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## Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta

The Discourse on the Lesser Analysis of Karma | M 135  
also (Kamma) Subha Sutta The Subha Sutta on karma

Theme: An analysis of karma and its fruition

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

### 1 The 2 key suttas on karma

**1.1** In the **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 136), which follows the above Sutta, the Buddha says that he is making a “great(er) analysis of karma” (*mahā.kamma,vibhaṅga*).<sup>1</sup> Hence, by analogy, this Sutta title should be rendered as “the discourse on the lesser analysis of karma,” with *cūḷa* qualifying not *sutta*, but *kamma,vibhaṅga*.<sup>2</sup> The Majjhima Commentary calls this Sutta **the Subha Sutta** (MA 5:15 colophon)<sup>3</sup> after the protagonist, adding that it is also called **the Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta** (MA 5:15).

**1.2** According to the Sutta’s Commentary, **Subha** is so called because he is good-looking (*dassiniya*) and charming (*pāsādika*). He is called “young brahmin” or *māṇava* as a youth and the convention stuck with him even in his old age.<sup>4</sup> **Todeyya,putta** means “the son of Todeyya (the one from Tudi,gāma)” was a purohita or royal chaplain of the rajah Pasenadi. (MA 5:8)

**1.3** Subha’s father was fabulously wealthy (*mahā,sālā*) and is mentioned in the list of eminent brahmins who gathered at Iccha,naṅkala and Manasākaṭṭha (D 1:235; Sn p115). According to Buddhaghosa, his home town was Tudi,gāma near Sāvatti, hence his name.<sup>5</sup>

Although very wealthy, Todeyya is very miserly. After his death, he is reborn as a dog in his own home and of which Subha is very fond. One day, when the Buddha is going on his almsround in Tudi,gāma, he arrives at Subha’s house. The dog, seeing the Buddha barks at him, and the Buddha addresses it as “Todeyya.” The dog then runs into the house and lies on a bed, from which no one could drive it away. When Subha asks about the cause of the uproar, the Buddha tells him the reason: that the dog is previously Todeyya!

Subha is greatly offended, claiming that his father has been reborn in the Brahma world. The Buddha then proves the dog’s identity by getting it to show where some of his father’s treasure are buried. The dog is later reborn in hell. To refute the Buddha, Subha visits the monastery, and this is the occasion for the teaching of the Subha Sutta (M 135), better known as **the Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta**.<sup>6</sup>

### 2 The fruits of karma

The Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta is special in that it gives some specific examples of the fruits of karma, good and bad, based on the simple folk notion of good begets good, bad begets bad.<sup>7</sup> Clearly this dis-

<sup>1</sup> M 136,7/3:209 (SD 4.16).

<sup>2</sup> See M:H 3:248 n1 & 254 n2. On *vibhaṅga* in the sense of “detailed analysis and explanation” as opposed to *uddesa*, a “brief statement,” see Jayatilleke 1963:293 f.

<sup>3</sup> Both D 10 and M 99 are also called **Subha S**. See M:H 3:248 n1.

<sup>4</sup> *Māṇavōti pana taṃ taruṇa,kāle vohariṃsu, so mahallaka,kāle’pi ten’eva vohārena vohariyati.*

<sup>5</sup> DA 2:399; MA 5:8 f; AA 3:164. *Todeyya* is a secondary derivation (*taddhita*) from *tudi + eyya*, with the strengthening of the vowel *u* in Tudi: see Warder, *Introduction to Pali Grammar*, 1974:252-254.

<sup>6</sup> DA 2:384; MA 5:8 f. See further (**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99/2:196-209), SD 38.6 (1.2).

<sup>7</sup> See **Isayo Samuddaka S** (S 11.10/1:227 f), SD 39.2.

course is addressed to the lay community, especially those not yet familiar with deeper doctrine of karma in the light of non-self. Significantly, here the protagonist is the brahmin youth, Subha Todeyya,putta.

