

1. What the Text Says

The *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is not an account of the beginning of the world. It describes a process that runs in every human being in every moment. The interpretations that turn it into nothing but a chain across three lifetimes, or into a rosary to be recited by rote, miss the text. The Buddha expressly set aside the question of the world's beginning.

The key stands before the twelve links, in the general formula. When this is, that is. When this is not, that is not. Nothing exists out of itself. Everything that is, is because something else is, and therefore everything ceases as soon as its condition is withdrawn. The process is like a river: it need not be fought; it is enough to stop feeding it. The twelve links are nothing but the unfolding of these four lines.

The chain begins with ignorance, *avijjā*, literally not-knowing. What is meant is not only missing knowledge about something, but non-observation: not observing what is just now happening. One reaches for the phone and only notices at the screen that the hand is already there. That blind grasp is the ignorance with which the chain begins. Out of non-observation arises what the mind creates; consciousness latches onto it, and with that there is an I that experiences and a world that is experienced. Through one of the six sense bridges something enters and makes contact. This is *phassa*, contact: the meeting of sense bridge, object and consciousness. This is where the *vipassanā* method begins: to notice contact as it becomes feeling, before the feeling becomes a story. Out of contact arises a feeling: pleasant, painful or neutral. Up to this point nothing has happened; the feeling arises unwilled. What happens with the feeling is very much willed: the wanting-to-have, the wanting-to-be-rid-of, the boredom that is itself only a wanting. That is *taṇhā*, thirst, craving. After craving comes clinging; out of clinging comes becoming: one becomes the one who is right, who was hurt, who knows better. This I is born, and what is born ages and dies. The world is not the mass of suffering. The mass of suffering is the building that is erected in a second around a feeling.

Between *vedanā* and *taṇhā*, between feeling and craving, lies the only point in the whole chain where one can step in. Everything before it happens too fast; everything after it is already too heavy. Everyone knows this: an insect stings, that is contact. It burns and itches, that is feeling. Up to here it is a small pain that passes by itself. Then the wanting sets in: get rid of it. One scratches, the itching grows worse, one gets annoyed, and the annoyance lasts longer than the sting. The evening may even be remembered as the evening with the sting.

Craving is not a third event that follows the feeling. A feeling that is only felt has no consequences. But then perception gives it a name: pleasant, mine, I know this. Thinking makes a story of the name. And in that moment craving is not on its way: it is already there. The story itself is the craving. As long as the feeling does not become a thought, no clinging arises. The *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* (MN 18) describes exactly this sequence: feeling becomes perception, perception becomes a thought, and the thought becomes a train of thought that runs by itself. The twelve links show this movement writ large, across the arc of a life; the *Madhupiṇḍika* shows it small, within the fraction of a second. It is the same movement.

The reverse order is neither flight from the world nor a deadening of the senses. It says only this: with the remainderless fading of ignorance the whole building collapses. If the feeling is seen, in the moment it arises, as a feeling and nothing more, craving does not arise. Where there is no craving, nothing is grasped; no one becomes, no one is born, no one dies. *Nirodha* is not the extinction of life but the absence of a building that was never necessary.

There is one point where the chain can rest: a feeling that is felt, and not yet made into thought.

2. The Word *sati* · สติ

Most translators stumble over a single word in the general formula: *sati*. What the word means is shown most clearly by everyday Thai. In Thai, สติ does not primarily mean mindfulness in the sense of the meditation literature; it means presence of mind, being in one's right mind, being with oneself. Its opposite is not distraction but loss of control. ขาดสติ, "to lack sati", means to act without presence of mind: เมาจนขาดสติ, drunk beyond one's senses; โกรธจนขาดสติ, blind with rage; ขาดสติชั่ววูบ, the moment of thoughtlessness pleaded in court. On the same axis lie ได้สติ (to come to one's senses), หหมดสติ (unconscious), เสียสติ (to lose one's mind), สติแตก (to snap), ตั้งสติ (to collect oneself), มีสติ (composed) and the monastic formula สติสัมปชัญญะ, mindfulness and clear comprehension. Everyday speech keeps the distinction clean: ขาดสติ is absence of mind, ขาดสมาธิ is lack of concentration. The

pupil gazing out of the window is distracted, but present. The drunk who hits out may be highly concentrated and is nevertheless not there. Sati is not concentration but presence. Thus Thai preserves the oldest layer of the Pali word: not observing, but not-forgetting that one is here.

