



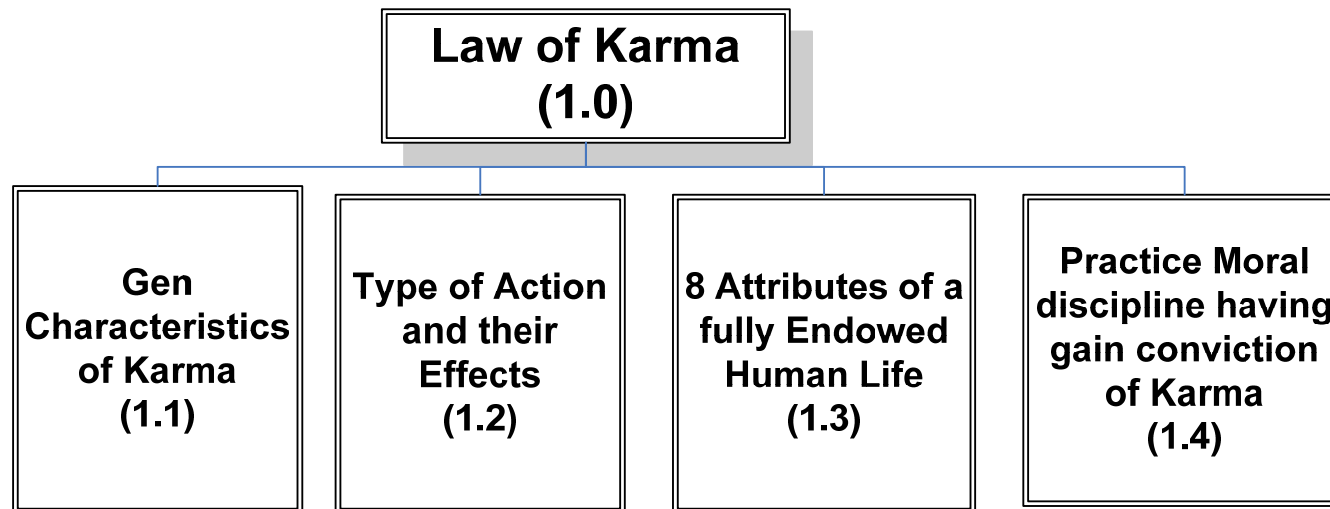
Karma



What we expect to
learn in this
Dharma talk on
Karma?



Road map on Karma





1.1

General characteristics of Karma?

1.1 Characteristics of Karma



There are four general characteristics of Karma:

- 1.1.1 The results of actions are definite
- 1.1.2 The results of actions increase
- 1.1.3 If an action is not performed its results cannot be experienced
- 1.1.4 An action is never wasted

1.1.1 The results of actions are definite



1. In Vinaya Sutras, Buddha says:

“For every action we perform, we experience a similar results”

2. In Wheel of Sharp Weapons, Dharmarakshita says:

“If we now experience any mental disturbance, it is becos in the past, we disturbed the minds of others and experiencing painful physical illness due to injury on others”

1.1.1A The results of actions are definite



2. In Wheel of Sharp Weapons, Dharmarakshita says (Cont'd):

Sufferings of thirst / hunger – selfishly stealing food and drinks of others

Experience oppression – looking down on others, beating others and demanding unreasonable work, attitude of contempt

Poverty – deliberately preventing others from obtaining necessities or destroying possessions

1.1.1B The results of actions are definite



2. In Wheel of Sharp Weapons, Dharmarakshita says (Cont'd):

Lack of good relationship with Spiritual Guide –
abandoning their advices, intentionally
disturbing their peace of mind, dishonest and
hypocritical towards them

3. Story of Nyempa Sangen – *ugly with melodious voice*

1.1.1C The results of actions are definite



4. By meditating, we develop the determination:

“I will abandon non-virtuous actions because suffering is their result and I will engage in virtuous actions because happiness is their result”

We then take this determination as our object of placement meditation

1.1.2 The results of actions increase



1. Even very small non-virtuous actions bear large fruits of suffering and very small virtuous actions bear large fruits of happiness.
2. Although we may create a very small non-virtuous action, as long as we fail to purify it, its power to produce suffering increases day by day

Story of a nun called Upala (Sufferings due to jealousy of other concubines)

1.1.2A The results of actions increase



3. By meditating:

“We develop a strong determination to avoid even the slightest non-virtue and to nurture even the smallest good thoughts and good deeds.

When this determination arises, do placement meditation.”

