Mil 3.3.12 — 12. Distinguishing Characteristic of Consciousness Question

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Examination Chapter

12. Distinguishing Characteristic of Consciousness Question

“Venerable Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing characteristic of consciousness?” “Knowing, your majesty, is the distinguishing characteristic of consciousness?”

“Please give me an analogy.” “Just as, your majesty, a town guardian sitting in the middle of the crossroads of the town would see a man coming from the eastern direction, the southern direction, the western direction, and the northern direction. In the same way, your majesty, a person knows with consciousness whatever form he sees with his eyes, he knows with consciousness whatever sound he hears with his ears, he knows with consciousness whatever odour he smells with his nose, he knows with consciousness whatever flavour he tastes with his tongue, he knows with consciousness whatever tangible he touches with his body, and he knows with consciousness whatever thought he knows with his mind. So too, your majesty, knowing is the distinguishing characteristic of consciousness?”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Distinguishing Characteristic of Consciousness Question twelfth