

14

(Kamma) Nidāna Sutta

The Discourse on the Causes (of Karma) | A 3.33 [A:Be 3.34]

Theme: The seed-like nature of karma

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2003, rev 2023

1 The 6 roots of action

1.1 As unawakened beings, all our actions are motivated by psychological “roots” (*mūla*). In the most systematized Abhidhamma, they are also called “causes” (*hetu*), or conditions, or specifically, “conditional cause” (*hetu paccaya*). They are the conditions whose presence determine the actual moral quality of a volitional state (*cetanā*), and the consciousness (*citta*) and associated mental factors (*cetasika*). In short, the roots decide the moral quality of karma.

1.2 The roots are traditionally given as **2 triads**, one wholesome or good (*kusala*) and one unwholesome or bad (*akusala*). They are listed as follows:

The 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*)

- (1) greed (*lobha*)
- (2) hatred (*dosa*)
- (3) delusion (*moha*)

the 3 wholesome roots (*kusala, mūla*)¹

- (4) non-greed (*alobha*) = charity²
- (5) non-hatred (*adosa*) = lovingkindness
- (6) non-delusion (*amoha*) = wisdom

1.3 According to **the Añña, titthiyā Sutta** (A 3.68),³ the 3 unwholesome roots arise and are reinforced by unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*), that is, not seeing the true nature of reality (especially not seeing impermanence), thus:

Greed arises and proliferates through unwisely attending to “a beautiful sign” (*subha, nimitta*).⁴

Hate arises and proliferates through unwisely attending to “a repulsive sign” (*paṭigha, nimitta*).

Delusion arises and proliferates through unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*).⁵

Thus, greed (*lobha* or *rāga*) comprises all degrees of attractedness towards an object from the faintest trace of a longing thought up to grossest egoism,⁶ whilst hatred (*dosa*) comprises all degree of “repulsion” from the faintest trace of ill-humour up to the highest pitch of hate and wrath.

(Buddhist Dictionary: *mūla*)

¹ “The 3 wholesome (*kusala*) roots—non-greed etc—though expressed in negative terms, nevertheless possess a distinctively positive character, just as is also often the case with negative terms in other languages: eg, the negative term ‘immortality,’ which has a decidedly positive character.” (BDict: *mūla*). For a helpful intro on this teaching, see Nyanaponika 1978.

² Incl renunciation (*nekkhamma*) and detachment (*anālaya*).

³ A 3.68.2/1:200 (SD 16.4).

⁴ On “signs” (*nimitta*), see **Nivaraṇa Pahāna Vagga** (A 1.2), SD 16.3 (5).

⁵ On “unwise attention” (*ayoniso manasikāra*), see **Nivaraṇa Pahāna Vagga** (A 1.2), SD 16.3 (6).

⁶ Clearly here egotism is meant. The Oxford University regards this as a “classic error”: “**egoism** and **egotism**: it is **egotism**, not **egoism**, that means ‘excessive conceit or self-absorption’; **egoism** is a less common and more technical word, for an ethical theory that treats self-interest as the foundation of morality”: <http://www.askoxford.com/betterwriting/classicerrors/confused/>. Some dictionary of modern English usage (eg the New Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary), however, nowadays accept either as giving the sense of *egotism*.

1.4 According to **the (Akusala) Kamma Nidāna Sutta** (A 10.174), the 10 unwholesome courses of action—taking of life, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, frivolous speech, covetousness, ill will and wrong view—are all caused by greed, hatred, or delusion, and as such are sources of the karmic chain (*kamma, nidāna, sambhava*). Only when they are destroyed will the karmic process end or suffering ends.⁷

1.5 In **the Channa Paribbājaka Sutta** (A 3.71), Ānanda admonishes the wanderer Channa how, under the power of the 3 unwholesome roots:

one thinks of harming oneself, of harming others, and of harming both;

one misconducts oneself through the body, through speech, and through the mind;

one does not understand what is beneficial or purposeful for oneself, for others, or for both—indeed, the 3 unwholesome roots “blinds one, makes one sightless, makes one ignorant, destroys wisdom, invites trouble, does not bring about nirvana.”⁸

1.6 **The Nīvaraṇa Pahāna Sutta** (A 1.2) goes on to mention greed and hatred—as sense-desire (*kāma-c, chanda*) and ill will (*vyāpāda*) respectively—to be *the first two mental hindrances* to mental focus and clarity—the key mental hindrances.⁹ When these two hindrances are overcome, the rest are easily overcome.¹⁰ In **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), the presence or absence of the 3 unwholesome roots forms a part of the contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*).¹¹

1.7 The very succinct **Ti,dhamma Pahanīya Sutta** (A 6.107) summarizes how the 3 unwholesome roots are to be overcome, thus:

SD 4.14(1)

Ti,dhamma Pahanīya Sutta

The Discourse on the Three Things to be Abandoned | **A 6.107**/3:445 f

Theme: The 3 unwholesome roots are to be abandoned

1 Bhikshus, there are these 3 things (*dhammā*). What are the 3?

2 **Lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*).** These are the 3 things.

