

Link 1 is ignorance (無明) or distorted view and there is a blind man holding a stick in the picture. Here, ignorance means more than not knowing something, but also misunderstanding of things.

Link 2 is impression (行) and in the picture there is a person making a pot based on the pot image in his mind. Due to ignorance, we form our impression of things and try to get or reject things according to how we see them.

Link 3 is consciousness (識) and there is a monkey in the picture. The monkey implies that our consciousness jumps around and it is consciousness that leads us to reborn from one of the 6 realms eventually.

Summarizing from links 1 to 3, there is intention to create something, an impression in our mind because of ignorance. The creation of impression is the creation of karma. When the time comes, this karma will click with consciousness, directing us to one of the 6 realms based on the good or bad karma that was accumulated in past.

Link 4 is psychosomatic formation (名色), which basically means our mind and body and is represented by a few people sailing in a boat in the picture. This link infers the fetus in the womb where the mind and body develop.

Link 5 is sense base (五種感官 - 眼耳鼻舌身) represented by a building with many windows. These windows represent our sensory organs (e.g. eyes, nose, ears, etc.)

Link 6 is contact (觸), which means your consciousness is in contact with the outside world. At the fetus stage, the sensory capabilities are still developing. After birth, you have contact with the outside world and the concept is represented by an intimate couple, inferring body contact. Actually, here it means all sorts of sensory contact.

Link 7 is feeling (受) and in the picture there is a man pulling an arrow out from his eye. Feeling can be good or bad and this feeling is intense.

Note that links 7 and 8 are very important and please make a mark on them.

Link 8 is craving (貪愛) and there is a man holding a glass of maybe, beer or wine in the picture. This link is about the thirst for things and the desire for more.

Link 9 is grasping (執取) and in the picture there is a monkey grabbing the fruits. We usually hold a tight grip on things that we want and cannot let them go.

Link 10 is becoming (有) and in the picture there is a pregnant woman. This is about the baby in the womb that becomes a life. So, it is our craving and grasping that create new karma that will lead us to a new life in one of the 6 realms.

Link 11 is birth (生) and in the picture there is a mother delivering a baby.

Link 12 is aging-death (老死) and represented by someone carrying something in the picture.

We are now in between links 11 and 12. After birth, we experience in this world the things mentioned earlier: the stress to prove our existence and disturbing emotions stemming from our distorted views inherited mainly from our previous lives, i.e. from links 1 to 7, that we cannot change. From link 8 onwards, however, it is about creation, creating things now. While we have received something from the past, we can still make changes if we want. On daily basis, we go through links 6 to 10 to create karma. With the contact with the outside world, we develop good or bad feelings about something. We like or dislike something and try to get it the way we want it, completing the creation of karma.

From a spiritual point of view, the window of opportunity to reduce or eradicate sufferings lies between links 7 and 8. Recall that up to link 7, you cannot do much to change things from past lives -- we see things in a human way and a dog sees the world in its way. However, from link 8 onwards, you can have some control depending on the environment, which is influenced by previous karma. It is due to karma from the past that some people have an easier time to direct or re-direct their course while some find it harder to change the course against a less favorable or harsher environment. Yet, the key is that everyone has the opportunity to change! Through practice, and being more mindful in specific, we watch our mind closely and control our cravings via our shaper senses.

So far, we have talked about how an individual experiences his life. In one's life, there are many ups and downs, highs and lows, fear and stress. Karma is created as a result and can affect the people around us. Now, let's look at a bigger picture. Everyone has his own stress and fear, his own distorted view or not knowing the truth. Yet, under-

Dependent Arising Diagram



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