

# **On Realizing There is Only The Virtual Nature of Consciousness**

**Vijñapti Matratā Siddhi**

成唯識論

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Dedicated to An Lạc

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## The Discourse on Realizing There is Only the Virtual Nature of Consciousness

*Vijñapti Matratā Siddhi*, 成唯識論

### Volume Eight

#### **On Habitual Forces** (vāsanā, 習氣)

*Question:* Although there is an inner consciousness, without there being outer conditions how can sentient beings have a continuity of existence (bhavāṅga, 有支) in the stream of life and death (saṃsāra srota, 生死流)?

*Answer:* On this, the nineteenth stanza of verse says:

- 19a Because the habitual forces (vāsanā, 習氣) from actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業) combine (saha, 俱) with the habitual forces from attachments to the dualities (grāha dvaya, 二取) between the beholder (grāhaka, 能取) and that beheld (grāhya, 所取),**  
**19b As earlier consequences from ripening seeds (pūrva vipāka, 前異熟) play out and come to an end (kṣīṇe, 既盡), others ripen (anyad vipākaṃ, 餘異熟) and rise up anew (janayanti tat, 復生) in the conscious mind.**

19a 由諸業習氣、二取習氣俱， karmaṇo vāsanā grāha dvaya vāsanayā saha

19b 前異熟既盡，復生餘異熟。 kṣīṇe pūrva vipāke anyad vipākaṃ janayanti tat

The Discourse on Realizing There is Only the Virtual Nature of Consciousness says that there are four explanations of this nineteenth stanza of verse.

Three are explained in this section on habitual forces (vāsanā, 習氣) and the fourth will be explained in the next section on the twelve mutually dependent links in the continuity of afflicted consciousness (dvādaśa aṅga, 十二有支).

#### A. The first explanation of this verse

There are the three kinds of habitual forces (vāsanā, 習氣)

These habitual forces are the adhesive natures of affliction that make them difficult to attain freedom from.

#### 1. The habitual forces arising from actions with consequences (karma vāsanā, 業習氣):

*Actions with consequences* (karmaḥ, 諸業) here is a reference to those actions that:

- Result in the earning of merit (puṇya, 福),
- Result in the loss of merit (apuṇya, 非福) or
- Do not have an impact on merit one way or the other (avikṛta, 不動)

In being endowed with affliction (sa āsava, 有漏)<sup>7</sup>, there are intentions (cetanā, 思) that lead to conscious purposes with a moral context that may be with or without virtue - that is, they can be either wholesome (kuśala, 善) or unwholesome (akuśala, 不善), good or evil.

With there being actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業), there is also a procession (parivāra, 眷屬) of projections that follow them. This is a reference to the five projections of purpose (pañca dharma skandhaḥ, 五法蘊)<sup>1</sup> that accompany actions (karmas, 諸業).

- Projections of physical forms (rūpa skandha, 色蘊)
- Projections of emotional feelings (vedanā skandha, 受蘊)
- Projections of mental associations (saṃjñā skandha, 想蘊)
- Projections of other motive forces (saṃskāra skandha, 行蘊)
- Projections of consciousness (vijñāna skandha, 識蘊)

This is because these projections of purpose similarly induce and bring about the different fruits of consciousness as they ripen and become mature (vipāka phala, 異熟果).

Although conditions (pratyaya, 緣) of consciousness arise from these actions, once these actions cease they no longer bring about any different ripening fruits (vipāka phala, 異熟果). However, they do perfume (vāsa, 熏) the seeds of primordial consciousness (mūla vijñāna, 本識) found in the subconscious memory which foster the same kind of potentialities (sva śaktiḥ, 自功能) so that they may arise again. This propensity for the rebirth of these potentialities is what is described as ‘habitual forces’ (vāsanā, 習氣). The atmospheric vapors arising from these habitual forces emanate from actions that are made, incrementally perfuming, conditioning and influencing the seeds found in primordial consciousness. This concept of ‘habitual forces’ disproves two theories:

- a. The thesis from The School on the Real Existence of All Purposes (Sarvāstivāda, 有部) that it is past actions alone that produce all present consequences.
- b. The thesis from The Materialistic School (Lokāyatika, 順世 or 路迦耶底迦) that present actions alone produce all future consequences.

The mutual interactions of these habitual forces maintain the continuity of their existence in the subconscious memory until they ripen and bring about the different consequences that are manifested in the conscious mind. These consequences then become distinguished as conditions of consciousness that will prevail in the future (adhipati pratyaya, 增上緣).

2. The habitual forces arising from attachments to duality (dvaidha grāha vāsanā, 二取習氣): These dualities can be manifested in many ways, including:

- \* The duality between subject & object, the imaginer (darśana bhāga, 見分) & that imagined (nimitta bhāga, 相分),
- \* The duality between verbalization (nāma, 名) and the objective reality of form (rūpa, 色)
- \* The duality between the projections of consciousness (citta, 心) & their mental states (caitta, 心所)
- \* The duality between the root-source and the end result, the seeds in the subconscious store of memory and the manifest purposes in the conscious mind.

All of these are involved in attachments to duality. In perfuming the seeds within the subconscious store of memory, these conscious manifestations are able to produce the potentialities for these seeds that are called the habitual forces of attachment to duality. These potentialities in turn ripen into fruits that are manifested in the conscious mind at different times in the future. These manifestations are therefore associated with the seeds in the subconscious mind as conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya, 因緣). The word ‘combine’ (saha, 俱) in the verse here is a reference the interactions that occur between the habitual forces arising from actions with consequences (karma bīja, 業種) and those arising from attachments to duality (dvaidha grāha bīja, 二取種). These two support each other in producing the fruits that arise in the conscious mind. (Those from actions are in a more indirect relationship with their fruits (over time) while those from attachments to duality are direct and immediate). However, because the bringing about of the fruits of conscious manifestation by those from actions made (karmaḥ, 諸業) is more apparent, Vasubandhu’s nineteenth stanza of verse mentions them first.

3. The habitual forces arising over time (paurva aparya vāsanā, 前後習氣):

- \* *Earlier consequences* (pūrva vipāka, 前異熟) in the stanza here is a reference to the conscious manifestations that are the different ripening fruits that have resulted from actions that have occurred in the past (karma vipāka phala, 業異熟果).

\* *Others ripen* (anya vipāka, 餘異熟) here is a reference to the various ripening fruits of consciousness from actions that rise up subsequently.

Although the seeds of attachment to duality result in fruits of consciousness that are lasting, the habitual forces from actions (karma vāsanā, 業習氣) come to an end immediately after being committed. While it is more difficult to distinguish the fruits brought about by different ripening seeds (vipāka phala, 異熟果), those that flow forth from seeds that are of the same kind (niṣyanda phala, 等流果) are more recognizable and easier to bring about. Because the seeds (from actions and attachments to duality) ripen, they bring about their manifest purposes that arise in the conscious mind. When these different fruits have already been experienced, they come to an end, but they are then able to further produce other, different kinds of fruits that ripen from the subconscious mind. Because of this, the cycles of cause and effect (hetu phala, 因果) (karma and retribution) found in the stream of life & death (saṃsāra srota, 生死流) continue to turn round and round without end. Why should one assume that external conditions explain their continued existence? The intent of this stanza is to explain that this wheel turns round and round because of the habitual forces of actions and attachment to duality and they are everywhere inseparable from consciousness because they are the very existential nature of the mind and its mental states.

B. *The second explanation of this verse*

Next there is another explanation for the continuity of life & death that is a result of habitual forces. In this explanation, habitual forces are again said to be of three kinds (trividha vāsanā, 三種熏習):

1. *The habitual forces arising from verbalizing mental constructs* (abhilāpa vāsanā, 言習氣): This is a reference to conditional purposes in the conscious mind that each arise directly and immediately from distinct kinds of parent seeds in the subconscious. There are two kinds:
  - a. *Verbal expressions that frame meanings* (vijñapti abhilāpa, 表義名言): This is a reference to verbal expressions that are able to communicate meaning through the distinguishing of different sounds of the voice.
  - b. *Verbal expressions that invoke mental images* (avabhāsa abhilāpa, 顯境名言): This is a reference to verbal expressions that are able to invoke images in the conscious mind and its mental states so they can be perceived and distinguished.

The seeds produced through perfuming by these two ways of verbalizing perceptions in the conscious mind each have their own distinct *conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness* (hetu pratyaya, 因緣).
2. *The habitual forces arising from attachments to identity* (ātma grāha vāsanā, 我執習氣): This is a reference to false clinging to the seeds of identity and possession (me and mine). There are two such kinds of attachment to identity:
  - a. *Innate attachments to identity* (sahaja ātma grāha 俱生我執): These are the attachments to identity and possession that are removed through a transcendental cultivation of the noble path (bhāvanā heya, 修所斷).
  - b. *Speculative attachments to identity* (vikalpa ātma grāha, 別我執): These are attachments to identity and possession that are removed through a transcendental vision of the noble path (darśana heya, 見所斷).

The seeds produced through perfuming by these two kinds of attachment to identity in the conscious mind lead to the distinctions of self and other that arise among sentient beings.

3. The habitual forces arising from existential continuity (bhavāṅga vāsanā, 有支習氣):

This is a reference to the different ripening seeds that arise from actions with consequences (vipāka karma bījaḥ, 異熟業種). There are two such kinds of existential continuity:

- a. *Actions that are afflicted but virtuous* (āsrava kuśala, 有漏善): These are able to bring about the consequences from actions that are desirable (priya, 可愛) .
- b. *Actions that are afflicted and without virtue* (āsrava akuśala, 諸不善): These are able to bring about the consequences from actions that are undesirable (apriya, 非愛).

The seeds produced through the perfuming of this existential continuity by the conscious mind lead to the different ripening fruits of destiny that are virtuous or unwholesome, good or evil. One should understand that the different fruits distinguished in the habitual forces of clinging to identity and existential continuity both constitute conditions of consciousness that will prevail in the future (adhipati pratyaya, 增上緣).

