



An Analytical Study of Action (*Kamma*) in Theravada Buddhism

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Abstract

This researcher article is about a study of an Analytical Study of Action (*Kamma*) in Theravāda Buddhism. Specifically, it was for achieving knowledge and understanding about *Kamma* Theravāda Buddhism. Apply *Kamma* result in Daily Life. *Kamma* means intentional body, verbal and mental action. In the ultimate sense, *Kamma* means volition. If the volition is good, *Kamma* is good; and If the volition is bad, *Kamma* is bad. *Kamma* is a law of nature and is not controlled by any being. The past actions influence the present, and the past and the present actions influence the future.

According to Buddhism this inequality is due not only to heredity and environment and, “nature and nurture” but also to the operation of the law of *Kamma*, in other words, to the result of our own inherited past actions and our present doings. Man himself is responsible for his own happiness and misery. He creates his own heaven and hell. He is the architect of his own fate. *Kamma* is neither fatalism nor a doctrine of predetermination. Every action produces an effect and a cause comes first and effect afterwards, therefore, we speak of *Kamma* as ‘the law of cause and effect’. For example, throwing a stone is an action. The past influences the present but does not dominate it, for *Kamma* is past as well as present. The past and present influence the future; the past is the background against which life goes on from moment to moment, the future is yet to be. Only the present moment exists, and the responsibility of using the present moment for good or for ill lies with each individual.

Kamma and it working is behind different kinds of existences, difference in appearance, characteristic, intelligence, aptitude, wealth, health, etc., among beings. The personal, social, and psychological differences are due to *Kamma*. All *Kamma* bear the nature of producing result. Through the development of Eightfold Noble Path, all defilement got eradicated; and one become an Arahant. After the passing away into *Nibbāna*, all *Kamma* become defunct, and one is free from *Kamma*.

Keywords: Buddhism, Analytical Study, *Kamma* in Theravada.

Introduction

Kamma is a Pali word meaning action. In its general sense *Kamma* means all good and bad actions. It covers all kinds of intentional actions whether mental, verbal or physical—thought, words and deeds. Whatever you do with your limbs is physical action. Verbal action means the words that you utter. Mental action means the thoughts that occur in your mind. In its ultimate sense *Kamma* means all moral and immoral volition.¹

The one that prompts these three actions is nothing but the mental concomitant, *cetanā-cetasika* that occurs in the mind of beings. *Cetanā* impels you to perform a certain deed because *Cetanā* is responsible for the completion of every *Kamma* action. *Cetanā* is commonly called *Kamma*. The Buddha says: Mental volition, O bhikkhus, is what I call *Kamma*. Having volition one acts by body, speech and thought.²

Cetanā (volition) is the main source of *kamma*, the word *cetanā* is a special term in Buddhism, the definite meaning of which cannot be rendered into any other language. *Cetanā* is the main cause of every action bodily or verbal or mental which may be good or evil. Nothing can be accomplished without *cetanā*.

Cetanā is also the motivating force for the mind. The *Kamma* arises depending on the driving force of *cetana*. The greater *cetana*, the stronger *kamma*. *Cetanā* is an extremely subtle reality. So it is very difficult to understand *Cetanā* correctly. But it is that subtle *cetanā* which motivates the mind. In performing an action, *cetanā* stimulates the mind, i.e., consciousness and its concomitants to perform their respective roles to accomplish the action, because *cetanā* precedes every action and it is solely responsible for the accomplishment of the action, *cetanā* is called the action or *kamma* by the Buddha.

The intensity of *kamma* depends on the force of *cetanā*. *Cetanā* is of three kinds *pubba-cetanā*, *munca-cetanā* and *Apara-cetanā*. *Pubba-cetana* exerts the initial force to perform the action; *Munca-cetanā* is the force involved while performing the action and *Apara-cetanā* continues to exert the force after performing the action. The results of an action will be effective only when the action is performed in conformity with the three kinds of *cetanā*. If one of these *cetanās* is weak or absent, the *kamma* becomes weak and its results will also be less effective.

¹ Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma, The Real Creator**, (Yangon, Myanmar, 2007), pp.115-117.

² Ashin Janakabhivamsa, **Abhidhamma in Daily life**, Mahagandayone Monastery, Amarapura Writing and repairing the scriptures. Translated by U Ko Lay (Faculty of Patipatti International Theravāda Buddhist Monastery, Myanmar, 1999), pp.108-109.

