SN 22.93 — SN 22:93 The River | Nadī Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

The River

Nadī Sutta (SN 22:93)

Near Sāvatthī. There the Blessed One said, “Monks, suppose there were a river, flowing down from the mountains, going far, its current swift, carrying everything with it, and—holding on to both banks—kāsa grasses, kusa grasses, reeds, vīraṇā grasses, & trees were growing. Then a man swept away by the current would grab hold of the kāsa grasses, but they would tear away, and so from that cause he would come to disaster. He would grab hold of the kusa grasses… the reeds… the vīraṇā grasses… the trees, but they would tear away, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“In the same way, there is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for people of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—assumes form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form. That form tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes feeling to be the self, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling. That feeling tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception. That perception tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes fabrications to be the self, or the self as possessing fabrications, or fabrications as in the self, or the self as in fabrications. Those fabrications tear away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“He assumes consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. That consciousness tears away from him, and so from that cause he would come to disaster.

“Now, what do you think, monks? Is form constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” …

“Is feeling constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” …

“Is perception constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” …

“Are fabrications constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” …

“Is consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” …

“Thus, monks, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle, common or sublime; far or near: Every form is to be seen as it has come to be with right discernment: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Any feeling whatsoever…. Any perception whatsoever…. Any fabrications whatsoever….

“Any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle, common or sublime; far or near: Every consciousness is to be seen as it has come to be with right discernment: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”