Mil 3.1.14 — 14. Concentration Question

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Great Chapter

14. Concentration Question

The king asked: “Venerable Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing characteristic of concentration?” “Concentration, your majesty, has being the foremost as a distinguishing characteristic, whatever wholesome mental states there are all these have concentration as the foremost, they lean towards concentration, slope towards concentration, and incline towards concentration.”

“Please give me an analogy.” “Just as, your majesty, whatever rafters there are in a house with a ridge pole, all the rafters go to that ridge pole, lean towards it, converge at it, and it is considered to be the chief of them. In the same way, your majesty, whatever wholesome mental states there are all these have concentration as the foremost, they lean towards concentration, slope towards concentration, and incline towards concentration.”

“Give me another analogy.” “Just as, your majesty, whatever king with his four-factored army would go down into battle, all the army – the elephants, horses, chariots, and foot-soldiers – would have him as the foremost, lean towards him, slope towards him, and incline towards him, and would gather around him. In the same way, your majesty, whatever wholesome mental states there are all these have concentration as the foremost, they lean towards concentration, slope towards concentration, and incline towards concentration. Thus, your majesty, concentration has being the foremost as a distinguishing characteristic. And this too was said, your majesty, by the Blessed One: ‘Develop concentration, bhikkhus. A concentrated bhikkhu knows things as they really are.’”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Concentration Question fourteenth