AN 4.115 — AN 4:115 Courses of Action | Ṭhāna Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Courses of Action

Ṭhāna Sutta (AN 4:115)

“Monks, there are these four courses of action. Which four? There is the course of action that is unpleasant to do and that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable. There is the course of action that is unpleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is profitable. There is the course of action that is pleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable. There is the course of action that is pleasant to do and that, when done, leads to what is profitable.

“Now as for the course of action that is unpleasant to do and that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable, one considers it as not worth doing for both reasons: because the

course of action is unpleasant to do, one considers it as not worth doing; and because the course of action, when done, leads to what is unprofitable, one considers it as not worth doing. Thus one considers it as not worth doing for both reasons.

“As for the course of action that is unpleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is profitable, it is in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of manly stamina, manly persistence, manly effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn’t reflect, ‘Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is profitable.’ So he doesn’t do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, ‘Even though this course of action is unpleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is profitable.’ So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him.

“As for the course of action that is pleasant to do but that, when done, leads to what is unprofitable, it is in light of this course of action that one may be known—in terms of manly stamina, manly persistence, manly effort—as a fool or a wise person. For a fool doesn’t reflect, ‘Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is unprofitable.’ So he does it, and thus the doing of that course of action leads to what is unprofitable for him. But a wise person reflects, ‘Even though this course of action is pleasant to do, still when it is done it leads to what is unprofitable.’ So he doesn’t do it, and thus the non-doing of that course of action leads to what is profitable for him.

“As for the course of action that is pleasant to do and that, when done, leads to what is profitable, one considers it as worth doing for both reasons: because the course of action is pleasant to do, one considers it as worth doing; and because the course of action, when done, leads to what is profitable, one considers it as worth doing. Thus one considers it as worth doing for both reasons.

“These are the four courses of action.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 45; MN 61; AN 3:2