

The Cause of Differences in Humankind



A Gift of Dhamma

The Cause of Differences In Humankind Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta

Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
For free distribution only.

Introduction: Buddha in the Cula-kammavibhanga sutta describes and explains why there are differences, the reason and the cause, in humankind, like some are:

- short-lived and long-lived,
- sickly and healthy,
- ugly and beautiful,
- important and mediocre,
- poor and rich,
- low-class and aristocratic,
- stupid and discerning

People are to be seen. A complete analysis of one's actions is given in this sutta for all householders to follow in their training practice for their liberation.

In Theravada tradition, the householder will gain good destination for his or her good actions and the Bhikkhu will gain the liberation, the arahatship. Thus, the householder will practice training for – *Dana, Sila, Bhavana* (for good destination); and Bhikkhu will practice training for – *Sila – Samadhi – Panna* (for Nibana in this very life).

Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta

Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
For free distribution only.

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery.

Then Subha the student, Householder Todeyya's son, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings and courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One:

"Master Gotama, what is the reason, what is the cause, why baseness and excellence are seen among human beings, among the human race?

- *short-lived and long-lived people,*
- *sickly and healthy,*
- *ugly and beautiful,*
- *influential and unimportant,*
- *poor and rich,*
- *low-born and high-born,*
- *stupid and discerning people are to be seen.*

So what is the reason, what is the cause, why baseness and excellence are seen among human beings, among the human race?"

"Student, beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and have their actions as their arbitrator. Action is what differentiates beings in terms of baseness and excellence."

"I don't understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's statement spoken in brief without explaining the detailed meaning. It would be good if Master Gotama taught me the Dhamma so that I might understand the detailed meaning of his brief statement."

"In that case, student, listen and pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, Master Gotama," Subha the student responded.

The Blessed One said:

Case. 1 – The way leading to a short life

"There is the case, student, where a woman or man is a killer of living beings, brutal, bloody-handed, given to killing and slaying, showing no mercy to living beings. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of

the body, after death, he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, hell.

If, on the break-up of the body, after death -- instead of reappearing in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, hell -- he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is short-lived wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to a short life: to be a killer of living beings, brutal, bloody-handed, given to killing and slaying, showing no mercy to living beings.

Case 2. The way leading to a long life

"But then there is the case where a woman or man, having abandoned the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings, and dwells with the rod laid down, the knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, and sympathetic for the welfare of all living beings. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in a good destination, in the heavenly world.

If, on the break-up of the body, after death -- instead of reappearing in a good destination, in the heavenly world -- he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is long-lived wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to a long life: to have abandoned the killing of living beings, to abstain from killing living beings, to dwell with one's rod laid down, one's knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, and sympathetic for the welfare of all living beings.

Case 3. The way leading to sickliness.

"There is the case where a woman or man is one who harms beings with his/her fists, with clods, with sticks, or with knives. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is sickly wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to sickliness: to be one who harms beings with one's fists, with clods, with sticks, or with knives.

Case 4. The way leading to health

"But then there is the case where a woman or man is not one who harms beings with his/her fists, with clods, with sticks, or with knives. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears

in a good destination...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is healthy wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to health: not to be one who harms beings with one's fists, with clods, with sticks, or with knives.

Case 5. The way leading to ugliness.

"There is the case, where a woman or man is ill-tempered and easily upset; even when lightly criticized, he/she grows offended, provoked, malicious, and resentful; shows annoyance, aversion, and bitterness. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is ugly wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to ugliness: to be ill-tempered and easily upset; even when lightly criticized, to grow offended, provoked, malicious, and resentful; to show annoyance, aversion, and bitterness.

Case 6. The way leading to beauty

"But then there is the case where a woman or man is not ill-tempered or easily upset; even when heavily criticized, he/she doesn't grow offended, provoked, malicious, or resentful; doesn't show annoyance, aversion, or bitterness. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in a good destination...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is beautiful wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to beauty: not to be ill-tempered or easily upset; even when heavily criticized, not to be offended, provoked, malicious, or resentful; nor to show annoyance, aversion, and bitterness.

