

PART II

Questions on Distinguishing Marks

1. No Person is Found (I,1)

King Milinda then approached Venerable Nāgasena, exchanged pleasant greetings with him and sat on one side. Venerable Nāgasena greeted the king in return and gladdened his heart. King Milinda asked Venerable Nāgasena: “How is the revered one known? What is your name, revered sir?”

“Sire, I am known as Nāgasena. My companions in the holy life address me as Nāgasena. Though parents give such names as Nāgasena or Sūrasena or Virasena or Siḥasena, this ‘Nāgasena’ is only a designation, a label, a concept, an expression, a mere name because there is no person as such that is found.”²⁴

Then King Milinda spoke thus: “Good sirs, let the Bactrian Greeks and the party of monks hear me. This Nāgasena says that ‘no person as such is found.’” He then spoke thus to Venerable Nāgasena:

“If, revered Nāgasena, there is ‘no person as such,’ who gives you robes, alms food, lodgings, and medicinal requisites, and who makes use of them? Who guards morality, who meditates, who realizes the paths and fruits and attains Nibbāna? Who kills living beings, who takes what is not given, who indulges in sexual misconduct, who utters lies and who imbibes intoxicating drinks? Who commits the five evil acts that bear fruit without delay?²⁵ Therefore, there is nothing wholesome or unwholesome, there is no one that does or makes another do wholesome or unwholesome acts, and there is neither fruit nor

24. The Pali words are: *saṅkhā*, *samaññā*, *paññatti*, *vohāra*, *nāma-matta*. These are all synonyms, intended to show that the person (*puggala*) has merely a conventional reality. “There is no person as such that is found” (*na h’ettha puggalo upalabbhati*) in the sense that the person is not apprehended as a datum in its own right but only by ascription to such truly existent phenomena as the five aggregates. Just below the same phrase will be repeated with the addition of the qualification *param-atthato*, “in the ultimate sense.” See note 29 on page 31.

result of good or bad deeds. Also, revered Nāgasena, if someone were to kill you there would be no murder. You have no teacher, no preceptor, no ordination. If you say, 'Co-farers in the holy life address me as "Nāgasena,"' what is this Nāgasena? Is it, revered sir, the hairs of the head that are Nāgasena?"

"No, sire."

"Are the hairs of the body Nāgasena?"

"No, sire."

"Are the nails ... The teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, faeces, brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, lymph, saliva, mucus, joint fluid or urine ... are any of them Nāgasena?"²⁶

"No, sire"

"Is material form, revered sir, Nāgasena?"

"No, sire."

"Or feeling, perception, mental formations or consciousness ... are any of them Nāgasena?"

"No, sire."

"Then, revered sir, are material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness all together Nāgasena?"²⁷

"No, sire."

"Well then, revered sir, is Nāgasena apart from material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness?"

"No, sire."

"Revered sir, though I have been asking you repeatedly, I do not see this Nāgasena. Nāgasena is only a sound."²⁸ For who

25. The five evil acts are matricide, parricide, killing an arahat, drawing a Buddha's blood with a mind set on murder, and causing a schism in the Sangha. Each of these deeds ripens in a rebirth in hell.

26. These form the thirty-two parts of the body, a common subject of meditation on the impurity of the body.

27. These are the five aggregates of existence (*pañcakkhandhā*). They are evanescent and occur in various combinations at any particular time to comprise the person. This analysis does not mean that a person is reducible to a mere combination of disjointed parts. The individual does have a unity, but this unity is functional and in process, not substantial and unchanging.

28. *Nāgasenasaddo yeva.*

here is Nāgasena? You, revered sir, have spoken a falsehood, an untruth. There is no Nāgasena."

Venerable Nāgasena then spoke thus: "You, sire, have been delicately nurtured as fits your noble birth. If, sire, you walk at noon-time on the hot scorching ground, trampling on sharp grit, pebbles and sand, your feet will hurt you, your body will be tired, your mind will be disturbed and you will suffer bodily pain. Now, did you come on foot or in a vehicle?"

"I, revered sir, did not come on foot. I came in a chariot."

"If, sire, you came in a chariot, show me the chariot. Is the pole the chariot, sire?"

"No, revered sir."

"Is the axle the chariot?"

"No, revered sir."

"Are the wheels the chariot?"

"No, revered sir."

"Is the body of the chariot ... the flag-staff, the yoke, the reins, the goad ... are any of them the chariot?"

"No, revered sir."

"Then, sire, are the pole, the axle, the wheels, the body, the flag-staff, the yoke, the reins, the goad all together the chariot?"

"No, revered sir."

"Well then, sire, is the chariot apart from the pole, the axle, the wheels, the body, the flag-staff, the yoke, the reins and the goad?"

"No, sire."

"Sire, though I have been asking you repeatedly, I do not see this chariot. Chariot is only a sound. What then is the chariot you say you came in? You, sire, have spoken a falsehood, an untruth. There is no chariot. You are king over all India, a mighty monarch. Of whom are you afraid that you speak a lie? Let the Bactrian Greeks and all the monks listen to me. This King Milinda says, 'I have come by chariot,' but on being asked to show the chariot, he does not show it. Is it proper to approve of that?"