To achieve success in this world, *kamma*, wisdom and effort are essential. Of these three wisdom and effort are prominent, and so people recognize the importance of their roles. As *kamma* and its results are difficult to understand, there are people who do not believe in them. Those who claim to be non-believers are in fact performing *kammic* actions everyday in contradiction to their own belief.

All people are occupied with their own work all the time. They receive their earnings in accordance with their work. There are two kinds of work or action—the good and the evil. Those who commit crimes are punished by means of fines, flogging, imprisonment or hanging according to the law. Those who perform good deeds earn money, property, status or power. So, people have to suffer or enjoy the consequences of good or bad *kamma*. Therefore, it is obvious that *kamma* and its results do exist in the world. One cannot deny or object to the existence of *kamma* and its results. The nature of *kamma* is subtle; the power of *kamma* is very strong. People think that after they have performed an action, the action dissolves and disappears, leaving nothing behind. But it is not so. Although the action has been completed, the energy of *cetana* arising at the time of action does not vanish. It remains in the mental stream.

Only when one understands correctly the principle of *Kamma* and its effect, one shall possess the right understanding and right view. The right view is *Sammādiṭṭhi*. The right view leads to right thought, right speech, the right action, right livelihood and good morality. Paying no attention to *Kamma* and its effect; not understanding its and ignoring its leads to the wrong understanding the wrong view. Thus, a person who understands *Kamma* and its effect and the one who does not understand *Kamma* will be so different that they are wide apart like the earth and the sky.³

So, there are inequalities and manifold destinies of human beings in the world. One is, for example, inferior and another superior. One perishes in infancy and another at the age of eighty or a hundred. One is sick and infirm, and another strong and healthy. One is beautiful another ugly. One brought up in luxury and another in misery. One is born a millionaire another misery. One is genius and another folly.⁴ Every action has its reaction. This is the eternal law. Buddhism named it as *Kamma*. *Kamma* is wholesome and unwholesome volitional action and *Kamma Vipaka* is the result of action. Through volition one does the

³Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma, The Real Creator**, (Yangon, Myanmar 2007), pp. 116-117.

⁴Nārada Mahāthera, **Buddhism in a Nutshell**, (Kandy, Sri lank Buddhist, Publication Society, 1982), pp.14-15.

kamma by means of body, speech or mind. We are the heirs of our action that we have done in the past as well as in the present.

According to Buddhism, man's position is supreme. Man is his own master, and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment over his destiny. Hence man has it in his power to shape his future destiny by means of his will and actions. It depends on his actions whether his destiny will lead him up or down, either to happiness or to misery. If day-by-day we are practicing kindness towards all living being, humans as well as animals, we will grow in goodness, while hatred, and all evil actions done through hatred, we will suffer unhappiness.

The Buddhists believe Kamma and its results. Those also trust that there are three periods of time in a life. There are the following: (1) the past life (2) the present life (3) the next life. In the past life having done good kamma, in the present life one is superior, long life, strong, healthy and handsome. One does good action last one should be poor, inferior and ugly in one future our good action will come back to us in blessing and bad action will come back to us in naughtiness. If we sow a mango seed, for instance, a mango tree will come up and bear mangoes, and if we sow a chili seed, a chili plant will grow and produce chilies. Good action leads to us our goal, Nibbana.

So one who wants to be lucky should do good action. Every action produces an effect and a cause comes first and effect afterwards, therefore, we speak of *Kamma* as 'the law of cause and effect'. For example, throwing a stone is an action. The stone strikes a glass window and breaks it. The break is the effect of the action of throwing, but it is not the end. The broken window is now the cause of further trouble. Some of one's money will have to go to replace it, and thus one is unable to save the money or to buy with it what one wants for some other purpose and the effect upon one is a feeling of disappointment.