Besides the Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta, other discourses and texts that mention specific benefits of karma include:

<b>Suppavāsā Sutta</b>	A 4.57/2:62 f	the benefits of giving
<b>Mallikā Sutta</b>	A 4.197/2:202-205	personality often has to do with past karma
<b>Vimāna Vatthu</b>	Vv, Khuddaka Nikāya	heavenly benefits of good karma
<b>Peta Vatthu</b>	Pv, Khuddaka Nikāya	unwholesome benefits of bad karma

### 3 The nature of karma

**3.1** The Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta should not be misconstrued as a rational ethical argument for karma and rebirth, especially from the statement that

beings are owners of karma, heirs to karma, born in karma, bound by karma, have karma as their refuge. It is karma that divides beings into low and excellent. [§4]<sup>8</sup>

This well known statement is also found in the **Saṃsappati Pariyāya Sutta** (A 10.205) which should be studied in this connection.<sup>9</sup>

**3.2** While the Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta speaks of our “ownership” of karma, nowhere does it say that everything is due to karma. **The Sīvaka Sutta** (S 36.21/4:230 f), for example, teaches that not everything that we feel or experience are due to karma alone, but could be the working of any possible eight conditions. **The (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta** (A 3.33/1:134-136) compares one’s karma to seeds that depend on favourable conditions to germinate, or could be destroyed by burning (through spiritual development).

**3.3** The workings of karma as stated here [§§5-20] in the context of a spiritual instruction to the brahmin youth Subha Todeyya,putta who was familiar with the law of karma, which was after all a pre-Buddhist notion, refined in Buddhism. It should not be simplistically taken as an immediate “cause and effect” situation, but one where various other aggravating or attenuating circumstances are involved. In **the Loṇa-phala Sutta** (A 3.99),<sup>10</sup> for example, it is stated that the cultivation of lovingkindness can limit the effects of one’s unwholesome karma.

**3.4** The teachings on karma here is one “whose meaning needs to be drawn out” (*neyy’attha*),<sup>11</sup> unlike, for example, **the Assu Sutta** (S 2:179 f) whose meaning is directly apparent (*nīṭ’attha*).<sup>12</sup> In our Sutta here, take the example of the statement that one who is callous and arrogant, who does not show respect to those worthy of respect would reborn in hell, and if reborn as a human would in a low family [§15]. It is important here to understand here that “karma is intention” (*cetanā’harṃ kammaṃ vadāmi*).<sup>13</sup> In other words, there is only bad karma here if the person *intentionally* (through greed, hatred or delusion) shows his callousness or arrogance, etc. In fact, this Sutta should be studied in perspective with such suttas as:

<sup>8</sup> See K N Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:404 f.

<sup>9</sup> **Saṃsappati Pariyāya S** (A 10.205/5:288, 291), SD 39.7. See also M 1:390; A 372-74, 186, 5:88; Kvu 522.

<sup>10</sup> See **Loṇa-phala S** (A 3.99/1:249-253), SD 3.5.

<sup>11</sup> D 3:127 f; A 1:60; Nett 21.

<sup>12</sup> See Piya Tan, “Teaching Methods of the Buddha,” National Univ of Singapore Buddhist Society, 2002: 27.

<sup>13</sup> A 6.63/3:415 (SD 6.11); Kvu 8.9.36/392. See SD 57.10 (1.3.2.1).

Sāleyyaka Sutta	M 41	SD 5.7	causes of disparity in birth; choosing happy rebirth
Saṅkhār'upapatti Sutta	M 130	SD 2.23	choosing our rebirth
Sarakāṇī Sutta	S 55.24	SD 3.6	an erstwhile drunk dies a streamwinner

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## Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga Sutta

### The Discourse on The Lesser Analysis of Karma

M 135

**[202]**

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying at Anātha,piṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove near Sāvattihī.

2 Then the brahmin youth Subha Todeyya,putta [Todeyya's son] went up to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side.

Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin youth Subha Todeyya,putta said this to the Blessed One:

#### DISPARITY AMONGST HUMANS

3 "What is the reason why, master Gotama, what is the cause **that there is inferiority and excellence amongst humans?**<sup>14</sup> For, master Gotama, humans are

seen to be short-lived,	seen to be long-lived;	<i>app'āyukā...</i>	<i>dīgh'āyukā</i>
seen to be often sick,	seen to be rarely sick,	<i>bavh-ābādha<sup>15</sup>...</i>	<i>appābādha</i>
seen to be ugly,	seen to be beautiful,	<i>dubbaṇṇā...</i>	<i>vaṇṇavanto</i>
seen to be uninfluential,	seen to be greatly influential,	<i>appēsakkhā...</i>	<i>mahēsakkhā</i>
seen to be poor,	seen to be rich,	<i>appa,bhogā...</i>	<i>mahā,bhogā</i>
seen to be low-born,	seen to be high-born,	<i>nīca,kulīnā...</i>	<i>uccākulīnā</i>
seen to be unwise,	seen to be <b>[203]</b> wise?	<i>duppaññā...</i>	<i>paññavanto</i>

What is the reason, master Gotama, what is the cause that there is inferiority and excellence amongst humans?"

4 "Young brahmin,

**beings are owners of karma,***kammassakā***heirs to karma,***kamma,dāyādā***born in karma,***kamma,yonī***bound by karma [karma as relative],***kamma,bandhu***have karma as their refuge.<sup>16</sup>***kamma,paṭisaraṇā*

<sup>14</sup> *Ko nu kho bho gotama hetu ko paccayo yena manussānaṃ yeva sataṃ manussa,bhūtānaṃ dissanti hīna-p,paṇītatā.* The cpd *hīna-p,paṇītatā* is a dvandva, resolve as *hīna* ("inferior, low; poor, miserable; vile, base, abject, contemptible, despicable"), V 1:10; D 1:82, 98; S 2:154) and *paṇīta* ("excellent, exquisite," Pv 4.1.27). Often opposed to *ukkaṭṭha* ("exalted, noble, high"), V 4:6 f; J 1:20, 22, 3:218; VbhA 410; or in graduated sequence, *hīna majjhima paṇīta* ("low, medium, excellent"), Vism 11, 64, 85 6, 424, 473.

<sup>15</sup> *Bavh'ābādha = bahu* ("much") + *ābādha* ("illness"): M 2:94; A 1:107, 2:75, 85; Miln 65. In cpds with initial vowels, *bahu* as a rule appears as *bavh-* (with metathesis, *-hu* becoming *-vh*): see Geiger, *A Pāli Grammar*, 1994 §49.1.

It is karma that differentiates beings, that is to say, by way of inferiority and excellence.”<sup>17</sup>

4.2 “I do not understand in detail the meaning of master Gotama’s word made in brief without explaining in detail. It would be good if master Gotama would teach me the Dharma so that I might understand in detail the meaning of master Gotama’s word.”

“Then, listen, young brahmin, pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, master!” the brahmin youth Subha Todeyya,putta replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

## 1 Short life

**5** “Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **kills living beings**, cruel, bloody-handed, given to violence and killing, merciless to living beings.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken,

with the body’s breaking up, after death,

one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

5.2 And if, with the body’s breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **short-lived**.<sup>18</sup>

5.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to a short life, namely, *one kills living beings, is cruel, bloody-handed, given to violence and killing, merciless to living beings*.