1.1.3 If an action is not performed its results cannot be experienced



1. In war, some soldiers died while others survived. Why, for those survivals, they did not create the cause to die at that time
2. Story of queen Nyo Sangma....*purifying non-virtuous actions by experiencing their effect...die*
3. Story of poor maidservant *Gurchog...escape the fire even though she had no miracle powers*

1.1.4 An action is never wasted

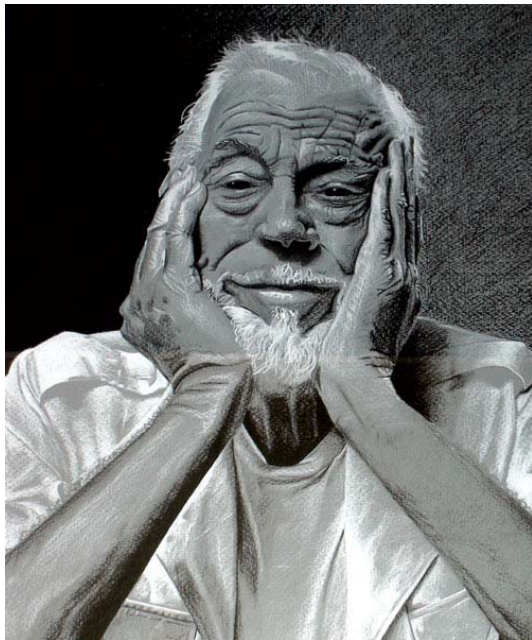


1. Buddha said: “The actions of living beings are never wasted even though hundreds of aeons may pass before their effects are experienced
2. Actions cannot simply vanish and we cannot give them away to someone else and thus avoid our responsibility.
3. Story of Shri Datta *who committed many extremely negative actions such as offering poisonous food to Buddha ... circumambulation of stupa in past.*

1.1.4A An action is never wasted



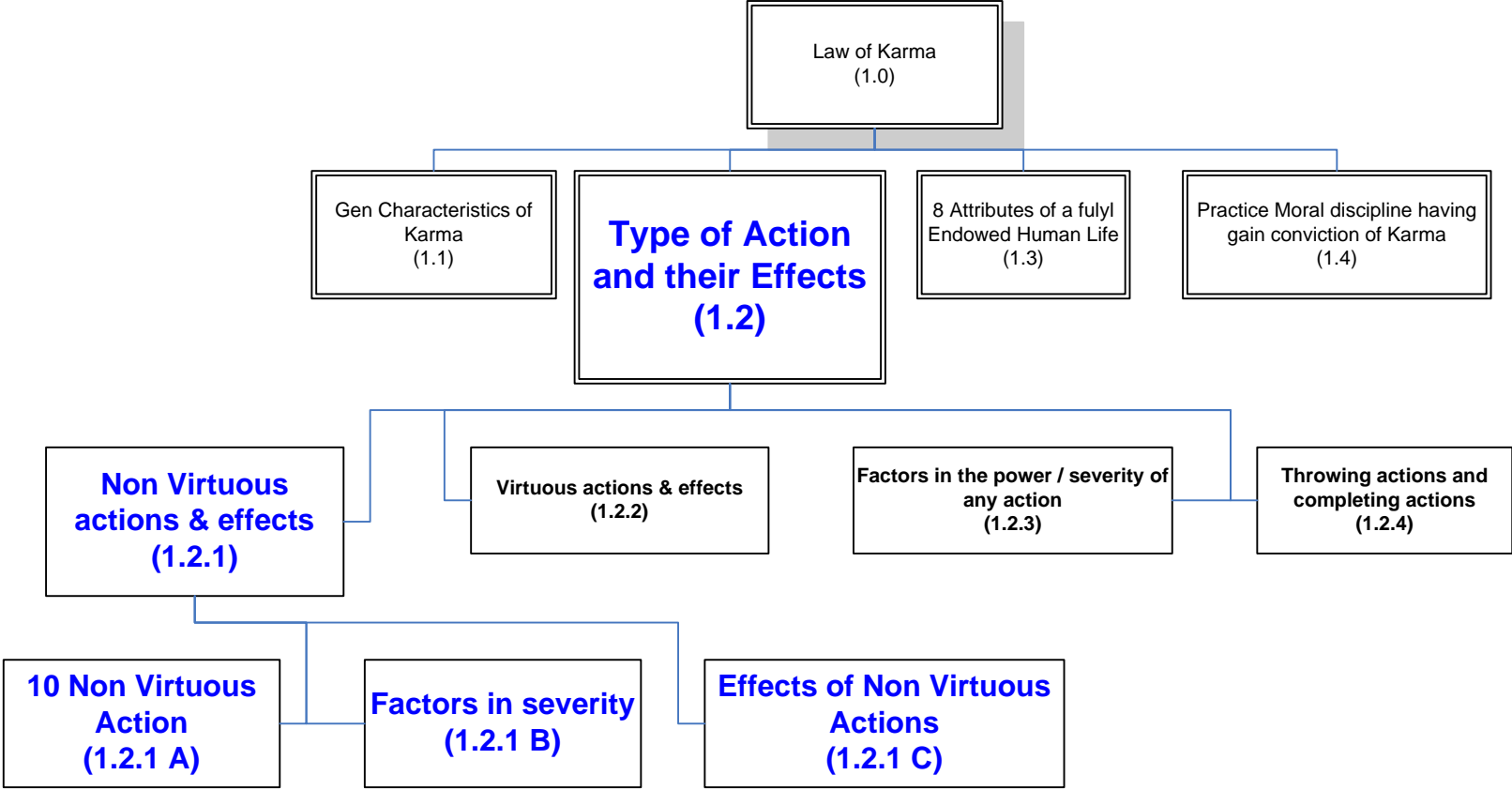
4. Guide to Middle Way, Chandrakirti says the moral discipline is the only cause of happy rebirths and liberation.
5. To practise moral discipline means to abandon negative actions having understood their dangers.