This may make one irritable, and if one is not careful one may allow the irritability to become the cause of doing something else which is wrong and so on, there is no end to the result of action, no end to *Kamma*, so we should be very careful about our actions, so that their effect will be good. Therefore, it is necessary for us to do a good, helpful action that will return to us in good *Kamma* and make us strong enough to start a better *Kamma*.⁵ Thrown a stone into a pond and watch the effect. There is a splash and a number of little rings appear round the place where it strikes. See how the rings grow wider and wider till they

⁵Nārada Mahā therā, **Majjhima Nikāya Majjhimapaṇṇasa Aṭṭhakathā**, (Somerville, Wisdom Publications, 1995), pp.70-75.

become too wide and too tiny for our eyes to follow. The little stone disturbs the water in the pond, but its work is not finished yet. When the tiny waves reach the edges of the pond, the water moves back till it pushes the stone that has disturbed it.⁶

The effects of our actions come back to us just as the waves do to the stone, and as long as we do our action with evil intention the now waves of effect come back to beat upon us and disturb us. If we are kind and keep ourselves peaceful, the returning waves of trouble will grow weaker and weaker till they die down, and our good *kamma* will come back to us in blessings. If we sow a mango seed, for instance, a mango tree will come up and bear mangoes, and if we sow a chili seed, a chili plant will grow and produce chilies.⁷

Kamma give results in the various sphere, and the formless. For example, unwholesome *Kamma* give results in the four woeful state and human beings and even in some celestial being.⁸ The word *Kamma* literally action or deed, but in the Buddha teaching it refers exclusively to volitional action. From a technical stand point, *Kamma* denotes wholesome or unwholesome volitional action, volition being the factor responsible for action.⁹ Therefore, Buddha said that beings are owners of their *kamma*. *Kamma* alone is their property; nothing else is *Kamma* is a very important subject in Buddhism.¹⁰

The Practice of *Kamma* in Theravāda Buddhism

The meaning of *Kamma*, the Pali term *Kamma* literally means action or doing. Any kind of volitional or intentional action whether mental, verbal or physical is regarded as *kamma*. It covers all that is included in the phrase: ‘thought, word or deed’. Generally speaking, all good and bad actions constitute *kamma*. In its ultimate sense, *kamma* means all moral and immoral volition (*kusala- akusala cetanā*). Having willed one acts by body, speech and thought.” According to Buddhism, all actions, though technically deeds, constitute

⁶Ashin Janakabhivamsa, **Abhidhamma in Daily life**, Mahagandayone Monastery, Amarapura Writing and repairing the scriptures. Translated by U Ko Lay (Faculty of Patipatti International Theravāda Buddhist Monastery, Myanmar, 1999), pp. 5-7.

⁷Pa Auk Tawya Sayādaw, **The workings of *Kamma***, (Myanmar, 2009) pp. 251-259.

⁸Bhikkhu Bodhi, A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma the Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha of Ācariya Anuruddha, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy Sri Lanka, 2007), pp. 105-109.

⁹Mehm Tin Mon, ***Kamma, The Real Creator***, (Yangon, 2007), pp.151-155.

¹⁰Nārada Mahāthera, **Buddhism in a Nutshell**, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1982), pp. 13-14.

kamma, because volition, the most important factor in determining *kamma*, volition, a deed is sterile; it produces no reaction of moral significance. *Kamma* is not fate nor is it predestination, imposed on us by some mysterious unknown power controlling our lives. It is one's own doing that reacts on one's own self, and so it is possible to divert the course of our *Kamma* to some extent.

The past influences the present but does not dominate it for *Kamma* is both past and present deeds. Every action produces an effect and it is a cause first and effect afterwards, therefore speak of *Kamma* as 'the law of cause and effect.' Throwing a stone, for example, is an action. The stone strikes a glass window and breaks it. The break is the effect of the action of throwing, but it is not the end. The broken window is now the cause of further trouble. Some of one's money will have to go to replace it, and one is thus unable to save the money or to buy with it what one wants for some other purpose and the effect upon one is a feeling of disappointment.¹¹ This may make one irritable, and if one is not careful one may allow the irritability to become the cause of doing something else, which is wrong and so on. There is no end to the result of action, no end to *Kamma*, so we should be very careful about our actions, so that their effect will be good. It is therefore necessary for to do a good, helpful action, which will return to us in good *kamma* and make us strong enough to start a better *Kamma*.¹²

