

Conditioned Co-production, or Mutual co-Arising, or  
Interdependent Origination

**Pratitya samutpada (Sanskrit) or Paticcasamuppada (Pali)**

Buddha's doctrine is primarily about conditions and causes: unhappiness/suffering depends on causes; hence, to eliminate it, one must discover and eliminate the causes.

Cause of suffering is the kind of desire that leads to rebirth; involves pleasure and pain, desire for existence or non-existence, etc. Unless one undoes the causal chain, one cannot escape transmigration once more into the realm of ignorance, suffering, conditionedness (samsara)

Regarding the "conditioned" in conditioned coproduction, conditioned means "where this is, that becomes." Buddhism seeks to discover and then to eliminate the causal factors that lead us to be constantly born into samsara.

The "causality" involved here is not the causality studied by science in its effort to explain the material world, but instead the causal issues involved in arising and cessation of samsara.

Buddha's crucial saying:

**When this is present, that comes to be;  
from the arising of this, that arises.  
When this is absent, this does not come to be;  
on the cessation of this, that ceases.**

The Twelve-fold Chain of **Pratitya Samutpada**, each member of which is totally dependent on the others.

ignorance  
dispositions/volitional impulses  
consciousness  
name and form  
six sense fields  
contact  
feeling  
desire  
appropriation  
becoming  
rebirth  
aging and dying

### A) Those factors which come from previous life:

#### 1) **Ignorance**. What is ignorance?

a) non-attainment of knowledge, blindness, lack of insight into four noble truths, dharmas, etc.

b) production of false views, deception, self-deception; construction of a world that conceals the truth; blind to the skandhas, we react to fictitious truths such as "men," "women," and "things" that don't really exist; we seek permanence among such things, but they are inherently impermanent. These "things" conceal Nirvana from us

2) **Karmic activities**. Ignorance during previous lifetime gives rise to (conditions, causes) a combination of volitional impulses, Sanskarah (Sanskrit) or Samkhara (Pali) derived from former births) [this amounts to "karma" that is passed on]

### B) Those factors which involve current lifetime

3) Karmic activities give rise to [**rebirth, moment-of-conception**] **consciousness** [one of the skandhas]

Last mental act of previous existence gives rise to first mental act of the new life; this means that conception results not from act of our parents, but instead is the consequence of what one has done in the previous life, and thus amounts to a voluntary act

The skandha of consciousness constitutes the organizing principle around which the new consciousness is set up as a subject in the world

4) Consciousness gives rise to **individual psycho-organic being** (namarupa)

namarupa refers to the psycho-physical organism, now settling down and coagulating round nucleus of consciousness; consciousness and namarupa depend on each other, lean on each other

[However, as Watts points out (p. 42), nama-rupa also refers to maya, which results when permanent names are given to forms, which are in principle always in flux..... The "veil of Maya" refers to the illusionary character of our concepts, names, measures, etc. The world is nothing but abstract names and fluid forms, so that the world is really ungraspable....]

5) Individual organism gives rise to the **six sense organs** (including mind)

6) Six sense organs give rise to **contact** (with objects of sense)

7) Contact gives rise to **sensation or feeling** (vedana), which is pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral

[The next two involve **Karmic processes** that cause future effects]

8) Sensation gives rise to **desire or craving** (trishna, tanha); e.g., pleasant feeling makes us desire more of it; unpleasant feeling creates aversion against it

9) Desire gives rise to **clinging or grasping** (upadana), a hardened form of craving, e.g., hardened by greater intensity and firmer seizure of sense objects, or by an acceptance of or infusion with perverted views; in grasping, we cling tight to that which we have craved/desired

There are four kinds of grasping:

- a) at sense objects
- b) at false opinions, including views that block salvation (e.g., nihilism, eternalism)
- c) at views that expect salvation to result from practices that can't produce it
- d) at word "self," involving all usages of the terms "I," "me," "mine," "my," etc.

**c) Those factors which involve the next life:**

10) from grasping comes **continuity of becoming**

This becoming can be of two kinds:

a) karma-becoming (wholesome or unwholesome) that is another term for deeds that condition rebirth (basically identical with number 2 above)

b) rebirth-becoming is the effect of such karma, and includes which plane of the triple world into which the individual may be propelled by karma: 1) formless world; 2) world of form; 3) world of sense desire (choice among gods, asuras, men, ghosts, animals, and infernal beings)

11) such continuity leads to **rebirth**, which here involves growth of skandhas during pre-natal period before actual ejection from womb

12) from birth