Bhikshus, for the abandoning of these 3 things, 3 things should be cultivated. What are the 3?

3 For the abandoning of lust, the foul [the impure] (*asubha*) should be cultivated.¹²

For the abandoning of hatred, lovingkindness (*mettā*) should be cultivated.

For the abandoning of delusion, wisdom (*paññā*) should be cultivated.

Bhikshus, for the abandoning of these 3 things, these 3 things should be cultivated.

— evaṃ —

⁷ **(Akusala) Kamma Nidāna S** (A 10.174/5:261 f), SD 18.8; also SD 15.11(1). For a more detailed exposition, see **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205), SD 18.2.

⁸ **Channa Paribbājaka S** (A 3.71/1:215-217), SD 18.10.

⁹ See **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1(5D.2), and also **Nīvaraṇa Pahāna Vagga** (A 1.2), SD 16.3 (4).

¹⁰ See **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1(4.2).

¹¹ See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,34/1:59), SD 13.3.

¹² See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,10/1:57), SD 13.3(4).

2 The (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta

2.1 The (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta may be very short but is nonetheless very profound and important as it gives one of the most fundamental teachings on karma. There are 3 unwholesome roots of karma (greed, hatred and delusion) and 3 wholesome roots (non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion). In positive terms, the 3 wholesome roots are renunciation (*cāga = nekkhamma*), lovingkindness (*mettā*) and wisdom (*paññā*) (D 3:275).

2.2 However, as technical terms, non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion should be understood not as ordinary wholesome roots of action, but in connection with karma “that is neither black nor white, with neither black nor white results, which leads to the destruction of karma” (**Vitthāra Kamma Sutta** (A 4.232), that is, the intention in the cultivation of the noble eightfold path.¹³

2.3 Mundane actions arising from the 3 wholesome roots (renunciation, lovingkindness and wisdom), although regarded as “white karma with white results” (id) are still subject to arising again in the future, that is, they bring pleasurable fruits and good rebirths, and as such, tie one down to the cycle of life and death.

2.4 The (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta contains the well-known **parable of the seeds**, that is, karma are like seeds that sprout or do not sprout under the proper conditions¹⁴ [§§1.5-1.8]. The Aṅguttara Commentary explains the second parable (of the destroyed seeds) by saying that the seeds here represent the wholesome karma and unwholesome karma. The man who burns the seeds is the meditator and the fire is the knowledge of the noble path. The burning of the seeds is like the destruction of the defilements on attaining path-knowledge. The reduction of the seeds to ashes is like when the five aggregates are cut off at the root (as in the arhat who is no longer motivated by craving). When the ashes are winnowed away in the wind or carried away by the stream, it is like when the five aggregates utterly cease (with the arhat’s parinirvana), never again to arise in the cycle of life. (AA 2:223)

2.5 The closing stanza summarizes the profound teachings of the prose text. The essence of this teaching is that one who understands the true nature of karma and acts accordingly would, at worst, only face their results in this life without bringing them over into the next life.¹⁵ In **the Brahma, vihāra Sutta**, the liberation of mind (*ceto, vimutti*)¹⁶ leads the noble disciple to understand that

Whatever evil deed I did before with this physical body, their result will be experienced here
and they will not follow me.¹⁷ (A 10.208,2/5:299)

¹³ (**Vitthāra Kamma S** (A 4.232/2:230-232), SD 4.13).

¹⁴ For a comparison of consciousness to seeds, see **Bīja S** (S 22.54/3:54 f). For a comparison of consciousness to a seed, see **Bhava S** (A 3.76/ 1:223 f). For a poetic version of the vegetation parable, see **Selā S** (S 5.9/1:134c = v550). For similar parables (fields and seeds), see **Kūṭa, danta S** (D 5/1:127-149), SD 22.8 (3.2).

¹⁵ See a related and important discussion in **Sañcetanika S** (A 10.206/5:292), SD 3.9.

¹⁶ “Liberation of mind” is so called because the mind is liberated, by way of concentration, from lust. Liberation by wisdom is so called because the mind is normally liberated from ignorance through insight. When they are coupled and described as canker-free (*anāsava*), they jointly result from the destruction of the mental influxes by the supramundane path of arhathood.

