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(Jāti) Paccaya Sutta

The Discourse on Conditions (Birth) | S 12.20
Theme: Dependent arising as the natural order of things
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2007, 2012

1 Sutta summary and highlights

1.1 DEPENDENT ARISING

1.1.1 Dependent arising basics. The (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta (S 12.20) is a succinct discourse on dependent arising in three distinct sequences or sections:

- (1) §§3-5 dependent arising (*paṭicca,samuppāda*);
- (2) §§6-17 its function (the dependently arisen, *paṭicca,samuppana*), and
- (3) §§18-21 the spiritual qualities of one who has fully realized this fundamental truth.

The full dependent arising formula comprises 12 links laid out in 11 propositions (A conditions B)—or in this Sutta, *B paccaya A*, “B is conditioned by A.” **The 12 links** of dependent arising, as listed in the Sutta, are as follows:

- (1) decay-and-death ← (2) birth ← (3) existence ← (4) clinging ← (5) craving ← (6) feeling ←
- (7) contact ← (8) the six sense-bases ← (9) name-and-form ← (10) consciousness ← (11) volitional formations¹ ← (12) ignorance.

Although this list is given in a *reverse* order, it is still called dependent *arising*, as it shows how suffering arises. We could of course call this sequence a “reverse” dependent arising. But this is *not* dependent *ending*, which is technically called *paṭiloma paccay’ākāra* (the “reverse cycle”).² Conversely, the “direct (or normal) cycle” (*anuloma paccay’ākāra*) of dependent arising begins with “ignorance,” and ends, domino-like, breaking up the whole chain.

1.1.2 Characteristics of dependent arising

1.1.2.1 “THE ELEMENT.” In the first sequence [§§3-5], each of the 12 links is said to condition the arising of the next, whether Buddhas arise in the world or not, and each of these links is described as the fixed course and natural order of things. The Saṃyutta Commentary explains: “This element (*sā dhātu*), the intrinsic nature of conditions (*paccaya,sabhāva*), simply prevails; it is never the case that birth is not the condition of death.”³

The term “**element**” (*dhātu*) in the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta context means “principle,”⁴ which is then described in the Sutta in two ways, by way of naturalness and universality: first, that the dependent arising operates *universally* whether Buddhas arise or not, and, secondly, that it is *universal* in that “this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality” (*sā dhātu dhamma-ṭ,thitā dhamma,niyāmatā idap,paccayatā*) [§3.2 etc]. Let us now look at the Saṃyutta Commentary’s explanations of these key terms (SA 2:40).

¹ “Volitional formations,” *saṅkhārā*. As the 2nd factor of dependent arising, as here, *saṅkhārā* are the karmically active volitions (“volitional formations”) responsible, in conjunction with ignorance and craving, for the producing rebirth and binding one to the wheel of existence (eg **Saṅkhār’upapatti S**, M 120). This kind of *saṅkhārā* gives an active synthetical explanation of how an individual existence arises, while as an aggregate (*khandha*), they apply in a passive analytical way. For details, see (**Paṭicca,samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2,13/2:4) n, SD 5.15 & **Saṅkhāra**, SD 17.6.

² “The direct conditioned process is the arising of the world; the reverse conditioned process is the ending of the world” (*loka,samudayan’ti anuloma,paccay’ākāram; loka,nirodhan’ti paṭilom’ākāran’ti*, SA 2:33). See further **Kaccāyana,gotta S** (S 12.15/2:16-17), SD 6.13; qu at **Channa S** (S 22.90/3:135), SD 56.5. For other refs, do global search in CSCD using “lokasamuday*”.

³ *Thitā’va sā dhātūti thito’va so paccaya,sabhāvo, na kadāci jāti jarāmarañassa paccayo na hoti* (SA 1:40).

⁴ S 2:25,19 = A 1:286,15.

1.1.2.2 “THE FIXITY OF THINGS.” Dependently arisen phenomena prevail [“stand”] because of conditions (*paccayena hi paccay’uppannā dhammā tiṭṭhanti*).⁵ As such, the conditions themselves—or the conditionality itself⁶—are called “the fixity of things” (*dhamma-ṭ,ṭhitatā*). “Fixity,” in the sense of a fixed course of activity, is a better English term here than “fixedness,” which refers to a *state* of stability. We might even take this to mean “immutability” in the sense that that this conditionality works in a fixed and unchanging manner.⁷

1.1.2.3 “THE ORDER OF THINGS.” The conditions determine or “fix” the dependent phenomena (*paccayo dhamme niyameti*), thus it is called “**the orderliness of phenomena**” (*dhamma,niyāmatā*). This definition comes close to what in science is called a universal law. The Commentaries, in fact, have **the 5 “natural orders”** (*pañca,niyāma*), or more simply, “laws,” that is,

- (1) the order (or law) of heat or energy (*utu,niyāma*), such as the laws of physics;
- (2) the order of seeds (*bīja,niyāma*), such as genetics;
- (3) the order of karma (*kamma,niyāma*), dealing with our actions;
- (4) the order of mental processes (*citta,niyāma*), including psychology and parapsychology; and
- (5) the order of phenomena (*dhamma,niyāma*), including those governing dependent arising.⁸

Of special significance here is that the fifth order, *dhamma,niyāma*, which includes the principles governing dependent arising, and, as we shall see, these principles are those of conditionality that, as such, have nothing to do with any abiding entity—it is non-self. In other words, we are all *processes*, not entities. [2.3]

1.1.2.4 “CAUSAL CONDITIONALITY.” Clearly, in this Sutta context, *idap,paccayatā* should be rendered as “causal conditionality,” that is, as a synonym of *paticca,samuppāda*. This is evident as the term is part of synonymic sequence in this key sentence in the Sutta:

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas [buddhas thus come] or no arising of Tathagatas, this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality. [§3.2 etc]

