SN 12.20 — Conditions

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Text

Linked Discourses 12.20

2. Fuel

Conditions

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, I will teach you dependent origination and dependently originated phenomena. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“And what is dependent origination? Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death. Whether Realized Ones arise or not, this law of nature persists, this regularity of natural principles, this surety of natural principles, specific conditionality. A Realized One awakens to this and comprehends it, then he explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses it. ‘Look,’ he says, ‘Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.’

Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth … Grasping is a requirement for continued existence … Craving is a requirement for grasping …

Feeling is a requirement for craving … Contact is a requirement for feeling … The six sense fields are requirements for contact … Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields …

Consciousness is a requirement for name and form …

Choices are a requirement for consciousness … Ignorance is a requirement for choices. Whether Realized Ones arise or not, this law of nature persists, this regularity of natural principles, this surety of natural principles, specific conditionality. A Realized One awakens to this and comprehends it, then he explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, clarifies, analyzes, and discloses it. ‘Look,’ he says, ‘Ignorance is a requirement for choices.’ So the fact that this is real, not unreal, not otherwise; the specific conditionality of it: this is called dependent origination.

And what are the dependently originated phenomena? Old age and death are impermanent, conditioned, dependently originated, liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease. Rebirth … Continued existence … Grasping … Craving …

Feeling … Contact … The six sense fields … Name and form …

Consciousness …

Choices … Ignorance is impermanent, conditioned, dependently originated, liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease. These are called the dependently originated phenomena.

When a noble disciple has clearly seen with right wisdom this dependent origination and these dependently originated phenomena as they are, it will be quite impossible for them to turn back to the first beginning, thinking: 'Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? After being what, what did I become in the past?' Or to turn forward to the final end, thinking: 'Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future? After being what, what will I become in the future?' Or to be undecided about the present, thinking: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? This sentient being—where did it come from? And where will it go?' Why is that? Because that noble disciple has clearly seen with right wisdom this dependent origination and these dependently originated phenomena as they are."