AN 3.34 — Nidāna Sutta (Causes)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

34. Nidāna Sutta (Causes) Bhikkhus, there are these three causes that are instigating factors, which develop into intentional actions (Kammā). What three?

Greed, as the basis, is a cause for kamma; anger, as the basis, is a cause for kamma; and delusion, as the basis, is a cause for kamma.

Bhikkhus, any greedy action caused by and born of greed, originating and arising from greed, ripens at the moment the person is reborn. When it thus ripens, the results of these past intentional actions are then consequently manifested either here and now, in the next birth, or in a subsequent birth.

Bhikkhus, any angry action caused by and born of anger, originating and arising from anger, ripens at the moment the person is reborn. When it thus ripens, the results of these past intentional actions are then consequently manifested either here and now, in the next birth, or in a subsequent birth.

Bhikkhus, any deluded action caused by and born of delusion, originating and arising from delusion, ripens at the moment the person is reborn. When it thus ripens, the results of these past intentional actions are then consequently manifested either here and now, or in the next birth, or in a subsequent birth.

Bhikkhus, imagine unspoiled and healthy seeds, that are not damaged or destroyed by either heat or the sun, and when planted at the right time, in a well-prepared field and with the rain also falling to nourish them, they would then germinate, grow, and fully develop.

In the same manner, Bhikkhus, any greedy action caused by and born of greed, originating and arising from greed, ripens at the moment the person is reborn. When it thus ripens, the results of these past intentional actions are then consequently manifested either here and now, in the next birth, or in a subsequent birth.

Similarly, Bhikkhus, any angry action caused by and born of anger, originating and arising from anger, ripens at the moment the person is reborn. When it thus ripens, the results of these past intentional actions are then consequently manifested either here and now, in

the next birth, or in a subsequent birth.

And, Bhikkhus, any deluded action caused by and born of delusion, originating and arising from delusion, ripens at the moment the person is reborn. When it thus ripens, the results of these past

intentional actions are then consequently manifested either here and now, in the next birth, or in a subsequent birth.

Bhikkhus, these are the three causes that are instigating factors, which develop into intentional actions (Kammā).

On the other hand, Bhikkhus, there are these other three causes that are instigating factors, which develop into intentional actions (Kammā), as well. What three?

Non-greed as the basis for action; non-anger as the basis for action; and non-delusion as the basis for action.

Bhikkhus, any non-greedy and equanimous action caused by and born of non-greed, originating and arising from non-greed, due to the absence of greed, fades and disperses the energy and magnitude of that very action, thereby uprooting it, and making it like a dead palm stump, never to rise again.

Bhikkhus, any non-angry and calmly considerate action caused by and born of non-anger, originating and arising from non-anger, due to the absence of anger, fades and disperses the energy and magnitude of that very action, thereby uprooting it, and making it like a dead palm stump, never to rise again.

Bhikkhus, any non-deluded and carefully reflected action, caused by and born of non-delusion, originating and arising from non-delusion, due to the absence of delusion, fades and disperses the energy and magnitude of that very action, thereby uprooting it, and making it like a dead palm stump, never to rise again.

Bhikkhus, imagine some unbroken, unspoiled and healthy seeds, that are not damaged or destroyed by either heat or the sun, ready to be planted in a well-prepared field. But a man comes along, burns all those seeds, turns them to ashes and blows them into the air, or disposes of them by putting them into a fast-flowing river.

In the same manner, Bhikkhus, any non-greedy and equanimous action caused by and born of non-greed, originating and arising from non-greed, due to the absence of greed, fades and disperses the energy and magnitude of that very action, thereby uprooting it, and making it like a dead palm stump, never to rise again.

Bhikkhus, any non-angry and calmly considerate action caused by and born of non-anger, originating and arising from non-anger, due to the absence of anger, fades and disperses the energy and magnitude of that very action, thereby uprooting it, and making it like a

dead palm stump, never to rise again.

Bhikkhus, any non-deluded and carefully reflected action, caused by and born of non-delusion, originating and arising from non-delusion, due to the absence of delusion, fades and disperses the

energy and magnitude of that very action, thereby uprooting it, and making it like a dead palm stump, never to rise again.

Bhikkhus, these are therefore the other three causes that are the instigating factors, which develop into intentional actions (Kammā), as well.

‘Whether born through greed, anger, or delusion, The ignorant one faces the effects of these, By tasting their fruits sooner or later, Whether they would be heavy or light, While still in this conscious body he is now reborn into. But the wise and calmly considerate Bhikkhu, Engaging in all that he does, with careful reflection, Equanimously abandons right here, any and all such Kammā, By cutting the very link that would have connected him to all miserable states.’