

Paṭiccasamuppāda (Dependent Origination)

*Chamnong Thongprasert**

Beauty can be good or bad, depending on how the owner puts it to use.

During the Buddha's lifetime there was a Brahmin named Vakkali. He was captivated by the Buddha's beauty and decided to be ordained. He followed the Buddha not because he wanted to listen to His Dhamma but because he wanted to look adoringly at His beautiful physique. The Buddha was said to have possessed a combination of "32 marks and 12 subsidiary features of the Great Man", and a person who possesses them is destined to be either a fully enlightened Buddha or a universal king. When Vakkali was newly ordained and followed the Buddha everywhere just to admire his beauty, the Buddha remained silent about it because He considered the Brahmin as having ordained into monkhood out of "faith," even though it was not faith in the Dhamma but in His physical splendor. Later on, when the right time came, he said to Monk Vakkali, "Behold, Vakkali, when you look at me, you do not really see me. A person who sees Dhamma can be said to see the Buddha." (*Yo Dhammam Passati; So, Mam Passati*)

Now, what is the meaning of Dhamma? If one asks a student, one may get the answer "Dhamma is Khuṇākon (goodness)," as written by Phraya Sisunthonwohan (Noi Achanrayangkun) in his verse in praise of the Dhamma as follows:

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Dhammad Khue Khunakon	Suan Chop Sathon
Dut Duang Prathip Chatchawan	Song Sat Sandan
Haeng Ong Phra Satsadachan	
Sawang Krachang Chai Mon	
Tham Dai Nap Doi Mak Phon	Pen Paet Phueng Yon
Lae Kao Kap Thang Naruephan	
Somya Lok Udon Phitsadan	An Luek O-lan
Phisut Phiset Suksai	
Ik Tham Ton Thang Kanlai	Nam Khanan Khan Khai
Patibat Pariyat Pen Song	
Khue Thang Damneon Dut Khlong	Hai Luang Lu Pong
Yang Lok Udon Doi Trong	
Kha Kho On On Uttamong	Nop Tham Chamnong
Duai Chit Lae Kai Wacha	

(Translation: Dhamma is the source of goodness. All the good things in it shine like a brilliant torch of the Buddha, the noble teacher, bringing to light the nature of creatures and clearing the mind of impurities. If one counts Dhamma in terms of the Paths (*Magga*) and their Fruits (*Phala*), the total number is eight, or nine if one includes *Nibbāna*. All this constitutes *Lokuttaradhamma* – profound, comprehensive, pure, wonderful and radiant. The Buddha also provides two kinds of teachings that will lead to the ultimate world – the practice (*Patipatti*) and study (*Pariyatti*) of Dhamma. I humbly bow my head and pay respect to the Dhamma with my mind, body and speech.)

When I was a school student, I recited this verse in praise of the Buddha, Dhamma, and *Saṅgha* regularly every week. I wonder if the students today still do so. If so, do their teachers explain the meaning of the verse to them?¹ Or do they let the students recite in a parrot-like manner?

¹ The verse in praise of the Buddha, Dhamma, and *Saṅgha* was part of a textbook on Thai literature for Mathayom Suksa-5 students (Grade 12). It could be found in Wannasan Wichak Book IV under Upper Secondary Education Syllabus 1981 (revised 1990) and was no longer used in the 2008 syllabus. - Editor

The verse is actually quite profound in its meaning. If it is clearly explained to the students, it may help them appreciate the value of the Triple Gems and increase their faith in Buddhism.

The word “Dhamma” in the verse is qualified by Khunakon which means “the source of all goodness”. Dhamma is a general term which can have a positive or negative connotation. In Pali there is a saying “*Kusalā Dhammā Akusalā Dhammā; Abayākatā Dhammā*”, which means “There are things which are wholesome; there are things which are unwholesome; and there are things which are without consequences.” Dhamma is indeterminate; it is neither *Kusalā* nor *Akusalā*. However, in this verse, only wholesome things are referred to as in “Suan Chop Sathon” (All the good things) and are compared to “Dut Duang Prathip Chatchawan” (like a brilliant torch). Dhamma here refers to 4 *Magga*, 4 *Phala*, and 1 *Nibbāna*, a total of 9 elements, which constitute the higher world or *Lokuttaradhamma* – Dhamma beyond the world, above the pull of all worldly desires.

When the Buddha told Vakkali, “A person who sees Dhamma can be said to see the Buddha,” what Dhamma was He talking about?

If one is asked what kind of enlightenment the Buddha attained, those who have read King Rama VI’s writings would answer “the Four Noble Truths.”

Is the answer correct? I would say it is not wrong, but it is not quite right either.

Why? Because it begs other questions.

Those who have studied the **Four Noble Truths** would know that they are *Dukkha*, *Samudaya* (cause of suffering), *Nirodha* (cessation of suffering), and *Magga* or *Dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā* (the path leading to the cessation of suffering). Talking of *Samudaya*, as far as one knows, one will find that the cause of suffering is *Tanhā* or “craving” consisting of *Kāma-Tanhā* or craving for sensual pleasures, i.e. sights, sounds, smells, tastes, *Phoṭṭhabba* (tangible objects) and *Dhamma* (mental objects). Now, where does such craving come from or what causes it? The Four Noble Truths do not give a satisfactory answer. One has to go right

to the root cause of craving and study *Paṭiccasamuppāda* or Dependent Origination for a better understanding, because the term **Dhamma** used here refers specifically to *Paṭiccasamuppāda*.

Dhamma, *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, and the **Buddha** are considered one and the same. In *Mahāhatthipadopamasutta Majjhimanikāya Mūlapaṇṇāsaka* Ven. Sāriputta, one of the two principal disciples of the Buddha often shown standing on the Buddha's right side, said the following to the attending monks:

*This word was spoken by the Buddha in the following manner:
A person who sees*

*Paṭiccasamuppāda is said to see Dhamma. A person who sees
Dhamma is said to see Paṭiccasamuppāda.*

*(Yo Paṭiccasamuppannam Sati; So Dhammam Passati Yo
Dhammam Passati; So Paṭiccasamuppādam Passati)*

Ven. Sāriputta's words remind one of what the Buddha said to Vaggali:

*Listen, Vaggali, what use is it seeing this decaying body?
Lo, Vaggali, a person who sees Dhamma is said to see me; a
person who sees me is said to see Dhamma. O Vaggali, when
you see Dhamma, it is the same as you see me. When you see
me, it is the same as when you see Dhamma.*

By the same token, this author views that **Dhamma**, *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, and the **Buddha** are one and the same. The Buddha was not called by that name until He attained the state of enlightenment.

In the third *Sutta* of *Pañcamavagga Tikanipāta Itivuttaka Khuddakanikāya* the Buddha said to the monks:

*O, monks, a monk may take hold of the end of my robe and walk behind me following my footpath, but if he is still possessed by *Avijjā* (ignorance), strong desires for sensual pleasures, ill-will, inclination for malice, forgetfulness, lack of mental discipline, fickleness, and lack of self-control, he is said to be far away from me. I am truly far away from him.*

Why is this?

O, monks, since that person does not see Dhamma, and when he does not see Dhamma, he is said not to see me.

(Dhammam Hi So Bhikkhave Bhikkhu Na Passati Dhammam Apassanuto Mam Na Passati)

...Even if the person is 100 Yojana (about 10,000 miles) from me, if he has Dhamma or sees Dhamma, he is said to see me (the Buddha).

(Dhammam Hi So Bhikkhave Passati Dhammam Passanuto Mam Passati)

Shortly after the enlightenment the Buddha remained under the Great bodhi tree near the bank of the Nerunjara river in the district of Uruvelā, enjoyinga bliss of *Vimuttisukha* for seven days and reflecting on the principles of *Paticcasamuppāda* forward and backward throughout the first part of the night:

With Avijjā (ignorance) as condition, there is Saṅkhāra (volitional impulses).

With Saṅkhāra (volitional impulses) as condition, there is Viññāna (consciousness).

