



Concept of Action and Reaction (*Kamma, Phala*) according to Theravada Buddhist point of views

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Abstract

Kamma includes the intentional actions of previous lives and contemporary life. Numerous *kamma* units may act together to control the present lifetime condition of a being. Our daily lives, our thoughts, behavior and deeds, our communications and our traditions and social institutions are entirely products of human intentional action, which is known in Buddhist as action. In instruction to comprehend the human world or condition, it is essential to comprehend the normal law acknowledged as the regulation of action.

Keywords- *action, reaction, or kamma, phala*

Introduction

Kamma is one of the most important laws governing our lives and society. When we understand it and when we act on what we know, and then we experience a sense of wholeness and peace. So, we live in a technique that is out of arrangement, overlooking the wildlife of belongings, we then knowledge disagreement, pain or agony and misperception. *Kamma* is one of the fundamental natural laws through which we create these vastly different realities. A great sense of fulfillment in the teaching of the Buddha practice comes from knowing this and from actively creating and fashioning our lives.

Kamma refers to the law of cause and effect; that every volitional act brings about a certain result. If we act motivated by greed, hatred or delusion, we are planting the seed of suffering; when our acts are motivated by generosity, morality, mediation, loving kindness or wisdom, then we are creating the *kammic* conditions for abundance and happiness. Doubt we vegetable an apple kernel, the tree that cultivates will accept apples, not mangoes. The only expressive action that will produce a mango is to plant a mango kernel. *Kamma* is just such a law of nature, the law of cause and effect.

Kamma refers to the experience of cause and effect over a period of time. We perform an action and sometime later we begin to experience its results. We plant a mango seed and numerous years advanced. We taste or palate the fruit. The understanding *kamma* has to do with the quality of mind in the very moment of action. When we experience a mind state of love, there comes naturally along with it, a feeling of openness and love that is its immediate fruit; similarly, when there is moment's greed or hatred, in addition to whatever future results will come, we also experience the painful energies that arise with those states. Our wholesome of mind creates happiness for us and on the whole society in the moment, as well as produces the fruit of well-being in the future.

Concept of *Kamma* in Ancient India

The Sanskrit word Karma means actions or deeds. As a spiritual term, karma mentions to intentional (usually moral) actions that affect one's fortunes in the present and the next life. Karma (*Kamma* in *Pali*) is a concept common to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, but interpreted in different ways. Here, it focuses specifically on Hindu beliefs about karma.



The perception of karma or law of karma is the larger principle that all of life is overseen by a system of root and result, deed and response, in which one's deeds have conforming belongings on the next time. Karma is thus a way of explaining evil and misfortune in the world, even for those who do not appear to deserve it, their misfortune must be due to wrong actions in their previous life.

In Hindu texts, the word karma first appears in the ancient Rig Veda, but there it simply means religious action animal sacrifice. There is some hint of the later meaning of karma in the Brahmins, but it is not until the Upanishads the karma is expressed as a principle of cause and effect based on actions.

Karma is observed as an important regulation of countryside that is automatic and motorized. It is not something that is compulsory by God or a god as a system of sentence or recompense, nor something that the gods can inhibit with. The term karma denotes primarily to evil karma that which is accrued as a result of incorrect actions. Evil karma binds a person's soul (Atman) to the cycle of rebirth (Samsara) and leads to bad luck in this life and poor conditions in the next life. The ethical liveliness of a certain ethical act bears fruit mechanically in the next life, established in one's class, nature and character.

Concept of *Kamma* in Buddhism

The law of *Kamma* is a fundamental doctrine in Buddhism. Although this belief was prevalent in India before the arrival of the Buddha, it was the Buddha who explained and formulated this doctrine in its complete form, which we have today. This realization of the law of *kamma* taught us self-reliance and self-responsibility, because we enjoy or suffer as a result of what *kamma* we did in the past. So whatever we enjoy in this very life is actually the result of good *kamma* we did in the past. And whatever we suffer in this very life here is also the result of bad *kamma* we did in the past. So we are not to blame anyone else for our suffering or failure

in this very life. If we want to blame at all, we can blame our own *kamma*. So *kamma* is one that produces results and we are the one who cause the result to be produced. Therefore, we are the masters of our own future. We can shape our future lives. In respect of this *kamma*, we are free and do not have to rely on any other person for our good present life and future life, because we alone can create our own life, either good or bad.

