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ABBREVIATIONS

D	Digha Nikaya (DN 15 refers to sutta no. 15)
MN	Majjhima Nikaya (MN 38 refers to sutta no. 38)
SN	Samyutta Nikaya (SN 12.43 refers to Chapter 12, sutta no. 43)
AN	Anguttara Nikaya (AN 2.26 refers to Book of the Twos, sutta no. 26)
KN	Khuddaka Nikaya
SA	Samyukta Agama

Note: The translation of the suttas (discourses) quoted are based mainly on Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi's works, with modifications where appropriate.

CONDITIONED ARISING OF SUFFERING

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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa

INTRODUCTION

Conditioned (or Conditional) Arising or Dependent Origination is the translation for the Pali words Paticca Samuppada. The discourses (sutta) on this subject are mainly found in the Nidana Samyutta of the Samyutta Nikaya, and also DN 15 (Maha Nidana Sutta), MN 9 (Samma Ditthi Sutta), MN 38 (Maha Tanha Sankhaya Sutta).

This is one of the very important topics that the Buddha said we should investigate, along with the Five Aggregates of Attachment (Pancupadanakkhandha) and Six Sense Bases (Salayatana). The importance of Paticca Samuppada can be seen from the following two quotations from the suttas.

MN 28

“He who sees Conditioned Arising sees the Dhamma; he who sees the Dhamma sees Conditioned Arising.”

SN 12.27

“When, monks, a noble disciple thus understands the condition (paccaya); thus understands the arising of the condition; thus understands the cessation of the condition; thus understands the way leading to the cessation of the condition; he is then called a noble disciple who is accomplished in view, accomplished in insight, who has arrived at this true Dhamma, who sees this true Dhamma, who possesses the insight of the trainee (sekha), who possesses the knowledge of the trainee, who has entered the stream of the Dhamma, a noble one (Ariya) with penetrative wisdom, one who stands squarely before the door to the deathless.”

The formula for Conditionality is ‘When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.’

To put it another way, Conditioned Arising refers to the arising of all things in the world from conditions, i.e. everything is dependent on conditions for its arising in the world. Similarly all things cease when their conditions cease. There are several Pali words used for condition, cause or origin: nidana, paccaya, hetu, samudaya. The Nidana Samyutta in the Samyutta Nikaya deals mainly with the conditioned arising of suffering, but it also

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deals with the conditioned arising of happiness (kamma-vipaka discourses, such as SN 12.25, SN 12.51, MN 57), the conditioned arising of liberation (SN 12.23), etc ...

In the Buddha's teaching, Paticca Samuppada is mainly used to explain the various conditions leading to continued existence and hence continued suffering. Only by understanding these conditions can we hope to untangle the fetters that bind us to suffering. The Buddha usually explained Paticca Samuppada using twelve conditions, but sometimes he also explained it by ten conditions. The arising sequence of suffering is called anuloma (forward) while the ceasing sequence is called patiloma (reverse). The twelve conditions are as shown in the chart of Paticca Samuppada in the following page.

This essay is written with the intention of helping readers understand Paticca Samuppada the way the Buddha explained it. Thus many discourses of the Buddha (suttas) are quoted to make this clear. It is also kept simple and non-scholastic to allow non-specialist readers to fathom this profound teaching of the Buddha. It is not an academic thesis or a comparative study quoting famous scholars or the books that abound on the subject matter. It is sufficient to quote the Buddha alone since he indicated in DN 29 that his teachings are perfect and complete.

CHART OF PATICCA SAMUPPADA

TRADITIONAL THREE LIVES INTERPRETATION	CONDITIONS	
	Pali Terms	English Translation
Past Life Kamma	1) Avijja	Ignorance
	2) Sankhara	Activation / Activity
Present Life Vipaka	3) Vinnana	Consciousness
	4) Nama-Rupa	Mentality- Materiality
	5) Salayatana	Six Sense Bases
	6) Phassa	Contact
	7) Vedana	Feeling
Present Life Kamma	8) Tanha	Craving
	9) Upadana	Clinging / Attachment
	10) Bhava Existence	Existence / Being / Becoming
Future Life Vipaka	11) Jati	Birth
	12) Jara- Marana	Aging-and- Death

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The traditional Theravada interpretation of Paticca Samuppada according to the Abhidhamma and Commentaries is the Three Lives interpretation as shown in the chart. This interpretation assumes sankhara to be kamma (intentional action) and says that ignorance caused kamma to be done in the past life which conditions rebirth-consciousness (vinnana) in the present life as the vipaka (result of kamma), giving rise to mentality-materiality, six sense bases, contact, and feeling. Then present life craving, attachment, and existence, conditions rebirth (jati) and suffering in the future life.

The other interpretation is the conscious moment interpretation, where all the twelve links are considered in one conscious moment. However, this essay will be based on one (present) life interpretation of Paticca Samuppada.

Defects in Traditional Three Lives Interpretation of Paticca Samuppada

This section highlights the weaknesses of the traditional three lives interpretation and in the process, further strengthen the case (argument) that a single (present) life interpretation provides a more coherent and faithful interpretation of the Paticca Samuppada in the suttas.

1) The Buddha said in several suttas that his Dhamma is ‘sanditthiko’, meaning ‘visible in this life’ or ‘directly visible’. Although the Buddha did speak about past lives and sometimes

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even future lives which he directly saw and knew by his psychic powers, what the Buddha meant by sanditthiko is that the Dhamma can be known in this very life without referring to past lives or using psychic powers. This is very important as it means an ordinary intelligent person without psychic powers can understand the Dhamma and Conditioned Arising.

He also said that the Dhamma is ‘akaliko’, i.e. ‘not dependent on time; timeless, immediate’. This means the Dhamma is applicable always, irrespective of time, not bound by time.

SN 35.70

“Venerable sir, it is said ‘the directly visible (sanditthiko) Dhamma, the directly visible Dhamma’. In what way, venerable sir, is the Dhamma directly visible, immediate (akaliko), inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise?”

“Here, Upavana, having seen a form (body) with the eye, a monk experiences the form as well as lust for the form. He understands that lust for forms exists internally thus: ‘There is in me lust for forms internally’. Since that is so, Upavana, the Dhamma is directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.” (Similarly for the other sense bases)

“But here, Upavana, having seen a form with the eye, a monk experiences the form without experiencing lust for the form. He understands that lust for forms does

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not exist internally thus: ‘There is no lust for forms internally’. Since that is so, Upavana, the Dhamma is directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.” (Similarly for the other sense bases)

The above sutta shows that suffering, the cause of suffering, the ceasing of suffering, and the way to the ceasing of suffering are directly visible in this very life. This is confirmed again by the sutta below.

SN 12.43

“And what, monks, is the arising / origin of suffering? In dependence on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition, feeling (comes to be); with feeling as condition, craving. This is the arising / origin of suffering. ”
(Similarly for the other sense bases)

“And what, monks, is the ceasing of suffering? In dependence on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition, feeling (comes to be); with feeling as condition, craving. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving comes cessation of clinging / attachment; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of existence; with the cessation of existence, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, cessation of aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Such is the cessation of this whole

mass of suffering. This is the ceasing of suffering.” (Similarly for the other sense bases)

2) The Jains or Niganthas taught that suffering is caused by kamma done in the past life / lives, and the way to end suffering is to exhaust all their past kamma through self-mortification and doing no new kamma. The Buddha showed how this view was unacceptable in the following sutta.

MN 14 & 101

“But, friends, do you know that you existed in the past, and that it is not the case that you did not exist?”

“No, friend.”

“But, friends, do you know that you did evil actions in the past and did not abstain from them?”

“No, friend.”

“But, friends, do you know that you did such and such evil actions?”

“No, friend.”

“But, friends, do you know that so much suffering has already been exhausted, or that so much suffering has still to be exhausted, or that when so much suffering has been exhausted all suffering will have been exhausted?”

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“No, friend.”

‘But, friends, do you know what the abandoning of unwholesome states is and what the cultivation of wholesome states is here and now?’

‘No, friend.’

Then the Buddha mentioned that it would only be fitting for the Niganthas to make all their assertions about the past if they directly knew them to be so by psychic power.

MN 101

“If, friend Niganthas, you knew that you existed in the past and that it is not the case that you did not exist; or that you did evil actions in the past and did not abstain from them; or that you did such and such evil actions; or that so much suffering has already been exhausted, or that so much suffering has still to be exhausted, or that when so much suffering has been exhausted all suffering will have been exhausted; or what the abandoning of unwholesome states is and what the cultivation of wholesome states is here and now; that being so, it would be fitting for the Venerable Niganthas to declare: ‘Whatever this person feels, whether pleasure or pain or neither-pain-nor-pleasure, all that is caused by what was done in the past. So by annihilating with asceticism past actions and by doing no fresh actions, there will be no consequence in the future. With no consequence in the future ... all suffering will be exhausted.’

