

Reincarnation mythology and the Buddhist paradigms of Impermanence, Anatman, and Conditioned Genesis

Quantum Life Buddhism (Nichiren school lineage)

I am sometimes a bit dismayed at the persistence of this idea of enduring “soul” and its sister magical thinking of reincarnation. Both these ideas are complete negation of the primary and fundamental elucidations of Buddhism. Read the vast library of sutra on Impermanence, Anatman, and emptiness. My own video lessons on the Origins of life, the 3000 realms of existence and Ichinen Sanzen...

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Quiescent Energy is a state of all potential without instantiation, in constant subtle shifting is also known as the Amala Consciousness (9th).

Causal chain reactions are accumulations of energy, mostly arising and then fall back into potential or potential energy.

Occasionally a chain reaction will arise in conditions plentiful of other actions and chains of reactions to persist and include many more into the growing chain reaction, to form properties and an ever-stronger momentum (will) to manifest “being” in order to manipulate energies into matter and into the Nidana of Nama/Rupa (name and form) or “Differentiation” and instantiation.

Billions of billions of these chain reactions had to combine in order to manifest something as vast as a universe; where a single molecule of DNA could evolve to become a human being.

At the beginning of all these chain reactions is the quiescent energy that is the fount of all potential “things” and therefore contains the “knowledge” of all the possibilities it manifests. This is the enlightened mind, the Amala consciousness; and it only exists as a consciousness to be experienced in the Human conditioned mind.

The billions of subsequent chain reactions that joined the initial chain that manifested each of us, constitute the amalgams of energy that are the monkeys

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(constant momentum “inertia” of desires or cravings to “be”) surrounding that conditioned human mind, constantly demanding our attention, and obfuscate our ability to think with our clear all-knowing and unconditioned mind; and instead carry us into all sort of causal misbehavior and misunderstandings in each their desire to exist. This accumulate of monkeys is known as Ichinen Sanzen or accumulated in our Alaya Consciousness (8th consciousness), and constitutes our ego. Chanting unlocks our Causal chain straight through to our Amala consciousness. The mind consciousness of the Amala is different from the Mind consciousness of the human condition in that our human mind is so manipulated by the Alaya that its function is a constant desire to make all experiences and perceptions permanent. The Buddhist method then is to appease the monkeys of the Alaya by encouraging life affirming actions (causes) to be made so to quiet the monkeys and rid the ego of its selfish manipulations making senseless causes that perpetuate the illusions of permanence. By doing so we can regain clarity and open a more direct path to our innate Amala consciousness of released potential to observe with true appreciation and compassion the human condition of mind.

As the Amala consciousness is devoid of any differentiation, all this vast energy is equaniminous and without name and form and therefore free of Karma (momentum).

Karma is created at the moment action exists no matter how subtle. From the first minute subtle action that may precipitate further actions adding components of attraction as described in the Nidana or causal chain, others follow. These components of attraction constitute the first instances of intent or volition and even at the most submicroscopic levels are the beginnings of differentiation and Karma. It is important to note that prior to the causal chain there is no container or energy that has any previously recorded map of actions and reactions, that might otherwise be considered something like the concept of a soul or container. Each and every causal chain begins in the same pool of undifferentiated energy with only random chain reactions of tendencies and conditions amalgamating on the fly with the predilections of its particular manifested intent, desires, and conditions (like a rolling ball of snow down a mountain).

It is also in this concept that the Buddha makes it clear that there is nothing, that is, no phenomena whatsoever that is eternal. This is the fundamental truth of Impermanence. When a human being dies, the body decays and returns to its constituent components while the accumulated karma has already made its way through the 9 consciousnesses to be reintegrated into the subtle quiescent energy that is potential.

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The Amala consciousness is UN-differentiated. All phenomena begin and end there. This is where the Buddha initiated the term Noumena, indicating the concept of location without place. We reviewed this as Wuji, a point or circle. A Quantum fluctuation if you will.

Thus, this cosmology supports the critical concepts of Impermanence, Anatman (no-soul), Equanimity, and Liberation from sufferings of Birth and Re-Birth, Emptiness or Void, without which there could be no Buddhism.

Also, this cosmology absolutely refutes the ideas of reincarnation, eternal souls, heavens or hells, afterlife and any of its derivatives, all of which would require a place with alternative versions of differentiation or phenomena made of Permanent particles and Permanent causal chains. Like eternal molecules of Bob and Jane etc....

I hope this makes some sense to you and I encourage you to pursue more study on these ideas.