With Viññāna (consciousness) as condition, there is Nāma-Rūpa (body and mind).

With Nāma-Rūpa (body and mind) as condition, there is Saḷāyatana (6 Āyatana) (six sense bases).

With Saḷāyatana (the six sense bases) as condition, there is Phassa (contact).

With Phassa (contact) as condition, there is Vedanā (feeling).

With Vedanā (feeling) as condition, there is Taṇhā (craving).

With Taṇhā (craving) as condition, there is Upādāna (clinging).

With Upādāna (clinging) as condition, there is Bhava (becoming).

With Bhava (becoming) as condition, there is Jāti (birth).

With birth as condition, there are aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

Such consideration of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is made in a proper forward order and in a systematic manner. The Buddha then reflected on the principles in a reverse order thus:

With the cessation (complete extinction) of ignorance, volitional impulses cease.

With the cessation of volitional impulses, consciousness ceases.

With the cessation of consciousness, body and mind cease.

With the cessation of body and mind, the six sense bases cease.

With the cessation of the six sense bases, contact ceases.

With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases.

With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases.

With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases.

With the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases.

With the cessation of becoming, birth ceases.

With the cessation of birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease. Thus is there a cessation to this whole mass of suffering.

When the Buddha felt thus, He uttered the following words:

When all the Dhamma is clear to a Brahmin who is intent on considering the matter, then all his doubts will disappear, because he has understood all the Dhamma and its conditionality.

The Buddha reflected on *Paṭiccasamuppāda* during the first part, the middle part and the final part of the night. He considered *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as ***Ariya-Dhamma***, “something noble and worth knowing” and said to the monks at Jetawan monastery in Savatthi thus:

O, monks, so what is this Ariya-Dhamma that the noble disciples see and understand thoroughly with wisdom?

O, monks, the noble disciples in this case have carefully reflected in their minds on Paṭiccasamuppādathus: because there is so and so, there is so and so. When this thing occurs, this thing also occurs. When there is no such thing, there is also no such thing. With the cessation of this thing, this thing also ceases:

*With ignorance as condition, there are volitional impulses.
With volitional impulses as condition, there is consciousness.
With consciousness as condition, there are body and mind.
With body and mind as condition, there are the six sense bases.
With the six sense bases as condition, there is contact.
With contact as condition, there is feeling.
With feeling as condition, there is craving.
With craving as condition, there is clinging.
With clinging as condition, there is becoming.
With becoming as condition, there is birth.*

With birth as condition, there are aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

Paṭiccasamuppāda is also known as the **Middle Path**. The Buddha said to Brahmin Kaccānagotra at Jetawan monastery:

Behold, Kaccāna, to say that all things exist is one extreme view (not the Middle Path); on the one hand, to say that all things do not exist is another extreme view (not the Middle Path).

Behold, Kaccāna, I proclaim a teaching that is balanced, avoiding these extremes, thus:

*With ignorance as condition, there are volitional impulses.
With volitional impulses as condition, there is consciousness.*

With birth as condition, there are aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

Paṭiccasamuppāda is the most profound and difficult issue to understand. Once, Ven. Ananda told the Buddha that he now clearly understood all its principles. The Buddha said:

Say not so, Ananda. This principle of Paṭiccasamuppāda is profound and hard to see. O, Ananda, because beings do not know, understand, and thoroughly realize this teaching, they (their minds) are confused like tangled threads thrown together in bundles, entangled like a web of tumbleweeds, and cannot escape Samsāra (the cycle of births and deaths), unhappiness, and perdition.

This is so, because only beings like the Buddha can fully understand *Paṭiccasamuppāda*. He attained enlightenment because he understood its principle. After he became enlightened, he spent the whole night considering *Paṭiccasamuppāda* forward and backward.

We should explore further the 12 links of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* to obtain a better understanding of it.

Paṭiccasamuppāda explains that a past event has *Avijjā* (ignorance) and *Saṅkhāra* (volitional impulses) as conditions. Yet, ignorance is always accompanied by *Tanhā* (craving) and *Upādāna* (clinging) while volitional impulses are instrumental to the process of *Kāma-Bhava* (becoming). Therefore, in *Paṭisambhidāmagga* *Scripture*, a past event is explained fully with the addition of craving, clinging and the process of becoming in the following manner:

Avijjā refers to ignorance that influences our action in our past life.

Saṅkhāra refers to continued generation of action.

Tanhā refers to desire to obtain the result of action in the present and future life.

Upādāna refers to attachment to action and its consequences.

Kāma-Bhava refers to intention.

These five elements are past conditions leading to birth in the present life.

In King Rama IV's writing entitled *Paticcasamuppāda Dhamma*, mention is made of how the five conditions of ignorance, volitional impulses, craving, clinging and becoming in the past life lead to the five conditions of ignorance, volitional impulses, craving, clinging and becoming in the present life, leading to another five conditions of ignorance, volitional impulses, craving, clinging and becoming in the future life. King Rama IV (2004) supplies an explanation on the matter as follows:

What is ignorance?

*It is **Moho** that clouds wisdom and prevents it from seeing the Four Noble Truths. Here **Moho** refers to “delusion”. By its nature **Moho** muddies the mind and causes it to mistake bad for good and wrong for right. *Kīṭāviya*: This is just like a host of grasshoppers and moths always glad to see a flame, thinking that it is nice and cool. *Upatittavā*: They rush into the flame to their death. By the same token people mistake wrong for right. *Yathā Mī*: Thus, when **Moho** becomes a dominant force in one's nature, it clouds up the mind into mistaking wrong for right. *Evaṁeva*: In the same manner, when **Moho** is dominant in one's nature, it prevents the mind from seeing *Tilakkhana* or the Three Characteristics of Existence, which are *Aniccam* (impermanence), *Dhukkham* (suffering), and *Anattā* (non-self) so that one cannot see the Four Noble Truths. **Moho** veils over the mind like clouds hiding the moon from sight. That is what **Moho** can do. The Buddha calls it *Avijjā* (ignorance). *Avijjā Paccaya* *Samkhārā*: When ignorance occurs, it is a condition leading to *Samkhāra* (volitional impulses).*

Avijjā is “ignorance” or partial understanding. In this case it refers to ignorance about the Four Noble Truths. One does not know what is suffering, the cause of suffering (*Dukkha-Samudaya*), where to stop suffering (*Dukkha-Nirodha*), or how to do so (*Dukkha-Nirodha-Gāminī Patipadā*).

What is *Samkhāra*? King Rama VI (2004) provides the following explanation:

What is Samkhāra? It means a formation of something. Kusala (a good act) and Akusala (a bad act) are instrumental to rebirth together with the consequences of such act. This is called Samkhāra. It is nothing more than the merit and demerit of the action that accompanies the rebirth. There are three kinds of Samkhāra: Puññābhisañkhāra, Anupuññābhisañkhāra, and Aneñjābhisañkhāra. Puññābhisañkhāra refers to eight types of Kāmābacarakusala and four types of Rūpābacarakusala. What does one mean by Kāmābacarakusala? It could be explained in this way. A person has not yet attained the state of Jhāna but he retains his faith and continues to do the act of giving, observe moral conducts, meditate and listen to the sermon of Dhamma as far as he can. This kind of good act can lead to his rebirth in the human world and the six heavens of sensual pleasures. Such act is known as Kāmābacarakusala, while Rūpābacarakusala is the state of meditative attainment during the first, second, third and fourth Jhāna. This is called Rūpajhāna, Jhānas of the Fine Material Sphere. Such good act can enable a person to be reborn in the Brahma world and is known as Rūpābacarakusala. These two kinds of Kusala are called Puññābhisañkhāra. Anupuññābhisañkhāra refers to 12 unwholesome thoughts and all immoral and sinful mental activities, e.g. thinking of killing others. If a person commits such act, he will be conditioned to be reborn in one of the four lower worlds of hell, hungry ghosts, Asura demon, and animals where he will undergo so much suffering. Afterwards, when that person is reborn in the human world, he will find himself in a base position, destitute, stupid, suffering from many diseases, beset with misfortune, accidents, dangers and all kinds of hazard. This is the result of unwholesome act. It is therefore called Anupuññābhisañkhāra, while Aneñjābhisañkhāra refers

to a person practicing Arūpajhāna of the formless sphere who will eventually be reborn in one of the four formless spheres as a bodiless Brahma who has only consciousness resolute and unshaken by any Akusula. The Kusala that results in the formless being is called Aneñajābhisañkhāra. These three kinds of Sañkhāra go toward making possible rebirth. They do not cause the rebirth by themselves. This can be compared to a case in which a town architect remodels the city in honor of the king. The architect does not own the city. Sañkhārapaccayā Viññāṇam: With the above mentioned Sañkhāra (volitional impulses) as conditions there is Viññāna (consciousness).

