

The Concept of Existence (Bhava) in Early Buddhism

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Abstract

The transition in Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) is often misunderstood. This article explores the early Buddhist philosophical perspective of the relationship between death and re-birth in the process of following *bhava* (*uppatti-bhava*) and existing *bhava* (*kamma-bhava*). It additionally analyzes the process of re-birth (*punabbhava*) through the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological level of becoming, specifically how *kamma-bhava* leads to re-becoming in a new birth. The philosophical perspective is established on the basis of the *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya-Sutta*, the *Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2), the *Cūlakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, the *Kutuhalasala-Sutta* as well as commentary from the *Visuddhimagga*. Further, G.A. Somaratne's article *Punabbhava and Jātiṣaṃsāra in Early Buddhism, Bhava and Vibhava in Early Buddhism* and Bhikkhu Bodhi's *Does Rebirth Make Sense?* provide scholarly perspective for understanding the process of re-birth. This analysis will help to clarify common misconceptions of Tilmann Vetter and Lambert Schmithausen about the role of consciousness and *kamma* during the process of death and rebirth. Specifically, the paper addresses the role of the re-birth consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*), death consciousness (*cūti-viññāṇa*), life continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*) and present consciousness (*pavatti-viññāṇa*) in the context of the three natures of existence and the results of action (*kamma-vipāka*) in future existences.

Keywords: Bhava, Paṭiccasamuppāda, Kamma, Psycho-Cosmology, Punabbhava

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Prologue

Bhava is the tenth link in the successive flow of human existence in the process of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Dependent Origination is one of the most profound doctrines, has in-depth meaning in Buddhism, which refers to the mode of being's (*puggala*) birth to death, continuing from one lifetime to another and a clear structure of rotated becoming (*samsāra*) within a twelvefold links. Among these links, the transition in Dependent Origination between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) is often misunderstood. This article explores the early Buddhist philosophical perspective of the relationship between death and re-birth in the process of following *bhava* (*uppatti-bhava*) and existing *bhava* (*kamma-bhava*). It also analyzes the process of re-birth (*punabbhava*) through the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological level of becoming, specifically how *kamma-bhava* leads to re-becoming in a new birth. The philosophical perspective is established on the basis of the *Mahātanhāsankhaya-Sutta*, the *Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2), the *Cūlakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, the *Kutuhalasala-Sutta* as well as commentary from the *Visuddhimagga*. Further, G.A. Somaratne's article *Punabbhava and Jāti-samsāra in Early Buddhism*, *Bhava and Vibhava in Early Buddhism* and Bhikkhu Bodhi's *Does Rebirth Make Sense?* provide scholarly perspective for understanding the process of re-birth. In this paper, I would like to clarify common misconceptions of Tilmann Vetter and Lambert Schmithausen about the role of *kamma* and consciousness during the process of death and rebirth based on the early Buddhist discourses.

The term we are considering is '*bhava*' in Pāli that has various meanings in the discourses of the Pāli Canon, and commentaries, which is formed with the suffix 'a' and the verbal root √bhū (to be, be), and its literal meaning is becoming, being or existence. Different scholars have given different rendering of the term into English. Some of the renderings are 'existence', 'being', 'becoming', 'birth', 'state of existence', 'life', 'mode of becoming', 'origin' and so forth. However, *bhava* is not translated as 'existence' in the metaphysical sense. Bhikkhu Bodhi has described the meaning of the term *bhava* as "sentient existence in one of the three realms of existence posited by Buddhist cosmology" (2000: 52-53). Thanissaro Bhikkhu describes it thus, "a sense of identity in a particular world of experience" (2013). According to him, the term 'becoming' is a prior metaphysical absolute, which refers not from previous sources, but something produced by our mind's activity. Therefore, the term has both psychological and cosmological meanings. For instance, becoming in the process of Dependent Origination is referred to the transition between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*), which denotes through the clinging (*upādāna*), one acts with the body, speech and mind, and creates the *kamma* that determines one's new becoming (*jāti*, *punabbhava*). *Bhava* is mentioned in many discourses in the Pāli canon, where it is classified in different ways. It is frequently mentioned that there are three kinds of *bhava*: the sensuous mode of becoming (*kāma-bhava*), fine-material mode of becoming (*rūpa-bhava*), immaterial mode of becoming (*arūpa-bhava*) (SN 12.2), which additionally can be understood in terms of a state of mind, a flow of consciousness (*viññāna*) and the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological states of being in the three worlds. Jeffery Hopkins explains it as 'lifetime to lifetime' (Tenzin Gyatso, 2015), which is fully potentialized karmic energy in one's last moment that produces another lifetime. In addition, it similarly explains as 'moment to moment' (Steven Goodman, 1992) that creates the new structure of karmic tendencies which will have their consequences in future becoming. I prefer myself the translation of the term '*bhava*' with a common term 'becoming, in order to make readers familiar with the content which this semantically identical in meaning.