Technically, *idap,paccayatā*, as “causal conditionality,” refers to a *single condition*, such as decay—and-death, etc, or to the *concurrence* of various conditions. According to the Commentary, this is the meaning here: *idap,paccaya* refers to these conditions (*imesaṃ paccayā*), “causal conditionality” is these very conditions themselves individually, or causally conditioning as a set (*samuha*). It should be understood here that this word, along with its meaning, refers to the characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*) of the causal conditioning, too.⁹

In other words, the term *idap,paccayatā* can mean “**specific conditionality**,” when it refers to a specific pair or proximate set of conditions (that is, a part of a bigger process), or as “**causal conditionality**,” referring to a larger or “whole” process of dependent arising. Its more common use is that of specific conditionality, that is, as the basic function of “*x paccaya y*,” as defined in this well known formula, as found, for example, in **the Dasa,bala Sutta 1** (which follows the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta), thus:

<i>Imasmim sati idam hoti</i>	when this is, that is,	
<i>imass’uppādā idam uppajjati</i>	with the arising of this, that arises;	
<i>imasmim asati idam na hoti</i>	when this is not, that is not,	
<i>imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhati</i>	with the ending of this, that ends.	(S 12.21/2:28)

In modern logical terms, this simply becomes:

⁵ The Pali context here dictates *paccaya* here to be taken in the plural.

⁶ *Paccayatā*, an abstract term common in Abhidhamma.

⁷ On the use of words and meaning, see *Saññā*, SD 17.4 (2.3).

⁸ DA 2:432; DhsA 272; see *Sivaka S* (S 36.21), SD 5.6 (2).

⁹ *Jarā,marañ’ādīnaṃ paccayato vā paccaya,samūhato vā idappa-c,cayatāti vutto. Tatrāyam vacan’attho—imesaṃ paccayā idap,paccayā, idap,paccayā eva idap,paccayatā, idap,paccayānaṃ vā samūho idap,paccayatā. Lakkhaṇaṃ pan’ettha sadda,s’atthato vedittabbaṃ* (SA 2:41).

When A is present, B is present; A arising, B arises;
When A is not present, B is not present; A ceasing, B ceases.¹⁰

1.1.2.5 “SUCHNESS.” The first sequence or section closes with the statement: “Thus, bhikkhus, is the suchness (*tathatā*) therein, the inerrancy, the invariability, the causal conditionality”¹¹ [§5.2]. The Commentary explains that “suchness,” etc, is just a name for the complete cycle of conditions (*paccay’ākāra*) right from the start of this or that condition so that this or that phenomena arise; this is suchness.¹²

Paraphrased, it reads: “Such it is here, its not being false, its not becoming something other, its conditions acting as causes.” Only in this context, I think, *idap,paccayatā* should be rendered as “causal conditionality,” that is, as a synonym of *paṭicca,samuppāda*. Where the former refers to the working of the *individual links*—which is more common—it is best translated as “specific conditionality.”¹³

1.1.2.6 “INERRANCY” (*avitathatā*) means that once the conditions are complete there is no non-occurrence, even for a moment, of the phenomenon that these conditions are capable of.¹⁴ Technically, this is a rule of necessity, that is, when all the conditions are rightly together, the emergent event must occur. Conversely, this means that if any condition is missing, then there would be no resultant phenomenon or event.¹⁵

1.1.2.7 “INVARIABILITY” (*anaññathatā*) means that there is no occurrence of any phenomenon by some other conditions (other than its own).¹⁶ This rule is a corollary to the previous one, which essentially states that when all the right conditions are present, it *necessarily* produces a certain result. The “invariability” rule means that none of these conditions by *itself* or by some *other* condition can produce a certain phenomenon. That is to say, *no* condition, in itself or by any other than the proper ones in concert, is *sufficient* to produce a result.

1.2 THE (JĀTI) PACCAYA SUTTA: METHOD & TERMS

1.2.1 Its key message. The more common dependent arising cycles as *A paccaya B*, beginning with “ignorance” and ending with “decay-and-death,” a synecdoche for “this mass of suffering,” specifically denoting the 5 aggregates.¹⁷

The (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta, however, gives a very simple but complete model of the 12-link dependent arising, beginning with what is most obvious in our lives, that is, decay-and-death, tracing the cycle to its roots, that is, ignorance [§§3-5]. The Sutta, in fact, gives the simplest full model of dependent arising and its significance, so that it is a good basic text to begin any useful study of dependent arising.

A key message of the Sutta, repeated for each of the 12 links, is that dependent arising is a *natural* law. In other words, it operates independent of the Buddha, who is merely the first to discover and fully understand it, and to declare it to the world for its benefit.

1.2.2 Dependent arisen phenomena. While the term *paṭicca,samuppāda* (a noun) refers to the law of dependent arising, *paṭicca,samuppanna* (a past participle verb), meaning “dependently arisen,” refers to its process. The Sutta says that each of the 12 links is “impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing” [§§6-17].

¹⁰ See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (2.3).

¹¹ *Iti kho bhikkhave yā tatra tathatā avitathatā anaññathatā idap,paccayatā.*

¹² *Tathatā’ti,ādāni paccay’ākārass’eva vevacanāni. So tehi tehi paccayehi anūn’ādhikeh’eva tassa tassa dhammassa sambhavato tathatā’ti* (SA 2:41).

¹³ See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (6).

¹⁴ *Sāmaggiṃ upagatesu paccayesu muhuttam pi tato nibbattānam dhammānam asambhavā,bhāvato avitathatāti* (SA 2:41).

¹⁵ See **Necessity and sufficiency**, SD 35.1.

¹⁶ *Añña,dhamma,paccayehi añña,dhammānuppattito anaññathatāti* (SA 2:41).