Case 7. The way leading to no prominence

"There is the case where a woman or man is envious. He/she envies, begrudges, and broods about others' gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she gains no prominence wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to no prominence: to be envious, to envy, begrudge, and brood about others' gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration.

Case 8. The way leading to prominence

"But then there is the case where a woman or man is not envious. He/she does not envy, begrudge, or brood about others' gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, or veneration. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in a good destination...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, he/she is prominent wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to prominence: not to be envious; not to envy, begrudge, or brood about others' gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, or veneration.

Case 9. The way leading to poverty

"There is the case where a woman or man is not a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwellings, or lighting to priests or contemplatives. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, he/she is poor wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to poverty: not to be a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwellings, or lighting to priests or contemplatives.

Case 10. the way leading to great wealth:

"But then there is the case where a woman or man is a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, scents, ointments, beds, dwellings, and lighting to priests and contemplatives. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in a good destination...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is wealthy wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to great wealth: to be a giver of food, drink, cloth, sandals, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, dwellings, and lighting to priests and contemplatives.

Case 11. The way leading to a low birth

"There is the case where a woman or man is obstinate and arrogant. He/she does not pay homage to those who deserve homage, rise up for those for whom one

should rise up, give a seat to those to whom one should give a seat, make way for those for whom one should make way, worship those who should be worshipped, respect those who should be respected, revere those who should be revered, or honor those who should be honored. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is low-born wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to a low birth: to be obstinate and arrogant, not to pay homage to those who deserve homage, nor rise up for... nor give a seat to... nor make way for... nor worship... nor respect... nor revere... nor honor those who should be honored.

Case 12. the way leading to a high birth

"But then there is the case where a woman or man is not obstinate or arrogant; he/she pays homage to those who deserve homage, rises up... gives a seat... makes way... worships... respects... reveres... honors those who should be honored. Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in a good destination...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is highborn wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to a high birth: not to be obstinate or arrogant; to pay homage to those who deserve homage, to rise up... give a seat... make way... worship... respect... revere... honor those who should be honored.

Case 13, The way leading to stupidity

"There is the case where a woman or man when visiting a priest or contemplative, does not ask: 'What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, having been done by me, will be for my long-term harm and suffering? Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare and happiness?' Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in the plane of deprivation...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she will be stupid wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to stupidity: when visiting a priest or contemplative, not to ask: 'What is skillful?... Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term

welfare and happiness?'

Case 14. The way leading to discernment

"But then there is the case where a woman or man when visiting a priest or contemplative, asks: 'What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, having been done by me, will be for my long-term harm and suffering? Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare and happiness?' Through having adopted and carried out such actions, on the break-up of the body, after death, he/she reappears in a good destination...

If instead he/she comes to the human state, then he/she is discerning wherever reborn.

This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a priest or contemplative, to ask: 'What is skillful?... Or what, having been done by me, will be for my long-term welfare and happiness?'

- "So, student, the way leading to short life makes people short-lived,
- the way leading to long life makes people long-lived;
- the way leading to sickness makes people sickly,
- the way leading to health makes people healthy;
- the way leading to ugliness makes people ugly,
- the way leading to beauty makes people beautiful;
- the way leading to lack of influence makes people non-influential,
- the way leading to influence makes people influential;
- the way leading to poverty makes people poor,
- the way leading to wealth makes people wealthy;
- the way leading to low birth makes people low-born,
- the way leading to high birth makes people highborn;
- the way leading to stupidity makes people stupid,
- the way leading to discernment makes people discerning.

"Beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and have their actions as their arbitrator. Action is what differentiates beings in terms of baseness and excellence."

When this was said, Subha the student, Todeyya's son, said to the Blessed One:

"Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama -- through many lines of reasoning -- made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life."