First of all, we should identify early Buddhism and the early Buddhist concept of *bhava*, which clarifies some scholars' misconceptions and misinterpretation based on their misunderstanding about the role of *kamma* and consciousness during the process of death and rebirth. Early Buddhism is referred to the pre-sectarian Buddhist period (until the first documented split among the Sangha) that was existed from the Buddha's time to one hundred years after passing away of the Buddha (*mahāparinibbāna*). *Nikāya* manuscripts from Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma Pitaka are considered to be early Buddhist scriptures. According to early Buddhist scriptures, the concept of 'bhava' is presented into two aspects, namely: (i) linking in the process of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*), (ii) the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological levels of becoming. Firstly, *bhava* in the process of Dependent Origination has referred to the doctrine of conditionality (*idappaccayatā*) of 'cause and effect'. According to the *Vibhaṅga-Sutta* (SN 12.2), the term 'bhava' explains in the context of Dependent Origination as conditioned by clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) depending upon causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*). According to *Mahāvedalla-Sutta* (MN.43), a conversation between Sāriputta, and Koṭṭhita is a logical analysis of becoming, where Koṭṭhita asked Sāriputta some interesting questions in relation to becoming. Secondly, the karmic processes on the three psycho-cosmological levels of becoming show how *kamma* leads to beings to renewed becoming in these three modes of becoming. According to the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2) (AN 3.76 and 3.77), a conversation between the Buddha and his attendant Ānanda can be found where the Buddha illustrates the role of action (*kamma*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and craving (*taṇhā*) in the production of renewed becoming (*āyatim punabbhava ābhiniḅbatti*) as well as the role of intention (*cetanā*) (AN 3.77). According to the *Mahātaṇhāsankhaya-Sutta* (MN 38), a conversation between the Buddha and a monk called as Sāti on a misconception of self-identical consciousness from one life to the next (*punabbhava*), the Buddha teaches how the role of consciousness based on the conditions of Dependent Origination. So, this discourse teaches how to understand the relationship of consciousness to rebirth.

The Process of Becoming in Dependent Origination

Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is one of the most profound doctrines in Buddhism. It articulates the cause of suffering in terms of psychophysiological conditions upon rebirth. The Buddha has expressed in the *Nidāna-Saṃyutta* (SN) and the *Buddhātuka-Sutta* (MN) that the law of conditionality in the Dependent Origination demonstrates the causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*), thus; "When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases" (Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 927). It constructively clarifies the law of causation that a cause leads to a consequence as a result (*kamma-vipāka*). When one seeks the cause of present actions (*kamma*), he understands the origin of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*) and when one penetrates the cause of suffering, he ceases the producing new action that leads to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*) or the cessation of re-becoming. In the *Paṭiccasamuppāda-Vibhaṅga-Sutta* (SN 12.2), the Buddha teaches the doctrine of Dependent Origination in a systematic way demonstrating the twelfold links and described the entire lifecycle of a being or the wheel of becoming. In addition, these links are categorized into three life-span related to time, namely; past, present and future (Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, 2010, 287).

Past life	ignorance and mental formation
Present life	consciousness, name and form, six-sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging and becoming
Future life	birth and aging-and-death

Figure 1: Life-span period

Thus, the Dependent Origination illustrates the endless cycle of death and rebirth from one existence to another existence within the twelfefold links. Consequently, it is undoubtedly well accepted that the doctrine of Dependent Origination has profound and in-depth meaning, in addition to its significance to understand the relationship between death and re-birth in the process of following *bhava* (*uppatti-bhava*) and present mode of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) as well as the process of re-becoming (*punabbhava*) through the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological mode of becoming, specifically how *kamma-bhava* leads to birth (*jāti*) in future.

