AN 10.96 — AN 10:96 To Kokanuda (On Viewpoints) | Kokanuda Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

To Kokanuda (On Viewpoints)

Kokanuda Sutta (AN 10:96)

On one occasion Ven. Ānanda was staying near Rājagaha in Tapodā monastery. Then, as night was ending, he got up & went to the Tapodā Hot Springs to bathe his limbs. Having bathed his limbs and having gotten out of the springs, he stood wearing only his lower robe, drying his limbs. Kokanuda the wanderer, as night was ending, also got up & went to the Tapodā Hot Springs to bathe his limbs. He saw Ven. Ānanda from afar, and on seeing him said to him, "Who are you, my friend?"

"I am a monk, my friend."

“Which kind of monk?”

“A son-of-the-Sakyan contemplative.”

“I would like to ask you about a certain point, if you would give me leave to pose a question.”

“Go ahead and ask. Having heard (your question), I’ll inform you.”

“How is it, my friend: ‘The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’ Is this the sort of view you have?”

“No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.”

“Very well, then: ‘The cosmos is not eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’ Is this the sort of view you have?”

“No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.”

“Very well, then: ‘The cosmos is finite … ’ … ‘The cosmos is infinite … ’ … ‘The soul & the body are the same … ’ … ‘The soul is one thing and the body another … ’ … ‘After death a Tathāgata exists … ’ … ‘After death a Tathāgata does not exist … ’ … ‘After death a Tathāgata both does & does not exist … ’ … ‘After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.’ Is this the sort of view you have?”

“No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.”

“Then in that case, do you not know or see?”

“No, my friend. It’s not the case that I don’t know, I don’t see. I do know. I do see.”

“But on being asked, ‘How is it, my friend: “The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.” Is this the sort of view you have?’ you inform me, ‘No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.’ On being asked, ‘Very well then: “The cosmos is not eternal … ” … “The cosmos is finite … ” … “The cosmos is infinite … ” … “The soul & the body are the same … ” … “The soul is one thing and the body another … ” … “After death a Tathāgata exists … ” … “After death a Tathāgata does not exist … ” … “After death a Tathāgata both does & does not exist … ” … “After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.” Is this the sort of view you have?’ you inform me, ‘No, my friend, I don’t have that sort of view.’ But on being asked, ‘Then in that case, do you not know or see?’ you inform me, ‘No, my friend. It’s not the case that I don’t know or see. I do know. I do see.’ Now, how is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

"'The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless,' is a viewpoint. 'The cosmos is not eternal …' … 'The cosmos is finite … ' … 'The cosmos is infinite … ' … 'The soul & the body are the same … ' … 'The soul is one thing and the body another … ' … 'After death a Tathāgata exists … ' … 'After death a Tathāgata does not exist … ' … 'After death a Tathāgata both does & does not exist … ' … 'After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless,' is a viewpoint. The extent to which there are viewpoints, view-stances, the taking up of views, obsessions with views, the cause of views, & the uprooting of views: that's what I know. That's what I see. Knowing that, I say 'I know.' Seeing that, I say 'I see.' Why should I say 'I don't know, I don't see'? I do know. I do see."

"What is your name, my friend? What do your companions in the holy life call you?"

"My name is Ānanda, my friend, and that's what my companions in the holy life call me."

"What? Have I been talking with the great teacher without realizing that he was Ven. Ānanda? Had I recognized that he was Ven. Ānanda, I would not have cross-examined him so much. May Ven. Ānanda please forgive me."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 15; MN 63; MN 72; AN 4:24; Sn 4:11