Ven. Sobhonmahathera (Mahasisayadau) (2010) explains Sañkhāra in his book *Paṭiccasamuppāda: Causation of Samsāra* as follows:

Avijjā (ignorance) is a condition to Sañkhāra (volitional impulses) which in turn is a condition to Viññāna (consciousness). Good or bad action in the past existence is a condition to the presence of consciousness in the new existence. In the beginning bad action may lead to rebirth in one of the four lower worlds of hell, hungry ghosts, Asura demon, and animals. Afterwards, there is a consciousness called Bhavañgacitta that moves passively and continuously during which it may experience one or more of the six senses of hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought. In other word, Bhavañgacitta is the same as the subconscious that we experience while we sleep and the same as the final consciousness just before we die. It is called Cuticitta. So Paṭisondhacitta (rebirth), Bhavañgacitta, and Cuticitta are the results (Vipāka) of the actions of the past existence.

There are five kinds of Akusala-Vipāka consciousness that experience objects through the five doors of the senses: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, and body-consciousness. These consciousnesses are the results of the Akusala acts in the same

way as the consciousness that experiences the sense objects as they occur at the five sense doors (Sampaticachana) and the consciousness that acts to screen the sense objects (Santirana). So, altogether there are seven consciousnesses that are the results of the Akusala acts (Anupuññābhisañkhāra).

On the other hand, the consciousnesses derived from Aneñajābhisañkhāra are the results of four Kusala acts of Arūpāvacara-citta (consciousnesses in the formless sphere). They are reborn as consciousnesses in one of the four formless spheres where Bhavañigacitta will arise in the course of existence and Cuticitta will appear at the end of the existence.

With regard to Puññābhisañkhāra, five Kusala acts of Rūpāvacara are conditions to the existence of five Rūpāvacara-citta consciousnesses in the form sphere, while eight Mahakusala-citta (great wholesome consciousnesses) are conditions to the existence of further eight consciousnesses in the sphere of the senses. These consciousnesses act as agents to rebirth, passive state of mind, and death in the human world and the six celestial spheres. They also act as Tathārammanna, i.e. taking on sense objects from Javana-citta (perceiving mind). After this, the Javana-citta will perceive all the seven sense objects such as hearing and hearing. The Kusala acts in the sphere of Kāmāvacara are conditions to five consciousnesses that take on the good sense objects through the five doors of senses. Upekkhā-Sampatichañca-citta acts as a receptor of sense objects, while Santirana-citta considers sense objects consisting of Upekkhā-Vedanā (neutral feeling) and Somanassa-Vedanā (pleasurable feeling).

In short there are 32 Vipāka-citta (resultant consciousnesses):

- 4 Arūpāvacara-Vipāka-citta (consciousnesses in the formless sphere)

- 5 *Rūpāvacara-Vipāka-citta* (consciousnesses in the form sphere)
- 7 *Kāmābacara-Akusala-Vipāka-citta* (unwholesome sensuous consciousnesses)
- 8 *Kāmābacara-Kusala-Vipāka-citta* (wholesome sensuous consciousnesses)

All these 32 Vipāka-citta are conditions to Saṅkhāra (volitional impulses).

Next, how is *Saṅkhāraa* condition to *Viññāna* (consciousness)?

This subject is rather difficult to understand, because some people believe that there is nothing after death, while others maintain that after death there is rebirth. The Buddha considers both views mistaken, saying that the notion of rebirth after death is *Sassatadīṭṭh* (doctrine of the continuance of the soul after death) and the notion of nothing after death *Ucchedadīṭṭh* (doctrine of the annihilation of the soul). He teaches that rebirth or annihilation of the soul depends on a set of conditions. If the conditions are there, there is rebirth. If all the conditions for rebirth are exhausted, there is no rebirth in accordance with the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* principle.

Next, how is consciousness (*Viññāṇa*) a condition to Body and Mind (*Nāma-Rūpa*)?

Here King Rama IV (2006) explains in his writing, *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, as follows:

What is Viññāṇa? Citta is an agent of rebirth, while Vipāka-citta is an agent that produces the present result. This Citta is known as Viññāṇa, which means “awareness”. As all the Citta are aware of sense objects. They are called Viññāṇa. It can be compared to a king. When the town architect finishes his work, the king is then free to preside over the city. Similarly, Viññāṇa, whether good or bad, occurs as a result of Saṅkhāra. Viññāṇapaccay Nāmarupam: When consciousness occurs, it

does not stop there. It serves as a condition resulting in Body and Mind.

What is Rūpa (body or form)? Rūpa-Dhamma consists of 18 Nipaphana-Rūpa: 4 Mahābhūta-Rūpa, 5 Pasāda-Rūpa, 4 Visaya-Rūpa, 2 Bhāva-Rūpa, 1 Hadaya-Rūpa, 1 Jīvita-Rūpa, and 1 Āhāra-Rūpa. The 4 Mahābhūta-Rūpa are the four elements of Dhātu: Paṭhavi-Dhātu (earth-elements), Āpo-Dhātu (liquid-elements), Tejo-Dhātu (fire-elements), and Vāyo-Dhātu (air-elements), totaling 41 in number. The 19 earth elements are composed of Kesā/(hair on the head), Lomā (hair on other parts of the body), Nakhā (nail), Dantā (teeth), Taco (skin), Mamsam (meat), Nahārū (sinew), Atṭha (bone), Atṭhamiñjam (bone tissue), Vakkam (spleen), Hadayam (heart), Yakanam (liver), Kilmakam (membrane), Pihakam (viscera), Papphāsam (lung), Antam (large intestine), Antagunam (small intestine), Udariyam (newly ingested food), Karisam (old ingested food). These 19 parts are called Pathavi-Dhātu. The 12 liquid-elements comprise Pittam (bile), Semaham (phlegm), Pabbo (pus), Lohitam (blood), Sedo (sweat), Medo (thick fat), Assu (tear), Vasā (soft fat), Kheļo (saliva), Siṅghāṇikā (nasal mucus), Lasikā (marrow), and Muttam (urine). These 12 parts are called Āpo-Dhātu. The four fire elements consist of Santappaggi, Paridayhaggi, Pariṇāmaggi, and Jiranaggi. Santappaggi is the fire element that keeps the body of a being warm. Paridayhaggi is the fire element that puts the body in turmoil. Pariṇāmaggi is the fire element that burns up the food. Jiranaggi is the fire element that burns down and ages the body. These four elements form Tejo-Dhatū. The six air-elements are Uddhaṅgamāvātā, Adhogamāvātā, Kucchisayāvātā, Koṭaṭhāsayāvātā, Aṅgamaṅgānisarinovātā, and Assāsapassāsavātā. Uddhaṅgamāvātā is the air that flows from the feet to the upper part of the body. Adhogamāvātā is the air that flows in the stomach. Koṭaṭhāsayāvātā is the air that flows in the intestines Aṅgamaṅgānusarinovātā is the air that flows

