
The Process of Suffering's Cessation as Depicted in the Dependent Origination

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Submitted: 16/07/2024 * Revised: 29/07/2024 * Accepted: 01/08/2024*

Abstract

This research article aimed to (1) study the concept of suffering and the cause leading to suffering according to the Buddhist perspective, (2) analyze the suffering resolution based on Dependent Origination in Theravada Buddhism, (3) propose the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination. The research methodology is documentary, involving in in-depth analysis of relevant documents and records.

The findings showed that there are three, or eight, types of suffering. All suffering comes from ignorance and craving. Ignorance leads one to believe that everything is permanent and unchanging, leading to attachment and craving, which lead to clinging to existence and the cycle of rebirth. The cycle of Dependent Origination illustrates the existence of suffering and its underlying causes. To cease suffering is to eliminate the cause of suffering. The Threefold Path is a process leading to the cessation of suffering. This path, which includes training in higher virtue, higher mind, and higher wisdom, leads to the cessation of suffering, the end of ignorance, the emergence of wisdom, enlightenment, and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. When the mind is filled with precept and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. When the mind is filled with precepts, concentration naturally follows. Concentrating the mind will facilitate the contemplation of the five aggregates, leading to the emergence of wisdom, the eradication of ignorance, the achievement of enlightenment, and the cessation of suffering. This is the process of ending suffering.

Keywords: Dependent Origination; Suffering; Suffering's Cessation; Theravada perspective

Introduction

Suffering, a fundamental part of life, is often referred to as “*dukkh*” in Buddhism. Various Buddhist scholars employ many distinct English phrases to express the concept of *dukkha*, including ill, pain, sorrow, uncertainty, unpleasantness, anguish, anxiety, unhappiness, conflict, and unsatisfactoriness. At present, the prevailing terms employed in Buddhist literature to refer to the concept of *dukkha* are ‘suffering’ and ‘unsatisfactoriness’ (Gnaramama, 2000).

Suffering is often psychological rather than physical, arising in desolate circumstances in life when people face situations such as losing loved ones, the pain of illness, or a failed marriage. It is difficult to comprehend and define the elusive nature of suffering. According to Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, cultural designs increase daily stress. Stress is responsible for most individuals' suffering. In the absence of stress, they can calmly and harmoniously address issues without feeling any annoyance. Stress is prevalent in situations characterized by poverty, fear, anxiety, violence, broken families, divorce, suicide, war, conflict, and environmental damage. Stress is intricately connected to the emotional anguish experienced by individuals, particularly their ancestral ties, future generations, and close relationships. This suffering is of such magnitude that it defies a complete description. There are various manifestations of suffering (Thich, 2014).

Through the lens of a Buddhist perspective, the notion of suffering is not intended to convey a negative worldview, but rather a pragmatic perspective that deals with the world as it is. Moreover, the primary objective of Buddhism is to foster and cultivate peace within society, on a global scale (Barua, 2023). Hence, the Buddha not only mentioned suffering at the beginning of his first sermon:

Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000b, p. 1848).

But the Buddha also taught the way to the cessation of suffering. Dependent Origination, the fundamental teaching in Buddhism, provides necessary steps to cessation of

suffering and achieving enlightenment. Once Dependent Origination is comprehended, individuals may realize the source of suffering and the process of its cessation.

“Bhikkhus, I will teach you dependent origination. Listen to that and attend closely, I will speak.” -“Yes, venerable sir,” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this: “And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination?”

With ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be].

With volitional formations as condition, consciousness.

With consciousness as condition, name-and-form.

With name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases.

With the six sense bases as condition, contact.

With contact as condition, feeling.

With feeling as condition, craving.

With craving as condition, clinging

With clinging as condition, existence;

With existence as condition, birth;

With birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. This bhikkhus, is called dependent origination (Bodhi, 2000a, p. 533).

Although the doctrine of Dependent Origination has been taught widely nowadays, its application for practicing liberation from suffering has not yet been studied widely, especially in the academic field. This study will fill this gap by studying the process of suffering cessation as depicted in Dependent Origination.