- a. The habitual forces of existential continuity (bhavāṅga vāsanā, 有支習氣) is a reference to what this stanza of verse calls the habitual force of actions with consequences (karma vāsanā, 業習氣).
- b. The habitual forces of clinging to identity (ātma grāha vāsanā, 我執習氣) & verbalization (abhilāpa vāsanā, 言習氣) are both a reference to what the stanza calls the habitual forces of attachment to duality (grāha dvaya, 二取). These two are both said to be ‘attachments’ (grāha, 取) because attachments to identities, possessions and verbalizations are all acquired through the perfuming of these seeds.
- c. The meaning of the word ‘interact’ (saha, 俱) here in the verse is the same as before.

C. The third explanation of this verse

Next, there is the continuous existence of life and death due to the ever-repeating cycles of:

1. Emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) that arise from afflictions (āsrava, 惑)<sup>7</sup>
2. Actions (karma, 業) that lead to consequences and
3. The sufferings (duḥkha, 苦) that are the consequences

1. Afflictions (āsrava, 惑) are emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) that nurture the arising of actions with consequences.
2. Actions with consequences (karmas, 諸業) are able to bring about subsequent actions with consequences.
3. Sufferings (duḥkha, 苦) is a reference to the host of sufferings that are induced and produced by actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業)

The seeds of afflictions, actions and sufferings are all called habitual forces (vāsanāḥ, 習氣).

- 1-2. The first two kinds of habitual forces, those of emotional disturbances (kleśa vāsanā, 惑習氣) and actions with consequences (karma vāsanā, 業習氣), are *conditions that will prevail in the future* (adhipati pratyaya, 增上緣) as suffering in the stream of life and death (saṃsāra duḥkha, 生死苦) because they support the arising of this suffering.
3. The third kind of habitual forces, those of suffering (duḥkha vāsanā, 苦習氣), are conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya, 因緣) because they are able to directly produce suffering.

These three habitual forces should be understood like those described in this stanza of verse.

Kuṣī added: The habitual forces of attachment to duality correspond to seeds of emotional disturbance (kleśa, 惑) and suffering (duḥkha, 苦) while those of actions with consequences (karma, 業) may be understood.



- \* *Affliction with emotional disturbance* (kleśa, 惑) is that which beholds (grāhaka, 取能) while suffering (duḥkha, 苦) is that which is beheld (grāhya, 所取).
- \* Attachment (grāha, 取) in this stanza refers to the adhesive nature of habitual forces and does not by itself describe the nature of *actions with consequences* (karma, 業).
- \* The meaning of the word 'interact' (saha, 俱) here in the verse is as the same as before.

### **The Twelve Links of Mutually Dependent Conditions** (dvādaśa aṅga, 十二有支):

This three-fold cycle of #1 affliction with emotional disturbances (kleśa, 惑), #2 actions with consequences (karma, 業) and #3 the suffering of consequences (duḥkha vipāka, 苦) is a general understanding of the twelve links in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness (dvādaśa aṅga, 十二有支) that begin with the darkness of ignorance and end in the suffering of old age and death, as elaborated in the holy teachings.

The links of this chain are forged during one's life, creating the afflictions that result in suffering. They begin with:

#1 *The darkness of ignorance* is a well or black hole within that constitutes a lack of awareness of the boundlessly transcendent nature of life's purpose that goes beyond the confines of self-centered existence

#2 *The inner motive forces* are found within this black hole of ignorance and constitutes the vacuum of want, the primal urge for survival of this self-centered existence in a world of competing interests.

These twelve links constitute the origination of suffering that ultimately results in the old age and death of this self-centered existence. The Buddha's original enlightenment at Bodhgayā was said to be a result of meditation on this cause of affliction and the noble path leading to freedom from the fetters that make up the links of this chain.

#### **1. In briefly summarizing these twelve links in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness, they are divided into four categories:**

- A. That which induces the continuity of its existence (ākṣepaka, 能引)
- B. The continuity of its existence that is induced (ākṣipta, 所引)
- C. That which produces conscious manifestations of its continuous existence (janaka, 能生)
- D. The conscious manifestations of its continuous existence that are produced (janya, 所生)

In elaborating on them in twelve parts:

- A. *The mutually dependent conditions that induce (affliction)* (ākṣepaka, 能引) is a reference to seeds of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bīja, 識種), the very afflicted nature of sentient (self-centered) existence as well as the motive forces within the subconscious memory that are the consequences of past causes:
  - #1 *Ignorance* (avidyā, 無明) of the transcendental nature: the darkness that is the well of the subconscious
  - #2 *Motive forces* (saṃskāra, 行): potential drives in the darkness, latent seeds that are both innate & acquired
- B. *The mutually dependent conditions that are induced* (ākṣipta, 所引): These are the effects of the present, the passive disposition of primordial consciousness that is induced by motive forces:
  - #3 *Primordial consciousness* (vijñāna, 識)
  - #4 *The duality between named objects distinguished in the mind and the objective reality of form* (nāma rūpa, 名色)
  - #5 *Alignment of the six mental & sensory faculties with their objects* (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
  - #6 *Mental/sensory contact* (sparśa, 觸)
  - #7 *Emotional feeling* (vedanā, 受)
- C. *The mutually dependent conditions that produce manifestations of affliction* (janaka, 能生) refers to the seeds that cause consequence-producing actions (karma bīja, 業種), producing the conscious states in the present:
  - #8 *Craving* (tṛṣṇā, 愛)
  - #9 *Attachment* (upādāna, 取)
  - #10 *Continuous existence* (bhava, 有) (of afflicted consciousness)
- D. *The manifestations of mutually dependent conditions that are produced* (janya, 所生): These are the cycles of manifestation that appear in the conscious mind and perfume the seeds of the subconscious memory.
  - #11 *Rebirth* (jāti, 生)
  - #12 *Old age and death* (jarā maraṇa, 老死)

Seeds of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bījaḥ, 識種) induce a primordial consciousness (mūla vijñāna, 本識) that is innate while seeds of consequence-producing actions (karma bījaḥ, 業種) produce the subconscious memory (ālaya vijñāna, 藏識) and conscious manifestations (pravṛtti vijñāna, 轉識) that are learned and acquired.



- A. *The mutually dependent conditions that induce afflicted consciousness* (ākṣepaka, 能引), *the prejudices and predispositions in the subconscious memory that are the consequences of past causes*: This is a reference to #1 the darkness of ignorance (avidyā, 無明) & #2 the potential motive forces within it (saṃskāra, 行), because these induce the seeds of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bīja, 識種) that produce the five kinds of fruits found in the dispositions of the passive conscious mind (#3 - #7). Of these two:
- #1 The darkness of ignorance (avidyā, 無明) is a reference to the unconscious mind that only retains latent seeds, those of primordial consciousness and those that can later arouse the good and evil actions in the world of the future (upon being perfumed).
  - #2 The seeds that can potentially be aroused here are called motive forces (saṃskāra, 行). All of the actions that are presently being experienced in the conscious mind (dṛṣṭa dharma vedanīyaṃ karma, 順現受業) and all of the actions that help support future consequences (nānā pakṣa sāmparāyika karma, 別助當業) are involved with these potential motive forces, perfuming them in order to rouse them.
- B. *The mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness that are induced* (ākṣipta, 所引), *the present disposition of the passive conscious mind*: This is a reference to the five kinds of seeds that constitute the primordial consciousness (mūla vijñāna, 本識) within. Unlike seeds of action with consequences (karma bīja, 業種), these seeds immediately and directly produce the different ripening fruits (vipāka phala, 異熟果) of primordial consciousness because they are only induced by #1 ignorance and #2 motive forces. They include:
- #3 Primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
  - #4 The duality between named (identified) objects distinguished in the mind & the objective reality of form (nāma rūpa, 名色)
  - #5 Alignment of the mental & sensory faculties with their six objects (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
  - #6 Mental/sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
  - #7 Emotional feeling (vedanā, 受)
- Among them:
- #3 The seeds of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bīja, 識種) are the cause for the arising of #3 primordial consciousness (mūla vijñāna, 識).
  - #4 When not separately distinguishing the last three remaining causes (#5 alignments of the mental/sensory faculties with their six objects, #6 mental/sensory contacts and #7 emotional feelings), these three are all considered to be included among the seeds of #4 the duality between mind and matter.
  - #5-#7 The seeds of these last three causes are like sequential steps in the evolving duality of mind and matter and, because of this, they are considered to be three subsequently arising kinds of seeds.
  - \* Some say that the seeds of #4 duality between that named and form (nāma rūpa, 名色) generally include all five of these causes and, among them, the four other kinds of seeds (those of #3 primordial consciousness, #5 alignment of the mental and sensory faculties with their six objects, #6 mental and sensory contacts and #7 emotional feelings) are established according to which ones are prevalent in the mind at any given moment.
  - \* The combination of #5 the alignment of the sensory and mental faculties with their six objects (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處) and #3 primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識) are generally distinguished as the five kinds of sensory consciousness (pañca vijñāna, 五識) & the consciousness that distinguishes imagined objects (mano vijñāna, 意識) respectively.