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But since, friend Niganthas, you do not know that you existed in the past and that it is not the case that you did not exist ... or what the abandoning of unwholesome states is and what the cultivation of wholesome states is here and now, it is not fitting for the venerable Nigaṇṭha to declare: ‘Whatever this person feels ... all suffering will be exhausted’ ”.

Similarly, if one asserts that rebirth-consciousness (See Condition no.3) in this life is due to past life Kamma (Condition no. 2), one would need psychic powers to be qualified to assert so.

However the majority of the Arahants did not possess psychic powers. This implies that the understanding of Paticca Samuppada does not need psychic powers; in other words, past life Kamma is not involved. So past life Kamma, whether we are aware of them or not, is not relevant to Paticca Samuppada.

The Buddha was trying to show the Niganthas that they were practising with blind faith and without proper knowledge. ***Ending suffering is about abandoning unwholesome states and cultivating wholesome states here and now*** - this is what the Ariyan Eightfold Path is about. What is important is that suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the way to end suffering can be seen here and now. There is no need to bring in the past and the future.

3) We see in sutta MN 79 (Culasakuludayi Sutta) below that the Buddha was basically telling the wanderer Sakuludayi that he could discuss the past with someone who could recollect past

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lives, and the future with someone who possessed the divine eye. But (since Sakuludayi did not possess such psychic powers) the Buddha said to put aside the past and future, he would teach the Dhamma which concerns only the present, namely Paticca Samuppada. This very clearly shows that Paticca Samuppada is concerned with the present life and can be seen without involving past and future lives.

MN 79

“Udayin, if someone should recollect his manifold past lives ... then either he might ask me a question about the past or I might ask him a question about the past, and he might satisfy my mind with his answer to my question or I might satisfy his mind with my answer to his question. If someone with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, should see beings passing away and reappearing ... and understand how beings pass on according to their actions, then either he might ask me a question about the future or I might ask him a question about the future, and he might satisfy my mind with his answer to my question or I might satisfy his mind with my answer to his question. *But let be the past, Udayin, let be the future. I shall teach you the Dhamma: When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.*”

4) In the chart of Paticca Samuppada showing the Traditional Three Lives Interpretation, Link No 12: Aging-and-Death refers to future life suffering. Why refer to the ending of future life suffering when suffering can be seen in the here and now, and

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the task at hand is in the ending of suffering in the present life? An Arahant has entirely eliminated suffering in this very life itself. So Aging-and-Death should refer to present life suffering, which can be solved in this very life.

5) Ignorance is to be abandoned in this present lifetime when we practise the Ariyan Eightfold Path to completion in this very life. Venerable Kondanna gained the stainless vision of the Dhamma (i.e., Conditioned Arising and Ceasing) and attained the first stage of Ariyahood when the Buddha taught the first five monks the Four Ariyan Truths (SN 56.11). When the Buddha taught them the Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59), all of them eradicated ignorance and attained Arahant hood. The abandoning and the cessation of ignorance in the five monks occurred in this very life, not in their next life.

6) Although the Buddha usually explained Paticca Samuppada by twelve conditions, sometimes he used only ten, leaving out Avijja and Sankhara. If Avijja and Sankhara refers to past life, as in the Three Lives interpretation, then evidently this implies that past life is not necessary to explain the origin and ceasing of suffering. This is seen in the longest sutta on Paticca Samuppada, i.e. DN 15 (Maha Nidana Sutta), and also SN 12.65.

SN 12.65

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘This consciousness turns back; it does not go further than mentality-materiality. It is to this extent that one may be born and age and die, pass away and be reborn, that is, when there is consciousness with mentality-materiality as its condition, and mentality-

materiality with consciousness as its condition. With mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense bases (come to be); with the six sense bases as condition, contact ... feeling ... craving ... clinging / attachment ...existence ... birth ... aging-and-death ... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.”

7) The Sutta below shows again that the Buddha’s teaching on Paticca Samuppada refers to the present life time.

AN 3.61

“When it was said: ‘These are the four Ariyan Truths: this, monks, is the Dhamma taught by me that is unrefuted ... uncensored by wise ascetics and brahmins’, for what reason was this said? In dependence on the six elements, the manifestation / appearance of an embryo (gabbassavakkanti) occurs. When the manifestation takes place, there is mentality-materiality; with mentality-materiality 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. Now it is for one who feels that I proclaim: ‘This is suffering’ and ‘This is the origin of suffering’ and ‘This is the cessation of suffering’, and ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering’.

And what, monks, is the Ariyan Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering, aging is suffering ... etc.

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And what, monks, is the Ariyan Truth of the Origin of Suffering? With ignorance as condition, activation (comes to be) ... etc.

And what, monks, is the Ariyan Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? With the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of activation ... etc.

And what monks, is the Ariyan Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering? It is just this Ariyan Eightfold Path; i.e. Right View, ... etc.”

The above sutta shows that once conception (gabbhassavakkanti) occurs, consciousness and mentality-materiality arises in the embryo, followed by six sense bases, contact, feeling, etc. The Buddha then emphasizes that a being with feeling is capable of knowing the four Ariyan Truths, obviously in this very life. And the Ariyan Truths of the Origin and Cessation of Suffering stated here, concern the twelve conditions of Paticca Samuppada. This implies clearly that the twelve conditions are all to be seen and known in this very life time.

8) Sometimes it is said that several of the earliest sects of Buddhism also agree that Paticca Samuppada should be seen as a three-lifetime explanation. But the early schools also proposed multiple alternative models apart from three-life time model. Moreover, we know that these early sects of Buddhism started principally because of differing views from within the original Theravada sect, somewhat like how the many Protestant sects started because of differing views from within the original

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Catholic sect. Hence we cannot rely on the views of these early sects. We should rely only on the Buddha's words in the Suttas and Vinaya as the Buddha advised: **“Ananda, whatever Dhamma and Vinaya I have taught and formulated for you, that will be your Teacher after I am gone.”** (DN 16). Also, in AN 4.180 the Buddha said that if any monk claims that the Buddha taught such-and-such, we should compare it with the Suttas and Vinaya. Only if it conforms to the Suttas and Vinaya should we take it to be the Buddha's teaching.

Of all the twelve conditions, no. 2 (Sankhara) and no. 10 (Bhava) are the most difficult and controversial. We have tried to explain this subject based totally on the earliest Buddha's discourses (sutta) in the Five Nikayas (Collections). The explanations starts with Condition no. 12 (Aging-and-Death) and goes down to Condition no. 1 (Ignorance) according to the way the Buddha contemplated and understood Paticca Samuppada as explained in SN 12.10.

CONDITION NO. 12: AGING-AND-DEATH

(JARA-MARANA)

SN 12.10

“Monks, before my enlightenment, while I was still a bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, it occurred to me: ‘Alas, this world has fallen into trouble, in that it is born, ages and dies, it passes away and is reborn, yet it does not understand the escape from this suffering (headed by) aging-and-death. When now will an escape be discerned from this suffering (headed by) aging-and-death?’

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is aging-and-death?”

The aging of the various beings in the various orders of beings, their growing old, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of vitality, degeneration of the faculties: this is called aging.

The passing away of the various beings from the various orders of beings, their perishing, breakup, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time, the breakup of the aggregates, the laying down of the carcass: this is called death. Thus this aging and this death are together called “aging-and-death.”

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The more detailed explanation of suffering given in the Four Ariyan (Noble) Truths is as follows:

SN 56.11

“Now this, monks, is the Ariyan Truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, becoming sick is suffering, death is suffering, union with what is displeasing is suffering, separation from what is pleasing is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering.”

Notice in this detailed *definition of suffering* that:

- I) *birth* and *death* refers to the *cycle of rebirths* (samsara),
- II) *aging* and *becoming sick* refers to the *impermanent nature* of the world,
- III) *union with* what is *displeasing*, *separation from* what is *pleasing*, *not to get* what one wants, refers to *craving*,
- IV) *the five aggregates of attachment* refers to *attachment*.

From this we can say that suffering basically is due to the cycle of rebirths, the impermanent nature of the world, craving, and attachment. The cycle of rebirths is due to craving, the impermanent nature of the world gives us suffering only because of our attachment, and attachment is a consequence of craving. So suffering can be said to be due principally to craving. Therefore, the emphasis is on the conditions that lead to craving, and how to dismantle those conditions.

