

SN 35.69

Samyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Salāyatanaṇavagga Samyutta
Group of Connected Discourses on the Six Sense Spheres
Salāyatana Samyutta
Connected Discourses on the Six Sense Spheres
Migajāla Vagga
The Section on Migajāla

Upasena Āsīvisa Sutta
“The Venerable Upasena and the Snake”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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At one time, the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Upasena, along with their students, were staying within the Snake’s Hood Cave, at Rājagaha’s Cool Forest.

It was then that one day, while sitting, a venomous snake fell upon the Venerable Upasena’s body, at which point, the Venerable Upasena addressed the Bhikkhus next to him by saying:

“Friends, come and lift this body of mine onto the bed and carry it outside into the open air, before it gets scattered right here, much like a handful of discarded chaff blown by the wind.”

Now, once he said this, the Venerable Sāriputta turned to the Venerable Upasena and remarked:

“But friend, we did not notice any sudden reactions nor changes within our Venerable Upasena’s body, at all! Your faculties seem as sharp as ever, with no changes detected whatsoever in your behavior. Yet, why is the Venerable Upasena saying:

‘Friends, come and lift this body of mine onto the bed and carry it outside into the open air, before it gets scattered right here, much like a handful of discarded chaff blown by the wind?’ ”

Then, the Venerable Upasena responded to the Venerable Sāriputta’s remarks by saying:

“Friend Sāriputta, you would indeed notice a sudden reaction or definite changes within this body, as well as in my faculties, which would be seriously affected, and all that turmoil in my

behavior would be fully witnessed and detected by you, had I been someone who goes on thinking:

‘I am my eye,’ or ‘this eye is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The eye and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my ear,’ or ‘this ear is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The ear and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my nose,’ or ‘this nose is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The nose and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my tongue,’ or ‘this tongue is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The tongue and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my body,’ or ‘this body is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The body and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my mind,’ or ‘this mind is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The mind and myself are one and the same!’

“But, Friend Sāriputta, seeing that no such thinking or perceiving takes place within me, why would there be any change in my faculties, demeanor, or behavior for you and other observers to witness or detect?”

And the Venerable Sāriputta said:

“In that case, it is clear to us that Our Dear Venerable Upasena has already relinquished long ago all that sort of self-obsessed ways of thinking and conceit; no longer allowing but having already pulled to pieces that inner drive or assumption within, which says: *“this is mine,”* or *“this is happening to me, or belonging to me,”* or *“this is who, how, or what I am!”*

“It is so wonderful, indeed, to see how Our Dear Venerable Upasena has completely pulled out from its roots the very ignorance, which is responsible for the deluded thinking that says:

‘I am my eye,’ or ‘this eye is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The eye and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my ear,’ or ‘this ear is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The ear and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my nose,’ or ‘this nose is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The nose and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my tongue,’ or ‘this tongue is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The tongue and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my body,’ or ‘this body is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The body and myself are one and the same!’

Or that –

‘I am my mind,’ or ‘this mind is mine!’ while perceiving the whole phenomena as: ‘The mind and myself are one and the same!’”

And as this was being said, the Bhikkhus gathered there proceeded to quickly lift the Venerable Upasena, while helping him onto the bed as they carried him outside into the open air.

Not long after, the Venerable Upasena’s body disintegrated in front of their eyes, as it scattered right there into the open air and vanished, much like a handful of discarded chaff blown by the wind.

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