When Venerable Nāgasena had spoken thus, all the Bactrian Greeks applauded him and told King Milinda: "Now, sire, speak if you can." King Milinda then addressed Venerable Nāgasena: "I am not, revered sir, speaking a lie. It is because of the pole, because of the axle, the wheels, the body, the

flag-staff, the yoke, the reins and because of the goad that 'chariot' exists as a mere designation."

"It is good, sire, that you understand a chariot. Even so is it for me, sire, because of the hairs of the head ... because of the urine, because of material form ... because of consciousness, that 'Nāgasena' exists as a mere designation. However, in the ultimate sense there is no person as such that is found.²⁹ This, sire, was spoken by the nun Vajirā in the presence of the Blessed One (S I 135):

Just as when the parts are rightly set
The word 'chariot' is spoken,
So when there are the aggregates
It is the convention to say 'a being'."

"It is wonderful, revered Nāgasena, it is marvellous. Your explanations are brilliant. If the Buddha were still here he would applaud. It is good, it is good, Nāgasena."

2. The Speech of the Learned (I,2)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, will you converse with me?"

"I will converse if you, sire, will converse in the speech of the learned, but if you converse in the speech of kings I will not converse."

"How, revered Nāgasena, do the learned converse?"

"When the learned are conversing, sire, there is a turning over and an unravelling of the subject; then there is a refutation and an acknowledgement of a mistake; distinctions and contradistinctions are drawn; yet, thereby, they are not angered. It is thus, sire, that the learned converse."

"And how, revered sir, do kings converse?"

"When kings are conversing, sire, they approve of some matter and order punishment for anyone who disagrees with that matter, saying: 'Inflict a punishment on him.' It is thus, sire, that kings converse."

29. *Paramatthato pan'ettha puggalo n'upalabbhati*. The word *paramattha* takes on a fundamental role in the history of Buddhist philosophy. It signifies that which possesses reality as an item of direct inspection, as contrasted with what has merely conventional or conceptual existence. An ultimately real person thus becomes effectively equivalent to a person conceived as a self (*attā*).

"I, revered sir, will converse in the speech of the learned, not in the speech of kings. Let the revered one converse unreservedly as he converses with a monk or a novice or a lay follower or with a monastery attendant. Let the revered one converse thus, let him not be afraid."

"It is well, sire."

"I have a question to ask you, revered Nāgasena."

"Ask it, sire."

"I have asked it, revered sir."

"That has been answered, sire."

"What have you answered, revered sir?"

"But what was asked by you, sire?"

King Milinda then thought: "This monk is learned, he is competent to converse with me. I have so many questions to ask him but before I ask them all the sun will set. Suppose I were to converse with him in the palace tomorrow?" Having asked Devamantiya to tell Venerable Nāgasena that the discussion should continue in the palace on the following day, the king rose from his seat, took leave of Venerable Nāgasena, mounted his horse and departed muttering, "Nāgasena, Nāgasena!"

3. Why Go Forth? (I,5)

On the following day Venerable Nāgasena went to the palace with a large number of monks. King Milinda with his own hands served the monks a sumptuous meal and presented each monk with a pair of woven cloths and Venerable Nāgasena with a set of three robes. Then he said: "Revered Nāgasena, sit down here with ten monks and let the rest go away." The king took a low seat, sat at a respectable distance and spoke thus: "Revered Nāgasena, what shall we discuss?"

"We, sire, are in need of a goal; let the discussion be about the goal."

"Of what use to you, revered Nāgasena, is the going forth and what is the highest goal for you?"

"Why, sire, that this suffering might be stopped and another suffering might not arise; our going forth is for this goal, sire, and our highest goal is final Nibbāna through non-clinging."

"But, revered sir, do all go forth for such a goal?"

"No, sire. Some go forth for such a goal, but others go forth from fear of kings or from fear of thieves or because they have

debts and others go forth for the sake of a livelihood. But those who go forth rightly go forth for such a goal.”

“And have you yourself, revered sir, gone forth for such a goal?”

“I was a boy, sire, when I went forth so I did not know that I was going forth for this goal, but it occurred to me thus: ‘These recluses, sons of the Sakyans, are learned and will make me train myself.’ Now that I have been trained by them I know and see that going forth is for this goal.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

4. Who Takes Rebirth? (I,6)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, is there anyone who, when dead, does not take rebirth?”³⁰

“Some take rebirth, some do not.”

“Who takes rebirth, who does not take rebirth?”

“One who has defilements takes rebirth, sire; one who is without defilements does not take rebirth.”

“Will you yourself take rebirth?”

“If I should have clinging, sire, I will take rebirth, but if I am without clinging I will not take rebirth.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

5. Attention and Wisdom (I,7)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, does he who does not take rebirth not take rebirth because of proper attention?”³¹

“Sire, it is because of proper attention, and it is because of wisdom, and it is because of other wholesome mental states.”

“Revered sir, is proper attention the same as wisdom?”

