

===== introduction =====

From workshop 21's transcript:

Stim Morane: Pila, you have contributed a number of observations from your own practice and study of Chinese traditions, for which I'd like to thank you. Would you be likely to attend next week's session? If so, perhaps you and I could make a little dialogue specifically on how codependent arising relates to your comments.

Pila Mulligan: ok, thank you

===== more observations and comments preliminary to Workshop 22 =====

Chuang Tzu attributed to Confucius the quote I posted about about how perception proceeds to emptiness (from the senses through the mind to primal spirit.) I lack the intellectual dexterity to engage in elaborate philosophical concepts. My perceiving (yin) mind is more agile than my rational (yang) mind. I find satisfaction in seeing the healing aspects of personal energy. I am not really competent to discuss pratityasamutpada. I am happy to share observations regarding interrelatedness.

In my experience, we share a living numinous environment, like fish share water, but with even greater interrelatedness than the metaphor implies. The metaphor refers to the invisible substance of a shared environment more than deific implications of numinosity. We live in a pool that is physical, mental and then some. We can adjust our presence in the pool so that the environment responds almost the same as when a school of fish turns simultaneously. At a personal level this is both a blessing and a curse. Fixations are one of the curses in our shared pool, with dulling repetitious actions being a result. A blessing is the capacity of a single act to lift us above the usual rat race of activity.

In my experience, the most significant part of a practice is breathing. Healthy breathing increases the potential for the small acts that uplift us. Asphyxiation in some form or another seems to be the most ubiquitous curse and cause of dulled perception. Breathing is how we transcend that effect of asphyxiation. Healthy breathing relates to the perception of light. When we are caught in asphyxiated dullness the light around us can seem to be corrupt. When we transcend that condition we can begin to see things in a better light.

Many traditions refer to experiencing emptiness. To me emptiness is form illuminated without corrupting perceptual burdens (by form I am referring to the external form or appearance of an object.) The object is still the same as in its mundane aspect, yet the perception is free of distortion. There is satisfaction in being aware of emptiness – an awareness full of meaning and contentment. Then we also can obtain a sense of how this awareness relates to the mundane world. That sense is the foundation of ethics. A small step in the direction of undistorted perception can mean the difference between a favorable or an unfavorable situation (and sometimes that step means doing nothing.)