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Suffering is defined in SN 12.2 as Aging-and-Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. But it is important to note that the twelve conditions of Paticca Samuppada here are not pertinent to all kinds of suffering. This suffering is different from suffering due to kamma (intentional action), e.g. having a short life because one has killed in the past, or being poor because one has not been charitable in the past. As seen above, Aging-and-Death is associated with the round of rebirths (samsara), the impermanent nature of the world, craving, and attachment. Thus an Arahant who has totally eliminated ignorance and is fully enlightened, will not be reborn when he passes away. All others will have to be reborn again; however Ariyans have no more than seven rebirths.

This suffering associated with Aging-and-Death refers mainly to Mental suffering. This is because everyone has bodily suffering, including all Ariya and even Arahants and Buddhas. But all Ariya do not have mental suffering, not even to the extent of becoming distraught for the Sotapanna (First Fruit Ariya), whereas ordinary beings have both bodily and mental suffering, as stated in SN 36.6.

Although Aging-and-Death is a physical process, by itself it does not give us suffering. In books written about people who died for ten to twenty minutes due to an accident or in a hospital, and then revived, they confirmed this – the dying moment is not painful. It is the thought of aging and the thought of death that gives people suffering - due to not being able to accept it. Thus some people in old age want to hide their aging by dyeing their hair, getting surgery to remove their wrinkles, etc. And if someone is told by a physician that he /she has terminal cancer

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with six months to live, that person normally is immediately devastated, with grief and despair following on. It is not as though that person will only experience the suffering six months later when he / she is dying.

This Aging-and-Death with the associated suffering has less to do with kamma (intentional actions) performed but is more due to being in the world of impermanence, cycle of rebirths (samsara), and this is caused by craving as explained in the second Ariyan truth. On the other hand, the suffering associated with kamma is due to unwholesome actions, which although is also dependently / conditionally arisen, is of a different nature from the suffering due to impermanence and the round of rebirths. Kamma can contribute to suffering, but it can also contribute to happiness. The realm of rebirth, personal characteristics, quality of life etc., is due to kamma. The round of rebirths is due to craving.

**SN 1.57 “Craving is what produces a person;
His mind is what runs around;
A being enters upon Samsara;
Kamma determines his destiny.”**

The five aggregates of attachment (attachment towards form, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness - essentially body and mind) is where the ego or self originates, since a normal being always identifies with body and mind. So when ‘I’ or ‘mine’ changes, as everything in the world must change, this non-acceptance due to not understanding, is the cause of mental

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suffering. Mental suffering comes from mental contact, i.e. thinking.

Only Right View, the first factor of the Ariyan Eightfold Path, which comes from understanding the Buddha's discourses (suttas) can help us eliminate mental suffering, and also initiate the destruction of craving.

CONDITION NO. 11: BIRTH

(JATI)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does aging-and-death come to be? By what is aging-and-death conditioned?’ Then monks, through careful attention there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is birth, aging-and-death comes to be; aging-and-death has birth as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is birth? The birth of the various beings into various orders of beings, their being born, descent / appearance / manifestation, production, the manifestation of the aggregates, the obtaining of the sense bases. This is called birth.”

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Again, although birth is a physical process, it is the realization that one has been born into this world of impermanence that is involved here. Most of us cannot recall our birth, how we had our ‘descent / appearance / manifestation of aggregates, obtaining of sense bases, etc.’ but we know definitely that we must have been born from our mother’s womb. However, ***existence is the condition for birth, meaning that after existence (‘I am’) comes the realization that birth must have occurred.***

The description of birth given above applies to humans and some other beings, but some of the description may not be relevant to most celestial beings, ghosts, and hell beings. However the realisation of having been born into this world of impermanence and suffering applies to all beings. This is in accordance with Paticca Samuppada, which applies to all beings, including those not born from the womb. When humans and devas listen to the Dhamma and understand Paticca Samuppada, their understanding of birth is that they have been born into this world of impermanence, hence they experience suffering. It is not the physical birth that matters, whether they were born from the womb, or from egg, water vapor, or by direct transformation. So even though birth is a physical process it is only the realization that one has been born into the world that matters in the understanding of Paticca Samuppada. This explanation of birth calls into question the hypothesis that “production of future renewed existence” described in Condition no.10 necessarily involves “descent of consciousness into the womb”.

CONDITION NO. 10: EXISTENCE

(BHAVA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists, does birth come to be? By what is birth conditioned?’ Then, monks through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: When there is existence, birth comes to be; birth has existence as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is existence? There are these three kinds of existence: sense-sphere existence, form-sphere existence, formless-sphere existence. This is called existence.”

To understand better the meaning of existence, we have to refer to sutta SN 12.68: **“Nibbana is the cessation of existence.”** When a person becomes liberated, an Arahant, he has attained nibbana (SN 12.51, SN 22.46, SA 85, SA 226), and existence ceases, meaning the conceit (‘I am’ or self / atta) ceases. So existence means the perception that self or I exists, either in the sense-sphere or form-sphere or formless sphere. The Commentary however explained ‘cessation of existence’ as ‘cessation of the five aggregates’ which is unacceptable since the Arahant still possesses the five aggregates. This Commentarial remark has given rise to the wrong view that an Arahant only attains nibbana when he passes away. In the ordinary worldling

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the five aggregates cease when he dies, but the self (bhava) does not cease and consequently leads to rebirth.

SN 22.47

“Monks, those ascetics and brahmins who regard (anything as) self in various ways all regard (as self) the five aggregates of attachment, or a certain one among them ... Thus this way of regarding things and (the notion) ‘I am’ have not vanished in him... When the uninstructed worldling is contacted by a feeling born of ignorance - contact, ‘I am’ occurs to him; ‘I am this’ occurs to him; ‘I will be’ and ‘I will not be’, and ‘I will consist of form’ and ‘I will be formless’...

So existence does not mean the world of existence, but existence means *a being (with a ‘self’ or ‘I am’ perception) has come into existence*. Thus the word *bhava* can also be translated as ‘being’ or ‘becoming’. So this being, upon realising that it exists in this world, will understand that it must have been born into this world. So the condition existence / being is necessary for the realisation of birth. That is why it is said that existence conditions birth, and not the other way around.

Note that the perception ‘I am’ leads to the perception ‘I suffer’. If not for this perception of ‘I am’ there would not be the perception of suffering. For example, a tree ages and dies, but the tree does not identify with suffering because it does not have the perception of existence. This is a crucial point to note. It is not the continued rebirth that leads to continued suffering, but rather, it is the continued (renewed) existence that leads to continued suffering. Hence the Second Ariyan Truth states: **“Now this,**

monks, is the Ariyan Truth of the Cause of Suffering ... it is this craving which leads to renewed existence..”

SN 22.82

“Here, monk, the uninstructed worldling ... regards form ...feeling ... perception ... volition ... consciousness ... (the five aggregates) as self or belonging to self, or as being in the self, or self as being in the aggregates. That is how identity view (sakkaya ditthi) comes to be.”

So the unlearned ordinary person identifies himself with body and mind. After studying and understanding the Dhamma he knows that body and mind are impermanent, and hence not-self; he then abandons identity view when he attains the First Fruition Ariya (Sotapanna) stage. However, all Ariyans except the Arahant still have the perception of a self (I am) even though they have eliminated identity view. Only when they attain Arahant hood will the last vestiges of identity with self (mana) be eliminated. This is the difference between the sekha (trainee Ariya) and the Arahant, as illustrated in the **Khemaka Sutta SN 22.89**, **“Friends, (the notion) ‘I am’ has not yet vanished in me in relation to these five aggregates of attachment, but I do not regard (anything among them) as ‘This I am’.”**

SN 12.70

“What do you think, Susima, is form (similarly for feeling, perception, volition, consciousness) permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, venerable sir.”

“Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?”

“Suffering, venerable sir.”

“Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“Therefore, Susima, any kind of form (similarly for feeling, perception, volition, consciousness) whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all forms should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not myself’.

SN 12.61

“Monks, the uninstructed worldling might experience revulsion towards this body ... Because growth and decline is seen in this body ...

But, monks, as to that which is called ‘mind’ (citta) and ‘mentality’ (mano) and ‘consciousness’ (vinnana) - the uninstructed worldling is unable to experience revulsion towards it ... Because for a long time this has been held to by him, appropriated, and grasped thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’...”

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Sutta SN 12.70 quoted above shows the way to contemplate the five aggregates in order to eliminate identity view. However sutta SN 12.61 above tells us that it is easier to eliminate identification with the body, but extremely hard to eliminate identification with the mind.

Production of Future Renewed Existence

There are about eight suttas in the Nidana Samyutta which discusses ‘production of future renewed existence’. In the three-life interpretation, the term is often understood as renewed existence in the next life. Let us investigate some of these suttas to understand this term without this presumption.

SN 12.12

“The nutriment consciousness is a condition for the production of future renewed existence. When that which has come into being exists, the six sense bases (come to be) ... contact ... etc.