Over a long period of time, the practice of mindfulness has been utilized to attain tranquility and freedom from suffering in everyday existence (Ven. Nyanabhadrā Phāp Tū et al., 2023). This research focuses on proposing the process of suffering’s cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination. The target audience for this research includes scholars and those who seek to enhance their understanding of the application of Dependent Origination to the cessation of suffering.

This research studies the concept of suffering and the causes leading to suffering according to the Buddhist scriptures. It then studies suffering resolution based on Dependent

Origination in Theravada Buddhism. Finally, it will propose the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination.

By pursuing the aforementioned goals, this study seeks to significantly contribute to the academic comprehension of the nature of suffering and the application of Dependent Origination for its cessation. This research is anticipated to greatly assist scholars, individuals, and society by providing a practical roadmap for the cessation of suffering based on Dependent Origination.

Research Objectives

1. To study the concept of suffering and the causes leading to suffering according to the Buddhist perspective.
2. To analyze the suffering resolution based on Dependent Origination in Theravada Buddhism.
3. To propose the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination.

Literature Review

Buddhadāsa (1992) explained the concept of Dependent Origination and the study of the law of Dependent Origination is important and necessary for the followers of the Buddha. It explains practical matters that lead directly to the cessation of suffering based on Dependent origination.

Payutto (1994) explained in detail Dependent Origination and Dependent Origination in everyday life, as well as Dependent Origination in society. The notion of causal interdependence holds the utmost significance in Buddhist teachings. It elucidates the natural law that governs the inherent order of the universe. The Buddha was not a messenger of divine decrees, but rather the explorer of the fundamental principle governing the natural universe, and the advocate of its integrity to humanity. Causality applies universally to all phenomena, encompassing both the natural environment as an external, physical condition and the events of human civilization, including ethical precepts. To create true happiness, it is of utmost importance that we not only reflect on the interrelationship of all things in the natural order but also see ourselves clearly as one system of causal relationships within the whole natural order, becoming aware first of the internal mental factors, then those in our life experiences, in society, and ultimately in the world around us.

Y. Rahula (1997) focused on the underlying principles and aspects of the teachings of the Buddha that brought peace, harmony, and happiness to innumerable beings, both human and otherwise. In the first part of the book, the elements that comprise the central and pivotal ideas and the fundamentals on which the practice of Buddhism is based are presented in detail. In the second part, the actual way of life and how to practice skillfully the “Way to Peace and Happiness” are also described in many ways.

Payutto (2017) analyzed the importance and definition of Dependent Origination, clearly explained each relationship between the factors in Dependent Origination, and finally clarified and offered the path to practice Dependent Origination to contemplation, the relationship between the Eightfold Path and Dependent Origination and then found the way to how to break the cycle of Dependent Origination.

W. Rahula (2007) provided the fundamental teachings of the Buddha and illustrated the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Five Aggregates, Kamma, and rebirth very clearly.

Cittasamvaro (2018) explained in his thesis the concept of Dependent Origination as found in Theravada Buddhism and analyzed gestalt perception. This study also explained that the meaning of Dependent Origination is the most important for people who practice the Buddha’s teaching. So, the researcher reviewed this thesis, which is especially important.

The literature reviewed provides a general background on the concept of suffering, its causes and the relationship between suffering and dependent origination. From there, they analyse and propose a path to the cessation of suffering based on the Theravada view of dependent origination. Important contributions from scholars such as P.A. Payutto, Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu and others, offer a rich tapestry of insights into suffering, its causes and the practice of the path to its end. Integrating these perspectives will be important in developing a deep understanding of the correct approach and attitude to suffering. However, the process of cessation of suffering as presented in Dependent Origination has not been widely studied in the academic field, and this study will fill this gap by studying this process, thereby not only providing a clear path for practice, but also contributing to bringing true peace into modernised life.

Research Methodology

This research is documentary research. The research methodology can be divided into the following ways:

Data Collection

Collecting data for this research will be from the primary sources of the English translation series of the Pali Canon, commentaries, and secondary sources, which are Buddhist textbooks, journals, articles, etc., together with the later interpretations from many scholars. These sources are chosen because they can provide a clear picture of the topic, which leads to a clearer comprehension of the topic.