¹⁷ See eg (**Paṭicca,samuppāda**) **Desanā S** (S 12.1/2:1 f, 12.15/2:16 f), SD 6.13 & **Kaccā(ya)na.gotta S** (S 12.1/-2:1 f, 12.15/2:16 f), SD 6.13. See also **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (4). On the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*), see (**Dve**) **Khandhā S** (S 22.48:3:47 f), SD 17.1a.

“**Impermanent**” (*anicca*) means that it will cease to be. Here, says the Commentary, it is not that “decay and death” (as facts of life) are impermanent, but it is the *state* of decaying and dying of the aggregates that is its innate impermanent nature (*anicca,sabhāva*); it is called “having been born” (*jāta*).¹⁸

“**Conditioned**” (*saṅkhata*), and such words, generally have the same sense, but here it refers to what happens when the conditions concur, that is, there is something “conditioned.”¹⁹ In other words, what happens to us as living beings, do not occur in themselves, but are each the result of some other conditions. What seem to be *results* of something become, in turn, *conditions* for other results, and so on, without end, as it were.

Our thoughts, our actions, our feelings, our problems, our being, as such, do not really occur as a single action, but as results of previous and other actions and events, in and around us. Such actions and events, in turn, affect others, and so on. For example, my writing this is a set of conditioned processes which are affecting you, even as you read this, which would, in turn, affect your actions, even life (or lives), in some way. Hence, everything here is said to be dependently arisen.

1.2.3 The purpose of dependent arising. Each of the 12 links are not only said to be “impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen” [1.2.2] but that they are “subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing” (*khaya,dhammaṃ vaya,dhammaṃ virāga,dhammaṃ nirodha,-dhammaṃ*) [§§6.2-17].²⁰ In a way, these qualifying phrases are simply synonyms describing “impermanence,” helping us understand it more fully and deeply.

While here, in the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta (S 12.20) and the Vibhaṅga (Vbh 334), this well known stock phrase qualifies dependent arising [§§6.2-17], elsewhere, it describes the 5 aggregates.²¹ In the **Raho,gata Sutta** (S 36.11), the phrase describes the 3 feelings,²² and in the **Mahā,nidāna Sutta** (D 15), feelings are described as being dependently arisen, followed by this stock phrase, that is, as “dependently arisen, subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.”²³ A number of suttas in the Aṅguttara Nikāya has the phrase, “for the destruction, the passing away, the fading away, the ceasing” (*khayāya...vayāya...virāgāya...nirodhāya...*) of lust (*rāga*).²⁴

An older version of this phrase is probably the two main words of “fading away” (*virāga*) and “ceasing” (*nirodha*), which are found in the famous *viveka,nissita formula*, which runs thus (with an alternative translation):

...dependent on solitude,²⁵ dependent on fading away (of lust) [dispassion],²⁶ dependent on cessation (of suffering),²⁷ ripening in letting go (of defilements).²⁸

¹⁸ *Aniccan'ti hutvā abhāv'atthena aniccaṃ. Ettha ca aniccan'ti na jarā,marañam aniccaṃ, anicca,sabhāvānam pana khandhānam jarā,marañattā aniccaṃ nāma jātam.*

¹⁹ *Saṅkhatā'disu'pi eseva nayo. Ettha ca saṅkhatan'ti paccayehi samāgantvā katam.*

²⁰ For a def, see SA 1:41.

²¹ **Ānanda S** (S 22.21/3:24). See also A 4:147, 5:360.

²² S 36.11/4:217 @ SD 33.6.

²³ D 15/2:64 @ SD 5.17.

²⁴ These are all found in **Rāgā Peyyāla**, an enigmatic list, at the very end of each of the Nipāta. It is part of a longer phrase in the sentence: “Bhikkhus, for the full comprehension, the utter destruction, the abandoning, the destruction, the passing away, the fading away, the ceasing, the giving up, the letting go of *lust*, these three states should be cultivated” (*rāgassa bhikkhave pariññāya parikkhayāya pahānāya khayāya vayāya virāgāya nirodhāya cāgāya paṭinissaggāya, ime dhammā bhāvetabbā*), viz, the empty concentration, the signless concentration, the undirected concentration (*suññata,samādhi animitta,samādhi appaṇihita,samādhi*): A 3.163/1:299×2, 4.271/2:256×2, 3:278×2, 6.124/3:452×2, 4:148×2, 4:349×2, 9.95-100/4:464×2, 10.219/5:309×2, 5:360. On the 3 concentrations, see **Suññata Samādhi S** (S 43.4/4:360), SD 55.8, **Animitta Ceto,samādhi Pañha S** (S 40.9/4:268 f), SD 24.19 & the 3 “doors to liberation” (*vimokkha,mukha*, Pm 2:48; Vism 21.66-73/657-659).

²⁵ Here “solitude” (*viveka*), or seclusion, has a special reference to the overcoming of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*). This whole phrase, beginning with “dependent on solitude is called **the viveka,nissita formula**. See Gethin 2001:162-168. According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, there are 5 kinds of “solitude” (*viveka*), ie overcoming of the hindrances: (1) solitude through suppression (*vikkhambhana viveka*); (2) solitude through the substitution of opposite or displacement by opposites (*tad-aṅga viveka*); (3) solitude through cutting off (*samuccheda viveka*);

[...based on solitude, on dispassion, on cessation, maturing in release.]
viveka, nissitam virāga, nissitam nirodha, nissitam vossagga, pariṇāmiṃ

This important stock phrase reminds us of the purpose of the spiritual life, that is, of mental cultivation, leading the overcoming of unwholesome mental states, and finally liberation.²⁹ The presence of the key words in the description of dependent arising reminds us, too, that its purpose is that of spiritual awakening and liberation.

1.3 BENEFITS OF REALIZING DEPENDENT ARISING

1.3.1 The 16 doubts. The (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta closes by stating that if we understand dependent arising with “right wisdom” (*sammā, pañña*)—defined as “path wisdom along with insight³⁰—it is impossible that we would be in any way troubled by thoughts or speculating about the past, the future, or even the present [§§18-21].