¹⁷ Comy says “It will be a karma ripening in this existence (*diṭṭha, dhamma, vedanīya, kamma*). They will not follow one to the next existence because the ripening in the next existence (*upapajja, vedanīya*) has been cut off through the practice of lovingkindness. This passage should be understood as a reflection made by a streamwinner or a once-returner.”

This is referred to as “limited karma” (*pamāṇa, kataṃ kammaṃ*)¹⁸ in **the Tevijja Sutta** (D 13,77/-1:251) and **the Saṅkha(dhama) Sutta** (S 42.8/4:322), which is also mentioned in **the Brahma, vihāra Sutta** (A 10.208):

(Having reached dhyana,) he knows, ‘Formerly my mind was limited and undeveloped, but now my mind is boundless and well developed. Any limited karma that was done neither remains nor persists there.’ (A 10.208,1/5:299)

3 Karma as seeds and fruits

3.1 Some of our karma ripen in this life, some in a future life. As such, it is often compared to seeds,¹⁹ which, given the right conditions, would fruit, that is, take effect, which in turn become causal conditions for new karma, and so on. In the case of bad karma, these “right conditions” are greed (and delusion), hatred (and delusion), or delusion itself. It should be noted here that both greed and hatred are always tainted by some level of delusion, for which reason they are “bad.”

3.2 Karma works exponentially (it can multiply in leaps and bounds), fuelled by habitual tendencies. It is not like if you kill ten cockroaches you will be reborn ten times as a cockroach. Rather, each time you commit an unwholesome act (such as consciously killing), the likelihood for you to kill again (or be violent in some way) is reinforced. This sort of explanation is useful in that one does not need to speculate about future lives, but to work at spiritually elevating the present one.²⁰

3.3 According to the Aṅguttara Commentary, the seeds here represent the wholesome and the unwholesome karma. The person who burns them with fire (*agginā dahana, puriso*) represents the meditator (*yogāvacara*). The fire represents the knowledge of the noble path. The time when the person burns up the seeds is like when the meditator burns up the defilements with path-knowledge. The time when the seeds have been reduced to ashes is like the time when the 5 aggregates remain, but are cut off at the root (that is, during the arhat’s life, when he is no longer fed by craving). The time when the ashes have been winnowed in the wind or washed away by a stream, and can no longer grow, is like the time when the 5 aggregates utterly cease (with the arhat’s parinirvana) and never again arise in samsara. (AA 2:223)

3.4 In Buddhism, the result of karmic acts are called *phala* (“fruit”) or *vipāka* (“result”). Although in modern Buddhism, the 2 terms are generally used as if synonymously, they have important and interesting differences in the early texts. The term ***phala*** has the following senses:

¹⁸ “Limited karma,” *pamāṇa, kataṃ kammaṃ*, as in **Tevijja S** (D 13.77/1:251), **Saṅkha(dhama) S** (S 42.8/4:322) & **Brahma, vihāra S** (A 10.108,3.3/5:299). Comys say that “limited karma” refers to sense-sphere karma (*kāmāvacara, kamma*),” and “unlimited karma” (*appamāṇa, kataṃ kammaṃ*) refers to form-sphere karma. It is called ‘unlimited’ because it is done by transcending the limit; for, it is developed by way of specified, unspecified and directional pervasion” (DA 2:406; MA 3:450; SA 3:106; AA 5:77; ItA 1:92). SA on Saṅkha(dhama) S explains that “In the case of (simple) lovingkindness, this can be interpreted either as access concentration or as dhyana, but when it is qualified as ‘liberation of mind’ (*ceto, vimutti*) it definitely means dhyana (*jhāna*)” (SA 3:105). The point is that if a person masters the “liberation of mind by lovingkindness” at the level of dhyana, the karmic potential of this dhyana attainment will take precedence over sense-sphere karma and will generate rebirth into the form realm. See Vism 9.49-58/309-311 (S:B 1149 n346; A:B 315 n73).

¹⁹ It is important to understand here “seeds” is just an imagery, an idea, or model, used to help visualize or internalize the potential nature of karma to become bigger than what it originally is. Karma may also be compared to *energy*, but unlike energy, karma cannot be measured. See Gethin 1998:222 f.

²⁰ On why it is advantageous to believe in karma and rebirth, see **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,15b-16/1:192), SD 35.4a.

