Mil 3.4.1 — 1. Question on Analysing Contact, Etc.

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Nibbāna Chapter

1. Question on Analysing Contact, Etc.

The king asked: “Venerable Nāgasena, is it possible, having repeatedly analysed these mental states that are of the nature to arise together, to declare a difference between them, saying ‘this is contact, this is feeling, this is perception, this is intention, this is consciousness, this is applied thought, this is examination’?” “No, your majesty, it is not possible to do that.”

“Please give me an analogy.” “Just as if, your majesty, a king’s cook might prepare a soup or sauce and put in it curds, salt, ginger, cumin, hot pepper, and various other things, and the king might say ‘bring me a taste of curds, a taste of salt, a taste of ginger, a taste of cumin, a taste of hot pepper, or a taste of all the other things put in.’ Is it possible, your majesty, having repeatedly analysed these tastes that are of the nature to arise together to bring forward an acidic flavour, a salty flavour, a bitter flavour, a sharp flavour, or a pungent flavour, or a sweet flavour?” “It is certainly not possible, venerable sir, to do that.” “In the same way, your majesty, it is not possible, having repeatedly analysed these mental states that are of the nature to arise together, to declare a difference between them, saying ‘this is contact, this is feeling, this is perception, this is intention, this is consciousness, this is applied thought, this is examination’?”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Question on Analysing Contact, Etc. first