Analysis and Synthesis

Analyzing and synthesizing the raw data, as well as systematizing the collected data to present the concept of suffering and the causes leading to suffering according to the Buddhist perspective, analyzing the suffering resolution based on Dependent Origination in Theravada Buddhism, and proposing the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Identifying significant findings from the discussion of the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination of the studies and suggesting useful information for further research.

Conceptual Framework

This research is documentary research. The conceptual framework of this research exhibits the significant research process in terms of input, process, and output as follows;

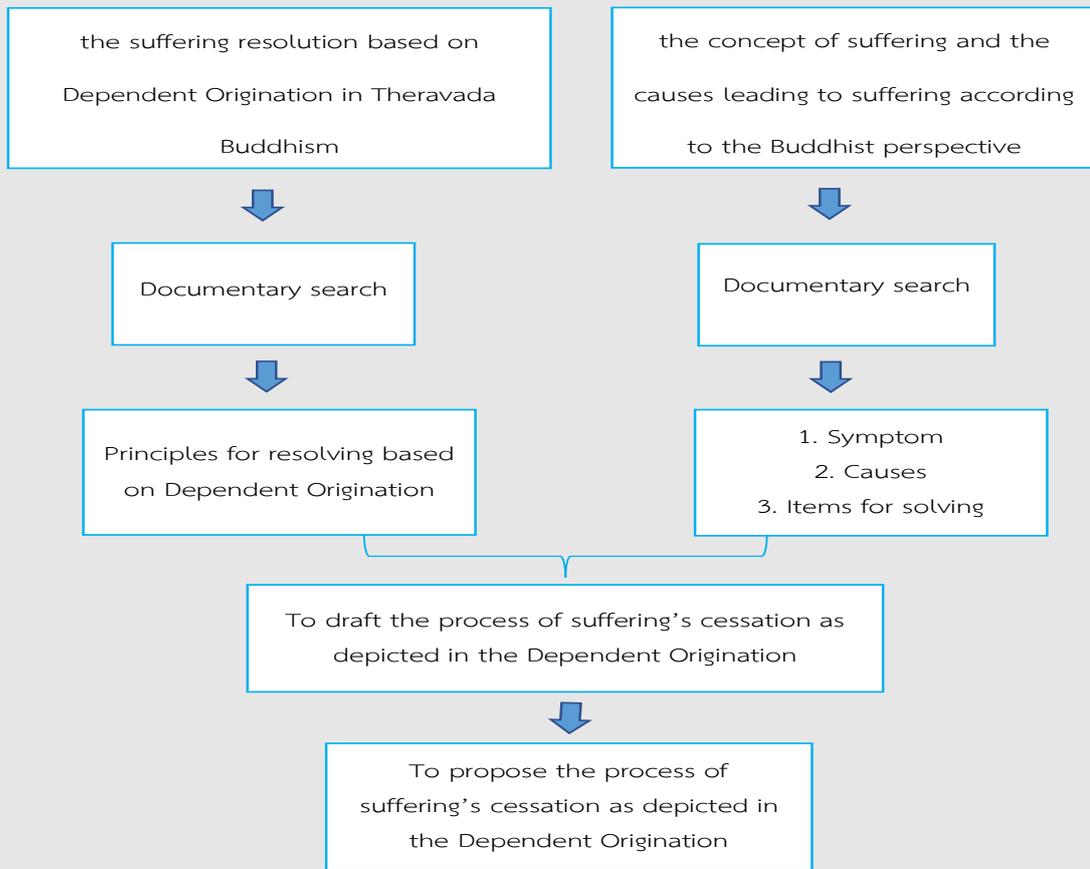


Figure 1 Concept Framework

Research Results

Objective 1: The results showed that the researcher found that we have exerted much effort to attain happiness and evade misery. Suffering is the condition or sensation of distress or agony that impacts an individual mentally and physically. The reasons for suffering might vary based on the specific circumstances and distinctive characteristics of each person. That suffering still exists, immutable from ancient times to thousands of years later. Buddha was not the creator or originator of this truth. This truth is readily available; Buddha is simply an individual who directly perceives, discovers, and realizes it before proceeding to preach it to sentient beings. According to the Buddha's teaching, all the physiological changes in the body that lead to pain, weakness, illness, old age, and death are suffering. All changes and shifts in mental states are considered suffering, such as love, hate, resentment, sadness, depression, despair, and hatred (joy, anger, love, and hatred). The Buddha analyzed eight kinds of suffering, and the cause of suffering is ignorance and cravings that make people reborn.

