SN 2.26 — With Rohitassa

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 2.26

3. Various Sectarians

With Rohitassa

At Sāvatthī.

Standing to one side, the godling Rohitassa said to the Buddha:

“Sir, is it possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn?”

“Reverend, I say it’s not possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn.”

“It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha.

Once upon a time, I was a seer named Rohitassa, son of the benefactors. I was a sky-walker with psychic powers. I was as fast as a light arrow easily shot across the shadow of a palm tree by a well-trained expert archer with a strong bow. My stride was such that it could span from the eastern ocean to the western ocean. This wish came to me: ‘I will reach the end of the world by traveling.’ Having such speed and stride, I traveled for my whole lifespan of a hundred years—pausing only to eat and drink, go to the toilet, and sleep to dispel weariness—and I passed away along the way, never reaching the end of the world.

It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha. ‘Reverend, I say it’s not possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn.’”

“But Reverend, I also say there’s no making an end of suffering without reaching the end of the world. For it is in this fathom-long carcass with its perception and mind that I describe the world, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.

The end of the world can never

be reached by traveling.

But without reaching the end of the world,

there’s no release from suffering.

So an intelligent person, understanding the world,

has completed the spiritual journey and gone to the end of the world.

Assuaged, knowing the end of the world,

they do not hope for this world or the next.”