

Notes and Quotes for September 18, 2022 Dharma Reflections:

Dependent Origination (*pratityasamutpada*), Links 4 and 5:

Name and Form (nama-rupa) and Six Sources (sadayatana)

“Pratitya-samutpada Skt... lit. ‘conditioned arising’ or ‘independent arising,’ often also translated as ‘conditional nexus’ or ‘causal nexus.’ The doctrine... says that all psychological and physical phenomena constituting individual existence are interdependent and mutually condition each other; this at the same time describes what entangles sentient beings in samsara.

“The chain of conditioned arising is, together with the anatman [*no-self*] doctrine, the core teaching of all Buddhist schools.

“[Conditioned arising] consists of twelve links:...

1. ignorance (*avidya*)...
2. formations or impulses (*samskara*), which precede actions.... In turn they condition
3. consciousness (*vijñana*) in the next life of the individual. This consciousness reenters another womb after the death of an individual who has not been liberated and instigates the arising of
4. name and form (*namarupa*), the psychological and physical factors... i.e., a new empirical being constituted by the five *skandas*. Which womb the consciousness chooses is determined by its qualities, which in turn depend upon the formations and impulses [*samskara*]. Interdependently with *namarupa*
5. the six bases (*shadayatana*) arise. These are the six object realms of the senses, which present themselves to the being after its birth, thus conditioning
6. contact (*sparsha*) with its environment. This contact invokes
7. sensation (*vedana*) out of which develops, for someone who is ignorant in the Buddhist sense,
8. craving (*trishna*). Ignorance and craving lead, after the death of the individual, to
9. clinging (*upadana*) to a womb, where
10. a new becoming (*bhava*) is set in motion. This is followed by
11. birth (*jati*) which again comes to an end in
12. old age and death (*jara-maranam*).

“The entire chain of conditions thus covers three existences: 1-2 relate to the previous existence, 3-7 to conditioning of the present existence, 8-10 to the fruits of the current existence, and 11-12 to the future life.”

- *Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, Shambhala, 1989, p. 277.

“**namarupa**... In Sanskrit and Pali, lit. ‘name-and-form,’ ‘mind-and-matter,’ ‘mentality-and-materiality’: a term for the mental and physical constituents of the person, with ‘name’ (nama) subsuming the four mental aggregates (SKANDHA) of sensations (VEDANA), perception (SAMJNA), conditioning factors (SAMSKARA), and consciousness (VIJNANA), and ‘form’ (RUPA) referring to the materiality aggregate, viz., the physical body. The term occurs most commonly as the fourth of the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination (PRATITYASAMUTPADA), where, in some interpretations, it refers to the five aggregates of a new lifetime at the moment of conception, when the consciousness (vijñana) from the previous lifetime enters the womb; in this interpretation, ‘name’ would be the consciousness of the previous lifetime, and ‘form’ would be the embryo that it inhabits. Name and form are said to rely upon each other, like a lame man (name) traveling on the shoulders of a blind man (form). Because of this reciprocal relationship, if consciousness (name) is not present, the form of the embryo will not develop and miscarriage will result. But consciousness (name) also cannot exist without the support that form provides, for it is only when there are physical sense bases (INDRIYA) that can come into contact with the external world that consciousness can be produced.”

- *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, Robert E. Buswel Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr, Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 566.

“2. Name and Form (nama-rupa)

“The link of name and form exists during the time after the link of resultant consciousness and before the link of the six sources. Third-link consciousness is a condition for form because this body becomes a living body only when consciousness is present...”

“In the case of human birth, fourth-link name and form refer to the five aggregates from the time just after conception until the time the five sense organs begin to develop. *Form* is the embryo that begins to grow in the womb. It consists of the four great elements—earth, water, fire, and air—and forms derived from them, such as color, smell, and so forth. The four great elements are metaphorical designations for the different qualities of matter. Earth is the solid aspect, the property of resistance and hardness. Water is the fluid and cohesive aspect that enables things to stay together. Fire is the quality of heat and energy, and air represents mobility, contraction, and expansion....

