

Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



6 August 1996

Try to cultivate the bodhicitta motivation, wishing for full enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. Then cultivate the thought that, in order to fulfil this ultimate spiritual goal, we study and practise the stages of the path.

Of the twelve links of dependent arising we have finished the first two: ignorance and karmic formation (or compositional karma).

Third Dependent Arising: Consciousness

Due to the force of ignorance we create or accumulate karmic formations. As soon as this karmic formation is completed, it leaves some latency of karmic potential in our mind or consciousness.

This third link - consciousness - can be either

- Causal consciousness or,
- Resultant consciousness.

Causal Consciousness is where the latency is planted by the karma. Later on, this latency is activated by craving or grasping, resulting in the next rebirth.

Resultant Consciousness is the consciousness at the time of conception in the next rebirth.

422.221.334 Fourth Dependent Arising: Name or Form

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The fourth dependent arising is called name or form. The term “Name” includes the aggregates of feeling, recognition, compositional factors (or discrimination) and consciousness; whereas “Form” refers to the aggregate of form, which in its embryonic stage can take many shapes such as oblong and so on.

This fourth dependent arising of Name or Form includes all the aggregates which constitute the aggregates of our being, and it begins in the first moment after conception. If we are born in formless realms, however, we have only the potential or seed for form.

422.221.335 Fifth Dependent Arising: Source

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The fifth link of dependent arising is the stage where we have all the six sense organs developed, as well as their respective consciousness. The six sense organs are the eye sense organ, ear sense organ, nose sense organ, tongue sense organ, body sense organ and mind sense organ.

Then six sense consciousnesses are the eye sense consciousness, ear sense consciousness, nose sense consciousness, tongue sense consciousness, body sense

consciousness and mind sense consciousness

There are also six objects corresponding respectively to each of the six consciousness. However at this stage there is no capacity for the consciousness to perceive its object as being attractive, unattractive or neutral.

It is said that for a being who takes miraculous birth in the upper realms, all six sense organs develop simultaneously. For ordinary beings however, the organs of body and mind were developed at the moment of conception in the womb, but the other sense organs - eye, ear, nose and tongue - develop at this stage of the sixth dependent arising.

422.221.336 Sixth Dependent Arising: Contact

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The sixth dependent arising is called contact, and it is the culmination of the meeting of sense organ, sense consciousness and object. Now there is discrimination of an object as being beautiful, ugly or neutral.

422.221.337 Seventh Dependent Arising: Feeling

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The seventh dependent arising of feeling automatically arises as a result of the sixth dependent arising, contact.

Feelings arise because of sensory contact with an object: pleasure towards beautiful objects, displeasure about ugly objects and neutrality towards indifferent objects.

We can understand the way the causal link of contact leads to feeling from our own experience. Firstly we either see an object with our consciousness, or the object comes into contact with our consciousness. Then because that object is discriminated as beautiful, ugly or indifferent, the respective feelings of pleasure, displeasure or neutrality arise.

It is said that this dependent arising of feeling becomes a cause to begin yet even more rounds of dependent arising, before we even finish this round.

422.221.338 Eighth Dependent Arising: Craving

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The eighth dependent arising of craving which is a type of desire which does not wish to be separated from pleasure, while wishing to be separated from pain, or for the indifferent feeling (or sense of equanimity) to not be diminished.

In terms of the twelve links of dependent arising, ignorance leads up to the dependent arising of contact,

which then results in feeling, and this feeling results in craving. From this point of view, feeling serves as a source of further karma and the development of delusions.

However this chain of events is not inevitable. There is a way to free ourselves from this chain of rebirths, and it is by generating renunciation, and focusing on purifying all negativities or non-virtuous karma. This is the only way. So generally speaking it is possible to end cyclic existence, but without applying such spiritual practice we cannot perceive such an end.

The life in which we are now born is the effect of one single karma, and the stage where we are at now is but one part of one set of twelve dependent arisings. Before we can complete this rebirth, or set of twelve links, we shall accumulate countless karmas, which means countless more sets (or lifetimes) of twelve links. Unless we achieve a great purification of our past karma, and minimise the accumulation of karma by generating renunciation, then cyclic existence seems to have no beginning and no end. Of course we are not asserting that there is no end to cyclic existence, but what we are saying is that given all the causes for rebirth in cyclic existence, it would appear to our minds that there is no end.

422.221.339 Ninth Dependent Arising: Grasping

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The ninth dependent arising of grasping is where the dependent arising of craving becomes so intense, that there is not only desire for an object, but also the strong wish to possess it.

There are four types of grasping:

1. grasping at sensual objects
2. grasping at wrong view, but not including the wrong view of transitory collections
3. grasping at false moral ethics or conduct such as extreme ascetic practices, because of wrong view
4. grasping at the view of self

422.221.3310 Tenth Dependent Arising: Existence

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The tenth dependent arising is called existence. In this stage the karmic latency, which is stored in the consciousness, is fully nourished and activated by the dependent arisings of craving and grasping to the stage where the karmic latency is about to produce its result - the next rebirth.

At this stage of existence all the causes to take another rebirth are fully present and ripened, so that the next rebirth is unavoidable.

422.221.3311 Eleventh Dependent Arising: Birth

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The eleventh link of dependent arising, birth, occurs because the link of existence has been created. There are four types of birth: from an egg, from a womb, from heat and moisture, and miraculously, and here the term "birth" means the first moment of consciousness. [In the context of birth from the womb, we usually call this process conception]. The eleventh dependent arising of

birth exists only in that first moment of conception.

422.221.3312 Twelfth Dependent Arising: Ageing or Death

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This twelfth link of ageing or death begins in the moment immediately after conception. In general "Ageing" means the momentary changes of this karmically acquired body, whereas the common view of ageing refers to the outer indications of physical deterioration: changes in the colour of hair, wrinkles in the skin, loss of strength and so on. From this common perspective death can come before ageing, so in order to accommodate this common view the twelfth link is called ageing or death.

Death is the separation of our consciousness from this body, and is the ripened result of our past karma.

Next week is discussion night. The following week will be the test.

The compulsory test question is to explain in detail a quotation from Lama Tsong Khapa's *Three Principles of the Path*, which indicates the three principle aspects of renunciation, bodhicitta and the correct view of emptiness.

Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.

Edit methodology

The initial transcript is prepared from Alan Molloy's notes. These are checked with Damien Busby's notes by Alan Molloy and any differences noted.

Adair Bunnnett then compares her notes against the typed transcript and prepares this edited version.

Edited version checked by Alan Molloy

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