The law of *kamma* is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism which has a strong connection with the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). The law of *kamma* refers to the law of cause and effect (conditionality): that every volitional deed whether wholesome or unwholesome brings about a certain consequence. Volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) is the second link of Dependent Origination that implies the present mode of becoming (*bhava*) as an action (*kamma*), whether wholesome and unwholesome deeds through bodily, verbally and mentally (SN 12.2), and its consequence leads to birth (*jāti*) or new becoming (*punabbhava*) and repeatedly transcends into superior or lower *saṃsāric* state of mind (*Cūlakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, MN 135). Becoming in Dependent Origination is usually divided into two aspects, namely; *kamma-bhava* and *uppatti-bhava* (Vbh.136: 137). *kamma-bhava* is the present mode of becoming. This present mode of becoming is determined by the present state of volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) such as intention (*cetanā*), desire (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*), prides (*māna*), fetters (*saṃyojana*). So, this mode of becoming determines birth (*jāti*) or new becoming (*punabbhava*). According to *Paṭiccasamuppāda-Vibhaṅga-Sutta* (SN 12.2), the present mode of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) and its connections to the clinging (*upādāna*), craving (*taṇhā*) and volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) which are determined by ignorance (*avijjā*). So, this mode of becoming determines birth, more especially the mode of birth. Here, birth (*jāti*) or re-becoming (*punabbhava*) denotes as *uppatti-bhava* in terms of realms wherein a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is driven by the clinging (*upādāna*). Understanding this subtle connection between birth and the present mode of becoming, one cultivates the doctrine of the buddha to achieve the cessation of birth by way of attaining the cessation of becoming and by way of ceasing, the volitional formations that determine such becoming. Thus, one ultimately understands that the present mode of becoming together with its volitional formations within this life could work to stop the birth in future.

Depending on the volitional formations such as craving and clinging, the mode of psycho-cosmological becoming continues transforming the karmic energy or consequence of wholesome or unwholesome for birth in future. The mode of psycho-cosmological becoming in future is also called re-becoming (*punabbhava*) that will take place in one's psycho-cosmological becoming in future by transforming the present mode of becoming. Depending upon the mode of becoming in future, rebirth or re-becoming comes in future. Therefore, re-becoming of a person in future is generated through volitional formations which are hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving (*Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, MN 43). The early discourses identify the connection of volitional formations of a person in the cycle of birth and death (*bhavacckka*). The cycle of birth and death implies that a person is going through circles of birth, each potential birth being determined by volitional formations that take place in the mode

of becoming at the time of death. *Atthi Raga Sutta* (SN 12.64) states denoting to this point thus; “Where there is the growth of volitional formations, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. Where there is the production of renewed becoming in the future, there is future birth, ageing, & death.”

As frequently described in the early discourses (SN 12.2, MN 43, 43.15, AN 3.76 and 3.77), becoming (*bhava*) could be in three psycho-cosmological modes of becoming: sensual mode of becoming (*kāma-bhava*), fine-material mode of becoming (*rūpa-bhava*), and immaterial mode of becoming (*arūpa-bhava*). A being can be taken place in any modes of becoming during his wandering in the cycle of birth in accordance with his volitional formations and repeatedly transcended into superior and inferior states ((*Cūḷakammavibhanga-Sutta*, MN 135). The two modes of becoming: the fine-material and immaterial mode of becoming; take place through cultivating the absorption meditations (*jhāna*) and are known as celestial beings (*brahmās*). All three modes of psycho-cosmological becoming are determined by the volitional formations (*kamma*) and when the potentiality of volitional formations is ripened as birth in those modes. Here, the volitional formations work as the seeds for birth in those modes. In the discourses of *Bhava* (1) and (2) (AN 3.76 and 3.77), this is illustrated by the Buddha with questioning by the Venerable Ānanda: “It is said thus, Sir, “becoming, becoming.” To what mode is there becoming?”

“If, Ānanda, there were no volitional action ripening in the sensual mode, would sensual mode of becoming be discerned?”

“No, Sir.”

“If, Ānanda, there were no volitional action ripening in the fine-material mode, would fine-material mode of becoming be discerned?”

“No, Sir.”

“If, Ānanda, there were no volitional action ripening in the immaterial mode, would immaterial mode of becoming be discerned?”

“No, Sir.”

