

TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

In the
Buddha's
Words



An Anthology of Discourses
from the Pāli Canon

Edited and introduced by

Bhikkhu Bodhi

FOREWORD BY THE DALAI LAMA

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Frontispiece: Standing Buddha Shakyamuni. Pakistan, Gandhara, second century A.D.
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29. "I was able to convince the monks of the group of five.³¹ Then I sometimes instructed two monks while the other three went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those three monks brought back from their almsround. Sometimes I instructed three monks while the other two went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those two monks brought back from their almsround.

30. "Then the monks of the group of five, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to birth, having understood the danger in what is subject to birth, seeking the unborn supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna, attained the unborn supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna; being themselves subject to aging, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement, having understood the danger in what is subject to aging, sickness, death, sorrow, and defilement, seeking the unaging, unailing, deathless, sorrowless, and undefiled supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna, they attained the unaging, unailing, deathless, sorrowless, and undefiled supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna. The knowledge and vision arose in them: 'Our liberation is unshakable; this is our last birth; now there is no more renewed existence.'"

(from MN 26: *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*; I 167-73)

5. THE FIRST DISCOURSE

Start here

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Bārāṇasi in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There the Blessed One addressed the monks of the group of five thus:

"Monks, these two extremes should not be followed by one who has gone forth into homelessness. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering toward either of these extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, and leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

"And what, monks, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata? It is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right

mindfulness, right concentration. This, monks, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, and leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

"Now this, monks, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

"Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving that leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination.

"Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonattachment.

"Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: it is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view ... right concentration.

"This is the noble truth of suffering': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.³²

"This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.³³

"This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.³⁴

"This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been abandoned': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering': thus, monks,

in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is to be developed': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering has been developed': thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and light.

"So long, monks, as my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was not thoroughly purified in this way,³⁵ I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans. But when my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was thoroughly purified in this way, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans. The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more renewed existence.'"

This is what the Blessed One said. Elated, the monks of the group of five delighted in the Blessed One's statement. And while this discourse was being spoken, there arose in the Venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma: 'Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.'³⁶

And when the wheel of the Dhamma had been set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth-dwelling devas raised a cry: "At Bārāṇasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed wheel of the Dhamma has

been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any ascetic or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world." Having heard the cry of the earth-dwelling devas, the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings raised a cry: "At Bārāṇasi ... this unsurpassed wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped ... by anyone in the world." Having heard the cry of the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings, the Tāvatiṃsa devas ... the Yāma devas ... the Tusita devas ... the devas who delight in creating ... the devas who wield power over others' creations ... the devas of Brahmā's company³⁷ raised a cry: "At Bārāṇasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any ascetic or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world."

Thus at that moment, at that instant, at that second, the cry spread as far as the brahma world, and this ten-thousand-fold world system shook, quaked, and trembled, and an immeasurable great radiance surpassing the divine majesty of the devas appeared in the world.

Then the Blessed One uttered this inspired utterance: "Koṇḍañña has indeed understood! Koṇḍañña has indeed understood!" In this way the Venerable Koṇḍañña acquired the name "Aññā Koṇḍañña—Koṇḍañña Who Has Understood."

(SN 56:11: *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*; V 420–24)

This title translates to: "Setting the Wheel of Dharma in Motion-sutta/sūtra"

V. THE WAY TO A FORTUNATE REBIRTH

1. THE LAW OF KAMMA

(1) *Four Kinds of Kamma*

"There are, O monks, these four kinds of kamma declared by me after I had realized them for myself by direct knowledge. What four?"

"There is dark kamma with dark results; there is bright kamma with bright results; there is kamma that is dark and bright with dark and bright results; there is kamma that is neither dark nor bright, with neither dark nor bright results, which leads to the destruction of kamma."

"And what, monks, is dark kamma with dark results? Here, monks, someone generates an afflictive volitional formation of body, speech, or mind. Having done so, he is reborn in an afflictive world. When he is reborn in an afflictive world, afflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by afflictive contacts, he experiences an afflictive feeling, extremely painful, as for example the beings in hell experience. This is called dark kamma with dark results."

"And what, monks, is bright kamma with bright results? Here, monks, someone generates a non-afflictive volitional formation of body, speech, or mind. Having done so, he is reborn in a non-afflictive world. When he is reborn in a non-afflictive world, non-afflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by non-afflictive contacts, he experiences a non-afflictive feeling, extremely pleasant, as for example the devas of refulgent glory experience.⁹ This is called bright kamma with bright results."

