SN 44.8 — With Vacchagotta

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 44.8

1. The Undeclared Points

With Vacchagotta

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta went up to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha:

“Worthy Gotama, is this right: ‘the cosmos is eternal’?”

“This has not been declared by me, Vaccha.” …

“Then is this right: ‘a realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists after death’?”

“This too has not been declared by me.”

“What’s the cause, worthy Gotama, what’s the reason why, when the wanderers of other religions are asked these questions, they declare one of these to be true? And what’s the reason why, when the worthy Gotama is asked these questions, he does not declare one of these to be true?”

“Vaccha, the wanderers of other religions regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness.

That’s why, when asked, they declare one of those answers to be true.

The Realized One doesn’t regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. He doesn’t regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness.

That’s why, when asked, he does not declare one of those answers to be true.”

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta rose from his seat and went to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. He asked Mahāmoggallāna the same questions, and received the same answers.

He said, “It’s incredible, worthy Moggallāna, it’s amazing. How the meaning and the phrasing of the Teacher and the disciple fit together and agree without contradiction when it comes to the chief matter! Just now I went to the ascetic Gotama and asked him about

this matter. And he explained it to me with these words and phrases, just like the worthy Moggallāna. It’s incredible, worthy Moggallāna, it’s amazing! How the meaning and the phrasing of the Teacher and the disciple fit together and agree without contradiction when it comes to the chief matter!”