

Dependent Origination

In

Early Buddhism

- ignorance (*avijjā*)
- **willed actions (*saṅkhārā*)**
- **consciousness (*viññāṇa*)**
- **mental aspects and form (*nāma-rūpa*)**
- the six senses
- sense impressions
- sensations
- craving
- fuel / taking up
- life
- birth
- old age and death & suffering

“Mendicants, what you intend or plan,
and what you have underlying
tendencies for

become a basis for the stationing of
consciousness. (*viññāṇaṭṭhiti*)

When there is a basis, consciousness is
established.

When consciousness is established and
grows, there is rebirth into a new state
of existence in the future. ... (SN 12.38)

“If you don’t intend or plan or have underlying tendencies, there is no basis for the stationing of consciousness.

When there is no basis, consciousness is not established.

When consciousness is not established and doesn’t grow, there’s no rebirth into a new state of existence in the future ...
(SN 12.38)

“Mendicants, what you intend or plan, and what you have underlying tendencies for become a basis for the stationing of consciousness.

When there is a basis, consciousness is established.

When consciousness is established and grows, there is an inclination.

When there is an inclination, there is coming and going.

When there is coming and going, there is passing away and reappearing. ... (SN 12.40)

“If you don’t intend or plan or have underlying tendencies,
there is no basis for the stationing of consciousness.

When there is no basis, consciousness is not established.

When consciousness is not established and doesn’t grow, there’s no inclination.

When there’s no inclination, there’s no coming and going.

When there’s no coming and going, there’s no passing away and reappearing. ... (SN 12.40)

“... a mendicant ... enters and remains in the first absorption ...

They enjoy it and like it and find it satisfying. (= *sañkhārā*)

If they abide in that, are committed to it, and meditate on it often without losing it, when they die they're reborn in the company of the gods of Brahmā's Host. ... (AN 4.123)

- ignorance
 - willed acts
 - consciousness
 - mental aspects and form
 - the six senses
 - sense impressions
 - sensations
 - craving
 - fuel / taking up
 - life
 - birth
 - old age and death & suffering
- } consciousness
in general**
- } specific instances of
consciousness**

Willed acts → consciousness

“If a foolish person does good willed acts, consciousness travels on to a good place. If he does bad willed acts, consciousness travels on to a bad place.” (SN12.51)

“After his body breaks down, the foolish person travels on to another body.” (SN12.19)

Once Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha: “Venerable, you mentioned life (*bhava*), but how does a life come about?”

Once Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha: “Venerable, you mentioned life (*bhava*), but how does a life come about?”

“Ananda, would life in the sensual worlds (*kāma-bhava*) appear if there were no deeds (*karma*) that ripen in the **sensual realm**?”

“No, Venerable.”

“So with deeds as the field, consciousness as the seed, and craving as the moisture, consciousness of beings who are obstructed by ignorance and tied [to samsara] by craving, gets planted in the **lower realm**. That is how a next life is created.” ...

“Ananda, would life with form (*rūpa-bhava*) appear if there were no deeds that ripen in the **realm with forms**?”

“No, Venerable.”

“So with deeds as the field, consciousness as the seed, and craving as the moisture, consciousness ... gets planted in the **middle realm**. That is how a next life is created.” ...