- (1) (lit) fruit (of trees, etc);²¹ the verb here is *phalati*, “it splits, bursts open” (intransitive) (A 1:77); the same verb *phalati* also means “it ripens” (V 2:108; J 3:251; PvA 185).
- (2) (fig) fruit, fruition, result; as a technical term this refers to the “path” (*magga*) and the progressive attainments (“fruition”), that is, the paths and fruitions, respectively of streamwinning, of once-return, of non-return and of arhathood: these attainers are commonly called “the eight noble individuals” (*aṭṭhâriya purisa, puggalā*)²²; in fact, in the Commentaries, these states are called *ariya, phala* (“the noble fruit”).²³ The Buddhist Dictionary defines this term (following the Abhidhamma tradition) as:

“it denotes those moments of supermundane consciousness which flash forth immediately after the moment of path-consciousness [sv *ariya, puggala*] and which, till the attainment of the next higher path, may during the practice of insight (sv *vipassanā*) still recur innumerable times. If thus repeated, they are called the ‘attainment of fruition’ (*phala, samāpatti*), which is explained in detail in *Vism ch 23*.” (BDict: *phala*)

- (3) (fig) fruit, fruition, result, consequence, that is, karmic result (in general).
- (4) (fig) blessing, benefit, as in the Sāmañña, phala Sutta, “the Discourse on the Fruits of Recluseship.”

The term, *vipāka*, has this sense:

vi- (prefix denoting fullness or intensifying) + √*pac*, “to cook” (this sense overlaps with “ripen”), “fruit, fruition, product” (always in the pregnant sense of “result, effect, consequence (of a karmic action),” usually either wholesome (*kusala*) or unwholesome (*akusala*); eg, “wherever that karma ripens, there one feels its effect” (*yattha taṃ kammaṃ vipaccati tattha tassa kam-massa vipākaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti*, A 3.34/1:134 passim).

3.5 AN ARHAT’S KARMA

3.5.1 An arhat’s feelings

The Sutta says that when one has uprooted the 3 unwholesome roots—as in an arhat—karma, too, is uprooted, “not to arise again” [§5[1-3]. It should be understood that this statement means the arhat does not create any new karma: his actions are all natural and spontaneous, joyfully done in non-greed, non-hatred, non-delusion.

So long as an arhat (like the Buddha) has a human body, living as a human (not in any of the form world or formless world), they will still feel what any normal human will feel (but without any greed, hatred or delusion). They feel tired; they feel the cold, the heat, etc; they feel pain. They also have a sense of aesthetic beauty, especially with nature.²⁴

And they, of course, feel the joy of dhyana. They also feel sadness at the suffering they notice, and at the moral or intellectual quality of the deeds of various individuals. However, they notice these feelings (that’s what they are, not emotions), and would act accordingly according to what is proper.²⁵

²¹ D 1:101; Sn 239; J 3:40; Tha 490.

²² M 7.7/1:37; A 6.10/3:286; cf Sn 227ab.

²³ DhA 1:230, 3:159; *Vism* 669, 702.

²⁴ **Mahā, parinibbāna S** records the Buddha as appreciating “delightful is Vesāli” and its various tree-shrine (D 16,- 3.2/2:102), SD 9.

²⁵ On **The Buddha’s feelings**, see SD 36.2 (5.8).

3.5.2 An arhat's past karma

Although an arhat does not create new karma, they will—under the right conditions—feel the effects of present conditions (like after a long sitting meditation, or walking on a long journey), and some past karma, whether good or bad, may fruit under such conditions, as in the case of the Buddha,²⁶ and of Aṅgulimāla.²⁷

Hence, §5 does not mean that an arhat's past karma does not fruit while they live (they do), but that the karmic fruits are defunct with the arhat's passing, since there will be no further life-continuum (*bhav'aṅga*) within which such karmic fruits could arise.

3.5.3 On *lobhe vigata*, etc [§5]

Regarding this key Sutta passages:

Bhikshus, an action [karma] done in **non-greed** [charity], born in non-greed, caused by non-greed, arisen from non-greed [... *the same for* non-hatred *and* non-delusion] —once greed [... hatred ... delusion] is gone (*lobhe vigata*) [§5 n], that karma is thus abandoned, cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump, rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again. [§5]

Brahmali also notes as follows:

"There must be a distinction here between 'non-greed' (*alobha*) and the situation when 'greed has vanished' (*lobhe vigata*). The former must refer to the motivation behind a particular action, the latter to the full uprooting of greed, attained only by the non-returner or even the arhat. Only in the light of this distinction does this statement make sense." (A:B 1640 n373)

