# Paticca Samuppada Sermon 20
# The Law of Dependent Arising

**(Pahan Kanuwa Sermon – No. 202)**

'*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*'

'Homage be! To the Fortunate One – the Worthy, Fully Enlightened!'

*Ye me pubbe viyākaṁsu*
*huraṁ gotama sāsanā*
*iccāsi iti bhavissati*
*sabbaṁ taṁ itihītihaṁ*
*sabbaṁ taṁ takkavaḍḍhanaṁ*
*nāhaṁ tattha abhiramiṁ*
*Tvañca me Dhammaṁ akkhāhi*
*taṇhānigghātanaṁ muni*
*yaṁ viditvā sato caraṁ*
*tare loke visattikaṁ*

*Idha diṭṭhasutamuta viññātesu*
*piyarūpesu Hemaka*
*chanda rāgavinodanaṁ*
*Nibbānapadamaccutaṁ*
*Etad aññāya ye satā*
*diṭṭhadhammābhinibbutā*
*upasantāva te sadā*
*tiṇṇā loke visattikaṁ*

*– Hemaka Sutta, Sutta Nipāta.*

Those who explained to me before

Outside the dispensation of Gotama

All of them said:

‘So it was and so it will be’

But all that is so-and-so talk

All that is productive of logic

I did not delight therein

But now to me, O! Sage

May you proclaim a Dhamma

That is destructive of craving

By knowing which and mindfully faring along

One might get beyond the world’s viscosity

The dispelling here in this world

Of desire and lust for pleasant things

Seen, heard, sensed and cognized

Is *Nibbāna* that slips not away

Knowing this they that are mindful

And are fully appeased here and now

Are always calm and composed

They have crossed the world’s viscosity.

Dear Listeners,

The uniqueness of the Law of Dependent Arising discovered by the Fully Enlightened One is the presenting of a solution to the Saṁsāric problem in the present itself. Until then, religious teachers in the world went on searching for a solution by entwining past and future with logic. In this well-preached (*svākkhāta*) Dhamma what becomes obvious by the other qualities like ‘*sanditthika*’ (can be seen here and now) ‘*akālika*’ (timeless) ‘*ehipassika*’ (inviting one to come and see) ‘*opanayika*’ (leading one onwards) and by the term often used ‘*diṭṭheva dhamme*’ (in this very life) is that solution in the present. Today we chose as the topic for the twentieth

sermon on Dependent Arising, the *Hemaka Sutta* of the *Pārāyana Vagga* in *Sutta Nipāta* in order to turn your attention to this unique quality. Paraphrased, this is the meaning of those verses.

'*ye me pubbe viyākaṁsu – huraṁ gotama sāsanā'*

Those, who, outside the dispensation of Gotama explained to me before –

'*iccāsi iti bhavissati*'

Said so 'it was', 'so it will be'

'*sabbaṁ taṁ itihītihaṁ*'

All that is 'so-it-was', 'so it was' talk

'*sabbaṁ taṁ takkavaḍḍhanaṁ*'

All that is productive of logic.

'*nāhaṁ tattha abhiramiṁ*'

I did not delight in it.

'*Tvañca me Dhammaṁ akkhāhi taṇhānigghātanaṁ muni*'

But may you preach to me the Dhamma that destroys craving, O! Sage.

'*yaṁ viditvā sato caraṁ tare loke visattikaṁ*'

Having understood which and faring mindfully, one can cross over from world's viscosity.

'*Idha diṭṭhasutamuta viññātesu piyarūpesu Hemaka*'

In regard to pleasant things seen, heard, sensed and cognized here in this world, O Hemaka.

'*chanda rāgavinodanaṁ Nibbānapadamaccutaṁ*'

The dispelling of desire and lust is the state of *Nibbāna* that does not slip away.

'*Etad aññāya ye satā diṭṭhadhammābhinibbutā*'

Knowing this, those that are mindful and fully appeased here and now.

'*upasantāva te sadā tiṇṇā loke visattikaṁ*'

Are always calm and composed and they have crossed over the viscosity in this world.

In a previous sermon we happened to mention that according to the exposition in the *Visuddhimagga* that is now accepted, out of the twelve links the two links ignorance and preparations (*avijjā saṅkhārā*) are reckoned as belonging to the past, the last two links, birth, decay-and-death as belonging to the future, and the eight links in the middle, consciousness, Name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving, grasping and becoming (*viññāṇa*,

*nāma-rūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava*) as belonging to the present. If we accept that exposition – that interpretation – what the Brahmin youth Hemaka had stated as a charge against other religious systems, the explaining as 'so it was' and 'so it will be', that is to say the 'so-and-so' charge could be levelled at our Dhamma as well. But, dear listeners, this is not a 'so-and-so' Dhamma. This is something unique. In support of his interpretation, Venerable Buddhaghosa, the author of *Visuddhimagga*, gives a twenty-fold analysis of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* made-up of groups of five:

*Atīte hetavo pañca idāni phalapañcakaṁ Idāni hetavo pañca āyatiṁ phalapañcakaṁ*

Five causes were in the past

Now there is a fivefold fruit

Now there are five causes

Which will have in future a fivefold fruit.

In the past there were five causes. In the present there are the five fruits. There are five causes in the present of which there will be five fruits in the future. What are these five causes? Ignorance, preparations, craving, grasping and becoming. What are said to be the five fruits in the present? Consciousness, Name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact and feeling. Then again the five present causes are said to be ignorance, preparations, craving, grasping and becoming and the five fruits are consciousness, name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact and feeling. By this analysis the wonderful inter-connection between the twelve links which is called '*idappaccayatā*' (specific conditionality) is breached.

We have already explained to you all that the basic principle of the Law of Dependent Arising obtains between any two consecutive links of the formula. That is to say:

> This being – this comes to be
>
> With the arising of this – this arises
>
> This not being – this does not come to be
>
> With the cessation of this – this ceases.

