

# **Purification, Ethics and Karma in Early Buddhist Discourse**

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lecture 9

## **review MĀ 12**

arahant is beyond the influxes

just like the shadow of a tree,  
which disappears once the tree has been cut into pieces

similarly on experiencing anything at the sense doors  
the arahant remains equanimous and mindful

## **review MĀ 13**

All that a person does:

- is caused by what was done in previous lives,
- is caused and created by a supreme divine being,
- is without any cause or condition.

three views: karmic determinism, almighty god, denial of causality

instead: four noble truths

## **review MĀ 14**

similes for falsehood in MĀ 14:

- 1) little water left (MĀ & MN)
- 2) discarded water (MĀ & MN)

- 3) MĀ: vessel tipped over, MN: vessel upside down
- 4) MĀ: vessel upside down, MN: empty vessel
- 5) elephant uses his trunk in battle (MĀ & MN)

types of speech the Buddha would use  
according to the *Abhayarājakumāra-sutta*, MN 58 (MN II 395)

three categories for evaluation:

- false/true
- unbeneficial/beneficial
- unpleasant/pleasant

- 1) false, unbeneficial, unpleasant: no  
false, unbeneficial, pleasant: no
- 2) true, unbeneficial, unpleasant: no  
true, unbeneficial, pleasant: no
- 3) true, beneficial, unpleasant: know time when to use  
true, beneficial, pleasant: know time when to use

four cases of speaking truth in AN 4.100 (AN II 100):

- 1) criticize what deserves criticism
- 2) praise what deserves praise
- 3) neither criticize what deserves criticism nor praise what deserves praise
- 4) criticize what deserves criticism and praise what deserves praise  
which is best?

when to criticize? *Kinti-sutta*, MN 103 (MN II 241)

three categories for evaluation:

- a) will I be troubled?
- b) will the other get upset?
- c) will it be possible to establish him in what is wholesome?

advice: speak even if I get troubled (a), and even if the other gets upset (b).

However, if one anticipates that: "'I cannot make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome.' One should not underrate equanimity towards such a person."

Mirror simile in MĀ 14 illustrates reflection:

- on bodily & verbal & mental action
- before & during & after

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### **MĀ 15 – Discourse on Intention**

(Parallel to the *Karajakāya-sutta*, AN 10.208/ AN V 299)

"If a person does an action intentionally, then he will have to experience its result, either in this life or in the next life, I say. If a person does an action unintentionally, then he will not have to experience the result, I say. "

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AN 10.208

"I do not say, monks, that without being experienced there is a coming to an end of intentional deeds that have been undertaken and accumulated.

Yet, monks, I do not say that there is a making an end of *dukkha* without having experienced [the fruits of] intentional deeds that have been undertaken and accumulated",

*na tvevāham, bhikkhave, sañcetanikānam kammānam katānam upacitānam appaṭisañviditvā dukkhass' antakiriyam vadāmi.*

AN 10.208 (suggested emendation):

Yet, monks, I do not say that there is a making an end of *dukkha* **through** having experienced [the fruits of] intentional deeds that have been undertaken and accumulated",

*na tvevāham, bhikkhave, sañcetanikānam kammānam katānam upacitānam paṭisañviditvā dukkhass' antakiriyam vadāmi.*

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main points:

10 pathways of action (*kammopatha*)

- 1) killing
- 2) stealing
- 3) sexual misconduct
- 4) false speech
- 5) malicious speech
- 6) harsh speech
- 7) gossiping
- 8) covetousness
- 9) ill will
- 10) wrong views

contrasted to  
overcoming the hindrances &  
cultivation of the four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*)

- a) loving kindness
- b) compassion
- c) sympathetic joy
- d) equanimity

leading to:

- good rebirth
- non return or arahantship

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## **MĀ 16 – Discourse to the Kālāmas**

(Parallel to the *Kesamutti-sutta*, AN 3.65/ AN I 188)

The Blessed One told them: “Kālāmas, do not doubt! Why? When there is doubt, hesitation arises.

Kālāmas, you yourselves do not have clear knowledge about whether there is a next life or whether there is no next life. Kālāmas, you yourselves also do not have clear knowledge about what action is an offence and what action is not an offence.

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AN 3.65

The Buddha acknowledges that there is good reason for them to have doubt, as they have doubts in regard to a doubtful matter

this is followed by listing different sources of knowledge:

- oral tradition
- lineage of teachings
- hearsay
- collection of scriptures
- logical reasoning
- inferential reasoning
- reflection on reasons
- acceptance of view after pondering
- seeming competence of a speaker
- because of liking one's teacher

then comes the famous dictum that:

"when you know for yourself: these things are unwholesome, these things are blamable, these things are censured by the wise, these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering, then you should abandon them."

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main points:

three roots of evil are desire, hatred and ignorance

free from these three evils, develop four divine abodes

resulting in four assurances, independent of various views