In its closing section, the Sutta lists the notorious “16 doubts”³¹ that plague the average worldling, bringing on all kinds of stress and disasters. These doubts are a simpler version of the 62 bases for wrong views, mentioned in **the Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1),³² which is a more comprehensive list of speculative possibilities that trouble our minds.³³

1.3.2 Self-centred views. Two key wrong views fuel these doubts, namely, eternalism (“Am I,” and the like) and annihilationism (“Am I not,” and the like), that is, these speculations vacillate between existence and non-existence, being and non-being.³⁴ In either case, there is some kind of belief in an abiding entity or “soul,” that survives death (eternalism), or that is destroyed at death (annihilationism).³⁵ These are extreme views rooted in self-view.³⁶

(4) solitude through tranquillization (*paṭipassaddhi viveka*); and (5) solitude through escape (*nissaraṇa viveka*) (Pm 1:27, 2:219-224; Vism 13.12/410, 22.110/693). See also **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** intro @ SD 13.1 §4.2c.

²⁶ *Virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

²⁷ *Nirodha*, ie, “non-arising of suffering.”

²⁸ MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (*vossagga*): “giving up” (*pariccāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), (*kilesa*), and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), and it is the way itself (*maggo eva vossagga, pariṇāmi*), culminating in nirvana (MA 1:85 f = SA 1:159 = VbhA 316). **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅgā*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriya* and *bala* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that that each *bojjhaṅga* is to be developed successively “as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation” (Gethin 2001:166).

²⁹ See *Viveka, nissita*, SD 20.4. For later technical application of the phrase, see Pm 1:20, 45, 47, 82.

³⁰ “With right wisdom,” *samma-p, paññāya*, glossed as “path-wisdom along with insight” (*sa, vipassanāya magga, paññāya*) (SA 2:41). In simple terms, *vipassanā* (“insight”) here refers to some level of proper understanding of the 3 characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self (*aniccatā dukkhatā anattatā*), and *magga, paññā* is the first of such understanding, esp of impermanence, that brings about streamwinning, and so on. **Ṭīkā** explains *vipassanā* here as “he understands with the wisdom that is the vision of the path as it really is” (*yathā, bhūta, dassana, magga, paññā pajānāti*) (SAT:Be 2:51). Here, there is no dhyana or deep samadhi involved, and the benefit here is the attaining of streamwinning (SA 1:42). If dhyana is involved, *yathā, bhūta, ñāṇa, dassana* (“the knowledge and vision according to true reality”) would be used: see **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24/1:145-151), SD 28.3; **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2,7/-1:8), SD 30.3; (**Ekā, dasaka**) **Cetanā’karaṇīya S** (A 11.2/5:312 f), SD 33.3b. On their abandonment, see Vism 19.21-27/603-605.

³¹ Here follows [§§18-20] “the 16 doubts,” found in **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2,7+8/1:8), **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38.23/1:265) and **Paccaya S** (S 12.20/2:26 f). See **Bhadd’eka, ratta S** (M 131) @ SD 8.9 (3).

³² D 1/1:1-46 @ SD 25.

³³ See **Bhadd’eka, ratta S** (M 131) @ SD 8.9 (3); **Anusaya**, SD 31.3 (7.3).

³⁴ This notion is the theme of **Kaccāyana, gotta S** (S 12.15/2:16-17), SD 6.13.

³⁵ See eg **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (SD 52.11/5:420-424), SD 1.1 (3) The middle way.

³⁶ See (**Vaccha, gotta**) **Ānanda S** (S 44.10/4:400 f), SD 2.16(5); **Vaccha, gotta S** (M 72/1:483-489), SD 6.15.

The most common kind of **self-view** (*attā,vāda*) is that of our identifying with our “self” or physical being, that is, the self-identity view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*). Such a view is attended by two other related wrong views: attachment to vows and rituals, and doubt. Together they are known as “**the three fetters**.”³⁷

“Attachment to vows and rituals” (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*) is basically the belief that the solutions to our problems lies outside and answers can be gotten through manipulating such “powers” by way of some vows (such as observing penances) and rituals (such as prayers for succour or salvation).

An extreme version of this “mental fetter” (*samyojana*) is a psychological disorder known as obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). This is an anxiety disorder in which we have unwanted and repeated thoughts or feelings (obsession), or conduct that makes us feel driven to do something (compulsions). Often we carry out the act in an attempt to rid ourselves of the obsessive thoughts, but this only gives temporary relief. Not performing the obsessive rituals can cause great anxiety.

The third fetter, “doubt” (*vicikicchā*) [1.3.1], which is not the kind that moves us to have a better self-understanding or deeper understanding of the Dharma, but a persistent fear that we might not be doing the right thing. It is a disempowering fear that prevents us from making much or any wholesome effort in personal growth or spiritual progress.

On a simple level, this is persistent *worrying* in terms of the past, the future, and the present, and *restlessness* to get into action to allay some fear or effect a goal. This doubt may sometimes appear as feeling guilty about what we have done or not done in the past (*kukkucca*) or feeling restless about the need to jump into some action we have in mind (*uddhacca*). These however form a pair of mental hindrances that prevent us from getting meditation focus. Mental hindrances are usually overcome with wholesome advice, conducive environment and proper practice³⁸

1.3.3 Dependent arising and streamwinning. It is clear that the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta is instructions on the attaining of at least streamwinning, the first stage of sainthood (path to liberation).³⁹ Here, the method of attaining sainthood (specifically streamwinning) is that of overcoming *doubts* about ourselves in terms of the three periods of time. In fact, the essence of the teaching here is found in this famous passage from **the Bhadd’eka,ratta Suttas**:

Let one not go back after⁴⁰ the past,
For what is past has passed away,⁴¹

The present state as it arises,
Immovable, unshakable,

Work at the task this very day!⁴³
For, there is no bargaining whatsoever

One who dwells thus ardently,
He is one who delights in the wholesome
oneness (of mind) (*bhadd’eka,ratta*),⁴⁴

nor harbour fond hope for the future.
and the future has not yet come.⁴²

with insight, one sees each of them;
having known that, let one be sure of it.