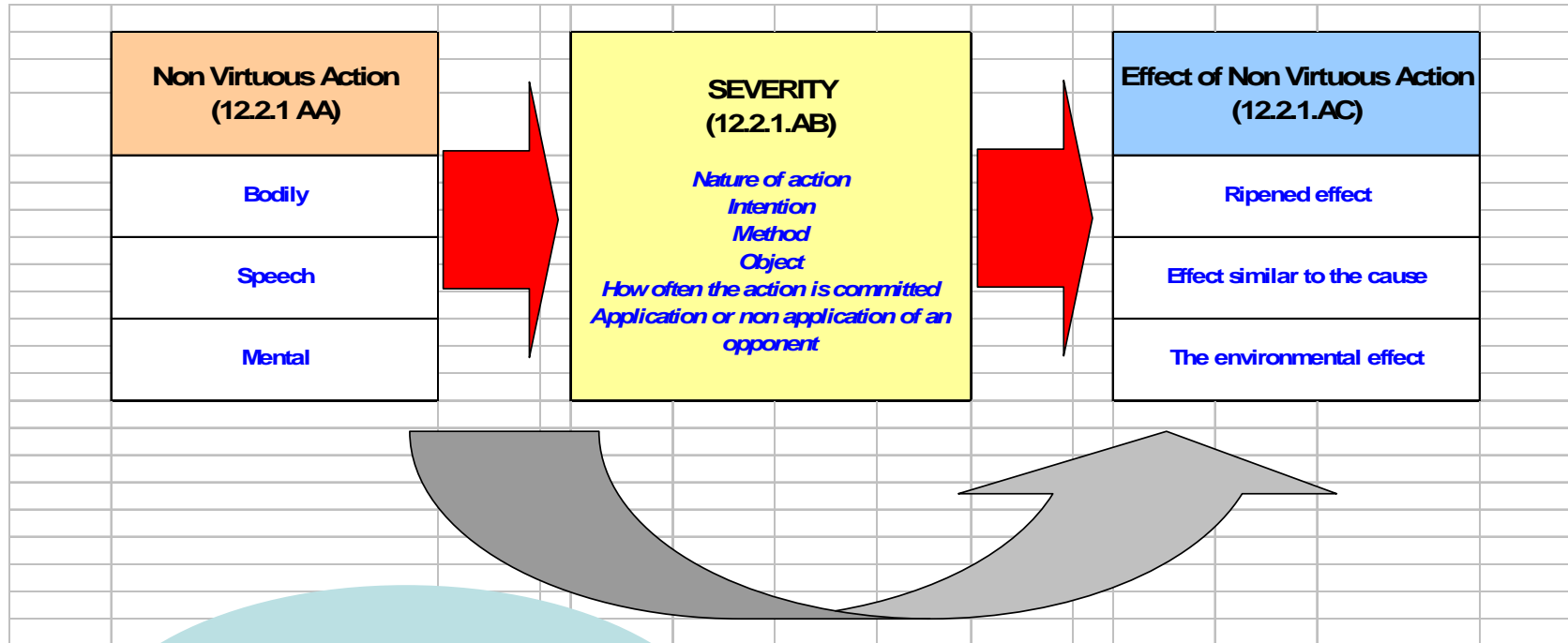
1.2

Type of action and their effects?

Roadmap: Types of Action & Their Effects



1.2.1 Overview of Non Virtuous Actions



The effect of non Virtuous action ripening depends on its severity committed.



1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions

		ABSTAIN / ABANDON
Bodily Action	1	Killing / Taking Life
	2	Stealing / Taking what does not belong to oneself
	3	Engaging in sexual misconduct (adultery, seduction etc)
Verbal Action	4	Speaking falsehood
	5	Speaking slanderous / divisive speech
	6	Speaking harshly / abusive
	7	Engaging in idle chatter, gossip
Mental Action	8	Covetousness, yearning for the possessions of others
	9	Ill will (Actively desiring harm, suffering and destruction to come to others)
	10	Wrong views (specially fixed wrong views which deny the efficacy of moral action)

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Killing)



OBJECT		Any being from smallest insect to Buddha
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correct identification of the person we intend to kill
	Determination	
	Delusion	Our determination to kill the person we have correctly identified
PREPARATION		Motivated by 3 root delusions. Directly or indirectly i.e., employing someone to kill for us
COMPLETION		Victim dies
Note:		
People who have power over others		<i>Personally responsible for all actions he commanded others to perform</i>
Group of people agree to perform		<i>Each individual incurs the result of killing</i>