When we understand that we alone are responsible for our own suffering or happiness, we know that we can shape our future so that we get happiness only and not suffering. If we do not want evil or painful results, we just need to circumvent which will contribute painful consequences. That means the knowledge of the law of *kamma* will teach us to abstain from what is bad, what is painful to oneself and what is harmful to others. Therefore, we can recover our lives here and also we can shape or outline our lives in the future because we understand the regulation of *kamma*.

Now *kamma* produces results. Whenever there is *kamma*, there will be results. We cannot escape from the consequence of the *kamma* we did in the past unless we become Buddha or *Arahant*. In *Dhammapada*, the Buddha spoke in a verse as following;

*"Na antalikkhe na samuddamajjhe, na pabbatanam vivaram pavissa,
Na vijjati so jagatippadeso, yatthatthito mucceyya papakamma"*.

Not in the sky, nor in the middle of the ocean, nor in the cave of a mountain, is there a place, where one may escape from the consequences of an evil deed. So when a person is reborn in another life, that rebirth is the result of *kamma* he did in the past in the immediate past life or in the lives before the past. Thus, when a being is said to be reborn, he is born-again as a result of the *kamma* he did in the previous lives.

The Category of *Kamma*

In the *Anguttra-Nikaya*, the Buddha categorized *kamma* into four kinds



corresponding to their nature and results : Four kinds of *kamma*, I have realized by my own wisdom and then made known to the world. They are black *kamma* having black result, (*kannha kannhavipaka*) white *kamma* having white result, (*sukka sukkavipaka*) both black and white *kamma* having black and white result, (*kannhasukka kannhasukkavipaka*) and neither black nor white *kamma* having neither black nor white result (*akannhasukka asukka akannha asukkavipaka*) and leading to the cessation of *kamma*.

The first means the action done by body; word and mind with ill will and it will make the doer take birth in a world dominated by ill will. This is the plight of beings such as those in a hellish world.

The second kind refers to the kind of *kamma* which is not conducive to ill will and its results lead only to happiness. It indicates the life of beings who take place in the realm of *Subhakinna*. The third *kamma* implies the actions, some of which are spurred on by ill will whereas others are not. The doer of this *kamma* is surrounded by both suffering and happiness. This signifies the lifetime of human lives, of some classes of wonderful beings and of some classes of hellish beings.

The fourth category denotes the action that leads to the cessation of the first, the second and the third *kamma*. The last one is mostly emphasized by the Buddha. The person who has attained the cessation of all *kamma* is called *Sabbakammakkhaya patto*.

The Nature of *Kamma*

According to Buddhism, all persons have deeds, intelligence and effort in various degrees. As man is a thinking person, intelligence (thoughtfulness) and effort do not create problem in life. For everybody can see the need and then believe in these two necessities of life. But as for 'karmic deed' many people say there is no *kamma* in life and some do not believe in *kamma*. Such persons who deny *kamma*, who do not believe in *kamma* are contradicting or rejecting their own volitional deeds in

practical life. They often do not take note of their own thoughts, words and deeds in daily life; they do not think with serious thought on their own daily behavior. So by disbelief in *kamma*, by rejection of *kammic* acts, they are now rejecting their own daily *kammic* deeds. They contradict themselves by such thoughtlessness, lacking to see their own *kammic* deeds every day. For even those who totally do not believe in *kamma* is doing *kamma* in each day by themselves. Nobody can avoid doing *kamma* of one kind or the other every day.

