Mil 3.1.12 — 12. Distinguishing Characteristic of Exertion Question

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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Great Chapter

12. Distinguishing Characteristic of Exertion Question

The king asked: “Venerable Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing characteristic of exertion?” “Exertion, your majesty, has supporting as a distinguishing characteristic, and no wholesome mental states supported by exertion decline.”

“Please give me an analogy.” “Just as, your majesty, a man, when his house is falling down, might support it with additional wood, so that, being thus supported, that house would not fall down. In the same way, your majesty, exertion has supporting as a distinguishing characteristic, and no wholesome mental states supported by exertion decline.”

“Give me another analogy.” “Just as, your majesty, a large army might destroy a small army, then the king would recall another and send for them in order to give additional strength to his own small army, and with that, the small army would destroy the large army. In the same way, your majesty, exertion has supporting as a distinguishing characteristic, and no wholesome mental states supported by exertion decline. And this too was said, your majesty, by the Blessed One: ‘A noble disciple endowed with exertion abandons the unwholesome, develops the wholesome; Abandons the blameworthy, develops the blameless, and maintains his own purity.’”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Distinguishing Characteristic of Exertion Question twelfth