

Culakammavibhanga Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya No. 135)

- I. General statement of “law of karma”

“Beings are (1) the owners of their actions; (2) the heirs of their actions; (3) their actions are their origin (*yoni* = womb), (4) their kinsman, (5) their refuge. (6) Their actions divide beings into the inferior and superior.”
- II. Four types of karma (according to Majjhima Commentary)
 1. *Oppressive karma (upapilaka-kamma)*: brings misfortune, destroys wealth and enjoyment. Causes difficulties and problems in the course of one’s life.
 2. *Destructive, terminative karma (upacchedaka-kamma)*: cuts off the life span prematurely, even if one is born through a karma tending to a long life-span. Simile: like a stone thrown up that knocks down an arrow in flight.
 3. *Generative karma (janaka-kamma)*: the karma that produces the mode of rebirth.
 4. *Supportive karma (upatthambhaka-kamma)*: karma that brings success in the course of life; removes obstacles and attracts good fortune.

(1) and (2) are necessarily unwholesome; (3) can be either wholesome or unwholesome; (4) is exclusively wholesome.
- III. How contrasting modes of action determine rebirth and life-experiences
 1. The destruction of life, killing
 - a. In the role of “generative karma” it produces rebirth in the plane of misery (in hell).
 - b. As “destructive karma,” ripening in the human world, it can cut off another karma tending to a long life-span and bring premature death.
 - c. As “oppressive karma” it impedes the efficacy of a generative karma tending to long life and thereby leads to short life-span.
Note: According to Majjhima Commentary, it is the “determinative volition,” i.e. the volition that actually “drives” the act of killing, that causes rebirth in a lower realm. The volitions preceding and following the act lead to short life in the human realm.
 2. Abstaining from the destruction of life, non-killing
 - a. In the role of “generative karma” produces rebirth in a heavenly world or a rebirth tending to long life in the human world.
 - b. As “supportive karma,” it reinforces another wholesome karma that has produced a human rebirth and removes obstructions and afflictions, thereby tending to long life in the human world.
Note: According to Majjh. Comy., the determinative volition takes on role (a), the preceding and subsequent volitions take on role (b).

- IV. The other pairs of contrasts
 - 1. The paths to poor health and good health
 - a. Injuring beings > lower rebirth or poor health in the human world
 - b. Refraining from injury to beings > higher rebirth or good health in the human world
 - 2. The paths to ugliness and beauty
 - a. Persistently angry person > lower rebirth or ugliness in the human world
 - b. Refraining from anger > higher rebirth or beauty in the human world
 - 3. The paths to influence and lack of influence
 - a. Envying others > lower rebirth or lack of influence in the human world
 - b. Refraining from envy > higher rebirth or positions of influence in the human world
 - 4. The paths to poverty and wealth
 - a. Stinginess > lower rebirth or poverty in the human world
 - b. Generosity > higher rebirth or wealth in the human world
 - 5. The paths to low status and high status
 - a. Arrogance > lower rebirth or low status in the human world
 - b. Respect and reverence > higher rebirth or high status in the human world
 - 6. The paths to dullness and wisdom
 - a. Obtuseness > lower rebirth or dullness in the human world
 - b. Investigation > higher rebirth or wisdom in the human world