1. The Compendium on the Spiritual Science of the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna Abhidharma Samuccaya, 大乘阿毘達磨集論) explains that #3 primordial consciousness is also in turn able to induce the seeds of actions with consequences (karma bīja, 業種) because:
  - a. The seeds of actions with consequences are also found within #3 primordial consciousness (as the subconscious store of memory).
  - b. The different seeds ripening in the subconscious store of memory (vipāka vijñāna bīja, 熟識種) involve #4 the duality of mind and matter.
2. The Scripture on Explaining the Arising of Conditions (Pratītya Samutpāda Divibhaṅga Nirdeśa Sūtra, 緣起經) explains that #3 primordial consciousness is both inducing (ākṣepaka, 能引) and induced (ākṣipta, 所引) because:
  - a. Seeds of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bīja, 識種) and seeds of action (karma bīja, 業種) are both found within #3 primordial consciousness (the latter as the subconscious store of memory).  
 The seeds of primordial consciousness are induced by ignorance and motive forces. This primordial consciousness in turn induces the seeds of consequence-producing actions, including those of craving, attachment and coming into conscious existence.
  - b. This primordial consciousness is the foundation for the duality between mind & matter but does not constitute it per se.
3. Although the perfuming and producing of the seeds of #3 primordial consciousness, #4 mind/matter duality, #5 alignment of mental/sensory faculties with their objects, #6 mental/sensory contact and #7 emotional feelings are really simultaneous, because of the relationship between them, the holy teachings hypothetically speak of them having a sequential order in which they come before or after each other because:
  - #3 Primordial consciousness is the leader while (#4 - #7) the other four follow it.
  - #4 Mind/matter duality is general while (#5 - #7) the next three are more specific.
  - #5 The alignment of mental and sensory faculties with their six objects is primary while #6 mental and sensory contact and #7 emotional feelings are secondary.
  - #6 Mental and sensory contact is a cause while #7 emotional feelings are an effect.
 Some say that they come before or after each other because the future manifestation of fruits from seeds depends on them arising in a sequential order through incremental stages of development (from #3 primordial consciousness to #4 mind/matter duality, from #4 mind/matter/duality to #5 the alignment of sensory and mental faculties with their objects, etc., etc.)
4. Because of this, in many places such as The Compendium on the Spiritual Science of the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna Abhidharma Samuccaya, 大乘阿毘達磨集論) and The Scripture on Explaining the Arising of Conditions (Pratītya Samutpāda Divibhaṅga Nirdeśa Sūtra, 緣起經), these five seeds of the passive conscious state in the present are also said to be actual manifestations of motive force (samudācāra, 現行), but when they are still in their causal state as seeds, they are by definition not actual manifestations of the conscious mind.
5. And so it is said that, in the arising of conditions (pratītya samutpada, 緣起) from the subconscious mind, the inducement (ākṣepa, 引) and arising (janana, 生) of the seeds (as consciousness) are simultaneous while, in the manifestations of the conscious mind (as actions), the times when they are moistened and nurtured are definitely not simultaneous with the times when they are not yet moistened and nurtured.

C. The mutually dependent conditions that are able to produce manifestations of afflicted consciousness (janaka, 能生), the presently active conscious states: This refers to three links:

#8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)

#9 Attachment (upādāna, 取)

#10 Continuity of existence (bhava, 有)

These three are able to directly and immediately result in future rebirth, old age and death.

This is a reference to the fact that:

1. The different fruits of delusion (moha, 愚) that ripen from within the subconscious mind directly bring about any subsequent coming into existence (punar bhava, 後有) of conscious actions with consequences (karmas, 諸業) as *conditions that prevail in the future* (adhipati pratyaya, 增上緣).
2. These actions with consequences lead to future (#11 & #12) rebirth, old age and death as *conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness* (hetu pratyaya, 因緣).
3. And with delusions about the existence of external conditions being the fruits of consciousness that will prevail in the future (adhipati phala, 增上果), emotional feelings arise about this objective sphere. As cravings (tṛṣṇā, 愛) grow and prosper there is further development of four kinds of attachment (catuḥ upādānāni, 四取).

These are attachments to:

- a. Desire for the objects of the senses (kāma upādāna, 欲取),
- b. Flawed beliefs about the transcendental nature of reality (dṛṣṭi upādāna, 見取),
- c. Superstitious beliefs about rituals or moral rules (śīla vrata upādāna, 戒取) and
- d. False (ad hominem) beliefs about identity (ātma vada upādāna, 我語取).

In combining #8 craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) and #9 attachment (upādāna, 取), there is a moistening and nourishing of six kinds of seeds:

- a. The seeds of action (karma bījaḥ, 業種) as that which induces (akṣepaka, 能引)
- b. Five seeds as that which is induced (ākṣipta, 所引):
  - #3 Primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
  - #4 The duality between named (identified) objects distinguished in the mind & the objective reality of form (nāma rūpa, 名色)
  - #5 Alignment of the six mental & sensory faculties with their objects (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
  - #6 Mental & sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
  - #7 Emotional feelings (vedanā, 受)

These six kinds of seeds evolve together as #10 the continuity of existence (bhava, 有) because combined they are able to directly produce the fruits (phala, 果) found in conscious manifestations of future existence (punar bhava, 後有). In clarifying this further:

- \* Volume ten of The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation says that only the seeds of actions (karma bījaḥ, 業種) constitute a continuity of existence (bhava, 有) because they are able to directly result in *the fruits of consciousness from different ripening seeds* (vipāka phala, 異熟果).
- \* Elsewhere it is stated that the term 'continuity of existence' (bhava, 有) is only used for the five kinds of seeds that have been induced (ākṣipta, 所引) because they directly produce the seeds for any *fruits of consciousness that flow forth from seeds that are of the same kind* (niṣyanda phala, 等流果).

D. *The manifestations of mutually dependent conditions produced in the conscious mind* (janya, 所生), *manifesting the effects into the future* - This is a reference to cycles of:

#11 Rebirth (jāti, 生)

#12 Old age and death (jarā maraṇa, 老死)

These are directly produced because of #8 craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛), #9 attachment (upādāna, 取) and #10 the continuity of (afflicted) existence (bhava, 有).

#11 Rebirth (jāti, 生) refers to everything from the intermediate existence between death and rebirth, including life in the womb (antara bhava, 中有), up to basic existence in this world (mūla bhava, 本有), but it does not involve decline into old age.

#12 Old age (jarā, 老) is a general reference the changes that accompany this decline.

Death (maraṇa, 死) refers the final destruction and dissolution of this life.

*A catechism on these twelve links of mutually dependent conditions in afflicted consciousness:*

*Question:* Why is not old age said to be a distinct link in the continuous existence of afflicted consciousness instead of being connected with that of death?

*Answer:* Old age is not always certain to occur. Although this is so, if life continues it is necessary and inevitable, and so it is established with death through association.

*Question:* Why is not sickness a distinct link?

*Answer:* All those in the four modes of birth (yonī, 生) as well as the spheres (dhātu, 界) and destinies (gati, 趣) of sentient existence must experience old age, except for those who die prematurely (but not all of these experience sickness). All other beings must experience the sickness, decay and deterioration that is associated with approaching the end of life.

*Question:* The duality of mind and matter is not universal. (There are beings meditating on sentient existence in the spheres of its form (objective reality) & existential principles beyond form as well as beings who are spiritually reborn (aupapāduka, 化生) in its sphere of desire whose six-fold alignment of subject and object is suddenly without this duality.) Why is it established as one of the links in the mutually dependent conditions of affliction?

*Answer:* It is established as a link because it is necessary. All beings born from a womb, from eggs or asexually through moisture are by necessity endowed with the duality of mind and matter, but the six-fold alignment between mental and sensory faculties and their objects has not yet been completely developed in some of them. And so the duality of mind and matter exists universally. Although beings meditating in the sphere of form and those spiritually reborn in the sphere of desire are endowed with the five sense faculties from the very beginning, they may not have yet employed them. Because of this, it is said that they are not yet fully endowed with the six-fold alignment of the mental and sensory faculties with their objects. Although those who are reborn into the sphere of existential principles beyond form are endowed with such a mental capacity (mano indriya, 意根) from the very beginning, at first their perception of this sphere is not clear and so it is said that this capacity is not yet in proper alignment with its object (which is without form).

*Question:* Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) is not universal. Why is it established as a distinct link in the continuous existence of afflicted consciousness? Those finding themselves in an evil destiny (akuśala gati, 惡趣) have no craving to be so reborn.

*Answer:* Craving is in fact necessary and so is established as a distinct link. Excepting those who no longer seek to live in this world, those reborn into virtuous destinies (kuśala gati, 善趣) are necessarily endowed with it. Those who have attained the fruit of never returning to this world (anāgamin, 不還) no longer have the cravings that moisten and nurture the seeds of

rebirth (jāti, 生). However, just as there are still the seeds of attachment within them, so there are still seeds of craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) that are universal. Those reborn into evil destinies (akuśala gati, 惡趣) have cravings for their own lives and the objects around them. The Scripture on Explaining the Arising of Conditions (Pratītya Samutpāda Divibhaṅga Nirdeśa Sūtra, 緣起經) only says that they do not have cravings because they do not hope for or seek rebirth in an evil destiny, but this certainly does not mean that they are without any cravings at all.

*Question:* Why are #11 rebirth and #12 old age and death established as the manifestations of conscious existence that are *produced* (janma, 所生) while the five links of #3 primordial consciousness, #4 name/form duality, #5 the six-fold alignment of mental & sensory faculties with their objects, #6 mental & sensory contact and #7 emotional feelings are distinguished as the links of mutually dependent conditions that are *induced* (akṣipta, 所引)? What is the difference?

*Answer:*

- a. When they are at the causal stage (as seeds) it is difficult to recognize the different distinctive characteristics of the five links found in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness that are induced (akṣipta, 所引). Therefore, the holy teachings establish their names on the basis of their future fruits. This means that:
  1. At the time of rebirth, the cause (seed) for #3 *primordial consciousness* is revealed.  
 Kuṁjī added: This occurs either at the first moment of rebirth or during the first week.
  2. Next, with the sense faculties not yet being fully developed, the characteristics of #4 *name/form duality* begin to develop.  
 Kuṁjī added: This occurs before the end of the fourth week after rebirth.
  3. Then, when the sense faculties become fully developed, #5 *the six alignments of subject & object* are clearly thriving.  
 Kuṁjī added: This occurs sometime after the fourth week.
  4. Depending on this, there is the arousal of #6 *mental and sensory contacts* as well as the first arising of emotional feelings.
  5. Finally, at the point in which #7 *emotional feelings* are flourishing, the fruits of these five have become completely developed.