Thus, Ānanda, volitional action is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving the moisture; for beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, consciousness becomes grounded in the lower mode. Thus, there is the production of renewed becoming in future. This is how there is becoming.” (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012: 309-10)

It should be clearly understood that becoming (*bhava*) is the present state of psychological transformation that takes place in the three phyco-cosmological modes of sensuous, fine-material and immaterial spheres at any time, now or future. Each mode of becoming comes with potentiality for numerous variation modes of birth (*jāti*). For instance, the sensual mode of becoming constitutes birth as human (*manussa*), gods (*deva*), animals (*tiracchāyana yoni*), spirits (*asura*), hell-beings (*niraya*). The fine-material mode of becoming constitutes birth as being celestial beings through the cultivation of absorption meditation: the fine-material of becoming is made by bodily form, but desireless and passionless; the immaterial mode of becoming is made by only consciousness and enjoyed the fruits of the volitional formations (*Jhāna-sutta*, AN 4.123). All these modes and their variation modes as either high or low,

superior or inferior, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, are determined by the mass of volitional formations (*kamma*) (*Mahasihanada-sutta*, MN 12). Thus, the mode of becoming assists as a motive to new becoming and wandering in the cycle of birth (*jāti-samsāra*). It is clearly shown that the relationship between the mode of birth (*uppatti-bhava*) and present mode of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) in the process of renewed becoming (*punabbhava*) and the role of volitional formations in the three psycho-cosmological modes of becoming that leads to birth in future.

Birth (*jāti*) refers to the potential birth in one of those modes and their variation modes as human, Thais, Indians, Buddhists, animals, gods, spirits or hell beings and so forth. In addition, it also refers to the birth of consciousness in terms of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts or the birth of aggregates. The Buddha teaches birth in future, which is not becoming in the sense of eternality, but the uninstructed worldly person who misunderstand the concept of re-becoming or rebirth and its continuous process through the volitional formations on the psycho-cosmological mode of becoming. The doctrine of Buddha is neither easy nor difficult to understand for the ordinary person. However, it is easily confused when a person comes to understand the Buddha's doctrine on birth (*jāti*) for the first time. As the wanderer, Vaccagotta questioned the Buddha related to this matter such as whether or not the world was eternal and whether the enlightened one existed after death. For him, there will be birth for some of his disciples, not other religious teachers or disciples. The Buddha replied him thus, "the other religious teachers or disciples assume birth as a permanent self and the five-holding-aggregates (*pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā*) of matter (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is a permanent or eternal self (*atta*)" (SN 44.8). But, for the enlightened one, the five-holding-aggregates is no-self (*anatta*); there is no permanent person, eternal self, but there is merely the experience of aggregates that is taken as 'this is mine, this am I, this is my self' (Somaratne, 2017: 120). As the formula of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), thus; "When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases" (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 927). Thus, the self, no-self, the same self or a different self, all these are the conventional truths, views due to not seeing the things as they truly are.

Even though, sometimes the doctrine of Dependent Origination on the role of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in the cycle of birth (*jāti-samsāra*) has misunderstood by the attendants of the Buddha themselves, for instance, Sāti, an attendant of the Buddha who misunderstood the rebirth of this same self or consciousness that runs and wanders through the round of the rebirths (*Mahātanhāsankhaya-Sutta*, MN 38). The aggregate of consciousness among the five-holding-aggregates (*pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā*) is often misunderstood as this self exists after death. In this early discourse, the Buddha asked his attendant, Sāti, thus; "What is that consciousness, Sāti?"

"Venerable sir, it is that which speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and bad actions."

"Misguided man, to whom have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma in that way? In many ways have I not stated consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without the significant conditions there is no origination of consciousness?". (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 350)

As it has been clarified in that discourse that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is arisen by being dependent upon the plenty of volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*), and each of six consciousnesses is also arisen by being dependent upon a sense-base and sensory object (*salāyatana*). And in

many discourses of the Buddha, he identified four nutriments; edible food, sensual feeling, volitions, and consciousness. Here, the nutriment of consciousness is regarded as a condition for the production of a renewed becoming in future (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000: 539). This statement clarifies that the role of consciousness is a medium for birth in future. Therefore, consciousness is called a flow or stream of consciousness (*viññāṇa-sota*) in terms of a state of mind that constitutes a renewed becoming and the continuity of becoming. The doctrine of Dependent Origination clarifies that the role of consciousness plays a significant role as a medium for birth in future or renewed becoming during the mode of death and rebirth. The consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in the stream of consciousness is considered to be a single becoming (*bhava*), which is also known as rebirth linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) that reveals the continuity of becoming from present mode of becoming to re-becoming in future. At the end of every thought process, the rebirth linking consciousness works as life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) along the process from death to new becoming. Then, at the moment of death, death consciousness (*cūṭi-viññāṇa*), the consciousness is occurred through experiencing the last life-continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*) of the present life and the first life-continuum consciousness of the forthcoming life, which is called the rebirth consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) of the present life. Here, the rebirth consciousness is connected with the consequence of volitional formations during death and birth, and connecting with the new becoming. It clarifies that the aggregate of consciousness does not run and wander through the rounds of rebirth, neither the same self nor same consciousness, but it changes in every moment of thought process.