The effects of our actions come back to us again and as long as we do our action with evil intention, the new effect come back to beat upon us and disturb us. If we are kind and keep ourselves peaceful, the returning trouble will grow weaker and weaker till they die down, and Our good *kamma* will come back to us in blessings. *Kamma* is a central and fundamental aspect of Buddhist doctrine common to all traditions of Buddhism. The Buddhist experience and concept that encompasses this worldly ambiguity and complicity of our intentions and actions is *Kamma*. *Kamma* is, on the one hand, a crucial category for practicing Buddhists in Asia and elsewhere that helps them interpret and understand their situations and life. Type of *Kamma*, including will divided into section as follow: (a) Two kinds of *Kamma* and (b) Three kinds of *Kamma* (c) Twelve kinds of *Kamma*. According to the Buddhism, there are two Type of *Kamma*, what are wholesome states? Wholesome

¹¹ Ashin Janakabhivamsa, **Abhidhamma in Daily life**, Mahagandayone Monastery, Amarapura Writing and repairing the scriptures. Traslate by U Ko Lay (Faculty of Patipatti International Theravāda Buddhist Monastery, Myanmar,1999), pp. 199-203.

¹² Pa Auk Tawya Sayādaw, **The workings of Kamma**, (Myanmar, 2009), pp. 251-259.

states are good states of mind; happy states of mind, like non-attachment; good will instead of ill will; a tranquil mind instead of a restless mind; not jealous of others; and the like. So this kind of wholesome states of mind gives you peace, gives you a happy state. Whereas unwholesome states of mind are states that make you agitated; make you unhappy such as greed, anger, restlessness, jealousy, and arrogance. Evil *Kamma* or unwholesome *Kamma* leads to a decrease in wholesome states or an increase in unwholesome states. You should avoid performing this kind of *Kamma*.¹³

Two kinds of Kamma

Akusala Kamma is rooted in greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). *Akusala kamma* is also of ten kinds: three bodily actions, four verbal actions and three mental actions. *Akusala* means blameworthy, faulty and unwholesome actions producing detrimental results. Since these action are not wholesome, they are called evil kinds of conduct. They can lead one to be reborn in the four miserable realms. Because they serve as ways of getting to miserable realms, they are called *Akusala kamma*. There are ten Unwholesome Actions caused by deed, word, and mind, which produce evil *Kamma*. Of them three are committed by bodily-namely,

1. Killing (*pānātipātā*)
2. Stealing (*adinnādānā*), and
3. Sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācārā*).

Four are caused by word- namely,

4. Lying (*musāvādā*)
5. Slandering (*pisunavācā*),
6. Harsh speech (*pharusavācā*), and
7. Frivolous talk (*samphappalāpa vācā*).

Three are committed by mind-namely,

8. covetousness (*abhiññhā*),
9. Ill-will (*vyāpāda*) and
10. False-view (*micchāṭṭhi*).

¹³Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma-The Real Creator**, (Yangon, Myanmar,2007). pp. 231-135.

Kusalakamma, there are including the ten Wholesome action, Wholesome action is rooted in Non-greed (*Alobha*), Non-anger (*Adosa*) and Non-delusion (*Amoha*). There are ten Wholesome Actions caused by deed, word, and mind, which produce Wholesome *Kamma*. *Kāmāvacara kusala kamma* is ten kinds: three bodily actions, four verbal actions and three mental actions.

These ten actions are called ten kinds of good conduct (*sucarita*). *Kusala* means blameless wholesome action producing beneficial results. These ten good conducts can help one to be reborn in human world or celestial realms. Because they serve as ways of getting to good destinations, they are called as “*Kusala kamma patha*”. Of the ten meritorious actions, the mental action of holding the right view, believing in *kamma* and its results, is the most important basic *kamma*.¹⁴ Therefore, wholesome means good action, good speech and good thought. Unwholesome means evil action, evil speech and evil thought. To cultivate good action, good speech and good thought means to cultivate good *kamma*. In the same way, to cultivate bad action, bad speech and bad thought means to cultivate bad *Kamma* (b) Three Kinds of Kamma

Three kind of *Kamma*, including will divide into section as follow: These are body, speech and mind. When we act physically the body serves as the instrument for volition. This is bodily *Kamma*. When we speak, expressing our thoughts and intentions, that is verbal *Kamma*, which can be performed either directly through speech or else indirectly through writing or other means of communications. When we think, plan, desire inwardly, without any outer action, that is mental *Kamma* manifests itself in three ways, through three “doors” of action.¹⁵

Alternatively, *Kamma* can be classified according to the paths which there are three. They are:

1. Bodily *Kamma*: intentional actions through the body.
2. Verbal *Kamma*: intentional actions through speech.
3. Mental *Kamma*: intentional actions through the mind.