To explain *kamma* further, let us analysis the *Pali* technical "*kamma*" which Myanmar call it "*kam*". Basically *kamma* in *Pali* means, deed, work, or act. We all must take note of people everywhere doing work, deed and act of various types in each day. Each person cannot escape doing some work. From dawn to dark everybody has to do business, to do some work, to earn his or her living each day. So persons are doing deeds most of the time,

Workers by doing their respective works get suitable wages, salaries and bonuses. Government servants, officials are doing official work to serve their own country and in return they get monthly pays and other suitable wages which are people's moneys. And merchants, traders, managers, salesmen, etc...., get their pays and profits by engaging in business, trade or commerce. Every country has statute-laws, human law; rules and regulations and therefore those who have committed crimes such as theft, murders, adultery, rebellion, etc., have to suffer prison terms, death punishments and fines, according to the nature of their unwholesome deeds. For those who obey government laws, acts, rules and regulations live in peace, safety and well-being in body and mind. Those who do social welfare work, who serve their country well, etc., get decorations, title and support from the government, according to the nature of their wholesome deeds.

Each nation in the world has proclaimed government acts, statues, rules and



regulations. So these laws must be obeyed by citizens to promote peace and harmony in society. Those who serve their nations as leaders, ministers, and so on, will win fame and honor and gratitude and respect if they act righteously and wisely. And they attain both power and responsibility to serve for the good of the country. And due to right action they live harmlessly and happily. Since we see such deeds and their suitable results no one should deny the *kammic* law or nature of *kamma* and its results. No one should neglect action. Those who say “there is no *kamma*; we don’t believe in *kamma*”, are very ignorant; they live in delusion and ignorance.

The Cause of *Kamma*

Ignorance (*avijja*) or ‘not knowing things as they truly are’ is the chief cause of *kamma* ‘Dependent on Ignorance arise volitional activities (*sankhara*)’ states the Buddha in *Paticca-Samuppada* Dependent Origination. *Paticca* means dependent upon and *samuppada* is called arising. Although the literal meaning of the term is dependent arising, it is applied to the whole causal formula which consists of twelve interdependent causes and effect, technically called *Paccaya* and *Paccayuppanna*. The way of the *Paticca-samuppada* should be understood as follows; Because of 1 arise 2. Because of 2 arise 3. When there is no 1, there is no 2. When there is no 2, there is no 3. When this is, that is (*Imasmim sati idam hoti*). This arising, that arises (*Imassa uppada idam uppajjati*). After there is not, that is not and noting (*Imasmim asati idam na hoti*), This ceasing, that ceases (*Imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati*). On this attitude of conditionality, relateness and interdependence, the whole actuality and permanence of life and its termination are clarified in a comprehensive formulation which is called *Paticca-samuppada* ‘Habituated Genesis’ consisting of twelve factors;

1. Through ignorance are conditioned volitional actions or *kamma* formations (*Avijjapaccaya sankhara*).

2. Through volitional actions is conditioned consciousness (*Sankharapaccaya vinnanam*).

3. Through consciousness are conditional mental and physical phenomena (*Vinnanapaccaya namarupam*).

4. Through mental and physical phenomena are conditioned the six faculties (i.e, five physical sense-organs and mind) (*Namarupaccaya salayatanam*).

5. Through the six faculties are conditioned (sensorial and mental) contacts (*Salayatanapaccaya phasso*).

6. Through contact is conditioned sensation (*Phassapaccaya vedana*).

7. Through sensation is conditioned desire (*Vedanapaccaya tagna*).

8. Through desire are conditioned clinging (*Tagnapaccaya upadana*).

9. Through clinging are conditioned the process of becoming (*Upadanapaccaya bhavo*).

10. Through, the process of flatterring is habituated birth (*Bhavapaccaya- jati*).

11. Through birth is conditioned decay, death, lamentation, pain, etc, (*Jatipaccaya Jaramaranam*).

This is how life arises, exists and continues. If we take this formula in reverse order, we come to the cessation of the process. Through the complete cessation of ignorance, volitional activities or *kamma*-formations cease; through the cessation of volitional activities, consciousness ceases; through the cessation of birth, decay, death, sorrow, etc., cease.

Conclusion

Good action can lead to the social welfare and real happiness. If everyone understands the true nature of action correctly, the present day society will be evaluating practicability because all good action, good action and bad action, bad action brings about their full results. Good action will remain effective and will produce good results in the present society. On the other hand, those who are wrong view do not believe in the law of action and its results they make mistakes repeatedly in their



deeds, words and thought. Because of their evil actions, not only present day society decline slowly and gradually but also the whole world from peace, prosperity and harmony.

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