The law holds good between any pair of links. It cannot be broken. It cannot take in additional things. Any two links are wonderfully interconnected. It is reinforced by the significant phrase '*yā tatra tathatā avitathatā anaññathatā idappaccayatā*' – 'That suchness, that invariability, that not-otherwiseness therein is the specific conditionality.' The Buddha has thus confirmed that connection. We have to point out that by the analysis in the *Visuddhimagga* that basic principle is violated.

Not only that. Venerable Buddhaghosa speaks of three rounds or 'vaṭṭas' – namely, '*kilesa-vaṭṭa*' (the round of defilements), the '*kamma-vaṭṭa*' (the round of action) and '*vipāka-vaṭṭa*' (the round of result). But, dear listeners, we have pointed out to you in our explanation of the

*Mahā Nidāna Sutta* that the '*vaṭṭa*' interpretation that is actually relevant to the Law of Dependent Arising is that between consciousness and Name-and-form. We have cited on several occasions a very deep section of the Buddha's sermon that confirms it. On this occasion too let me quote it for the benefit of those who are new-comers.

*"... Ettāvatā kho Ānanda jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā uppajjetha vā, ettāvatā adhivacanapatho ettāvatā niruttipatho, ettāvatā paññattipatho ettāvatā paññāvacaraṁ ettāvatā vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati itthattaṁ paññāpanāya, yadidaṁ nāmarūpaṁ saha viññāṇena*."

"In so far only, Ānanda, can one be born or grow old or die or pass away or reappear, in so far only is there any pathway for verbal expression, in so far only is there any pathway for terminology, in so far only is there any pathway for designation, in so far only is there any sphere of wisdom, in so far only is there a whirling round of pointing out a 'this-ness' – that is to say, as far as name-and-form together with consciousness"

In this exposition we have birth, decay and death and all the rest of it. Nothing is lacking. Venerable Sāriputta, the foremost in wisdom, presents this more clearly through a very simple simile in the *Naḷakaḷāpa Sutta* in answer to a series of questions raised by Venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita. It is a wonderful simile.

"Just as, friend, two sheaves of reeds are made to stand one supporting the other at the top, so consciousness stands with name-and-form as condition. And then with name-and-form as condition there are the six sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving etc. Out of these two sheaves of reeds, if one is drawn, the other falls down. If the other is drawn, this will fall down. In the same way the cessation aspect is explained as follows:

With the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of name-and-form occurs and along with the cessation of name-and-form, six sense-spheres, contact, feeling, craving, grasping and the rest of it falls. Just try to visualize this:

Out of the two sheaves of reeds, suppose the one on the left is the consciousness sheaf of reeds. The one on the right side is the name-and-form sheaf of reeds. A number of other sheaves of reeds are leaning on the name-and-form sheaf of reeds. All those would fall if the name-and-form sheaf of reeds falls. Now you can understand why this is called '*sandiṭṭhika*' (visible here and now) '*akālika*' (timeless) and '*ehipassika*' (inviting one to come and see). There is no need to bring in three periods of time into the interpretation of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula.

Now that we have said all this about the exposition in *Visuddhimagga*, let us go on to another point. Out of the above mentioned mutual interdependence, even as a corollary of it, something called a duality (*dvayatā*) comes up. We have made use of the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* in selecting topics for a number of our sermons. As you may recall, there is a duality of arising and ceasing (*samudaya-nirodha*). There is another duality of internal – external (*ajjhatta-bahiddhā*). It is these two dualities that you come across throughout the *Satipaṭṭhāna*

*Sutta*. We have spoken about the two phrases '*iti ajjhattaṁ vā kāye, bahiddhā vā kāye*' (whether in the internal body or in the external body) and '*samudayadhammānupassī vā vayadhammānupassī vā*' (either seeing the arising nature or the passing away nature). This is the duality. But our *Theravāda* tradition has not recognized this term. It has not come up in the traditional exegesis. However we pointed out its importance. There are two discourses in the *Saḷāyatana Saṁyutta* of the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* by the same titled '*dvayaṁ*' (dyad). In one *Dvayaṁ Sutta* we find the Buddha addressing the monks and saying:

"monks, I shall preach to you about a dyad. What is the dyad? Eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and tangibles, mind and mind-objects. This is the dyad."

Then the Buddha declares a very striking challenge:

"If someone says I will reject this dyad and make known some other dyad, it will only be a vain boast. When questioned he would not be able to make good his boast. And furthermore, he would come to vexation."

Just see, all that is about the duality. In the other '*Dvayaṁ*' *Sutta* this is how it comes up:

"*Dvayaṁ bhikkhave paṭicca viññāṇaṁ sambhoti*."

"Consciousness, monks, arises depending on a dyad."

"*Kathañca bhikkhave dvayaṁ paticca viññāṇaṁ sambhoti*."

"How monks, does consciousness arise 'depending on a dyad?"

"*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṁ*."

"Depending on eye and forms arises eye-consciousness."

Then the Buddha makes another declaration.

"*Cakkhuṁ aniccaṁ vipariṇāmī aññathābhāvī, Rūpā aniccā vipariṇāmino aññathābhāvino*."

"Eye is impermanent changing and becoming otherwise. Forms are impermanent, changing and becoming otherwise."

Then he goes on:

"*Itthetaṁ dvayaṁ calañceva vayañca aniccaṁ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi*."

"Thus this dyad is unstable, passing away, impermanent, changing and becoming otherwise."

Just understand in brief that the question of the two is resolved through the teachings on impermanence. There is another significant discourse that corroborates, the 'internal-external' part of the implications of *dvayaṁ* or dyad. There is in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* a discourse titled '*Bālapaṇdita Sutta*' – not to be confused with the '*Bālapaṇdita Sutta*' of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. Let us bring up a section of that discourse:

"*Avijjānīvaraṇassa bhikkhave bālassa taṇhāya sampayuttassa evāyaṁ kāyo samudāgato. Iti ayañceva kāyo bahiddhā ca nāmarūpaṁ. Itthetaṁ dvayaṁ. Dvayaṁ paṭicca phasso saḷevāyatanāni yehi phuṭṭho bālo sukhadukkhaṁ paṭisaṁvediyati etesaṁ vā aññatarena*."