"And what, monks, is dark and bright kamma with dark and bright results? Here, monks, someone generates both an afflictive volitional formation of body, speech, or mind and a non-afflictive volitional formation of body, speech, or mind. Having done so, he is reborn in a world that is both afflictive and non-afflictive. When he is reborn in such a world, both afflictive and non-afflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by such contacts, he experiences both an afflictive feeling and a non-afflictive feeling, a mixture and conglomeration of

How is this view of karma overlapping or different from the Jaina view?

pleasure and pain, as for example human beings and some devas and some beings in the lower world experience. This is called dark and bright kamma with dark and bright results.

"And what, monks, is kamma that is neither dark nor bright, with neither dark nor bright results, which leads to the destruction of kamma? The volition to abandon this dark kamma with dark results, and to abandon the bright kamma with bright results, and to abandon the dark and bright kamma with dark and bright results—this is called the kamma that is neither dark nor bright, with neither dark nor bright results, which leads to the destruction of kamma."¹⁰

"These, monks, are the four kinds of kamma declared by me after I had realized them for myself by direct knowledge."

AN = Āṅuttara Nikāya; the Nikāyas are texts within the Pali Canon in the Sutta basket (What Buddha said)

(AN 4:232; II 230–32)

(2) *Why Beings Fare as They Do After Death* **SKIP TO p. 161 bottom**

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering by stages in the Kosalan country with a large Saṅgha of monks, and eventually he arrived at a Kosalan brahmin village named Sālā.

2. The brahmin householders of Sālā heard: "It is said that the ascetic Gotama, the Sakyān son who went forth from a Sakyān clan, has been wandering in the Kosalan country with a large Saṅgha of monks and has come to Sālā. Now a good report of Master Gotama has been circulating thus: 'That Blessed One is an arahant ... [as in Text III,2] ... that is perfectly complete and purified.' Now it is good to see such arahants."

3. Then the brahmin householders of Sālā went to the Blessed One. Some paid homage to him and sat down to one side; some exchanged greetings with him and, after their greetings and cordial talk, sat down to one side; some saluted him reverentially and sat down to one side; some remained silent and sat down to one side.

4. When they were seated, they said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, what is the cause and condition why some beings here, on the breakup of the body, after death, are reborn in a state of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell? And what is the cause and condition why some beings here, on the breakup of the body, after death, are reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world?"

5. "Householders, it is by reason of unrighteous conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, that some beings here, on the

breakup of the body, after death, are reborn in a state of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell. It is by reason of righteous conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, that some beings here, on the breakup of the body, after death, are reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world."

6. "We do not understand the detailed meaning of Master Gotama's statement, which he has spoken in brief without expounding the detailed meaning. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach us the Dhamma so that we might understand the detailed meaning of his statement."

"Then, householders, listen and attend closely to what I shall say."

"Yes, venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

7. "Householders, there are three kinds of unrighteous bodily conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma. There are four kinds of unrighteous verbal conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma. There are three kinds of unrighteous mental conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma.

8. "And how, householders, are there three kinds of unrighteous bodily conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma? Here someone kills living beings; he is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. He takes what is not given; he takes by way of theft the wealth and property of others in the village or forest. He commits sexual misconduct; he has intercourse with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by law, and even with those already engaged. That is how there are three kinds of unrighteous bodily conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma.

9. "And how, householders, are there four kinds of unrighteous verbal conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma? Here someone speaks falsehood; when summoned to a court, or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family's presence, and questioned as a witness thus: 'So, good man, tell what you know,' not knowing, he says, 'I know,' or knowing, he says, 'I do not know'; not seeing, he says, 'I see,' or seeing, he says, 'I do not see'; in full awareness he speaks falsehood for his own ends, or for another's ends, or for some trifling worldly end. He speaks maliciously; he repeats elsewhere what he has heard here in order to

See here the reference to Brahmin-born householders coming to the Buddha to hear his ideas about what causes a being's condition/state after death

divide [those people] from these, or he repeats to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who divides those who are united, a creator of divisions, who enjoys discord, rejoices in discord, delights in discord, a speaker of words that create discord. He speaks harshly; he utters such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, offensive to others, bordering on anger, not conducive to concentration. He engages in idle chatter; he speaks at the wrong time, speaks what is not fact, speaks what is useless, speaks contrary to the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the wrong time he speaks such words as are worthless, unreasonable, immoderate, and unbeneficial. That is how there are four kinds of unrighteous verbal conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma.

