SN 14.12 — With a Cause

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 14.12

Chapter Two

With a Cause

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts arise for a reason, not without reason.

And how do sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts arise for a reason, not without reason? The element of sensuality gives rise to sensual perceptions. Sensual perceptions give rise to sensual purposes. Sensual purposes give rise to sensual desires. Sensual desires give rise to sensual passions. Sensual passions give rise to searches for sensual pleasures. An unlearned ordinary person on a search for sensual pleasures behaves badly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

The element of malice gives rise to malicious perceptions. Malicious perceptions give rise to malicious thoughts. … malicious desires … malicious passions … malicious searches … An unlearned ordinary person on a malicious search behaves badly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

The element of cruelty gives rise to cruel perceptions. Cruel perceptions give rise to cruel purposes. … cruel desires … cruel passions … cruel searches … An unlearned ordinary person on a cruel search behaves badly in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

Suppose a person was to drop a burning torch in a thicket of dry grass. If they don’t quickly extinguish it with their hands and feet, the creatures living in the grass and wood would come to ruin.

In the same way, a corrupt perception might arise in an ascetic or brahmin. If they don’t quickly give it up, dispel it, eliminate it, and obliterate it, they’ll suffer in the present life, with distress, anguish, and fever. And when the body breaks up, after death, they can expect to be reborn in a bad place.

Thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness arise for a reason, not without reason.

And how do thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness arise for a reason, not without reason? The element of renunciation gives rise to perceptions of renunciation. Perceptions of renunciation give rise to thoughts of renunciation. The purpose of

renunciation give rise to enthusiasm for renunciation. Enthusiasm for renunciation gives rise to passion for renunciation. Fervor for renunciation gives rise to the search for renunciation. A learned noble disciple on a search for renunciation behaves well in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

The element of good will gives rise to perceptions of good will. Perceptions of good will give rise to thoughts of good will. … enthusiasm for good will … passion for good will … the search for good will. A learned noble disciple on a search for good will behaves well in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

The element of harmlessness gives rise to perceptions of harmlessness. Perceptions of harmlessness give rise to thoughts of harmlessness. … enthusiasm for harmlessness … passion for harmlessness … the search for harmlessness. A learned noble disciple on a search for harmlessness behaves well in three ways: by body, speech, and mind.

Suppose a person was to drop a burning torch in a thicket of dry grass. If they were to quickly extinguish it with their hands and feet, the creatures living in the grass and wood wouldn’t come to ruin.

In the same way, a corrupt perception might arise in an ascetic or brahmin. If they quickly give it up, dispel it, eliminate it, and obliterate it, they’ll be happy in the present life, free of distress, anguish, and fever. And when the body breaks up, after death, they can expect to be reborn in a good place.”