Who knows, death would come tomorrow?
with death’s great horde.

relentlessly, day and night—

says the peaceful sage.⁴⁵

(M 131, 132, 133, 134)⁴⁶

³⁷ See **Sarakāni S 1** (S 55.24.8.2/5:376), SD 3.6 n: The 5 lower fetters.

³⁸ See **Uddhacca,kukkucca**, SD 32.7.

³⁹ See **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2) @ SD 30.3 (1.3.3.3).

⁴⁰ “Let one...go back after” (*anvāgameyya*), pot 3 sg of *anvāgameti* (caus of *anvāgacchati* = *anu* + *ā-gacchati*), lit “to let come back,” ie to wish something back (CPD).

⁴¹ Alt tr: “For the past is gone.”

⁴² Alt tr: “And the future is yet unreached.”

⁴³ This line and the next are qu at UA 89, DhA 3:430. Cf “Work at your task diligently. | The Tathagatas are those who show the way. | Liberated are those who have practised, | the meditator, from Māra’s bonds” (*tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ | akkhātāro tathāgatā | paṭipannā pamokkhanti | jhāyino māra,bandhanā*, Dh 276).

⁴⁴ Meaning fortunate in attaining dhyana or the spiritual goal, in a single night of meditation.

⁴⁵ The peaceful sage here is, of course, the Buddha (MA 5:3).

A few late suttas, such as **the Nidhi,kaṇḍa Sutta** (Khp 8/7),⁴⁷ and the Commentaries speak of three types of awakening, namely, the “perfection of the disciples” (*sāvaka,pāramī*),⁴⁸ the “personal awakening” (*pacceka,bodhi*) and the “buddha plane” (*buddha,bhūmi*).⁴⁹ It should be understood that such terms are purely historical categories: the Buddha is the “first amongst equals,” the disciples follow him, and as such are also known as “those awakened after the Buddha” (*buddhānubuddha*),⁵⁰ which is probably an old term.

It must be understood that true awakening is simply a *liberation* from suffering, the attaining of nirvana. The point is that such a freedom is an experience, like being free from imprisonment: it really has no name. However, if the Buddha’s awakening could be defined theoretically or philosophically, it would be in term of dependent arising, as evident, for example, from **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26).⁵¹ If we really understand and accept the Buddha’s teaching of language and experience, we must agree that there is no difference between the two awakenings.⁵²

2 Dependent arising in the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta

2.1 The (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta is so called—I have added the disambiguating prefix *Jāti*—for the simple reason that it presents the dependent arising formula end-first, that is, beginning with “birth” (*jāti*). The standard formula begins with “ignorance” (*avijjā*), as in **the (Avijjā) Paccaya Sutta** (S 12.27)⁵³ [3.1]. Our Sutta here starts with the familiar, the observable universal fact that there is *birth* and there is *decay-and-death*. From this basic fact, the dependent arising is used to trace “back” to the source of the problem, as it is, that is, *ignorance*.

2.2 The key phrase of **the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta**, “this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things” (*sā dhātu dhamma-t,thitatā dhamma,niyāmatā*), needs some explanation. The Sutta’s Commentary⁵⁴ says that both *dhamma-t,thitatā* and *dhamma,niyāmatā* refer to conditions (*paccaya*). “**This element**” (*sā dhātu*) is the intrinsic nature of the conditions (*paccaya,sabhāva*), that it simply prevails. As such, it is *never* the case that birth is not a condition for decay-and-death. For, on account of a condition, the conditionally arisen phenomena persist (*paccayena hi paccay’uppannā dhammā tiṭṭhanti*); therefore, the condition itself is called **the fixity of things** (*dhamma-t,thitatā*). This element of conditionality determines [fixes] the state of things (*paccayo dhamme niyameti*), therefore, it is called **the orderliness of things** (*dhamma,niyāmatā*).

2.3 The natural order of the universe and life itself is *that all volitional formations are impermanent and suffering [unsatisfactory], and they operate on the principle of non-self [without any abiding entity]*. All phenomena, in other words, arise by way of conditions, a network of causes and effects, which in turn proliferate further networks of causes and effects. All this is impermanent and suffering, and both these impermanent and suffering phenomena, together with the principle (dhamma) behind them, are non-self. This fixed universal order of things always exists in the universe and our lives, with or without the Buddhas. The Buddha does not create or invent all this, but merely discovers it, and declares it to the world.⁵⁵ As such, **Bodhi** points out that

⁴⁶ M 131,3+10/3:187 (SD 8.9) = 132,3/3:191 = 133,5/3:193 = 134,3/3:200.

⁴⁷ Qu at AA 1:56 = J 2:414.

⁴⁸ *Sāvaka,pāramī*, the most common of these 3 terms, is found by itself in Pug 9, 70, and is common in Comys.

⁴⁹ KhpA 229. Nāṇamoli translates it as “the plane of awakening” (Khp:Ñ 262).

⁵⁰ **Koṇḍañña S** (S 8.9/1:194*); **Jiṇṇa S** (S 16.5/2:203); Tha 679 (ThaA 3:5), 1246; V 3:8×2, 9×2; ThaA 3:170.

⁵¹ M 26.19/1:167 @ SD 1.11.

⁵² See eg **Gilāyana S** (S 55.54.19/5:410), SD 4.10.

