Mil 3.3.11 — 11. Distinguishing Characteristic of Intention Question

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Examination Chapter

11. Distinguishing Characteristic of Intention Question

“Venerable Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing characteristic of intention?” “Willing and arranging, your majesty, are the distinguishing characteristics of intention.”

“Please give me an analogy.” “Just as, your majesty, some person or other might prepare a poison and drink it himself and get others to drink it, then he himself would become afflicted and others would become afflicted. In the same way, your majesty, some person here, through intention, would will an unwholesome action and on the break up of the body, after dying, would be reborn in a bad destination, a state of suffering, a hell realm. And those who followed him, on the break up of the body, after dying, would be reborn in a bad destination, a state of suffering, a hell realm.

Or just as, your majesty, some person or other might prepare a mixture of ghee, butter, oil, honey and molasses and drink it himself and get others to drink it, then he himself would become happy and others would become happy. In the same way, your majesty, some person here, through intention, would will a wholesome action and on the break up of the body, after dying, would be reborn in a good destination, a heavenly realm. And those who followed him, on the break up of the body, after dying, would be reborn in a good destination, a heavenly realm. So too, your majesty, willing and arranging are the distinguishing characteristics of intention.”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Distinguishing Characteristic of Intention Question eleventh