Consequently, the causes for the five links of induced (akṣipta, 所引) mutually dependent conditions are established based on the fruits that have been attained.  
 Kuṁjī added: The causes for these links are established based on this sequential arising of their fruits because their characteristics are difficult to recognize when their causes are latent or suppressed.
- b. Because it is easier to perceive their different distinctive characteristics at the stage of fruition, the links of #11 rebirth and #12 old age and death are generally established by revealing three kinds of suffering, that is, birth, old age and death. In fact, when these fruits have yet to be produced (janya, 所生) and are seen as being in the future, one speaks of #11 birth, #12 old age and death as that which is to be dreaded. When they are that which has already been attained in the present, one understands the arising of their different stages and characteristics as (#3 - #7) the five links that have been induced (akṣipta, 所引).

*Question:* Why is #1 ignorance (avidyā, 無明) generally established as the condition necessary for the bringing about of actions with consequences (karmas, 諸業) while #8 craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) & #9 attachment (upādāna, 取) are only said to moisten and nurture them?

*Answer:* Although all emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) are able to moisten and nurture actions, the power of ignorance (avidyā bala, 無明力) is predominant in bringing them about



because it is endowed with eleven qualities by which it is uniquely distinguished (ekadaśa viśeṣa, 十一殊勝), as explained at length in The Scripture on Explaining the Arising of Conditions (Pratītya Samutpāda Divibhaṅga Nirdeśa Sūtra, 緣起經):

Here, the eleven qualities that uniquely distinguish ignorance are said to include the following:

1. The objects before it (ālambana viśeṣa, 所緣勝): Ignorance can be found in all projections of consciousness, whether they are pure or tainted with afflictions.
2. How it is imagined in the mind (ākāra viśeṣa, 行相勝): Ignorance is able to conceal realities and reveal falsehoods.
3. Its conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya viśeṣa, 因緣勝): Ignorance is the root source for both emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) and actions with consequences (karmas, 諸業).
4. Its confluence of arising conditions (samutthāna viśeṣa, 等起勝): Ignorance is equally able to:
  - a. Induce (as #2 motive forces),
  - b. Be induced (as #3 - #7 the five passive conscious states),
  - c. Produce manifestations (as #8 - #10 the three active conscious states) and
  - d. Be manifested (as #11 - #12 the suffering of rebirth, old age and death).
5. Its evolving permutations (pariṇāma viśeṣa, 轉異勝): Ignorance can be transformed into four states:
  - a. Latent seeds (anuśaya, 隨眠)
  - b. Entanglements (pary avasthāna, 纏縛)
  - c. Motive forces associated with consciousness (samprayukta saṃskāra, 相應), and
  - d. Permutations that are uniquely distinct (kevala, 不共).
 These different characteristics of ignorance are based on their functions.
6. Its improper conduct (mithyācāra viśeṣa, 邪行勝): Because of ignorance, there is confusion about the principles of reality that appear to wax (as attachments to views about eternity & existence) and wane (such as attachment to views about impermanence & emptiness) in the mind.
7. Its pervasiveness (saṃtāna viśeṣa, 相狀勝): The unique characteristics (sva lakṣaṇa, 自相) of ignorance subtly pervade the shared characteristics (sāmānya lakṣaṇa, 共相) of all things, whether they are pleasant (priya, 愛) or unpleasant (apriya, 非愛).
8. Its creation of actions with consequences (karma kriyā viśeṣa, 作業勝): Ignorance is able to do the work that builds the foundation for the struggles of life and death (saṃsāra, 生死) and it also prevents the work of spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃).
9. Its obstacles (āvaraṇa viśeṣa, 障礙勝): Ignorance is able to prevent purposes that are distinguished (unafflicted but conditional) as well as those purposes that are universal and transcendental (unafflicted and unconditional). This is a reference to the obstacles of emotional disturbance (kleśa āvaraṇa, 煩惱障) and cognitive dissonance (jñeya āvaraṇa, 所知障), respectively.
10. Its adapting to circumstances (anuvartana viśeṣa, 隨轉勝): Ignorance is able to adapt to any conditions, from the three roads of evil (greed, hate & stupidity) to the very peak existential experience (bhavāgra, 有頂) found in the highest heaven of meditation.
11. Its correction (pratipakṣa viśeṣa, 對治勝): Ignorance is not corrected by afflicted knowledge (āsrava jñāna, 有漏智). It is only corrected through the unafflicted knowledge (anāsrava jñāna, 無漏智) that comes from transcendental vision (darśana, 見) and cultivation (bhāvanā, 修) of the noble path.
  - a. The power of craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) is prevalent in moistening and nurturing the seeds of actions with consequences (sneha karma, 潤業) because, as the scriptures say, craving is like water in that it can moisten and nourish their seeds. And so, in order to sprout, grow and come into existence, the seeds of actions (karma bīja, 業種) must be repeatedly moistened and nurtured by craving.
  - b. Craving and attachment are distinguished respectively as the beginning and end stages in this process of moistening and nourishing. On the other hand, ignorance (avidyā, 無明) does not need to be repeatedly applied to the seeds of karma. It only needs to be established once. Therefore, although emotional disturbances (kleśaḥ, 諸煩惱) involve the links of both craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) and attachment (upādāna, 取), attachment is the prevailing factor in the nurturing process and it is said to be the intensification of craving.

2. *On these twelve occurring at different levels of meditation:*

Generally speaking, these twelve links all depend on conditions arising at the same level of meditation (sva bhūmiḥ, 自地). However, there are motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) that depend on ignorance occurring at different levels, such as when motive forces at a higher level rise above the ignorance found at a lower level. For example, the motive forces in the first approach to meditative resolve (anāgamyā samādhi, 未至定) rise above the ignorance that is confined to the sphere of desire, prior to entry into meditation. If this were not so, upon first subduing the lower levels of ignorance found in tainted motive forces, there would be no motive force (saṃskāra aṅga, 行支) that could bring about a higher level of meditative resolve (samādhi, 定) because it could not rise above its own level of ignorance.

*Question:* When being reborn at a higher level (e.g., the sphere of form) from a lower level (e.g., the sphere of desire), or going from a higher level to a lower level, under what circumstances do emotional feelings (vedanā, 受) bring about craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)?

*Answer:* Cravings connect with emotional feelings when there is going to be a future rebirth (jāti, 生), whether it is going to be as a conscious manifestation or will still remain among the seeds in the subconscious mind. This does not contradict reason.

3. *On these twelve occurring over the course of the same or different lifetimes (of the past, present and future)*

With these twelve links regarded as consisting of ten causes (seeds) and two effects (fruits), they are not necessarily all experienced in the same lifetime (sama yuga, 同世).

1. Among the ten causes, the first seven (#1 - #2 those that induce & #3 - #7 those that are induced) are sometimes in the same lifetime as the next three (#8 craving, #9 attachment & #10 continuity of existence) and sometimes they are not.
2. When the last two (#11 rebirth & #12 old age and death), the middle three (#8 craving, #9 attachment & #10 continuity of existence) and the first seven (#1 - #2 those that induce & #3 - #7 those that are induced) are considered to be three distinct groupings, they must at least occur in the same lifetime within their own groupings.
3. In this way, a single repetition of these twelve as a cause in one life and an effect in another reveals how the wheel (of death & rebirth) turns while being free from belief in the finality (of death) or the eternity (of life). To postulate (as is done in some teachings about the lesser track of attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level) that the wheel just repeats twice is of no use. Some would even go beyond this as a means of conveying the fact that the wheel keeps going round and round forever into the future.

4. *On the different characteristics of these twelve links*

a. *The twelve links being real* (dravyasat, 實) *or merely hypothetical* (prajñaptisat, 假):<sup>2</sup>

In distinguishing the meaning of these twelve links, the first nine are considered to have a *real existence* while the last three (#10 the continuity of (afflicted) existence, #11 rebirth and #12 old age & death) only have a *hypothetical existence*.

Kuījī added: This is because:

#10 The continuity of conscious existence (bhava, 有) is really a synthesis of six links (#2 motive forces and #3 - #7 the five induced links) after they have been moistened and nourished by #8 craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) and #9 attachment (upādāna, 取).

#11 Rebirth and #12 old age & death are really #3 - #7 the five induced links in the three phases of their life-cycle; creation (jāti, 生), change (anyathātva, 異) & destruction (niruddha, 滅).



- b. The twelve links as single entities (ekadravya, 一事) or composite entities (nānādravya, 非一事):

Five of the links are *single entities*:

- #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明)
- #3 Primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
- #6 Mental/sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
- #7 Emotional feeling (vedanā, 受)
- #8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)

The remaining are *composite entities*.

Kuṇḍī added: For example, #2 motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) pervade both matter and mind, etc.

- c. The twelve links being tainted or untainted by the nature of emotional disturbance (saṃkleśa, 染):

1. Three of the links are only *tainted*, because they constitute the very nature of emotional disturbance:

- #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明)
- #8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)
- #9 Attachment (upādāna, 取)

2. Seven of the links are only *untainted* because they are only different ripening fruits of the subconscious mind. Five of these are the induced links (ākṣipta, 所引) found in the passive disposition of consciousness:

- #3 Primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
- #4 The duality between named (identified) objects & the objective reality of form (nāma rūpa, 名色)
- #5 Alignment of the mental & sensory faculties with their six objects (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
- #6 Mental and sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
- #7 Emotional feeling (vedanā, 受)

Two are the manifestations of conscious existence that are produced (janya, 所生)

#11 Rebirth (jāti, 生) and #12 Old age and death (jarā maraṇa, 老死)

Volume ten of The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation says that, because tainted purposes can intrude on the first seven links, they are conventionally said to be *both tainted and untainted*. The seeds of the two remaining links can also be either tainted or untainted by emotional disturbances this way.