4 Karma: 2 kinds or 3 kinds?

4.1 In §1.3 of the (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta (A 3.33), we see the phrase *diṭṭh'eva dhamme uppajjaṃ vā apare vā pariyāye* referring to the kinds of karma in temporal terms of resulting (*vipāka*) or fruiting (*phala*). Buddhaghosa, in his Visuddhi, magga and Commentaries, apparently "corrects" *uppajjaṃ* or *uppajjaṃ* to *uppajje* as a tatpuruṣa ("that which arises in a rebirth").²⁸ Consequently, he comes up with a threefold division of karma according to the time of their ripening or fruiting, namely:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) karma experienced in the present life | (<i>diṭṭha, dhamma, vedanīya</i>); |
| (2) karma experienced in the following life | (<i>upapajja, vedanīya</i>); and |
| (3) karma experienced in a subsequent life | (<i>apara, pariyāya, vedanīya</i>). ²⁹ (AA 2:210, 222) |

4.2 Scholars like the German Buddhologist Oskar von Hinüber (1971) have noted that the threefold categorization of karma found in some Theravāda texts is due to the misunderstanding of the absolute

²⁶ On the Buddha's past karma, see Pubba, kamma, piloti (kā) (Ap 387/1:299-301) in *The Buddha and His Disciples*, Singapore, 2002b, 2013 ch 23. <http://sites.google.com/site/dharmafarer/home/books-by-piya-tan>.

²⁷ On his past karma as an arhat, see Aṅguli, māla S (M 86,16-33/2:104 f), SD 5.11.

²⁸ A 1:134,23,28 = 135,2; 5:292,4 = 294,28 = 297,10 = 298,17 = *anantare atta, bhāve*, AA 5:76; Vism 19.14/601; cf *upapajja, vedanīyaṃ kammaṃ* (Kvu 611,23). See also A 10.206+207, SD 3.9.

²⁹ Often *apara, pariyāya* is confused with *aparāpariya* (from *aparāparam*, "another and another, various, ever following"), which then means "a series (of rebirths)"; the locative form, *aparāpariye*, "at some later time" (KhpA 143,15) (*diṭṭha, dhamme...samparāye...~*). See CPD: *aparāpariyāya*. See also Sañcetanika S (A 10.206), SD 3.9 (1.1.2).

upapajja or *upapajjam* [1b]. The British philologist **K R Norman** summarizes this interesting problem, giving us this important and helpful explanation:

Sometimes the commentary explanation has had an insidious effect upon the canonical text, ie what was originally written in the commentary was sometimes included in the text (as “glosses”), or had an effect upon the words in the text, in that the text was changed to fit their meaning given by the commentary. It has been pointed out [Hinüber 1971: 241-249] that the three-fold categorization of *kamma* (*karma*), which is found in some Theravādin canonical texts, is due to the misunderstanding of the absolutive *upapajja* or *upapajjam*.³⁰ This was thought to be incorrect, and was consequently “corrected” to the “locative” *upapajje*. As a result of this, what had originally been a two-fold classification, ie “one who feels the result [of a bad deed] in the here and now or, having been reborn, in some future period” became “...in the here and now, or in (a future) rebirth, or in some future period.” This misinterpretation seems to have come into existence in a 15th century *ṭīkā* on the Nettippakaraṇa, from which it was introduced into manuscripts of the Netti itself, and then into manuscripts of the Majjhima-nikāya and the Aṅguttara-nikāya, on which the Netti passage was based. (Norman 1997: 166; emphases added)

4.3 Such a hermeneutical development is understandable and common in all living religions. There is always a need to systematize and explain the teachings. In fact, **the Visuddhi,magga** further adds a fourth category, “lapsed karma” (*ahosi,kamma*), quoting **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, “There has been (*ahosi*) karma, there has been no karma-result, there will be no karma-result” (Pm 2:78; Vism 19.14/601). This refers to non-existent karma, that is, those that no more bear fruit (as when one attains arhathood).³¹

4.4 However useful such an idea may be, it should be noted that it is not attested in the early Canon. The Suttas, such as **the Deva,daha Sutta** (M 101), simply speaks only of 2 kinds of karma in terms of time of ripening or fruiting, that is,

- (1) a karma “to be experienced here and now” (*diṭṭha.dhamma,vedanīya*) and
- (2) a karma “to be experienced in another life” (*samparāya,vedanīya*).³²

As such, I have here, while aware of the commentarial hermeneutics, preferred the reading *upapajjam* or *uppajjam* (rather than vl *uppajje*) and rendered the passage in keeping with the sutta tradition [§2 n].

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³⁰ The extension of an absolutive by a nasal can be found elsewhere in Pali: see Geiger 1994 §214; 2000: §215.

³¹ See **Deva,daha S** (M 101,20/2:221), SD 18.4.

