AN 3.22 — Gilāna Sutta (Suffering from Illness)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

22. Gilāna Sutta (Suffering from Illness) Bhikkhus, there are these three types of people suffering from illness found in existence. What three?

Here, someone suffering will not be able to recover from his illness, whether he does or does not get suitable nourishment, suitable medicine, and a caring and competent caretaker to look after him.

Another ailing person is one who recovers from his illness, whether he does or does not get suitable nourishment, suitable medicine, and a caring and competent caretaker to look after him.

Finally, there is the suffering person who will recover from his illness only if he gets suitable nourishment, suitable medicine, and a caring and competent caretaker, but not if he is deprived of them.

Suitable nourishment, suitable medicine, and a caring and competent caretaker are intended to be used and administered especially for the one who will recover from his illness if and when he is

provided with the suitable nourishment, suitable medicine, and a caring and competent caretaker, but he will deteriorate if he is deprived of them.

However, given the benefit these factors have on this type of a person, the other suffering individuals must not be deprived of these resources of suitable nourishment, suitable medicine, and a caring and competent caretaker, for they too must be provided with these benefits.

These, therefore, are the three types of people suffering from illness found in existence.

Similarly, Bhikkhus, there are these three types of beings, much like those people suffering from illness that are found in existence. What three?

Here, someone will not be dedicated to a wholesome way of life, whether he does or does not come in contact with The Tathāgata, or whether he does or does not hear The Dhamma and The Discipline, taught and proclaimed by The Tathāgata.

Meanwhile, someone else will be dedicated to a wholesome way of life, whether he does or does not come in contact with The Tathāgata, or whether he does or does not hear The Dhamma and The Discipline, taught and proclaimed by the Tathāgata.

Finally, yet another person will be dedicated to a wholesome way of life, but only because he comes in contact with The Tathāgata and only because he is able to hear The Dhamma and The Discipline, taught and proclaimed by The Tathāgata.

Thus, providing the teachings of The Dhamma are intended especially for the person who will be dedicated to a wholesome way of life, but only if he comes in contact with The Tathāgata, and only if he is able to hear The Dhamma and The Discipline, taught and proclaimed by The Tathāgata, and not without the presence or teaching of The Tathāgata.

However, given the benefit that these factors have on this type of being, the other people too must be taught The Dhamma and The Discipline, taught and proclaimed by The Tathāgata, and not be deprived of them.

Bhikkhus, these are the three types of beings that are similar to those suffering from an illness, found in existence.