- d. The twelve links standing by themselves (pratyeka lakṣaṇa, 獨相)

Or being combined with the others (saṃsrṣṭa lakṣaṇa, 雜相):

Three links are said to *stand by themselves* in that they do not interact with the others:

- #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明)
- #8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)
- #9 Attachment (upādāna, 取)

The rest *are combined with each other*.

Kuṇḍī added: For example, when interacting with each other, #2 motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) & #3 - #7 the five induced links are called #10 continuous conscious existence, #11 rebirth & #12 old age & death.

- e. The twelve links having form (sa rūpa, 有色) or being without form (arūpa, 無色):

Six links are only found in the *sphere of existential principles that is without form*.

- #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明)
- #3 Primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
- #6 Mental/sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
- #7 Emotional feeling (vedanā, 受)
- #8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)
- #9 Attachment (upādāna, 取)

The remaining links pervade both *the sphere of form and this sphere beyond form*.

- f. The twelve links being afflicted (sa āsrava, 有漏)<sup>7</sup> or being without affliction (anāsrava, 無漏): All of the links are endowed with *affliction* because they are only involved in conditional purposes (saṃskṛta dharma, 有為法) and because non-affliction and unconditional purposes (asaṃskṛta dharma, 無為法) are not considered links in causing the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness (bhavāṅga, 有支).
- g. The twelve links being virtuous (kuśala, 善), evil, (akuśala, 不善) or morally undefined (avyakṛta, 無記):
1. Three links shroud the cognitive processes of consciousness (nivṛta, 有覆) and so are only unwholesome or morally undefined:
    - #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明)
    - #8 Craving (trṣṇā, 愛)
    - #9 Attachment (upādāna, 取)

Kuīji added: Ignorance in the sphere of desire arises through speculations about distinctions (vikalpa, 分別) and is only unwholesome. Craving and attachment may be either unwholesome or morally undefined. In the higher spheres of sentient existence (meditations on the objective reality of its form & its existential principles that are beyond form) these three are all morally undefined.
  2. One is only virtuous or unwholesome, that is, good or evil:
    - #2 Motive forces (saṃskāra, 行)

Kuīji added: Motive forces are either good or evil, but never morally undefined. They are never morally undefined because that which is morally undefined does not have an impact on the fruits of consciousness.
  3. One of these links can be virtuous, unwholesome or morally undefined but does not shroud the cognitive processes of consciousness:
    - #10 The continuity of conscious existence (bhava, 有)

Kuīji added: The continuity of conscious existence can be virtuous, evil or morally undefined because it is a combination of #2 motive forces with #3 - #7 the five links that are induced (primordial consciousness, etc.).
  4. The remaining seven are only morally undefined and do not shroud the cognitive processes of consciousness because they are ripening consequences rather than causes.
    - #3 Primordial consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
    - #4 The duality between identified objects in the mind & the objective reality of form (nāma rūpa, 名色)
    - #5 Alignment of the mental & sensory faculties with their six objects (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
    - #6 Mental/sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
    - #7 Emotional feeling (vedanā, 受)
    - #11 Rebirth (jāti, 生)
    - #12 Old age and death (jarā maraṇa, 老死)

Kuīji added: These seven have the nature of being different ripening seeds arising from the subconscious into the conscious mind.

However, virtue that is corrupted with emotional disturbances (saṃkleśa, 染) can also arise in these seven.

Kuīji added: Volume ten of The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation explains that, except for #1 ignorance, #8 craving, #9 attachment and #12 old age & death, which are only corrupted by emotional disturbance, all of the other links can be either corrupted or uncorrupted. In these seven that can be morally undefined and do not shroud the cognitive processes of consciousness, states can arise that are virtuous but still corrupted by emotional disturbances.
- h. The twelve links in terms of the three-fold sphere of sentient existence (trayo dhātavaḥ, 三界)<sup>4</sup>: Although all twelve links pervade the three-fold sphere of sentient existence either partially or entirely, they do so entirely in the *sphere of desire* but only partially in the *sphere of form* (objective reality) & the *sphere that is beyond form* (existential principles), where the three kinds of #7 emotional feelings (contentment, suffering and indifference) are not manifested.

i. The twelve links being crude (audārikā, 麤苦障) *or refined* (śāntā, 靜妙離):

The higher levels of #2 motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) are able to subdue those at lower levels through aspiration. There are six ways that they appear in the mind (ṣaḍ ākāra, 行相).

Three ways appear to be *coarse and unrefined* (audārikādy ākāra, 麤苦障行相):

1. Coarseness (sthūla, 麤)
2. Suffering (duḥkha, 苦)
3. Being laden with obstacles (nivarāṇa, 障)

Three appear to be *subtle and refined* (śāntādy ākāra, 靜妙離行相):

1. Sublimity (pranīta, 妙)
2. Being endowed with peace of mind (śānta, 靜)
3. Transcending obstacles (niḥsaraṇa, 離)

In seeking a higher rebirth there is transcendence of coarseness & attainment of refinement.

j. The twelve links of those in training (śaikṣa, 學) *and those beyond training* (aśaikṣa, 無學):

These twelve links in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness do not arise in either *those in training* or *those beyond any further need for training* on the noble path. Because the virtuous but afflicted actions of the saints are based on awakened knowledge (vidyā, 明) about life and death (saṃsāra, 生死), they are opposed to these links and so are not involved with them. One should understand that noble beings by necessity do not create or promote actions that will subsequently result in the fruits of suffering because they do not wish to be afflicted and they are able to sever the seeds arising from the delusions found in the special kind of ignorance that is unique to the deliberations and calculations of self-interest (avidyā āveniki, 不共無明 or 獨頭無明).

*Question:* Do not the actions that result in the fruit of the never-returner (anāgamin, 不還)<sup>12</sup> involve #2 motive forces (saṃskāra aṅga, 支行)?

*Answer:* In cultivating the various practices of meditation that still the mind (dhyāna, 靜慮), the never returner is reborn into the pure abodes of heaven (śuddhāvāsa, 淨居天) as well as the lower trance states that are found in the fourth level of meditation. That this is because of their actions (karmaḥ, 諸業) is not a contradiction with what has been said about it not being one of these links found in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness.

k. The twelve links in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness in terms of detachment from them (prahāṇa, 斷): There are two theories on this:

1. There is a thesis that:

- a. #1 Ignorance is *only severed through vision of the noble path* (darśana heya, 見所斷) because:
  - \* There must be delusions (moha, 癡) about the principles of transcendental reality (the four truths) for #2 motive forces to arise from #1 ignorance.
  - \* Those who are noble do not create actions (karmaḥ, 諸業) that result in afflictions that subsequently have #10 a continuity of conscious existence (bhava, 有).
- b. #8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) & #9 attachment (upādāna, 取) are *only severed through cultivation of the noble path* (bhāvanā heya, 修所斷) because:
  - \* Through lust and greed, craving seeks #10 a continuity of future conscious existence (punar bhava, 後有), moistening and nurturing the seeds of #11 rebirth.

\* Craving and attachment are not severed through a vision of the noble path. According to volume five of Sthiramati's Commentary on the Spiritual Science of the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna Abhidharma Samuccaya Vyākhyā, 大乘阿毘達磨雜集論), there are nine ways that an innate craving (sahaja tṛṣṇā, 俱生愛) arises upon facing the very end of one's life (cyuti citta or maraṇa bhava, 命終心):

1. A death in the sphere of desire that will lead to rebirth in the sphere of desire
2. A death in the sphere of form that will lead to rebirth in the sphere of form
3. A death in the sphere being form that will lead to rebirth in the sphere beyond form
4. A death in the sphere of desire that will lead to rebirth in the sphere of form
5. A death in the sphere of desire that will lead to rebirth in the sphere beyond form
6. A death in the sphere of form that will lead to rebirth in the sphere of desire
7. A death in the sphere of form that will lead to rebirth in the sphere beyond form
8. A death in the sphere beyond form that will lead to rebirth in the sphere of desire
9. A death in the sphere beyond form that will lead to rebirth in the sphere of form

In the case of human beings, from the moment of death (cyuti citta or maraṇa bhava, 命終心) there is said by some to be an intermediate period (antara bhava, 中有) lasting up to forty-nine days after which there is rebirth through re-entry into a womb (pratisaṃdhi, 結生).

- c. The nine links other than #1 ignorance, #8 craving and #9 attachment are *severed through both vision and cultivation of the noble path*.
2. There is another thesis (deemed correct) that all twelve links need to be *severed through both vision and cultivation of the noble path*.

*Question:* If this is the case, how is #1 ignorance (avidyā, 無明) severed by cultivation of the noble path and how are #8 craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛) & #9 attachment (upādāna, 取) severed by vision of the noble path?

*Answer:* Volume ten of The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation says that those who have attained the fruit of the stream-enterer (srotāpanna phala, 預流果)<sup>12</sup> have already partially severed a portion of each of these mutually dependent links of afflicted consciousness but none of them entirely.

1. If #1 ignorance is only severed through a vision of the noble path, why doesn't the Discourse speak of the stream-enterer severing it entirely?
2. If #8 craving & #9 attachment are only severed through cultivation of the noble path, why does it speak about the stream-enterer having partially severed these links through attaining a vision of the noble path?
3. Volume fifty-nine of the discourse also speaks about all emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) being able to produce bondage to rebirth (pratisaṃdhi, 結生) anywhere in the sphere of sentient existence.

Kuṅjī added: 'All' here refers to all emotional disturbances, those that are severed by vision of the noble path and those that are severed by cultivation of the noble path.

4. It also says that motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) which lead to unwholesome destinies (akuśala gati, 惡趣) are only brought about through the emotional disturbances from speculations about distinctions (vikalpa kleśa, 分別煩惱).

