

The representative formulation of conditioned genesis lists twelve factors. In the forward order - the origin of suffering: when this exists, that exists - these twelve factors are as follows:

- (1) Conditioned by *ignorance* (avijjā), activities (saṃkhārā) arise (or exist);
- (2) conditioned by *activities*, consciousness (viññāṇa) arises;
- (3) conditioned by *consciousness*, name-and-material form (nāma-rūpa)<sup>66</sup> arise;
- (4) conditioned by *name-and-material form*, the six sense-spheres (saḷāyatana) arise;
- (5) conditioned by *the six sense-spheres*, contact (phassa) arises;
- (6) conditioned by *contact*, feeling (vedanā) arises;
- (7) conditioned by *feeling*, craving (taṇhā) arises;
- (8) conditioned by *craving*, attachment (upādāna) arises;
- (9) conditioned by *attachment*, becoming (bhava) arises;
- (10) conditioned by *becoming*, birth (jāti) arises;
- (11) conditioned by *birth* arise
- (12) *aging-and-death, along with grief, lamentation, pain, depression and despair* (jarā-maraṇa-soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassa-upāyāsa); thus arises (exists) this whole mass of suffering.

In negative formulation - the cessation of suffering: when this does not exist, that does not exist - the twelve factors are: Conditioned by the ceasing of ignorance, activities cease; conditioned by the ceasing of activities, consciousness ceases; ... thus ceases this whole mass of suffering.

While this is the representative formulation, conditioned genesis does not always have twelve factors in early Buddhist texts. There also exist accounts of it which list five

factors,<sup>67</sup> eight,<sup>68</sup> nine,<sup>69</sup> ten,<sup>70</sup> or eleven factors,<sup>71</sup> as well as the usual twelve factors. The statement of conditioned genesis with just five factors runs: (1) craving, (2) attachment, (3) becoming, (4) birth, and (5) "aging-and-death, along with grief, lamentation, pain, depression and despair." This most concise formula corresponds directly to two of the four noble truths, since (5) "aging-and-death, along with grief, lamentation, pain, depression and despair" is suffering (first truth), and (1) craving (taṇhā) is the origin of suffering (second truth). Since craving is itself a conditioned phenomenon, the series of causes can be extended to as many as twelve factors.

At SN 12, 20<sup>72</sup> and its Chinese counterpart SA 296,<sup>73</sup> and also at SA 299,<sup>74</sup> it is stated that conditioned genesis is not something made by the Buddha himself or by others: whether or not a Buddha arises in the world, this is the status of dharma (P. dhammaṭṭhitatā, 法住 Skt. dharmasthititā), the certainty of dharma (P. dhamma-niyāmatā, 法定 Skt. dharmā-niyāmatā), the fact of causal connection (P. idappaccayatā) – or the element (nature) of dharma (法界 Skt. dharmā-dhātu). In other words, the texts in the Pāli and Chinese versions record in common that conditioned genesis is a principle of nature, of phenomena as they really are.

This principle is connected with emptiness. At SN 20 7, the Buddha says:

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Those discourses uttered by the Tathāgata (the Buddha) are profound, deep in meaning, supramundane (lokuttarā), **connected with emptiness** (suññatapaṭisaṃyuttā).<sup>75</sup>

By "discourses (suttanta)" is meant the teaching or dharma of the Buddha. That teaching is profound, deep in meaning, because it is supramundane and connected with