

# Dependent Origination and its Corollaries

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## Abstract

This research article concerns the Dependent Origination and Corollaries which are related to the Lord Buddha's Teachings. It definitely concerns to the Law of Karma, the Law of Causation mentioned in the Buddhist Teachings. The four main theories related to the Dependent Origination and Corollaries are, 1) The Law of Karma which is the Law of causality.

2. The theory of Momentariness which refers to the impermanence of every existence.

3. The theory of 'No-Ego' which refers to the unimportance of any material substance'.

4. The theory of Causal Efficiency'

**Keywords:** Dependent Origination

The doctrine of Dependent Origination as has been discussed earlier, The centrality of this teaching is of such that, the rest of the tenets of Buddhism can be easily deduced from it as they have been found to revolve around this principle. In fact, the whole of Buddhist philosophy seems to have been built around it like a mesh of network connectivity such that the moment a person picks up issue related to it, other doctrines of Buddhism tends to naturally spring forth or grow on it. In this paper, we will deal with all the principle that arises as corollaries of Dependent Origination in a step by step manner, one by one, such that this, in the process, accentuates and enhances the centrality and importance of the Doctrine of Dependent Origination and highlights the inescapable relation the other theories hold with due reference to it.

The doctrine of Dependent Origination being the central teaching of the Buddha, his other teachings can be easily deduced from it as corollaries<sup>1</sup> C.D. Sharma A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, p. 74.

To start with, the theory of Karma can be said to follow from or is an implication of the law of causation. Life in this present state can be explained in terms of one's past Karnasand is accredited to the impressions of the Karmas of the past life and in the same manner whatever our present actions are will in turn shape the future course of our life, Where one is Ignorant about the truth concerning the principle of Karma and its workings it results in a vicious circle of continuous rebirth as the law of kamma is instrumental in determining the course of life. Another theory that arises from the theory of Dependent Origination is the theory of momentariness (ksana-branga-vada) which arises as a corollary of the theory of Dependent Origination. This theory asserts that since the existence of things depend on the nature of their causes and conditions

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and these factors in turn are by nature dependent upon other factors they are said to be necessarily relative, dependent, conditional and finite and are therefore momentary by nature. To say that a thing arises and exists depending on its cause is in other words to be saying that it is momentary, for the very existence of the thing depends upon things such as the causal factors and its Conditions in the absence of which things that arises as an effect would not have arisen, remove the cause and the thing in itself in effect will cease to be. This gives rise to the universally accepted principle that things which arises, that which is born, that which is produced, must necessarily be subjected to death and destruction and is therefore impermanent, Going a step further we can assert that things which are not permanent are simply those which are momentary. Another important tenet that follows from the principle of Dependent Origination is that of the theory of No-Ego (nairativavada), as against the belief held by the other Schools of thought which believes in externalism and presupposes an eternal soul, the theory of Dependent Origination gives rise to the theory that there is nothing such as a permanent soul. On the other hand what is spoken of as the individual ego is something that is just momentary, the ego that is said to characterize individuals is ultimately false as what is there at the end is nothing but the five fleeting skandhas. It has been thus aptly pointed out that when everything else is said to be momentary, how come the ego alone which arises depending on some other factor be spoken of as permanent, the ego too is momentary and is therefore relative and false, Applying the same principle it can be said that the so called matter is also impermanent and thus unreal, applying the same principle it can be safely concluded that there is nothing such as a material substance (sanghatavada), Matter being dependent and relative by its very nature is momentary and therefore, ultimately unreal. Another theory that arises as a derivative of the theory of dependent origination is the theory of causal efficiency (artlia-kriva-Karitva) which is based on the fact that because each preceding link is causally efficient to products the succeeding link and thus the capacity to produce an effect becomes the criterion of existence.

## The theory of Kamma

The belief in the theory of Karma, it will be seen naturally follows from the doctrine of Dependent Origination as everything that is there is dependent upon some factor and does not exist on its own. The law of Karma is only a special form of the more general law of causation as conceived by Buddha. The present existence of an individual is, according to this doctrine, as according to that of the law of Karma, the effect of its past Karma; and the future life of existence would be the consequential effect of the Karma of this present existence,

1. Kamma (in Pali) or Karna (in Sanskrit) means any work or action done with some objective or purpose and all these good or bad actions are in turn classified on the basis of Kusalaor Akusala roots. Kamma can therefore be that of Kusal, Akusalor Avyakkirut2Jativusethatividhaun-Kussalarm, akusalam, abyakataunca. V. M. n. 999, V. P. 58