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Stealing)



OBJECT		Anything that someone else regarded as their own
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object we are stealing
	Determination	Determination to steal
	Delusion	Usually attachment
PREPARATION		Many methods of stealing Example of devious method: (Bribery, blackmail, manipulation)
COMPLETION		Object stolen

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Sexual Misconduct)



OBJECT		<p>Vow of celibacy : Any other person</p> <p>Not celibate and have partner: Anyone else</p> <p>Not celibate and no partner: Any of the following (anyone else' partner, anyone with vow of celibacy, pregnant woman, animals or anyone who does not have consent)</p>
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify object of sexual misconduct
	Determination	Determine to commit
	Delusion	Desirous attachment or hatred or ignorance
PREPARATION		Many ways to engage in sexual misconduct
COMPLETION		Sexual bliss is experienced by means of the union of 2 sex organs

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Lying)



OBJECT		The object included anything within the eight factors:- a) What is seen / What is not seen b) What is heard / What is not heard c) What is experienced / What is not experienced d) What is known / What is unknown
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	Determine to lie
	Delusion	Any root delusion may be involved
PREPARATION		Many ways to engage in a lie
COMPLETION		Person to whom lie is directed has understood our meaning and believes what we have said or indicated.

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Divisive Speech)



OBJECT		2 or more people who have a relationship with one another. If relationship is good, divisive speech will destroy it completely. If relationship is bad, it will make it worse.
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	Determine to damage the relationship between people
	Delusion	Any of the three root delusions may be involved
PREPARATION		2 types: a) True but harmful to utter b) False (slander or propaganda) Many ways of carrying out divisive speech
COMPLETION		Good relationship is damaged or bad relationship is made worse off.

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Hurtful Speech)



OBJECT		Any person who can be hurt by what we say
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	To speak hurtfully
	Delusion	Must be influenced by delusion
PREPARATION		Many ways:_ a) Utter hurtful words out of desirous attachemt b) Sarcasm
COMPLETION		When the person to whom our action is directed understands our words, believes that they have been uttered in earnest and is disturbed.

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Idle Chatter)



OBJECT		Meaningless conversation
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	Determine to engage in conversation
	Delusion	Must be influenced by delusion
PREPARATION		<p>Many ways: _</p> <p>a) Utter everything that comes into the head</p> <p>b) Talking that is mindless or of no real benefit</p>
COMPLETION		When others have heard our words

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Covetousness)



OBJECT		Mental action of covetousness is anything that belongs to someone else (material possession, a job, someone's partner)
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	Determine to possess
	Delusion	Must be influenced by delusion
PREPARATION		Engage in the action by repeatedly considering how to obtain the object
COMPLETION		By choosing a particular method and decide to apply it to procure the object for oneself

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Malice)



OBJECT		Object of malice is any other person
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	Determine to express our malice towards them
	Delusion	Must be influenced by one of the root delusions
PREPARATION		By repeatedly considering how to harm someone else
COMPLETION		Complete the action when we choose our method and decide to put it into effect