"Monks, to the fool hindered by ignorance and fettered to craving, this body has come up. Thus (there is) this body and name-and-form as external (to it). Thus there is this dyad. Depending on the dyad there is contact and the six sense-spheres, contacted by which or by any one of them, the fool experiences pleasure and pain."

That would suffice as far as the significance of the dyad is concerned. Now let us pass on to the two words '*hetu*' and '*paccaya*'. During the Buddha's time those two words were used in every discourse as synonymous. Whenever the question comes up as

'*Ko hetu ko paccayo*' – 'what is the cause, what is the condition?' – the answer is one. There are no two answers. There is a delightful discourse titled '*Mahā Puṇṇama*', which has as its setting a moonlit night out in the open air. The Buddha is seen answering questions raised by the monks.

One monk strangely enough, rattled out five questions one after the other.

"Venerable Sir, what is the cause, what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of form?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of feeling?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of perception?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of preparations?

What is the cause what is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of consciousness?"

Now the Buddha is answering:

"The four great primaries is the cause, the four great primaries is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of form.

Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of feeling.

Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of perception.

Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of preparations.

Name-and-form is the cause, name-and-form is the condition for the designation of an aggregate of consciousness."

What we need to glean from this quotation is the fact we had pointed out – namely that the two words were used synonymously in the discourses. But, dear listeners, it is evident that in the

literature handed down as treatises – that is to say, in the '*pakaraṇa*' literature – a semantic change, an undesirable change of meanings has occurred. First of all, let me give an instance of it. In the section called '*Parikkhā Vibhaṅga*' in the Nettippakaraṅa, '*hetu*' and '*paccaya*' are distinguished as two words. This is how it comes up:

"*Dve dhammā janayanti hetu ca paccayo ca*'

'Two factors 'bring forth' ('*janayanti*') something – cause and condition.'

Out of them cause is said to be the special factor (*asādhāraṇo hetu*) and condition is said to be the common factor (*sādhāraṇo paccayo*). An illustration is also given. In the case of a germinating seed, the seed is called the cause and conditions are earth and moisture. Then is summing up *Nettippakaraṅa* says:

"*Iti sabhāvo hetu parabhāvo paccayo. Ajjhattiko hetu bāhiro paccayo. Janako hetu pariggāhako paccayo. Asādhāraṇo hetu sādhāraṇo paccayo*."

In defining the two words it says, *hetu* or cause is intrinsic nature (*sabhāvo*) and *paccaya* or condition is extrinsic nature (*parabhāvo*). Here we find an unusual semantic twist. '*Sabhāva*' (Skt. *svabhāva*) is a word used in general for 'nature'. Now it has become a technical term. So '*sa-bhāvo*' is intrinsic nature. '*Parabhāvo*' is extrinsic nature. Just see what a distortion it is. For the birth of a sapling or a seedling the seed is said to be the cause (*hetu*) and other things such as earth, water, fire and air are conditions (*paccaya*). But from the verses uttered by Selā Therī it seems that all the three factors – seed, earth and moisture are essential. Then '*ajjhattiko hetu*' – cause is internal '*bāhiro paccayo*' condition is external. Then again, '*janako hetu*' – cause is what brings forth or gives birth – '*pariggāhako paccayo*' – condition is what helps or contributes to it.

Now we cannot help saying something about the *Paṭṭhānappakarana* too. When we come to it, we find the number of 'conditions' (*paccayā*) increasing up to twenty four. In the attempt to show the connection between thoughts, twenty four conditions are listed. The first among them is called '*hetu*' but not in the sense we mentioned above. So it seems at last '*hetu*' (cause) became one of the '*paccayas*' (conditions). To add to the confusion now the scholars are at pains trying to establish the 'identity' of the two conditions '*anantara*' and '*samanantara*' because the definition given to both happens to be the same. So this is the situation. Anyway, we do not wish to labour the point. Let us now pass on to '*Paṭisambhidāmaggappakaraṇa*. When we come to it we find a similar semantic change. This is how the two words '*hetu*' (cause) and '*hetusamuppanna*' (arisen from a cause) are explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*:

"*Avijjā hetu saṅkhārā hetusamuppannā, saṅkhārā hetu viññāṇaṁ hetusamuppannaṁ*."

According to this interpretation, out of the twelve links, the one that precedes a link is the cause from which that particular link is arisen. But we have pointed out with reference to the first two lines of the verse '*ye dhammā hetuppabhavā – tesaṁ hetuṁ Tathāgato āha*' that what is called '*hetu*' is not ignorance or any other link but that basic principle of

'*idappaccayatā*' (specific conditionality) – 'This being – this arises' etc. We have also shown that as for '*hetusamuppanna*' each of these twelve links is arisen from a cause. Ignorance and other links are illustrations of the principle. This fact is further borne out by the qualification sometimes mentioned about a Stream-winner (*Sotāpanna*) that he has clearly seen the cause as well as things arisen from the cause ('*hetu ca sudiṭṭho hoti hetu samuppanne ca dhamme*').

But an even clearer proof of this fact – as we earlier pointed out – is the declaration made by the Buddha showing the distinction between the Law of Dependent Arising (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) and things dependently arisen (*paṭicca samuppannā dhammā*). It is a momentous declaration.

> "*Jātipaccayā bhikkhave jarāmaraṇaṁ*.
>
> *Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṁ*
>
> *anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṁ*
>
> *ṭhitā va sā dhātu*
>
> *dhammaṭṭhitatā*
>
> *dhammaniyāmatā*
>
> *idappaccayatā*".

"Dependent on birth is decay and death. Whether there be an arising of *Tathāgatas* or whether there be no arising of *Tathāgatas*, that elementary nature, that orderliness of the Dhamma, that norm of the Dhamma, the specific conditionality does stand as it is."

