Mil 3.4.4 — 4. Question on the Workings of Different Kamma

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Nibbāna Chapter

4. Question on the Workings of Different Kamma

The king asked: “Venerable Nāgasena, why is it that not all people are the same? Some people are short-lived, others long-lived, some have much affliction and others little affliction, some are ugly and others beautiful, some have little power and others great power, some have little wealth and others great wealth, some come from an inferior clan and others from a superior clan, some are foolish and others are wise.”

The elder said: “Why then, your majesty, is it that not all trees are the same? Some are acidic, some are salty, some are bitter, some are pungent, some are astringent, and some are sweet?” “I think, venerable sir, that it is because of the difference in seeds.” “In the same way, your majesty, it is because of the difference in kamma that not all people are the same. Some people are short-lived, others long-lived, some have much affliction and others little affliction, some are ugly and others beautiful, some have little power and others great power, some have little wealth and others great wealth, some come from an inferior clan and others from a superior clan, some are foolish and others are wise. And this too was said, your majesty, by the Blessed One: ‘Young man, beings are the owners of their kamma, heirs to their kamma, born from their kamma, bound to their kamma, and protected by their kamma. Kamma divides beings into inferior and superior.’”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

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