

From Blue Cliff Record, Case 44: Ho Shan's Knowing How to Beat the Drum – Talk 1
April 20, 1983 Dharma Talk by Dainin Katagiri Roshi

52:12

And then Shan [again] said, “Knowing how to beat the drum.” ...

... Through the hearing the sound of the drum, we can understand how much your practice is progressed. In Eihei-ji monastery, we hit the gong. Each time, we bow; full bows. One hit of the gong, and bow. But every time, the sound depends on the individual personality. If you are a really rough guy, even though you hit the bell softly, still the sound is very rough. Even though the sound is very soft, still there is a kind of an absence of mind, scattering of your mind. So it's very interesting practice for us; that's why every time, we bow. Because one hit of the drum, then bow – at that time, your body and your mind [are] exactly peaceful and harmonious, tuning into the rhythm of the gong's life. And then next moment, you can really face directly the life of the gong, right in front of you. And then hold, then beginner. You start newly to hit the gong, with your wholeheartedness.

So one day the Zen Master [heard] the monk who hit the gong in the morning, and he asked the attendant who hit the gong. So [the attendant] said the monk's name; and then the Zen Master said, “Ah, I understand.” I understand the sound of the gong this morning, because of who hit it. Because he knows his practice, the quality of his life. So through the sound of the gong, you really understand how much your practice is progressed. And also this freedom is not something you can get immediately or you can get by practicing for one year or two years; no. Life after life, you have to practice. Most of you met Thich Nhat Hanh. Well, that's peace. Everyone feels exactly peace from him. Whoever you are, everyone felt in that way. Real peaceful guy. But that peace is not something you can get by practicing for a couple of years. No.

And also, one more practice is, you should continue to practice not [in a] showy [way]. Very quiet practice. He talked about mindfulness; mindfulness is not a showy practice. When you walk on the street, just walk on the street, with your breath, with your mind, with your road, with your foot. And then finally, you can become one with the universe, with the rhythm of life. But this practice is not showy; you cannot show it to people. That's why when you go to the bathroom, wash your face, and gassho to the water basin, this practice is very calm practice. But it's really powerful. If you practice day by day like this, very naturally, that freedom really blooms, the flower of freedom blooms, just like Thich Nhat Hanh.

Dependent Co-Origination, from Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pratītyasamutpāda>

(This definition is provided for discussion in class. There is some good information here, but please don't get too attached to it, because we will be critiquing it.)

Pratītyasamutpāda (Sanskrit: प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद, Pāli: paṭiccasamuppāda), commonly translated as **dependent origination**, or **dependent arising**, is a key doctrine in Buddhism shared by all schools of Buddhism.^{[1][note 1]} It states that all dharmas (phenomena) arise in dependence upon other dharmas: "if this exists, that exists; if this ceases to exist, that also ceases to exist". The basic principle is that all things (dharmas, phenomena, principles) arise in dependence upon other things.

The doctrine includes depictions of the arising of suffering (*anuloma-paṭiccasamuppāda*, "with the grain", forward conditionality) and depictions of how the chain can be reversed (*paṭiloma-paṭiccasamuppāda*, "against the grain", reverse conditionality).^{[2][3]} These processes are expressed in various lists of dependently originated phenomena, the most well-known of which is the twelve links or *nidānas* (Pāli: *dvādaśanidānāni*, Sanskrit: *dvādaśanidānāni*). The traditional interpretation of these lists is that they describe the process of a sentient being's rebirth in *samsāra*, and the resultant *duḥkha* (suffering, pain, unsatisfactoriness),^[4] and they provide an analysis of rebirth and suffering that avoids positing an *atman* (unchanging self or eternal soul).^{[5][6]} The reversal of the causal chain is explained as leading to the cessation of rebirth (and thus, the cessation of suffering).^{[4][7]}

Another interpretation regards the lists as describing the arising of mental processes and the resultant notion of "I" and "mine" that leads to grasping and suffering.^{[8][9]} Several modern western scholars argue that there are inconsistencies in the list of twelve links, and regard it to be a later synthesis of several older lists and elements, some of which can be traced to the Vedas.^{[9][10][11][12][13][5]}

The doctrine of dependent origination appears throughout the early Buddhist texts. It is the main topic of the *Nidana Samyutta* of the Theravada school's *Samyuttanikāya* (henceforth SN). A parallel collection of discourses also exists in the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* (henceforth SA).^[14]