all over the body. Assāsapassāsavātā is the air that breathes in and out. These six elements form Vāyo-Dhātu. All the above mentioned are called Mahābhūta-Rūpa, because they are major sources for all forms of being (Rūpa) and can be compared to the caves in the mountain where animals inhabit. In other words, the 4 Mahābhūta-Rūpa are the places where all forms of Rūpa reside. The five Pasāda-Rūpa are Cakkhupasāda (eye-faculty), Sodapasāda (ear-faculty), Ghānapasāda (nose-faculty), Jivhāpasāda (tongue-faculty), and Kāyapasāda (body-faculty). Cakkhupasāda (eye-faculty) is the size of a louse located in the middle of the pupil, acting as an agent that sees all material forms. Sodapasāda (ear-faculty) is as small as a very fine hair of the yak, round like a ring, located in each ear canal, acting as an agent that hear all things. Ghānapasāda (nose-faculty) is shaped like a goat hoof, located in the middle of the nose, acting as an agent receptive of all smells. Jivhāpasāda (tongue-faculty) is shaped like a lotus petal, located in the middle of the tongue, serving as an agent receptive of all tastes. Kāyapasāda (body-faculty) spreads all over the body, acting as an agent receptive of all body contacts, whether rough or fine, hot or cold, soft or hard. If there is something wrong with this faculty, the body sensations will be lost or go astray. The four Visaya-Rūpa forms consist of Rūpāramāṇa, Saddāramāṇa, Gandhāramāṇa, and Rasāramāṇa. Rūpāramāṇa refers to Rūpa or forms, whether small or big, fine or rough, external or internal - all forms that appear at the eye-door. They are all called Rūpāramāṇa. Saddāramāṇa refers to all sounds that the ears receive. Gandhāramāṇa refers to all smells that reach the nose. Rasāramāṇa refers to all the tastes that reach the tongue. The two Bhāvarūpa consist of Itthī-Bhāva-Rūpa (femininity) and Purisa-Bhāva-Rūpa (masculinity). Itthī-Bhāvarūpa (femininity) displays feminine manners and characteristics, while Purisa-Bhāva-Rūpa (masculinity) has male manners and characteristics. If neither of these states is clear in a person,

he is called a bisexual person. Hadaya-Rūpa refers to the heart or mind. Jīvita-Rūpa is the faculty that gives vitality to life like water that keeps the water lily alive. Āhāra-Rūpa is food for consumption; the consumption of rice and water, for example, provides strength and colors to the skin, body, and blood in the present form. All the Rūpa or forms described above are only possible with the presence of Viññāna (consciousness). This consciousness is, therefore, a Citta that is a condition to the presence of Rūpa. But Viññāna, as a Citta, is not only a condition to Rūpa (material things) but also a condition to Nāma-Dhamma (mental things).

Nāma-Dhamma depends on three Vedanā (aggregates,) i.e. Vedanā (feeling), Saññā (perception), and Saṅkhāra (volitional activities). Vedanā-Khandha is a mental factor providing a feeling of happiness and unhappiness as well as equanimity (Upekkhā). Vedanā occurs in consciousnesses and therefore is considered one of Vedanā. Saññā consciousness takes note of everything and is therefore considered another Khandha (aggregate). Saṅkhāra-Khandha consists of 50 consciousnesses derived from Saññā-Vedanā. Originally, there were 52 consciousnesses, but Vedanā consciousness was moved to Vedanā-Khandha, and Saññā consciousness to Saññā-Khandha. The remaining 50 consciousnesses are considered Saṅkhāra-Khandha. These three Khandha occur when there is Viññāna as condition. When Nāma and Rūpa are present, they are conditions to Āyatana (sense spheres).

On the issue of “Viññāna giving rise to Nāma-Rūpa,” Ven. Sobhonmahathera (Mahasisayada) (2010) explains in his book *Paṭiccasamuppāda: Causation of Samsāra* revised by Phra Phrommamoli (Somsak Uppasamo) and translated by Phra Khanthasaraphiwong as follows:

Nāma-Rūpa occurs as a result of Viññāna. According to the Paṭiccasamuppāda principle, Viññāna is a condition to

Nāma-Rūpa. This means that the arrival of Viññāṇa is a condition giving rise to Cetasika (mental activities) – something that naturally occurs with consciousness – and body at the same time. Cetasika that occurs with Viññāṇa includes feeling (Vedanā), perception and recognition (Saññā) of something relating to Kamma. Kamma-Nimitta and Gati-Nimitta are objects of consciousness appearing when a person is near death. Every consciousness must always be accompanied by Cetasika. Higher rebirths (Tihetuka-Paṭisandhi) of Brahma, gods, and humans are accompanied by three Kusala-Citta elements of non-greed, non-anger, and non-delusion. Middle-level rebirths of gods and humans (Davihetuka-Paṭisandhi) are accompanied by two: non-greed and non-anger. Low-level rebirths of gods on the ground and humans born with deformities are those without Kusala consequences (Ahetuka-Paṭisandhi), that is, without accompanying good qualities. However, Ahetuka-Paṭisandhi of humans in the Sugati-Bhūmi (blissful spheres) is considered a good rebirth compared to Ahetuka-Paṭisandhi in Dugati-Bhūmi (sphere of misery) of beings in the lower worlds of Apāya-Bhūmi.

Births/rebirths can be classified into three categories: in the mother's womb (Gabbhaseyya), on the wet ground (Saṇsedaja), and instant self-birth without the need for parents (Opapātika). There are two kinds of births in the mother's womb: in the body form (Jalābuja) e.g. humans and quadrupeds, and in the egg form that is later hatched out (Aṇḍaja) e.g. birds and chickens. All births are different at the beginning of the birth or regarding the size and time of formation. The birth of humans is our next subject which will be explained in the light of scripture commentaries.

Human births: The occurrence of Viññāṇa gives rise to Kamma-Jarūpakalāpa (Rūpakalāpa caused by Kamma). There are three Kalāpa or 30 Rūpa: 10 Kāya-Dasaka, 10 Bhāva-Dasaka, and 10 Vatthu-Dasaka. The Kāya-Dasaka

consists of Kāya-Pasāda-Rūpa and 9 other Rūpa (earth, water, fire, wind, color, smell, taste, nutriment, and life). The Bhāva-Dasaka consists of ten components: Purisa-Bhāva-Rūpa (forms indicative of masculinity) or Itthī-Bhāva-Rūpa (forms indicative of femininity) and 9 other Rūpa of Kāya-Dasaka nature. When Bhāva-Rūpa is better developed, masculinity and femininity will become more marked. Bhāva-Rūpa is like a mechanism that shows gender development and manners peculiar to either sex. Sexual aberrations are clearly seen when a person's sexuality departs from the norm. Vatthu-Dasaka consists of object Rūpa (form) where mind-consciousnesses reside, including Paṭisandhi (rebirth), Bhāvanga (passive consciousness), and Cuti (decease/taking on another rebirth), together with nine other Rūpa forms. When aberrance occurs resulting in neither masculinity nor femininity, the being concerned is said to be without Bhāva-Rūpa. It has only 10 Kāya-Dasaka and 10 Vatthu-Dasaka, which are physical forms for Paṭisandhi, Bhāvanga, and Cuti to reside in. So, during the rebirth in general, Rūpa occurs for Viññāna to be conceived in the form of three groups of Kalāpa or 30 Rūpa forms forming Kalala², the beginning of life according to Buddhist scriptures.

Rūpa in the mother's womb looks like a clear drop of water, the size of an oil drop hanging at the end of the yak hair, so small that it cannot be seen with a naked eye. Kalala does not occur by itself but as a result of the union of the father's semen and mother's menses. If we do not accept this, it is hard to explain why a born baby has a semblance of its parent. Therefore, the Buddha says in various Suttas that the body is a combination of four Dhātu (elements) together with the father's semen and mother's menses. In the Tipiṭaka mention

² *Kalala* is equivalent to “cell” in English.

is made of three conditions necessary for birth/rebirth to take place.

1. *Father and mother live together.*³
2. *The mother is at the menstruation age.*⁴
3. *Viññāna is conceived.*⁵

When the father's sperm and mother's menses join together and give rise to Utu-ja-Rūpa (form that occurs at a certain temperature), it is possible that such Utu-ja-Rūpa develops into Kamma-ja-Rūpa mixed with three groups of Kalāpa...