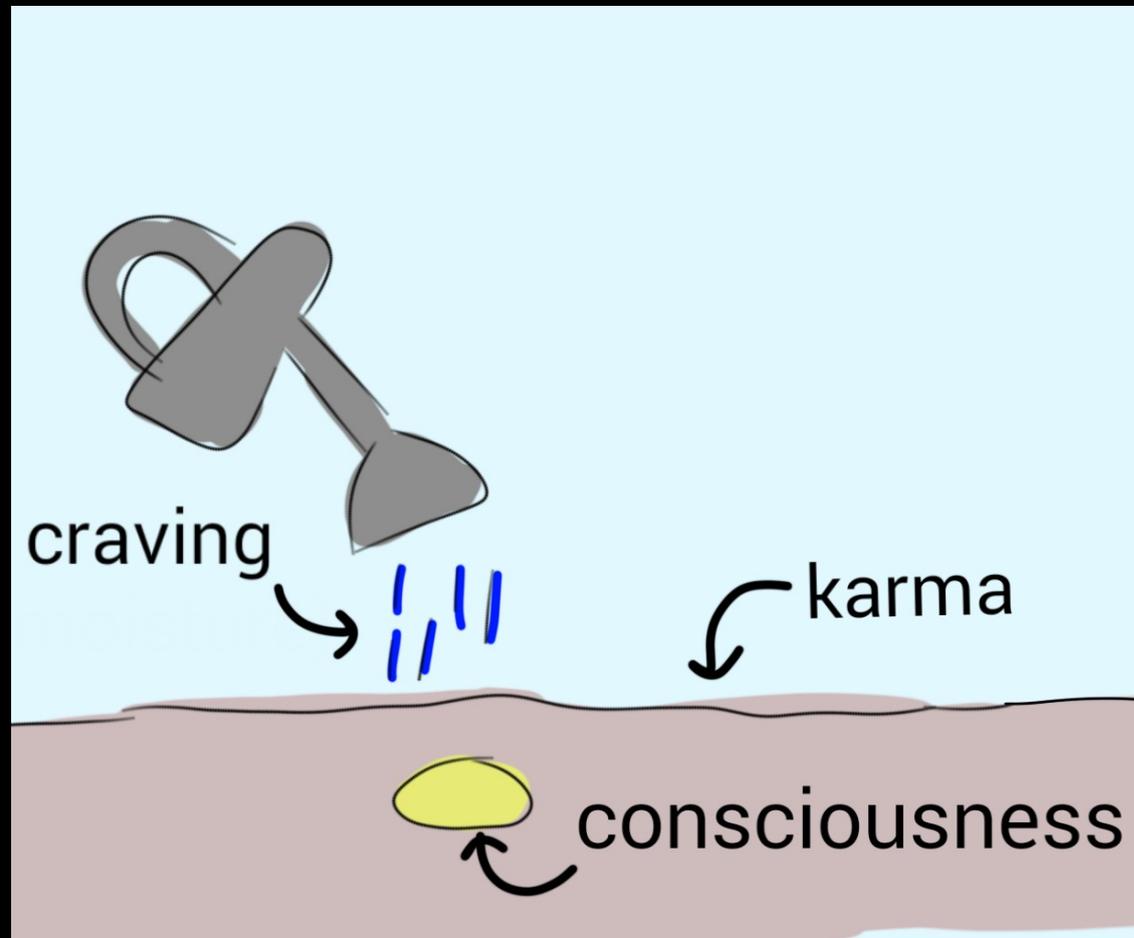
“Ananda, would life without form (*arūpa-bhava*) appear if there were no deeds that ripen in the **realm without forms**?”

“No, Venerable.”

