Mil 3.1.3 — 3. Investigating Question

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Great Chapter

3. Investigating Question

The king asked, “Venerable Nāgasena, will you converse with me?” “If, your majesty, you will converse in the speech of wise people, I will converse, however, I will not do so if you converse like a king.” “How, Venerable Nāgasena, do wise people converse?” “In a conversation among wise people, your majesty, both a summing up and an unravelling are made, a refutation and a redress are made, an assertion and a counter-assertion are made, and wise people do not become angry because of that. That is the way, your majesty, wise people converse.” “Then how, venerable sir, do kings converse?” “In a conversation, your majesty, kings assert some point of view, and for the one who disputes that view, they order punishment, saying ‘Punish that person.’ That is the way, your majesty, kings converse.” “I will converse, venerable sir, in the speech of wise people, not in the speech of kings. May the venerable one converse freely just like he does with a bhikkhu, a novice, a lay supporter, or with a monastery attendant. May the venerable one converse freely and not be afraid.” The elder approved, saying “It is well, your majesty.”

The king said, “Venerable Nāgasena, I will ask.” “Ask, your majesty.” “You have been asked by me, venerable sir.” “It has been answered, your majesty.” “Then, what has been answered by you, venerable sir?” “Then, what has been asked by you, your majesty?”

Investigating Question third