**6** But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **has given up killing living beings**, refrains from harming living beings, laid down rod and sword, conscientious, merciful, one dwells beneficial and compassionate to all living beings.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken,

with the body’s breaking up, after death,

one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

6.2 And if, with the body’s breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **long-lived**.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Kamma-s, sakā māṇava sattā kamma, dāyādā kamma, yonī kamma, bandhū kamma, paṭisaraṇā. Kukkura, vatika S* (M 57.7/1:390), SD 23.11; *Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga S* (M 135,4/3:203, 20/3:206), SD 4.15; *Abhiṅga Pacca, vek-khitabba Ṭhāna S* (A 5.57/3:72-74), SD 5.12; *Suta, dhara S* (A 5.96/3:186), SD 82.7; *Pabbajita Abhiṅga S* (A 10.48/-5:88); *Saṃsappanīya Pariyāya S* (A 10.205/5:288, 290, 291), SD 39.7; *Kvu* 522; *Miln* 65. See also K N Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:404 f. See (3) for related statements on karma. See foll n.

<sup>17</sup> On this *kamma, dāyādā pericope*, see **A 5.57,2(5)/3:72** (SD 5.12) & **A 10.48,2(7)/5:88** (SD 48.9). Also A 5:86,8 ≈ 3:72,2 f (AA 3:260,2; MAṬ 3:25,11), = qu Miln 65,27 = DhsA 66,9 (DhsAṬ 67,2). This pericope is given in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person sg in **Āghāta Paṭivīnaya S 1** (A 5.161/3:185 f), SD 12.23, ≈ A 5:289,26 f; cf Vism 301,10 f. For other refs, see CPD: kamma-dāyāda.

<sup>18</sup> “If the kamma of killing directly determines the mode of rebirth, it will produce rebirth in one of the states of deprivation. But if a wholesome karma brings about a human rebirth—and rebirth as a human being is always the result of wholesome kamma—the kamma of killing will operate in a manner contrary to that of the rebirth-generative kamma by causing various adversities that may eventuate in a premature death. The same principle holds for the subsequent causes in which unwholesome kamma comes to maturity in a human existence: in each case the unwholesome kamma counteracts the wholesome kamma responsible for the human rebirth by engendering a specific type of misfortune corresponding to its own distinctive quality.” (M:ÑB 1345 n1224)

6.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to a long life, namely, *one has given up killing living beings, refrains [204] from harming living beings, laid down rod and sword, conscientious, merciful, dwells beneficial and compassionate to all living beings.*

## 2 Sickliness

7 Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **habitually injures living beings** with a clod of earth, with a stick, or with a sword.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken,  
with the body's breaking up, after death,  
one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

7.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **sickly** [constantly ill].

7.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to sickliness, namely, *one habitually injures beings with a clod of earth, with a stick, or with a sword.*

8 But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man is **not of the nature of injuring beings**, refrains from harming living beings, laid down rod and sword,  
conscientious, merciful, one dwells beneficial and compassionate to all living beings.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken,  
with the body's breaking up, after death,  
one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

8.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **healthy**.

8.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to health, namely, *one has given up harming living beings, refrains from harming living beings, laid down rod and sword, conscientious, merciful, dwells beneficial and compassionate to all living beings.*

## 3 Ugliness<sup>20</sup>

9 Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man is **angry, often irritable**;  
even over a trivial remark, becomes cross, shaken, vexed, stubborn,  
and shows temper, anger and sulkiness [bitterness].

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken,  
with the body's breaking up, after death,  
one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

9.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **ugly**.

<sup>19</sup> "In this case the wholesome kamma of refraining from killing may be directly responsible for either the heavenly rebirth or the longevity in a human existence. The same principle applies to all the passages on the maturation of wholesome kamma." (M:ÑB 1345 n1224).

<sup>20</sup> For parallels, see **Vajirūpama S** (A 3.24/1:124,4); **Jiguchitabba S** (A 3.27/1:126,30) = **Pug 3.5/30,5, 14/36,25**; **(Kamma) Mallikā S** (A 4.197,2/2:202), SD 39.10; **Nm 2:231 f**; ItA 2:164. Cf **Dukkathā S** (A 5.157/3:181 f).

9.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to ugliness, namely, *one is angry, often irritable; even over a trivial remark, becomes cross, shaken, vexed, stubborn, and shows temper, anger and sulkiness [bitterness]*.

