

# ❧ Dependent Origination ❧

When we study Buddhism, we come across many vipassanā techniques to attain ultimate happiness or Nibbana. Some of them are:

- 1) Development of six sense bases
- 2) Mindfulness on the five aggregates that are subject to clinging
- 3) Four foundations of mindfulness
- 4) The action that destroys all actions
- 5) Dependent origination

Dependent origination is one of the most beautiful and profound teachings.

“This dependent origination is profound and appears profound. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this doctrine that this generation has become like a tangled ball of string, covered as with a blight, tangled like coarse grass, unable to pass beyond states of woe, the ill destiny, ruin and the round of birth-and-death.”

*15 Mahānidāna Sutta: The Great Discourse on Origination*

“If this exists, that exists; if this ceases to exist, that also ceases to exist.”

“Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”

“Of those things that arise from a cause,  
the Tathagata has told the cause,  
and also what their cessation is:  
this is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.”

“If someone sees the dependent origination, he sees the Dhamma. If someone sees the Dhamma, he sees me.”

## Two Types of Dependent Origination

**Forward conditionality** or “with the grain” explains the arising of suffering, or how the being wanders in the endless journey of Saṃsāra:

“And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination? With ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called dependent origination.

*Samyutta Nikaya, 12 Nidānasamyutta Connected Discourses on Causation  
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**Reverse Conditionality** or “against the grain” explains the disappearance of suffering, or the way to be free from this endless journey of Saṃsāra:

But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, cessation of name-and-form; with the cessation of name-and-form, cessation of the six sense bases; with the cessation of the six sense bases, cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling, cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of existence; with the cessation of existence, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.”

*Samyutta Nikaya, 12 Nidānaṣaṃyutta Connected Discourses on Causation  
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“May all beings be well, may all beings be happy, may all beings be peaceful.”

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