Studies by Western biologists show that the conception occurs when the mother's ovum joins the father's semen (sperm). The resulting form then develops into a fetus in the mother's womb. In the beginning the embryo is so small that it cannot be seen with a naked eye. This finding corresponds with the passage in the *Tipiṭaka* on conception and birth. The Buddha knew from his wisdom without the help of any instrument. He knew that life begins with three groups of *Kalāpa*, consisting of 30 *Rūpa* forms forming *Kalala*, a result of the combination of the mother's menses and father's semen. The Buddha taught this fact 2,500 years ago, long before modern scientific discoveries:

<i>Pathamam Kalalam Hoti</i>	<i>Kalalā Hoti Abbuda</i>
<i>Abbuda Jāyate Pesi</i>	<i>Pesi Nibbattatī Ghano</i>
<i>Ghanā Pasākhā Jāyanti</i>	<i>Kesā Lomā Nakhāpi Ca</i>

In “*Paṭiccasamuppāda*: Causation of *Saṃsāra*”, Mahasisayadau (2010) mentions the following:

At the end of the seventh day Kalala develops into Abbuja characterized by murky bubbles. A week later it grow into a tissue called Pesi. Another week later it grew into a lump of

³ *Matapitūnam Saṃvāso*

⁴ *Utūni*

⁵ *Gandhabbo Okkamati*

meat called Ghana. In the fifth week it became Pañcasākhā, having fivebuds that eventually become arms, legs and head.

Visutthimagga Scripture gives no detail about further growth after the fifth week but says that after 77 days (11 weeks) there will arise Pasāda-Rūpa fed by nutrients absorbed from the mother's body. It also mentions that the fetus in the womb has fingernails and toenails.

According to modern science or biology, birth is caused by two factors. First, a man's spermatozoon joins a woman's ovum; second, the woman is at a menstruation age. Infertility is considered a "chance occurrence." In Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy, however, there is no such thing as "chance". Appealing to chance is only a way to cover up *Avijja* or one's ignorance. According to Buddhism, conception depends on three factors. The first two are the ones identified by modern science: ***Matapitūnam Snamyāso***, the parents cohabit, i.e. have sexual intercourse; and the woman is at a menstruation age. The Pali term for this is ***Utunī***, which means "a person who has seasons." The word ***Utu*** means "seasons" or "menses" in common parlance. The third factor is ***Gandhabbo Okkamati***, which means "a Ganharva (angel) descends into the womb." "***Gandhabbo***" is taken to mean "the rebirth of *Viññāna*" in the Dhamma discourse. It does not matter how frequently a couple may engage in sexual intercourse. Without the rebirth of *Viññāna* into the womb, no conception will take place. Even in the event of *Viññāna* descending into the womb, if it dies on the way, no conception will take place. We call this "miscarriage". In his address to a general meeting of the Buddhist Association about 20 years ago, H.M. King Bhumibol said at one stage that "*Buddhism is scientific.*" The Buddha knows all truths that can be known. He does not invent anything new, just like how Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity. Newton did not invent the law but discovered it. The Buddha says in *Dhamma-Niyāma Sutta* that "whether a *Tathāgata* (Buddha) appears on earth or not, the truth that all *Saṅkhāra* is impermanent, subject to suffering and non-being will always be there. He merely comes to know the truth. After His enlightenment, He teaches it, shows it and formulates it, making

it easier to understand. However, Buddhism and science are different in that the latter discovers concrete truths, while the former discovers both concrete and abstract truths.

Next, *Nāma-Rūpa* is a condition to six Āyatana. What is Āyatana?

Āyatana means “connection base.” The six Āyatana bases inside our body, i.e. the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, are internal Āyatana. They serve to connect to another set of six external Āyatana spheres, i.e. *Rūpa* (form), sound, smell, taste, tangible objects, and mind objects. King Rama IV (2004) explains in his *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as follows:

There are six kinds of Āyatana: Cakkhavāyatana, Sotāyatana, Ghānāyatana, Jivhāyatana, Kāyāyatana, and Manāyatana. Cakkhavāyatana is the two eyes on which all objects appear. The eyes are like the sources of Rūpa (forms) – hence the name Cakkhavāyatana. Sotāyatana refers to the two ears where all sounds appear. They are like the sources of sounds – hence the name Sotāyatana. Ghānāyatana refers to the nose where all smells are received. The nose is like the source of smells – hence the name Ghānāyatana. Jivhāyatana refers to the tongue where tastes appear. It is like the source of tastes – hence the name Jivhāyatana. Kāyāyatana refers to the body where all touches are felt whether cold or hot, soft or hard. It is like the source of all touches – hence the name Kāyāyatana. Manāyatana refers to the heart where all Dhamma known to Citta appears. The heart is the source of Dhamma – hence the name Manāyatana. Saṭāyatana-paccaya Phasso: When Āyatana appears as condition, there arises Phassa (contact/touch).

Ven. Mahasisayadau (2010) explains the matter in his *Paṭiccasamuppāda: Causation of Samsāra* as follows:

*Saṭāyatana means the six internal Āyatana (sense fields) or Davāra (sense doors), i.e. the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, as well as the six Āyatana or Āramaṇa (objects of consciousness), i.e. *Rūpa* (form), sound, smell, taste, tangible*

objects, and mind objects (all mental experiences). The meeting between the internal and external Āyatana is called Phassa. Phassa is a natural occurrence in the mind, known by the mind, without form and tangibility. However, it is a clearly felt phenomenon when the Āramanya is experienced in a fairly clear or powerful manner. For instance, when we see someone being bullied, we feel frightened or uncomfortable. Or when we see someone hanging on the tree top with a thin rope, we feel scared. When we are frightened, we feel a shiver up on our spine. Hearing, listening to, or reading an interesting story can give us so deep an impression that we never forget. All the examples given here show how powerful Phassa can be on the mind after it comes into contact with Āramanya.

King Rama IV (2004) explains in his *Paṭiccasamuppāda* thus:

Phassa refers to the mental faculty that comes into contact with sense objects. It is a dwelling for the six Āramanya of Rūpa (form), sound, smell, taste, tangible objects, and mind objects accessible by consciousness. This mental faculty occurs in all consciousnesses. With the presence of Phassa as condition, there arises Vedanā (feeling).

There are five kinds of Vedanā: Sukha-Vedanā (physical pleasures), Dukkha-Vedanā (physical pain), Somanassa-Vedanā (mental happiness), Domanassa-Vedanā (mental pain), and Upekkhā-Vedanā (indifference). Sukha-Vedanā is a feeling of pleasures. Dukkha-Vedanā is a feeling of physical discomfort. With Somanassa-Vedanā, the Citta feels joy. With Domanassa-Vedanā the Citta feels displeasure. Upekkhā-Vedanā is the state in which Citta feels neither displeasure nor discomfort, neither Somanassa nor-Domanassa. The Citta is neutral. It is called Upekkhā-Vedanā. Vedanā is a dominant force where there is Āramanya. Vedanāpaccyā Tanhā: With the presence of Vedanā as condition, there arises Tanhā (craving).

There are three kinds of Taṇhā: Kāma-Taṇhā, Bhava-Taṇhā, and Vibhava-Taṇhā. Kāma-Taṇhā is a craving for sensual pleasures. Bhava-Taṇhā is a craving for existence together with Sāsātadiṭṭhi. Sāsātadiṭṭhi refers to the belief that after death beings are reborn again and again in an unending cycle, accompanied by sensual desires. This is called Bhava-Taṇhā. Vibhava-Taṇhā refers to the wish characterized by Ucchedadiṭṭhi. Ucchedadiṭṭhi is the belief that after death beings will not be reborn ever again. When such desires and sensual pleasures occur together with Ucchedadiṭṭhi, it is called Vibhava-Taṇhā. Each of the three Taṇhā is divided into three internal and three external, which are further divided into 36 past Taṇhā, 36 future Taṇhā and 36 present Taṇhā, totaling 108 Taṇhā. Taṇhāpaccayā Upādanam: when Citta is secure in Taṇhā, Taṇhā is further strengthened.