The condition for the production of future renewed existence is identified as the nutriment consciousness (Condition no. 3). Sometimes, as in SN 12.12 above, the link that is usually occupied by ‘the manifestation / appearance of mentality-materiality’ (Condition no. 4) is replaced with ‘production of renewed existence. (Condition no. 10). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the meaning of these three Conditions together.

SN 12.39

“Monks, what one intends, and what one plans and whatever one has a tendency towards: this becomes an object (arammana) for the arising (thitiya, lit. standing) of consciousness. When there is an object there is a support for consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is the *manifestation / appearance (avakkanti) of mentality-materiality (nama-rupa)*.

With mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense bases (come to be); with the six sense bases as condition, contact ... feeling ... craving ... attachment ... being ... birth ... aging-and-death ... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.”

Note: Avakkanti above is often translated as ‘descent’. Besides descent, avakkanti has another two meanings, namely ‘entry or appearance / manifestation’. As we shall see later (SN 12.67) consciousness always arises with mentality-materiality, being the object that consciousness cognizes. So it is logical that mentality-materiality ‘appears / manifests’ when consciousness arises.

The traditional Theravada interpretation (according to the Commentaries and Abhidhamma) of ‘production of future renewed existence’ is that of the production of renewed existence in the next life, hence the ‘descent’ of consciousness or mentality-materiality (into the womb).

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However, if existence is to be understood as the perception of ‘I am’ as it should be, then ‘production of future renewed existence’ means the production of future renewed perception of a self which leads to production of future renewed suffering. The moment the ‘I am’ is destroyed, suffering is automatically destroyed. The production of future renewed existence is not about the production of future renewed five aggregates as the Commentaries suggest. The following suttas provide explanations on how the production of future renewed existence occurs.

SN 12.59

“Monks, when one dwells contemplating gratification in things that fetter, there is the appearance / manifestation (rather than descent since gratification is the support for consciousness) of consciousness. With consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality [comes to be] ... six sense bases ... contact ... feeling ... craving ... attachment ... being ... birth ... aging-and-death. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Suppose, monks, there was a great tree, and all its roots going downwards and across would send the sap upwards. Sustained by that sap, nourished by it, that great tree would stand for a very long time. So too, when one dwells contemplating gratification in things that fetter ...

Note: In the above sutta, gratification, i.e. enjoyment (which brings with it an underlying tendency to lust) causes consciousness to arise or appear, and with it mentality-

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materiality. Even within the span of one hour we can enjoy many things, e.g. watching TV, hearing great music, savouring a delicious meal, etc. This causes consciousness to arise or appear many times, and consequently being / existence is renewed / produced. Obviously avakkanti cannot mean descent (into the womb) many times in one hour.

SN 12.64

“If, monks, there is lust for the nutriment edible food (similarly for the nutriment contact, nutriment mental volition, nutriment consciousness), if there is delight, if there is craving, consciousness becomes established there and comes to growth. Wherever consciousness becomes established and comes to growth, there is the appearance of mentality-materiality. Where there is the appearance of mentality-materiality, there is the growth of activity. Where there is growth of activity, there is the production of future renewed existence. Where there is the production of future renewed existence, there is future birth ...aging-and-death ... ”

Suppose, monks, an artist or a painter, using dye or lac or turmeric or indigo or crimson, would create the figure of a man or woman complete in all its features on a well-polished plank or wall or canvas. So too, if there is lust for the nutriment ... consciousness becomes established there and comes to growth. Wherever consciousness becomes established and comes to growth, there is the appearance of mentality-materiality ... future birth ... aging-and-death ... ”

Note: Craving is the cause for consciousness to arise continuously. This is the uncontrolled flow of consciousness

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known as ‘asava’. Consciousness arises simultaneously with mentality-materiality (phenomena), the six sense bases (from which the six consciousness arise), activation of body / speech / mind, and ignorance (as stated in MN 9 "With the arising of the asava there is the arising of ignorance"). Thus the growth of consciousness causes the growth of activation / activity which leads to the growth of future renewed contact, feeling, craving, attachment, existence/ being, birth, aging-and-death. Every future renewed unit of consciousness that arises brings with it the future renewal of the other eleven conditions of Paticca Samuppada. Consciousness is not a continuous stream but it arises and passes away every moment, and thus has to be considered as such.

MN 43

(Ven. Mahakotthita) “Friend, how is renewed existence in the future produced?”

(Ven. Sariputta) “Renewed existence in the future is produced through the delighting in this and that on the part of beings who are hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving.”

Note: As mentioned previously, even within the span of one hour we can take delight in many things, causing renewed consciousness, etc...

SN 22.47

“Here, monks, the unlearned ordinary person...regards form (body) as self, or as belonging to self, or as being in self, or self as being in form (similarly for the other four aggregates - feeling, perception, volition, consciousness).

Thus this way of regarding things and (the notion) ‘I am’ have not vanished in him. As ‘I am’ has not vanished, there takes place an appearance / manifestation (rather than descent) of the five faculties - of the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, the body faculty ... ”

Note: In the above suttas, gratification, lust, delight, craving, are all synonymous, being supports for the continued arising of consciousness. Consciousness arises and passes away extremely fast. Each time consciousness arises, the world (mentality-materiality) manifests / appears, followed by the other conditions, including existence. So long as the being continues to ‘delight in this and that’, consciousness continues to arise, with existence following faithfully behind. The future consciousness that arises would consequently give rise to the ‘future renewed existence’. For example the production / arising of consciousness minutes later, hours, a week, a month or even a year later would be the production / arising of future renewed consciousness, giving rise to production / arising of future renewed existence. So ‘production of future renewed existence’ would mean the existence (‘I am’) that would be renewed with the arising of future units of consciousness.

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Since one unit of consciousness arises and passes away, and then another arises and passes away depending on conditions, there is no continuity, only the illusion of continuity. Hence in the Magandiya Sutta, MN 75, the Buddha said that for a long time we have been tricked by the mind. Only nibbana is undeceptive (or real) (MN 140). According to sutta SN 22.95, consciousness is a magician or conjuror creating a magical illusion of life, just like the artist painting the picture on the canvas.

This continued flow of consciousness, due to delighting in this and that, is the asava (lit. flow / discharge) which I venture to translate as ‘uncontrolled mental flow / discharge’, basically the uncontrolled flow of consciousness. This uncontrolled flow of consciousness gives rise to the world- ‘appearance of mentality-materiality’. Liberation from samsara (the cycle of births and deaths) means the destruction of asava. Hence the Arahant is called the Khinasava, ‘one who has destroyed the asava’. Although the Arahant still has consciousness, his consciousness is controlled, not uncontrolled. For the ordinary person, the flow of consciousness is so uncontrolled most of the time that during the day, he has unwholesome thoughts, daydreams, worries, etc. Even when he manages to stop thinking long enough to fall asleep at night, the uncontrolled flow starts again making him dream. This tendency for consciousness to flow is so strong that it continues after death for all beings except the Arahant.

CONDITION NO. 9: ATTACHMENT
(UPADANA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does existence come to be? By what is existence conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is attachment, existence comes to be; existence has attachment as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks is attachment? There are these four kinds of attachment: attachment to sensual pleasures, attachment to views, attachment to rules and religious observances, attachment to a doctrine of self. This is called attachment.”

How attachment gives rise to existence is explained below.

SN 22.81

“Here, monks, the uninstructed worldling ... regards form (body) as self ... as belonging to self ... as being in the self ... self as being in the form ... That regarding, monks, is an activity. That activity - what is its source, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When the uninstructed

worldling is contacted by a feeling born of ignorance-contact, craving arises: thence that activity is born.”

So for example a child is given a chocolate candy to eat. That delicious taste makes him crave for more. That craving automatically makes the object (chocolate candy) and subject ('I' want) arise and that 'I' becomes associated with the body and mind (the five aggregates), giving rise to identity view. Craving results in the conceit 'I' and also attachment. In the same way, that attachment to sensual pleasures gives rise to identity view and hence existence. So also does attachment to views, rules and religious observances, doctrine of self, give rise to identity view and thus existence.

What is the difference between craving and attachment? Craving is a very strong desire. Attachment or clinging is to hold onto something or someone very tightly. In my personal opinion, the craving produces a neural pathway in our brain which becomes stronger the greater the craving. So attachment is like a habit pattern created by the neural pathway, an addiction.

CONDITION NO. 8: CRAVING

(TANHA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does attachment / clinging come to be? By what is attachment conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is craving, attachment comes to be; attachment has craving as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is craving? There are these six classes of craving: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for touch, craving for thoughts. This is called craving.”