⁵³ S 12.27/2:421 @ SD 39.12

⁵⁴ S 12.20/2:25-27 @ SD 39.5. Comy: *Thitā’va sā dhātū ti thito’va so paccaya,sabhāvo, na kadāci jāti jarā,maranassa paccayo na hoti. Dhamma-t,thitatā dhamma,niyāmatā ti imehi pi dvīhi paccayam eva katheti. Paccayena hi paccay’uppannā dhammā tiṭṭhanti, tasmā paccayo’va dhamma-t,thitatā ti vuccati. Paccayo dhamme niyameti, tasmā dhamma,niyāmatā ti vuccati* (SA 2:39)

⁵⁵ See SAṬ:VRI 2:42, but cf S:B 741 n51.

The two expressions, *dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā*, must thus have a meaning that is common to *both* dependent origination *and* the three characteristics, and it therefore seems unfitting to explain them here, as [the SA Ṭkā] does, in a way that is specifically tied to conditionality. Moreover, it is more likely that here *dhamma* means the principle or lawfulness that holds sway over phenomena, not the phenomena subject to that principle. (S:B 742 n51)

Hence, the paraphrased 3-characteristic formula would read thus:

<i>sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā</i>	all conditioned phenomena are impermanent;
<i>sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā</i>	all conditioned phenomena are suffering;
<i>sabbe dhammā anattā</i>	all principles behind conditionality are non-self.

(Dh 277-279)

Note especially the wording of the third line. The (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta and Dh 277-279 (above) should be studied with **the Dhamma,niyāma Sutta** (A 3.134), discussing these 3 characteristics.⁵⁶ [3.2]

3 Related Suttas

3.1 (AVIJJĀ) PACCAYA SUTTA.

3.1.1 Its presentation of dependent arising. While **the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta** (S 12.20) presents the dependent arising formula end-first, that is, beginning with “birth” (*jāti*) [2.1], **the (Avijjā) Paccaya Sutta** (S 12.27), gives the traditional formula, that is, the “direct order” (*anuloma*) dependent arising, beginning with “ignorance” (*avijjā*).⁵⁷ This latter Sutta, as such, starts with the unknown, yet an innate and universal truth: the fact that *we do not really know* why we are what we are. From this basic fact of *ignorance*, dependent arising traces how our thinking and actions develop into virtual realities culminating in full blown suffering and rebirth.

The (Avijjā) Paccaya Sutta is interesting in that it applies the model of “specific conditionality” (*idap,paccayatā*) [1.1.2.4] to eleven pairs of proximate links, with the right arrow “→” meaning “is the condition for” or “brings about,” that is,

(1) birth	→	decay-and-death,
(2) existence	→	birth,
(3) clinging	→	existence,
(4) craving	→	clinging,
(5) feeling	→	craving,
(6) contact	→	feeling,
(7) the six sense-bases	→	contact,
(8) name-and-form	→	the six sense-bases,
(9) consciousness	→	name-and-form,
(10) volitional formations	→	consciousness, and
(11) ignorance	→	volitional formations.

The pattern is that of “when A is, B is,” and conversely, “when A is not, B is not.” This means, theoretically at least, that the chain of dependent arising can be broken at any link. Breaking it at any of the links means that the whole chain is broken, but this is not easy to do, because the chains are, so to speak, very strong.

However, in practical meditation, when we are distracted, we are often advised merely to note its impermanence or “rise and fall,” and not to get caught up in its “details.”⁵⁸ Technically, this means that we only observe the “feeling” aspect of a mental event and *stop* there, that is, not going on into the “craving”

⁵⁶ A 3.134/1:285 @ SD 26.8.

⁵⁷ S 12.27/2:421 @ SD 39.12

⁵⁸ See *Nimitta & vyañjana*, SD 19.14.

stage.⁵⁹ In this way, the mental hindrance is overcome. However, only with the uprooting of ignorance, that is, the attaining of true knowledge (that of fully understanding the four noble truths), are we really awakened and liberated.⁶⁰

3.1.2 Idiomatic translation of the dependent arising formula. Here, we compare the two basic styles of translating the dependent arising passage as given in **(the (Jāti) Paccaya Sutta**, that is, the traditional style (following the Pali syntax) and the idiomatic English translation. First, let us look at the dependent arising formula, given in *reverse* here, in Pali:

(1) <i>jāti,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>jarā,marañam</i>
(2) <i>bhava,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>jāti</i>
(3) <i>upādāna,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>bhavo</i>
(4) <i>taṅhā,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>upādānam</i>
(5) <i>vedanā,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>taṅhā</i>
(6) <i>phassa,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>vedanā</i>
(7) <i>saḷāyatana,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>phasso</i>
(8) <i>nāma.rūpa,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>saḷāyatanam</i>
(9) <i>viññāṇa,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>nāma,rūpam</i>
(10) <i>saṅkhāra,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>viññāṇam</i>
(11) <i>avijjā,paccayā bhikkhave</i>	<i>saṅkhārā</i>

Traditional translation⁶¹

(1) Conditioned by birth,	<u>decay-and death.</u>
(2) Conditioned by existence,	birth.
(3) Conditioned by clinging,	existence.
(4) Conditioned by craving,	clinging.
(5) Conditioned by feeling,	craving.
(6) Conditioned by contact,	feeling.
(7) Conditioned by the 6 sense-bases,	contact.
(8) Conditioned by name- and-form,	the 6 sense-bases.
(9) Conditioned by consciousness,	name-and-form.
(10) Conditioned by volitional formations,	consciousness.
(11) Conditioned by <u>ignorance</u> ,	volitional formations.

Idiomatic translation

<u>Decay-and-death</u> is conditioned by	birth.
Birth is conditioned by	existence.
Existence is conditioned by	clinging.
Clinging is conditioned by	craving.
Craving is conditioned by	feeling.
Feeling is conditioned by	contact.
Contact is conditioned by	the 6 sense-bases.
The 6 sense-bases are conditioned by	name-and-form.
Name-and-form are conditioned by	consciousness.
Consciousness is conditioned by	volitional formations.
Volitional formations are condition- ed by	<u>ignorance.</u>

We could, of course, use the active voice in the idiomatic translation, rendering them as “Birth conditions decay-and-death,” “Existence conditions birth,” and so on. However, it is more difficult for most of us to follow such a sequence, because it does not follow a natural flow of our thoughts. We need to assert more mental effort in connecting each conditioned cause with its conditioned result.

