

AN APPROACH TO VARIOUS TYPES OF KAMMA IN THERAVA ABHIDHAMMA

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Etymologically, *kamma* means “work” or “action.” But in the context of the Buddha’s teaching it is defined more specifically as “action based on intention” or “deeds willfully done.” Actions that are without intention are not considered to be *kamma* in the Buddha’s teaching.

One instance of intention is one instance of *kamma*. When there is *kamma* there is immediate result.

“All *kamma*, whether good or evil, bears fruit. There is no *kamma*, no matter how small, which is void of fruit.”¹

Kamma is classified into four types according to the time at which results are produced, *kalavasena*.¹

1. Immediately effective *kamma*, *ditthadhammavedaniya*,
2. Subsequently effective *kamma*, *upapajjavedaniya*,
3. Indefinitely effective *kamma*, *aparāpariyavedaniya* and
4. Defunct *kamma*, *ahosi*.

Now I will explain the meaning of these *Kamma* in detail.

There are *Kamma* that readys in the same lifetime (*ditthadhammavedaniya*), *Kamma* that readys in the next life (*upapajjavedaniya*), and *Kamma* that readys in realization sive births (*aparāpariyavedaniya*). There are three types of *Kamma* to outcome

¹Abhi S, 33

results, as a particle is to grow. But for a partical to grow, real auxiliary explanation such as soil, rain, etc., are necessityed. In the same way for a *kramma* to produce an effect, different or several auxiliary causes such as detail or circumstances, surroundings, etc., are required. Sometimes it happens that the auxiliary causes do not produce any result. Such *Kramma* is called action , ‘*Kramma* that is ineffective’.

In *Dhammapada* commentary, it illustrates the result of a good *Kamma* that reaped in this life. A husband and his wife possessed only one upper garment to wear when they went out-of-doors. One day the husband heard the *Dhamma* from the Buddha and was so pleased with the Doctrine that he wished to offer his only upper garment, but his innate greed would not permit him to do so. He combated with his mind and, ultimately overcoming his greed, offered the garment to the Buddha and exclaimed- “ I have won, I have won.” The king was delighted to hear his story and in appreciation of his generosity presented him thirty- two robes. The devout husband kept one for himself and another for his wife and offered the rest to the Buddha.²

The evil effect of bad *Kamma* that ripens in this very life also could be seen in *DhammapadaAthakatha*. A hunter who went hunting to the forest, followed by his dogs, met by the wayside a bhikkhu who was proceeding on his alms round. As the hunter could not procure any game he thought it was due to the unfortunate meeting of the *Bhikkhu*. While returning home he met the same *Bhikkhu* and was deeply enraged at this second encounter. In spite of the entreaties of the innocent Bhikkhu the hunter set the dogs on him. Finding no escape there from, the *Bhikkhu* climbed a tree. The wicked hunter ran up to the tree, and pierced the soles of Bhikkhu’s feet with the point of an arrow. The pain was so excruciation that the robe, the *Bhikkhu* was wearing fell upon the hunter completely covering him. The dogs, thinking that the *Bhikkhu* had fallen from the tree, devoured their own master.³

Kamma ripens in the next life is called *Upapajjedaniya* and it illustrates in *Dhammapadaatthakathā*. A millionaire’s servant returned home in the evening after working in the paddy field. He comes to know that all were observing the Eight Precepts, as it was the full moon day. Learning that he also could observe them even for half a day, he took the

²Dha A I, 447

³Dha A. II, 22

precepts and fasted at night. Unluckily he died on the following morning and as a result of his good action he was born as a Deva.⁴

Ajātasatthu, son of King *Bimbisāra*, after his death, was born in a state of misery as the result of killing his father.

No one is exempt from experiencing the result of indefinitely effective *Kamma*, *aparāpariyavedaniya*. Even the *Buddhas* and *Arahants* may reap the effects of their past *Kamma*.

In the remote past, the *ArahantMoggallāna* instigated by his wicked wife, attempted to kill his parents. As a result of this he suffered long in a woeful state, and in his last birth was beaten to death by bandits.⁵

The Buddha's foot was slightly injured when *Devadatta* made a futile attempt to kill Him. This was due to His killing a stepbrother of his in previous birth with the object of appropriating his property.

The following English terms have been translated for the behavior *kamma* as action, volitional action, intentional action, deed or doing. Specifically *Buddhahism* is called destiny. Some definitions of Buddhist terms are necessary to grasp and *kamma* is as the product of the mind. The active principle of action is manifested itself in three ways and it is going through three doors of action; these are body, verbal of speech and mind.

And everyone's action has aim and objective as deeds of unwholesome and wholesome on many other conditions, therefore, everyone's life will receive results which correspond to its unwholesome and wholesome. In being-life, some results are immediately effective or remotely effective; however we see on the object these results of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, which might arise later in the passive, said of their life. It is important to remember that seeing and hearing arise alternately at different impressions, even when they seem to occur at the same time. The seeing involves sensitive eye-organ and consciousness; similarly, the hearing involves sensitive ear-organ and consciousness.

Moreover, everybody receives ear-sense before they are born; this is also known as a result. There are many situations, the results of actions and other types of consciousness arise alternately. When seeing and hearing, the results of action are impossible to find out whether the object is pleasant or unpleasant. Because the moment of resultant –mind are very short, it

⁴ Ibid. II, 278

⁵ Ibid 348

falls away immediately, But when we feel pleasure or pain on this occasion we can be find-out that there are results of action.

There in, the unwholesome action is associated with three psychological roots of greed, hatred and delusion; and the opposite type of wholesome is associated with three psychological roots of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion. The unwholesome and wholesome action inhibits the result of other action and makes the opportunity for its own result. The behavioral action discuss the notion of immediate effect ;when one such action is done, another action is not able, by ejecting it to find opportunity for its own result as killing one's mother, patricide or killing one's father, the murder of an *Arahant*.

Conclusion

The more we understand about the *Kamma*, the more we see how careful we must be of our acts, words and thoughts, and how responsible we are to our fellow beings. Living in the light of this knowledge, we learn certain lessons from the doctrine of *Kamma* such as patience, confidence, self-reliance, restraint and power.

May all beings be happy, healthy, and peaceful!

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