1.2.1 A Ten Non Virtuous Actions (Holding Wrong View)



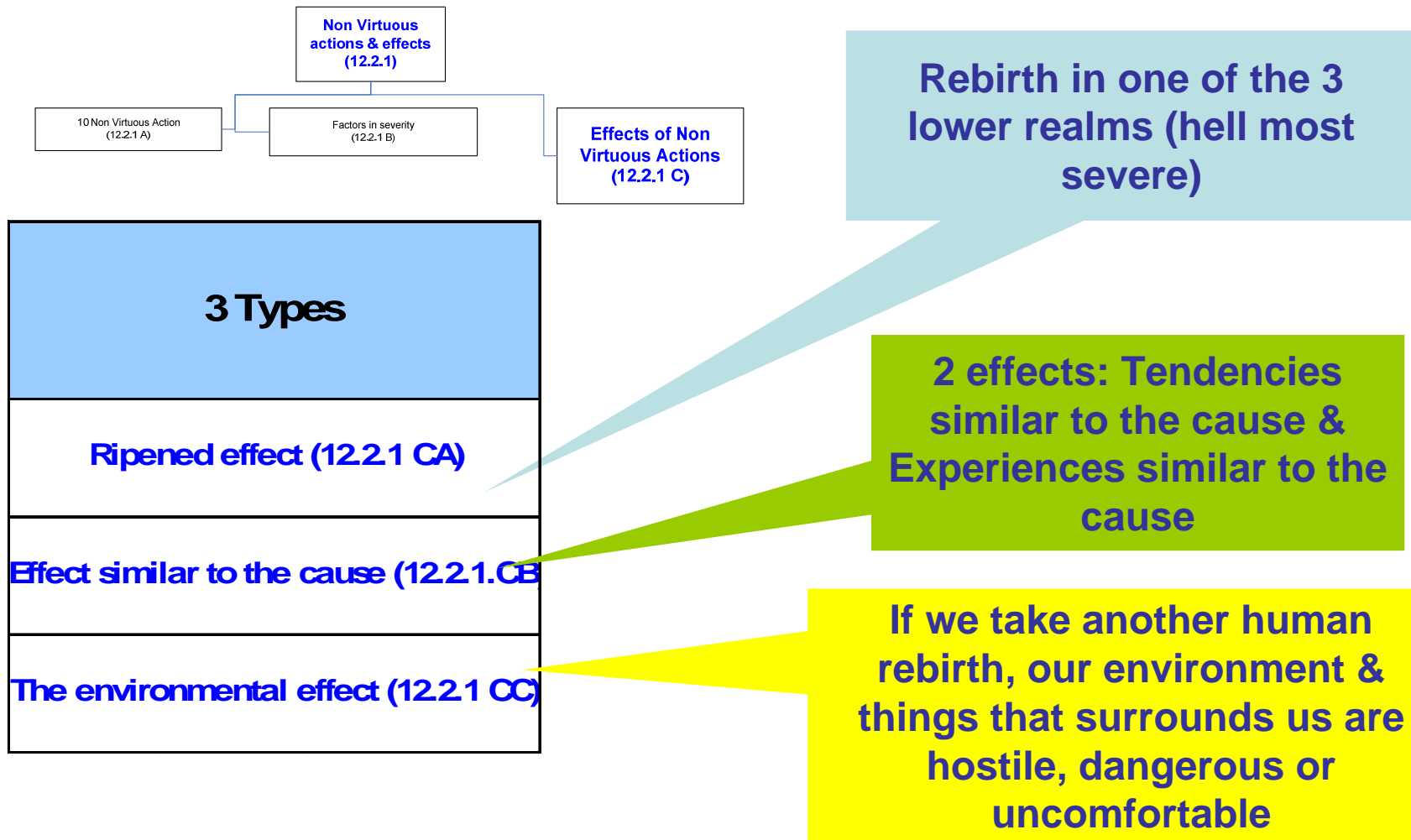
OBJECT		To attain liberation and enlightenment, there are certain objects we need to know i.e., a) Existence of past and future lives b) Law of karma c) 4 Noble Truths d) 3 Jewels
INTENTION	Discrimination	Correctly identify the object
	Determination	Engage in holding wrong view by repeatedly considering how to deny the object's existence
	Delusion	Must be influenced by root delusion
PREPARATION		Repudiating the object dogmatically, by using incorrect ways of reasoning, or by developing faith in someone who teaches wrong views
COMPLETION		Choose our method and decide to rely upon it in order to hold our wrong view tightly. At this point, we have closed our mind, and we have created the cause to experience the full negative result of our action.

1.2.1 B Factor in Severity



Severity	Explanation
Nature of action	Correspond to the degree of harm the action inflicts upon others
Intention	Depends on the power of delusion involved (e.g. killing with rage > killing with a mild anger)
Method	Chosen method to inflict upon others (killing swiftly is less destructive than killing by painful poisoning)
Object	Object of refuge or someone who is our beneficiary (e.g. parents)
Frequency	More often we perform a non virtuous action, the more powerful it becomes
Application / No application of an opponent	Power of non virtuous action is lessened when we perform virtuous as well.

1.2.1 C Effects of Non Virtuous Actions



1.2.1 CB Effect Similar to the cause



3 Types
Ripened effect (12.2.1 CA)
Effect similar to the cause (12.2.1.CB)
The environmental effect (12.2.1 CC)

1st effect:
Tendencies similar to the cause by continuing to have strong compulsion to repeat similar non virtuous actions. The effect is making it extremely difficult for us to avoid creating the cause for many future rebirths in lower realms

1.2.1 CB **Effect Similar to the cause**



2nd Effect: Experiences similar to the cause

Killing	Experience a short life Vitality is damaged by poor health
Stealing	Lack of wealth and possessions
Sexual Misconduct	Quickly separated from our friends and family Partners abandon us for someone else
Lying	No one trusts what we say People do not listen to our advice
Divisive Speech	Hard to develop harmonious relationships

1.2.1 CB Effect Similar to the cause



2nd Effect: Experiences similar to the cause (Cont'd)

Hurtful Speech	Other say “unpleasant” things to us and speak badly about us
Hard Speech	Someone hurts us by speaking offensively or sarcastically
Idle Chatter	People do not take seriously what we say
Covetousness	Desires are not fulfilled Fail to obtain what we want
Malice	Constantly prone to fear Panic in dangerous situation
Wrong View	Great confusion Difficult to develop wisdom Full of doubt when we hear Dharma

1.2.1 CB Effect Similar to the cause



Environmental Effect

If we take another human rebirth, our environment and things that surround us are hostile, dangerous or uncomfortable