Kuṅjī added: It also says that motive forces which lead to (the more virtuous) human and divine destinies (kuśala gati, 善趣) are only brought about through innate emotional disturbances (sahaja kleśa, 俱生煩惱). It further says that speculative emotional disturbances are severed through vision of the noble path while innate ones are severed through cultivation of the noble path.

5. However, the discourse does not say that the emotional disturbances moistening and nurturing #11 rebirth are only severed through cultivation of the noble path (bhāvanā heya, 修所斷) or that motive forces impacting future #10 continuous conscious existence are only severed through vision of the noble path (darśana heya, 見所斷). Because of this, it is understood that the three links of

- #1 ignorance, #8 craving & #9 attachment are severed through both vision and cultivation of the noble path.
6. In fact, in its main role of bringing about the #2 motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) that lead to unwholesome destinies, #1 ignorance is only severed through vision of the noble path. In its secondary, supportive role of bringing about the motive forces that lead to human and divine destinies, it can be severed through both vision and cultivation of the noble path.
  7. In their main role of moistening and nurturing #11 rebirth, the two links of #8 craving and #9 attachment are only severed through cultivation of the noble path. In their secondary, supportive role, they can be severed through both vision and cultivation of the noble path.
3. In severing attachments to these links (prahāṇa, 斷), it is also necessary to distinguish between conscious purposes that are corrupted (saṃkleśa dharma, 染污法) and subconscious afflictions (āsrava, 漏) that have not yet corrupted (akliṣṭa, 不染污) the conscious mind. The existential natures of corrupted purposes need to be severed in order to sever them forever, yet the existential natures of afflictions (in the subconscious) that have not become corrupted in the conscious mind need not be severed because they are not necessarily in contradiction with the noble path. In fact, when speaking about the severing of these attachments (prahāṇa, 斷), there are two levels of meaning:
- a. Disentanglement (visaṃyoga, 離縛) is a reference to severing the conditions in the conscious mind that have been corrupted by emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱).
  - b. Never arising again (anutpāda, 不生) is a reference to severing the foundation of afflictions (āsrava, 有漏)<sup>7</sup> in the subconscious upon which the emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) in the conscious mind depend so that they never rise up again.
  - a. Disentanglement (visaṃyoga, 離縛) is said to involve severing bondage to conscious purposes that are wholesome but afflicted as well as morally undefined purposes that do not shroud the cognitive processes of consciousness (anivṛta, 無覆). These are only severed through cultivation of the noble path (bhāvanā heya, 修所斷).
  - b. Never arising again (anutpāda, 不生) is said to involve severing bondage to evil destinies as well as attachments to meditations that transcend mental associations (asaṃjñi samāpatti, 無想定), etc. These are only severed through a vision of the noble path (darśana heya, 見所斷).

The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation speaks about the twelve links all being subject to both of these kinds of severance (prahāṇa, 斷). Based on the above explanation, one should understand which of these two kinds need to be used in severing of bondage to these twelve links found in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness.

1. The twelve links in terms of the three kinds of emotional feelings (vedanā traya, 三受):
  - a. In terms of feelings of contentment (sukha vedanā, 樂受): Ten of the links are directly associated with both contentment and indifference. The other two are not because:
    1. #7 Emotional feelings (vedanā aṅga, 受支) are not associated with themselves.
    2. #12 Old age and death are for the most part not associated with contentment or incidental feelings of indifference.

Kuṣī added: Feelings of indifference are only incidentally associated with the seven evolving manifestations of consciousness (pravṛtti vijñāna, 轉識) while the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識) is always associated with such feelings.



- b. *In terms of feelings of suffering* (duḥkha vedanā, 苦受): Eleven of the links are associated with suffering because, as stated before, #7 emotional feelings are not associated with themselves. In terms of the three kinds of suffering (duḥkha traya, 三苦):
  - a. Eleven of the twelve links at least partially involve *suffering from change & impermanence* (vipariṇāma duḥkhatā, 壞苦). In the stage of #12 old age and death there is little feeling of contentment, as suffering is based on the destruction of that which brings contentment. Because of this, it is said to no longer have any contentment that can be taken away by such change.
  - b. All twelve involve *suffering from unpleasant feelings* (duḥkha duḥkhatā, 苦苦) at least partially because, in all of them, there are #7 emotional feelings of suffering.
  - c. All twelve involve *suffering from uncontrolled motive forces* (saṃskāra duḥkhatā, 行苦) completely because, in all afflicted purposes there is suffering because of uncontrolled #2 motive forces.
- c. *In terms of feelings of indifference*: Eleven of them at least in part involve feelings of indifference (upekṣā vedanā, 捨受). #12 Old age and death involve them completely, as already explained about the suffering of change and impermanence.

This is a proper understanding of the twelve links in terms of the three kinds of emotional feelings. In the holy teachings, the defining and prevailing characteristics of these are said to vary in accordance with the circumstances.

- m. The twelve links in terms of the truths of suffering (duḥkha, 苦) & its origination (samudaya, 集):
  - a. All twelve of these involve *the truth of suffering* (duḥkha satya, 苦諦) because it is the very nature of attachment to the projections of purpose (upādāna skandha, 取蘊), that is, attachment to the projections of form, emotional feelings, mental associations, motive forces and consciousness.
  - b. Five of the links also involve *the truth of its origination* (samudaya satya, 集諦) because they involve the nature of actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業) and the nature of emotional disturbance (kleśa, 煩惱).  
These five are:
    - #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明)
    - #2 Motive force (saṃskāra, 行)
    - #8 Craving (tṛṣṇā, 愛)
    - #9 Attachment (upādāna, 取)
    - #10 A continuity of (afflicted) existence (bhava, 有)
- n. The twelve links in terms of the four conditions of consciousness (catvāraḥ pratyayāḥ, 四緣)
  - 1. All the links are characterized as conditions that will prevail (over one another) in the future (adhipati pratyaya, 增上緣). They may or may not have the other three conditions in relation to each other. The Scripture on Explaining the Arising of Conditions (Pratītya Samutpāda Divibhaṅga Nirdeśa Sūtra, 緣起經) only says they have conditions that may prevail over one other, but it does not deny the possibility of the other three.
  - 2. Regarding conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya, 因緣):
    - a. *In the relationship between #8 craving and #9 attachment* there is a condition that may directly cause the arising of consciousness.
    - b. *In the relationship between #10 continuous conscious existence and #11 rebirth* there is also a condition that may directly cause the arising of consciousness.

Kuījī added:

- a. The intensification of #8 craving is said to lead to #9 attachment because the seeds of craving produce attachment.
- b. The seeds of #3 - #7 the five induced links (ākṣipta, 所引) of afflicted consciousness are manifested as #10 continuous conscious existence because #11 - #12 the manifestations (samudācāra, 現行) of afflicted consciousness produced (janma, 所生) are said to be its #11 rebirth (jāti, 生).

These are the relationships between the links constituting conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya, 因緣).

To clarify some seeming contradictions found in the holy teachings:

- a. When Asaṅga's Compendium on the Spiritual Science of the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna Abhidharma Samuccaya, 大乘阿毘達磨集論) speaks about the relationship between #2 motive forces and #3 primordial consciousness being a condition that directly causes the arising of consciousness, it is really referring to any #3 primordial consciousness that results in seeds of action (karma bīja, 業種). In fact, other than the two just described, the relationships between the rest of the links do not bring about conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness.
  - b. When volume four of Sthiramati's commentary on Asaṅga's Compendium speaks about there being a condition directly causing the arising of consciousness in the relationship between #1 ignorance & #2 motive forces, it is really speaking about the seeds (bījaḥ, 種) of habitual forces causing actions (cetanā karma vāsanā, 思業習氣) when there is #1 ignorance. Because these forces are combined with ignorance, they are conventionally said to be ignorance, but these in fact are really only the seeds of its motive forces (saṃskāra bījaḥ, 行種).
  - c. When volume ten of The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation speaks about none of the links being related to each other as conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness and them only interacting through the three other kinds of conditions, it is based on:
    1. #8 craving & #9 attachment only being conscious manifestations, not seeds arising from the subconscious mind.
    2. #10 continuous conscious existence only results from the seeds of actions (karma bījaḥ, 業種), not from the seeds of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bīja, 識種)Kuījī added: This is why the relationship between #8 craving and #9 attachment and the relationship between #10 continuous conscious existence and #11 rebirth are both not said to be conditions directly causing the arising of consciousness here.
  3. Regarding conditions that are similar to and immediately connected with those of the past (samanantara pratyaya, 等無間緣): In the relationships between #1 ignorance and #2 motive forces, #8 craving and #9 attachment, as well as #11 rebirth and #12 old age & death, there may be conditions that are similar to those immediately connected with the past (samanantara pratyaya, 等無間緣) and conditions objectively present before one another (ālambana pratyaya, 所緣缘).
- Kuījī added: As explained before, like all links, these pairs necessarily have the relationship of prevailing over one another (adhipati pratyaya, 增上缘) so that fact is not cited again here.
4. Regarding conditions objectively present before one another (ālambana pratyaya, 所緣缘): In the relationships between #10 continuous conscious existence and #11 rebirth as well as #7 emotional feeling and #8 craving, there may be conditions that are objectively present before one another (ālambana pratyaya, 所緣缘) but not conditions similar to and immediately connected with those of the past (samanantara pratyaya, 等無間缘).



The remaining links do not have relationships with each other as conditions similar to and immediately connected with those of the past (samanantara pratyaya, 等無間緣) or conditions objectively present before one another (ālambana pratyaya, 所緣缘).

