

# TWELVE DEPENDENT ORIGATION LINK

**12 DEPENDENT ORIGATION (Pratīyasamutpāda)**

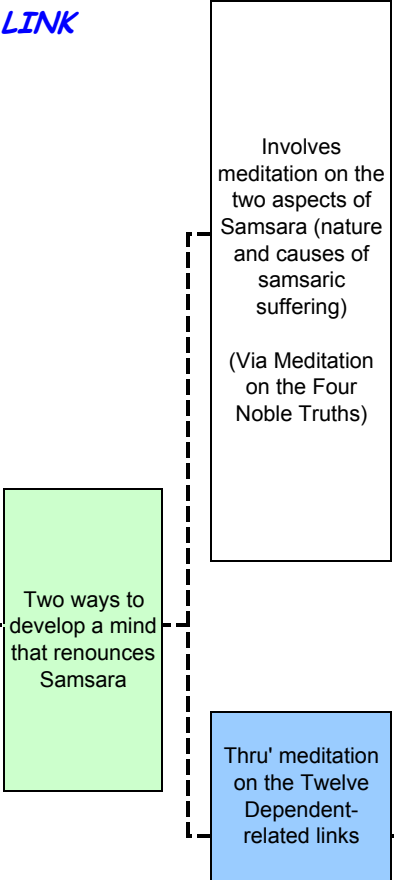
Pratīyasamutpāda explains the existence of objects and phenomena as being due to systems of causes and effects.

The general or universal definition of pratīyasamutpada which is emphasised in Mahayana Buddhism states that all phenomena are arising together in a mutually interdependent web of cause and effect. When one cause changes or disappears, the resulting object or phenomenon will also change or disappear, as will the objects or phenomena depending on the changing object or phenomenon.

The Twelve Dependent-related links (Nidanas) show the causal relations between the psychophysical phenomena that sustain dukkha, and the possibility to revert this chain, leading to liberation



**PRINCIPLE OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION**  
The flame in an oil lamp burns dependent upon the oil and the wick. When the oil and wick are present, the flame in an oil lamp burns. If either of these is absent, the flame will cease to burn. (Example used by Buddha himself).



Explaining the twelve link via a SCRIPTURAL presentation

(Which explains the Twelve links as a general mode of the nature of samsaric evolution)

Explaining the twelve link via a EXPERIMENTAL presentation

(Which speaks of the Twelve links in terms of how they are experienced by an individual over a continuum of lifetimes)

Actual Meditation on the Twelve Dependent-Related Link

1	<b>IGNORANCE</b>	Fundamental ignorance of the truths and the delusion of mistakenly perceiving the skandhas as a self.
2	<b>FORMATION / VOLITIONAL ACTIONS</b>	As long as there is ignorance there is the formation of karma: positive, negative and neutral. This forms the rebirths in the various realms.
3	<b>CONSCIOUSNESS</b>	Formations cause the consciousness of the next existence. The consciousness which propels one towards the next existence is called the impelling consciousness. And the consciousness that is led to that particular state, once the conditions have come together
4	<b>NAME AND FORM</b>	The five skandhas. By the power of consciousness one is linked to a womb, and there the body develops: the form and the four 'name' skandhas of sensation, perception, formation and consciousness.
5	<b>SENSE FACULTIES (SIX AYATANAS)</b>	The six inner ayatanas of the sense faculties then arise.
6	<b>CONTACT</b>	The coming together of objects, sense faculty and consciousness is contact.
7	<b>FEELING / SENSATION</b>	From contact arises sensation: pleasurable, painful and neutral.
8	<b>CRAVING</b>	There then develops a desire not to be separated from pleasurable sensations and to be free from painful sensations.
9	<b>GRASPING / ATTACHMENT</b>	As craving increases, it develops into grasping, i.e. actively striving never to be separated from what is pleasurable and to avoid what is painful.
10	<b>BECOMING / EXISTENCE</b>	Through this grasping one acts with body, speech and mind, and creates the karma that determines one's next existence.
11	<b>BIRTH</b>	Through the power of this becoming, one is reborn in a particular birthplace whenever the necessary conditions are assembled.
12	<b>AGEING AND DEATH</b>	Following rebirth there is a continual process of aging as the aggregates change and develop; and eventually there is death when the aggregates finally cease.

The twelve links can be explained as a process occurring over:

Three lifetimes:  
(i) The past cause of ignorance and karmic formations lead to the result of (ii) one's consciousness of the present life and the links up until becoming, through which one accumulates the karma through the negative emotions of craving and attachment, that will lead to (iii) a future rebirth. One takes birth according to one's karma and experiences the sufferings of old age and death and so one.

Or over two lifetimes:  
(i) The ignorance of one's previous incarnation, and the karma created through the power of craving and attachment, cause (ii) one to take another birth, and in that present life there arise the links from consciousness through to becoming and old age and death.

**Meditation in serial order on the dependent relationship of the side of delusion** (from Dependent-related ignorance to ageing and death)

**Meditation in serial order on reverse order on the dependent relationship of the side of delusion** (from Dependent-related Ageing & Death to Ignorance)

*[These two methods reveal the step-by-step development of samsara from its root cause, ignorance]*

**Meditation in serial order on the dependent relationship of the perfectly purified side**

**Meditation in serial order on reverse order on the dependent relationship of the perfectly purified side**

*[This will reveal the step-by-step cessation of the twelve dependent-related links and the attainment of liberation]*