³² M 101,20/2:221, SD 18.4.

(Kamma) Nidāna Sutta

The Discourse on the Causes (of Karma)

A 3.33

The 3 unwholesome roots

[134]

1 Bhikshus, there are these 3 causes³³ for the arising of karma.

What are the three?³⁴

Greed	(<i>lobha</i>)	is a cause for the arising of karma.
Hatred	(<i>dosa</i>)	is a cause for the arising of karma.
Delusion	(<i>moha</i>)	is a cause for the arising of karma.

The 3 kinds of unwholesome karma

2 Bhikshus, an action [karma] done in **greed**, born in greed, caused by greed, arisen from greed, ripens wherever the individual is reborn.

wherever the individual is reborn,	there the karma will ripen;
wherever the karma ripens,	there the individual feels the fruit of that karma,
be it <i>in this life or,</i>	<i>having been reborn, in the next life or in a subsequent life.</i> ³⁵

2.2 Bhikshus, an action done in **hatred**, born in hatred, caused by hatred, arisen from hatred:

wherever the individual is reborn,	there the karma will ripen;
wherever the karma ripens,	there the individual feels the fruit of that karma,
be it <i>in this life or,</i>	<i>having been reborn, in the next life or in a subsequent life.</i>

2.3 Bhikshus, an action done in **delusion**, born in delusion, caused by delusion, arisen from delusion,

wherever the individual is reborn,	there the karma will ripen;
wherever the karma ripens,	there the individual feels the fruit of that karma,
be it <i>in this life or,</i>	<i>having been reborn, in the next life or in a subsequent life.</i>

³³ *Nidānāni*, pl of *nidāna* (ts), from *ni*, “down” + *dāna* (√DĀ, to bind): (n) tying down to; ground (lit & fig), foundation, occasion, introduction (giving context); source, origin, cause, antecedent; underlying or determining factor; reason, reference. On conditionality, or *nidāna* as a “link” in dependent arising, see **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (8.1).

³⁴ These 3—greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*)—are generally called “the roots of the unwholesome” (*akusala, mūla*): see above: (1) The 6 roots.

³⁵ The readings vary: Be *diṭṭhe vā dhamme upapajja vā apare vā pariyāye* [Be:Ka *aparāpare vā*]; Ce *diṭṭhe vā dhamme upapajje vā apare vā pariyāye*; Ee *diṭṭhe’va dhamme uppajje vā apare vā pariyāye*; Se *diṭṭhe’va dhamme upapajje vā apare vā pariyāye*. Follow the reading *upapajjaṃ* or *uppajjaṃ* (rather than vl *uppajje*) & Norman 1997: 166, I have here tr in keeping with the sutta tradition. Buddhaghosa “corrects” *upapajjaṃ* here and elsewhere to be a tatpurusha, as *upapajje* or *uppajje* (A 1:134,23,28 = 135,2; 5:292,4 = 294,28 = 297,10 = 298,17 = *anantare attā, bhāve*, AA 5:76; Vism 19.14/601); cf *upapajja, vedanīyaṃ kammaṃ* (Kvu 611,23). Comy explains this sentence (wherever it occurs) as relating “3 kinds of karma” (*tīṇi kammāni*, according to the time of their ripening (*vipāka*) or fruition (*phala*) (AA 2:210, 222): see above: (4) Karma: 2 kinds or 3 kinds?

Karma are like seeds

3 Bhikshus, just as seeds that are undamaged, not rotten, unspoiled by wind and sun, viable,³⁶ well planted in a good field, sown in well-prepared soil
—bhikshus, just as when the rainfall is right for them,³⁷
bhikshus, these seeds will be able to grow, sprout and flourish.³⁸

3.2 Even so, bhikshus, when an action is done in **greed**,
born in greed, caused by greed, arisen from greed,
wherever the individual is reborn, there the karma will ripen;
wherever the karma ripens, there the individual feels the fruit of that karma,
be it *in this life or, having been reborn, in the next life or in a subsequent life*.

3.3 Even so, bhikshus, when an action is done in **hatred**,
born in hatred, caused by hatred, arisen from hatred,
wherever the individual is reborn, there the karma will ripen;
wherever the karma ripens, there the individual feels the fruit of that karma,
be it *in this life or, having been reborn, in the next life or in a subsequent life*.

3.4 Even so, bhikshus, when an action is done in **delusion**,
born in delusion, caused by delusion, arisen from delusion,
wherever the individual is reborn, there the karma will ripen;
wherever the karma ripens, **[135]** there the individual feels the fruit of that karma,
be it *in this life or, having been reborn, in the next life or in a subsequent life*.