Environmental Effect of:	Place we live in or reborn to have the following characteristics:
Killing	Poor, hard to find food and other necessities
Stealing	Barren, plants & crops will not flourish there
Sexual Misconduct	Unclean and breeds diseases
Lying	People cheat and deceive us, no one we can trust
Divisive Speech	Rugged and mountainous, little transport so people have to carry heavy goods

1.2.1 CB Effect Similar to the cause



Environmental Effect (Cont'd)

Environmental Effect of:	Place we live in or reborn to have the following characteristics:
Hurtful Speech	Dense undergrowth, plants that stings and tear our flesh
Idle Chatter	Fruit and crop do not grow properly or at the right time, and so they are wasted
Covetousness	Material resources are easily destroyed or lost, Body strength & beauty quickly degenerate
Malice	Ravaged by war and disease, continuous conflict
Wrong View	Lack water and resources quickly exhausted Nothing precious exists, no work of arts, scriptures or Spiritual Guides



1.2.2 Virtuous Actions & Effects

1.2.2 Virtuous Actions & Effects



Virtuous actions are paths that lead to temporary happiness of higher rebirths and ultimate happiness of liberation and full enlightenment.

Virtuous action is a restraint from one of the 10 Non virtuous actions.

Beneficial power, effects of virtuous actions “mirror” that of Non Virtuous actions in opposite

1.2.2A Examples of wholesome Karma



Generosity (Alobha)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Generosity / Dana2 Rejoicing in merit of others3 Transferring of merit
Goodwill (Adosa)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4 Morality5 Service to others6 Reverence
Knowledge (Amoha)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7 Meditation8 Listening to Dharma9 Teaching the Dharma10 Correction / Straightening one's erroneous views



1.2.3

Factors in the power of any actions

1.2.3A **Factors in the power of any actions (Person who is the object)**



**Action is more powerful if
it is performed towards
those who are kind and
helpful (Spiritual Guides,
Buddha, parents)**

1.2.3B **Factors in the power of any actions (Vows Taken)**



**If we take vows, all our actions
become more powerful.
Vows are the basis for accumulation a
great amount of merit.**

1.2.3C **Factors in the power of any actions (Object that is the instrument)**



**Example act of giving.....
Action is more powerful if
we give something that is
useful or helpful to other
person.**

1.2.3D **Factors in the power of any actions (The motivation)**



Action is more powerful if we perform them with strong motivation e.g., Go for refuge on a day we have taken the 8 Mahayana precepts



1.2.4 Contaminated actions – Definition and Type

1.2.4A **Contaminated Actions**



There are 2 types of contaminated actions:

- Throwing actions**
- Completing actions**



1.2.4Aa **Throwing actions**

❖ **What is Throwing action?**

So called becos it is the main course of a samsaric rebirth and so it is said to “throw” us into samsara.

- ❖ **Most of virtuous actions of ordinary beings are causes of samsaric rebirth becos they are tainted by self-grasping.**
- ❖ **Some of virtuous actions are not, such as visualizing Buddha and making offeringseven without good motivation.**

1.2.4Ab **Completing actions**



❖ **Definition of a Completing action?**

Main cause of an experience we have once we have taken a particular rebirth

- ❖ **Example:** Animals have been thrown into the animal world by non-virtuous actions, but their experiences as animals vary considerably depending upon their different completing actions

(Domestic pets experience a luxurious animal life, receiving more care and attention than some human beings).



1.3

Eight Attributes of a fully Endowed Human Life

We will discuss about:

- Advantages (1.3.1)**
- Functions (1.3.2)**
- Causes (1.3.3)**

1.3.1 Eight attributes of fully endowed human life (Their advantages)



Greatest advantage of the 8 attributes is that human life gives the very best opportunity to attain liberation and enlightenment in one lifetime.



1.3.2 Eight attributes of fully endowed human life (Their Functions)

Attributes	Explanation
Long Life	Enables us to fulfil our desires and completes our Dharma practice
Beauty	Makes it easier for us to attract disciples when we give Dharma instructions Help them to develop faith in us
High Status	Makes people trust us, obey us and follow our advice People assume we are honest and more inclined to listen carefully and consider what we say



1.3.2A Eight attributes of fully endowed human life (Their Functions)-Cont'd

Attributes	Explanation
Wealth and resources	Allow us to give generously More influence over people
Persuasive speech	Makes others trust what we say and take our words to heart.
Power and influence	Makes others comply with our wishes and put our instructions into practice.
Freedom and independence	We will not experience so many interferences to our practice
Strong Body	Perform virtuous actions of body Free from physical hindrances e.g, illness

1.3.3 Eight attributes of fully endowed human life (Their Causes)



If we sow good seeds in our field-like consciousness, we can be sure that they will ripen.....