The above explains the reality about the arising of conditions (pratītya samutpada, 緣起) based on the immediate succession of the links (aṅgas, 支) in their natural order, without mixing them up. When they are treated differently from this, the understanding about these conditions become more complex. To study them with discernment, one should consider them all in accordance with logical reasoning.

o. Involvement of the twelve links in the three-fold cycle (mārga traya, 三道 or 輪迴三道) of affliction, action & suffering:

These three are involved in all twelve links in the conditions of afflicted consciousness:

- a. *Afflictions with emotional disturbance* (kleśaḥ, 諸惑) involves #1 ignorance, #8 craving & #9 attachment.
- b. *Actions with consequences* (karmaḥ, 諸業) involve #2 motive forces (saṃskāraḥ, 諸行) and that portion of #10 continuous conscious existence (bhava, 有) that does not include the seeds from #3 - #7 the five links in the induced disposition of primordial consciousness (vijñāna bījaḥ, 諸識種子).
- c. *The suffering of consequences* (duḥkha, 苦) involves the two links that are manifestations of afflicted purpose in the conscious mind, #11 rebirth (jāti, 生) and #12 old age and death (jarā maraṇa, 老死) as well as that portion of #10 continuous conscious existence that does include the seeds from #3 - #7 the five induced links of consciousness.

In clarifying this:

- \* There are sources including The Discourse of the Masters on Grounding in the Practice of Engaged Meditation (Yogācāra Bhūmi Śāstra, 瑜伽師地論) and The Scripture on the Ten Levels of Grounding (Daśa Bhūmikā Sūtra, 十住經) that speak about #10 a continuity of conscious existence (bhava, 有) only being found in actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業). One should understand that this depends on only speaking about the actions with consequences that come into conscious existence (karma bhava, 業有).
- \* There are also sources such as volume four of Sthiramati's Commentary about the Compendium on the Spiritual Science of the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna Abhidharma Samuccaya Vyākhyā, 大乘阿毘達磨雜集論) that say #3 primordial consciousness involves actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業). This just refers to the fact that the seeds of actions with consequences (karma bījaḥ, 業種) are found in primordial consciousness.
- \* Emotional disturbances (kleśa, 惑) and actions with consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業) are only said to involve the suffering of consequences (duḥkha, 苦) to the extent that:
  - a. They only involve the truth of suffering (duḥkha satya, 苦諦), not the truth of its origination (samudaya satya, 集諦)
  - b. They produce a disgust for suffering that ultimately leads to spiritual freedom.

Kuījī added: Saying that they only involve the truth of suffering does not mean that they do not also involve the truth of its origination, only that in penetrating the first there is also penetration of the latter.

It is because this three-fold cycle involves all twelve links in these mutually dependent conditions that it is able to produce the continuity of afflicted consciousness found in the stream of life & death (saṃsāra saṃtati, 生死相續).

5. *The dual nature found in the mutually dependent conditions of afflicted consciousness*

And this continuity of life & death is due to an inner condition that directly causes the arising of consciousness (antara hetu pratyaya, 內因緣), not any external conditions (bāhya pratyaya, 外緣). It is because of this that there is really only the virtual nature of consciousness (vijñapti matratā, 唯識).

a. *The dual nature of the conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness:*

1. *Causality* (hetu, 因) here is a reference to actions that lead to consequences (karmaḥ, 諸業) which can be either afflicted (sa āsrava, 有漏) or without affliction (anāsrava, 無漏). Because they have a real influence on the stream of life and death, they are said to be its causes.
2. *Conditions* (pratyaya, 緣) refers to obstacles (āvaraṇa, 障) that arise from emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) and cognitive dissonance (jñeya, 所知). In supporting these influences on the stream of life and death, they are said to be its conditions.

b. *The dual nature between the fragmentation and transcendence of consciousness:*

*Question:* What is this dual nature?

*Answer:* Life and death (saṃsāra, 生死) has two aspects:

1. Its fragmentation into parts (pariccheda saṃsāra, 分段生死): disintegration
  2. Its transcendental manifestation that is inconceivable (acintya pariṇāma saṃsāra, 不思議變易生死)
1. *The fragmentation of life & death into parts* (pariccheda saṃsāra, 分段生死) is that which is understood to exist by ordinary sentient beings and those saints on the lesser track of attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level. Here there is an explicit ripening of different fruits (sthūla vipāka phala, 麤異熟果) in the three-fold sphere of sentient existence<sup>4</sup>. It is due to two factors:
    - \* *Causality* (hetu, 因) arising from actions (karmaḥ, 諸業) that are endowed with affliction (sa āsrava, 有漏), whether they are wholesome or unwholesome, virtuous or evil.
    - \* *Conditions* (pratyayaḥ, 諸緣) arising from obstacles of emotional disturbance (kleśa āvaraṇa, 煩惱障) that support the power of these karmic influences. It is called *fragmentation into parts* (pariccheda, 分段) because life and survival (kāya jīvita, 身命) may be short or long, large or small in according with the power of conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya bala, 因緣力) and define the measure of its lifespan. This could be a day, a year or eighty thousand lifetimes.
  2. *The transcendental manifestation of life & death that is inconceivable* (acintya pariṇāma saṃsāra, 不思議變易生死) refers to the subtle fruits of consciousness (sūkṣma vipāka phala, 細異熟果) realized by buddhas and bodhisattvas who have attained levels of grounding in the transcendental nature of life's purpose (bhūmis, 地) but are not apparent to worldly beings or saints on the lesser track of attaining freedom from affliction at an individual level. This involves:
    - \* *Causality* arising from actions and their consequences that are distinguished (karma vikalpa, 分別業) to be without affliction (anāsrava, 無漏)
    - \* *Conditions* that are supported by the power arising from the obstacles of cognitive dissonance (jñeya āvaraṇa, 所知障), with only subtle distinctions arising from their different ripening fruits (vipāka phala, 異熟果).

It is called *transcendental manifestation* (acintya pariṇāma, 不思議變易) because, through the power from vows of compassion (karuṇa praṇidhāna bala, 悲願力), there is a spiritual manifestation of their lives and livelihoods in ways that are very subtle and go beyond any defined limitations.

\* *With compassion* (karuṇa, 悲) there is the desire for existence being transformed into the greater purpose of delivering sentient beings from suffering.

\* *With vows* (praṇidhāna bala, 悲願) there is the desire for existence being transformed into aspiration for supreme enlightenment (sambodhi, 無上菩提).

It is called *inconceivable* (acintya, 不思議) because the functions and powers of its influence come from vows (praṇidhāna, 願) & meditative resolves (samādhi, 定) that are very subtle, difficult to fathom and without any affliction.

### There are two levels in this inconceivable manifestation of life & death

1. *The manifestations of the bodhisattva's spiritual life produced through the mental resolve of meditation* (mano maya kāya, 意成身 or 意生身): Some speak of the spiritual life that is produced through the mental resolve of meditation being in accordance with the accomplishments of one's vows. On this, The Scripture on the Lion's Roar of Princess Śrī Mālā (Śrī Mālā Devī Siṃha Nāda Sūtra, 勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經) says:

“With there still being attachments (upādāna, 取), there are the conditions that cause actions endowed with affliction (sa āsrava karma, 有漏業) to continuously come into conscious existence, subsequently producing rebirth (of the obstacles of emotional disturbance (kleśa āvaraṇa, 煩惱障) found in the three-fold sphere of sentient existence<sup>4</sup>.

This is a reference to beings that still remain bound to the first four levels of habitual affliction (catur vāsa bhūmi, 四習地 or 四住地):

1. Continuous entrenchment in their own beliefs (sarva darśin vāsa bhūmi, 一切見住地)
2. Continuous cravings in the sensuous sphere of desire (kāma tṛṣṇā, 欲愛住地); a love of pleasure
3. Continuous cravings in the pure sphere of form (rūpa tṛṣṇā, 色愛住地); a love of meditations on ideals of beauty, truth, etc.
4. Continuous cravings in the sphere of existential principles beyond form (bhava tṛṣṇā, 有愛住地); innate love of existence

With (these four being overcome and) there only remaining attachment to the ignorance of life's greater purpose (avidyā vāsa bhūmi, 無明習地 or 無明住地) found in the obstacles of cognitive dissonance (jñeya āvaraṇa, 所知障), there are conditions causing actions that are without affliction (anāsrava karma, 無漏業), with a spiritual life being produced through the mental resolve of meditation (mano maya kāya, 意成身) that continuously comes into existence. This spiritual life subsequently leads to rebirth in three different lineages of spiritual development. These three different lineages include those of:

- a. Spiritually worthy beings (arhats, 阿羅漢)
- b. Self-enlightened beings (pratyeka buddhas, 獨覺)
- c. Bodhisattvas who have attained mastery of the eighth level of grounding in the transcendental nature of purpose that is unshakeable (acalā bhūmi, 不動地).”

Still conditioned by the continuity of a fundamental ignorance of the transcendental nature of life's greater purpose, the spiritual lives of these three lineages still need to arise through the mental resolve of meditation (mano maya kāya, 意成身 or 意生身) in order to:

1. Completely penetrate the contentment found in the mental resolve of meditation (samādhi sukha samāpatti mano maya kāya, 三昧樂正受意生身)

2. Be endowed with the existential nature of awakening to transcendental nature of life's purpose (bodhi svabhāva mano maya kāya, 覺法自性性意生身)
3. Innately and spontaneously turn attention towards the transcendental nature of purpose found in all things without any need for special motivation (saha ja anabhisamkāra manaskāra mano maya kāya, 種類俱生無行作意生身)

The unafflicted actions found in this mental resolve of meditation are still conditioned by this fifth and final level of habitual attachment, continuous ignorance of the transcendental nature of life's greater purpose (avidyā vāsa bhūmi, 無明習地).

2. There are also said to be the apparent manifestations of a buddha's spiritual life that have a transformative influence (nirmāṇa kāya, 變化身) because, through the power of meditative resolve that is without any affliction, one's own life is transformed into that of the buddha's spiritual life. As explained in the sixteenth volume of Asaṅga's Exposition of the Holy Teaching (Āryadeśanā Vikhyāpana 顯揚聖教論):

*“Question:* Students of the noble path (śrāvakas, 聲聞) who are beyond any further need for training (aśaikṣas, 無學) have already forever relinquished attachment to any subsequent coming into existence (punar bhava, 後有). How can they then awaken to the supreme nature of life's purpose (anuttara bodhi, 無上菩提) (like a buddha)?