Accordingly in Buddhism, there are three types of Kamma, Physical (related to body), vocal (related to tongue) and mental (related to Mind)<sup>3</sup> Dr. Suwaj Sontakke *The Buddha: Dhamma and Doctrine*: p.97

All phenomena, mental and material, are subject to the law of dependent origination, which is subservient to the Law of Karma. The Buddha says, “ By Karma the World exists, by Kamma mankind exists; Beings are bound by Karma as the linch-pin of a chariot keeps the wheel on.”<sup>4</sup>Kathavathu, E. T., p. 315

The law of Karma is often equated with the law of Dhamma which is responsible for explaining factors such as the chain of causation, the wheel of existence etc.,<sup>5</sup>Ja-dunath Sinha *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 92 understanding of which assist and results in the progress of an individual towards enlightenment

The doctrine of Kamma brings to focus the integrity, unity and interconnectedness between the humans and the world that he inhabits so much that in the *Dhammapada* it is written that there is no place to hide in order to escape from the Kammic results

Bhraumanism in upholding the eternalist point of view makes too much of the permanent self but Buddhism in place of this ego puts forth the impermanent dharma in its place. The Buddha does not impose the responsibility of the individual for utilization of his own free desire rather it stresses on energy, effort, and endeavor

Buddhist himself said, “My action is my possession, my action is my inheritance, my action is the womb which bears me, my action is the race to which I am akin, my action is my refuge.”<sup>6</sup> Hopkins, E.W. *Buddhism religions of India*, (*Modifications of Karman Doctrine*, *JRAS*, 1906, p. 583)

It is we ourselves who can purge ourselves and attain emancipation by exercising our own free-will, good volitions and bring in the desired fruits in performing those good actions and on the other hand it is we ourselves who has the potentiality to self destruct in wrongfully making the worst choice of actions, kanna is the connecting link between one life of an individual und another, it is significant as the force which directs human society

“Although it is simply one type of natural law, it is the most important one for us as human beings, because it is our particular responsibility. We are creators of Kamma, and kamma in return shapes the fortunes and conditions of our lives. Thus the law of Kamma is very useful for men and society for it makes one aware of the consequences of our actions prompting us to do what is good and avoid that which is bad or negative. It is also highly educating for it makes people have believe in themselves, in their own capacity and capability of enlightenment for it is we ourselves who built heaven or hell. “By oneself indeed is evil done and by oneself is one defiled; by oneself is evil not done and by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity depend entirely on oneself; no one can purify another.”<sup>7</sup> DP, V, p. 165.

“Impermanent are all component things,  
They arise and cease that is their nature:  
They come into being and pass away,  
Release from them is bliss Supreme.”<sup>8</sup> DN., il, p. 157.

The doctrine of dependent origination also gives rise to the Buddhist theory of Momentariness or the truth concerning the transitory nature of all existing things. Buddha says that all things are endowed with four characteristics, namely, origination (utpada), staying (sthiti), growth (jara) and destruction (nirodh). The Buddha repeatedly teaches that everything of this world is subjected to change and decay and is impermanent.<sup>9</sup>Mahaparinibbanasuta, ii, 10.

Everything that arise, that which is born originates depending on some preceding conditions, it will disappear when the condition ceases to be. Whatever has a beginning has also an end and is necessarily subjected to death and destruction. Buddha, therefore says, “Know that whatever arises from causes and conditions and is in every respect impermanent.”<sup>10</sup>Mahanarinibbana sutta

“That which seems everlasting will perish, that which is high will be laid low; where meeting is, parting will be; where birth is, death will come.”<sup>11</sup> Dhammapada.

He states that all conditioned things are impermanent unsatisfactory when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification. All things are not-self, when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification.<sup>12</sup> Dhammapada-279

Thus, the world is nothing but an aggregate of the momentary fleeting of the five Skandhas and so there is nothing such as a spiritual or a material substance or Pudgala-nairatmya Everything is conditional, dependent, relative; pratyasamutpanna is merely a link in the chain, a transitory phase in the series only the ceaseless change goes on. Everything is sorrow (sarvamdukkham): everything is devoid of self (sarvamanatma): everything is momentary (sarvamKsanikam) is said to be the roaring of Sugata-Lion (Saugatasimhanda),

The transitory of the world and life in It has been an accepted fact and has been talked over by mankind all through the ages. This has been logically captured and perfected in the Buddhist theory of the doctrine of impermanence which was develop further into the theory of momentariness (ksanika-vade) by the Buddha s later followers. Under this everything was viewed as conditional and therefore having no permanent existence<sup>13</sup> MN., I, 35 and that things last not even for a short period of time but exist only for one partless moment of time. Everything is becoming changing and in flux. There is both neither being nor non-being but becoming 3 phenomenon that endures only for a moment before passing away. Everything is a manifestation of the flow of E’lan Vital just like a river which is a continuous flow of different waters and one cannot take a dip twice in the same water. The world is a succession of transient phenomena produced by the preceding phenomena and produces succeeding phenomena.

