

of a life characterized by "ignorance" and misunderstanding, as the blind man cannot see and cannot tell the reality. Not knowing the reality and believing that there is a personal identity exists outside our body and mind, we have the ignorance. In fact, each of us, and all beings of consciousness, is born with ignorance, or the belief in the existence of our identity beyond our body and mind. We, humans, have a more sophisticated idea of self and may refer our identities to our names. Yet, names are just labels. Names are not born with us and do not tell who we really are. That is an example of how we confuse ourselves with the name or label and create the image of self or self-identity.

In order to prove our existence, we have to go through a lot of stress and tension, the disturbing emotions, in our mind. Karma is created when we try to get what we want and reject what we do not want. This karma can even be created at the intention stage, i.e. at the thought of taking certain action. As long as we have the distorted view of not understanding the true personal identity, we will have disturbing emotions. Beware that they are also contagious! For example, you may be fighting with your boss or colleagues at your workplace. The fighting upsets you, bringing you disturbing emotions. Your behavior is affected negatively by these emotional disturbances. You may treat others in the office badly, causing the disturbing emotion to spread through or spill over to others unintentionally. You may even bring these emotions home and make your family unhappy. Therefore, we have to know the power of these disturbing emotions! If you are unhappy, you will make people around you unhappy and create negative karma!

Most people don't like seeing ghosts. Some people are even bothered or attacked by ghosts. Actually, one should not be worrying about the ghost but the disturbing emotions caused by it. In fact, disturbing emotion is the real ghost that can disturb the mind.

The next thing is karmic result, which in Buddhist terms, is not a judgment and reward but a natural, moral law. It is your earlier experience and intention stored in your mind that comes back and occurs. For example, if you had some fearful experience during the day, you might still be in a state of fear at night. If you had watched a scary movie earlier in the day, you might still feel scared later in the night. In the meantime, there are some conditions - biological, physical and psychological factors, to name just a few, to make things happen. For example, for you to see this Buddha statue in front of you, you have to have your eyes (biological) that can see. This Buddha statue has to be here in front of you (physical) and you have the consciousness of sight (psychological). Note that a dead body has eyes but it does not have the consciousness to see the statue. All these and other factors are the cause and seeing the statue is the effect. All these contributing factors to cause-and-effect are parts of karma.

With respect to cause and conditions, they are different: every cause will bring its own result or the result is unique, whereas conditions can be conducive to many things. For example, the plant is coming from a particular seed. The seed is thus the cause for the plant. The sun, water, soil and so on are the conditions to facilitate this and other plants' growth. In the case of human beings, the real cause of our experience begins from ignorance, the start of the 12 links of life. The conditions are external, referring to the elements of earth (地), water (水), fire (火), wind (風) and space (空) as well as the 6th element of consciousness (識).

Looking at cause-and-effect, one should recognize the five qualities about the cause:

- it is not permanent or eternal (i.e. the cause is not always there);
- it is not random (i.e. something does not come out of nowhere for no reason);
- it does not transfer (i.e. the seed that grows this apple is not this apple's seed. The apple seed and this apple cannot exist at the same time because you need a seed to grow this apple and the seed from this apple will grow another apple);
- it brings about expanded/multiplied effect (e.g. a small apple seed grows into a big tree of hundreds of apples which, in turn, yields many more apple seeds and apples) and, hence, we ought to care for the slightest bit of our karma, be it good or bad;
- it is linked to a specific effect (e.g. an apple seed will not yield an orange).

Then again, the seed itself does not have the intention to grow into something. It will grow into a tree only when the conditions are present.

Now we look at the 12 nidanas, or links, of dependent arising (十二因緣). It is presented like a clock in this picture with 12 symbols around the circle. It starts at the one o'clock position where there is an image of a blind person that represents ignorance. There are several ways to interpret the concept and one way is to consider completing a karmic cycle in three lives' time:

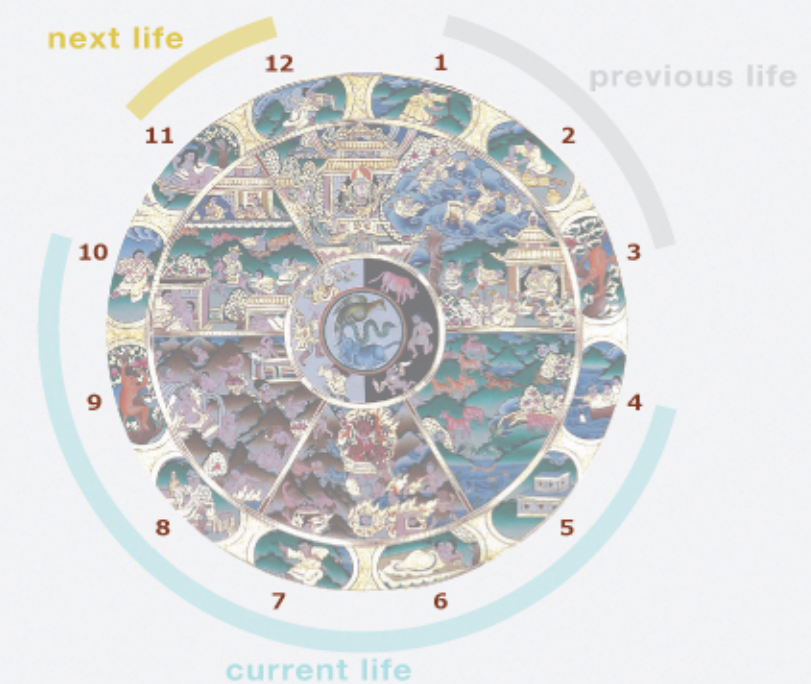
- links 1 to 3: previous life
- links 4 to 10: current life
- links 11 & 12: next life

Dependent Origination

The Lion in the well (Klesha)
Distorted view, Disturbing emotions, Karma, Karmic Result

Dependent Origination : cause, condition, five qualities

1. Ignorance (無明)
2. Impression (行)
3. Consciousness (識)
4. Psychosomatic formation (名色)
5. Sense Base (五種感觀)
6. Contact (觸)
7. Feeling (受)
8. Craving (愛)
9. Grasping (取)
10. Becoming (有)
11. Birth (生)
12. Aging-death (老死)



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|----------------|--------------------------|--------|------------------------|
| 1,2,3 | 4,5,6,7 | 8,9,10 | 11,12 |
| 1,2,3 = Past | 4,5,6,7,8,9,10 = Present | | 11,12 = Future |
| 1,8,9 = Klesha | 2,10 = Karma | 3, | 4,5,6,7,11,12 = Dukkha |

Shared value : Happiness, Ultimate Liberation (moksha)
The intent : Dependent Existence :

Pratice of Mindfulness and Loving Kindness