Of the two translations styles, the idiomatic translation clearly gives a more coherent flow that helps us sustain a logical connection between the proximate links (the last link of the preceding line and the first link of the following line). Moreover, if we want to read the normal sequence of the 12 links, we simply begin with ignorance in the last link and read the underlined items backwards in a natural manner.

3.2 DHAMMA NIYĀMA SUTTA. We have seen that the two expressions, *dhamma-ṭ,ṭhitatā* and *dhamma,niyāmatā*, describes the nature of dependent arising [1.1.2]. These two qualities also pertain to the 3 characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self, such as stated in **Dh 277-279** and **the Dhamma**

⁵⁹ See **(Samuday’atthaṅgama) Loka S** (S 12.44/2:71-73), SD 7.5 & **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (18).

⁶⁰ See **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana** @ SD 1.1 (6).

⁶¹ In both these sets of translations, *bhikkhave* has been omitted.

Niyāma Sutta (A 3.134).⁶² As such, Buddhist teachers like Bhikkhu Bodhi⁶³ and Bhikkhu Sujato⁶⁴ have proposed that *dhamma* here cannot mean “phenomena” as suggested in the Commentaries and Sub-commentaries.

This observation is very helpful in clarifying the correct sense of *dhamma,niyāma*, its role as the fifth of the 5 “orders” [1.1.2.3], and the close connection between dependent arising and the 3 characteristics. It is this last topic that we shall focus on here. In this connection, too, it must be noted that, while I agree in principle with the notion of the two venerable monk teachers, I still find it difficult to see the principle could be separate from the event that it controls. After all, a principle here is nothing but the nature or behaviour that is manifested.

My point is that we must also include *both* the senses of “phenomena” *and* “principle” in the term Dharma here. Let us look at the three famous lines once again:

<i>sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā</i>	all phenomena are impermanent;
<i>sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā</i>	all phenomena are suffering;
<i>sabbe dhammā anattā</i>	all phenomena and principles behind conditionality are non-self.

(Dh 277-279)

On a philosophical level, the key third line means that both constructed or projected reality *as well as* things as they are, or the “principle” (*dhamma*, that is, how the fully awakened mind would know them) are non-self. Here, too, we cannot include nirvana in either category: *nirvana is neither self nor non-self*; it is unconditioned.⁶⁵

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The Discourse on Conditions (Birth)

S 12.20

1 While residing at Sāvathī.

2 “Bhikshus, I will teach you **dependent arising** and **dependently arisen phenomena**.”⁶⁶

Listen, pay close attention, I will speak!”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied to the Blessed One in assent.

Dependent arising: The 12 links⁶⁷

2.2 The Blessed One said this:

3 “And what, bhikshus, is **dependent arising**?”

(1) ‘**Decay-and-death, bhikshus, are conditioned by birth.**’

*Jāti,paccayā bhikkhave jarā,marañam.*⁶⁸

3.2 Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas [Buddhas thus come] or no arising of Tathagatas, this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.⁶⁹

3.3 The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

⁶² A 3.134/1:286 @ SD 26.8.

⁶³ S:B 742 n51. See **Dhamma Niyāma S** (A 3.134) @ SD 26.8 (2.1).

⁶⁴ Sujato, “All Dhammas,” 2002. See **Dhamma Niyāma S** (A 3.134) @ SD 26.8 (2.1).

⁶⁵ See **Dhamma Niyāma S** (A 3.134/1:285), SD 26.8.

⁶⁶ *Paṭicca,samuppādaṅ ca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi paṭicca,samuppanne ca dhamme.*

⁶⁷ See Intro (1). For further details, see **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (4).

⁶⁸ Alt tr, “Conditioned by birth, bhikshus, there is decay-and-death.” This is actually the 11th of the 12 links of dependent arising: see S 12.1/2:1 f, 12.15/2:16 f @ SD 6.13.

⁶⁹ *Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ, t̥hitāva sā dhātu dhamma-t̥, t̥hitatā dhamma,niyāmatā idap,paccayatā.* See Intro (1.1.2.4).

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies⁷⁰ it thus, saying,

‘See!’⁷¹

4 *Decay-and-death*, bhikshus, is conditioned by birth.’

(2) ‘**Birth, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by *existence*.’

Bhava,paccayā bhikkhave jāti.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Birth*, bhikshus, is conditioned by existence.’

(3) ‘**Existence, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by *clinging*.’

Upādāna,paccayā bhikkhave bhavo.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Existence*, bhikshus, is conditioned by clinging.’

(4) ‘**Clinging, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by *craving*.’

Tañhā,paccayā bhikkhave upādānam.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Clinging*, bhikshus, is conditioned by craving.’

(5) ‘**Craving, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by *feeling*.’

Vedanā,paccayā bhikkhave tañhā.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Craving*, bhikshus, is conditioned by feeling.’

(6) ‘**Feeling, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by *contact*.’

Phassa,paccayā bhikkhave vedanā.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

⁷⁰ “He tells...clarifies,” *ācikkhati deseti paññāpeti paṭṭhapeti vivarati vibhajati uttānīkaroti*: Comys say that although these are synonyms, they differentiate their usages thus: as an indication (*uddesa*) they “say” (*ācikkhanti*); as a description (*niddesa*) they “teach” (*desenti*); as a restatement (*paṭiniddesa*) they “proclaim” (*paññāpenti*); by laying down the meaning in one way or other they “establish” (*paṭṭhapenti*); when showing the reason for a certain meaning they “reveal” (*vivaranti*); when showing the classification of a detail they “analyse” (*vibhajanti*); in order to do away with what is inverted or profound, or when creating a basis for their audience’s knowledge, they “clarify” (*uttāni,karonti*); and when abolishing their audience’s ignorance and blindness in all these ways, they “make known [declare]” (*pakāsentī*) (VbhA 371; briefly at SA 2:40). On the need to “instruct, inspire, rouse and gladden” one’s audience, see SD 6.1 + SD 11.4 (4).