Objective 2: it was found that the Buddha expounded the doctrine of Dependent Origination, which began with the cause of suffering as well as the process of rebirth. The Buddha presented the doctrine of Dependent Origination to highlight the suffering and its underlying causes. Dependent Origination is the essence of the Buddha's teaching as well as the process of rebirth, the cycle of birth and death, and the law of cause and effect. This process is based on the principle of causality, which states that if one thing exists, another thing will also exist as a result, and if one thing does not exist, the other thing will not exist either. This process involves birth and death. To end suffering, one must not destroy the results of suffering but must destroy the cause of suffering and the cessation of Dependent Origination.

Finally, in the last objective, the researcher found that the process of ending suffering vanishes from Dependent Origination; that is the end of suffering. The cessation process involves practicing and contemplating the Threefold Training, which includes training in higher virtue, higher mind, and higher wisdom. Specifically, training in higher virtue involves cultivating qualities such as right speech, right action, and right livelihood. By consistently practicing these virtues, the mind achieves calmness, stability, and concentration, which are crucial for the emergence of wisdom. Building upon this foundation, training in the higher mind develops right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness. This involves recognizing the mental processes in relation to sense-base-consciousness, helping to avoid harmful thoughts and develop beneficial qualities, leading to a peaceful mind, and paving the way for wisdom to develop. Finally, training in higher wisdom refers to a state of insight that leads to thorough comprehension, resulting in complete mental purification and liberation from suffering, which encompasses the right view and right thought. By observing things as they truly are with effort, mindfulness, and concentration, it allows the development of wisdom in the nature of dhamma, including impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. This wisdom eradicates desires and attachments, eliminates ignorance, and stops craving, clinging, and becoming, resulting in the cessation of suffering.

Discussions

This study's findings shed light on the profound impact of Dependent Origination on daily life and the experience of suffering. Clarifying the relationship between Dependent Origination and the process of eliminating suffering has significantly contributed to building a

happy and peaceful life, leading to liberation, the elimination of ignorance, and the end of suffering.

The research findings regarding the first objective align with existing literature and emphasize the concept of suffering. The classification of suffering is based on the Buddhist perspective and is consistent with many existing studies from both psychological and Buddhist perspectives. For example, from the Buddhist point of view, all physical changes in the body that lead to pain, weakness, illness, old age, and death are suffering. All changes and shifts in mental states are considered suffering, such as love, hate, resentment, sadness, depression, despair, and hatred (joy, anger, love, and hatred). This is consistent with Quilao's (2018) explanation, which posits that physical pain is the primary source of suffering as it exacerbates mental suffering. The psychological suffering analyzed is the feeling of isolation, lack of love, or suffering coming from social relationships with friends. Such suffering fits into the eight types of suffering presented in this study.

As for objective 2, the findings of this research show that suffering has been researched and analyzed through the lens of Dependent Origination, analyzing the concepts and relationships of each factor in Dependent Origination. This aligns with the concepts discussed by Cittasamvaro (2018), who analyzed and defined each component of Dependent Origination as well as their relationships to the three time periods.

Regarding the end of suffering, it is only ending when the cycles of Dependent Origination are terminated. This is consistent with the analysis of Chowdhury (2019), who emphasized the process of life through the doctrine of Dependent Origination based on Buddhist psychological introspections. This study clearly outlines the links that lead to the origin of suffering and the cessation of suffering.