10. "And how, householders, are there three kinds of unrighteous mental conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma? Here someone is covetous; he covets the wealth and property of others thus: 'Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!' Or he has a mind of ill will and intentions of hate thus: 'May these beings be slain and slaughtered, may they be cut off, perish, or be annihilated!' Or he has wrong view, distorted vision, thus: 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed; no fruit or result of good and bad actions; no this world, no other world; no mother, no father; no beings who are reborn spontaneously; no good and virtuous ascetics and brahmins in the world who have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.'" That is how there are three kinds of unrighteous mental conduct, conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma. So, householders, it is by reason of such unrighteous conduct, such conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, that some beings here on the breakup of the body, after death, are reborn in a state of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell.

11. "Householders, there are three kinds of righteous bodily conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma. There are four kinds of righteous verbal conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma. There are three kinds of righteous mental conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma.

12. "And how, householders, are there three kinds of righteous bodily conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma? Here someone, abandoning the destruction of life, abstains from the destruction of life; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, he dwells

compassionate to all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; he does not take by way of theft the wealth and property of others in the village or in the forest. Abandoning sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual misconduct; he does not have intercourse with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by law, or with those already engaged. That is how there are three kinds of righteous bodily conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma.

13. "And how, householders, are there four kinds of righteous verbal conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma? Here someone, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech; when summoned to a court, or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family's presence, and questioned as a witness thus: 'So, good man, tell what you know,' not knowing, he says, 'I do not know,' or knowing, he says, 'I know'; not seeing, he says, 'I do not see,' or seeing, he says, 'I see'; he does not in full awareness speak falsehood for his own ends, or for another's ends, or for some trifling worldly end. Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech; he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord. Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech; he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many. Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter; he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is good, speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the right time he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate, and beneficial. That is how there are four kinds of righteous verbal conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma.

14. "And how, householders, are there three kinds of righteous mental conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma? Here someone is not covetous; he does not covet the wealth and property of others thus: 'Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!' His mind is without ill will, and he has intentions free from hate thus: 'May these beings be

3. "Master Gotama, why is it that human beings are seen to be inferior and superior? For people are seen to be short-lived and long-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, without influence and influential, poor and wealthy, low born and high born, stupid and wise. Why is it, Master Gotama, that human beings are seen to be inferior and superior?"

4. "Student, beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior."

"I do not understand in detail the meaning of Master Gotama's statement, which he spoke in brief without expounding the meaning in detail. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach me the Dhamma so that I might understand in detail the meaning of his statement."

"Then, student, listen and attend closely to what I shall say."

"Yes, sir," Subha replied. The Blessed One said this:

5. "Here, student, some man or woman kills living beings and is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in a state of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell. But if on the breakup of the body, after death, he is not reborn in a state of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell, but instead comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is short-lived.¹⁴ This is the way, student, that leads to short life, namely, one kills living beings and is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.

6. "But here, student, some man or woman, abandoning the destruction of life, abstains from the destruction of life; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, he dwells compassionate to all living beings. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. But if on the breakup of the body, after death, he is not reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world, but instead comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is long-lived.¹⁵ This is the way, student, that leads to long life, namely, abandoning the destruction of life, one abstains from the destruction of life;

with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, one dwells compassionate to all living beings.

7. "Here, student, some man or woman is given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in a state of misery.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is sickly. This is the way, student, that leads to sickliness, namely, one is given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife.

8. "But here, student, some man or woman is not given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. Because of performing and undertaking such action, on the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in a good destination.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is healthy. This is the way, student, that leads to health, namely, one is not given to injuring beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife.

9. "Here, student, some man or woman is of an angry and irritable character; even when criticized a little, he is offended, becomes angry, hostile, and resentful, and displays anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a state of misery.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is ugly. This is the way, student, that leads to ugliness, namely, one is of an angry and irritable character ... and displays anger, hate, and bitterness.

10. "But here, student, some man or woman is not of an angry and irritable character; even when criticized a little, he is not offended, does not become angry, hostile, and resentful, and does not display anger, hate, and bitterness. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a good destination.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is beautiful. This is the way, student, that leads to being beautiful, namely, one is not of an angry and irritable character ... and does not display anger, hate, and bitterness.