“*Name* refers to the four mental aggregates because they engage with objects with the help of names and terms. Just after conception only the mental and tactile consciousnesses arise because in the embryo only the mental and tactile faculties are present.

Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature (Vol.3 of *The Library of Wisdom and Compassion*), The Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron, Wisdom, 2018, pp. 170-171.

“4. *Name and form* is mentality and materiality. In the Pali tradition, *name (nama)* refers to five mental factors that are indispensable for making sense of and naming things in the world around us—feeling, discrimination, intention, contact, and attention. These help us to organize the data that flow in through our six sources and render them intelligible. The Sanskrit tradition says *name* consists of the non-form aggregates. *Form (rupa)* is the form aggregate—our body constituted of the four elements and forms derived from them.

“The way the six sources arise from name and form can be understood in two ways. (1) As the psychophysical organism conceived in the mother’s womb develops, the six sources arise, and (2) the conditioning occurring in any cognition produces the six sources. For example, the eye source depends on the support of the body (material), which is alive due to the presence of consciousness and its accompanying mental factors (mentality).

- *Buddhism—One Teacher, Many Traditions*, The Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron, Wisdom, 2014, p. 167

“5. *Six Sources (sadayatana)*

“The fifth-link six sources are the six cognitive faculties that exist in the nature of the polluted ripening of result (the five aggregates) during the time after the link of name and form has occurred and before the link of contact has come about....

“The cognitive faculties are subtle sensitive forms located in the larger organs... such as the eyeball. They function to connect an object and consciousness so that cognition of the object occurs. The six are called *sources* because they are the sources for the arising of the six consciousnesses....

“When the six cognitive faculties have formed, this link is complete, and the new being has the potential to experience objects through the coming together of the object, cognitive faculty, and preceding moment of consciousness....

“The six sources afflict transmigrating beings because they complete name and form, thereby creating the potential for awareness of objects to arise.”

- *Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature (Vol.3 of The Library of Wisdom and Compassion)*, The Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron, Wisdom, 2018. Pp. 172-173.

“5. *Six sources* refers to the six internal bases—eye, ear, nose, tongue, tactile, and mental—that generate consciousness. They are called ‘sources’ because they are the sources for the arising of the six consciousnesses. They are *internal* because they are part of the psychophysical organism. Of these, the first five are sense sources and the sixth is mental source.... Each internal

source is particular to its own object and consciousness. If it is injured or unable to function, the corresponding sensory function is also impaired. The six *external* sources—form up to mental objects—are the objects of consciousness. Together, these twelve include all conditioned phenomena.”

- *Buddhism—One Teacher, Many Traditions*, The Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron, Wisdom, 2014, p. 167

“The ‘individual’ *consciousness* is the third link, symbolized [on the Wheel of Life *thangka*] by the agitated monkey which is the cognitive mode that experiences everything in terms of subject and object, which in turn gives rise to all dualistic activity.

“The fourth link is called *name and form*, depicted by a boat with two people representing, respectively, consciousness and the mental body in the *bardo* of becoming. The consciousness subject corresponds to name, while form is the body with which it is identified in the experience of ‘I am that,’ as in ‘I am that body.’

“The fifth link is the *six realms*, depicted by a house with six openings that correspond to the six sense fields in which the *bardo* being’s consciousness is developed.

“The sixth link, *contact*, represents the connection formed between consciousness-subject and its projection, or projected objects, between the consciousness identified with the mental body and the world it mistakenly perceives as being ‘out there,’ or outside of it. Recall again the analogy of the dream. This link is depicted by an arrow touching a man’s eye.

Luminous Mind—The Way of the Buddha, Kalu Rinpoche, Wisdom, 1997. P 72.

“[O]ur present life... is rooted in the ignorance and formative actions of a preceding life.... Through the maturation of *kamma* (formative actions) conditioned by ignorance come the five resultant factors in this life...: consciousness, name and form, six sources, contact, and feeling.