Attributes	Causes
Long Life	Not to harm others Actively dispel dangers that threaten others' lives Help those who are in captive
Beauty	Overcome anger and intolerance with patience Offer light before images of Buddha Make statues or painting of Buddha Make stupa Give clothes to needy
High Status	Overcome pride

7.3.3A Eight attributes of fully endowed human life (Their Causes)-Cont'd



Attributes	Causes
Wealth and resources	Practise giving by making offerings to Three Jewels Giving wealth and resources to needy
Persuasive speech	Mindful of what we say and to abandon the 4 non-virtuous actions of speech
Power and influence	Practise prostration Respect others esp those who are powerful and influential over us (Teacher, parents)
Freedom and independence	Eliminate the problems and dangers that threaten others Help others gain own freedom and independence.
Strong Body	Help those who are physical weak to regain strength Avoid exploiting others physically



1.4

How do we practice Moral discipline having gain conviction of Karma?

1.4 Practice Moral discipline having gain conviction in the Law of Karma



To practise moral discipline, we need to:

- ✓ *Meditate again and again on the Law of karma, remembering the instructions and dwelling on the points / meanings we find helpful.*
- ✓ *When not meditating, we read books that explain working of Karma*
- ✓ *By contemplating and meditating, we develop conviction and become determine to abandon non-virtuous actions*

By practising in this way, our non virtuous potentialities will be purified and our mind will be free from obstructions



1.4A Practice Moral discipline having gain conviction in the Law of Karma (Cont'd)

At this stage, we can only gain general understanding of Karma. We cannot prove by reasoning, exactly how each individual action produces its own effect.

Only Buddha can see these relationships exactly.....



Additional Notes



1. Misconception of Karma

2. Practical illustration of working of Karma

3. Classification of Karma

4. Orders operating in physical and mental realms



1. Misconception of Karma



1. In Buddhism, karma is not pre-determinism, fatalism or accidentalism, as all these ideas lead to inaction and destroy motivation and human effort.
2. These ideas undermine the important concept that a human being can change for the better no matter what his or her past was.

1A. Misconception of Karma



Pubbekatahetuvada	The belief that all happiness and suffering arise from previous karma (Past-action determinism)
Issaranimmanahetuvada	The belief that all happiness and suffering are caused by the directives of a Supreme Being (Theistic determinism)
Ahetu-apaccayavada	The belief that all happiness and suffering are random, having no cause (Indeterminism or Accidentalism)



1. Misconception of Karma

2. Practical illustration of working of Karma

3. Classification of Karma

4. Orders operating in physical and mental realms



2. Practical illustration of working of Karma

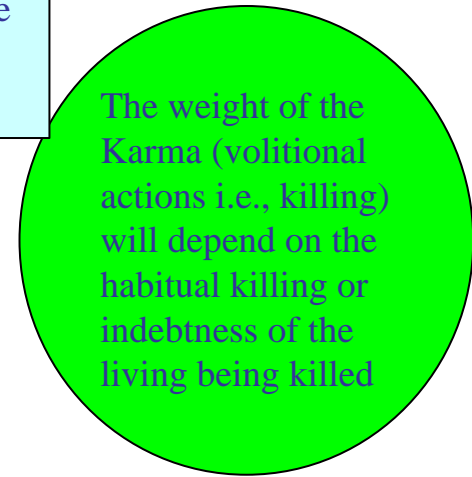
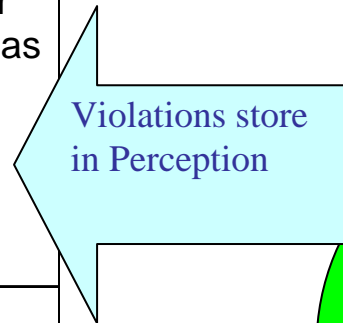


Table 2: Killing a Snake (Unwholesome action)

1. Awareness of Object / Contact	Object	Snake
	Sense Organ	Eye
	Sense Consciousness	Sight of Mr A + Eye Organ = Consciousness of an object (at this juncture snake not identified)



2. Personal experience	Perception	Labelling, identifying or recognizing the object as "SNAKE".
	Feeling	Feeling of displeasure
	Mental Formation / Violation	Feeling of displeasure with "SNAKE", thoughts and mental consciousness arise from the mind – good, bad, right wrong in line with the common nature of all thinking. In this case, the immediate destructive effects of hatred / fear – seizing a piece of stick / stone to kill the SNAKE.





1. Misconception of Karma
2. Practical illustration of working of Karma
3. Classification of Karma
4. Orders operating in physical and mental realms



3. Classification of Karma



Karma can be classified in respect to:-

- 3.1 Functions
- 3.2 Priority of Effect
- 3.3 Time in which effects are worked out
- 3.4 Plane / Realm in which Karma takes place

3.1 Functions



Karma can be classified by function into:-

3.1.1 Reproductive Karma

3.1.2 Supportive Karma

3.1.3 Obstructive / Counteractive Karma

3.1.4 Destructive Karma

3.1.1 Reproductive Karma



1. Every Birth is conditioned by a past good or bad karma, which predominated at the moment of death.
2. Karma that conditions the future birth is called Reproductive Karma

3.1.2 Supportive Karma



1. That which comes near the Reproductive Karma and supports it.
2. Neither good nor bad but it assists or maintains the action of Reproductive Karma (*e.g., moral supportive Karma assists in giving Health, Wealth, Happiness; whereas immoral supportive Karma assists in giving pain, sorrow etc.*)

3.1.3 Obstructive / Counteractive Karma



1. Tends to weaken, interrupt and retard the fruition of the Reproductive Karma.
2. For example, a person born with good Reproductive Karma may be subject to various ailments thus preventing him from enjoying the blissful results of his good actions.