In the Four Ariyan Truths concerning suffering, craving is said to be the cause of suffering, and three types of craving are mentioned (see SN 56.11). The above definition shows that craving here is for sensual pleasures (*kamatanha*), which includes the body-and-mind. This also results in craving for existence (*bhava-tanha*) the strongest of all cravings. It is due to the perception of ‘I am’ (‘self’) that beings instinctively try to preserve this ‘self’ and have an innately strong will-to-live. This notion of ‘self’ also leads to all kinds of ideas about the ‘self’; hence, craving for thoughts.

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The third type of craving, craving for non-existence (*vibhava-tanha*), refers to the desire to end existence or what has come into existence. This is a subtler craving and is rooted in craving for existence. For example, when a person gets irritated over a situation, due to the perception of ‘I am’ suffering (attachment to ‘self’), that person wishes for non-existence (of self and of that unpleasant experience). Another example is a person who is so overwhelmed by suffering that he has no more interest to live/exist. Such a person may go into deep depression, or go mad, or commit suicide, or even become a renunciant. But these are exceptions to the general trend of beings whose greatest craving is for life itself, because then one can experience sensual pleasures in the world.

SN 12.43

“And what, monks, is the origin of suffering? In dependence on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition, feeling (comes to be); with feeling as condition, craving. This is the origin of suffering (similarly for the other sense bases).

... But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving comes cessation of attachment ... existence ... birth ... aging-and-death ... Such is the cessation of the whole mass of suffering. ”

SN 12.52

“Monks, when one dwells contemplating gratification in things that can be clung to, craving increases. With craving

as condition, attachment ... existence ... birth ... aging-and-death... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Monks, when one dwells contemplating danger in things that can be clung to, craving ceases. With the cessation of craving comes cessation of attachment ... existence ... birth ... aging-and-death ... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.” ...

SN 12.66

“As he explores he understands thus: ‘ The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] aging-and-death: this suffering has attachment as its source ... attachment has craving as its source ... Whatever in the world has a pleasant and agreeable nature: it is here that this craving arises ... The eye has a pleasant and agreeable nature ... So too the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind ... ’

Monks, whatever ascetics and brahmins ... regarded that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as permanent, as happiness, as self, as healthy, as secure: they nurtured craving. In nurturing craving they nurtured attachment. In nurturing attachment they nurtured suffering ... Monks, whatever ascetics and brahmins ... regarded that in the world with a pleasant and agreeable nature as impermanent, as suffering, as nonself, as a disease, as fearful: they abandoned craving. In abandoning craving they abandoned attachment. In abandoning attachment they abandoned suffering ... ”

SN 35.244

“So too, monks, whatever in the world has a pleasant and agreeable nature is called a thorn in the Ariyan Discipline.”

SN 12.11

“Monks, there are these four kinds of nutriment for the maintenance of beings that have already come to be and for the assistance of those about to come to be. What four? The nutriment edible food, gross or subtle; second, contact; third, mental volition; fourth, consciousness. ... Monks, these four kinds of nutriment have what as their source ... These four kinds of nutriment have craving as their source, ... ”

SN 12.64 (See under Condition no. 10: Existence).

From all the above we can see that craving is a very important condition among the twelve. The main cause of suffering, i.e. of believing that we continue in the cycle of births-and-deaths (samsara), is craving for body-and-mind (ours and beloved ones) which gives rise to Identity View, for objects of the six senses which have a pleasant and agreeable nature, for the four nutriments, etc. Craving supports the continued arising of consciousness which creates the world of the six senses.

We can also see from these suttas that Craving in Paticca Samuppada refers to craving for pleasant and agreeable things in the world, leading to craving for sensual pleasures (kama-tanha), craving for existence (bhava-tanha), craving for non-existence (vibhava-tanha), and consequently to rebirth.

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In the definition of the Second Ariyan Truth: **“Now this, monks, is the Ariyan Truth of the Cause of Suffering: It is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there...”**

As mentioned under Condition No. 9 (Upadana), when a child is given a delicious chocolate candy to eat, craving for the chocolate (the object) arises simultaneously with I / Self (the subject). So we see clearly that each time craving arises, it leads to renewed existence (I / Self).

Thus we saw under Condition No. 10 (Bhava), Sutta MN 43 quoted the Arahant Sariputta as saying: **“Renewed existence in the future is produced through the delighting in this and that on the part of beings who are hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving.”** So beings are continually renewing existence (I / Self) each time they take delight in sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and thoughts, from one moment to another.

Thus, as stated in the Third Ariyan Truth, it is by giving up, relinquishing, abandoning craving that suffering ceases. For this, the most important thing is to study the early discourses (suttas) found in the five Nikayas (Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguttara, Khuddaka). Only then can we get Right View, the entry point into the Ariyan Eightfold Path (see MN 117). That is why the Buddha called his disciples (monastic and lay) savaka, i.e. listeners or hearers of his Dhamma.

When the Buddha was about to pass into parinibbana he told his disciples: **“Ananda, whatever Dhamma and Vinaya I have**

taught and formulated for you, that will be your Teacher after I am gone.” (DN 16).

The Buddha also said “Be a lamp unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves, with no other refuge. Take the Dhamma as your lamp, take the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge.”

When we study the Buddha’s early discourses we come to understand the impermanent, conditioned nature of the world, of the dangers of samsara, of suffering, of the delusion of beings.

CONDITION NO. 7: FEELING

(VEDANA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does craving come to be? By what is craving conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is feeling, craving comes to be; craving has feeling as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is feeling? There are these six classes of feeling: feeling born of eye-contact, feeling born of ear-

contact, feeling born of nose-contact, feeling born of tongue-contact, feeling born of body-contact, and feeling born of mind-contact. This is called feeling.”

In MN 44 (and also SN 36.3), it is stated: “... there are three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling...”

... the underlying tendency to lust underlies pleasant feeling. The underlying tendency to aversion underlies painful feeling. The underlying tendency to ignorance underlies neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.”

SN 35.18

“Monks, if there were no gratification in form, beings would not become enamoured with it, but because there is gratification in form, beings become enamoured with it. If there were no danger (suffering) in form, beings would not experience revulsion towards it; but because there is danger in form, beings experience revulsion towards it ... (similarly for sound, smell, taste, touch, thought.)”

From the above it is obvious that pleasant feeling arising from contact at the six sense bases gives rise to craving for sensual pleasures (kama-tanha), and consequently craving for existence (bhava-tanha). On the other hand, painful feeling gives rise to craving for non-existence (vibhava-tanha). Although beings do experience suffering in life, it is the expectation of enjoyment in life (overshadowing the impending suffering) that

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drives beings to want to live. If there were no enjoyment in life, no being would desire to live on.

From the many sutta quotes given previously we see that craving arises from pleasant and agreeable things, gratification in things that fetter, delighting in this and that, delight and lust, etc. This craving is mainly associated with pleasant feelings and to a lesser extent, neither-painful-nor-pleasant feelings. Although beings do not welcome painful feelings, they take delight in it by identifying with it as ‘my’ feeling. Delight in feeling is clinging (MN 38). As a result of clinging to feeling as mine, beings welcome pleasant feeling and repel painful feeling. Aversion towards painful feelings leads to lust for pleasant feeling as shown in MN 38 and SN 36.6 below.

MN 38

“Engaged as he is in favouring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels – whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant – he delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As he does so, delight arises in him. Now delight in feelings is clinging.”

SN 36.6

“When he harbours aversion towards painful feeling, the underlying tendency to aversion towards painful feeling lies behind this. Being contacted by painful feeling, he seeks delight in sensual pleasures ... because the uninstructed worldling does not know of any escape from painful feeling other than sensual pleasure. When he seeks delight in sensual

pleasure, the underlying tendency to lust for pleasant feeling lies behind this.”

MN 1.171

“Monks, the Tathagatha ... has understood that delight (nandi) is the root of suffering, and that with being (as condition) there is birth, and that for whatever has come to be there is aging and death ... ”

When one understands that feelings can result in craving, attachment, and ultimately suffering, one sees the danger of pleasant and agreeable things in the world, which are called thorns in the Ariyan Discipline (SN 35.244). Thus the holy life is the path of renunciation, letting go of all the pleasurable things in the world, which are Mara’s bait, and which keeps us hooked, addicted to samsara. In MN 43, it is said that the benefit of wisdom is the attainment of the higher knowledges, full understanding, and letting go. So the final mark of understanding the Dhamma is the willingness to let go of our attachments, including the ego.

CONDITION NO. 6: CONTACT

(PHASSA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does feeling come to be? By what is feeling conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is contact, feeling comes to be; feeling has contact as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is contact? There are these six classes of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, mind-contact. This is called contact.”

