

Time-loop

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We are caught in a trap even right now; we don't even know it. I'm reminding myself of this, too, and it helps when we know and accept that we are trapped in the first place. But most of us neither know, much less accept, that we are in this tricky trap. Indeed, it is so fabulous and fascinating that we do not even know it is a trap; or worse, we do not mind that it is a trap, and actually enjoy it—just like a hamster zealously running in its wheel!

This is the TIME-LOOP trap that we spin for ourself. It starts with a grand idea we have of ourself: we imagine this to be our status of pleasure, power or knowledge. We are driven by an idea of a certain PLEASURE that leeches on us. We desire it, to seek it, to accumulate it.

We weave a habitual and predictable web around this PLEASURE idea, and as we age, this web only gets bigger and more complicated. We have trapped a lot of pleasure-objects, but the web just keeps getting bigger. We never actually ever think or feel that we are enjoying any of this. We are just busy trapping, collecting, compiling, storing them. Then, one day, a strong wind blows our WEB OF GREED apart. We find ourself helplessly empty. We wonder what we have been doing all this time, and now we are too old to start spinning a new web!

Even more powerful than the pleasure web is the WEB OF POWER, of titles, status, respect and so on. We spin a web of shiny colours and shimmering hues around the notion that we have all these titles, status, fame, honour, respect, and so on. We move around with an air of self-importance, making all kinds of public gestures to advertise this power and goodness.

People just love it or fear it. They get caught in the web, too. That way, we reinforce and grow it. The web of power gets bigger and bigger, heavier and heavier. One day, it just breaks under its own weight. Suddenly, we realize we have only been webbing around, dazzled by our own self-importance. In fact, we have been running after this idea of power that we never had any idea what it really is about: we don't even understand what contentment is. Now we are too old to build a new web!

The trickiest of all our time-loop traps is the WEB OF KNOWLEDGE, of expertise, of professionalism, of holiness. When we weave a web around this idea, around a Guru, an Authority figure, it gives us a euphoric blast of self-empowerment. Round and round the Guru we go all lifelong. Others who know or meet us are also drawn and caught in this sticky web of DELUSION that promises rounds of power, success, happiness, holiness, whatever we want.

This is the time-loop trap that keeps us running our hamster wheel of promise, power, success, happiness, holiness, whatever we wish for. It is a time-loop trap because it keeps us going round and round the same delusion. We keep running after our own tail, as it were. Or worse, in many of us, we are actually devouring our own tail, like the uroboros, and wondering why we are suffering pain!

So round and round we go in our time-loop trap, baited by juicy bits of Pleasure, driven by gales of Power, drawn to dazzling displays of Delusion. All our life, we have been running in

a loop, running after the same thing: they may look different, sound different, feel different; we even think differently about them. But we are really running after the same thing we have imagined in our own minds of pleasure, power and knowledge, which are really beautifully coloured sticky webs of greed, hate, delusion.

One day, as we sit silently alone, we realize we have been running around in circles. We don't even know what we really want in life, or what is really worth wanting in life. This is when may recall that brief moment we have really paid some attention to the Buddha's teaching, the true Dharma of impermanence: we get a glimpse of true reality. We just want to change, to better ourself.

This is the moment we break out of our Web; when we break through our own views; beyond which we see the true reality of impermanence. We realize that we only need to know this, accept this reality. We will then be truly contented and happy. And when we take a step further, we may even come closer to the Buddha's path of awakening.

We have been trapped in the web of Samsara, and the Buddha has been teaching us to free ourself from it all. This is the best time to be free of our time-loop trap.

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