

I — 'THE CLOG-BOUND SUTTA'
(*'Gaddula-Baddha-Suttam'*)¹

In the course of our Dhamma talks, we shall discuss two main suttas. One is called '*Gaddula-Baddha-Suttam*' ('The Clog-Bound Sutta'), the other is called '*Dutiya-Gaddula-Baddha-Suttam*' ('The Second Clog-Bound Sutta'): that is two '*Gaddula-Baddha*' suttas.² We shall begin with the first one:

INCONCEIVABLE IS THE BEGINNING, BHIKKHUS

Thus I heard.³ One time the Exalted One was dwelling in Sāvatti, in Jeta's Grove, Anātha-piṇḍika's monastery. There the Exalted One addressed the bhikkhus:

Inconceivable is the beginning, bhikkhus, of the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). A first point is not known of ignorance-hindered beings (*avijjā-nivaraṇānam sattānam*) fettered by craving (*taṇhā-saṃyojanānam*), rushing on (*sandhāvataṃ*) and running about (*saṃsarataṃ*).

Here, The Buddha discusses the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*),⁴ the rushing on from one world to another (now a human being, then a deva, then an animal, then again a human being, etc.), and the running about within one world (again and again a human being, or again and again a deva, etc.). The Buddha mentions the two main causes for this ongoing process: ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*).

Ignorance and craving are necessary for actions to possess kammic potency. The kammic potency (*kamma-satti*) is the potency by which volitional action through body, speech, or mind is able to produce a kamma result, *kamma-vipāka*. This potency is also called 'other-moment kamma' (*nānā-kkhaṇika kamma*) because we produce the kamma at one particular consciousness moment, and if the kamma matures, the kammic potency produces the result at another moment: either in this life or a future life.⁵ But without ignorance and craving, action does not possess kammic potency.

¹ Reference numbers in italics refer to sutta quotations, etc. in endnotes beginning p.20.

² S.III.I.x.7 and S.III.I.x.8. *Gaddula* (clog) + *baddha* (bound: pp. of *bandhati* = to bind) = clog-bound. In English, a clog is a block of wood that serves to impede the motion of a horse, dog, etc. Here, it is a cubit-long block of hardwood that hangs by a strap from a dog's neck to prevent it from running. The stick is attached by the middle so it hangs horizontally before the dog's knees: when the dog tries to run, the dog's knees strike the stick. The device may be found still in use in rural Myanmar.

³ Regarding translations and reference to The Buddha, see 'Editor's Note', p.363.

⁴ *saṃsāro*: the noun *saṃsāra* comes from the verb *saṃsāraṭi*, which comes from *saṃ* (in the same way) + *sāraṭi* (run on) = to run on in the same way. (PED)

⁵ kammic potency: in the *Paṭṭhāna (Causal Relations)*, The Buddha lists twenty-four types of cause (*paccaya*). They all produce their result because of their inherent potency (*dhamma-satti*) (*satti* = ability, capacity, potential, power, potency). Thus, while each volitional formation arises and perishes, its inherent kammic-potency (*kamma-satti*) remains in that same mentality-materiality continuity. While kamma is the cause, its inherent potency produces the result (*vipāka*). This potency is also called *nānā-kkhaṇika kamma*: *nānā* (other/different) + *kkhaṇika* (moment). The result arises in another consciousness: in this life or another. (P.I.427 '*Kamma-Paccayo*' ('Kamma Cause') & P.I '*Paccay-Uddesa-Vaṇṇanā*' ('Description of the Kamma Section')). See also footnote 56, p.15, and 'Kammic Potency', p.370.