What corroborates the inter-connection between birth and decay is the norm that holds good whether there be an arising of Tathāgatas or there be no arising of Tathāgatas. That elementary nature 'stands as it is' – '*ṭhitā va sā dhātu*'. That is the 'suchness' which cannot be changed – '*tathatā*'. That specific conditionality (*idappaccayatā*) is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. 'Things dependently arisen' (*paṭiccasamuppannā dhammā*) are the twelve links beginning with 'ignorance'. They all are '*hetusamuppannā*'. Every one of them is impermanent (*aniccaṁ*), prepared (*saṅkhataṁ*) and dependently arisen (*paṭiccasamuppannaṁ*). All this shows that an undesirable semantic change has occurred with the passage of time in regard to the Law of Dependent Arising.

There are enough instances in the discourses to prove that the twelve linked formula of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* has been presented as an answer to questions of extremists which are of the dilemma type. The world rests on a duality (*dvayanissita*) – the question of two things. Either 'it is' or 'it is not'. Either 'it exists' or 'it does not exist'. Either 'everything exists' or 'nothing exists'. Either it is 'one's own doing' or 'another's doing'.

The worldlings are immersed in such a duality (*dvayatā*). When such Brahmins come and raise questions, particularly in the *Kaccānagotta Sutta*, the Buddha pointed out that such questions with two ends rest on a duality (‘*dvayanissita*’).

*“Sabbaṁ atthīti kho Kaccana ayaṁ eko anto. Sabbaṁ natthīti ayam dutiyo anto. Ete te Kaccāna ubho ante anupa– gamma majjhena Tathāgato dhammaṁ deseti:*

*avijjāpaccayā saṅkharā* …(etc.)”

“(To say) ‘Everything exists’, Kaccāna, is one extreme. ‘Nothing exists’ – this is the second extreme. Without going to both extremes, Kaccāna, the Tathāgata preaches the Dhamma by the middle:

Dependent on ignorance, preparations … (etc.)”

Without going to both extremes the *Tathāgata* brings up the twelve linked formula of Dependent Arising. In that exposition both the direct (*anuloma*) and indirect (*paṭiloma*) orders are given. I hope you all can follow. Firstly, the direct order beginning with ‘*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*’ (Dependent on ignorance, preparations). Then the Buddha follows it up with the indirect order, ‘*avijjāyatveva asesa virāganirodhā*……(etc).’ (But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance……etc.). Between these two we find ‘*samudaya*’ (arising) and ‘*nirodha*’ (ceasing). One cannot say something absolutely exists or absolutely nothing exists.

There is an ‘arising’ and a ‘ceasing’. It is that norm that is called Dependent Arising or ‘*Paṭicca Samuppāda*’. Not only that. Sometimes a tetralemma beginning with ‘one’s own doing’ (*sayaṁ kataṁ*) ‘another’s doing’ (*paraṁ kataṁ*) and so on as well as six dilemmas were presented to the Buddha but he answered them with the twelve linked formula. There are many who do not know why the Buddha puts forward these twelve links as his answer. Why does he do so? In it there is the solution in the present. It lays bare the structure of the problem. What is the structure? Within the background of ignorance, preparations arise. It is these preparations that keep up the vortex between consciousness and name-and-form. The outcome of that vortical interplay is bifurcation within the six sense-spheres as internal and external.

Now comes up the story of the ‘dyad’ (*dvayaṁ*) – eye and forms, ear and sounds etc. That is why we illustrated the mutual interdependence (*aññamañña paccayatā*) with reference to the simile of the two bundles of reeds. As a result of the bifurcation as ‘internal’ and ‘external’ in the case of the six sense-spheres, the entire story of feeling, craving, grasping, becoming and birth unfolds itself.

Though we explain this way, you might not understand. Now you had better recall the similes we have given while discussing the Law of Dependent Arising. Many of you would follow when it comes in the form of similes. We have given various kinds of similes like the cinema and the magic world. Let us take it this way. Suppose there are several worlds. There is the cinema-world. Now that we have spoken of the chess game between Ajith and Sumith, let us call it the gambler’s world. Then there is the magic world and the cricket world. There is another world

which the dog on the plank represented earlier. Later we presented a more aesthetic simile in the form of the story of Narcissus. Everyone seems to like it. For those who haven't heard it before let me give a summary of it. It is a Greek story we have read. A very handsome Greek youth who had never seen his own face, while wandering in a forest bent down into a pond to wash his face. Seeing the reflection of his own face there, he imagined it to be an angel's. To embrace the angel he had a vain struggle with the ripples for several days and in the end sacrificed his life for love. That, of course, was self-love. Other affections are no better. We have to call it the world of romance. So we have now a lot of worlds. The cinema-world, the gambler's world, the magic-world, the cricket-world and the romantic world.

Now let us see how in each of these worlds those twelve links of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula play their part. Think of the cinema-world to begin with. When does the film-show actually start? When the entire cinema hall is steeped in darkness. At that moment the eyes get focused on the screen. Then the deluded interplay begins. In that strange world all the 'preparations' of the actors and actresses become meaningful in the darkness. When the interval comes, and lights are turned on, all the variety of colours on the screen fade away. But it is between the screen and the background of darkness that a wonderful world is created with the help of the behaviour of actors and actresses. That is the delusion. Then why does one go to the cinema hall and buy a ticket? To get deluded. What is the reason? The entire world is a world of sensuality. Within this sensual world, there are many tiny tiny worlds which we already named. The cinema world is easily understood.

Then let us take up the magic-world.

The magic-world exists until the magician's subtle tricks are understood. As soon as one discovers them at least by hiding in some corner of the stage, the magic-world is no more. Now what about the gambler's world? We have clearly portrayed it with the help of the chess game between Ajith and Sumith. To put it in brief, that world exists on the chess-board. Those worthless pieces became 'chessmen'. When the Zen master compelled the two friends to play a deadly chess game – a gamble for life – with sword in hand threatening to behead the loser, both of them mutually made up their minds to sacrifice their life for each other. But just at the critical moment of judging the winner and the loser, what did the Zen master do? He bent down and swept off the pieces from the chess board and that was the end of the game. Isn't that enough for you to understand the gambler's world?

