

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ་དང་པོ་དང་རྣམ་པར་དབྱེ་བ་བསྟན་པ།

**Teaching the Fundamental Exposition and
Detailed Analysis of Dependent Arising**

Pratītyasamutpādādivibhaṅganirdeśa

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ་དང་པོ་དང་རྣམ་པར་དབྱེ་བ་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་མདོ།

rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba dang po dang rnam par dbye ba bstan pa zhes bya ba'i mdo

The Sūtra “Teaching the Fundamental Exposition and Detailed Analysis of Dependent
Arising”

Pratītyasamutpādādiviḥṅganirdeśanāmasūtra



Toh 211

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SUMMARY

s.1

In the Jeta Grove outside Śrāvastī, monks have gathered to listen to the Buddha as he presents the foundational doctrine of dependent arising. The Buddha first gives the definition of dependent arising and then teaches the twelve factors that form the causal chain of existence in saṃsāra as well as the defining characteristics of these twelve factors.

ac.

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ac.1

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INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1

Dependent arising is one of the core teachings of Buddhism. The canonical accounts of the Buddha's awakening relate how at first he hesitated to describe the profound realization he had attained, given how difficult it would be for others to comprehend. At last, persuaded to speak of his discovery, the Buddha began by teaching the four truths of the noble ones. Then, to explain in more detail the causes of suffering and its cessation, he taught the aggregates, how they are misconstrued as a self, and the theory of dependent arising, based in part on the pan-Indian idea of moral causation, as a means to gain insight into the nature of reality. This teaching was later analyzed in great detail by the various Buddhist philosophical schools. It is a topic discussed in many other sūtras and has been widely interpreted in commentaries by the Buddhist traditions.

i.2

Teaching the Fundamental Exposition and Detailed Analysis of Dependent Arising takes place in Śrāvastī, the ancient capital of the Kośala state located near the Rapti River in what is today northeastern Uttar Pradesh. In Buddhist India, Śrāvastī was famous for housing the Jeta Grove monastery. This monastery was erected in a park, outside the city, which had been donated to the Buddha and his community by the wealthy benefactor Anāthapiṇḍada. Tradition relates that the Buddha spent twenty-four rainy seasons at this important monastery. The sūtra begins with the Buddha teaching a congregation of monks. He first presents the topic of dependent arising and summarizes the doctrine: "If this exists, that arises; by this having been produced, that is produced." Whatever is born has arisen in reliance on causes and conditions, with no cause or condition being primary or absolute. In this there is no phenomenon that exists independently. This general meaning of dependent arising applies to both animate and inanimate objects. In his teaching the Buddha then explains how twelve progressively arising factors cause beings to continuously take birth, age, and die, only to become born anew. These twelve factors are described as

the progressive chain of events that accounts for the perpetual suffering of saṃsāra. After presenting the twelve links, the Buddha elucidates them with a detailed analysis, subdividing and defining each of the twelve factors.

i.3 The sūtra is today extant in Sanskrit as well as Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, and Mongolian translations. The Sanskrit is found as part of the *Nidānasamṃyukta* collection.¹ Indian commentaries on this text (today extant only in Tibetan translation) were written by Vasubandhu (fourth–fifth century CE, Toh 3995²) and Guṇamati (sixth century CE, Toh 3996³). The text was translated several times into Chinese, first by Kumārajīva in the early fifth century CE (Taishō 123) and later by Hsüan-tsang in 661 CE (Taishō 124). Apart from these two independent translations, the sūtra was also translated by Guṇabhadra in the the early fifth century CE as part of his translation of the *Samṃyuktāgama* (Taishō 99).

i.4 The Tibetan translation has no colophon, so we do not know when or by whom it was produced. It is, however, included in the Denkarma inventory of translated texts, compiled at a date in the early ninth century thought to have been 812 CE, so it must have been translated at the latest by that date.⁴

i.5 This English translation is based on the Tibetan translation in the Degé Kangyur in consultation with the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*). We also consulted the Sanskrit editions by Tripathi (1962) and Vaidya (Ānandajoti 2009).

tr.

THE TRANSLATION

The Sūtra

Teaching the Fundamental Exposition and Detailed Analysis of Dependent Arising

- 1.1 [F.123.b] Homage to the Three Jewels.⁵
- 1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavān was dwelling in Śrāvastī at Jeta Grove, in the park of Anāthapiṇḍada.⁶
- 1.3 Then the Bhagavān spoke to the monks: “Monks,⁷ I shall teach you the fundamental exposition and detailed analysis of dependent arising. Listen very well and bear this in mind as I explain. What is the fundamental exposition of dependent arising? It is thus: if this exists, that arises; by this having been produced, that is produced.
- 1.4 “It is thus: through the condition of ignorance, formations arise; through the condition of formations, consciousness arises; through the condition of consciousness, name-and-form arises; through the condition of name-and-form, the six sense sources arise; through the condition of the six sense sources, contact arises; through the condition of contact, feeling arises; through the condition of feeling, craving arises; through the condition of craving, grasping arises; through the condition of grasping, existence arises; through the condition of existence, birth arises; through the condition of birth, aging and death—as well as sorrow, lamentation, suffering, unhappiness, and strife—arise. In this way, this sole great heap of suffering arises. This is the fundamental exposition of dependent arising.
- 1.5 “What is the detailed analysis of dependent arising? What is *ignorance* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of ignorance, formations arise’? It is not knowing the past, not knowing the future, and not knowing either the past or