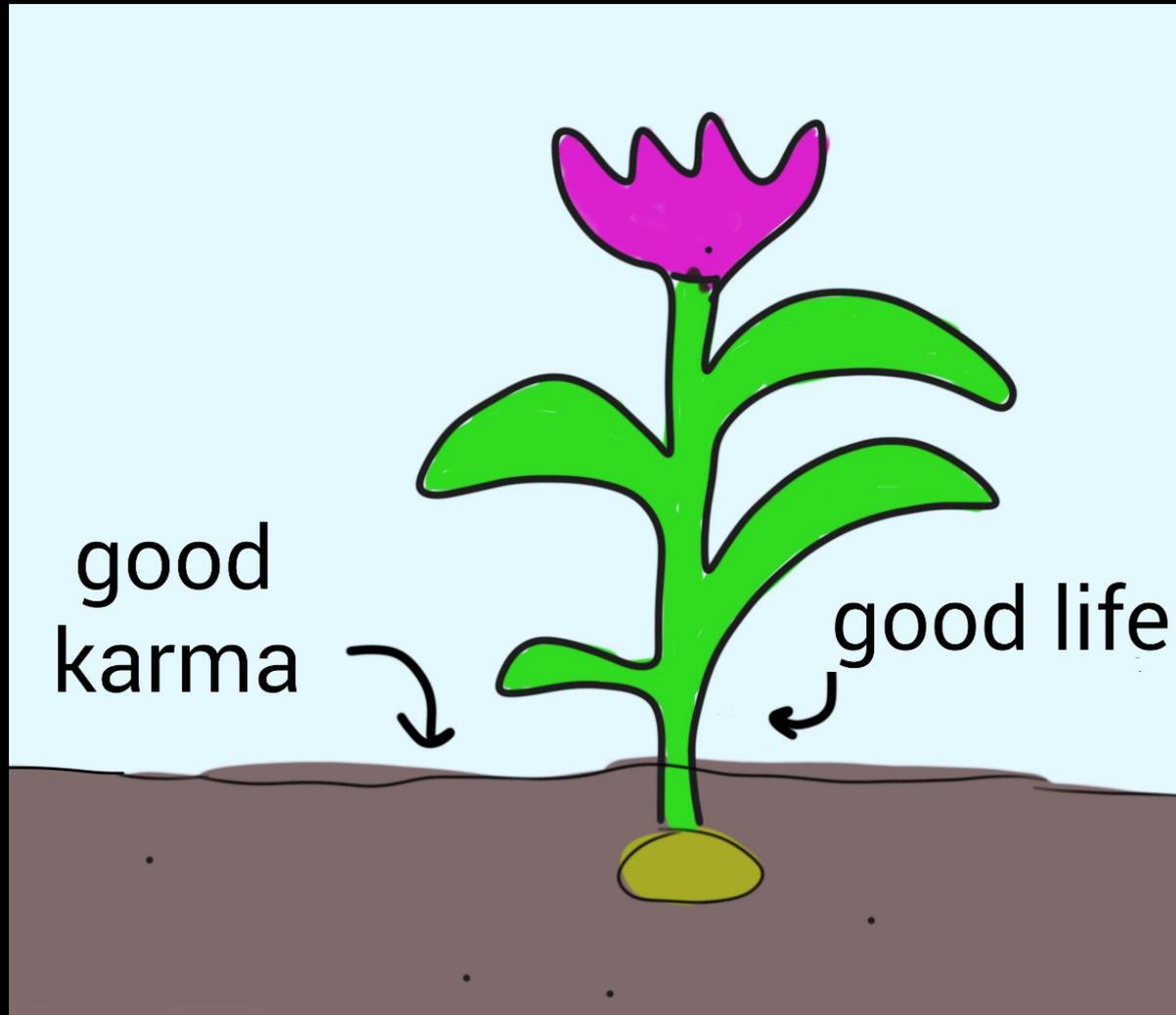
“So with deeds as the field, consciousness as the seed, and craving as the moisture, consciousness ... gets planted in the **higher realm**. That is how a next life is created.