Then as for the cricket-world, we need not describe it for you. You all know about it. But this is what has to be pointed out as important. When the two teams get down to the cricket ground, the paraphernalia of the game dazzle with life. Players are dubbed with strange names. From then onwards it is all delusion. The cricket delusion is so powerful that in the end some even commit suicide. So that is the cricket-world. Between victory and defeat, all the twelve links are there – even birth and death, grief, lamentation, pain, unhappiness, despair and all the rest of it. Then the world of romance. About that you all know more than we do. There again either it is self-love or love for another. It is that love for each other that make them say:

‘Of course the world outside is suffering but when we are together our world is wonderful!’ The day that soap bubble vanishes into thin air there is suicide or murder. So that is the world of romance. Remember, in everyone of those worlds, it is the twelve links that come into play.

What is of particular importance is that vortex – ‘*vaṭṭa*’. The real rallying point is the mutual inter-relation between consciousness and name-and-form. It is a very strange kind of delusion. That is why we said, if you ask consciousness

‘Who are you?’

it would reply ‘Ask name-and-form’.

If you ask name-and-form

‘Who are you?’

It would also reply:

‘Ask consciousness.’

The two are neither to be reckoned as two nor are they one and the same. There is a delusion involved. That is why we pointed out that what is called ‘*nāma-rūpa*’ is a formal name and a nominal form. It is only a perception of form. But it is in Name-and-form that consciousness finds an object. It is here that a world is created. All that happens within the darkness of ignorance. In that darkness of ignorance a preparation goes on. It is that preparation that in the Dhamma is called ‘*kāyasaṅkhāro*’ (body preparation), ‘*vacīsaṅkhāro*’ (speech preparation) and ‘*cittasaṅkhāro*’ (thought preparation). So much so, as we mentioned on an earlier occasion, in order to escape from the round of existence all those three preparations have to be stilled. Breathing in and breathing out are reckoned as the body preparation (‘*kāyasaṅkhāro*’), thinking and pondering are the speech preparation (‘*vacīsaṅkhāro*’) and perception and feeling are the thought preparation (‘*cittasaṅkhāro*’). These constitute the infra-structure of existence. That is why the yogins in the past stilled those preparations. *Nibbāna* is called ‘*sabba saṅkhāra samata*’ – the stilling of all preparations. When all preparations are stilled, that is the end of the whole story. But these are not stilled automatically. It is when the light of wisdom dawns that they are stilled. That is what we call ‘*anidassana viññāṇa*’ – nonmanifestative consciousness. Consciousness ceases, name-andform ceases. In various ways we described it. Whether you call it ‘*saḷāyatana nirodha*’ (cessation of the six sense-spheres), ‘*viññāṇa nirodha*’ (cessation of consciousness) or ‘*nāma-rūpa nirodha*’ (cessation of name-and-form) it is the same. It shows that the Buddha solved this problem in the present itself. This is a wonderful Dhamma- a marvellous Dhamma.

Though we say so, you might wonder why all these facts have not come to light all this time. Neither the commentators, nor the Western scholars could understand such deep *sutta*s like *Mūlapariyāya*, *Madhupiṇḍika*, *Mahā Nidāna* and *Mahāpadāna*. They were relegated to the limbo as abstruse discourses. What is the reason? There must be some reason. What is it? This is the

reason, dear listeners. In the history of this dispensation an unfortunate thing had happened at some stage or other. Those extremely deep discourses were branded as '*vohāra desanā*' (conventional sermons) and pushed into obscurity. In their place, other things came to be upheld as deep. The Buddha must have foreseen this predicament for he had made a prophesy that in future such monks would get the upper hand.

"*Ye te Suttantā tathāgatabhāsitā gambhīrā gambhīratthā lokuttarā suññatāpaṭisaṁyuttā tesu bhaññamānesu na sussū– sissanti na sotaṁ odahissanti na aññācittaṁ upaṭṭhapessanti na te uggahetabbaṁ pariyāpuṇitabbaṁ maññissanti*."

"Whatever discourses that are preached by the *Tathāgata* that are deep and profound in meaning, transcendental and dealing with voidness, when those discourses are being spoken about, they would not listen to them, they would not lend ear to them, they would not make up their minds to understand them. They would not think it worthwhile learning and mastering them."

This is precisely what came to pass. At present '*vohāra desanā*' or the so called 'conventional teachings' are supposed to have been addressed to simple people like us. You know, there were instances when such discourses like *Bāhiya Sutta* helped the listeners to attain Fruits of the Path or even Arahanthood. But unfortunately for some reason or other those sermons were branded as conventional teachings and relegated to the background. That is the reason for all this confusion.

At present what is called *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is a formula to be by-hearted and recited up and down. It has no other significance. But it is with this formula that the Buddha not only solved the entire Saṁsāric puzzle but presented through it a wonderful principle that lays bare the structure of the Realms of Form and Formless Realms as well as that of the miniature worlds found within this sensuous realm – as we highlighted above. This fact has been ignored all this time. It is because of this ignorance that they went on taking liberties with the two words '*hetu*' and '*paccaya*'. We can't change the Buddha word. If the Buddha has used the couple of words synonymously we have to accept it as it is. Playing with these two words had gone so far that concepts totally foreign to the spirit of the Dhamma came to be tagged on with the passage of time. That is why they went to the extent of bringing in like Brahmins, such concepts as 'one's own doing' and 'another's doing' or interpreting '*hetu*' as intrinsic nature (*sabhāvo*) and '*paccaya*' as extrinsic nature (*parabhāvo*). This confusion is not of recent origin. It has gone on for quite a long time. Our ideas may appear as revolutionary. But I cannot help pointing this out. The truth must come to light even in the face of criticism.