These, bhikshus, are 3 causes for the arising of karma.

The 3 wholesome roots

4 Bhikshus, there are **3 causes for the arising of karma**.
What are the three?

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) <u>Non-greed</u> | is a cause for the arising of karma. |
| (2) <u>Non-hatred</u> | is a cause for the arising of karma. |
| (3) <u>Non-delusion</u> | is a cause for the arising of karma. |

³⁶ "Viable," *sāradāni*, (of seeds) "fresh" (D 3:354 = A3:404); fr *sārada*, "autumn." Also fr *sāra*, "essence."

³⁷ "Proper and timely rain," *devo ca sammā dhāraṃ*, lit "right and seasonable rain."

³⁸ *Seyyathāpi bhikkhave bijāni akhaṇḍāni apūtīni avātātapa, hatāni sārādāni sukha, sayitāni sukhetta supari, kamma, katāya bhūmiyā nikkhattāni, devo ca sammā dhāraṃ anuppaveccheyya, evassu tāni bhikkhave bijāni vuddhiṃ virūḷhiṃ vepullāṃ āpajjeyyurū*. Stock: **Pāyāsi S** (D 23,31/2:353 f :: DA 813,21) = **Bīja S** (S 22.54/3:54) = **Sarakāni S 2** (S 55.25/5:380) = **(Kamma) Nidāna S** (A 3.33/1:135).

The 3 unwholesome karmas uprooted

5 (1) Bhikshus, in the case of an action [karma] done in **non-greed** [charity], born in non-greed, caused by non-greed, arisen from non-greed —once greed is gone,³⁹ that karma is thus abandoned, *cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump, rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again.*⁴⁰

(2) Bhikshus, in the case of an action done in **non-hatred**, born in non-hatred, caused by non-hatred, arisen from non-hatred —once hatred is gone, that karma is thus abandoned, *cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump, rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again.*

(3) Bhikshus, in the case of an action done in **non-delusion**, born in non-delusion, caused by non-delusion, arisen from non-delusion —once delusion is gone, that karma is thus abandoned, *cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump, rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again.*

Total destruction of karma

6 Bhikshus, just as **seeds** that are undamaged, not rotten, unspoiled by wind and sun, [136] viable, well planted in a good field, sown in well-prepared soil —if a person were to **burn** them in a fire, the fire reduced them to ashes. Then, the ashes were winnowed in a strong wind, or he were to let the ashes be carried away by swift currents in a stream.⁴¹

6.2 In this way, bhikshus, these seeds— *are cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump, rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again.*⁴²

³⁹ “Bhikshus ... is gone,” *yaṃ bhikkhave alobha, pakataṃ kammaṃ alobhajāṃ amoha, nidānaṃ amoha, samudayaṃ lobhe vigate.* [3.5.3]

⁴⁰ *Ucchinna, mūlaṃ tālā, vatthu, kataṃ anabhāva, kataṃ āyatim anuppāda, dhammaṃ.* The positive aspects of these 3 wholesome roots are non-greed (renunciation), non-hate (lovingkindness) and non-delusion (wisdom). On the nature of these wholesome karmic types, see above: (1) The 6 roots. On an arhat’s karma: [3.5].

⁴¹ “If a person were to burn them...swift currents in a stream,” *tāni puriso agginā daheyya, agginā dahitvā masiṃ kareyya, masiṃ karitvā mahāvāte vā opuṇeyya, nadiyā vā sīgha, sotāya pavāheyya.* As in **Mahā Rukkha S** (S 12.56.4/2:88).

⁴² In positive terms, *non-greed* is charity, renunciation, detachment, *non-hate* is lovingkindness, and *non-delusion* is wisdom. Here, the phrase, “will not be able to arise again, etc,” should be carefully noted: the action arisen from non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion here should be understood, not as an ordinary wholesome action, but as “karma that is neither black nor white, with neither black nor white results, that leads to the destruction of karma,” ie the mind set on cultivating the noble eightfold path. The worldly karma arising from the three wholesome roots, on the other hand, brings about “white karma with white result,” bringing wholesome fruits resulting in a happy rebirth. See **(Vitthāra) Kamma S** (A 4.232/2:230-232), SD 18.10.

7 (1) Even so, bhikshus, wherever an action is done in **non-greed**, born in non-greed, caused by non-greed, arisen from non-greed

—once *greed* is gone, that karma is thus abandoned,
cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump,
rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again.

(2) Even so, bhikshus, wherever an action is done in **non-hatred**, born in non-hatred, caused by non-hatred, arisen from non-hatred

—once *hatred* is gone, that karma is thus abandoned,
cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump,
rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again.

