Snp 5.1 — Ajita-manava-puccha: Ajita's Questions

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: UNKNOWN. Entire protected source unit, including notes and verses, preserved; canonical completeness has not been independently established.

Text

[The Venerable Ajita:]

"By what is the world enveloped? Because of what is it not known? With what do you say it is soiled? What is its great fear?"

[The Lord:]

"The world is enveloped by ignorance, Ajita. Because of wrongly directed desire and heedlessness it is not known (as it really is). It is soiled by longings and its great fear is suffering."

[Ajita:]

"Everywhere flow the streams.[1] What is the obstruction for the streams, tell me the restricting of them, by what are they cut off?"

[The Lord:]

"Whatever streams are in the world, it is mindfulness that obstructs them and restricts them, and by wisdom they are cut off."

[Ajita:]

"It is just wisdom and mindfulness. Now mind-and-body, sir, explain this: where does it cease?"

[The Lord:]

"This question you have asked, Ajita, I will answer for you: where mind-and-body completely cease. By the cessation of consciousness they cease."[2]

[Ajita:]

"Those who have fully understood the Dhamma, those who are training and the other individuals here,[3] explain their (rule of) conduct."

[The Lord:]

"Not craving for sensual pleasures and with a mind that is pure and tranquil[4] a bhikkhu should mindfully go forth, skillful in all situations."

Notes

1.

"The streams" are cravings flowing out towards pleasurable and desirable objects in the world.

2.

This question and answer refers to the doctrine of dependent-arising (paticca-samuppada). Where rebirth-consciousness (pati-sandhi-vinnana) does not arise there is no establishment of an individual (mind-and-body, namarupa) in a realm of existence, nor the consequent appearance of old age and death and the other sufferings inherent in life.

3.

"Those who have fully understood" are arahants (perfected ones) who have reached the highest goal. "Those who are training" are those noble beings (ariya) who are working towards and are assured of that goal. The other individuals are ordinary beings (puthujjana) who have not yet reached assurance.

4.

The word anavilo means pure, clear, tranquil, unagitated, unmuddied, etc. In the Dhammapada v. 82, the wise are compared to a deep lake with this quality.