So then, dear listeners, in regard to the Law of Dependent Arising you should pay special attention to what we have said about '*Saṁsāra-vaṭṭa*' (the vortex of *Saṁsāra*) and '*aññamaññapaccayatā*' (the mutual inter-dependence) and the inter-connection between consciousness and name-and-form. The term *viññāṇa* itself is suggestive of two things. '*Vijānāti*' means discriminating as two things. It is due to that very discrimination that name-

and-form becomes the object of consciousness. That happens in the darkness of ignorance which makes one grasp at the shadow. Name-and-form is only a shadow or a reflection. That is where the story of the deer and the mirage comes in. It leads to an imprisonment between two things.

“Eye is here, form is over there”.

The deer is unaware of the fact that with each step it is taking it is taking its eye along with it. Therefore, it has posited two ends or driven two pegs for itself. The whole world has got caught between these two pegs and created a dichotomy to rest on (‘*dvayanissita*’). The Buddha gave a solution to this problem by giving up both extremes not by putting them together nor by compromising with them, but by avoiding both. The solution he gave is the twelve-linked formula of Dependent Arising.

By this solution the Buddha, for one thing, solved the Saṁsāric puzzle. Why did the commentator bring in the question of past lives and future lives into the interpretation of this formula? They could not appreciate the fact that if you understand the present life in *Saṁsāra* correctly the past and the future are already understood. Just ponder over this, dear listeners. Must you go on removing the sheaves of a plantain trunk to ascertain whether the tree has a pith? If you take a sharp sword and cut the trunk in two in the middle, can you not see from the cross-section that it is pithless? That is why a streamrunner (*Sotāpanna*) is said to have seen *Nibbāna*. We have explained earlier that he is said to have seen *Nibbāna* because for a split second he has seen in a flash, the cessation of preparations in the light of wisdom. In one of our *Nibbāna* sermons, we have compared it to the legendary Herculean feat of the soldier Nīla in parting the sea water with a giant iron bar. If the *Sotāpanna* has had that flash of insight, he has discovered the secret of *Saṁsāra* to that extent. Of course all fetters to existence are not broken by that initial insight. That realization is gradual but it is because of this insight into the truth that he is irreversibly inclined to *Nibbāna*. He has thereby won the assurance of *Nibbāna*. He has had a glimpse of the true state of affairs which is none other than the Law of Dependent Arising. ‘This being – this comes to be’.

Nowadays when speaking about that attainment there are many who go on asserting:

“We keep our precepts unbroken. We are already ‘*sotāpanna*’.”

That is not the criterion. One has to see the norm of the Dhamma couched in the phrase:

‘*Yaṁ kiñci samudayadhammaṁ – sabbaṁ taṁ nirodhadhammaṁ*’ –

‘whatever is of a nature to arise – all that is of a nature to cease.’

Through that insight one has seen the norm of arising and ceasing. He has for a moment experienced the cessation of consciousness. Consciousness is what one grasps at last. By seeing its cessation he has understood the nature of arising and ceasing of the entire Five Aggregates. It is by that insight into the truth that he is inclined to *Nibbāna*. He is irreversible. By

that much alone a stream-winner is great. Of course he has to proceed further. The Buddha has pointed out that it is when one directs radical attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) that there is, this breakthrough.

I have now said enough about *Nibbāna*. About this series of sermons I have to say something more. I have shown that there has been some historical evolution in the interpretation of the Law of Dependent Arising. These sermons might give rise to all sorts of criticism. So I would like to mention that there is a history for this little series of sermons too. Though it is something personal, let me tell you about it. About 20 years ago, when I was at Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya, my revered teacher, the Most Venerable Mātara Srī Ñāṇārāma Mahāthera, once when I saw him in his '*kuṭi*' invited me to deliver a series of sermons on *Nibbāna* to the meditative Sangha there as they had some problems in understanding it. He even said that the sermons should be taped. But my first response, with a simile, was that if I came out with what I have to say, I would be the target of heavy criticism. But the next day he encouraged me with a wonderful guarantee.

"You had better mention in the sermon itself that I invited you to give these sermons."

It is because of that guarantee that you had the opportunity to listen to the series of sermons on *Nibbāna* and read the '*Nivane Niveema*' volumes (that is, 'Nibbāna – The Mind Stilled' series in 7 volumes). If not for that these things would have continued to remain concealed under the sands of time. I came to know that those who had a myopic eye for the *Nibbāna* series twenty years ago, are now showing a deep interest in it.

In the meantime, some suggested to me the feasibility of writing a book on Dependent Arising. But instead of writing a book, I thought it easier to deliver a series of sermons to you all because you have already listened to more than a hundred of my sermons. I had the confidence that you would not get up and go complaining that the sermons are too deep. That is why I started this series of sermons. But one thing, dear listeners, a preacher's mode of presentation adapts itself to the level of understanding of the audience. Twenty years ago, I addressed those *Nibbāna* sermons to the meditative *Saṅgha* of Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya. Some of the similes I gave in those sermons are now well known in the country. But in these sermons addressed to a village audience I gave similes direct from village-life – even rustic ones. I suppose it does not detract our respect for the Dhamma. Please try your best to understand this deep Dhamma through them. It is because of the depth of this Dhamma that the Buddha hesitated to preach it at first – that Brahmā Sahampati had to bend his knees to propitiate and invite him to preach.

We have already mentioned on an earlier occasion that there are two things in this Dhamma that are considered exceptionally deep. As it is said in *suttas* like *Ariyapariyesana,*

"*Duddasaṁ idaṁ ṭhānaṁ yadidaṁ idappaccayatā paṭicca– samuppādo*".

"This is something difficult to see, namely the specific conditionality – the Dependent Arising."

