Mil 3.1.5 — 5. Going Forth Question

English translation by John Kelly.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/mil3.1.5/en/kelly
Source revision: 6a395ceb6f28549111d7d96859f7f6f6610afc01
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Milinda’s Questions

Great Chapter

5. Going Forth Question

Then Venerable Nāgasena approached King Milinda’s dwelling, and on arriving sat on the seat prepared. King Milinda then served and satisfied with his own hands Venerable Nāgasena and his assembly with delicious hard and soft foods, presented to each bhikkhu a pair of cloths, and to Venerable Nāgasena a set of three robes. He said to Venerable Nāgasena, “Venerable Nāgasena, sit here with ten bhikkhus and let the rest of them go.”

Then King Milinda, having seen that Venerable Nāgasena had eaten, and had withdrawn his hand from his bowl, took a certain low seat and sat down on one side. Seated there, King Milinda said to Venerable Nāgasena, “What is the conversation to be about, Venerable Nāgasena?” “We need a goal, your majesty. Let the conversation be about the goal.”

The king said, “What use for you, Venerable Nāgasena, is your going forth? What is the ultimate goal for you?” The elder said, “How then, your majesty, would this suffering cease, and other suffering not arise? This, your majesty, is the purpose of our going forth, and our ultimate goal is final nibbāna without any clinging.”

“Do all go forth for this goal, Venerable Nāgasena?” “Certainly not, your majesty, some go forth through fear of kings, some go forth through fear of thieves, some go forth oppressed by debts, and others go forth for the sake of livelihood. But those who go forth the right way, go forth for such a goal.”

“Did you go forth for this goal, venerable sir?” “I went forth, your majesty, when I was a child and I did not know that I was going forth for this goal. Then, it occurred to me, ‘These recluses, Sakyan sons, are wise and they will train me. Now, I have been trained by them, and I know and see that the going forth is for that goal.’”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Going Forth Question fifth