From Nāgārjuna's Verses from the Middle

21. Investigation of Rising and Passing (*Disappearance*)

1. Passing does not exist without or together with rising. Rising does not exist without or together with passing.

[The Sanskrit terms *sambhava* ('*byung ba*/rising) and *vibhava* ('*jig pa*/passing) are related to *bhava* (*dgnos po*/thing); also cf. *svabhava* and *parabhava*. So "appearance" and "disappearance" would capture the play on the two words. Not also that in verses 15-16 the Tib. '*byung*/'*jig* does not translate *sambhava*/*vibhava*, but *udaya*/*vyaya*]

2. How can passing exist without rising? Is there death without birth? There is no passing without rising.

3. How could passing exist together with rising? Death does not exist at the same time as birth.

4. How could rising exist without passing? Things are never not impermanent.

5. How could rising exist together with passing? Birth does not exist at the same time as death.

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6. How can those that are not established either mutually together or not mutually together be established?

7. The finished does not rise; the unfinished too does not rise; the finished does not pass; the unfinished too does not pass.

8. Rising and passing do not exist without the existence of things. Things do not exist without the existence of rising and passing.

9. Rising and passing are not possible for the empty; rising, passing are not possible for the non-empty also.

10. Rising and passing cannot possibly be one; rising and passing also cannot possibly be other.

11. If you think that you can see rising and passing, rising and passing are seen by delusion.

12. Things are not created from things; things are not created from nothing; nothing is not created from nothing; nothing is not created from things.

13. Things are not created from themselves, nor are they created from something else; they are not created from [both] themselves and something else. How are they created?

14. If you assert the existence of things, the views of eternalism and annihilationism will follow, because things are permanent and impermanent.

15. If you assert the existence of things, eternalism and annihilationism will not be, because the continuity of the rising and passing of cause-effect is becoming.

16. If the continuity of the rising and passing of cause-effect is becoming, because what has passed will not be created again, it will follow that the cause is annihilated.

17. If things exist essentially, it would be unreasonable [for them] to become nothing. At the time of nirvana [they] would be annihilated, because the continuity of becoming is totally pacified.

18. If the end stops, it is unreasonable for there to be a beginning of becoming. When the end does not stop, it is unreasonable for there to be a beginning of becoming.

19. If the beginning is created while the end is stopping, the stopping would be one and the creating would be another.

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20. If it is also unreasonable for stopping and creating to be together, aren't the aggregates that die also those that are created?

21. Likewise, if the continuity of becoming is not reasonable at any of the three times, how can there be a continuity of becoming which is non-existent in the three times?

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7.2. The Meaning of Dependent Arising

There are two main formulations of dependent arising, one general and the other specific. In its most abstract form, the theory holds that "That being, this comes to be; from the arising of that, this arises; that being absent, this is not; from the cessation of that, this ceases." The more specific formulation details the process by which links in the chain arise, one after the other, and which links directly influence which others. The most common of these specific formulations is the twelve-link one described in chapter two, but there are minor variations on this. The crux of all formulations of the theory is the mutual interdependence of all things. Every element is both conditioned and is a conditioner, so every element is both an effect and a cause. There is no transcendent law of cause-and-effect ruling the process, for there is only a relative "before" and "after," only a relative causal sequence. On the one hand no element is individually autonomous, and on the other hand neither is there a higher force ruling the process. Since no thing exists on its own, no thing is real in itself. A thing is dependent on another, then, not just for its identification, as "tallness" is dependent on "shortness," but for its very existence, as the piece of clothing is dependent upon the threads which constitute it.

Thus far, the doctrine of dependent arising may seem clear and obvious. If so, it is only because one does not yet understand it in all of its implications. The Buddha's attendant, ananda, once said to his master, "It is surprising, sir, it is wonderful, sir, how profound this dependent arising is and how profound is its illumination. Yet it seems to me as if very simple."

"Say not so, ananda, say not so," admonished the Buddha in reply.

The theory is abstruse and its ramifications vast. In the eyes of Buddhism, the doctrine of dependent arising solves all metaphysical philosophical problems. Etiology is solved because there is, not an absolute beginning, but a temporally indeterminate welling up of mutually conditioned factors. Since no factor is

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temporally prior, as such, the discussions of genesis manage to avoid positing an absolute beginning without recourse either to a metaphysical entity like a transcendent God or to causal priority *ad infinitum*. Eschatology is solved because, since the ultimate end of existence is merely the appeasement of arising through appeasement of ignorant dispositions, there is no need to predict apocalypses or nihilistic destruction of existence. Things arose, but there was no ultimate cause, and things will cease, but there is no ultimate fate.

Soteriology is likewise solved; one need face neither a final Judgment Day nor mere annihilation, but rather one will just face the self-caused abandonment of equally self-caused afflicted existence. When ignorance ceases, birth ceases, and death ceases. Karma, metempsychosis, and the nature of the soul are also all solved without recourse to abstract soul-theories. Karma is neither an adventitious elemental defilement, like it is for the Jains, nor a subtle and transcendental deterministic fate, like for certain schools of Hinduism.

