

Another Model of Paṭicca Samuppāda

Bhante Bodhidhamma · DhammaBytes · 14:06

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa (x3)

Homage to the Buddha, the Blessed, Noble and Fully Self-Enlightened One.

I want to make one more talk devoted to Dependent Origination, really looking at another model. If I go through the model, then you'll see that it offers a slightly different perspective.

Remember that we begin with this *avijjā*, ignorance. We start from the platform of not knowing, but this not knowing produces a certain delusion. A delusion is the wrong way of looking at something. Because of that, we've created in the past these *saṅkhāras*. *Saṅkhāras* are basically all our habits. The important thing is that they've been produced by an act of will. In other words, we produce them. We don't particularly produce what we see - it's just natural to the body, natural to the sense base. But what you do with what you see is within your power.

These two things - the fundamental not knowing, the delusion, and the habits - are running concurrently beneath every moment. Then within every moment you've got to have this basic trilogy. The first one is the potential of cognition, which is the primary act of knowing, and this doesn't happen unless you've got a body and mind. The two lean against each other. Because there's a body and mind, you've got your six sense bases. There's your basic human being, and it's through that that you make contact with the world.

That's your first active moment - contact. There has to be an object, there has to be a sense base, and there has to be that act of cognition. From there you've got your basic sensations, and then we divide the world into what we like, what we don't like, and there's an area of neutrality. But if you look at that more closely, it always shades off into liking and not liking. That's what we might call the basic duality of the world, but that's not suffering.

It's at the next point that these *saṅkhāras*, these volitional conditionings, begin to rise in the form of desires, and that's your *taṇhā*. There's another word in Pali, *chanda*, which means a good desire, such as desire to meditate. But *taṇhā* is a word specific to those desires which arise out of delusion.

Out of that, the next moment is that moment of identity, self. That's the point actually where you start suffering - the point where you identify with what it is you want. As soon as you've done that, it's almost impossible to stop the energy going into that process which is going to make it come out of a potential desire into some form of action, and that's your becoming, that's your *kamma*. As soon as you act, there has to be a beginning of the action, the middle section, and the end of it. That's your birth, aging and death.

That's your fundamental dependent origination rolling on every so often. Not all the time. It's only when it's activated through this desire. It obviously doesn't happen when you're asleep. It doesn't happen in neutral actions either. But that doesn't mean to say that the fundamental delusion isn't there. That's running constantly underneath every moment of our lives.

All this produces suffering. The Buddha says, *dukkha* - that's the *dukkha*. The Buddha says that it's because of suffering that we seek the end of suffering. That might be pretty obvious, but it's because we don't want to suffer that we begin to seek the end of suffering. So suffering itself is the cause for the end of suffering.

The way this comes about is through three things. First of all, wise reflection. The Buddha is very keen on this *yoniso-manasikāra* - that every so often you actually look back upon your actions and work out what we've done which is harmful to ourselves. In a sense, that's the action of conscience. Interestingly enough, there's no word in Pali for our word conscience, but that's another talk.

This wise reflection brings about a certain confidence. That's what we mean by this faith, this confidence. It's through the confidence that we begin to act in skillful ways. As soon as we do that, it takes away all the guilt, all the shame, all the remorse from our lives, and there's a natural gladness that arises. There's a natural peacefulness in the mind. With this peacefulness there comes a deeper peacefulness of a rapture. It has also a certain calmness to it, and you'll see that some of these qualities are part of the seven factors of enlightenment. This produces a certain contentment, a certain happiness.

When you've got that emotional base within the mind, concentration arises naturally. It's easy. What empowers this is the desire to want to know. Even when something horrible is happening within us, even when we've got a depression, as soon as you turn towards an investigation towards that mode, that interest, immediately you can feel that at another level, or a part of it, or beneath it, there is this very subtle joy. That joy is actually mirroring the liberation, the detachment from the mental state that we're experiencing.