SN 12.24

“Therein, friends, in the case of those ascetics and brahmins, proponents of kamma, who maintain that suffering is created by oneself ... suffering is created by another ... suffering is created both by oneself and by another ... suffering has arisen fortuitously, being created neither by oneself nor by another ... (all) that too is conditioned by contact ... it is impossible that they will experience (anything) without contact.”

As explained in sutta SN 12.43, quoted under Condition 8, contact is the meeting of the sense base, (e.g eye), sense object

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(form), and consciousness arisen (eye-consciousness). Contact then results in feeling, craving, etc.

Since contact gives rise to feelings, we are advised to guard the doors of the sense faculties. Pleasant and agreeable things in the world are Mara's bait which keeps us hooked to the rounds of rebirths (SN 35.230)

SN 35.239

“And how, monks, is a monk one who guards the doors of the sense faculties? Here, having seen a form with the eye, a monk does not grasp its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unrestrained, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. Similarly, having heard a sound ... etc.”

CONDITION NO. 5: SIX SENSE BASES

(SALAYATANA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does contact come to be? By what is contact conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there are the six sense bases, contact comes to be; contact has the six sense bases as its condition.’”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, are the six sense bases? The eye base, the ear base, the nose base, the tongue base, the body base, the mind base. These are called the six sense bases.”

Consciousness (Condition no.3), mentality-materiality (Condition no.4), activation (Condition no. 2), and the six sense bases (Condition no. 5) are intimately connected. Consciousness arises simultaneously with its object mentality-materiality (the world of mental and physical phenomena). Consciousness only arises at the six sense bases, hence the six sense bases also simultaneously manifest with the arising of consciousness. After consciousness arises, the ‘being’ comes into existence (renewed existence) which immediately cognises the six sense bases since it identifies with body and mind (identity view). See sutta SN 12.12 quoted under Condition no. 10 (Existence). Along

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with the arising of consciousness and the six sense bases, body, speech and mind are activated (Condition no. 2).

The six sense bases can be grouped together generally as body (i.e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, body) and mind. Thus they resemble the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness - also body and mind) in this respect. So it is not surprising that some of the discourses in both groups are quite similar. However the emphasis of the discourses on the six sense bases is to see the danger of the six external sense objects with the 'pleasant and agreeable nature', Mara's bait, in order to let go of craving. The emphasis of the five aggregates discourses is to see their impermanent, painful, non-self nature in order to dispel identity view. The discourses in the Salayatana Samyutta, Khandha Samyutta, Nidana Samyutta, are all equally important to investigate, and their understanding is essential for one to enter the stream of the Ariyans.

**CONDITION NO. 4: MENTALITY-
MATERIALITY
(NAMA-RUPA)**

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists do the six sense bases come to be? By what are the six sense bases conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is mentality-materiality, the six sense bases come to be; the six sense bases have mentality-materiality as their condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is mentality-materiality? Feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention: this is called mentality. The four great elements and the form derived from the four great elements: this is called materiality. Thus this mentality and this materiality are together called mentality-materiality.”

SN 12.67

(Ven. Mahakotthita) “Now we understand the Ven. Sariputta’s statement thus: ‘... but rather, with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality (comes to be).’ Now we also understand the Ven. Sariputta’s (other) statement thus: ‘... with mentality-materiality as condition,

consciousness (comes to be).’ But how, Ven. Sariputta, should the meaning of this statement be seen? ”

(Ven. Sariputta) “Well then, friend, I will make up a simile for you, for some intelligent people here understand the meaning of a statement by means of a simile. Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too with mentality-materiality as condition, consciousness (comes to be); with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality (comes to be) ...

If, friend, one were to remove one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall, and if one were to remove the other sheaf, the first would fall. So too, with the cessation of mentality-materiality comes cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness comes cessation of mentality-materiality ...

SN 35.68

“Venerable sir, it is said, ‘the world, the world’. In what way, venerable sir, might there be the world or the description of the world?”

“Where there is the eye, Samiddhi, where there are forms, eye-consciousness, things to be cognized by eye-consciousness, there the world exists or the description of the world.”

“Where there is the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind, where there are mental phenomena, mind-consciousness,

things to be cognized by mind-consciousness, there the world exists or the description of the world.

SN 35.116

“That in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world - this is called the world in the Ariyan Discipline. And what, friend, is that in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world? The eye is that in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world. The ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind is that in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world ... ”

When consciousness arises, mentality-materiality arises together with it, and when consciousness ceases, mentality-materiality also ceases. Thus mentality-materiality is the world that ‘appears’ or manifests to consciousness. Mentality refers to the mental phenomena presented to consciousness. Materiality refers to the material or physical phenomena. Hence we note that mentality does not incorporate consciousness.

Materiality is defined as the four great elements: earth, water, fire, wind, and form derived from the four great elements, e.g. sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. This is the physical world and it has four characteristics. Earth refers to the hardness characteristic, water to fluidity, fire to heat, and wind to motion. Most people think that the physical world is totally different from the mental world but this is not really so. The hardness, fluidity, heat, and motion characteristics are in reality perceptions. And perceptions are mind-made, depending on one's state of mind,

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and may also be different for different persons. . Thus for example, a brick wall would be perceived as hard for a normal person, as he would realise if he bumped his head onto it. But an Arahant who has psychic powers would not perceive it as hard as he can walk through the wall, as a ghost could too. In other words, the world is perceived differently by different beings depending on their state of mind. This is why Mind is so important in the Buddha's teaching, it is necessary to cultivate and develop our minds.

SN 2.26

“However, friend, I say that without having reached the end of the world there is no making an end to suffering. It is, friend, in just this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I declare the world, the origin of the world, the ending of the world, and the way leading to the ending of the world. ”

The above suttas and sutta SN 22.95, where the Buddha likened consciousness to a magician creating an illusion, are all pointing out that the world is created by consciousness.

MN 22

“Monks, a well taught Ariyan Disciple ... regards material form ... feeling ... perception ... volition ... what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized ... thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not myself’ ... Since he regards them thus, he is not agitated about what is non-existent. ”

CONDITION NO. 3: CONSCIOUSNESS

(VINNANA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does mentality-materiality come to be? By what is mentality-materiality conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: when there is consciousness, mentality-materiality comes to be; mentality-materiality has consciousness as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness. This is called consciousness.”

As stated under Condition no. 4, consciousness arises (and ceases) simultaneously with mentality-materiality, i.e. the world, its object of cognizance. The world appears so real (‘virtual reality’) as stated in the simile in SN 12.64 quoted under Condition no.10.

In **MN 75** the Buddha stated that we **“have long been tricked, cheated and defrauded by this mind.”** Thus we see our poor selves traversing the rounds of rebirths and suffering along the way. In **MN 140** the Buddha said: **“ ... For that is false,**

monk, which has a deceptive nature, and that is true which has an undeceptive nature – nibbana ... ”

So it appears like consciousness begins upon our births, is continuous throughout our lives, ceases momentarily at death, only to continue again at rebirth. Thus it is not surprising that a monk Sati is said in **MN 38** to have such a wrong view: **“As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed one, it is this same consciousness that runs and wanders through the round of rebirths, not another.”** The monk Sati had this misunderstanding because consciousness seems to be a continuous stream, when in fact it is not so.

The Buddha rebuked him: **“Misguided man, to whom have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma in that way? Misguided man, in many discourses have I not stated consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness? ...**

Monks, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness ... (similarly for the other senses).

Monks, do you see: ‘Its origination occurs with that as nutriment’... ‘With the cessation of that nutriment, what has come to be is subject to cessation’... ”

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So, consciousness can be likened to a string of neon lights which light up one after another giving the impression of a continuous stream of light moving, when in fact there is no continuity or motion at all.

SN 22.54

“Monks, there are these five kinds of seeds... If these five kinds of seeds are unbroken, unspoilt, undamaged by wind and sun, fertile, securely planted, and there is earth and water, would these five kinds of seeds come to growth, increase and expansion?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“Monks, the four stations of consciousness should be seen as like the earth element. Delight and lust should be seen as like the water element. Consciousness together with its nutriment should be seen as like the five kinds of seeds.”

SN 35.93

“Monks, consciousness comes to be in dependence on a dyad... in dependence on the eye and forms there arises eye-consciousness. The eye is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise; forms are impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. Thus this dyad is moving and tottering, impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise.

Eye-consciousness is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. The cause and condition for the arising of eye-consciousness is also impermanent, changing, becoming

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otherwise. When, monks, eye consciousness has arisen in dependence on a condition that is impermanent, how could it be permanent? ... (similarly for the other five senses).”

As seen in the above suttas and previous suttas quoted, consciousness arises because of craving (delighting in this and that), the root cause of suffering, but it ceases almost immediately. Craving again is the condition or support for it to arise again, and again ...