Incorporating both of the classifications described above, we have altogether six kinds of *Kamma*: bodily, verbal and mental *Kamma* which is unskillful; and bodily, verbal and mental *Kamma* which is skillful. Another way of classifying *Kamma* is according to its results. In this classification there are four categories:

¹⁴Phramaha Thotsaporn Iddhivaro, **Kamma in Theravāda Buddhism**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1955), pp.20-25.

¹⁵Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma-The Real Creator**, (Yangon, Myanmar, 2007), pp.103-105.

1. Black *kamma*, black result: This refers to bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions which are harmful. Simple examples are killing, stealing, sexual infidelity, lying and drinking intoxicants.

2. White *kamma*, white result: These are bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions which are not harmful, such as practicing in accordance with the ten bases for skillful action.

3. *Kamma* that is both black and white, giving results both black and white: Bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions which are partly harmful, partly not.

4. *Kamma* which is neither black nor white, with results neither black nor white, which leads to the cessation of *kamma*: This is the intention to transcend the three kinds of *kamma* mentioned above, or specifically, developing the Seven Enlightenment Factors or the Noble Eightfold Path. Of the three channels of *Kamma* bodily, verbal and mental is mental *kamma* which is considered the most important¹⁶.

Twelve Kinds of Kamma

Twelve kinds of *Kamma*, including will divided into section as follow: (1) Four kind of *Kamma* with Respect to function, (2) Four kinds of *Kamma* by Order of Ripening, (3) Four kinds of *Kamma* by Time of Repening. When *Kamma* repins, the volitions involved in carrying out action, can perform various function. The functions can be classified into four: (1) There is Reproductive *janaka Kamma*, which conditions the future birth. (2) Supportive *Upatthambaka Kamma* that assists or maintains the results of already-existing *Kamma*. (3) Counteractive *Upapilaka Kamma*, which suppresses or modifies the result of the reproductive *Kamma*. (4) Destructive *Upaghātaka Kamma* that destroys the force of existing *Kamma* and substitutes its own resultants.

(a) Four Kind of Kamma with Respect to Function

(1) There is Reproductive *janaka Kamma* is produces the unborn, makes it manifest, it is called *janaka*. *Janaka kamma* every birth is conditioned by past good and bad *Kammas* that predominated at the moment of death. The *Kamma* that conditions the future birth is called *Janaka Kamma*.

¹⁶Pa Auk Tawya Sayadaw, *The workings of Kamma*, (Myanmar, 2009), pp.201-205.

(2) *Upatthambhaka Kamma* that which comes near the *Janaka kamma* and supports it is called *Upatthambhaka Kamma*.

(3) *Upapilaka Kamma* Obstructive or counteractive *Kamma*, which unlike the former, tends to weaken, interrupt and retard the fruition of *Janaka kamma* is called *Upatthambhaka kamma*.¹⁷

(4) *Upaghātaka Kamma* is that which can nullify the potential energy of *Janaka Kamma*. It is more powerful opposing *Kamma* of the past, which, seeking an opportunity may quite unexpectedly operate. Second one which not only cuts off the effect of the *janaka kamma* but also destroys the *janaka kamma* and produce its own effect. In other words, the person dies abruptly and is reborn in accordance with the *upaghātaka-Kamma*.¹⁸

As an example of the operation of the above four *Kammas*, the case of Devadatta may be cited. His good *janaka-kamma* conditioned him to be born in a royal family. His continued comforts and prosperity were due to the action of the *janaka Kamma* as well as the supportive *Kamma*. The obstructive *Kamma* came into play when he was excommunicated from the Samgha and subject to much humiliation.¹⁹ Then his serious immoral *Kamma* causing a schism in the Samgha operated as the destructive *Kamma* which sent him down to the avici hell.

(b) Four Kinds of Kamma by Order of Ripening

Four kinds of *Kamma* by Order of Ripening, including will divided into section as follow; Weighty (*Garuka-kamma*), Death-proximate (*Āsaṇṇa kamma*), Habitual (*Āciṇṇa Kamma*), Reserve (*Kaṭṭatā Kamma*).