**10** But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man is ***neither angry nor often irritable***; even over a wordy remark [strong word],<sup>21</sup> he is not cross, not shaken, not vexed, not stubborn, and does not show any temper, anger or sulkiness [bitterness].

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, with the body's breaking up, after death, one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

10.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **pleasant**.<sup>22</sup>

10.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to pleasantness, namely, *one is neither angry nor often irritable; even over a wordy remark [strong word], he is not cross, not shaken, not vexed, not stubborn, and does not show any temper, anger or sulkiness [bitterness]*.

#### 4 Jealousy

**11.1** Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **has a jealous heart**; jealous of others' receiving gains, honour, respect, esteem, homage and worship; one is vengeful and holds grudges.<sup>23</sup>

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, with the body's breaking up, after death, one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

11.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **uninfluential**.

11.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to lack of influence, namely, *one has a jealous heart; jealous of others' receiving gains, honour, respect, esteem, homage and worship; one is vengeful and holds grudges. [205]*

**12** But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **has no jealous heart**; not jealous of others' receiving gains, honour, respect, esteem, homage and worship; neither vengeful nor holds grudges.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, with the body's breaking up, after death, one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

12.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **of great influence**.

12.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to great influence, namely, *one has no jealous heart; not jealous of others' receiving gains, honour, respect, esteem, homage and worship; neither vengeful nor holds grudges.*

<sup>21</sup> "Wordy remark," *bahum pi vutto*, lit "many a word." M:ÑB missed this word.

<sup>22</sup> "Pleasantness," *pāsādika*, "one who is pleasant, lovely," for earlier *vaṇṇavanta*, "one who is beautiful" [3].

<sup>23</sup> As at (**Kamma**) **Mallikā S** (A 4.197) but with somewhat different results (A 4.197.2.3/2:202), SD 39.10.

## 5 Stinginess

**13** Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man [being stingy] is **not a giver** of food, drinks, cloth, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling, and lightings, to recluses and brahmins.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, with the body's breaking up, after death, one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

13.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn one is **poor**.

13.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to poverty, namely, *one is not a giver of food, drinks, cloth, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling, and lightings to recluses and brahmins*.

**14** But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man is **a giver** of food, drinks, cloth, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling, or lightings, to recluses and brahmins.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, with the body's breaking up, after death, one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

14.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **wealthy**.

14.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to wealth, namely, *one is a giver of food, drinks, cloth, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwelling, or lightings, to recluses and brahmins*.

## 6 Callousness and arrogance

**15** Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man is **callous and arrogant**, to one worthy of homage, one pays no homage;

before one worthy of rising up to,	one does not rise up;
to one worthy of a seat,	one offers no seat;
for one worthy of being given way to,	one does not give way;
to one worthy of honour,	one honours not;
for one worthy of esteem,	one shows no esteem;
to one worthy of respect,	one respects not;
to one worthy of veneration,	one venerates not.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, with the body's breaking up, after death, one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

15.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **of a low family**.

15.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to birth in a low family,

namely, one is callous and arrogant,	
to one worthy of homage,	<i>one pays no homage;</i>
before one worthy of rising up to,	<i>one does not rise up;</i>
to one worthy of a seat,	<i>one offers no seat;</i>
for one worthy of being given way to,	<i>one does not give way;</i>
to one worthy of honour,	<i>one honours not;</i>
for one worthy of esteem,	<i>one shows no esteem;</i>



<i>to one worthy of respect,</i>	<i>one respects not;</i>
<i>to one worthy of veneration,</i>	<i>one venerates not.</i>

**16** But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man is **neither callous nor arrogant**,  
to one worthy of homage, one pays homage;  
before one worthy of rising up, one rises up;  
to one worthy of a seat, one offers a seat;  
to one worthy of being given way, one gives way;  
to one worthy of honour, one honours;  
for one worthy of esteem, one shows esteem;  
to one worthy of respect, one shows respect;  
to one worthy of veneration, one venerates.

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, after death,  
with the body's breaking up, one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

16.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **of a high family**.

