

Self and Environment

How does personal practice
affect our environment?

The Kool-Aid Analogy

- Or the Karma-Aid analogy
 - Our practice is based on a clear understanding of Karma as Energy plus Action, defined as “*Formations*”. These formations are the Engine of Life leading from *Potential* to *Instantiations* of limitless *forms*.
 - Consider every action of thought, word, or deed, committed by a person, including our practice, to be an ***Affect*** or *action to influence* Karma. We do not *create* karma, but in fact influence or affect karma. This is commonly misunderstood.

Personal karma vs Universal karma

- Personal Karma is a misunderstanding of Karma
 - This is also the result of countless misled translations of the teachings of Shakyamuni and throughout the scholarship of Buddhism to Nichiren.
 - Karma is the Engine of all Life, of ALL phenomena.
 - We and our sentient minds are also a part of all phenomena. We tend to think of ourselves as independent and separate karmic entities, but in reality, we are simply one of countless manifestations of the same energies/karma that all phenomena are manifest of.

We are cause makers

- Our experience of “identity” is in reality an experience of a sub-set of the whole or universal karma of instantiation (formation).
- What we mistake for personal karma creation is actually *cause making* or ***influence creation*** imposed on our stream of *karmic amalgam*.
- Here is the analogy of the influence with the understanding that we are all phenomena that arise (instantiate), express (manifest or endure), and then dissipate (extinction) in the flow of the Engine of Life (karma).

The Analogy

- You go to a local stream. Like you and I, the stream represents our momentum of manifestation or amalgam of tendencies and conditions.
- We then pour an envelop of powdered drink mix into the stream, representing our actions (cause/effects)
- Those causes/effects influence the stream and integrate over time, the flow of the stream, to express and dissolve into the current and makeup of the entirety of the stream.
- Over time, this influence is subsumed into the stream.

The Analogy continued

- The stream continues to flow (your continued personal experience of life creating moment to moment causes/effects) eventually to a river.
- Entering the river representing your friends and family, neighborhood etc... Your influence also affects them (*your environment*). These affects may seem imperceptible and yet they are part of the whole personal environment you are integral to.
- This river also continues to flow as it leads into the lakes, seas and ocean into which all this influence will integrate with the greater and larger *environment* representing the whole of the universe and all phenomena or life.

The Buddhist circle

- In summary then;
 - We are each products of formation.
 - As forms manifested of this vast collection of karma we can influence our perceived amalgam as separate while in fact influencing the whole over time.
 - As we leave our stream of existence/experience of karma, our influence is subsumed into the whole as simple undifferentiated energy. No longer constituent of its manifested forms, but all the way back to its unsubstantiated energies of potential.
 - Even the Kool-aid is part of this *formations to un-formations* cycle.

Karma is Karma

- In the end, karma is a process (*formation*) that never really changes
- Karma is a process of amalgam and dissolution like waves on the top of an ocean of energy
- We are collections of the process of formations from quiescent energy experienced as separated but not
- We act upon those formations and experience the affects of our influences on our “*selves*” and *environment from moment to moment*
- We eventually stop our influences and experience of formations (death/extinction), *personal and environmental*
- In the end there is quiescence, same as it ever was.