## Theory of Causal Efficiency

The World of becoming is governed by the Law of Causality, (Pratyasutpada) which is without a beginning or end. All existences conscious and unconscious are impermanent components that are essence less they simply are composed of qualities that combines together, take individuals forms, and break up. Whatever is existent is

momentary like a mass of clouds. The changes are casually connected with one another. Capacity of production and production of effects must go together. Causal efficiency cannot exist without production. Existence consists in causal efficiency or production of effects. It has been observed that cause produces their effects either simultaneously or successively but this production of simultaneous or successive effects are possible only in the case of momentary causes. Permanent entities are not capable of simultaneous or successive production of effects for the alternatives cannot be proven. Assuming that a permanent entity too has the potentiality to produce its effects at the present time, it has to be granted that this entity has the capacity of producing its effects in the past and the future, Now, if it has the capacity, it must produce past and future effects in the present moment, since what is capable of producing an effect at a particular time must produce it at that time. But a permanent entity does not do so, it does not produce past and future effects at that time and when this is the case it can be safely concluded that what does not produce an effect at a particular time is not capable of producing it neither at the present moment nor in any course of time. Thus a permanent entity does not have the causal efficiency to produce effects. For instance, a piece of stone can never produce a sprout.

### **The theory of non-existence of the soul**

The law of change is universal: neither man, nor any other being animate or inanimate is exempted from this conditioned existence as things continually changing, lasting only for a moment. Many schools of philosophy Indian as well as western popularly hold the belief that there is in man an abiding substance called the soul (atma), capable of transmigrating from one body to another body, that is everlasting and persists through various stages of change that characterizes the body. The soul being an eternal substance is said to continue its existence even before birth and after death, and can live among the eternal and final realities forever enjoying a life of bliss or strive depending upon its karma. Buddha however in agreement and consistent with his theories of dependent origination, Conditional existence and universal change, denies the existence of such eternal substance called the soul. But now, it may be asked, as to how does he then explain the continuity of a person through different births, or even the changes an individual undergoes in his lifetime of being a child an adult and of old age? Though Buddha denies the identity of a permanent individual saying that he is nothing other than the aggregate of the five skandhas, Buddha does not deny the continuity of the streams of successive states that compose his life. The assertion that the self is not eternal and transcendental means that the five aggregates constitute the not-self. That there is no permanent self for the self is nothing other than an empirical aggregate. There is no self beyond them.<sup>14</sup> Cp. Hume.

Life is an unbroken stream of conscious States each preceding condition giving rise to the succeeding one and each succeeding state dependent upon the preceding stage. "Bhikkhus, in one who contemplates all phenomena which are object of attachment as enjoyable, the arising of consciousness (in Rebirth) takes place. Dependent on

Consciousness, mind-and-body arises.15 VN., 59.

The continuity of the life series as is shown is based on a causal connection running through the different states. This continuity is often explained with the example of a lamp Bunny throughout the night. This theory of the non-existence of soul (annatta-vada) plays a very important part in understanding the teachings of Buddha. Buddha, therefore, repeatedly exhorts his disciple to give up the false view about the self in pointing out that people, who suffer the illusions of the self, do not know its nature clearly and are unable to tell its whereabouts. He clubs this question as under ‘avyakruta’ and would not say yes or no to them as they in actuality do not merit discussion This, he, wittily remarks that those who talk and are concerned about the nation of self is like falling in love with the most beautiful maiden in the land though she has never been seen nor known<sup>16</sup>or it is like building a staircase for mounting a place which has never been seen<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 261

Man is only a conventional name for a collection of different constituents<sup>18</sup>Potthapinda – Sutta (Dialogues, 1, pp. 259-61 the material body, the immaterial mind (manas or Citta), the formless consciousness (Vijnana), just as a chariot is a collection of wheels, axles, shafts, etc.<sup>19</sup>Milindha-panha, Warren, pp. 129-133.