With that concentration and with that investigation, there arises the knowledge and the insight - the one moves into the other. This knowledge and insight is always into these three characteristics - *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* - because these are manifestations of our delusion. With those little insights, there are classic insights which lead to these paths and fruits. They're cut-off points because you can't fall down from that. It's like when we reach the age of six or seven, and Father Christmas can't exist anymore. You can't go back to believing it. It's not possible. You've got to kid yourself. You can't go back to that open belief that Father Christmas is going to appear from Lapland with Rudolph.

What happens is, just like with Father Christmas, you become disenchanted with that. You don't believe in it anymore. That's your disenchantment. That's a really beautiful word for it because we tend to be enchanted by the world, bewitched by the world. It's this knowledge, this understanding which undermines that bewitchment, that enchantment.

These moments of bewitchment and enchantment don't have to be huge, fantastic insights. They're just little understandings that keep coming to us all the time. What's happening is there's a slow movement in consciousness, a slow movement in the way we're seeing the world. This begins to accumulate, this begins to grow. It manifests in the way we feel about things, the way we respond to things rather than react. It manifests in the heart as compassion, love, sympathetic joy. These are all qualities that arise because we're undermining that fundamental delusion which is causing this root selfishness where we can only see the world from the way that we see it and for our own benefit.

As soon as that disenchantment comes, all the emotions around bewitchment disappear. That's your dispassion. That's where the heart's beginning to really cleanse itself. It's at these little moments that we experience these liberations. That liberation is the quality of freedom that the Buddha talks about, which is the essential feel of *Nibbāna*.

We get little insights like that. *Nibbāna* itself is a technical word. It refers to the final end. It's phrased as path, fruits and *Nibbāna*, but that doesn't mean to say that we can't get a little inkling as to what it is to be liberated from these desires. All that takes us to what's known as the destruction of the outflows, the *āsavas*, which will be my talk next week.

You've got this wheel of dependent origination constantly turning, and then slowly there's an awakening of "Hey, I'm suffering." As soon as that recognition comes up, then there's the desire to escape it. It's through this reflection, it's through faith, it's through good action that the faith begins to arise that the path that we're on is actually leading out of it. This leads to a natural gladness which leads to a deeper state of rapture, which is that interest, which is wanting to know how to get out of this. But that must be matched with calmness.

Then there comes this general happiness with things, and it's within that atmosphere that the concentration easily grows and with it this investigation. It's in the investigation that these knowledges and insights arise.

As soon as we see something, we become disenchanted. For instance, it's like when you overeat, and then afterwards you feel bloated, you feel heavy with it, and you have a little reflection. You say, "Well, this is caused by overeating. So the next time I see food, I'll go a bit more gently on it." There's all these little gross examples, but as you become disenchanted, more and more subtly within the way you observe your own psychology, you see every time there's an indulgence there's always an aftermath of dissatisfaction. It's really beginning to feel the dissatisfaction which leads you to the end of it.

So long as when the dissatisfaction comes up you keep going back to another pleasurable state to hide it from ourselves, then we're not actually seeing the suffering. Unwittingly we keep pounding this, we keep pounding the beat round and round - it's dependent origination. It's really catching the aftermath, the effects of indulgence, which makes us want to stop indulging. That's part of your knowledge and insight that brings about the disenchantment with the world as a place we can seek happiness.

Which, remember, is not a denial of the pleasures and joys of life. It's that wrong relationship of thinking that this is true happiness. That's what leads us to this lovely place where we're enjoying things, but there's that dispassion. Remember, the English word "passion" is quite lovely because it comes from the Latin meaning "I suffer." That's the liberation. That's the feeling of liberation. Slowly through this, we're undermining these *āsavas*, which I'll talk about next week - these outflows.

That's looking at dependent origination as a joyful process, or at least the process out of which we can find our liberation. I can only hope that my words have been of some assistance and that you will struggle against the old habits and release yourself from the pain of suffering sooner rather than later.

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