(1) Weight (*Garukakamma*) is that which means either weighty or serious, may be either good or bad, it produces its result in this life or in the next for certain: if good, it is purely mental as in the case of Jhāna. Otherwise, it is verbal or bodily. The five kinds of *Garuka-kamma* according to their gravity are: (a) *Mātughātaka Matricide*, (b) *Pitughātaka patricid* (c) *Arahantaghātaka* The murder of an Arahan (d) *Lohituppādaka* the wounding of a Buddha, (e) *Samghabhedaka*-the creation of schism in the Samgha.

¹⁷Nandamālābhivamsa, **Fundanmental Abhidhama Part II.** (Myanmar: 2013), pp.39-40.

¹⁸Ashin Silanandabhivamsa, **Volition An Introduction to the law of kamma**, Dhammananda Vihāra Monastery. (Theravāda Buddhist Society of America.1979),pp. 51-55.

¹⁹Pa Auk Tawya Sayādaw, **The workings of Kamma**, (Myanmar, 2009), pp. 168-173.

(2) Death-proximate (*Āsanna-kamma*), is that which one does or remembers immediately before the dying moment.

(3) Habitual (*Ācinna Kamma*), is that which one habitually performs and recollects and for which one has a great liking.

(4) Reserve (*Kaattā Kamma*) is the ‘cumulative *kamma* which embraces, all that can’t be included in the above three, this is as it were the reserve fund of particular being. Moreover, which is done once and soon forgotten. Now if we have any *garuka-kamma*, it will produce its result when we die and condition our next life.²⁰ If we do not have any *garuka-kamma*, which is often the case, then we must rely on *āsanna-kamma* to condition our next life. To get a good *āsanna-kamma*, sons and daughters or relatives and friends should arrange wholesome deeds such as offering robes to monks or listening to Dhamma-preaching for the person on his or her death-bed. The dying person should also be reminded of his past good deeds.

(c) Four Kinds of Kamma by Time of Repening

Four kinds of *Kamma* by Time of Repening, including will divided into section as follow; (1) Immediately Effective (*Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya kamma*), (2) Subsequently Effective (*Upapajjavedaniya-kamma*), (3) Indefinitely Effect (*Aparāpriya Vedaniya Kamma*) (4) Defunct (*Ahosi-Kamma*).

(1) Immediately Effective (*Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya kamma*) Moral and immoral action, which may produce its due effects in this very life is called *Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya-kamma*.

(2) Subsequently Effective (*Upapajjavedaniya-kamma*) Some actions, which may produce their effects in a subsequent life, are called *Upapajjavedaniya-kamma*.

(3) Indefinitely Effect (*Aparāpriya Vedaniya-Kamma*) actions, which may produce their effects in any life in the course of one’s wandering in *Samsāra*, are called *Aparāpriya vedaniya-kamma*.

(4) Defunct (*Ahosi-Kamma*) a seed to sprout, certain auxiliary causes such as soil, rain, etc., are required, in the same way for a *Kamma* to produce an effect, several auxiliary causes such as circumstances, surroundings, etc., are required, the *Kamma* which can’t produce its effect in this very life or any life for not auxiliary causes. It is called *Ahosi-Kamma*.²¹ Moreover, Defunct *Kamma* which no longer bears fruits. In studying *vāthis*, we notice that

²⁰Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma-The Real Creator**, (Yangon, Myanmar, 2007), pp.175-179.

²¹Pa Auk Tawya Sayadaw, **The workings of Kamma**, (Myanmar, 2009), pp.92-93.

mahā-kusala citta or *akusala citta* functions seven times as *javana* in normal situations. The *cetanā* (volition) associated with the first *javana* is named *diṭṭhadhammavedaniya-kamma* which will produce its result in this very life. If it does not operate in this life, it becomes defunct.²²

Practice of *Kamma* including will divided into three section as follow: (1) Ten Wholesome Courses of Action (*Dasa KusalaKamma pada*) (2) Meritorious Deeds (*Puñña Kiriya Vatthu*) (3) Threefold Training.

