

## The Shorter Exposition of Kamma

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park.

Then Subha the student (brahmin), Todeyya's son, went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him, and when the courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. When he had done so, Subha the student said to the Blessed One:

2. "Master Gotama, what is the reason, what is the condition, why inferiority and superiority are met with among human beings, among mankind? For one meets with short-lived and long-lived people, sick and healthy people, ugly and beautiful people, insignificant and influential people, poor and rich people, low-born and high-born people, stupid and wise people. What is the reason, what is the condition, why superiority and inferiority are met with among human beings, among mankind?"

3. "Student, beings are owners of kammass, heirs of kammass, they have kammass as their progenitor, kammass as their kin, kammass as their homing-place. It is kammass that differentiate beings according to inferiority and superiority."

4. "I do not understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's utterance spoken in brief without expounding the detailed meaning. It would be good if Master Gotama taught me the Dhamma so that I might understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's utterance spoken in brief without expounding the detailed meaning."

### Kammass and Life-span

5. "Here, student, some woman or man is a **killer** of living beings, murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. **Due to having performed and completed such kammass**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell. If, on the dissolution of the body, after death, instead of his reappearing in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, he comes to the human state, **he is short-lived** wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to short life, that is to say, to be a killer of living beings, murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.

6. "But here some woman or man, having **abandoned** the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings, lays aside the rod and lays aside the knife, is considerate and merciful and dwells compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. **Due to having performed and completed such kammass**, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, in the heavenly world. If, on the dissolution of the body, after death, instead of his reappearing in a happy destination, in the heavenly world, he comes to the human state, **he is long-lived** wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to long life, that is to say, to have

abandoned the killing of living beings, to abstain from killing living beings, to lay aside the rod and lay aside the knife, to be considerate and merciful, and to dwell compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

### **Kammas and Health**

7. "Here, student, some woman or man is one who **harms** beings with his hands or with clods or with sticks or with knives. ... This is the way that **leads to sickness**, that is to say, to be one who harms beings with one's hands or with clods or with sticks or with knives.

8. "But here some woman or man is not one who harms beings with his hands, or with clods, or with sticks, or with knives. ... This is the way that **leads to health**, that is to say, not to be one who harms beings with his hands or with clods or with sticks or with knives.

### **Kammas and Beauty**

9. "Here, student, some woman or man is **angry**, much given to rage; even when little is said, he is furious, angry, ill-disposed, resentful, he shows ill-temper, hate and surliness. ... **he is ugly** wherever he is reborn...

10. "But here some woman or man **is not** angry or much given to rage; even when much is said, he is not furious, angry, ill-disposed, resentful, nor does he show ill-temper, hate or surliness.... **leads to beauty**,...

### **Kammas and Power**

11. "Here, student, some woman or man is **envious**; he envies, begrudges and harbors envy about others' gains, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings. ... This is the way that **leads to insignificance**, that is to say, to be envious, to envy, begrudge, and harbor envy about others' gain, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings.

12. "But here some woman or man is not envious, he does not envy, begrudge or harbor envy about others' gain, honor, veneration, respect, salutations and offerings.... **he is influential** wherever he is reborn. ...

### **Kammas and Wealth**

13. "Here, student, some woman or man is **not a giver** of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, perfumes, unguents, bed, roof and lighting to monks or brahmins. ... he is poor wherever he is reborn....

14. "But here some woman or man **is a giver** of food, drink, cloth, sandals, perfumes, unguents, bed, roof and lighting to monks and brahmins. ... **he is rich wherever he is reborn**....

## **Kammas and Wisdom**

17. "Here, student, some woman or man *when visiting a monk or brahmin*, **does not ask**: 'What is wholesome, venerable sir? What is unwholesome? What is blamable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, by my doing it, will be long for my harm and suffering? Or what, by my doing it, will be long for my welfare and happiness?' Due to having performed and completed such kammas, ... he will be stupid wherever he is reborn. This is the way that leads to stupidity...

18. "But here some woman or man *when visiting a monk or brahmin*, **asks**: 'What is wholesome, venerable sir?...Or what, by my doing it, will be long for my welfare and happiness?' Due to having performed and completed such kammas, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination...If instead he comes to the human state, **he is wise wherever he is reborn**. This is the way that leads to wisdom, ...

## **When There Is This That Will Be**

19. "So, student, ***the way that leads*** to short life ***makes*** people short-lived, ***the way that leads*** to long life ***makes*** people long-lived; ... ***the way that leads*** to stupidity ***makes*** people stupid, ***the way that leads*** to wisdom ***makes*** people wise.

## **It is Kammas that Differentiate Beings**

20. ***"Beings are owners of kammas, student, heirs of kammas, they have kammas as their progenitor, kammas as their kin, kammas as their homing-place. It is kammas that differentiate beings according to inferiority and superiority."***

21. When this was said, Subha the student, Todeyya's son, said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! The Dhamma has been made clear in many ways by Master Gotama, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing the hidden, showing the way to one who is lost, holding up a lamp in the darkness for those with eyes to see forms.

22. "I go to Master Gotama for refuge, and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let Master Gotama accept me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

Majjhima Nikaya 135, Cula-Kammavibhanga Sutta  
Translated from the Pali by Ñānamoli Thera