Mil 3.6.1 — 1. Love of the Body Question

English translation by John Kelly.
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Text

Milinda’s Questions

Mindfulness Chapter

1. Love of the Body Question

The king asked: “Venerable Nāgasena, is the body dear to recluses?” “No, your majesty, the body is not dear to recluses.” “Then, venerable sir, why do you cherish and treasure it?” “But, your majesty, when you have gone into battle have you been struck by arrows from time to time?” “Yes, venerable sir, I have.” “And would the wound, your majesty, be anointed with a salve, smeared with oil, and wrapped in a soft bandage?” “Yes, venerable sir, the wound would be.” “And was the wound dear to you, your majesty, that it was anointed with a salve, smeared with oil, and wrapped in a soft bandage?” “No, venerable sir, the wound was not dear to me, it was for the healing of the flesh that it was anointed with a salve, smeared with oil, and wrapped in a soft bandage.” “In the same way, your majesty, the body is not dear to recluses, but recluses look after the body without attachment for the maintenance of the holy life. And moreover, your majesty, the body is said by the Blessed One to be like a wound, and therefore recluses look after the body as they would a wound without attachment. And this too was said, your majesty, by the Blessed One:

‘Covered with moist skin,

the great wound with nine openings

Oozes everywhere

putrid-smelling secretions.’”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Love of the Body Question first