Once consciousness arises, the world (nama-rupa) of impermanence and suffering manifests or appears. Thus the Buddha said in SN 12.65:

“This consciousness turns back; it does not go further than mentality-materiality. It is to this extent that one may be born and age and die, pass away and be reborn ... ”

Hence in the sutta above and also in DN 15 (the longest sutta on Paticca Samuppada) the Buddha thought it is enough to consider only ten conditions, without Ignorance (avijja) and Activation (sankhara), to explain Paticca Samuppada. This also implies that suffering and its origination and cessation can all be explained within our same one lifetime.

Continued delighting in this and that feeds the continued arising of consciousness which is the ‘uncontrolled mental flow / discharge’ (asava), producing renewal of existence. It is only by understanding Dhamma that a person begins to see the danger in pleasant and agreeable things of the world and delighting in this and that. Then he begins to let go of craving and attachment

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which means constricting the uncontrolled flow of consciousness, until there is no more renewal of existence and the asavas are destroyed.

Thus it is enough to see that craving is the main cause of suffering, and the ending of suffering is the letting go of craving, abandoning craving in this very life. Doing so will result in the ending of suffering in this life itself, without referring to past or future lives.

CONDITION NO. 2: ACTIVATION

(SANKHARA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does consciousness come to be? By what is consciousness conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is activation, consciousness comes to be; consciousness has activation as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is activation? There are three kinds of activation: body-activation (*kaya-sankhara*), speech-

activation (vacisankhara), mind-activation (citta-sankhara). This is called activation. ”

There are many translations for the word sankhara, e.g. formations, essential conditions, volition, volitional formations, conditioned things, determinant, conditioner, etc. The reason for this is that this word is used in various different contexts and meanings. We need not investigate all the different contexts and meanings of sankhara here. We only want to understand its meaning in the context of Paticca Samuppada.

The traditional Theravada interpretation of this word according to Abhidhamma and Commentaries in the context of Paticca Samuppada is kamma (intentional action). But when used for kamma (seen in SN 12.25, AN 4.171, and MN 57), it is always kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara and mano-sankhara which is different from the set of sankhara used in Paticca Samuppada, namely, kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, citta-sankhara, seen in SN 12.2 and MN 44. Notice that for kamma, mano-sankhara is used whereas for Paticca Samuppada, citta-sankhara is used.

One could argue that mano and citta are synonymous, but various suttas show that they are not necessarily so. We notice that in the suttas concerning conditioned arising of suffering, sankhara is always defined as kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, citta-sankhara (eg. SN 12.2, MN 9), never as kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, mano-sankhara. The set of kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, mano-sankhara, on the other hand, refers to the arising of pleasant feeling (happiness), painful feeling (suffering), and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling (neither-suffering-nor-

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happiness) as a result of intentional actions. Thus logically these two sets of sankhara are different.

Also, if they are synonymous, why should two sets of sankhara be mentioned in the Nidana Samyutta? It is clear that the kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, mano-sankhara set concerning kamma is mentioned because kamma-vipaka (action-retribution) does involve Conditioned Arising since they are conditionally arisen, but it does not necessarily concern the twelve conditions for the arising of suffering. We know from the various suttas quoted above that consciousness arises from various conditions: gratification in things of the world, delighting in this and that, lust for the nutriments, regarding the aggregates as I and mine, intending, planning, having a tendency towards, etc. All these conditions are ascribed to craving, not kamma. And craving arises mainly from pleasant feelings, as we have seen earlier.

Objections against the Translation of Sankhara as Kamma:

1. The set of sankhara used in Paticca Samuppada is kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, citta-sankhara which concerns the activation and de-activation of a being. This will be explained in detail in the following section. The set of sankhara used for kamma is kaya-sankhara, vaci-sankhara, mano-sankhara which concerns actions using the body, speech, and mind. The two sets of sankhara are different, and used differently. For example, SN 12.51 states that an Arahant does not generate 'sankhara', but this is mainly in the context of kamma. As seen in MN 44, in-and-out

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breathing is kaya-sankhara. If sankhara in SN 12.51 and MN 44 are similar, how can an Arahant breathe (kaya-sankhara) when he / she stops generating ‘sankhara’? Evidently, sankhara in SN 12.51 (kamma) is different from the sankhara in MN 44 (activation). By recognising **there are 2 different usages and meanings of sankhara**, then it makes sense that although an Arahant does not generate ‘sankhara’ (used as kamma), ‘sankhara’ (activations in the 12 links) still arises. The Arahant’s activation arises with knowledge, i.e. not conditioned by ignorance, and it ceases without remainder when he / she passes away.

2. It is to be noted that sankhara used as kamma is mentioned under the Nidana Samyutta because it is also conditionally arisen. In suttas where sankhara is used as kamma, i.e. SN 12.25, SN 12.51, MN 57, the context is on generating meritorious and demeritorious deeds that condition the types of feelings, i.e. pleasant, painful or neutral, which leads to happiness, suffering, and neither-suffering-nor-happiness. On the other hand, the 12 links of Paticca Samuppada concerns the conditioned arising of suffering only.
3. Suffering in Paticca Samuppada is mainly attributed to aging-and-death, i.e. the round of rebirths, as shown in SN 12.2, which is different from the suffering due to kamma. **Continued rebirth is due to craving, not kamma.** However kamma determines the quality of life, personal characteristics (intelligent or stupid, beautiful or ugly, strong or sickly...), etc.

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4. As mentioned in the Introduction, MN 14 & 101 shows that **kamma done in the past is not relevant**. Whether we do or do not know if kamma has been done at all, what kamma (if any) has been done, how much kamma has been done, etc, have nothing to do with the present life Aging-and-Death (see Condition no. 12) which is due to craving (SN 12.43). What is important is that the origin, the cessation, and the way to end suffering can be seen here and now. There is no need to bring in the past and the future.

5. When sankhara (activation) ceases, consciousness ceases, i.e. birth / rebirth ceases according to the traditional interpretation. Therefore, sankhara is the condition to end consciousness (birth / rebirth). If sankhara is interpreted as kamma, it implies that one has to stop creating kamma in order to end birth / rebirth. This is not possible as the ending of kamma only occurs after liberation with the destruction of the conceit (mana) 'I am'. Only the Arahant stops creating kamma (SN 35.146). In fact, the way to the ending of kamma is the Ariyan Eightfold Path, which is actually by cultivating skillful kamma, as stated in SN35.146 and AN 4.237. This means that before one becomes liberated , one needs to continuously cultivate skillful kamma which leads to liberation, to the ending of kamma. The importance of cultivating wholesome / skillful states is also stated by the Buddha in MN 14 and MN 101 and is mentioned in the Introduction. The more detailed list of skillful kamma needed for liberation is listed under Carana (Conduct; Practice) in DN 2: Samanaphala Sutta.

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6. In the three lives interpretation, past life kamma is said to be the condition for rebirth-linking consciousness to arise. But consciousness is arising all the time and not only at birth, and this was said by the Buddha to be caused by craving, delighting in this and that”, and not kamma. After consciousness (said by the Buddha to be the conjurer) arises, then only is there the perception of birth, aging, sickness, death, rebirth, ...etc. And the Buddha said in MN 75 that we have long been deceived by the mind. There is basically no difference between the consciousness at death and rebirth from all other consciousness. Death, rebirth, etc is all a play/illusion conjured up by consciousness.

7. **SN 12.38 “Monks, what one intends, and what one plans, and whatever one has a tendency towards: this becomes an object (arammana) for the arising (thitiya, lit. standing) of consciousness. When there is an object there is a support for consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth there is the production of future renewed existence ... If, monks, one does not intend, and one does not plan, but one still has a tendency towards something, this becomes a basis for the maintenance of consciousness ... ”**

Intention and planning are kamma. Tendency or underlying tendency refers to craving (see also AN 7.12).

Kamma can become an object for the arising of consciousness, but kamma is only generated due to craving. Without craving, no kamma is generated. Therefore, craving is a

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necessary and sufficient condition. Craving alone is enough to become the object for the arising of consciousness. Kamma, a byproduct of craving, is optional. Kamma is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition. An Arahant has destroyed craving therefore he does not create any kamma.

The Three Activations

To understand how sankhara is used here, let us refer to the Pali English Dictionary. The literal meaning of sankhara is given as ‘preparation, get up’. The Chinese translation for sankhara is ‘行’ (pronounced as xing), meaning ‘getting into motion, activate’, among various other meanings. This is very interesting, because it is close to the literal meaning of sankhara. Combining the two, we suggest ‘activation’ or ‘mobilisation’ or ‘activity’ for sankhara: body-activation, speech-activation, mind-activation, meaning they ‘activate, come alive, get into motion.’

MN 44

(Ven. Dhammadinna) “There are these three activations, friend Visakha, body-activation (kaya-sankhara), speech-activation (vacisankhara), mind-activation (citta-sankhara) ...

In-out breathing, friend Visakha, is body-activation; thought directed-and-sustained is speech-activation; perception-and-feeling is mind-activation ...

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Friend Visakha, in-breathing and out-breathing are bodily, these are states bound up with the body; that is why in-out breathing is body-activation. First one directs thought and sustains thought, and subsequently one breaks out into speech; that is why thought directed-and-sustained is speech-activation. Perception and feeling are mental, these are states bound up with the mind; that is why perception-and-feeling is mind-activation ...

Friend Visakkha, when a monk is attaining the cessation of perception and feeling, first speech-activation ceases, then body-activation, then mind-activation ...

Friend Visakkha, when a monk is emerging from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling, first mind-activation arises, then body-activation, then speech-activation.”

It is obvious that to activate the body, breathing is necessary. That is why in-out breathing is body-activation. In order to speak, we must think, this is why thought directed-and-sustained is speech-activation. For the mind to function there must be consciousness, which always accompanies perception and feeling (explained in MN 43). That is why perception-and-feeling is mind-activation.

Cessation of perception and feeling is also the cessation of consciousness. Since consciousness arises and ceases moment to moment, whenever consciousness arises the being 'activates', and whenever consciousness ceases the being 'shuts down' (deactivates). The 'shut down' of a being in stages is described

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in detail in MN 44. First speech deactivates, i.e. thought directed-and-sustained ceases. Then, body deactivates, i.e. in-out breathing ceases. Lastly, mind deactivates, i.e. perception-and-feeling ceases.

Activation of body, speech and mind is the reverse of the shut-down of consciousness. This means every time consciousness ceases (each unit of consciousness arises and ceases only for a very minute unit of time), a new unit of consciousness is regenerated by craving. Then the body, speech and mind activates simultaneously. This is why activation is said to be the condition for consciousness to arise, just as consciousness is said to be the condition for mentality-materiality to arise, although both arise simultaneously. This means that activation, consciousness, mentality-materiality, and the six sense bases arise simultaneously due to craving and ignorance, i.e. the being 'activates' or 'comes alive' with the arising of consciousness. This happens many times in a second because consciousness arises and passes away extremely fast, with every conscious moment.

CONDITION NO. 1: IGNORANCE

(AVIJJA)

SN 12.10

“Then, monks, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does activation come to be? By what is activation conditioned?’ Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is ignorance, activation comes to be; activation has ignorance as its condition’.”

SN 12.2

“And what, monks, is ignorance? Not knowing suffering, not knowing the origin of suffering, not knowing the cessation of suffering, not knowing the way leading to the cessation of suffering. This is called ignorance.”

This is Condition no.1, the ultimate condition or cause for the arising of suffering. So this ultimate cause is ignorance of suffering, i.e. ignorance of the Dhamma. Because of ignorance, beings have a distorted view of life. The greatest desire of ordinary beings is to stay alive, i.e. the will to live, and re-live. This desire is strongly supported by the second desire, which is to enjoy life through the sense pleasures, especially sex (to procreate, or bring to life).

In MN 9 it is stated: **“With the arising of ignorance there is the arising of the asava (uncontrolled flow of consciousness). With the cessation of ignorance there is the**

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cessation of the asava". This means that Ignorance, Consciousness, and Activation are inter-related.

Although we notice impermanence and change, yet we don't like to think about it or accept it because it is unpleasant, until one day it smacks us squarely on the face, i.e. the death of a dearly beloved one. The grief brings forth two kinds of reaction. The fool will wail, grieve, despair and may even go mad, but nothing beyond that. The intelligent person will also grieve, but after that he will start asking questions and looking for answers. This spiritual search will one day bring him to the Enlightened One's Dhamma whereby his ignorance will be eliminated.

Getting Right View, which means understanding the Four Ariyan Truths about suffering is equivalent to surmounting ignorance, i.e. gaining the basic realization of impermanence, suffering and non-self. According to MN 43, there are only two conditions for Right View:

- (1) the voice of another (teaching us the original teachings of the Buddha), and
- (2) focused attention.

This shows that listening to the discourses of the Buddha is very important. That was why the Buddha called all his monastic and lay disciples 'listeners or hearers'(savaka). When one attains the basic understanding of the four Ariyan Truths one attains the Vision of the Dhamma (dhamma-cakkhu) which also means stream entry, the First Path Ariyan Stage. If a person has attained this, his direction in life suddenly changes. He begins to let go of his worldly interests and instead devotes his time and energy on studying and practising the Dhamma. As he does this, his

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wisdom matures until the Path attainment turns to Fruit, i.e. First Fruition Ariya or Sotapanna, when the three fetters (samyojana) fall away - Identity View, Doubt, Attachment to Rules and Religious Observances. When Identity View is destroyed the Sotapanna does not identify with body and mind. This means that a large amount of suffering is suddenly eliminated.

Since the understanding of the Four Ariyan Truths of a Sotapanna (who has not finished his work) cannot be of the same level as the understanding of an Arahant (who has finished his work and is fully enlightened), so also their Right Views cannot be of the same level. The Arahant has totally eliminated Ignorance, which is one of the five higher fetters that only an Arahant can eliminate (SN 45.180 and DA 9). Hence the Arahant is not reborn again. The Sotapanna, Sakadagamin, and the Anagamin have not totally eliminated ignorance, which is why they have to be reborn again, though not more than seven lifetimes. As we saw in sutta SN 22.89 (quoted under Condition no. 10) all sekha (all Ariyans except the Arahant) have eliminated Identity View but not the conceit 'I am'. But having understood the Four Ariyan Truths, all Ariya have become detached from mental suffering according to sutta SN 36.6.

CONCLUSION

As we can see from the twelve conditions of Paticca Samuppada, the continued cycle of birth-aging-death continues mainly because beings delight in worldly pleasures. This provides the condition for consciousness to keep arising, and consciousness creates the world. The way to break this cycle is to understand impermanence, suffering, non-self, see the danger of pleasant and agreeable things of the world, and give up this craving, abandon it, and the uncontrolled flow of consciousness (asava) will cease. For this, knowledge of the Buddha's instructions in his discourses is very important, and our own effort to practise this Dhamma. The Buddha said: **“Monks, be a lamp unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves, with no other refuge. Take the Dhamma as your lamp, take the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge.”** (SN 22.43)

Summary of the Conditioned Arising of Suffering:

- Ignorance / avijja of the Dhamma and of the immense suffering of the round of rebirths, combined with craving for sensual pleasures (kamatanha) and for life (bhava-tanha), generates a powerful will-to-live. Ignorance of the Dhamma also leads to a delusional ‘self’, which gives rise to craving for being (bhava-tanha) and craving for non-being (vibhava-tanha).
- Ignorance brings about the arising of consciousness (vinnana) simultaneously with activation (sankhara - of body, speech, and mind), mentality-materiality (nama-rupa), and the six

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sense bases (salayatana). Thus the world of the six senses manifests.

- Then contact at the six sense bases gives rise to feelings. Feelings condition craving.
- Craving conditions clinging / attachment. This gives rise to the perception of an I / self (subject) craving for and clinging to the external sense object. Hence existence / being (bhava). i.e. the 'I am' arises.
- This being then realises it has come into existence, and that can only be due to birth. And because of the impermanent nature of the world, and attachment to objects that give us happiness, the being is experiencing suffering.

Ceasing of suffering

Knowledge of the Dhamma through listening to the suttas / discourses awakens us to the suffering caused by the perception of existence. When one attains the Vision of the Dhamma, i.e. Right View, one has entered the stream of the Ariyans.

Knowing the danger of pleasant and agreeable things in the world, one begins to renounce worldly pleasures, and progresses on the Ariyan Eightfold Path. In one's practice, it is important to observe one's feeling, because that is the link to break the chain of conditioned arising of suffering. Although one has no control over the feeling that has already arisen, one can certainly make the effort to stop the chain at feeling and not let it develop into

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craving. The more one reduces craving and clinging, the less the uncontrolled consciousness flows, and the more tranquil and peaceful does the mind become.

When one attains ‘destruction of the asavas’, one has permanently destroyed the uncontrolled flow of consciousness and become a liberated Arahant. Greed, hatred, and delusion have been destroyed and nibbana is attained.

However the body and mind (the five aggregates) still remain, and there is still bodily suffering but no more mental suffering. The body continues to age and will die but there is no more self to acknowledge ‘I age’ or ‘I die’. When the Arahant finally passes away (‘enter parinibbana’), all the twelve conditions will cease permanently.



Ciram Titthatu Saddhammo