

14

(Kāya) Na Tumha Sutta

The (Body is) “Not Yours” Discourse | S 12.37

Theme: The basics of dependent arising

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2003

Introduction

This sutta is one of the briefest statement on **dependent arising** (*paticca,samuppāda*), preceded by the formula of “specific conditionality” (*idap,paccayatā*).¹ Various other treatments of it are found in **the Nidāna Saṃyutta** (the Connected Collection on Causes), the 12th book of the Saṃyutta Nikāya.

There are altogether a total of 5 suttas entitled “Na Tumha Sutta” that parallel the “Na Tumhakam” section (M 22.40/1:140 f) and the Jetavana simile (M 22.41/1:141) of **the Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22):

(Kāya) Na Tumha Sutta	(S 12.37/2:64 f):	the 5 aggregates M 22.40.
(Khandha) Na Tumha Sutta 1	(S 22.33/3:33 f):	the 5 aggregates with Jetavana simile.
(Khandha) Na Tumha Sutta 2	(S 22.34/3:33):	the 5 aggregates, no simile.
(Dhātu) Na Tumha Sutta 1	(S 35.101/4:81 f):	the 18 elements, ² with Jetavana simile.
(Dhātu) Na Tumha Sutta 2	(S 35.102/4:82):	the 18 elements, no simile.

In all these 5 suttas, however, the word *dīgha,rattam* is omitted in the closing stock phrase.

In **the (Nava Purāṇa) Kamma Sutta** (S 35.146), the “old karma” theme is treated in full using the four noble truth framework.³

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The (Body is) “Not Yours” Discourse

S 12.37

- 1 [The Blessed One was] staying at Sāvattthi.
- 2 “Bhikkhus, this body is not yours, nor does it belong to others.⁴ [64]
- 3 It is to be regarded as old karma,⁵ put together, thought out, something that is felt.⁶
- 4 Now here, bhikkhus, the learned noble disciple applies his mind well and skillfully to dependent arising itself, thus:

¹ On both, see eg V 1:1; S 2:1; Vbh 135; Vism 517; Abhs:SR 188. On specific conditionality (*idap-paccayatā*), see **Paccaya S** (S 12.10/2:25-27), **Tathā S 1** (S 56.20/5:430 f), **Tathā S 2** (S 56.27/5:435).

² The 18 elements: 6 internal sense-organs, 6 external sense-fields, 6 sense-consciousnesses.

³ S 35.146/4:132 f @ SD 4.12.

⁴ *Nāyam, bhikkhave, kāyo tumhākam na pi aññesam*. Comy: Since there actually is no self, there is nothing belonging to a self; thus it is said: “It is not yours” (*na tumha*). And since there is no self of others, too, it is said, “Nor does it belong to others” (*na pi aññesam*) (SA 2:70).

⁵ *Purāṇam idaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ*. Comy explains that the body is not “old karma” but because it arises from old karma, it is referred to in terms of its conditions. It is seen as “put together” (*abhisankhata*) since it is created by conditions. It is “thought out” (*abhisañcetaṃ*) because it is based on volition (the will), rooted in volition. It is “to be felt” (*vedaniya*) because it is the support for what is to be felt [ie the basis and object for feeling] (SA 2:70, 402). See **Nava Purāṇa Kamma S** (S 35.146), SD 4.12 Intro.

⁶ *Abhisankhataṃ abhisañcetaṃ vedaniyaṃ daṭṭhabbam*. *Vedaniya*, lit “to be felt,” “a basis for feeling”; “intelligible” (DPL); “(a) to be known, intelligible, comprehensible (D 1:12, 2:36; M 1:487, 2:220); (b) to be experienced (S 4:114; A 1:249, 4:382)” (PED: vedeti). It is possible to see the arrangement here as follows: “old karma” refers to the sense-faculty (physical sense-organ); “put together” to the coming together of sense-faculty, sense-object, and sense-consciousness; “thought out” to perception; and “something that is felt,” feeling. The “eye” here and the other faculties refer not to the mere physical organs, but to their functionality, as the seeing eye, hearing ear, etc.