11. "Here, student, some man or woman is envious, one who envies, resents, and begrudges the gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a state of misery.... But if instead

he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is without influence. This is the way, student, that leads to being without influence, namely, one is envious ... toward the gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others.

12. "But here, student, some man or woman is not envious, one who does not envy, resent, and begrudge the gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a good destination.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is influential. This is the way, student, that leads to being influential, namely, one is not envious ... toward the gains, honor, respect, reverence, salutations, and veneration received by others.

13. "Here, student, some man or woman does not give food, drink, clothing, carriages, garlands, scents, unguents, beds, dwelling, and lamps to ascetics or brahmins. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a state of misery.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is poor. This is the way, student, that leads to poverty, namely, one does not give food ... and lamps to ascetics or brahmins.

14. "But here, student, some man or woman gives food ... and lamps to ascetics or brahmins. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a good destination.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wealthy. This is the way, student, that leads to wealth, namely, one gives food ... and lamps to ascetics or brahmins.

15. "Here, student, some man or woman is obstinate and arrogant; he does not pay homage to one who should receive homage, does not rise up for one in whose presence he should rise up, does not offer a seat to one who deserves a seat, does not make way for one for whom he should make way, and does not honor, respect, revere, and venerate one who should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a state of misery.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is low born. This is the way, student, that leads to low birth, namely, one is obstinate and arrogant ... and does not honor, respect, revere, and venerate one who should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated.

16. "But here, student, some man or woman is not obstinate and arrogant; he pays homage to one who should receive homage, rises up for one in whose presence he should rise up, offers a seat to one who deserves a seat, makes way for one for whom he should make way, and honors, respects, reveres, and venerates one who should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated. Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a good destination.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is high born. This is the way, student, that leads to high birth, namely, one is not obstinate and arrogant ... and honors, respects, reveres, and venerates one who should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated.

17. "Here, student, some man or woman does not visit an ascetic or a brahmin and ask: 'Venerable sir, 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 harm and suffering for a long time? What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?' Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a state of misery.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is stupid. This is the way, student, that leads to stupidity, namely, one does not visit an ascetic or brahmin and ask such questions.

18. "But here, student, some man or woman visits an ascetic or a brahmin and asks: 'Venerable sir, what is wholesome?... What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?' Because of performing and undertaking such action ... he is reborn in a good destination.... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wise. This is the way, student, that leads to wisdom, namely, one visits an ascetic or brahmin and asks such questions.

19. "Thus, student, the way that leads to short life makes people short-lived, the way that leads to long life makes people long-lived; the way that leads to sickness makes people sickly, the way that leads to health makes people healthy; the way that leads to ugliness makes people ugly, the way that leads to beauty makes people beautiful; the way that leads to being uninfluential makes people uninfluential, the way that leads to being influential makes people influential; the way

that leads to poverty makes people poor, the way that leads to wealth makes people wealthy; the way that leads to low birth makes people low born, the way that leads to high birth makes people high born; the way that leads to stupidity makes people stupid, the way that leads to wisdom makes people wise.

20. "Beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior."

21. When this was said, the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama!... [as in preceding text] ... Let Master Gotama accept me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from today until life's end."

STOP

(MN 135: *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta*; III 202-6)

2. MERIT: THE KEY TO GOOD FORTUNE

(1) Meritorious Deeds

"Monks, do not fear meritorious deeds. This is an expression denoting happiness, what is desirable, wished for, dear, and agreeable, that is, meritorious deeds. For I know full well, monks, that for a long time I experienced desirable, wished for, dear, and agreeable results from often performing meritorious deeds.

"Having cultivated for seven years a mind of loving-kindness, for seven eons of contraction and expansion I did not return to this world. Whenever the eon contracted I reached the plane of streaming radiance, and when the eon expanded I arose in an empty divine mansion. And there I was Brahmā, the great Brahmā, the unvanquished victor, the all-seeing, the all-powerful. Thirty-six times I was Sakka, ruler of the devas. And many hundreds of times I was a wheel-turning monarch, righteous, a king of righteousness, conqueror of the four regions of the earth, maintaining stability in the land, in possession of the seven treasures. What need is there to speak of mere local kingship?

"It occurred to me, monks, to wonder: 'Of what kind of deed of mine is this the fruit? Of what deed's ripening am I now of such great