It is not easy for the worldlings immersed in defilements to see the Law of Dependent Arising. So also the cessation (*nirodha*) which is *Nibbāna*. That too is difficult for the world to see. It comes with the cessation of preparations. Instead of that, the worldlings are steeped in the craving for existence or becoming (*bhavataṇhā*), all speculative views come ancillary to it. This dispensation is threefold as Precept, Practice and Penetration (*pariyatti, paṭipatti, paṭivedha*). Out of these the first to suffer from neglect was Penetration. Then Practice too gradually went down. In the end only Precept remained. So the intellectuals came to the forefront. From there onwards, it was the age of commentaries, treatises and compendia. It happened not only in our Theravāda tradition, but in other sects as well. It is said that eighteen sects sprang up even before the lapse of a hundred years from the Buddha's passing away. Not only that. Each sect had its scriptural heritage – cartloads of books. It was rarely that one with discernment took the trouble to make sense out of them.

Therefore, you must not rest satisfied merely with listening to these sermons but make an effort to understand them. Don't be discouraged thinking:

'We are worldlings without that wisdom to understand such things.' The Buddha has pointed out the seed of wisdom – that is, 'radical attention' (*yoniso manasikāra*). We all have that in us to some extent or other. I have shown it by the 'simile of the five-fingers'. I shall repeat it for the benefit of the new comers. Up to now they explained the constituents of '*nāma*' in *nāma-rūpa* differently giving first place to '*phassa*' or contact. I gave the simile of the five-fingers – feeling (*vedanā*) the little finger, perception (*saññā*) the ring finger, intention (*cetanā*) the middle finger, contact (*phassa*) the index-finger and attention (*manasikāra*) the thumb. Out of these taking 'attention' as the thumb we pointed out with the help of a simile of a case of murder or theft how a judge gives crown pardon to an alleged culprit when there are no witnesses and gets the whole mystery out through him. The Buddha had to do a similar thing because this Saṁsāric problem is so difficult to solve since consciousness is a magician's trick.

That is why the Buddha gave 'attention' out of the five constituents of name (*nāma*) free pardon and made him the crown witness. But he was made to give an oath of speaking the truth as if warning him.

"You are the guy in the guise of '*ayonisomanasikāra*' (non-radical attention) who committed this Saṁsāric crime with the other four guys plotting for the murder of all beings from beginningless times. At least now you had better be '*yoniso*' (radical)."

That was the beginning. We have shown what happens when '*yoniso manasikāra*' reaches the climax of its development. It is with the help of this radical attention that one understands feeling as feeling. You should think why in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* there are the apparently awkward phrases like '*Kāye kāyānupassī*' (contemplating body in the body) and '*vedanāsu vedanānupassī*' (contemplating feeling in feeling). When one gives evidence under an oath one cannot help coming out with the truth – feeling as feeling, perception as perception, intention as intention. But one thing. In the end the culprit – the biggest culprit – is found guilty through

his own confession. He is caught by his talk about the 'thing' – '*manasikāra sambhavā sabbe dhammā*'. All 'things' are found out by 'attention'. That is the deepest point. Mind finds out a thing by means of '*manasikāra*'. As we already mentioned, out of the five members on the '*nāma*' side namely, feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention – attention is the 'thumb'. It is the 'thumb' with the complicity of the other four fingers is carrying on this 'gangmurder'. He has the closest connection with contact (the index finger). We have identified the five fingers. Of course this is not a part of the Buddha's teaching. I gave this simile only for clarification of issues involved.

So then take it that we all have the ability to arouse '*yoniso-manasikāra*'. Get it awakened. It is then that there is the dispelling of the four perversions (*vipallāsā*). In place of the four perceptions so far pursued, namely the perception of permanence (*niccasaññā*), the perception of the pleasant (*sukhasaññā*), the perception of beauty (*subhasaññā*) and the perception of self (*attasaññā*), one begins to develop the perception of impermanence (*aniccasaññā*), the perception of suffering (*dukkhasaññā*), the perception of repulsiveness (*asubhasaññā*) and the perception of not-self (*anattasaññā*) according to the method of contemplation taught by the Buddha. That is the great revolution in one's way of attention. Then the world one sees is far different from the above mentioned worlds. This is a Dhamma that penetrates through the world. Gradually, the perception of the compact (*ghanasaññā*), which made one posit two ends, gets liquidated through the contemplation of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā*). What happens with that liquidation? The perception of the heap (*rāsisaññā*) emerges. One begins to see a thing as a heap. Thereby the contemplation of impermanence goes deeper. One sees the flux of arising and ceasing. It culminates in disenchantment or disgust (*nibbidā*). In this Dhamma '*nibbidā*' is the key to *Nibbāna*. There is such a norm of Dhamma in this teaching. Supramundane Paths and Fruits cannot be realized through by-hearting the Dhamma or by getting certificates. You have to get down into the practice proper. It is to those who had practiced deeply in this Dhamma in past births like Bāhiya, that the Buddha preached very brief sermons like 'In the seen – just the seen.' It may not apply to everybody. You have to start from the 'nursery' itself. That is why virtue, concentration and wisdom have to be developed. Backed by them gradually one comes to realize those Supramundane attainments. It may be a miserable leper like Suppabuddha. If he came to the Buddha with the correct Saṁsāric maturity, he could realize immediately on hearing the Buddha's sermon that norm of the Dhamma enshrined in the dictum:

'*yaṁ kiñci samudayadhammaṁ – sabbaṁ taṁ nirodhadhammaṁ*' – 'whatever is of a nature to arise – all that is of a nature to cease.'

It is the insight based on the Five Aggregates of Grasping which in effect is the insight into the Law of Dependent Arising.

The Buddha has proclaimed this regarding the Law of Dependent Arising.

"*Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṁ anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṁ ṭhitā va sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā*."

"Whether there be an arising of the *Tathāgatas* or whether there be no arising of *Tathāgatas*, that elementary nature, that orderliness of the Dhamma, that norm of the Dhamma, the specific conditionality does stand as it is."