⁷¹ *Passatha*. This is prob one of the shortest spiritual statement, if not *the* shortest, in religious history. However, its significance is universal, if we accept that ignorance blinds us so that we suffer being fetters to worldliness.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Feeling*, bhikshus, is conditioned by contact.’

(7) ‘**Contact, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by the 6 sense-bases.’

Saḷāyatana, paccayā bhikkhave phasso.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Contact*, bhikshus, is conditioned by the six sense-bases.’

(8) ‘**The 6 sense-bases, bhikshus,**

are conditioned by name-and-form.’

Nāma.rūpa, paccayā bhikkhave saḷāyatanam.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *The six sense-bases*, bhikshus, are conditioned by name-and-form.’

(9) ‘**Name-and-form, bhikshus,**

are conditioned by consciousness.’

Viññāṇa, paccayā bhikkhave nāmarūpam.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Name-and-form*, bhikshus, are conditioned by consciousness.’

(10) ‘**Consciousness, bhikshus,**

is conditioned by volitional formations.’

Saṅkhāra, paccayā bhikkhave viññāṇam.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See! *Consciousness*, conditioned by volitional formations.’

(11) ‘**Volitional formations, bhikshus,**

are conditioned by ignorance.’

Avijjā, paccayā bhikkhave saṅkhārā.

Whether there is the arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas,

this element stands as the fixity of things, the order of things, a specific conditionality.

The Tathagata awakens to this and realizes it.

Having awakened to it, having realized it, he tells, teaches, proclaims, establishes, reveals, analyses and clarifies it thus, saying,

‘See!

5 Volitional formations, bhikshus, are conditioned by ignorance.’

5.2 Thus, bhikshus, is the *suchness* therein, the inerrancy, the invariability, the causal conditionality.⁷²

5.3 This, bhikshus, is called dependent arising.

⁷² *Iti kho bhikkhave yā tatra tathatā avitathatā anaññathatā idap, paccayatā.* See Intro (1.1.2.2).

Dependently arisen phenomena⁷³

6 And what, bhikshus, are **dependently arisen phenomena**?

6.2 Decay-and-death,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.⁷⁴

7 Birth,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

8 Existence,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

9 Clinging,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

10 Craving,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

11 Feeling,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

12 Contact,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

13 The 6 sense-bases,

bhikshus, are impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

14 Name-and-form,

bhikshus, are impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

15 Consciousness,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

16 Volitional formations,

bhikshus, are impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

17 Ignorance,

bhikshus, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen,
subject to destruction, subject to passing away, subject to fading away, subject to ceasing.

The 16 doubts removed: Streamwinning

18 Bhikshus, when a noble disciple has clearly seen, as they really are, with right wisdom, this dependent arising and these dependently arisen phenomena,⁷⁵

18.2 that⁷⁶ he would ever run back to **the past**, thinking:⁷⁷

⁷³ See Intro (1.2.2).

⁷⁴ *Jarā, maraṇaṃ bhikkhave aniccaṃ saṅkhataṃ paṭicca, samuppannaṃ khaya, dhammaṃ vaya, dhammaṃ virāga, - dhammaṃ nirodha, dhammaṃ.*

⁷⁵ The whole para: *Yato kho bhikkhave ariya, sāvakaṃsa “ayaṃ ca paṭicca, samuppādo, ime ca paṭicca, samuppānā dhammā” yathā, bhūtaṃ samma-p, paññāya sudiṭṭhā honti.*

⁷⁶ Here follows [§§18-20] “the 16 doubts”: see Intro (1.3.1).

⁷⁷ *So vata pubb’antaṃ vā paṭidhāvissati.* “Ever,” vata.

- (1) ‘Now, *was* I in the past?’
 - (2) ‘Now, was I *not* in the past?’
 - (3) ‘Now, *what* was I in the past?’
 - (4) ‘Now, *how* was I in the past?’
 - (5) ‘Now, having *been* what, did I become what in the past?’—this is impossible.⁷⁸
- 19** or, that he would ever run up into **the future**, thinking:⁷⁹
- (6) ‘Now, *will* I be in the future?’
 - (7) ‘Now, will I *not* be in the future?’
 - (8) ‘Now *what* will I be [27] in the future?’
 - (9) ‘Now, *how* will I be in the future?’
 - (10) ‘Now, having *been* what, will I become what in the future?’ —this is impossible.⁸⁰
- 20** or, that he would now be in doubt within himself about **the present**, thinking:⁸¹
- (11) ‘Now, *am* I?’
 - (12) ‘Now, am I *not*?’
 - (13) ‘Now *what* am I?’
 - (14) ‘Now *how* am I?’
 - (15) ‘Where, now, has this being come from?’
 - (16) ‘Where, now, will it [this being] go?’—this is impossible.
- 21** What is the reason for this?
Because, bhikshus, the noble disciple has clearly seen, as they really are, with right wisdom, this dependent arising and these dependently arisen phenomena.”

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⁷⁸ “This is impossible”: this phrase is supplied by *n’etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati*, lit “this case does not exist” [§20].

⁷⁹ *Aparantaṃ vā upadhāvissati* [Ke *apadhāvissati*].

⁸⁰ “This is impossible”: this phrase is supplied by *n’etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati* [§20]. See above §18.2 n.

⁸¹ *Etarahi vā paccuppannaṃ addhānaṃ ajjhantaṃ kathāṃ, kathāṃ bhavissati*.