The Pāli word ‘*punabbhava*’ refers to re-becoming or renewed becoming, but this term is popularly and mistakenly taken to refer to rebirth. In early discourses, there does not appear any Pāli word corresponding to ‘rebirth’. For that reason, when worldly persons see the concept of re-becoming through the doctrine of the Buddha, they understand that there is no birth (*jāti*) after death, no path to salvation is a necessary, the concept of rebirth implies being born again of the same person and so forth. Parallel confusions still run through the Buddhist traditions to which the modern scholars also contribute through their reckless misinterpretation based on the Buddhist’s concepts of renewed becoming or rebirth. That’s why we should aware of and clarify some of the scholar’s misinterpretations. Among them, Akira Hirakawa, a prominent scholar who does not believe that rebirth was a necessary tenet of the teaching of the Buddha, states thus, “Śākyamuni was primarily concerned with liberation from the suffering of existence. If existence consisted of cycles of birth and death, then deliverance from those cycles was his goal. Thus, Early Buddhists did not need to dismiss rebirth” (Akira Hirakawa, 1990: 6). Similarly, Tilmann Vetter says that “The Buddhist doctrine of salvation.....seems firmly bound to the concept that one must continuously be reborn and die. If there is no rebirth, then one needs no path to salvation, because an end to suffering comes at death.” (Vetter, 1988: XVI).

It is necessary to mention that the Buddha teaches and stimulates only one thing that is the cessation of the suffering or how to stop the cause of suffering. Probably, in that sense, Akira Hirakawa feels that rebirth was not a necessary tenet of the doctrine of the Buddha, but it has a strong integral connection to the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) and Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) because both doctrine’s principle objective focuses on the process of the origin and cessation of suffering. The Buddha in Dependent Origination teaches the process of the origin and cessation of suffering as the law of causality— cause and effect, how suffering is an effect of the cause of suffering and the end of suffering is an effect that leads to the cessation of suffering. In many early Buddhist discourses, the Buddha mentioned that craving (*taṇhā*) is the root cause of suffering. In the

discourse of *Mahavedalla-Sutta* (MN 43), Sāriputta states thus, “when craving (*taṇhā*) and ignorance (*avijjā*) ripen together; both are the cause of becoming (*bhava*) (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 388). According to Dependent Origination, for the reason of mode of becoming (*bhava*), a being exists and has to endure suffering in the cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*) repeatedly. Understanding the connection between birth (*jāti*) and present mode of becoming (*bhava*) in the process of life; one achieves the cessation of birth by the way of attaining the cessation of becoming and by the way of ceasing the volitional formations such as craving (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*) and ignorance (*avijjā*), one can stop the mode of becoming and birth in future. Thus, the Dependent Origination clarifies how suffering comes to becoming repeatedly and how suffering can be eradicated along the path to liberation. From the standpoints of Dependent Origination and four noble truths, the continuity of becoming or birth (*jāti*) in future exists in the cycles of birth and death (*samsāra*) till applying the path to the liberation and achieving the cessation of becoming.

In Vedic belief, one acts volitional formations either good conduct or bad conduct through bodily and verbally. The soul with volitional formations transforms from one life to another life after death that is called atman or eternal soul or self, soul or self does not change after death (Swami Nikhilananda, chapter II, verse-18). It refers to the aggregates of consciousness or the same self or soul in Veda that runs and wanders through the rounds of rebirth. Tilmann Vetter contrasts early Buddhism along with Vedic belief that good deeds lead to heaven and bad deeds to the underworld (Vetter, 1988: 77). Tilmann Vetter’s statement is indeed not logical from the Buddhist perspective. He tried to reconstruct the Buddha’s view on *kamma* and rebirth with the connection to the Vedic belief on rebirth where they have only a belief in the other world and after staying in heaven a person is reborn as a human being (Vetter, 1988: 78). Lambert Schmithausen emphasized rebirth which can be dealt with Vetter’s view that there is no mention of rebirth as an animal or hungry ghost nor even a return to the mode of human, nor there is re-becoming in three modes of becoming in future (Lambert Schmithausen, 1992: 138). To establish and prove these statements, Vetter states, “the old structure that good or bad conduct in the world of mankind either to heaven or to the underworld” with reference to *Puggala-Sutta* (SN 3.21): It states, thus,