Ven. Mahasisayadau (2010) explains the issue of *Phassa* as condition to *Vedanā* (feeling) as follows:

Vedanā has Phassa as its condition.

Phassa through the eyes is a condition leading to a feeling of happiness (Sukha-Vedanā), a feeling of unhappiness (Dukkha-Vedanā), or a sense of indifference (Upekkha-Vedanā), depending on the objects being experienced. If the object is beautiful, we feel happy. If the object is ugly we will feel uncomfortable. If the object is so and so, i.e. neither beautiful nor ugly, we will feel indifferent or Upekkha-Vedanā. Upekkha-Vedanā does not lead to a decision that a feeling is good or bad. We may not even know that there is a feeling of Upekkha-Vedanā in our mind. However, Upekkha-Vedanā is considered a feeling. In fact, all three kinds of Vedanā – happiness, unhappiness, and indifference – do not involve a person's self. No person is involved in the feeling of Vedanā. It is the character of Citta when experiencing contact.

Viññāṇa, *Phassa* and *Vedanā* appear at the time of seeing. *Viññāṇa* in *Paṭiccasamuppāda* means “consciousness/awareness”, as mentioned by the Buddha: “Monks, the six groups of *Viññāṇa* are *Cakkhu-Viññāṇa* (eye-consciousness), *Sota-Viññāṇa* (ear-consciousness), *Ghāna-Viññāṇa* (nose-consciousness), *Jivhā-Viññāṇa* (tongue-consciousness), *Kāya-Viññāṇa* (body-consciousness, and *Mano-Viññāṇa* (mind-consciousness).” The word “*Viññāṇa*”, therefore, does not mean soul in English. It means sense perception through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. It corresponds, rather, to the notion of “consciousness.”

King Rama IV explicated the concept of *Viññāṇa* in his *Brahma-Cariyakathā* thus:

Viññāṇam Aniccam: Viññāṇa is impermanent. It consists of 89 Citta: 12 Akusla-Citta (consisting of 8 Lobha-Citta, 2 Dosa-Citta, and 2 Moha-Citta), 18 Ahetuka-Citta, 24 Kamabacarasobhana-Citta (consisting of 8 Kusala-Citta, 8 Vitaka-Citta, and 8 Kiriya-Citta), 15 Rūpābacara-Citta (consisting of 5 Kusala-Citta, 5 Vitaka-Citta, and 5 Kiriya-Citta), 12 Arūpābacara-Citta (consisting of 4 Kusala-Citta, 4 Vitaka-Citta, and 4 Kiriya-Citta), 8 Lokuttara-Citta (consisting of 4 Magga-Citta and 4 Phala-Citta. The total number of Citta is 89, constituting Viññāṇa, with the power to perceive. Viññāṇa is impermanent. It occurs and goes out at the same time. It has no self. It is a non-self and vanishes away. It is owned by nobody. It is based on Nama-Rūpa, occurring and going out.

In *Paṭiccasamuppāda* King Rama IV (2004) gives the following explanation on *Viññāṇa*:

What is Viññāṇa? Citta is an agent for rebirth, with Vipāka-Citta acting to bring about the present result. This is called Viññāṇa. Viññāṇa means “awareness” Every Citta by nature can perceive objects. That is why it is called Viññāṇa. Viññāṇa, by analogy, is like a king. When the town architects have finished with the decoration, the king is then free to rule the

city. In a like manner, with *Viññāṇa*, *Saṅkhāra* serves to shape the rebirth according to the results of good and bad deeds. *Viññāṇa paccayā Nāma-Rūpam*: When *Viññāṇa* occurs as a condition, it does not stop there. Of necessity it leads to *Rūpa-Dhamma* (form) and *Nāma-Dhamma* (mind) as a result.

Concerning *Rūpa-Dhamma* and *Nāma-Dhamma*, King Rama IV (2004) gives the following explanation in *Paṭiccasamuppāda*:

What is Rūpa (body or form)? Rūpa-Dhamma consists of 18 Nipaphana-Rūpa: 4 Mahābhūta-Rūpa, 5 Pasāda-Rūpa, 4 Visaya-Rūpa, 2 Bhāva-Rūpa, 1 Hadaya-Rūpa, 1 Jīvita-Rūpa, and 1 Āhāra-Rūpa. The 4 Mahābhūta-Rūpa are the four elements of Dhātu: Paṭhavi-Dhātu (earth-elements), Āpo-Dhātu (liquid-elements), Tejo-Dhātu (fire-elements), and Vāyo-Dhātu (air-elements), totaling 41 in number. The 19 earth elements are composed of Kesā (hair on the head), Lomā (hair on other parts of the body), Nakhā (nail), Dantā (teeth), Taco (skin), Mamsam (meat), Nahārū (sinew), Atṭha (bone), Atṭhamiñjam (bone tissue), Vakkam (spleen), Hadayam (heart), Yakanam (liver), Kilmakam (membrane), Pihakam (viscera), Papphāsam (lung), Antam (large intestine), Antagunam (small intestine), Udariyam (newly ingested food), Karīsam (old ingested food). These 19 parts are called Pathavi-Dhātu. The 12 liquid-elements comprise Pittam (bile), Semaham (phlegm), Pabbo (pus), Lohitam (blood), Sedo (sweat), Medo (thick fat), Assu (tear), Vasā (soft fat), Kheļo (saliva), Siṅghāṇikā (nasal mucus), Lasikā (marrow), and Muttam (urine). These 12 parts are called Āpo-Dhātu. The four fire elements consist of Santappaggi, Paridayhaggi, Pariṇāmaggi, and Jiranaggi. Santappaggi is the fire element that keeps the body of a being warm. Paridayhaggi is the fire element that puts the body in turmoil. Pariṇāmaggi is the fire element that burns up the food. Jiranaggi is the fire element that burns down and ages the body. These four elements form Tejo-Dhātu. The six air-elements

are *Uddhaṅgamāvātā*, *Adhogamāvātā*, *Kucchisayāvātā*, *Koṭaṭhāsayāvātā*, *Āṅgamaṅgānisarinovātā*, and *Assāsapassāsavātā*. *Uddhaṅgamāvātā* is the air that flows from the feet to the upper part of the body. *Adhogamāvātā* is the air that flows in the stomach. *Koṭaṭhāsayāvātā* is the air that flows in the intestines. *Āṅgamaṅgānusarinovātā* is the air that flows all over the body. *Assāsapassāsavātā* is the air that one breathes in and out. These six elements form *Vāyo-Dhātu*. All the above mentioned are called *Mahābhūta-Rūpa*, because they are major sources for all forms of being (*Rūpa*) and can be compared to the caves in the mountain where animals inhabit. In other words, the 4 *Mahābhūta-Rūpa* are the places where all forms of *Rūpa* reside. The five *Pasāda-Rūpa* are *Cakkhupasāda* (eye-faculty), *Sotapasāda* (ear-faculty), *Ghānapasāda* (nose-faculty), *Jivhāpasāda* (tongue-faculty), and *Kāyapasāda* (body-faculty). *Cakkhupasāda* (eye-faculty) is the size of a louse located in the middle of the pupil, acting as an agent that sees all material forms. *Sodapasāda* (ear-faculty) is as small as a very fine hair of the yak, round like a ring, located in each ear canal, acting as an agent that hear all things. *Ghānapasāda* (nose-faculty) is shaped like a goat hoof, located in the middle of the nose, acting as an agent receptive of all smells. *Jivhāpasāda* (tongue-faculty) is shaped like a lotus petal, located in the middle of the tongue, serving as an agent receptive of all tastes. *Kāyapasāda* (body-faculty) spreads all over the body, acting as an agent receptive of all body contacts, whether rough or fine, hot or cold, soft or hard. If there is something wrong with this faculty, the body sensations will be lost or go astray. The four *Visaya-Rūpa* forms consist of *Rūpāramāṇa*, *Saddāramāṇa*, *Gandhāramāṇa*, and *Rasāramāṇa*. *Rūpāramāṇa* refers to *Rūpa* or forms, whether small or big, fine or rough, external or internal – all forms that appear at the eye-door. They are all called *Rūpāramāṇa*. *Saddāramāṇa* refers to all sounds that the ears receive. *Gandhāramāṇa* refers to all smells that reach the nose. *Rasāramāṇa* refers to all the tastes that reach the

