

Buddhist Terms in Chapter 20 of the Lotus Sutra

The Four Noble Truth 四諦 (shitai) (p.285, L.21): A basic concept in Buddhism which explains the cause of suffering and the way of deliverance from suffering. This was one of the first doctrines taught by the Buddha after his enlightenment: ① All existence is suffering. ② The cause of suffering is illusion and desire. ③ Nirvana is the realm free from suffering. ④ The means for the attainment of nirvana is the practice of the Eightfold Noble Path. The four noble truths are particularly stressed in Hinayana, and the person who pursues these truths is called a *shravaka* or *shomon*.

The Twelve causes or The Twelve-Linked Chain of Dependent

Origination 十二因緣 (P.285, L.25): All phenomena have a certain principal. The Twelve-linked Chain of Dependent Origination is a principle of birth and death in the three generations in Buddhism:

- ① **IGNORANCE** or 無明 *MUMYO*, is the cause of all illusions in the past lives.
- ② **PREDISPOSITION** or 行 *GYO*, ignorance produces predisposition. Ignorance and predisposition cause one to be born in this world. ① and ② are one's previous lives.
- ③ **CONSCIOUSNESS** or 識 *SHIKI*, is the first stage of consciousness after conception that takes place in the mother's womb. This is one's prepossessed character.
- ④ **MENTAL FUNCTIONS & MATTER** or 名色 *MYO-SHIKI* is the stage of forming one's body and mind inside the womb. Today we can see inside a mother's womb through ultrasound and say, "This is the head, and these are the hands and legs." This is the stage of objects and the naming of each of these objects.
- ⑤ **THE SIX SENSES** or 六入 *ROKUNYU*. In this stage, the five organs and the brain are connected. This still takes place in the mother's womb. Today it is said that education before one's birth is very important because it will affect the future of the baby to be born. ③, ④, and ⑤ are inside the mother's womb.
- ⑥ **CONTACT** or 觸 *SOKU*. A baby is born at this stage. To be born in this world is great contact for the new born. ⑥ is birth into this world.
- ⑦ **PERCEPTION** or 受 *JU*. In this stage, one feels good or bad, has a sense of pleasure or displeasure, feels comfortable or uncomfortable, and so forth. This is the stage which lasts from the birth until one's early teens. ⑦ is pre-adolescent.
- ⑧ **DESIRE** or 愛 *AI*. In this stage one wishes to keep the things and matters that he or she feels good, comfortable, and so forth; while he or she keeps the negative away from him or her. ⑧ is adolescent.
- ⑨ **ATTACHMENT** or 取 *SHU*. In this stage, if one likes the thing or the matter, he or she has attachments of feeling good, pleasure, being comfortable, and so forth. One will be happy

when he or she is able to keep what he or she likes to keep, but one will hate and suffer when the opposite occurs. This is a stage from adolescent to adulthood. However this attachment causes one to be born again in the next life. ⑨ is adulthood.

⑩ **EXISTENCE** or 有 *U*. In this stage, one discriminates against others. Our daily lives are full of discrimination; profit or non-profit, good or bad, "mine" or "others," black or white, long or short, etc. This is our life in this world. ⑦, ⑧, and ⑨ are causes to be born again.

⑪ **BIRTH** or 生 *SHO* Thus, we will be born again in the next life because of suffering in the preceding stage. ⑪ is future life.

⑫ **OLD AGE & DEATH** or 老死 *RO-SHI*. One gets old eventually and dies. ⑫ is continuation of birth and death until one reaches Nirvana.

The Six Paramitas (六波羅蜜) (P.285, L. 27): The six kinds of practice by which bodhisattvas are able to attain enlightenment, ① giving, ② keeping precepts, ③ perseverance, ④ assiduity, ⑤ meditation and ⑥ wisdom.

Jambudvipa (閻浮提) (P.286, L.6): It is the name of a great island to the south of Mt. Sumeru and is the world in which we are living according to the traditional cosmologic view.