There are including the ten Wholesome action, Wholesome action rooted in Non-greed (*Alobha*), Non-anger (*Adosa*) and Non-delusion (*Amoha*). There are ten Wholesome Actions caused by deed, word, and mind, which produce Wholesome *Kamma*. Of them three are committed by bodily-namely,

1. Abstaining from killing living beings (*(pānātipātā-virati)*),
2. Abstaining from stealing(*Adinnādānā-virati*)
3. Abstaining from sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācārā-virati*)

Four are caused by word- namely,

4. Abstaining from false speech (*musāvādā-virati*)
5. Abstaining from malicious speech (*pisunavācā-virati*)
6. Abstaining from harsh speech (*pharusavācā-virati*)
7. Abstaining from gossip (*samphappalāpa-virati*)

Three are committed by mind-namely,

8. Abstaining from coveting (*anbhijjhā*)
9. Abstaining from ill-will (*avyāpāda-virati*)
10. Possessing Right Understanding of the Dhamma (*sammādiṭṭhi*).

Therefore, wholesome means good action, good speech and good thought. Unwholesome means evil action, evil speech and evil thought. To cultivate good action, good speech and good thought means to cultivate good *kamma*. In the same way, to cultivate bad action, bad speech and bad thought means to cultivate bad *Kamma*.²³

²²Ashin Silanandabhivamsa, **Volition An Introduction to the law of kamma**, (Dhammananda Vihāra Monastery, Theravāda Buddhist Society of America.1979), p.35.

²³Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma-The Real Creator**, (Yangon, Myanmar. 2007), pp. 55-57.

Meritorious Deeds (*Puñña Kiriyā Vatthu*)

Ten based of Meritorious Deeds (*Dasa Puñña-kiriyā Vatthu*) are ten meritorious acts which Buddhist practice in everyday life to reach the eternal happiness *Nirvāna* either lay-man or a monk. But Buddhist monks have more rules (*Vinaya*) to follow so that it will speed up the process.

(1) Giving (*Dāna*): It means giving something in Charity-Generosity the moral act of giving one's possessions. Ultimately, it is the volition involved in giving something to other.²⁴

(2) Morality (*sīla*) Virtue or precepts Keeping away from evil done through the doors of the body and speech. The precepts can be five, eight, nine, ten, 227 or 331, according to one's ability, commitment as well as spiritual status.

(3) Meditation (*Bhāvanā*) Mental Culture is meditating or contemplating on either the forty exercises for the attainment of mental tranquillity. Vipassanā or Insight meditation is an insight into the true nature of things or seeing develop and cultivate the mind.²⁵

(4) Reverence (*Apacāyana*) paying respect and reverence to the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, to parents and other elders, to teachers and any others leading virtuous lives. Paying respect is shown by worshipping, offering flowers, or by getting up from the seat.

(5) Service (*Veyāvacca*) giving assistance to those worthy of respect and mentioned above, as well as to the sick, old and weak people. Serving the visitors, Keeping one's home, school and temple clean and tidy too comes under service.²⁶

(6) Transference of merit (*Pattidāna*) requesting another to share the merit or moral deeds done by a person. Conferring merit to the dead, to the Devas and all beings and wishing them to be well and happy.

(7) Rejoicing in other's merits-sharing (*Pattānumodanā*) the merits offered by others and rejoicing in the same. Rejoicing in good deeds even without the knowledge of the doer comes under this. A man who rejoiced when was offered to the Buddha acquired equal merit.

²⁴Pa Auk Tawya Sayādaw, **The workings of Kamma**, (Myanmar, 2009), pp.101-105.

²⁵Bhikkhu Bodhi; **A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma the Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha of Acariya Anuruddha**, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy Sri Lanka, 2007), pp. 203-205.

²⁶Pa Auk Tawya Sayādaw, **The workings of Kamma**, (Myanmar, 2009), pp.109-111.

(8) Listening to the Dhamma (*Dhamma Sāvana*) hearing the Dhamma with a pure mind for the purpose of practicing morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*paññā*).

(9) Teaching the Dhamma (*Dhamma Desanā*) Teaching the Dhamma out of compassion to the listeners with a pure mind, and without the impure intention of obtaining offerings, honour, praise and fame.

(10) Straightening one's view (*Diṭṭhijju Kamma*): It is a type of wholesome *Kamma* accrued through straightening one's view and by giving up pernicious views. It includes adopting right view regarding the nature of *Kamma*, life, existence, etc.