Now, I will present you the Dhammapada Story and Verse No. 73 & 74

Verses 73 and 74

The Story of Citta the Householder

Dhammapda Verses and Story

By

Daw Mya Tin

While residing at the Jetavana monastery, the Buddha uttered Verses (73) and (74), with references to Thera Sudhamma and Citta the householder.

Citta, a householder, once met Thera Mahanama, one of the groups of the first five bhikkhus (Pancavaggis), going on an alms-round, and invited the Thera to his house. There, after listening to the discourse he offered alms-food to the Thera. Citta attained Sotapatti Fruition. Later, Citta built a monastery in his mango grove. There, he looked to the needs of all bhikkhus who came to the monastery and Bhikkhu Sudhamma was installed as the resident bhikkhu.

One day, the two Chief Disciples of the Buddha, the Venerable Sariputta and the Venerable Maha Moggallana, came to the monastery and after listening to the discourse given by the Venerable Sariputta, Citta attained Anagami Fruition. Then, he invited the two Chief Disciples to his house for alms-food the next day. He also invited Thera Sudhamma, but Thera Sudhamma refused in anger and said, "You invite me only after the other two." Citta repeated his invitation, but it was turned down. Nevertheless, Thera Sudhamma went to the house of Citta early on the following day. But when invited to enter the house, Thera Sudhamma refused and said that he would not sit down as he was going on his alms-round. But when he saw the things that were to be offered to the two Chief Disciples, he envied them so much that he could not restrain his anger. He abused Citta and said, "I don't want to stay in your monastery any longer," and left the house in anger.

From there, he went to the Buddha and reported everything that had happened. To him, the Buddha said,

"You have insulted a lay-disciple who is endowed with faith and generously. You'd better go back to him and own up your mistake."

Sudhamma did as the Buddha told him, but Citta would not be appeased; so he returned to the Buddha for the second time. The Buddha, knowing that the pride of Sudhamma had dwindled by this time, said,

"My son, a good bhikkhu should have no attachment; a good bhikkhu should not be conceited and say 'This is my monastery, this is my place, these are my lay-disciples,' etc., for in one with such thoughts, covetousness and pride will increase."

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 73. The foolish bhikkhu desires praise for qualities he does not have, precedence among bhikkhus, authority in the monasteries, and veneration from those unrelated to him.

Verse 74. "Let both laymen and bhikkhus think that things are done because of me; let them obey me in all matters, great and small." Such being the thoughts of the fool, his greed and his pride grow.

At the end of the discourse, Sudhamma went to the house of Citta, and this time they got reconciled; and within a few days, Sudhamma attained arahatship.

The Story of Citta the Householder Dhammapada Verse 73 and 74.

Illustrated Dhammapada
by
Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero

While residing at the Jetavana Monastery, the Buddha spoke these Verses, with reference to Venerable Sudhamma and Citta the householder. A householder named Citta, residing in the city of Macchikàsanóa, observed the Venerable Mahànàma, one of the band of five, making his round for alms; and pleased with his Deportment, took his bowl, invited him into his house, provided him with food, and at the conclusion of the meal listened to the law and obtained the fruit of conversion. Now Citta, possessed of immovable faith, desiring to make his own pleasure-garden Ambaññhaka Grove a place of residence for the Sangha, poured water into the right hand of the Venerable and made the grove move to the Sangha. The moment he uttered the words,

"The Religion of the Buddha is firmly established," the earth shook to its ocean boundary. The great treasurer caused a splendid monastery to be erected in the

grove, and thereafter the door stood open to monks who came from all four quarters. At Macchikàsanóa also resided the Venerable Sudhamma.

Some time afterwards, the two Chief Disciples, hearing the rumor of Citta's good qualities, decided to pay their respects to him and therefore went to Macchikàsanóa. Citta the householder, hearing that they were coming, proceeded forth half a league to meet them, escorted them to the monastery, invited them, performed the usual duties for visitors, and then made the following request of the Buddha, "Venerable, we desire to listen to a short discourse on the Dhamma."