the future. It is not knowing the inner, not knowing the outer, and not knowing either the inner or the outer. It is not knowing actions, not knowing their maturation, and not knowing either actions [F.124.a] or their maturation. It is not knowing the Buddha, not knowing the Dharma, not knowing the Saṅgha. It is not knowing suffering, origin, cessation, or the path. It is not knowing the causes and not knowing that phenomena arise from causes. It is not knowing virtue and nonvirtue. It is not knowing unseemliness and not knowing the absence of unseemliness. It is not knowing what to engage in and what not to engage in. It is not knowing what is bad, sublime, negative, or positive. It is not knowing the phenomena that dependently arise within such divisions. It is failing to understand the six sense sources of contact just as they are. It is not knowing what is and how it is. It is not seeing and not understanding. It is being confused, deluded, ignorant, and obscured. This is ignorance.

1.6 “What are *formations* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of ignorance, formations arise’? They are threefold. What are the three?⁸ They are the formations of the body, the formations of speech, and the formations of the mind.

1.7 “What is *consciousness* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of formations, consciousness arises’? It is the six collections of consciousness: the consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

1.8 “What is *name* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of consciousness, name-and-form arises’? It is the four formless aggregates. They are the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of formations, and the aggregate of consciousness.

1.9 “What is *form*? Whatever form there may be, it is all the four great elements and form derived from the four great elements. In this way, when both form and the aforementioned name are taken together, they are called *name-and-form*.⁹

1.10 “What are *the six sense sources* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of name-and-form, the six sense sources arise’? There are six inner sense sources: the inner sense sources of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. [F. 124.b]

1.11 “What is *contact* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of the six sense sources, contact arises’? There are six collections of contact: being conjoined with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. This is contact.

1.12 “What is *feeling* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of contact, feeling arises’? There are three feelings: pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain.

1.13 “What is *craving* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of feeling, craving arises’? There are three cravings: the craving of the desire realm, the craving of the form realm, and the craving of the formless realm.

- 1.14 “What is *grasping* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of craving, grasping arises’? Grasping is of four types: grasping at desire, grasping at views, grasping at moral rules and vows and rites, and grasping at theories that assert the self.
- 1.15 “What is *existence* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of grasping, existence arises’? There are three existences: the existences of the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.
- 1.16 “What is *birth* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of existence, birth arises’? *Birth* refers to the way a being is born into a particular class of beings. It refers to conception, entrance, maturation, manifestation, obtaining aggregates, obtaining elements, obtaining sense sources, fully developing aggregates, and the manifestation of the life faculty.
- 1.17 “What is *aging* in the statement, ‘Through the condition of birth, aging and death arise’? *Aging* refers to becoming bald, white haired, wrinkled, worn out, slack, hunched like a cow drinking water, covered with liver spots, having drooping limbs, being afflicted with rheumatism, breathing heavily, walking hunched over, walking with a stick, feeling unwell and lethargic, being weakened, being exhausted, having impaired faculties, losing one’s memory, and becoming old and decrepit. This is called aging.
- 1.18 “What is *death*? [F.125.a] *Death* is the departure or passing away of each and every being from their respective class of sentient beings; it is their disintegration, internal deterioration, loss of life, fading of bodily warmth, cessation of the life faculty, discarding of the aggregates, dying, and decease. Combining the two into one, death with the aforementioned aging, this is known as *aging and death*. This is the detailed analysis of dependent arising.
- 1.19 “O monks, I said that I would explain to you the fundamental exposition and detailed analysis of dependent arising, and they are as I have now described them.”¹⁰
- 1.20 *This concludes “The Sūtra Teaching the Fundamental Exposition and Detailed Analysis of Dependent Arising.”*

NOTES

n.

- 1 The *Nidānasamyukta* is a collection of canonical texts that present the topic of causation. The collection is part of the *Samyuktāgama* of the Sarvāstivāda school. It has partially survived in Sanskrit in the form of manuscript fragments discovered in Central Asia. This collection was also translated in its entirety into Chinese (Taishō 99). Many of the texts in the *Nidānasamyukta* (although not the sūtra translated here) are also included in the Pāli *Nidānasamyutta* collection of the *Samyuttanikāya*. For a Sanskrit edition of *Teaching the Fundamental Exposition and Detailed Analysis of Dependent Arising*, see Tripathi (1962). See also Ānandajoti (2009) for an online edition by P.L. Vaidya. See also Mejer (1997) for a study of this sūtra.
- 2 *Pratītyasamutpādādivibhaṅganirdeśa* (rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba dang po 'i rnam par dbye ba bshad pa).
- 3 *Pratītyasamutpādādivibhaṅganirdeśaṭīkā* (rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba dang po dang rnam par dbye ba bstan pa'i rgya cher bshad pa).
- 4 See Denkarma, F.301.a.3. See also Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), 161–162, no. 297.
- 5 This phrase is omitted in Vaidya's Sanskrit edition.
- 6 The Sanskrit in Vaidya's edition continues this sentence: "... together with a great saṅgha of monks containing twelve hundred and fifty monks."
- 7 Tripathi's Sanskrit edition begins here.
- 8 This question is omitted in Tripathi's and Vaidya's editions.
- 9 Tripathi's Sanskrit edition reads: "In this way, when both form and the aforementioned name are taken together, they are *name-and-form*. This is called *name-and-form*."
- 10 Tripathi's Sanskrit edition ends here. After this paragraph, Vaidya's edition includes the customary statement: "The monks, uplifted, rejoiced in the teaching of the Blessed One."

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Anāthapiṇḍada

mgon med zas sbyin

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན།

Anāthapiṇḍada

A wealthy householder of Śrāvastī renowned for his generosity. He spent a small fortune to purchase the grove of Prince Jeta, built a monastery there, and offered both to the Buddha.

g.2 Jeta Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

Jetavana

A grove owned by Prince Jeta in Śrāvastī, the capital of the kingdom of Kośala. It was bought by Anāthapiṇḍada and became the monastery that the Buddha spent most rainy seasons in and is therefore the setting for many sūtras.

g.3 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

མཉམ་ཡོད།

Śrāvastī

Capital city of the Kośala state, ruled by one of the Buddha's royal patrons, King Prasenajit. One of the six largest cities in India during the time of the Buddha.

g.4 Aging and death

rga shi

རྣ་ཤི།

jarāmaraṇa

The twelfth link of dependent arising.

g.5 Bhagavān

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

“Blessed One.” Epithet of the Buddha.

g.6 Birth

skye ba

སྐྱེ་བ།

jāti

The eleventh link of dependent arising.

g.7 Consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna

The third link of dependent arising. The fifth of the five aggregates.

g.8 Contact

reg pa

རེག་པ།

sparsā

The sixth link of dependent arising.

g.9 Craving

sred pa

སྲེད་པ།

tṛṣṇā

The eighth link of dependent arising.

g.10 Dependent arising

rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་པར་འབྱུང་བ།

pratītyasamutpāda

Arising based on the law of causality: whatever has arisen does not have an independent existence.

g.11 Desire realm

'dod pa' i khams

འདོད་པའི་ཁམས།

kamadhātu

One of the three realms of saṃsāra, characterized by a prevalence of desire.

g.12 Existence

srid pa

སྲིད་པ།

bhava

The tenth link of dependent arising.

g.13 Feeling

tshor ba

ཚོར་བ།

vedanā

The seventh link of dependent arising. The second of the five aggregates.

g.14 Form

gzugs

གཟུགས།

rūpa

The first of the five aggregates.

- g.15 **Form realm**
gzugs kyi khams
 གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ཁམས།
rūpadhātu
 One of the three realms of saṃsāra, characterized by coarse materiality similar to the desire realm.
- g.16 **Formations**
'du byed
 འདུ་བྱེད།
saṃskāra
 The second link of dependent arising. The fourth of the five aggregates.
- g.17 **Formless realm**
gzugs med pa'i khams
 གཟུགས་མེད་པའི་ཁམས།
ārūpyadhātu
 One of the three realms of saṃsāra, characterized by having only a subtle mental form.
- g.18 **Grasping**
len pa
 ལེན་པ།
upādāna
 The ninth link of dependent arising.
- g.19 **Great element**
'byung ba chen po
 འབྱུང་བ་ཆེན་པོ།
mahābhūta
 The four great or gross elements are earth, water, fire, and air.
- g.20 **Ignorance**
ma rig pa
 མ་རིག་པ།
avidyā
 The first link of dependent arising.
- g.21 **Name-and-form**
ming dang gzugs
 མིང་དང་གཟུགས།
nāmarūpa
 The fourth link of dependent arising.
- g.22 **Park of Anāthapiṇḍada**
mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba
 མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྤྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།
Anāthapiṇḍadarāma
 Park given to the Buddha by the wealthy donor Anāthapiṇḍada.
- g.23 **Perception**
'du shes
 འདུ་ཤེས།

saṃjñā

The third of the five aggregates.

g.24 Sense source

skye mched

སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

āyatana

See "six sense sources."

g.25 Six sense sources

skye mched drug

སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དུག

ṣaḍāyatana

The fifth link of dependent arising.