*Answer:* They depend on the apparent manifestation of a buddha's spiritual life that has a transformative influence (nirmāṇa kāya, 變化身) to do so, not merely through their own life that is (merely) the consequence of their actions (karma vipāka kāya, 業報身).”

This explanation is not in contradiction with logical reasoning.

#### A catechism on these two levels in the inconceivable manifestation of life & death

*Question:* If the obstacles of cognitive dissonance (jñeya āvaraṇa, 所知障) could support the manifestations of life & death (saṃsāra, 生死) even in those whose actions are without any affliction (anāsrava karma, 無漏業), those predisposed to become (niyata gotra, 定性) saints on the lesser track (determined to only be free from the afflictions of this world without becoming buddhas) would never really be able to forever enter into the spiritual freedom that does not depend on a residue of life & death's conditions (nirupādhiśeṣa nirvāṇa, 無餘涅槃) because, in holding onto these obstacles of cognitive dissonance, they would be analogous to ordinary people (prthagjanaḥ, 諸異生) who are determined to hold on to their obstacles of emotional disturbances (kleśa āvaraṇa, 煩惱障). With this being so, does not their realization of the truth of the noble path just bring about more suffering?

*Answer:* Who is saying that this is so?

*Question:* If it is not bringing about more suffering, what is being said here?

*Answer:* Meditative resolves (samādhis, 定) and vows (praṇidhānas, 願) that are without affliction (anāsrava, 無漏) (in the fourth stage of meditation) can still fuel actions that are endowed with affliction (sa āsrava karma, 有漏業), making them continue to bear fruits. In interacting with these resolves and vows, these afflicted actions can become stronger and prevail for longer periods of time, and so it can hypothetically be said that unafflicted resolves and vows can bring these afflicted actions about. The truth is that, although they can have a supporting role in bringing them about, the afflicted actions are really not brought about by these unafflicted resolves and vows alone. In fact, the obstacles of cognitive dissonance do not really prevent emancipation at all because they

cannot by themselves bring about the actions that moisten and nourish the seeds for rebirth in the afflictions of this world.

*Question:* What use is there in further bringing about the struggles and sufferings along the stream of life and death (saṃsāra, 生死) this way?

*Answer:* To attain self-awareness (pratyātma vedya, 自證), to awaken to the transcendental nature of life's purpose (bodhi, 菩提) and to bring meaningful benefits and the bliss of contentment to others; Self-enlightened beings (pratyeka buddhas, 獨覺) and students of life's purpose (śrāvakas, 聲聞) beyond further need for training who are not stuck in their lineage of spiritual development (aniyata gotra, 不定性) (and so can still turn towards the greater track of spiritual awakening) and bodhisattvas who have mastered (vaśitā, 自在) great vows (mahā praṇidhāna, 大願) at the eighth level of grounding in the transcendental nature of life's purpose that is unshakeable (acalā bhūmi, 不動地) have all already forever subdued and severed the obstacles of emotional disturbance (kleśa āvaraṇa, 煩惱障) and so do not need to take on another, separate life (pariccheda kāya, 分段身) in the future. However, lest they waste a long time that could be used cultivating the practices of the bodhisattvas, they are fulfilled through the power arising from their distinguished vows (praṇidhāna, 願) and resolves of meditation (samādhi, 定) that are without affliction (anāsrava, 無漏). Just as spiritually worthy beings (arhats, 阿羅漢)<sup>12</sup> conserve their resources in order to extend their lives and fulfill the purposes for their lives in this world, bodhisattvas further the causes that bear the fruits of their lives' purpose so that they are not cut short. They are repeatedly supported by their vows and resolves of meditation until the moment that they finally realize the supreme awakening (anuttara bodhi, 無上菩提).

*Question:* If they have attained these fruits through their past actions and their unafflicted vows and meditations, why do they still need to further overcome the obstacles of cognitive dissonance?

*Answer:* Having not yet attained perfect realization of the great compassion that transcends any defined objectives (animitta, 無相), they do not cling to either the existence or non-existence of their spiritual awakenings (bodhi, 菩提), or to the existence or non-existence of sentient beings that are to be delivered. Because of this, they inspire vows of compassion that are intense and courageous. Furthermore:

- a. Because obstacles of cognitive dissonance (jñeya āvaraṇa, 所知障) prevent greatness of spiritual awakening (mahā bodhi, 大菩提), bodhisattvas maintain their lives in this world for long periods of time in order to work on eliminating these obstacles once and for all.
- b. The obstacles of cognitive dissonance are the very foundation of affliction (āsrava āśraya, 有漏依). If these obstacles did not exist, this foundation would certainly not exist either. These obstacles have great powers to support the spiritual lives of bodhisattvas for as long they remain in this world.

*Kuṭī added a question:* Those predisposed to only be arhats (while still in this world) conserve their vital energies and prolong their lives through their 'meditations on the ultimate bounds of reality' (prantakoṭika dhyāna, 邊際定). What is the difference between this kind of existence and that of the bodhisattvas?

*Answer:*

- \* As long as the spiritual lives of bodhisttvas remain in this world through vows and resolves of meditation that are still endowed with afflictions and supported by obstacles of cognitive dissonance, there still remain fragmented lives (pariccheda kāya, 分段身) because there are objectives that are recognized by ordinary sentient



beings as well as the saints on the lesser track of only attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level.

- \* However, once they involve support from vows and resolves that are without any affliction and not supported by the obstacles of cognitive dissonance, there are said to be inconceivable manifestations of the spiritual life (acintya pariṇāma kāya, 不思議變易身) because they involve objectives not known to them.

Kuṇḍī added: These objectives remain unknown to them even though they may be endowed with the divine eye (divya cakṣu, 天眼) (that perceives death and rebirth, karma and retribution). On the other hand, these spiritual lives may be known to those stream-enterers (śrotāpanna, 預流)<sup>12</sup> who have turned their hearts over to the greater track of collective spiritual awakening (mahāyāna, 大乘).

Because of this, one should understand that, although the nature of manifesting life and death in these bodhisattvas may involve differing ripening fruits (vipāka phala, 異熟果) that are endowed with affliction (sa āsrava, 有漏)<sup>7</sup>, the prevailing fruits (adhipati phala, 增上果) of their actions are without affliction (anāsrava karma, 無漏業). In the holy teachings, such as in The Scripture on the Ten Levels of Grounding (Daśa Bhūmikā Sūtra, 十住經), it is said that, in being without affliction, the buddhas transcend the three-fold sphere of sentient existence<sup>4</sup> but teach about the spiritual life by adapting to the causes found in this sphere that support its realization.

#### D. The fourth and final explanation of Vasubandhu's nineteenth stanza of verse:

Three explanations of this stanza were explained in the previous section on habitual forces (vāsanā, 習氣). Having distinguished between the fragmentations of life & death and the inconceivable manifestations of the spiritual life:

- \* The words *habitual force of actions with consequences* (karma vāsāna, 業習氣) is a reference to the seeds (bījaḥ, 種子) of two kinds of action, those with afflictions (sa āsrava, 有漏) and those without afflictions (anāsrava, 無漏), as already explained.
- \* The words *habitual forces of attachments to duality* (dvaidha grāha vāsanā, 二取習氣) refer to the two kinds of attachment, those to identity (ātma grāha, 我執) and those to purpose (dharma grāha, 法執), as explained before, because they both involve clinging to attachments.
- \* The meaning of the word *combine* (saha, 俱) in the verse here is the same as explained before.

Although the manifestations of life & death (pāriṇāmikī cyutiḥ, 變易生死) transcend any fragmentations into lives that succeed one another and the different ripenings of fruits that come to an end and then are reborn, there is progress over many successive lives through a repetitive process of purification or catharsis (pariṣkāra, 資助). The meaning of this is also found in (the Brahmanic explanation of) the ending of former lives in the heaven of judgment, penitence & atonement (suyāma devaloka, 須夜摩天) & rebirth of subsequent lives in the heaven of forgiveness, redemption & rebirth (tuṣita devaloka, 兜率天).

- \* Although this continuous succession of lives and deaths occurs through the manifested purposes of the conscious mind, they certainly exist in the seeds (bījaḥ, 種) of the subconscious as well, and that is what is being emphasized in this stanza of verse. Kuṇḍī added: In fact, the continuous successions of manifested purposes are often interrupted while those of the seeds are always occurring.
- \* Some say this stanza does not refer to manifested purposes in order to demonstrate that the true ripenings of cause and effect are inseparable from the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識) that is found in primordial consciousness (mūla

vijñāna, 本識). Manifested purposes may cause its different ripening fruits to appear but they are not identical with them because, when the seven evolving manifestations of consciousness (pravṛtti vijñāna, 轉識) are interrupted, there are no longer any different ripening of these fruits.

- \* The wheel of life and death turns (saṃsāra cakra, 生死輪) round and round through the bounds of the past, present and future but it does not depend on external conditions because it really arises from within consciousness.

The mutually dependent conditions of unafflicted purposes should also be understood like this. From the very beginning of time, their seeds have been stored in the subconscious memory found within primordial consciousness. When they have been repeatedly perfumed by the seven evolving manifestations of consciousness (pravṛtti vijñāna, 轉識), these seeds gradually grow and develop, becoming ever more prevalent until there is a complete realization of enlightenment. In transforming consciousness by discarding seeds that are tainted or adulterated, there is its restoration with newly arising seeds that are without affliction. Because of power from a buddha's original vow (purva praṇidhāna bala, 本願力), all the seeds of virtue are retained (dhāraṇa, 任持) forever into the future, bringing about sublime functions that continue on without end. Because of this, one should understand that ultimately there really is only an inner consciousness.

### **The Discourse on Realizing There is Only the Virtual Nature of Consciousness,**

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### **Volume Eight**