Now there are two *sati* in Pali that happen to be written alike. One is the noun from √smṛ: memory, keeping present, the not-forgetting of what is happening right now; only this word entered Thai as สติ. The other is a verbal form from √as, “being”, and that is the one in the general formula: *imasmim sati idaṃ hoti* means literally “this being, that is”, that is, “when this is, that is”. If mindfulness were meant here, the form would have to be *satiyā*. Whoever reads the line from the Thai transcription will easily read “mindfulness”; the grammar does not allow it. In the general formula the word is “being”.

3. Drawing It Together

The participle *sati* in the general formula says: when this is present, that is present; *asati*, when it is not, then not. The chain shows what “this” is: ignorance at the root and, in the lived moment, the craving that springs from feeling. The noun *sati*, which shares only its spelling with the participle, names the tool by which the condition is withdrawn: the presence of the one who looks, in the fraction of a second between feeling and craving. Thai has named this presence and its absence with ได้สติ and ขาดสติ. The two words must not be confused, but they may be held side by side. If *sati* is present, the feeling is recognized as a feeling and the chain has no link on which to run. If *sati* is absent, it runs through.

That is why the formula stands so soberly, without God, without soul, without punishment, without reward. It demands no belief. It demands that one look, thoroughly and from the root. It can be tested on a single breath: something makes contact, a feeling arises, and in the split second before craving springs up, there is only the breath. No myth, no metaphysics: a user's manual. Suffering has a blueprint, and whoever knows the blueprint need not build any more. What follows is the text itself.

THE TEXT

Pali in Thai recitation transcription, Pali (IAST) and English. Source: Nidānaśamyutta, SN 12 (Thai Tipiṭaka vol. 16); recitation version of Wat Na Pa Pong.

I. Introduction and General Formula · บทนำ

Nr.	Thai (Umschrift)	Pali	English
1	อิธะ ภิกขะเว อริยสะวาทโก ปะฏิจะสะมุปปาทัญญะวะ สาธุกัง โยนิโส มะนะสิกะโรติ	<i>Idha bhikkhave ariyasāvako paṭiccasamuppādaññeva sādhukaṃ yoniso manasikaroti:</i>	Here, monks, the noble disciple attends carefully and wisely to dependent arising itself:
2	อิหมัสมิถ สะติ อิหัง โหติ	<i>Imasmim sati idaṃ hoti,</i>	When this is, that is.
3	อิหมัสสุปปาทา อิหัง อุปปัจจะติ	<i>imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati;</i>	From the arising of this, that arises.
4	อิหมัสมิถ อะสะติ อิหัง นะ โหติ	<i>imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti,</i>	When this is not, that is not.
5	อิหมัสสะ นิโรธา อิหัง นิรุจมะติ	<i>imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.</i>	From the cessation of this, that ceases.
6	ยะทิหัง	<i>Yadidaṃ:</i>	That is to say:

II. Arising (Anuloma) · สมุทวาร

Nr.	Thai (Umschrift)	Pali	English
1	อะวิจชาปัจจะยา สังขาร	<i>Avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā,</i>	With ignorance as condition, what the mind creates arises.
2	สังขาระปัจจะยา วิญญานัง	<i>saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ,</i>	With what the mind creates as condition, consciousness arises.
3	วิญญานะปัจจะยา นามะรูปัง	<i>viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ,</i>	With consciousness as condition, mind

			and body arise.
4	นามะรูปะปัจจะยา สะพ่ายะตะ นัง	<i>nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanam,</i>	With mind and body as condition, the six sense bridges arise.
5	สะพ่ายะตะนะปัจจะยา ผัสโส	<i>saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso,</i>	With the six sense bridges as condition, contact arises.
6	ผัสสะปัจจะยา เวทนา	<i>phassapaccayā vedanā,</i>	With contact as condition, feeling arises.
7	เวทะนาปัจจะยา ตัณหา	<i>vedanāpaccayā taṇhā,</i>	With feeling as condition, craving arises.
8	ตัณหาปัจจะยา อุปาทานัง	<i>taṇhāpaccayā upādānam,</i>	With craving as condition, clinging arises.
9	อุปาทานะปัจจะยา ภาวะ	<i>upādānapaccayā bhavo,</i>	With clinging as condition, becoming arises.
10	ภาวะปัจจะยา ชาติ	<i>bhavapaccayā jāti,</i>	With becoming as condition, birth arises.
11	ชาติปัจจะยา ชะรามะระณัง โสกะปะริเทวะทุกขะโทมะนัส สุปายาสา สัมภะวันติ	<i>jātipaccayā jarāmarañam sokaparidevadukkhadomanass upāyāsā sambhavanti.</i>	With birth as condition, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair come to be.
	เอวะเมตัสสะ เภวะลัสสะ ทุกข์ กัณ्हันตัสสะ สมุททะโย โหติ	<i>Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.</i>	Thus is the origination of this whole mass of suffering.