3.1.4 Destructive Karma



Potential energy of the Reproductive Karma could be nullified by a mere powerful opposing karma of the past.

3.2 Priority of Effect



Karma can be classified by priority of effect:-

3.2.1 Weighty Karma

3.2.2 Proximate / Death Proximate Karma

3.2.3 Habitual Karma

3.2.4 Reserve / Cumulative Karma

3.2.1 Weighty Karma



1. Good – purely mental, as in cases of Jhana (ecstasy or absorption).
2. Immoral side: Matricide, Patricide, Murder of Arahant, Wounding of a Buddha and Creation of Schism in Sangha.

3.2.2 Proximate / Death Proximate Karma



This is what one does or remembers immediately before the moment of dying

3.2.3 Habitual Karma



1. It is that which one habitually performs and recollects and for which one has a great liking.
2. At the death-moment, unless influenced by other circumstances, one usually recalls to mind one's habitual deeds.

3.2.4 Reserve / Cumulative Karma



All actions that are not included in the **3.2.1 to 3.2.3** and those actions soon forgotten belong to this category

3.3 Time in which effects are worked out



Karma can be classified in according to the time in which effects are worked out:-

3.3.1 Immediate Effective Karma

3.3.2 Subsequent Effective Karma

3.3.3 Indefinitely Effective Karma

3.3.4 Defunct / Ineffective Karma

3.3.1 Immediate Effective Karma



1. Which is experienced in this present life.
2. If it does not operate in this life, it is called “Defunct or Ineffective” Karma

3.3.2 Subsequent Effective Karma



1. The next weakest is 7th thought moment.
2. Its effect one may reap in the subsequent rebirth.
3. This is called subsequent effective Karma

3.3.3 Indefinitely Effective Karma



1. If this too does not operate in 2nd birth, it is called Defunct / Ineffective Karma
2. The effect of the immediate thought-moments may take place at any time until one attains Nirvana.

3.3.4 Defunct / Ineffective Karma



Any actions that should operate their effects in this life or in a subsequent life, but do not operate, they are termed as Defunct / Ineffective Karma

3.4 Plane in which Karma takes place



Karma can take place in accordance to the plane of birth:-

3.4.1 Evil actions

3.4.2 Good Actions I

3.4.3 Good Actions II

3.4.1 Evil actions



Karma may ripen in the following sentient planes of existence:

*6 Celestial / heavenly planes + human plane
+ 4 Woeful planes*

(Ps: 31 plane of existence)

3.4.2 Good Actions I



Karma may ripen in the sentient planes except for the four woeful planes

3.4.3 Good Actions II



Karma may ripen in the Realm of Form



1. Misconception of Karma
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4. Orders operating in physical and mental realms



4. Orders operating in physical and mental realms



Orders / Process (Niyama) operating in physical and mental realms are:-

- 4.1 Utu Niyama (*Note*)
- 4.2 Bija Niyama
- 4.3 Karma
- 4.4 Dharma Niyama (*Note*)
- 4.5 Citta Niyama

Note - More or less mechanistic, though they can be controlled to some extent by human ingenuity and power or mind.

4.1 Utu Niyama



1. Physical inorganic orders, e.g., seasonal phenomena of winds and rains.
2. The unerring order of seasons, characteristic seasonal changes and events, causes of winds and rains, nature of heat, etc., all belong to this group.

4.2 Bija Niyama



1. Order of germs and seeds (Physical organic order), e.g., rice produced from rice-seed, sugary taste from sugar-cane or honey, peculiar characteristics of certain fruits etc.
2. The scientific theory of cells and genes and the physical similarity of twins may be ascribed to this order.

4.3 Karma



1. Order of act and result, e.g., desirable and undesirable acts produce corresponding good and bad results.
2. As surely as water seeks its own level so does Karma, given opportunity, produce its inevitable result, not in the form of a reward or punishment but as an innate sequence.
3. This sequence of deed and effect is as natural and necessary as the way of the sun and moon.

4.4 Dharma Niyama



1. Order of the norm, e.g., the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a Bodddhisattva in his last birth.
2. Gravitational and other similar laws of nature.
3. The natural reason for being good and so forth, may be included in this group.

3.5 Citta Niyama



Order or mind or psychic law,

e.g., processes of consciousness, arising and perishing of consciousness, constituents of consciousness, power of mind, etc, including telepathy, telesthesia (extrasensory perception), retro-cognition, premonition, clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading and such other psychic phenomena which are inexplicable to modern science.



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