On coming across the Teaching of the Buddha, it is most important for everyone to cultivate the Morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). One should undoubtedly possess these three virtues.²⁷ The method is based on three practical steps, namely Morality, Concentration, and Insight or wisdom, known collectively as the Threefold Training.

The first step is morality (*Sīla*). Morality is simply suitable behavior, behavior that conforms with the generally accepted standards and causes no distress to other people or to oneself. It is coded in the form of five moral precepts, or eight, or ten, 227, or 337 in other ways. It is conducted by way of body and speech aimed at peace, convenience and freedom from undesirable effects at the most basic level.²⁸ It has to do with the members of a social group and the various pieces of property essential to living.

The second aspect of the threefold training is concentration (*Samādhi*). This consists in constraining the mind to remain in the condition most conducive to success in whatever he wishes to achieve. Just what is concentration? No doubt most of you have always understood concentration as implying a completely tranquil mind, as steady and unmoving as a log of wood. But merely these two characteristics of being tranquil and steady are not the real meaning of Concentration.²⁹ The basis for this statement is an utterance of the Buddha. He described the concentrated mind as fit for work in a suitable condition for doing its job. Fit for work is the very best way to describe the properly concentrated mind.

²⁷Piyadassi Thera, **The Threefold Division of the Noble Eightfold Path**, (Sri Lanka, 2010), pp.7-9.

²⁸Mehm Tin Mon, **Kamma-The Real Creator**, (Yangon, 2007), P.137-238.

²⁹Dagfinn Aarhus Braseth, **Morality, Meditation, and Wisdom: An Exploration of the Buddhist Foundation of Mindfulness**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1955), pp.37-39.

The third aspect is the training in insight (*paññā*), the practice and drill that give rise to the full measure of right knowledge and understanding of the true nature of all things. Normally we are incapable of knowing anything at all in its true nature. Mostly we either stick to our own ideas or go along with popular opinion, so that what we see is not the truth at all.³⁰ It is for this reason that Buddhist practice includes this training in insight, the last aspect of the threefold training, designed to give rise to full understanding of and insight into the true nature of things.

Conclusion

Kamma is a fundamental doctrine in Buddhism, *Kamma* is a central doctrine of Buddhism, a novel discovery made by the Buddha on the day of His enlightenment. The Buddha explained and formulated this doctrine in the complete form in which we have it today. According to Buddhism, this inequality is due not only to heredity, environment, “nature and nurture”, but also to *Kamma*. In other words, it is the result of our own past actions and our own present doings. The law of *Kamma* places the responsibility of his or her life on the individual. He must bear the consequences of his bad actions, and enjoy the consequences of his good actions.

He may alter his future life for good or bad by good or bad actions, respectively. Knowing that the Law is our great helper if we live by it, and that no harm can come to us if we work with it, knowing also that it blesses us just at the right time, we learn the grand lesson of patience, not to get excited, and that impatience is a check to progress. In suffering, we know that we are paying a debt, and we learn, if we are wise, not to create more suffering for the future. In rejoicing, we are thankful for its sweetness, and learn, if we are wise, to be still better. Patience brings forth peace, success, happiness and security.

The Law being just, perfect, it is not possible for an understanding person to be uneasy about it. If we are uneasy and have no confidence, it shows clearly that we have not grasped the reality of the law. We are really quite safe beneath its wings, and there is nothing to fear in all the wide universe except our own misdeeds. The Law makes man stand on his own feet and rouses his self-confidence. Confidence strengthens, or rather deepens our peace and happiness and makes us comfortable, courageous; wherever we go the Law is our protector.

³⁰Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path The Way to the End of Suffering*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1999), pp .98-103.

As we in the past have caused ourselves to be what we now are, so by what we do now will our future be determined. A knowledge of this fact and that the glory of the future is limitless, gives us great self-reliance, and takes away that tendency to appeal for external help, which is really no help at all. ‘Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another’ says the Buddha. Naturally, if we realize that the evil we do will return to strike us, we shall be very careful. Just we do or say or think something that is not good, pure and true. Knowledge of *Kamma* will restrain us from wrong-doing for others’ sakes as well as for our own. The more we make the doctrine of *Kamma* a part of our lives, the more power we gain, not only to direct our future, but to help our fellow beings more effectively. The practice of good *Kamma*, when fully developed, will enable us to overcome evil and limitations, and destroy all the fetters that keep us from our goal, *Nibbana*.

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