Mil 3.6.3 — 3. Characteristics of a Great Person Question

English translation by John Kelly.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/mil3.6.3/en/kelly
Source revision: da23a8afdd1be12267ecf4a0ff94af5187093702
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Milinda’s Questions

Mindfulness Chapter

3. Characteristics of a Great Person Question

The king asked: “Venerable Nāgasena, was the Buddha endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great person and distinguished with the eighty secondary features, with radiant complexion, skin like gold, and a halo that extends for one fathom?” “Yes, your majesty, he was.”

“But, venerable sir, were his mother and father endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great person … and a halo that extends for one fathom?” “No, your majesty, they were not.”

“That being so, venerable sir, is it not then that the Buddha arose endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great person … and a halo that extends for one fathom? But surely a child is like their mother or those on their mother’s side or like their father or those on their father’s side.” The elder said, “But is there, your majesty, any lotus with a hundred leaves?” “Yes, venerable sir, there is.” “And where then is the origin for that?” “It is born from mud and it thrives in water.” “Then, your majesty, is the lotus like the mud in colour, smell, or taste?” “Certainly not, venerable sir.” “Or is it like the water in smell or taste?” “Certainly not, venerable sir.” “In the same way, your majesty, the Buddha was endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great person and distinguished with the eighty secondary features, with radiant complexion, skin like gold, and a halo that extends for one fathom, and his parents were not.”

“You are clever, Venerable Nāgasena!”

Characteristics of a Great Person Question third