The Venerable replied, "Lay disciple, we are weary with the journey; nevertheless listen for a short while." Citta, merely by listening to the Buddha's discourse on the Dhamma, obtained the fruit of the second path. Then he bowed to the two chief disciples and invited them to be his guests, saying,

"Venerable, pray take a meal in my house tomorrow with your thousand monks." Then he turned to the resident monk, the Venerable Sudhamma, and invited him, saying to him, "Venerable, you also come tomorrow with the Venerable." Angry at the thought, "He invited me last," Sudhamma refused the invitation; and although Citta repeated the invitation again and again, he still refused. The lay disciple said,

"Pray be present, Venerable," and went out. On the following day he prepared splendid offerings in his own residence. Very early in the morning the Venerable Sudhamma thought to himself, "What manner of food has the householder prepared for the chief disciples? I will go see." So very early in the morning he took bowl and robe and went to his house.

"Pray sit down, Venerable," said the householder. "I will not sit down," replied Sudhamma; "I am about to set out on my alms-round." The Venerable surveyed the offerings prepared for the chief disciples, and seeking to annoy the householder about the varieties of food provided, said,

"Householder, your food is most excellent, but there is one thing you have omitted." "What is that, Reverend sir?" "Sesame-cake, householder."

Thereupon the householder rebuked him, comparing him to a crow. Angered at this, the Venerable said, "This is your residence, householder; I will depart." Three times the householder strove to prevail upon the Venerable to remain, but each time the latter refused. Finally he left the house, went to the Buddha, and related the words that had passed between Citta and himself.

The Buddha said, "You, an inferior, have insulted a faithful, believing disciple." Having thus put the blame solely on the monk, the Buddha sent him back to beg pardon of the disciple. The Venerable went to Citta and said, "*Householder, it was all my fault; please pardon me.*"

But the householder refused to pardon him and said, I will not pardon you.” Provoked at his failure to obtain pardon, he returned to the Buddha. The Buddha, although he knew that the householder would pardon Sudhamma, thought, “This Venerable is stubborn in his pride; now let him go thirty leagues and come back.” And so, without telling him how he might gain pardon, he just dismissed him. The Venerable returned with pride humbled.

The Buddha then gave the Venerable a companion and said to the Venerable, “Go with this companion and ask pardon of the householder.” Said the Buddha,

“A religious person ought not to give way to pride or ill-will, thinking, ‘This residence is mine, this male lay disciple is mine, this female lay disciple is mine.’ For if he so did, ill-will and pride and the other depravities increase.”

After listening to this admonition Venerable Sudhamma bowed to the Buddha, rose from his seat, circumambulated the Buddha, and then, accompanied by his companion-monk, went within sight of the lay disciple, atoned for his fault, and begged the disciple’s pardon.

The lay disciple both pardoned him and in turn asked his pardon, saying, “I pardon you, Venerable; if I am to blame, pray pardon me also.” The Venerable held steadfast in the admonition given by the Buddha, and in but a few days attained arahatship together with the supernatural faculties.

The lay disciple thought to himself, “Even without seeing the Buddha I have attained the fruit of conversion; even without seeing him I have attained the Fruit of the second path. I ought to see the Buddha.

” So he ordered yoked five hundred carts full of sesame, rice, ghee, sugar, garments, coverlets, and other offerings, whether of food or aught else.” He visited the Buddha, and spent one month giving alms to the Buddha and the monks. After a month, Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha, “Venerable, was it because he saw you that he received all these honors?”

Said the Buddha, “Ananda, no matter what place such a man resorts to, he receives gain and honor.”

References:

1. Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta - Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
2. Dhammapada by Daw Mya Tin (Nibbana.com)
3. Illustrated Dhammapada by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero