

## 12 Links of Dependent-Arising

<i>Link</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<b>1. Ignorance</b>	The mental factor of obscuration with respect to suchness that motivates a projecting action included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself.
<b>2. Compositional action</b>	The mental factor of intention that, motivated by the ignorance included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself, projects a future life that is its projected object.
<b>3. Consciousness</b>	The main mental knower immediately after the infusion of a latency of a projecting action that is included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself.
<b>4. Name and form (excluding those of miraculous birth)</b>	A link of dependent-arising of the thoroughly afflicted class that is both of the following: 1) a projected result of a projecting action that is included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself and 2) abides in the class of aggregates beginning immediately upon connecting to birth existence but prior to the six sense powers being fully formed.
<b>5. Six sense spheres</b>	A link of dependent-arising of the thoroughly afflicted class that is both of the following: 1) a projected result of a projecting action that is included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself and 2) abides in the class of fruitional aggregates beginning with the six sense powers being fully formed but being unable to utilize their object, upon the aggregation of the three—object, sense power and consciousness.
<b>6. Contact</b>	A mental factor that is both of the following: 1) a projected result of a projecting action that is included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself and 2) abides in the class of fruitional aggregates beginning with being able to utilize its object upon the aggregation of the three—object, sense power, and consciousness—but being unable to know the causes of the three feelings of pleasure, pain, and neutrality, such as food.

<b>7. Feeling</b>	<p>A mental factor that is both of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) a projected result of a projecting action that is included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself and</li> <li>2) abides in the class of fruitional aggregates beginning with being able to know the causes of the three feelings of pleasure, pain, and neutrality, such as food, and experiencing either satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or neutrality.</li> </ol>
<b>8. Craving</b>	<p>An attachment that initially nourishes the latency of a projecting action that is included within the same round of dependent-arising as itself due to a craving for any of the three feelings which are included in the same round of dependent-arising as itself.</p>
<b>9. Grasping</b>	<p>An attachment in which the previous link of dependent-arising of craving has intensified and come to possess a powerful capacity to nourish the latency of a projecting action.</p>
<b>10. Existence</b>	<p>An actualizing action that actualizes another lifetime, due to the latency of a projecting action being nourished by the previous two [links of] craving and grasping.</p>
<b>11. Birth</b>	<p>A link of dependent-arising of the thoroughly afflicted class that abides in the class of fruitional aggregates beginning immediately upon connecting to birth existence by the power of the previous link of dependent-arising of existence.</p>
<b>12. Aging and death</b>	<p>The factor of change over the life-stages of the fruitional aggregates beginning from the second instant of having actualized birth existence until before actualizing death existence.</p>

# A Brief Explanation of the Wheel of Life

During the Buddha's time, King Udayana of the border region gave King Bimbisara of the central region a priceless jewel-studded suit of armor. In return, King Bimbisara gave him a drawing of the Wheel of Life. What does this drawing illustrate? It illustrates both samsara and nirvana.

First of all, regarding samsara, it illustrates the three: the causes of samsara, the places of samsara, and the modes of samsara. This wheel is composed of four concentric rings.

In the innermost ring, the rooster, the snake, and the pig illustrate the three poisons.

In the second ring, from among the causes of samsara, virtue and non-virtue are illustrated by the black and white portions.

In the third ring, there are five portions. In the lower half, the center portion depicts the hell realm, while the right and left portion depict the hungry ghost and animal realms. In the upper half, there are the human and god realms.

In the fourth ring, there are drawings illustrating the twelve links of dependent-arising:

1. The old blind lady illustrates the link of ignorance, in the sense that, even though she moves in the direction as she wishes, such as a place of happiness, she cannot reach it.
2. The potter illustrates the link of compositional actions, in the sense that he creates according to his wishes the pot's shape and other qualities that he wishes for.
3. The monkey illustrates the link of consciousness, in the sense that it shifts and travels to other trees without dwelling in a single location.
4. The passengers riding in a boat illustrates the link of either name or form, in the sense that they ride in the boat and reach the other shore, since one passes from this life and passes through the intermediate existence for the future life and reaches the birth existence.
5. The empty village illustrates the link of the six sense spheres, in the sense that, even though there is a place to reside, there are no residents.
6. The boy and the girl kissing illustrates the link of contact, in the sense that, apart from mere touching of the lips on that occasion, the attribute of feeling has not been generated.
7. The eye pierced by an arrow illustrates the link of feeling, in the sense that one is unable to experience other feelings due to pain on that occasion.
8. The drinking of alcohol illustrates the link of craving, in the sense that one is ruined due to intoxication on account of bad habits.
9. The monkey grasping at another fruit while eating a previous one illustrates the link of grasping.

10. The pregnant woman who is close to giving birth illustrates the link of existence in which one connects to a future rebirth.
11. The child being born illustrates the link of birth, in the sense one reaches the end of birth when one has been born.
12. Carrying a corpse illustrates aging and death.

The wheel being held by the four limbs of the monster and placed into its mouth illustrates impermanence that is death, in which karma and afflictions cause birth and death.

This also illustrates the four noble truths. True sufferings are birth and the places of birth. True origins are karma and afflictions on the occasion of the twelve links.

Second, regarding nirvana, above the wheel of life, the Buddha Bhagavan pointing to the full moon illustrates true cessation—nirvana or liberation. It seems that true path is implicitly indicated.

The following is written below the wheel:

Strive and cast away.  
Enter into the Buddha's teachings.  
Like a great elephant in a house of mud,  
Conquer the Lord of Death's battalions.  
Whoever with great circumspection,  
Practices this discipline of the Dharma,  
Abandoning the wheel of births,  
Will put an end to suffering.

Its meaning is taught as follows:

One wishing for liberation should strive in the meaning of liberation and mentally cast away the drawbacks of samsara. Having entered into the Buddha's teachings, when one enters into the practice of the three higher trainings, one should conquer the four battalions of maras just as a fierce great elephant arriving at a house of mud would destroy it. A person who wishes for liberation from his heart, possessing great circumspection of his three doors, when he practices and makes effort in this true path directly realizing selflessness, the main dharma disciplining the mental continuum as taught by the supreme teacher, since he comes from a state of practicing the three trainings, abandoning the wheel in which one passes through birth and death powerlessly, will put an end to the suffering aggregates and never have to experience suffering again.

May this composition be the cause of benefit and happiness!