Specific conditionality

5a When this is, that is;
With the arising of this, that arises.
When this is not, that is not;
With the ending of this, that ends.⁷

imasmim sati idaṃ hoti
imass'uppādā idaṃ uppajjati.
imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti;
imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.

The 12-link dependent arising⁸

5b

Avijjā,paccayā saṅkhārā
saṅkhāra,paccayā viññāṇaṃ
viññāṇa,paccayā nāma,rūpaṃ
nāma,rūpa,paccayā saḷ'āyatanāṃ
saḷ'āyatana,paccayā phassa
phassa,paccayā vedanā
vedanā,paccayā taṇhā
taṇhā,paccayā upādānaṃ
upādāna,paccayā bhava
bhava,paccayā jāti
jāti,paccayā jarā,marañam
soka,parideva,dukkha,-
domanass'upāyasā sambhavanti
evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-k,-
khandhassa samudayo hoti

with ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations;⁹
with volitional formations as condition, there is consciousness;
with consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form;
with name-and-form as condition, there is the sixfold sense-base;
with the sixfold sense-base as condition, there is contact;
with contact as condition, there is feeling;
with feeling as condition, there is craving;¹⁰
with craving as condition, there is clinging;
with clinging as condition, there is existence;
with existence as condition, there is birth;
with birth as condition there arise decay and death,
sorrow, lamentation, physical pain,
mental pain and despair.
—Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

5c

avijjāya tveva asesā, virāga, nirodhā
saṅkhāra, nirodho
saṅkhāra, nirodhā viññāṇa, nirodho
viññāṇa, nirodhā nāma, rūpa, nirodho
nāma, rūpa, nirodhā saḷāyatana, nirodho
saḷ'āyatana, nirodhā phassa, nirodho
phassa, nirodhā vedanā, nirodho
vedanā, nirodhā taṇhā, nirodho
taṇhā, nirodhā upādāna, nirodho
upādāna, nirodhā bhava, nirodho
bhava, nirodhā jāti, nirodho
jāti, nirodhā jarā, marañam
soka parideva, dukkha,-
domanass'upāyasā nirujjhanti

But with the utter fading away and ending of ignorance,
volitional formations end;
with the ending of volitional formations, consciousness ends;
with the ending of consciousness, name-and-form ends;
with the ending of name-and-form, the sixfold sense-base ends;
with the ending of the sixfold sense-base, contact ends;
with the ending of contact, feeling ends;
with the ending of feeling, craving ends;
with the ending of craving, clinging ends;
with the ending of clinging, existence ends;
with the ending of existence, birth ends;
with the ending of birth, there end decay-and-death;
sorrow, lamentation, physical pain,
mental pain and despair.

⁷ See SD 5.16(2a).

⁸ The following formula [§5bc], as at **Acela Kassapa S** (S 12.17/2:20 f).

⁹ Comy: When it is said, “With ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations,” the meaning should be understood thus: “It is ignorance and it is a condition; hence ‘ignorance-as-condition’ (*avijjā ca sā pacayā cā ti avijjā, paccayā*). Through that ignorance-as-condition, volitional formations come to be (*tasmā avijjā, paccayā saṅkhārā sambhavanti*)” (SA 2:9 f). Bodhi: “This explanation suggests that the verb *sambhavanti*, which in the text occurs only at the end of the whole formula, should be connected to each proposition, thus establishing that each conditioned state arises through its condition. The twelve terms of the formula are treated analytically in [**Vibhaṅga S**].” (S:B 725 n1)

¹⁰ In (**Samuday'atthaṅgama**) **Loka S** (S 12.44), the dependent arising is shown to be broken here when “with the remainderless fading away and ending of that same craving comes cessation of clinging...” the rest of the chain breaks accordingly leading to the ending of “this whole mass of suffering.” (S 12.44/2:71-73)

evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-k-
khandhassa nirodho hoti

—Such is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.”

— evaṃ —

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