1 Samyutta-nikaya, quoted in Harvey, 54

2 Mahanidana Sutra, quoted in Warder, 108.

Karma is simply the correlation between cause and effect. Karma is determined by one's actions and dispositions, and when one appeases one's dispositions then, when eventually the lingering effects of prior causes have come to fruition, existence will be no more. The simple conditioning of one link by another link enables the Buddhist karma to be determined without being deterministic and subtle without being transcendental. Reincarnation is similarly solved with no recourse to atman-theories. Death is conditioned by birth, which is in turn conditioned by ignorance. This contiguous contingency obviates the need to posit a substantial and transcendently-enduring soul. The perceived existence and continuity of the individual is likewise explained without recourse to atman: since the aggregates of the individual arise together, and these aggregates account for the entire nature of the individual, there is no need to posit an extraneous metaphysical entity like the self. The debate of free will versus determinism is also solved. There can be no "free" will, for no element of existence is independent. All things are dependent upon other things, and so is the will. This does not mean that the universe is bound by inexorable determinism: the Buddha declared himself to be an upholder of "free action," for it is one's will in the form of volitional dispositions which both caused existence in the first place and will ultimately bring about appeasement and freedom.

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Two more theories repugnant to the Buddha, the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, are obviated by dependent arising. Nothing is eternal, for, when a thing's conditioning factors cease, then it will cease. Neither is anything destined to face destruction in non-existence for, as contingent upon other things, it was never independently real in the first place.

Finally, dependent arising solves ontology. Things are empirically real, for they were arisen. However, they are not ultimately real, for there is no substance, *tõn*, on which they are founded. There is Becoming, but no Being. Since things are not ultimately real, the affliction of suffering can be vanquished; if suffering were ultimately real, then it could never be abolished.

The Abhidharma schools were the first to offer an interpretation of the doctrine of dependent arising, but interpretation probably was not their intent. They understood the doctrine to mean the temporal succession of momentary and discrete elements (dharma), which were in themselves real.¹ They did not see dependent arising to mean that the elements were only relatively real, but rather they saw it as describing the inter-actions between already-existing elements.

1 Malalasekera in Moore, 80

2 That both free will and determinism are operative in Buddhism's dependent arising is not to be confused with the compatibility of the two in Jainism. In the former, neither is ultimately real, but in the latter, both are real..

The point of the doctrine dependent arising, they felt, was solely to negate soul-theories, not to negate the elements themselves. Dependence was thus seen as referring to the conditioning relations between the elements, which relations were meticulously analyzed and systematized. It was these relations that became seen as the dynamic force of becoming.

The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) writings criticized the Abhidharma theory of relations as being, not an explanation of dependent arising, but an interpretation of it, and an interpretation with which they disagreed. The systematic hierarchy of relations was seen as being no less metaphysical than the speculative theories of causality, which the Buddha was trying to avoid.²

A further problem was that, while it was not explicitly wrong to describe the universe as made up of discrete elements, it was misleading. To isolate an element temporally was to take a first step towards conceptually reifying that element. The approach adopted by the Perfection of Wisdom School was to elevate the theory of dependent arising from the empirical to the conceptual by formulating a two-truth theory, a theory later embraced by Nagarjuna.

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This approach declared that the Abhidharma schools saw reality from the standpoint of lower, conventional truth, and so they saw all as being composed of real elements, which are mutually dependent in terms of causal efficacy. The Perfection of Wisdom, on the other hand, believed themselves to have access to perfect prajna, “wisdom” (hence the name of this school, Pra-jnaparamita).

From the standpoint of higher, ultimate truth afforded by such wisdom, elements were seen as being, not just causally conditioned, but even ontologically conditioned. That is, the elements did not merely constitute conglomerate things, which, as an assemblage, had no inherent identity and real existence; moreover, rather, the elements themselves had no inherent identity or real existence. The result of this interpretation of dependent arising is that the elements are “empty;” as dependent arisen, they are not real and are without self-nature. Furthermore, concepts, too, are unreal.³ All concepts are based on dualities as “tallness” is dependent on “shortness.”

The ultimate implication of this interpretation is a shift from emphasis on logical reasoning, as evidenced in the Abhidharma, to non-dual intuition, or prajna.

1 Santina, 6

2 Cf. Kalupahana 1975, 154-155

3 Santina, 12.7.2.

This non-dual intuition prefigured Nagarjuna’s use of comprehensive four-fold negations and the later mysticism of Zen.¹ In the writings of both the Perfection of Wisdom School and Nagarjuna, all propositions regarding a subject are negated (e.g. something is, is not, both is and is not, neither is nor is not), but no alternative proposition is offered. The only way to grasp the subject is through non-dual, non-conceptual intuition.