tongue. The two Bhāvarūpa consist of Itthī-Bhāva-Rūpa (femininity) and Purisa-Bhāva-Rūpa (masculinity). Itthī-Bhāvarūpa (femininity) displays feminine manners and characteristics, while Purisa-Bhāva-Rūpa (masculinity) has male manners and characteristics. If neither of these states is clear in a person, he is called a bisexual person. Hadaya-Rūpa refers to the heart or mind. Jīvita-Rūpa is the faculty that gives vitality to life like water that keeps the water lily alive. Āhāra-Rūpa is food for consumption; the consumption of rice and water, for example, provides strength and colors to the skin, body, and blood in the present form. All the Rūpa or forms described above are only possible with the presence of Viññāna (consciousness). This consciousness is, therefore, a Citta that is a condition to the presence of Rūpa. But Viññāna, as a Citta, is not only a condition to Rūpa (material things) but also a condition to Nāma-Dhamma (mental things).

Nāma-Dhamma depends on three Vedanā (aggregates,) i.e. Vedanā (feeling), Saññā (perception), and Saṅkhāra (volitional activities). Vedanā-Khandha is a mental factor providing a feeling of happiness and unhappiness as well as equanimity (Upekkhā). Vedanā occurs in consciousnesses and therefore is considered one of Vedanā. Saññā consciousness takes note of everything and is therefore considered another Khandha (aggregate). Saṅkhāra-Khandha consists of 50 consciousnesses derived from Saññā-Vedanā. Originally, there were 52 consciousnesses, but Vedanā consciousness was moved to Vedanā-Khandha, and Saññā consciousness to Saññā-Khandha. The remaining 50 consciousnesses are considered Saṅkhāra-Khandha. These three Khandha occur when there is Viññāna as condition. When Nāma and Rūpa are present, they are conditions to Āyatana (sense spheres).

As for Tañhā, Kāma-Tañhā is the desire for sensual pleasures. Bhava-Tañhā is the desire to be so and so, and Vibhava-Tañhā is the desire

not to be so and so, or the desire to not be something, e.g. desiring to not be foolish, desiring to not be poor. In Buddhism, not desiring is itself considered a “desire.”

From *Phassa* to *Tanhā* and to *Upādāna* (clinging) one can trace back. *Upādāna* is the cause of *Tanhā* which in turn gives rise to *Vedanā*, which in turn is the cause of *Phassa*. The word “*Paticca*” means “to depend on one another.” For instance, parents cause a child to be born, and a child is the cause for the existence of the parents, for without children people do not become parents. From *Phassa* to *Upādāna* the same principle applies. For example, when a man and a woman fancy each other, they are engaged in *Phassa*, e.g. holding hands, embracing, or having sexual intercourse. All this is *Phassa*. When people like each other and touch each other, they feel happy. When they feel happy, they want to re-experience that happiness by repeating the touch. With happiness, there arises *Tanhā* or “desire” or love. The more they touch, the greater the love or desire. Then arises *Upādāna*, “clinging” to the notion that this person is my lover, my husband, or my wife that nobody else can possess. There is a feeling of jealousy. This is *Upādāna*.

The word “*Upādāna*” means “clinging” or “jealousy” or “possessiveness.” King Rama IV (2004) explains thus:

There are four kinds of Upādāna: Kāmupādāna, Dīṭṭhupādāna, Silabbatupādāna, and Attavādupādāna. Kāmupādāna is clinging to sensual pleasures and objects. Dīṭṭhupādāna is clinging to views of Sāsātadīṭṭhi (continuance of the soul after death) and Ucchedadīṭṭhi (extinction of the soul after death). Silabbatupādāna refers to clinging to rules and rituals of non-Buddhist priests and teachers. Attavādupādāna is clinging to self. Upādāna-Paccayā Bhavo: When Upādāna occurs, it is a condition to Bhava (becoming/existence).

Bhava consists of Kāma-Bhava and Uppatti-Bhava. All the perception and volition that accompany consciousness or Citta include both Kusala and Akusala elements. This existence is called Kāma-Bhava. Uppatti-Bhava refers to 4 Apāya-Bhumi

(unhappy planes of existence), 1 *Manssā*, 6 *Kāmāvacara-Bhumi* (sensuous planes of existence), totaling 16. *Rūpa-Bhava* refers to 16 *Rūpa-Brahma*, while *Arūpa-Bhava* signifies 4 *Rūpa-Brahma*. Here, however, the focus is on *Kāma-Bhava*, since it is a condition to the existence of *Jāti* (birth). *Bhavapaccayā Jāti*: When *Kāma-Bhava* occurs, it is a condition to *Jāti*.

King Rama IV (2004) divides *Bhava* into *Kāma-Bhava* and *Uppatti-Bhava*. Most texts, however, adopt *Kāma-Bhava*. For example, Ven. Mahasisayadau (2010) adopts the following view regarding this matter:

Karma and the occurrence of new Bhava:

The Buddha says that Bhavapaccayā Jāti (with *Bhava* as condition there is *Jāti*). Rebirth into the human world, the world of gods, or the lower worlds happens as a result of *Kusala* or *Akusala* acts. Therefore, rebirth occurs as a product of action which is the result of clinging (*Upādāna*) and craving (*Taṇhā*), itself a consequence of the contact between the 6 Āramaṇa and 6 Āyatana.

In other words, as a result of Avijjā and Saṅkhāra, among others, in the former Bhava there are Viññāna, Nāma-Rūpa, Āyatana, Phassa, and Vedanā in the present Bhava or life. All this together with Upādāna in the present Bhava is condition to new Kamma or acts. As a result, Kamma leads to rebirth in another Bhava. This can be compared to a wrong-doer who is sent to jail and commits new offenses or to a debtor who creates more debts before paying off the old ones.

The new Kamma that a person accumulates in one Bhava is innumerable. When the time is ripe, any one Kamma may appear as Nimitta (sign) just before his death, resulting in a rebirth in another Bhava. Other Kamma will lead to another rebirth in the next Bhava as long as the person is stuck in the cycle of rebirths. It the Kamma accumulated in the previous

Bhava is very strong, that Kamma will bring about the rebirth earlier than that committed in the present Bhava. It will appear as a sign called Kamma-Nimita or Gatti-Nimita just before the person dies, resulting in rebirth in a happy or unhappy plane of existence. Therefore, the course of existence in the new Bhava is conditioned by good or bad acts,

Kamma can be divided into four types that exert influence in different manners:

1. ***Garuga-Kamma*** or weighty *Kamma*
2. ***Ācīnna-Kamma*** or ***Bahula-Kamma*** or habitual *Kamma*
3. ***Āsanna-Kamma*** or *Kamma* committed on the threshold of death
4. ***Katattā-Kamma*** or casual *Kamma*

Ven. Mahasisayadau (2010) explains the difference between *Saṅkhāra* and *Kamma* in *Kammabhava* (the active process of becoming) as follows:

Aṭṭhakathā Scripture provides three different approaches to *Saṅkhāra*, *Kamma* and *Kammabhava*:

First, preparations that are made in advance for any act are considered Saṅkhāra, while volition that occurs while doing the act is Kammabhava. Therefore, attempts to obtain money to buy a thing or make a donation are Saṅkhāra, while the volition during the act of doing so is Kammabhava. Activities during the planning to kill a person are Saṅkhāra, while the volition during the killing is Kammabhava.

Second, the difference can be discerned on the basis of Vithīcitta or thought process. An act of killing or giving consists of 7 Javanacitta or thought moments. The first six steps are Saṅkhāra, while the seventh Javanacitta is considered Kammabhava.