III. Cessation (Paṭiloma) • นิโรธวาร

Nr.	Thai (Umschrift)	Pali	English
1	อะวิจชาเย เตววะ อะเสสะ วิราคะนิโรธา สังขาระนิโรโธ	<i>Avijjāya tveva asesavirāganirodhā saṅkhāranirodho,</i>	With the remainderless fading away and cessation of that very ignorance, what the mind creates ceases.
2	สังขาระนิโรธา วิญญานะนิ โรโธ	<i>saṅkhāranirodhā viññānanirodho,</i>	With the cessation of what the mind creates, consciousness ceases.
3	วิญญานะนิโรธา นามะรูปะนิ โรโธ	<i>viññānanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho,</i>	With the cessation of consciousness, mind and body cease.
4	นามะรูปะนิโรธา สะพ่ายะตะ นะนิโรโธ	<i>nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatananirodho,</i>	With the cessation of mind and body, the six sense bridges cease.
5	สะพ่ายะตะนะนิโรธา ผัสสะนิ โรโธ	<i>saḷāyatananirodhā phassanirodho,</i>	With the cessation of the six sense bridges, contact ceases.
6	ผัสสะนิโรธา เวทะนานิโรโธ	<i>phassanirodhā vedānanirodho,</i>	With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases.
7	เวทะนานิโรธา ตัณหานิโรโธ	<i>vedānanirodhā taṇhānirodho,</i>	With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases.
8	ตัณหานิโรธา อุปาทานะนิ โรโธ	<i>taṇhānirodhā upādānanirodho,</i>	With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases.
9	อุปาทานะนิโรธา ภาวะนิ โรโธ	<i>upādānanirodhā bhavanirodho,</i>	With the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases.
10	ภาวะนิโรธา ชาตินิโรโธ	<i>bhavanirodhā jātinirodho,</i>	With the cessation of becoming, birth ceases.
11	ชาตินิโรธา ชะรามะระณัง โสกะปะริเทวะทุกขะโทมะนัส สุปายาสา นิรุจันติ	<i>jātinirodhā jarāmarañam sokaparidevadukkhadomanass upāyāsā nirujjhanti.</i>	With the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease.
	เอวะเมตัสสะ เภวะลัสสะ ทุกข์ กัณ्हันตัสสะ นิโรโธ โหติ	<i>Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti ti.</i>	Thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

IV. The Twelve Links · องค์ ๑๒ ของปฏิจจสมุปบาท

Nr.	Pali	Thai	English
1	<i>avijjā</i>	อวิชชา	ignorance: not knowing the four noble truths and dependent arising
2	<i>saṅkhārā</i>	สังขาร	what the mind creates: stirrings of body, speech and mind
3	<i>viññāṇa</i>	วิญญาน	consciousness: cognizing at the six sense bridges
4	<i>nāmarūpa</i>	นามรูป	mind and body: the mental side (feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention) and the body
5	<i>saḷāyatana</i>	สฬายตนะ	the six sense bridges: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind
6	<i>phassa</i>	ผัสสะ	contact: the meeting of sense bridge, object and consciousness
7	<i>vedanā</i>	เวทนา	feeling: pleasant, painful or neutral
8	<i>taṇhā</i>	ตัณหา	craving, literally “thirst”: for sense pleasures, for becoming, for non-becoming
9	<i>upādāna</i>	อุปาทาน	clinging: to sense pleasures, to views, to rules and rituals, to the view of a self
10	<i>bhava</i>	ภพ	becoming: existence in the sense realm, the form realm and the formless realm
11	<i>jāti</i>	ชาติ	birth: the appearance of the aggregates
12	<i>jarāmaraṇa</i>	ชรา มรณะ	ageing and death, with their retinue: sorrow (soka), lamentation (parideva), pain (dukkha), grief (domanassa), despair (upāyāsa)

V. Note

The text is the canonical formula of dependent arising as it stands in many places in the Nidānaśaṃyutta of the Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN 12) and as it is chanted in Thailand as a recitation text (บทสวดปฏิจจสมุปบาท). The Thai column gives the Pali in the recitation transcription customary in Thailand, in which the niggahīta (anusvāra, ṇ) is written and pronounced as ัง; the sign^๕ (yamakkan) marks a consonant cluster without a vowel of its own. The English rendering follows the wording of the talk translations on schwoererd.com (what the mind creates, mind and body, sense bridges, contact, craving, clinging, becoming) rather than the PTS vocabulary of Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Recitation source: Wat Na Pa Pong, บทสวดปฏิจจสมุปบาท สวดโดย ภิกขุ เอเอ อธิจิตโต. Compiled and translated by Daniel Schwörer, Winterthur, September 2026 / พ.ศ. ๒๕๖๙.

PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA – DEPENDENT ARISING

ปฏิจจสมุปบาท · สังยุตตนิกาย นิทานวรรค · พระไตรปิฎก เล่มที่ ๑๖

DANIEL SCHWÖRER

imasmim sati idaṃ hoti · imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti

เมื่อสิ่งนี้มี สิ่งนี้จึงมี เมื่อสิ่งนี้ไม่มี สิ่งนี้จึงไม่มี · when this is, that is; when this is not, that is not · wenn dies ist, ist jenes; wenn dies nicht ist, ist jenes nicht

ENGLISH

The Paṭiccasamuppāda is not an account of the beginning of the world. It describes a process that runs in every human being in every moment: something touches, a feeling arises, and within a fraction of a second the feeling becomes craving, and the craving an I that holds on and suffers. Between feeling and craving lies the only point in the whole chain where one can step in. If the feeling is only felt and not yet made into thought, no clinging arises: that is the point where the chain can rest, and exactly there vipassanā practice takes hold. The formula demands no belief; it can be tested on a single breath.

The edition gives the complete recitation text as chanted in Thai monasteries: the Pali in Thai transcription, the Pali in Roman script, and a new English translation, with an introduction. A second part shows, through the everyday Thai word สติ, what sati originally means: not observation, but presence.

The English translation is the author's own; the Pali recitation text in Thai script follows the version chanted at Wat Na Pa Pong.

ไทย

ปฏิจจสมุปบาทมิใช่เรื่องเล่าว่าด้วยจุดเริ่มต้นของโลก หากพรรณนากระบวนการที่ดำเนินอยู่ในมนุษย์ทุกคนในทุกขณะ: บางสิ่งกระทบ เวทนาเกิดขึ้น และภายในเสี้ยววินาทีเวทนามลายเป็นตัณหา ตัณหากลายเป็นตัวตนที่ยึดไว้และเป็นทุกข์ ระหว่างเวทนากับตัณหา มีจุดเดียวในสายโซ่ทั้งหมดที่พอจะเข้าแทรกได้ หากเวทนาเพียงถูกรู้สึกและยังมีได้กลายเป็นความคิด อุปาทาน ย่อมไม่เกิด: นั่นคือจุดที่สายโซ่จะสงบลงได้ และตรงนั้นเองที่การปฏิบัติวิปัสสนาเข้าจับ หลักธรรมนี้ไม่เรียกร้องความเชื่อ พิสูจน์ได้ในลมหายใจเดียว

ฉบับนี้ให้บทสวดครบถ้วนตามที่สวดกันในวัดไทย: บาลีอักษรไทย บาลีอักษรโรมัน และคำแปลภาษาอังกฤษฉบับใหม่ พร้อมบทนำ ส่วนที่สองแสดงผ่านคำไทยในชีวิตประจำวันว่า สติ เดิมหมายถึงอะไร: มิใช่การเฝ้าดู หากคือการอยู่กับเนื้อกับตัว

คำแปลภาษาอังกฤษเป็นของผู้เขียนเอง ส่วนบทสวดบาลีอักษรไทยเป็นไปตามฉบับวัดนาป่าพง

DEUTSCH

Der Paṭiccasamuppāda ist kein Bericht über den Anfang der Welt. Er beschreibt einen Vorgang, der in jedem Menschen in jedem Augenblick abläuft: Etwas berührt, ein Gefühl entsteht, und im Bruchteil einer Sekunde wird aus dem Gefühl ein Verlangen, aus dem Verlangen ein Ich, das festhält und leidet. Zwischen Gefühl und Verlangen liegt der einzige Ansatzpunkt der ganzen Kette. Wird das Gefühl nur gefühlt und noch nicht zum Gedanken, entsteht kein Anhaften: Das ist der Punkt, an dem die Kette zur Ruhe kommt, und genau dort setzt die Vipassanā-Praxis an. Die Formel verlangt keinen Glauben; sie lässt sich an einem einzigen Atemzug prüfen.

Die Ausgabe enthält den vollständigen Rezitationstext, wie er in thailändischen Klöstern gesungen wird: das Pali in thailändischer Umschrift, das Pali in lateinischer Schrift und eine neue englische Übersetzung, mit einer Einführung. Ein zweiter Teil zeigt am thailändischen Alltagswort สติ, was sati ursprünglich heisst: nicht Beobachtung, sondern Anwesenheit.

Die englische Übersetzung stammt vom Verfasser; der Rezitationstext in Thai-Schrift folgt der Fassung von Wat Na Pa Pong.