AN 3.132 — Lekha Sutta (Carved in Stone)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

131. Lekha Sutta (Carved in Stone) Bhikkhus, there are these three types of people living in the world. What three?

The person who is like a line chiseled and carved into a solid rock; the person who is like a line drawn on sand; and the person who is like a line written on the surface of water.

And who, Bhikkhus, is that person who is like a line chiseled and carved into a solid rock?

Here, Bhikkhus, a person often gets angry, and this anger of his stays with him for a very long time. Much like the line chiseled and carved onto a rock that does not get erased quickly either by water or the wind, similarly, this irritable person often gets angry, whereby his anger stays with him for a very long time.

Bhikkhus, this is the person who is like a line chiseled and carved into a rock.

And who, Bhikkhus, is that person who is like a line drawn on sand?

Here, Bhikkhus, a person often gets angry, but unlike the previous one, his anger does not stay with him for a very long time. Much like the line drawn on sand that gets erased quickly by either water or the wind, similarly, this irritable person often gets angry, but his anger does not stay with him for long, for it dissipates with time.

Bhikkhus, this is the person who is like that line drawn on sand.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the person who is like a line that is written on the surface of water?

Here, Bhikkhus, even while spoken to with harsh, disagreeable, or rough words meant to injure and hurt him, such a person still does not get angry, but instead remains kind and on friendly terms with those same individuals, thinking little of the matter, much like the line written on the surface of water. Similarly with this person, who even while spoken to with harsh, disagreeable, or rough words that are meant to injure and hurt him, he does not get angry, and instead remains kind and on friendly terms with those same individuals, thinking little of the matter.

Bhikkhus, this is the person who is like a line that is written on the surface of water.

Bhikkhus, these are the three types of people living in the world.