Third, the difference can be based on Cetasika or mental factors. Here, volition is considered Kammabhava, while other Cetasika elements that accompany volition are Saṅkhāra.

Of the three approaches, the first provides the clearest explanation that is accessible to the general public with limited education, while the third helps explain the Kusala acts committed by form and formless Brahmans (Rūpa-Brahma and Arūpa-Brahma). The three definitions can be used to differentiate good and bad deeds in Kāma-Bhūmi (the sensuous plane of existence).

In addition, Visuddhimagga Scripture mentions the rebirth of Viññāṇa with Saṅkhāra as condition in the following manner: Saṅkhāra that takes on Āramaṇa is Kamma. Kamma-Nimitta or Gati-Nimitta that appears just before a person dies will lead Citta to a new Bhava. In light of this explanation, Kammabhava may refer to volition that drives a person to do good or bad deeds in the past; Saṅkhāra, on the other hand, invites Citta or consciousness at the moment just before death that clings to Kamma, Kamma-Nimitta or Gati-Nimitta as Āramaṇa.

Toward the end of of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, King Rama IV (2004) gives a very precise explanation:

Jati is Uppatti-Bhava, i.e. a cycle of births and rebirths in Bhava is considered Jati. Jatipaccayā Jarāmaraṇa Sokapari-devadukkhadomanassa Upāyāsa Sambhavanti: When Jati occurs in the cycle of birth and rebirths in Bhava, it gives rise to aging, diseases, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair, and longing. All the sufferings will follow in the wake of Jati. Jati, on the other hand, depends on Bhava for its existence. Bhava, in turn, depends on Upādāna for its existence, Upādāna on Taṇhā for its existence, Taṇhā on Vedanā for its existence, Vedanā on Phassa for its existence, Phassa on Āyatana for its existence, Āyatana on Nāma-Rūpa for its existence, Nāma-Rūpa on Viññāṇa for its existence, Viññāṇa on Saṅkhāra for its existence, and Saṅkhāra on Avijjā for its existence. Avijjā is the origin of all things.

If Avijjā is extinguished, so is Saṅkhāra. If Saṅkhāra is extinguished, so is Viññāna. If Viññāna is extinguished, so is Nāma-Rūpa. If Nāma-Rūpa is extinguished, so is Āyatana. If Āyatana is extinguished, so is Phassa. If Phassa is extinguished, so is Vedanā. If Vedanā is extinguished, so is Taṇhā. If Taṇhā is extinguished, so is Upādāna. If Upādāna is extinguished, so is Bhava. If Bhava is extinguished, so is Jāti. If Jāti is extinguished, aging, diseases, and all mishaps including lamentation and pain are also extinguished. This is so because they depend on Avijjā from the start.

He⁶ then considers Paṭiccasamuppāda Dhamma in the context of 4 Saṅkhepa (divisions): Avijjā and Saṅkhāra in one Saṅkhepa, Viññāna and Nāma-Rūpa, Saṭṭayatana (the six senses), Phassa, and Vedanā in another Saṅkhepa, Taṇhā, Upādāna, and Bhava in another Saṅkhepa, and Jāti, Jāra (old age), and Marana (death) in another Saṅkhepa. Saṅkhepa means in a brief form and not expanded. In other words, if one wants to present the matter in brief, one simply starts with Saṅkhepa at the beginning, and the Dhamma will run to the end of the course. If one starts with Saṅkhepa at the end, the Dhamma will go right to the beginning. If one starts with Saṅkhepa in the middle, the Dhamma will go all the way to both ends. Valliñ Chinditvā Viya: It can be compared to a person trying to cut a creeper. A pull at a part of the plant has a shaking effect all the way. If one considers the Dhamma on the basis of time, Avijjā and Saṅkhāra are the past. They occur first, so they are the past events, leading to the existence of all other things, starting with Viññāṇa together with other 9 Dhamma ending with Jāti. These are considered to be in the present time, because they always occur in the present, while Marana (death) must be considered a future event. On the other hand, if one considers the Dhamma on the

⁶ Meaning the Buddha

basis of Sandhi or connecting links, there are 3 Sandhi: the connection between Saṅkhepa 1 and 2 as one Sandhi, the connection between Saṅkhepa 2 and 3 as another Sandhi, and the connection between Saṅkhepa 3 and 4 as another Sandhi – hence, 3 Sandhi.

If one considers the Dhamma on the basis of Ākāra (modes of cause and effect), there are 20 Ākāra: 5 past causes, 5 present effects, 5 present causes, and 5 future effects. The 5 past causes are Avijjā, Saṅkhāra, Taṇhā, Upādāna, and Bhava of the past Jāti (existence), leading to 5 present effects of Avijjā, Saṅkhāra, Taṇhā, Upādāna, and Bhava of the present Jāti. The 5 present effects, in turn, become the causes of future effects of Avijjā, Saṅkhāra, Taṇhā, Upādāna, and Bhava of the future Jāti.

If one considers the Dhamma in terms of Aṅgara (factors), there are 12 Aṅgara: Avijjā, Saṅkhāra, Viññāṇa, Nāma-Rūpa, Saṅyatana, Phassa, Vedanā, Taṇhā, Upādāna, Bhava, Jāti, and Jāra-Marana. If one considers the Dhamma in terms of Mūla (root causes), there are two Mūla: Avijjā and Taṇhā. Avijjā and Taṇhā are likened to the hub of the wheel, the three parts of Saṅkhāra to the spokes, Jāra-Marana to the rim, and Āsava (mental intoxication originally being part of Avijjā) to the axle, while the three components of Bhava can be compared to the chariot with the driver turning hither and thither endlessly. Similarly, when all the elements of Paṭiccasamuppāda Dhamma are there, they will continue in the cycle of births and rebirths without end. This will cease only when one is purged of Avijjā or ignorance about the true nature of things and comes to truly understand the four noble truths. One is tired of continuing the cycle of births and rebirth, attains the nine levels of Nāṇa (true knowledge) to the state of indifference (Upekkhā) to Saṅkhāra, and diligently practices Vipassanā insight meditation in a proper order. This will act to purge all Akusala including Avijjā and enable one to see Nibbāna clearly. Vāto Viya: This is just like a strong wind blowing all

the clouds away from the course of the moon, thus enabling one to see it clearly. Similarly, it is the function of Gotrabhū-Ñāṇa to consider Nibbāna as its object of attainment. Cakkhumā Puriso Viya: It can be compared to an astrologer looking for a time to celebrate a festival based on the appearance of the moon. When Gotrabhū-Ñāṇa Nibbāna as its object of attainment is strong enough, it will attain the knowledge of Sodāpattimagga (Path of Stream Entrance), leaving behind Sakkāyaditṭhi (self-delusion) and Vicikicchā (uncertainty), completely ridding the mind of Sīlabbataparāmāsa (adherence to rules and regulations). Sakkāyaditṭhi is a mistaken belief about self that everything is centered on “me” and “mine”. Vicikicchā refers to doubt. Sīlabbataparāmāsa is adherence to mistaken doctrines of divine worships and a mistaken belief that they are all superior to Buddhism. The Buddha was able to abandon these three Akusla acts by virtue of the knowledge of Sodāpattimagga and the practice of Vipassanā. Once He attained the knowledge of Sakidāgāmi-Magga (the Path of Returning Once), He was able to get rid of Kāmarāga (sensual desires) and Byābāda (ill-will). Roughly speaking, Kāmarāga refers to delight in all sensual pleasures and objects, while Byābāda is a strong ill-will, a desire for revenge and retribution. The Buddha left Kāmarāga and Byābāda behind and continued practicing Vipassanā until He attained Anāgāmi-Magga (the Path of No Returning) in which He abandoned all the finer sensual desires and completely got rid of all ill-will. He continued practicing Vipassanā until He attained Arahatta-Magga (the Path of Arahantship) in which the remaining Kilesa (impurities) are all gone. At this point He attained Bodhiñāṇa (Enlightenment) and achieved the same four perfect qualities characteristic of all the Buddha that had come before Him.

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