Man as such is nothing but a collection of five groups (Panca-skandhas) of changing elements, namely, (1) form (Rupa) consisting of different factors which we perceive in this body having form, (2) feelings (Vedana) of pleasure, pain and indifference, (3) perception including understanding and naming (Sanjna) (4) predispositions or tendencies generated by the impressions of past experience (Samskaras), and (5) consciousness itself (Vijnana), The last four are together called Nama. The existence of man depends on this collection and it dissolves when the collection breaks up. The soul or the ego denotes nothing more than this collection and when the constituents themselves as spoken at as impermanent and transitory the claim of an individual soul does not find a place of credibility. “Look upon the world,” says the Buddha, “as void having destroyed the view of oneself as really existing, So one may overcome death: the king of death will not see him who thus regards the world.

Once the Buddha kept silent or the existence or non-existence of the Self. In wandering Monk Vacchagottasaid, “Is there the ego?” Buddha was silent. Again he said, “Is there not the ego?” Still Buddha kept silent. When the monk departed, the Buddha said to Ananda that an affirmative answer would lead to externalism (sasvatavada) and the negative answer would lead to annihilationism (ucchedavada). Both of which are wrong views. The ego or self is not eternal; nor is the self non-existent. If the self is right-existent, there can be no transmigration and reaping of the fruits of actions. The truth lies in the middle of the two extreme Views. The phenomenal or empirical self exists.

There is nowhere to be found in the aggregates ‘I am’”<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 2.

Thus the doctrine of No-self means two things: (1) the self is an aggregate of impermanent mental and bodily processes; (2) the world is unsubstantial and void: it is all aggregate of impermanent qualities devoid of substances. The doctrine of no-self also means that the world is unsubstantial and soulless. All external things are aggregate

gates of changing qualities. There is no permanent substance apart from impermanent qualities. The permanent identical substance is a fiction of the imagination. All forms of existence, material, and psychological are impermanent and soulless, they are subject to the inexorable law of becoming. The Buddha in denying the permanent self says, 'The world is empty of a self, or of anything of the nature of a self. The five seats of the five senses, and the mind, and the feeling that is related to mind: all these are void of a self or of anything that is self-like.'<sup>22</sup> SN., iii, 13

"Whatever material form there be whether past future or present internal or external gross or subtle, low or lofty, far or near; that material form the monk sees, mediates upon examines with systematic attention, he thus seeing meditating upon and examining with systematic attention would find it empty he would find substantial and without essence what essence monk. could there be in material Form."<sup>23</sup> SN., 3, p. 142.

After His attainment of Enlightenment, the Buddha in his first discourse to the Pabncavariya Bhikkhus at the deer park at Isipatana near Banaras where upon he clearly states, "O, Bhikkhus, rupa, the material body is not self or soul. If Rupa were self (Atta), the inner core of one's own body. then Rupa would not tend to distress. And it ought to be possible to say about it, let my body be thus (in the best of conditions). Let my body not be thus (in the worst of conditions). Rupa may be interpreted in this manner."<sup>24</sup> Vinaya Pitaka, Mahavagga / MajjhimaNikaya 1: 4: 5, 3: 1: 9,

But as all skandhas are formed therefore they are bound to get destroyed.

The Sutta literature defines the rupakkhandha-the material aggregate as consisting of four primary permanent elements-Earth, water, fire, and air<sup>25</sup> MN., 1, 185, 53, SN., i, 3 – 4; ii, 59. In the Visuddhimagga<sup>28a</sup>, Buddhaghosa defines rupa as of four primary elements and the matter derived from them,

which undergo changes and secondary matter of which a specific definition is not given. It sometimes includes ether in the elements, and sometimes treats it as a derivative. Matter is also seen classified in terms of internal and external, gross and subtle and far and near. It is a matter of fact that every existent being living or non living beings from the very moment they come to existence began to decay instead of growing. It is also accompanied by every moment of continuous changes and this decaying of things from the moment it is born is termed as Rupassa-Jarata. Again this decaying of things is succeeded by a state where the component parts disintegrates and decomposes and finally faces total extinction of annihilation Known as Rupassa-aniccata. The Dhammasangani defines it as:-

"Yorupassakhayovayo, bhedo, paribhedo, aniccataaantarahannam, idam tam rupassa aniccata"<sup>26</sup>Dhs. P. 190

The destruction or the dissolution of the thing here is nothing other than the appearance of that particular character of all materials qualities called aniccata inherent in a particular thing.

## Nirvana

The third noble truth contains the fact about the extinction of suffering, Nirvana

has been described as extinction, as a state of happiness here and hereafter<sup>27</sup>IhaMandati-*pechchahandati-Dhammapada*, 18, as an inconceivable and indestructible state, or as a changeless state. It is the highest good.<sup>29</sup>*Nibbananaparammamsukhain-Ibid*, 203.