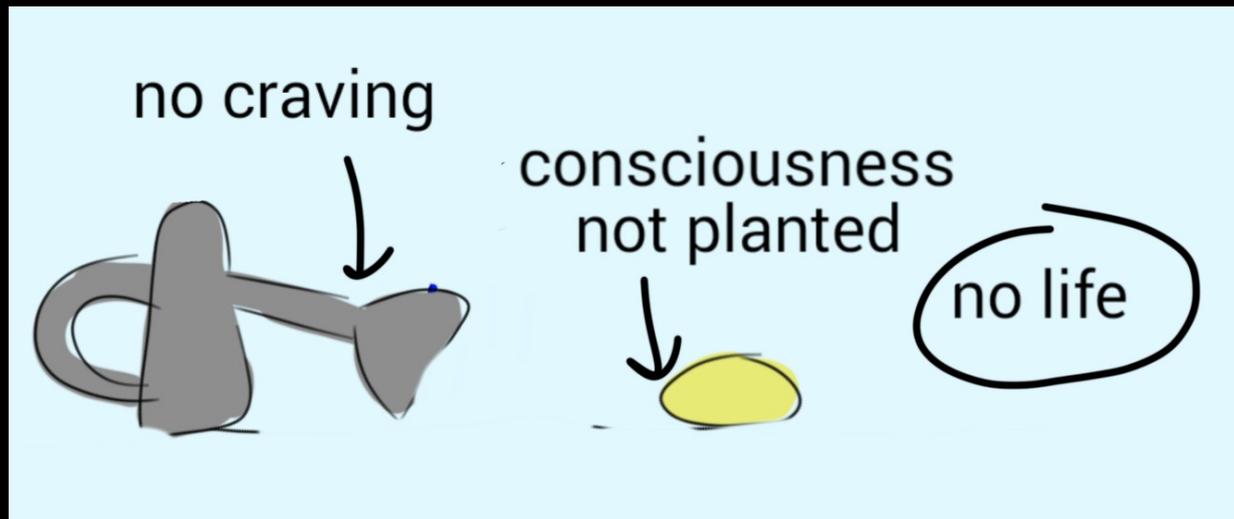
That is how life comes about, Ananda.” (AN3.76)

“With deeds (*karma*) as the field,
consciousness as the seed,
and craving as the moisture ...”



“... consciousness gets planted
in the **lower** / **middle** / **higher** realm.
That is how a next life is created.”





Selā: “Just as a seed sprouts when sown in a field, based on two things: nutriments in the soil (karma) and moisture (craving), so the aspects of existence (*khandhas*), the elements and the six senses, have come into being dependent on conditions, and cease when those conditions end.”
(SN5.9)

“If willed acts cease, consciousness will cease.”
(SN12.1)

“When liberated by ending craving
the mind's deliverance
when consciousness ceases
is like a flame going out (*nibbāna*).”
(AN3.90)



What is 'consciousness'?

Once a monk named Sati, a fisherman's son, had the following bad view: “As I understand the teaching taught by the Buddha, it is this same consciousness that roams and transmigrates, not a changing one.” [...]

The Buddha: “Sati, what do you mean by 'consciousness'?”

“Venerable Sir, it is that which thinks and feels, which in various places experiences the results of good and bad deeds.” [...]



“Confused man, I taught in many discourses that [each instance of] consciousness arises dependently, that a consciousness does not come into existence on its own.

A consciousness is named according to what it depends on.

- When a consciousness arises dependent on the sense of sight and sights, it is named sight-consciousness;
- when on the sense of hearing and sounds, hearing-consciousness;
- when on the sense of smell and smells, smell-consciousness;
- when on the sense of taste and tastes, taste-consciousness;
- when on the sense of touch and tangible objects, touch-consciousness;
- and when on the mind and mental phenomena, mental consciousness.” (MN38)

What is consciousness?

“What is consciousness?

There are six types of consciousness:

1. sight-consciousness,
2. hearing-consciousness,
3. smell-consciousness,
4. taste-consciousness,
5. touch-consciousness,
6. mental consciousness.

Those [together] are what's called 'consciousness'.” (SN12.2)

Sariputta:

“The Buddha knows a person's stream of consciousness if it is planted right back in this world, and also if it is planted in another world.” (DN28)



- “consciousness that roams and transmigrates” (MN38)
- “stream of consciousness” (DN28)
- “consciousness travels on” (SN12.51)
- “on-flowing consciousness” (MN106)
- “planes (or 'stations') of consciousness” (DN15)

Why “consciousness” (*viññāṇa*)?

“That which is called 'psyche' (*citta*) or 'mind' (*mano*) or 'consciousness' (*viññāṇa*) — that self (*atta*) is permanent and eternal.”

(DN1)

“[At death] the top of the heart brightens. Through that brightened top the self (*atta*) departs, either through the eye, or through the head, or through any other part of the body. When it departs, the vital force follows; when the vital force departs, all the organs follow. Then the self has **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*), and goes to the body which is related to that **consciousness**. It is followed by knowledge, kamma and past experience.”

(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.2)