(3) Even so, bhikshus, wherever an action is done in **non-delusion**, born in non-delusion, caused by non-delusion, arisen from non-delusion

—once *delusion* is gone, that karma is thus abandoned,
cut off at the root, made barren like a palm-tree stump,
rendered unable to come into being, of a nature not to arise again

8 These, bhikshus, are 3 causes for the arising of karma.

<p>9 <i>Lobhajaṃ dosajaṃ c'eva mohajaṃ cāp'aviddasu</i>⁴³ <i>yaṃ tena pakataṃ kammaṃ appaṃ vā yadi vā bahum</i> <i>idh'eva taṃ vedaniyaṃ vatthu aññaṃ na vijjati</i>⁴⁵ </p>	<p>Whatever karma the ignorant has done, born of greed, born of hatred, and born of delusion, whether little or much is felt right here;⁴⁴ no other ground is found.⁴⁶</p>	<p>c a b</p>
<p>10 <i>Tasmā lobhañ ca dosañ ca</i>⁴⁷ <i>mohajaṃ cāpi viddasu</i> ⁴⁸ <i>vijjaṃ uppādayaṃ bhikkhu sabbā duggatiyo jahe ti</i> </p>	<p>Therefore, the wise should abandon (any act) born of greed, born of hatred and born of delusion. A monk, giving rise to wisdom, abandons⁴⁹ all suffering states.</p>	<p>d ab b</p>

⁴³ See n for line f (*vatthu ...*).

⁴⁴ On “right here” (*idh'eva*) “no other ground is found” (*vatthum aññaṃ na vijjati*): see foll n.

⁴⁵ Be Ce AA:Be AA:Ce so; Ee Se *vatthum aññaṃ na vijjati*. Comy explains verse 9: “Whatever karma the blind, ignorant one (*avidū andha, bālo*) has created, born of greed, hatred and delusion—whether that karma be little or much—it is felt right here (*idh'eva taṃ vedaniyaṃ*), that is, it is to be experienced by the fool here in his very own individual being (*idha sake attabhāve yeva*). **No other ground [place] is found** (*vatthum aññaṃ na vijjati*) for the ripening of that karma; for the karma done by one person does not ripen in another's being” (AA 2:223,26-224,5).

⁴⁶ On this teaching is referred to as *pamāṇa, kataṃ kammaṃ*, see Intro (2) n on “limited karma.”

⁴⁷ Note that Comy reads *lobhaṃ* and *dosam* as *lobhajaṃ* and *dosajaṃ* respectively.

⁴⁸ **10ab**: Be Ce AA:Be AA:Ce *mohajaṃ cāp'aviddasu*.; Ee *mohañ cāpi viddasu* (7 syllables; the rest are 8 each, in sloka). Reading corrected: Comy supplies the missing verb and direct object for *mohajaṃ* (AA 2:223,26), and explains: “Therefore, the wise (*vidū medhavi paṇḍito*) does not create that karma born of greed and so forth (*yo vidū ... taṃ lobhaj'ādi, bhedaṃ kammaṃ na karoti*). **10b** ≈ A 2:72,3*; a-*viddasu*, “ignorant, not intelligent” (Dh 268c; Sn 762f) [CPD sv]; but foll Comy, the reading should be *viddasu*, not *aviddasu* [PED: viddasu].

⁴⁹ **10c** The verb *jahe* (line d) applies to the whole verse in ref to arhathood (AA 2:224,6-10). *Jahe* is opt of *jahati*, “to abandon” (eg S 1:23,1* = Dh 221a: *kodham jahe*, “he should give up anger”; Dh 370a: *pañca chinde, pañca jahe*, “he should cut off 5, give up 5,” the 5 lower fetters, the 5 higher fetters, respectively, DhA 4:108); or pres (J 305/-3:19,24*: *katham jahe*, “(the brahmin) abandons speech,” J 448/4:58,12*: *jahe kāpurise*, “one gives up false peo-

— evaṃ —

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ple”). Comy: This verse refers to the attainment of arhathood, and that an arhat, on reaching nirvana, abandons (*jahe*) not only bad rebirth, but also good ones (AA 2:224). Comy takes *jahe* as pres, *jahati* (AA 2:224,9 f) which fits the Sutta context better; or the opt could be taken as “he would surely ...” (Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, 1974: 86-88. Thanissaro, in his *Access to Insight* tr, poetically renders *jahe* as “sheds,” noting that “The word ‘sheds’ acts as a ‘lamp’ in this verse ...”: accessed 25 Dec 2006:
<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.033.than.html>.