“In this life..., when feeling occurs, craving arises. That leads to clinging, which generates the active *kamma* of a renewed existence. These three are the force generating another rebirth... during which birth and aging and death are experienced.

“In any given life all these factors intermesh....

“The Sanskrit tradition speaks of the twelve links in terms of the *afflictive side*—how cyclic existence continues, and the *purified side*—how cyclic existence ceases. Each side has a forward and reverse order. These four combinations correspond to the four truths of the aryas.

Emphasizing true origins of dukkha, the *forward order of the afflicted side* begins with ignorance and shows how it eventually leads to aging and death. The *reverse order of the afflicted side* emphasizes true dukkha. It begins with aging and death and traces back through birth and so forth to ignorance.

“The purified side is the process of attaining liberation. The *forward order of the purified side* speaks of true paths by emphasizing that by ending ignorance, all the other links will cease. The *reverse order of the purified side* speaks of true cessation and liberation by emphasizing that beginning with aging and death, each link ceases with the cessation of its preceding link.

“Sariputra makes one of the most famous statements of the Pali suttas (Majjhima Nikaya, 28:28):

Now this has been said by the Blessed One: ‘One who sees dependent arising sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising.’

“Here, ‘Dhamma’ refers to truth, reality. It also refers to the Buddha’s doctrine. Understanding dependent arising is the key to understanding both of these. It is also the key to countering samsara. The Buddha says (Digha Nikaya, 15:1):

This dependent arising, Ananda, is deep and appears deep. Because of not understanding and penetrating this Dhamma, Ananda, this generation has become like a tangled skein...and does not pass beyond samsara with its planes of misery, unfortunate births, and lower realms. [pp. 170-172]

“BENEFITS OF MEDITATING ON THE TWELVE LINKS OF DEPENDENT ARISING

“Of the different levels of dependent arising, the Sanskrit tradition explains this process of dependent arising as *causal dependence*. Each link arises dependent on the preceding one; understanding this counteracts the extreme of eternalism, thinking that the links exist inherently or thinking that an external creator causes dukkha. When each link is complete, it gives rise to the subsequent links; understanding this eliminates the view of annihilation, thinking that things totally cease.

“Understanding causal dependence leads to insight into selflessness. We see there is no substantial person underlying the process of dependent arising and there are no inherently existent persons or phenomena that are bound to samsara or liberated from it.

“Reflection on causal dependence clears away wrong views, such as believing our dukkha arises without causes or is due to an external creator or a permanent cause. Identifying that ignorance and formative actions cause future lives eliminates the wrong view that everything ceases at death. We also realize our actions have an ethical dimension and influence our

experiences. Seeing the variety of realms we may be born into ceases the misconception that no other life forms exist. Furthermore, we understand that all the causes of suffering exist within us. Therefore relief from suffering must also be accomplished within ourselves.

“Contemplating each link individually accentuates its unsatisfactory nature. Seeing the beginningless, unsatisfactory nature of samsara stimulates strong renunciation and energizes us to make effort to terminate it. We ask ourselves, ‘What sense does it make to crave worldly pleasures when attachment to them brings endless rebirth?’ Bodhisattvas meditate on the twelve links with respect to themselves and other sentient beings. This arouses their compassion, which spurs bodhicitta. They want to attain awakening to be fully competent to lead others on the path out of samsara. Bodhisattvas’ compassion is so intense that if it were more beneficial for sentient beings for bodhisattvas to delay their own awakening, they would joyfully do this. However, seeing that they can be of greater benefit to others after they become buddhas, they exert effort to attain Buddhahood as quickly as possible.” Pp. 175-176

- *Buddhism—One Teacher, Many Traditions*, The Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron, Wisdom, 2014.

“The root of all centrist arguments is the praise to the Buddha that Nagarjuna proclaims at the very beginning of his *Fundamental Verses on Centrism*:

I bow down to the perfect Buddha,
The supreme orator, who taught
That dependent origination
Is without ceasing and without arising,
Without extinction and without permanence,
Without coming and without going,
Not different and not one.
It is the peace in which discursiveness is at complete peace.