Concerning objective 3, this research proposes that the process for ending suffering involves practicing the Threefold Training: higher virtue, higher mind, and higher wisdom. Higher virtue includes right speech, right action, and right livelihood, leading to mental calmness and concentration. Training in the higher mind involves right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness, recognizing mental processes and promoting beneficial thoughts. Training in higher wisdom involves insight and comprehension through right view and right thought, observing things as they are to develop wisdom in dhamma (impermanence, suffering, and selflessness). This wisdom eradicates desires, attachments, and ignorance, and

stopping craving, clinging, and becoming, resulting in the cessation of suffering. This is consistent with the research by Do (2022), who conducted research and proposed a practical method for cultivating wisdom based on wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) aimed at eradicating ignorance and fostering the development of liberated wisdom, on the key concept of eliminating suffering according to the Buddhist perspective. This suggests that the development of liberating wisdom has many paths, but all share the same goal: attaining liberation wisdom.

The application of Dependent Origination in mitigating suffering involves recognizing the interdependent nature of all phenomena and understanding that suffering arises from a chain of causes and conditions. By identifying and disrupting these causal links, individuals can progress toward the cessation of suffering. This process entails a deep understanding of the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, which trace the origin of suffering from ignorance (*avidyā*) to birth, aging, and death. Furthermore, this study reinforces the significance of mindfulness (*sati*) and wisdom (*paññā*) in breaking the cycle of Dependent Origination. Mindfulness helps individuals become aware of the present moment and the arising of thoughts and emotions, while wisdom enables them to see the true nature of these phenomena and their impermanent and non-self characteristics. This insight leads to the cessation of craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*), which are pivotal in the chain of Dependent Origination.

In conclusion, the research findings highlight the essential role of Dependent Origination in understanding and addressing suffering. By applying this profound Buddhist principle, individuals can work toward the cessation of suffering, leading to a life of peace, happiness, and ultimate liberation. This study contributes to the broader discourse on the practical implications of Buddhist teachings in contemporary life, offering valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners.

Knowledge from Research

This research has proposed the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination, as shown in the figure below:

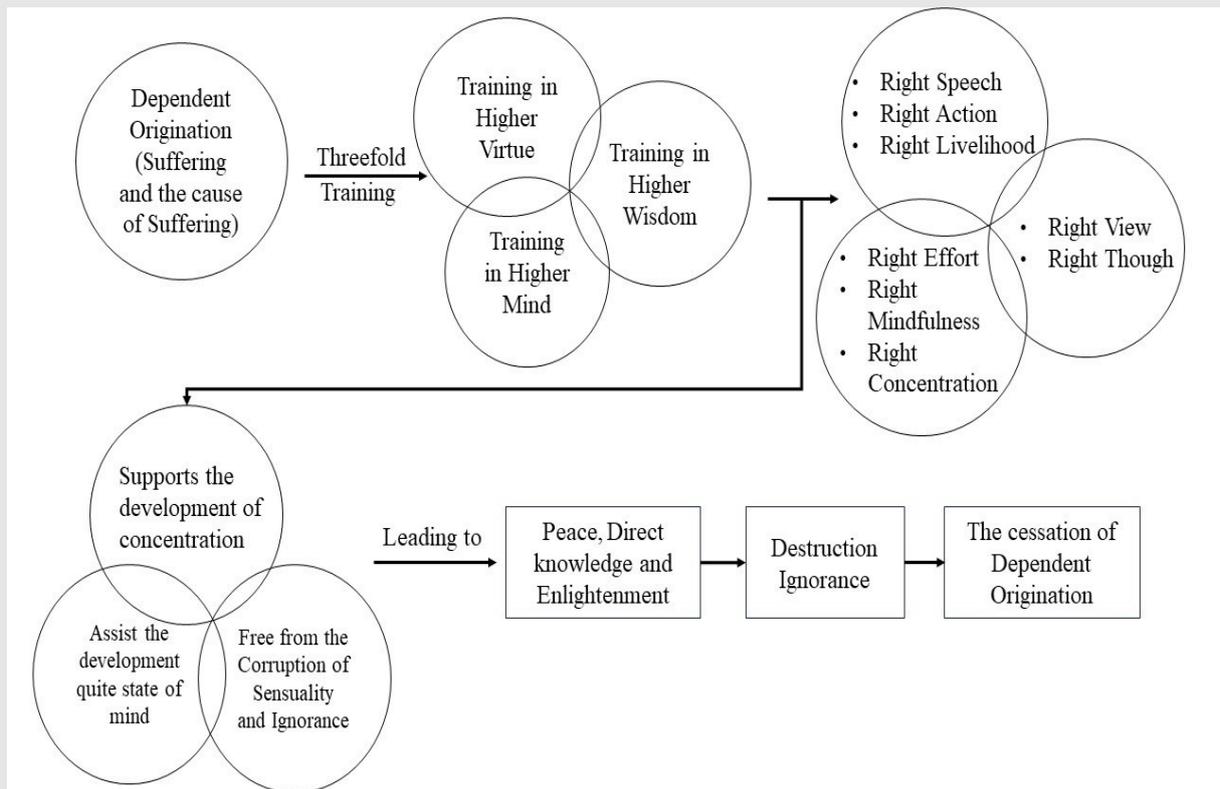


Figure.2 The Process of Suffering’s Cessation as Depicted in The Dependent Origination.

The above process provides clearly the picture of suffering and its cessation as depicted in the Dependent Origination in both theories and practical. Notably, the process mentioned above can be expanded and transferred through the employment of the subsequent methods:

Academia: The above process can be published in print books, newspapers, and journals to expand the source of information about suffering and the process of ending it, based on the Dependent Organization. This will assist scholars in easily accessing and further expanding their research.

In community: The process can be presented in seminars, workshops, and basic doctrine classes for Buddhists, equipping them with a solid foundation for the practice of transforming suffering. In addition, organize retreats for groups such as business groups and doctor groups so that they can apply the processes to their daily lives and work.

Conclusion

This study endeavors to propose the process of suffering's cessation as depicted in Dependent Origination. Utilizing documentary research, it provides invaluable insights into the concept of suffering and the causes leading to suffering according to Buddhist scriptures. The analysis of suffering resolution based on Dependent Origination in Theravada Buddhism illustrates a comprehensive picture of suffering's cessation.

The findings of this research have significant implications:

1. Enhanced Understanding of Suffering and Its Causes: The study offers a deeper understanding of the nature of suffering (dukkha) and its root causes, elucidating how physical and psychological sufferings are interconnected and arise from specific conditions.

2. Knowledge of Dependent Origination: The research enhances the comprehension of Dependent Origination, detailing the process of birth and death, and the suffering of sentient beings. It opens up wisdom to end this cyclic process by understanding the intricate links between ignorance, craving, clinging, and other factors.

3. Strategies for Practicing Cessation of Suffering: The study provides practical strategies for ending suffering as depicted in Dependent Origination. It emphasizes the importance of the Threefold Training: higher virtue, higher mind, and higher wisdom. This holistic approach includes ethical conduct, mental discipline, and the development of insight to eradicate ignorance and attachment, leading to the cessation of suffering.

In conclusion, this study contributes significantly to the broader discourse on the cessation of suffering through the lens of Dependent Origination. By elucidating the process of suffering's cessation, it offers valuable guidance for both scholars and practitioners in applying Buddhist teachings to achieve peace, happiness, and ultimate liberation from suffering.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for Application in Daily Life

Rapid advancements in the modern world have led to increased stress, new diseases, and rising social issues like greed and crime. Despite technological progress, empathy

has diminished, and global conflicts are escalating. The Threefold Training from Buddhism offers a practical solution to these challenges. By applying higher virtue, higher mind, and higher wisdom in daily life, individuals can reduce greed, improve ethical conduct, and cultivate mindfulness. This approach helps in recognizing the impermanence of emotions and fostering a compassionate life, ultimately leading to reduced suffering and greater well-being.

2. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research can expand in several areas:

1. Interreligious Perspectives: Explore how different religions address suffering and its cessation.
2. Comparative Processes: Study the cessation of suffering from various Buddhist traditions or other spiritual teachings.
3. Practical Applications: Investigate how the cessation methods described in Dependent Origination can be applied in real-world scenarios.

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