“There are four kinds of persons (*puggala*); one who from the darkness goes to the darkness, one who from the darkness goes to the light, one who from the light goes to the darkness, and one who from the light goes to the light. The person who from the darkness goes to the darkness is reborn (*paccājāto*) in a lower-class family of Caṇḍālas, basket makers, hunters, etc., in a poor family with little food and clothing; moreover, the person is ugly and a cripple. And this person leads an evil life with his body, his speech and his thoughts and after death he goes to the underworld. The person who from the darkness goes to the light is also reborn in a lower-class family of Caṇḍālas, etc., is ugly and a cripple, but leads a good life with his body, his speech, and his thoughts and after death goes to the heavenly world. The person who from the light goes to the darkness is reborn in an upper-class family of wealthy warriors, Brahmans, or citizens where there are all the luxuries of life; moreover, the person is beautiful. This person leads an evil life with his body, his speech and his thoughts, and after death he goes to the underworld. Finally, the person who from the light goes to the light is reborn in an upper-class family of wealthy warriors, Brahmans or citizens where there are all the luxuries of life; moreover, the person is beautiful. This person leads a good life with his body, his speech, and his thought and after death he goes to the heavenly world.” (Vetter, 1988: 79-80).

I have no idea how he supposed to establish his statement with only this discourse about the idea of *kamma* that in the earliest period heaven and the underworld was only destinations at death and not future human existence. Tilmann Vetter tried to prove that renewed becoming of

human in future was the later development in Buddhism. I have previously clarified this idea with the reference of early Buddhist discourses such as *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya-Sutta*, the *Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2), the *Cūlakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, the *Kutuhalasala-Sutta*, where those discourses provide how a being takes place in any modes of three phyco-cosmological becoming in the cycle of birth and death in accordance with his volitional formations. For instance, re-becoming in one of the three phyco-cosmological modes of becoming as human (*manussa*), animals (*tiracchāyana yoni*), gods (*deva*), spirits (*asura*), hell-beings (*niraya*), and so forth. In Buddhism, the consciousness during death and birth functions as a medium for birth in future that changes at the end of every thought process. Thus, the same consciousness does not run and wander in the cycle of birth and death like Vedas after death, the same self or soul runs, wanders and transforms to birth in future without any changes.

Ending Mark

To conclude I would like to summarize the key point of this paper in simple terms: Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is the mode of being's birth to death, continuing of becoming from one lifetime to another and a clear process of rotated becoming (*saṃsāra*) through twelvefold links. The transition of becoming (*bhava*) in Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) is often misunderstood. The term '*bhava*' has two meanings from a metaphysical and cosmological perspective. In that sense, becoming in Dependent Origination is usually divided into two modes: *kamma-bhava* is the present mode of becoming that determined by the present state of volitional formations such as intention, desire, clinging, prides, fetters, and ignorance, which determines birth (*jāti*) or renewed becoming (*punabbhava*) in future. The mode of birth or renewed becoming in the three modes of phyco-cosmological becoming: sensual, fine-material, and immaterial mode of becoming; are regarded as *uppatti-bhava*. Here, birth (*jāti*) is the birth of present mode of becoming in new becoming in future that conditioned by the five-holding-aggregates (*pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā*) of matter, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is a stream of consciousness in terms of a state of mind as medium for the renewed becoming and its continuity in future. The consciousness in the stream of consciousness is a single becoming, is also known as rebirth linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) that reveals the continuity of becoming from present mode of becoming to re-becoming in future, and that rebirth linking consciousness works as life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) which changes at the end of every thought process, and at the moment of death, death consciousness (*cūti-viññāṇa*) occurs through experiencing the last life-continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*) of the present life and the first life-continuum consciousness of the next life. Thus, the rebirth consciousness is connected with the consequence of volitional formations during death and birth, and connecting with the new becoming. Through the above explanations, this analysis has clarified common misconceptions of Tilmann Vetter and Lambert Schmithausen about the role of consciousness and *kamma* during the process of death and rebirth.

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