

# The Meaning of Dependent Arising

*Dhīvan, 16 December 2023, Adhiṣṭhāna*

*samuppāda* = arising  
*paṭicca* = having depended on  
*paṭicca-samuppāda* = an arising, having depended on

*cakkhuñ ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇam*  
dependent on the eye and visual forms arises eye-consciousness  
*paṭicca-samuppāda* = an arising [of something], dependent on [something else]

## Syntactical compounds

*ehi-passika* = [the Dharma is] come! see! -ish,  
‘having the quality of a personal invitation’  
*avecca-pasāda* = perfect confidence [in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha]  
*ariyasāvako buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti*  
the noble disciple is one who is endowed with confidence having understood the  
Buddha [etc.]  
*paṭicca-samuppāda* = [a phenomenon] arises having depended on [causes and conditions]  
*paccaya* = condition, a ‘basis’ or ‘support’

## Conceptual metaphors

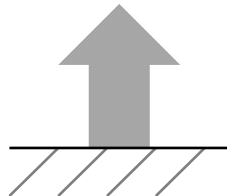
*samuppāda* = arising – a metaphor for ‘starting to exist’  
*paṭicca* = dependent – a metaphor for ‘having causes and conditions’  
‘Moving against (*paṭicca*) whatever causal basis (*paccaya*) it arises from (*uppajjati*),  
consciousness is reckoned accordingly.’  
NATURAL CAUSATION IS UPWARD MOVEMENT

upward motion (arising, *uppāda*) → natural causation  
upward moving phenomenon (e.g. consciousness) → a natural effect  
original location (basis, *paccaya*) → situation taken as a natural cause

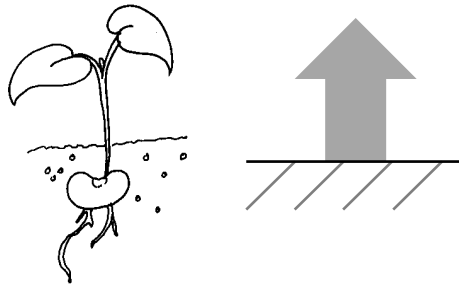
*origination* = arising

*from* = dependent on

*a cause* = a basis



*origination* = arising  
*from* = dependent on  
*a cause* = a basis



**From the story of the arahant *bhikkhunī* Selā (*Samyutta Nikāya* 5: 9):**

‘This body was not made by myself, this painful thing was not made by another.  
 It has come to be dependent on (*paṭicca*) a cause, and ceases from the cause’s break-up.  
 As a particular seed grows when sown in a field,  
 Owing to (*āgamma*) both good earth as well as to moisture,  
 So the constituents (*khandhas*), elements and six sense-realms  
 Have come to be dependent on a cause, and cease from the cause’s break-up.’

**Organic similes and dependent arising**

‘Karma is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving is the moisture. For beings obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving, consciousness is established in an inferior realm. In this way there is future production of renewed existence. (A 3: 76)

action (*karma*), seed (*bīja*), maturation (*vipāka*) and fruit (*phala*)

‘Monks, just as whatever kinds of seeds or plants attain increase and growth and come to full size, they all do so relying on the earth, planted in the earth, likewise, monks, a practitioner, relying on virtuous conduct, planted in virtuous conduct, developing the noble eightfold path, frequently practising the eightfold noble path, obtains increase and growth and comes to full size in terms of wholesome qualities.’ (S 45: 150)

In the *Śālistamba Sūtra* (‘The Rice-Stalk Discourse’), the Buddha contrasts objective (*bāhya*) and subjective (*ādhyātmika*) dependent arising:

objective dependent arising		subjective dependent arising	
			ageing-and-death
fruit			birth
flower			continued existence
calyx			appropriation
bud			craving
swelling			feeling
stalk			contact
leaf			six sense spheres
shoot			name-and-form
sprout			consciousness
seed			formative forces
			ignorance