

Shoyo Sensei's Dharma Message

Our Decision-making - 1

Question (1):

What is our Life?

Answer (1):

Our life is a continuous process of decision-making.

Question (2):

What is decision-making?

Answer (2):

Decision-making is an action of our mind that is constantly functioning moment by moment without stopping. Our mind keeps working as long as we are alive, from the time we first wake up in the morning until we go to sleep at night. "Should I go to the bathroom first?" or "Should I fix the bed before that?" After we go to sleep, our mind keeps making decisions: "Which dream do I want to see?" or "Do I change my sleeping position?" Our decision-makings should be made sometimes at major stages of our life: "Should I marry this person or that person?" Our decision-makings are done by our mind. Our mind also tells us whether that decision was "good," "bad," "right," or "wrong." Our life is a continuous process of our decision-makings.

Question (3):

What makes my decision each time?

Answer (3):

It is "my mind." But, the question is what is "my mind." And Buddhism offers a rich information about it.

Question (4):

Why so?

Question (4):

As a living person, we constantly receive information through our sense organs (eye, ear, tongue, nose, skin and mind). Our sense organs receive, information only when it meets its corresponding sense object (color/shape for eye, sound for ear, taste for tongue, smell for nose, touch for skin, and concept for mind). But, the problem is at the moment a sense organ and its corresponding sense object meet, immediately, the sensation or sense impression arises. This sensation is a very first and primitive process of decision-making, but it already has its own preference and its own interpretation. For, this sensation is either "comfortable" and "pleasant" or "uncomfortable" and "unpleasant." According to the Buddha, this is already an arising of the first process of decision-making. However since this sensation is so subtle, it does not capture our attention yet. Then, this first process of sensation continues to grow stronger. In this sense, "my mind" is powerfully hijacked by my own taste without knowing.

Question (5):

What happens to the next process of decision-making?

Answer (5):

After the arising of the sense impression (*phassa*) by the contact of a sense organ and a sense object, the following continues to occur as long as the process of decision-making by "MY BRAIN (MIND)":

Arising of manifold concepts (*papaca*) in association of "I" concept ⇆ arising of perception ⇆ arising of reasoning (*vitakka*) arising manifold concepts (*papanca*) processing and storing information (*samkhara*) ⇆ domination of the group of manifold concepts, perceptions and associations (*papanca-sanna-samkha*) ⇆ [Emotional involvement] liking pleasant sensations (*piyarupa-sarrajja*) or disliking unpleasant sensations ⇆ (*appiyarupa -byappajja*) ⇆ domination of the mind by unskillful roots of action (*akusala mula*): greed,

attachment, desire (*lobha*), aversion, anger, hatred (*dosa*), delusion, confusion, ignorance (*moha*) ⇔ making a decision ⇔ [physical or verbal] taking an action harmful to oneself (*atta-byappadhahya*), to others (*para-byabadhaya*) or to both oneself and others (*ubhaya-byabadhaya*) ⇔ [mental] arising of negative energy (*papa*): unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), anxiety (*parideva*), fear/insecurity (*bhaya*), frustration (*domanassa*), stress (*upayasa*), sadness/grief (*soka*) etc. ⇔ leads to the next contact of sense organ and sense object ⇔

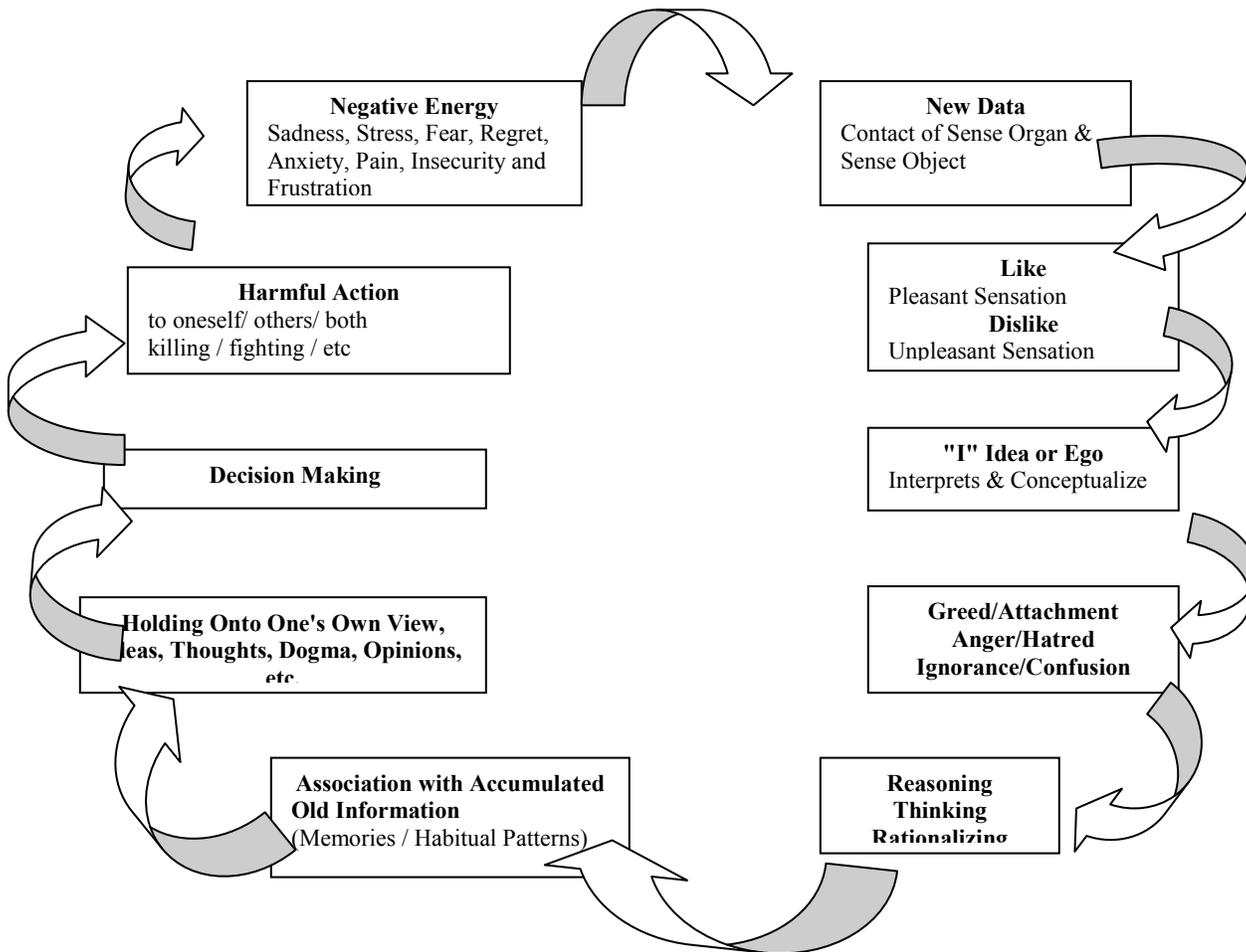
Question (6):

Can you show what you said by a diagram?

Answer (6):

The mechanism of our decision-making can be shown as follows:

The Mechanism of our Decision-making:



**Na Man Da Bu,
Shaku Shoyo**