- *The Center of the Sunlit Sky—Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition*, Karl Brunnholzl, Snow Lion, 2004, p. 231.

*The way that can be spoken of is not the eternal Way;
the name that can be named is not the Immortal Name.
Nameless the source of earth and sky,
names engender every thing.*

*Unfettered by desire, the mystery reveals itself;
wanting this gives rise to that.*

*Beyond named and nameless, reality still flows;
unfathomable the arch, the door, the gate.*

- *Walking the Way: 81 Zen Encounters with the Tao Te Ching*, Robert Rosenbaum, Wisdom, 2013.

Possible Discussion Starting Points

1. On p. 1 here, the encyclopedia summarizes the doctrine of independent arising as saying “that all psychological and physical phenomena constituting individual existence are interdependent and mutually condition each other; this at the same time describes what entangles sentient beings in samsara.”

So, the doctrine that explains “all psychological and physical phenomena constituting individual existence” (that’s *you*)... describes what entangles” *you* “in samsara.” Your way of existing, in other words, is the root cause of your troubles. And only you can change that. Fortunately, this doctrine also points the way out. Discuss.

2. On p. 4 here, Kalu Rinpoche teaches, “The fourth link is called *name and form*, depicted by a boat with two people representing, respectively, consciousness and the mental body in the bardo of becoming. The consciousness subject corresponds to name, while form is the body with which it is identified in the experience of ‘I am that,’ as in ‘I am that body.’”

Whatever the type of body—(human body, dream body, meditation body, or a bardo of ‘becoming’ body)—a body that represents the energy approaching a subsequent four-realms rebirth (only four [hungry ghost, animal, human, titan] instead of six samsaric realms here, because, as Kapleau Roshi said, “There are no midwives in heaven or in hell” and transmigrating beings typically appear immediately in a heavenly or hellish realm, directly after the experiencing the bardos of dying, without transiting the bardo of becoming)—whatever the type of body, it can “feel” pleasure and pain.

Experiment: Without and judgments of right and wrong, pay attention right now to the belief “I am that body which I am observing.” Can you trace that belief back to a source? Can you maintain the awareness of looking into that source without leaning on what Kalu Rinpoche calls a “consciousness subject?”

3. On p. 6, the Dalai Lama explains, “Bodhisattvas meditate on the twelve links with respect to themselves and other sentient beings. This arouses their compassion, which spurs bodhicitta.” Discuss the specific steps involved that cause our meditation on the twelve links to arouse compassion. What is discovered that starts the process? What might be uncovered along the way?

4. On p. 3, the Dalai Lama observes, ““The six are called *sources* because they are the sources for the arising of the six consciousnesses.... When the six cognitive faculties have formed, this link is complete, and the new being has the potential to experience objects through the coming together of the object, cognitive faculty, and preceding moment of consciousness....”

So, so-called “objects” (i.e., “the real world”) are only experienced dependently, and require the preceding moment of consciousness, as well as the cognitive faculty, to “exist” at all. This points to another sense in which “form is empty.” Discuss.

5. On p. 5, the Dalai Lama presents several “benefits from meditating on the twelve links of dependent arising.” Such meditation:
 - counteracts the extreme of eternalism
 - eliminates the view of annihilation
 - leads to insight into selflessness
 - clears away wrong views, such as
 - believing our dukkha arises without causes or
 - is due to an external creator or a permanent cause
 - that everything ceases at death
 - the misconception that no other life forms exist
 - reveals that our actions have an ethical dimension and influence our experiences
 - leads to the understanding that all the causes of suffering exist within us. Therefore relief from suffering must also be accomplished within ourselves.
 - accentuates the unsatisfactory nature of each link
 - stimulates strong renunciation of samsara and energizes us to make effort to terminate it
 - arouses compassion
 - spurs bodhicitta

That’s a pretty impressive list of benefits. Let us dedicate the merit of these meditations to the welfare and benefit of all beings through the attainments of the bodhisattva path, and to the liberation of all beings through the embodiment of *annutara-samyak-sambodhi*!