It is often compared with the extinction of the flame of a lamp.<sup>30</sup>*Nibbantidhirayathayampadipo-Suttanipata*, *Ratansutta*.

Without a counterpart, there is nibbana, and it is not possible by simile, argument, cause, or method, to point out the shape, configuration, age, or size of nibbana.”<sup>31</sup>*Milindapanho*. 315.

Nirvana literally means ‘cooled’ or ‘extinguished’ and ‘Blowing out’. Nirvana is the extinction of Passions such as greed, hatred, anger, and delusion and of the impurities, Sensuality, will-to-be born, and ignorance which are compared to fires. It is the extinction of passions or the ‘cooling’ of the fires and the consequent suffering. It is not to be understood as extinction of existence<sup>32</sup> Rhys Davids shows that the Pali word for liberated “*Parinibbuto*” is used of living persons and scarcely of dead Arhants. (Vide *Dialogues*, II. P. 132, 1, n.) or annihilation but rather deliverance from the sense of individuality<sup>33</sup>*Sanannaphala-Sutta*, *Dialogues*, 1, p. 84; *DP.*, 90, 94-96;;*Parinibban sutta* and to mistake Nirvana as annihilation is a wicked heresy.<sup>34</sup>*Samyuttanikaya*, III, 109,

It is not to be mistaken with inaction but is compatible with active intellectual and Social life. It is not renunciation of actions as can be seen from the life at Buddha himself who continued to strive for the welfare of humanity after his Enlightenment for 45 rainy seasons but it is the purging of all actions of attachment, aversion, and delusion. An enlightened heart being selfless sees that the raft with which one constructed with toil and helped him to get across the flood of misery, should be left for others and not allowed to perish this one began to work for the emancipation of many. Here despite the continuation of this physical form attachment to worldly things and the desire to live is extinguished and annihilated and so it is rightly described as the renunciation of all the bases of rebirth, destruction of craving, will-to-live, and becoming.<sup>36</sup>*Upasivananavapuccha*, 1073-75, *AN.*, iii, 359: ii, 118; *MN.* 1, 304; ix; *SN.*, L, 134; IV, 251, 261 & 371: *DN.*, iii, 130.

Nirvana is a state of enlightenment which results in removal of all ignorance. It is a state of perfect equanimity which removes attachments, aversion, and delusion. It is a state of stainless purity, perfect peace and good-will. It is a state of perfect self-possession and unconditioned freedom. The liberated person has complete insight, complete passionlessness, unruffled calm, perfect self-control, tranquil mind, tranquil Words, and tranquil deeds.<sup>37</sup> *Samanna-phala-sutta* (*Dialogues*, 1, p. 34).

There is extinction of individual existence as he is devoid of mental grasping, ignorance, and craving, which produce a new individual of five aggregates and being so he is completely destroyed of egoism and ultimately the sense of individuality.

Nirvana is also divided into categorized as *Sa-upadi-sesa-Nirvana* and *anupadi-sesa-nirvana*. One who is perfectly disciplined and calmed is said to be *Parinibbuta* or perfected.<sup>38</sup> Mrs. Rhys Davids; *Buddhism*, pp. 192 & 192., T. 204 20/6 / a018



Sa-upadi-sesa-Nirvana means the attainment of nirvana with the aggregates of five skandhas remaining or the residual vital conditions and the remainder of mental grasping, the cause of rebirth, Nirvana while being alive. The latter means “nirvana” without the residual vital conditions or without the remainder of mental grasping or the complete nirvana with the extinction of the five skandhas. Parinirvana literally means ‘completely gone out’

## Conclusion

Dependent Origination lies at this core of Buddha's teaching. It shows that things do happen or come into existence due to some prior cause and never on blind fate. There must be a fitting, cause to explain the effect, a cause that ceases the moment the effect begins and an effect that itself lasts for a moment for what is brought into existence is bound to dissolve. In fact the seeds of germination themselves humanity blinded by ignorance fails to see this truth and under the illusion of greed, hatred and delusion begins to assert things as belonging to him, strives and cling for that which is not resulting in misery and suffering. Failing to see the fleeting nature of all things we cling, and pine for that which is just a passing phase, this striving for the things that are impermanent results in suffering. But for these who are enlightened, those who have realized the truth of Dependent Origination what was earlier dark is now light, what is suffering for the other is emancipation for in realizing the truth the cling to neither and now but treads the path of the middle way. They in realizing the law of Dependent Origination know that everything is governed by the law of kamma and in seeing the momentariness or impermanence of nature have realized the now existence of a permanent self, of the fleeting material world and the composite nature of things which is but an aggregate bound to dissolution.

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