16.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to birth in a high family,  
namely, one is neither callous nor arrogant,

<i>to one worthy of homage,</i>	<i>one pays homage;</i>
<i>before one worthy of rising up to,</i>	<i>one rises up;</i>
<i>to one worthy of a seat,</i>	<i>one offers a seat;</i>
<i>for one worthy of being given way to,</i>	<i>one gives way;</i>
<i>to one worthy of honour,</i>	<i>one honours;</i>
<i>for one worthy of esteem,</i>	<i>one shows esteem;</i>
<i>to one worthy of respect,</i>	<i>one shows respect;</i>
<i>to one worthy of veneration,</i>	<i>one venerates.</i>

## 7 Not seeing holy ones

**17** Here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **does not visit a recluse or a brahmin** to ask,  
'Bhante, what is wholesome?  
What is unwholesome?  
What is blamable?  
What is blameless?  
What should be cultivated?  
What should not be cultivated?  
What kind of action will lead to my loss and suffering for a long time?  
What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?'

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, after death, with the body's breaking up,  
one re-appears in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> It is important to understand here that we are not relegated to "hell" for not visiting or not patronizing monastics and lay teachers. The operative word here is question them on the Dharma, ie, a wholesome learning exchange. Any suffering that arises in this connection has to do with our *ignorance*, rather than our socializing with the religious. Of course, *merely* socializing with renunciants, or worse, having affairs with them, would have the same or more negative effect.



17.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **unwise**.

17.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to lack of wisdom,

namely, *one does not visit a recluse or a brahmin to ask,*

*'Bhante, what is wholesome?*

*What is unwholesome?*

*What is blamable?*

*What is blameless?*

*What should be cultivated?*

*What should not be cultivated?*

*What kind of action will lead to my loss and suffering for a long time?*

*What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?'* [206]

**18** But here, young brahmin, a certain woman or man **visits a recluse or a brahmin** to ask,

*'Bhante, what is wholesome?*

*What is unwholesome?*

*What is blamable?*

*What is blameless?*

*What should be cultivated?*

*What should not be cultivated?*

*Doing what will lead to my loss and suffering for a long time?*

*Doing what will lead to my good and happiness for a long time?'*

Through such karma, thus accomplished, thus undertaken, after death,

with the body's breaking up, one re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven.

18.2 And if, with the body's breaking up, after death, one does not re-appear in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven,

if one returns to a human state, then wherever one is reborn, one is **very wise**.

18.3 This, young brahmin, is the way leading to great wisdom, namely, *one visits a recluse or a brahmin to ask, 'Bhante, what is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blamable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my loss and suffering for a long time? What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?'*

## Conclusion

**19** Thus, young brahmin,

there is a way that leads to	a short life,	or that leads to	a long life;
there is a way that leads to	sickliness,	or that leads to	good health;
there is a way that leads to	ugliness,	or that leads to	beauty;
there is a way that leads to	lack of influence,	or that leads to	great influence;
there is a way that leads to	poverty,	or that leads to	wealth;
there is a way that leads to	low birth,	or that leads to	high birth;
there is a way that leads to	foolishness,	or that leads to	great wisdom.

**20** Young brahmin, beings are owners of karma, heirs to karma, born in karma, bound by karma, have karma as their refuge. It is karma that differentiates beings into inferior and excellent."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Cf **Abhiṅga Paccavekkhitabba Thāna S** (A 5.57,2(5)), SD 5.12.

**21** When this was said, the brahmin youth Subha Todeyyaputta said to the Blessed One:

“Excellent, master Gotama! Excellent, master Gotama! Bhante, just as if one  
 were to place upright what had been overturned, or  
 were to reveal what was hidden, or  
 were to show the way to one who was lost, or  
 were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,

in the same way master Gotama has, in numerous ways, the Dharma has been made clear by master Gotama.

I go to master Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May master Gotama remember me as a layman who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life.”

— evaṃ —

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