About this Law of Dependent Arising, the Buddha has used such words of affirmation like '*tathatā avitathatā*, *anaññathatā, idappaccayatā*' – 'That suchness therein, the invariability, the not-otherwiseness, the specific conditionality.' When one sees this norm as a fact of realization – instead of saying 'impermanent – impermanent' – one begins to see the flux of arising and passing away. This is the path outlined in this Dhamma. Therefore, this series of sermons is not meant for the scholar to pass exams and get degrees. Think of the purpose of these sermons – their practical aspect.

But what has been happening all this time? A basket was simply handed down without examining what is in it.

"Our teacher has said this. We must not go beyond it. Our commentators have explained like this. We must not think beyond their explanations."

A vast delusion has gone on for a long, long period getting hold of the brains – lay – and monk – alike. Ignoring those extremely profound discourses, they ran after other things (I won't say what they are). But the truth is here. Worldlings do not see it. We had to say in our *Nibbāna* sermons too, that a path of Dhamma overgrown for a number of centuries, had to be cleared up. On this occasion too it has to be reiterated. We showed the inter-relation between name-and-form and consciousness in both aspects of arising and ceasing. The world is always on the '*samudaya*' side (arising side). 'Though there is nightfall today, there is a dawn tomorrow.' That is their way of thinking. They do not like even to think of '*nirodha*' (cessation). That is why we gave various similes. The seamstress craving stitches up those two ends, but it is when one sees the middle that there is a release. Now that we have mentioned about those two ends, let us hark back to that wonderful verse preached by the Buddha:

'*Yo ubhante viditvāna*

*majjhe mantā na lippati*

*taṁ brūmi mahāpurisoti*

*sodha sibbanimaccagā*'

'He who, having understood both ends, does not get attached to the middle with wisdom, him I call a great man. He has gone beyond the seamstress here.'

Six interpretations were given for this verse. But out of them, let me now mention a few. Pleasant feeling is one end. Painful feeling is the other end. The middle is neither painful nor pleasant feeling – which is the middle that no one is interested in. the six internal sense-

spheres is one end. The six external sense-spheres is the second end. Consciousness is the middle. It is due to the magic trick of consciousness that those two ends are separated. Then again, 'name' is one end and 'form' is the other end. It is through ignorance of the fact that consciousness is in the middle that many scholars go on explaining 'name' and 'form' like materialistic scientists. The term '*rūpa*' is interpreted as in physics. But we have pointed out that what we have here is only a 'perception of form' (*rūpasaññā*). It is with the help of the constituents of the name group that form is recognized. That is the basics for any consciousness. '*Rūpa*' cannot be understood by such materialistic analysis. You can't change this Dhamma into an atomistic study. One has to see what actually is here. How can one see it? Certainly not through instruments. One can do it only through radical-attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). It is for that virtue, concentration and wisdom are required. This is what we presented through our sermons.

Therefore, you should not think that these are too abstruse for us. Some are even scared of the term '*Paṭicca Samuppāda*'. They would say:

'That is something even the author of *Visuddhimagga* could not understand. So how can we do it?' That seems to be the general attitude. But the truth is here in the discourses which they underestimate as too simple conventional teachings (*vohāra desanā*). It is in such under-rated discourses like *Mahā Nidāna* and *Mahāpadāna* that the true explanation of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is found. One has to intuit into the meaning without getting involved in words. Of course all these are worldly conventions. There are the path ways of synonyms and terminology. Every vortex revolves round with the synonyms and terminology proper to it. Think for instance about the cricket world. As you know, it has its own ways of synonyms and terminology. It is within that environment that the cricket craze goes on. That is what gives rise to an '*itthatta*' or a level of existence. Birth, decay and death go with it. Regarding that too there is a very wonderful discourse which we have already discussed. Let me now mention it in brief.

"*Kāye vā bhikkhave sati, kāyasañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ. Vācāya vā bhikkhave sati, vacīsañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ. Mane vā bhikkhave sati, manosañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ avijjāpaccayā va*."

To put it simply – "When one has taken for granted that there is a body, due to intentions about the body there arise inward pleasure and pain. When one takes for granted that there is speech, due to verbal intentions there arise inward pleasure and pain. When one takes for granted that there is a mind, due to mental intentions there arise inward pleasure and pain.

Finally, it is said:

'*avijjā paccayā va*' – all conditioned by ignorance."

But then it goes on to say:

‘*avijjāyatveva asesa virāganirodhā so kāyo na hoti yaṁ paccayāssa taṁ uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ sā vācā na hoti yaṁ paccayāssa taṁ uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ so mano na hoti yaṁ paccayāssa taṁ uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ*.’

‘But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance, that body is not there owing to which there arise for him inward pleasure and pain. That speech is not there owing to which there arise for him inward pleasure and pain. That mind is not there owing to which there arise for him inward pleasure and pain.’ Then it is said in affirmation:

“*Khettaṁ taṁ na hoti, vatthuṁ taṁ na hoti, āyatanaṁ taṁ na hoti, adhikaranaṁ taṁ na hoti yampaccayāssa taṁ uppajjati ajjhattaṁ sukhadukkhaṁ*.”

“That field is not there, that site is not there, that base is not there, that reason is not there, owing to which there can arise for him that inward pleasure and pain.”

That field, that site, that base, that reason which sustained all those are not there once ignorance ceases. That is what we tried to point out in various ways.

Well, everything comes to an end. When I started this series of sermons, I expressed my misgivings – as I did in the case of *Nibbāna* sermons – whether I would live long enough to complete the series. However, I survived the series. So I would like to wind up with a transference of merit. Whatever merit that accrued by my efforts to clean up a path of Dhamma overgrown for centuries, may it be rejoiced over by my departed parents who brought me up, teachers who gave me the vision of knowledge, and lay-supporters who helped keep his frail body alive. Whatever beings there be, from the lowest hell to the highest Brahma world, may they too rejoice over that merit! May it conduce to their attainment of Deathless *Nibbāna*! In this series of sermons I made use of various sections of the discourses. So let this floral garland of sermons woven out of the well-preached Dhamma flowers culled from the garden of profound discourses be a humble offering at the foot of the Dhamma shrine which received honour and worship from the Buddha himself!

