

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:

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



emptiness. The teaching of the Buddha is profound, deep in meaning because it is connected with the emptiness of the supramundane.

As shown above, the Buddha used conditioned genesis as the basis for teaching dharma (the nature of phenomena), which leads to nirvana (the cessation of suffering), so the dharma of conditioned genesis is also profound. Thus, there are two profound dharmas connected with emptiness: conditioned genesis and nirvana. At SN 6. 1, the Buddha says:

I have penetrated this dharma that is profound, difficult to see, hard to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond the sphere of thought, subtle, realisable only by the wise. ... namely causal connection: **conditioned genesis** (idappaccayatā: paṭiccasamuppādo). This too is difficult to see, namely the calming of all activities, the renunciation of all defilements, the extinction of craving, detachment, cessation: **nirvana** (sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbupadhi-paṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho: nibbānaṃ).<sup>76</sup>

Similarly at SA 293 he says:

I teach to monks this Dharma: the noble, the supramundane, **connected with emptiness**, according to the dharma of conditioned genesis<sup>77</sup>. ... Profound is this, namely **conditioned genesis**; even more profound, more difficult to see is this, namely the renunciation of all attachments, the extinction of craving, fading away of desire, cessation: **nirvana**.<sup>78</sup> These two dharmas are namely the **compounded** (有爲 Skt. saṃskṛta, P. saṃkhata, i.e. conditioned genesis) and the **uncompounded** (無爲 Skt. asaṃskṛta, P. asaṃkhata, i.e. nirvana). The com-

pounded is arising, persisting, changing, passing away. The uncompounded is not arising, not persisting, not changing, not passing away.<sup>79</sup>

As stated in section 1.2, in the term "kong-sanmei" 空三昧 (concentrative meditation of emptiness) or "suññatāvihāra" (abode of emptiness) "emptiness" has the meaning of "absence of craving (taṇhā) or of desire (rāga), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha)"; and in the term "suñña-loka" (empty world) "emptiness" has the meaning of "not-self". These two meanings of "emptiness" relate to the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra)<sup>80</sup> or to the world (loka).<sup>81</sup> However, the complete cessation of craving or of desire, hatred, and delusion manifests the emptiness of the supramundane, nirvana: the *asaṃkhata* (uncompounded, unconditioned, absolute). The definition of "nirvana" is: "the extinction of craving" (taṇhakkhayo),<sup>82</sup> and this is identical with the definition of "asaṃkhata": "the extinction of desire, the extinction of hatred, the extinction of delusion" (rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo).<sup>83</sup> Thus, of the above two meanings of emptiness, "not-self" is of key significance for the vision of "empty world", but "the complete extinction of craving"<sup>84</sup> is of ultimate significance because of its connection with "the uncompounded", nirvana.

"Emptiness" applies to nirvana, the uncompounded, the supramundane, because the supramundane is empty of craving. "Emptiness" also applies to conditioned genesis, the compounded world (loka): the compounded world is empty of self ("empty world" suñña-loka), and seeing this one can develop the emptiness which consists in the extinction of all afflictions (kilesa) and of all suffering (dukkha); one can attain nirvana.

Conditioned genesis is profound, deep in meaning, because of the connection with emptiness, the profundity of