“No, sire, attention is one thing, wisdom is another. Goats, sheep, cows, buffaloes, camels and donkeys have attention but they do not have wisdom.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

30. *Paṭisandahati*, lit. reconnect. This refers to the linking of one existence, at the moment of rebirth, with the existence that immediately precedes it.

31. *Yoniso manasikāra*, also translated as wise attention or methodical attention.

6. The Marks of Attention and Wisdom (I,8)

King Milinda said: “What is the distinguishing mark of attention and what is the distinguishing mark of wisdom?”

“Examination is the distinguishing mark of attention and cutting off is the distinguishing mark of wisdom.”

“How is this so? Make a simile.”

“Do you know about barley-reapers, sire?”

“Yes, revered sir, I do.”

“How, sire, do barley-reapers reap barley?”

“Revered sir, grasping a handful of barley in the left hand and a sickle in the right, they cut it off with the sickle.”

“Even so, sire, does one who is devoted to mental training take hold of the mind with attention and cut off the defilements with wisdom.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

7. The Mark of Morality (I,9)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, when you said: ‘And because of other wholesome mental states’—which are these wholesome mental states?”³²

“Sire, they are morality, faith, energy, mindfulness, and concentration.”

“Revered sir, what is the distinguishing mark of morality?”

“The distinguishing mark of morality, sire, is that it is the basis of all wholesome mental states, namely, the (five) spiritual faculties, the (five) powers, the (seven) factors of enlightenment, the (eightfold) path, the (four) foundations of mindfulness, the (four) right efforts, the (four) bases of psychic power, the (four) jhānas, the (eight) deliverances and concentration. In one who has morality, sire, none of these wholesome mental states decreases.”³³

“Make a simile.”

“As, sire, whatever vegetable life and animal life come to growth, increase and maturity, all do so by being dependent on the earth; even so do all these wholesome mental states develop by being dependent on morality.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

32. This refers back to §5.

8. The Mark of Faith (I,10)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of faith?”

“Faith, sire, has tranquillizing as a distinguishing mark and also leaping forward as a distinguishing mark.”

“Revered Nāgasena, how is tranquillizing a distinguishing mark of faith?”

“When faith is arising, sire, it extirpates the hindrances;³⁴ when the mind is without the hindrances it is clear, pure and serene. Thus it is, sire, that tranquillizing is a distinguishing mark of faith.”

“Make a simile.”

“As, sire, a Wheel-turning King³⁵ going along a high road with his four limbed-army of elephants, horses, chariots and infantry, might cross a small stretch of water and, as a result, that water will become foul, turbid and muddy. Yet the king would ask his men to bring him some drinking water. The king might have a water-clearing gem. So the men cast that water-clearing gem in the water. Immediately the various water plants disappear, the mud subsides and the water becomes clear, pure and serene. Then the men offer the drinking water to the king. Sire,

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33. The five spiritual faculties (*indriya*) are: faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. The five powers (*bala*) are the same factors as the spiritual faculties, elevated to the status of invincibility. The seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) are: mindfulness, investigation of phenomena, energy, rapture, tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity. The four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are: mindful contemplation of the body, feelings, states of mind, and mental objects. The four right efforts (*sammappadhāna*) are: the effort to prevent unarisen unwholesome mental states from arising; the effort to eliminate arisen unwholesome states; the effort to arouse unarisen wholesome states; the effort to develop fully arisen wholesome states. The four bases of psychic power (*iddhipāda*) are: concentration due to intention, concentration due to energy, concentration due to consciousness, and concentration due to investigation, each conjoined with the activity of striving. The four jhānas or meditative absorptions are frequently enumerated in the Suttas. On the eight deliverances (*vimokkha*), see D II 70–71.
34. The five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), the main obstacles to meditative development, are: sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt.

like the water is the mind, like those people is the earnest student of mental training, like the water plants and the mud are the hindrances, like the water-clearing gem is faith. Just as the water plants disappear and the mud subsides as soon as the water-clearing gem is thrown in the water and the water becomes clear, pure and serene, even so, sire, faith, as it is uprising, extirpates the hindrances and the mind that is free from the hindrances is pure, clean and serene. It is thus, sire, that tranquillizing is a distinguishing mark of faith."

"How, revered sir, is leaping forward a distinguishing mark of faith?"

"As, sire, one who is devoted to mental training, on seeing that the minds of others are freed, leaps forward after the fruit of stream-entry or the fruit of once-returning or the fruit of non-returning or after arahatship and performs mental training for the attainment of the unattained, for mastery of the unmastered and for realization of the unrealized, even so, sire, is leaping forward a distinguishing mark of faith."

"Make a simile."

"Suppose, sire, as a result of heavy rain a river would swell overflowing both banks. Then a great crowd of people were to come but, not knowing either the width or depth of that river, might stand terrified and hesitant on the bank. Then a strong man comes along. He knows his own power and strength. He ties on his loin-cloth tightly and, leaping into the water, crosses over. On seeing that he had crossed over the great crowd of people too would cross over. Even so, sire, one who is devoted to mental training, on seeing that the minds of others are freed, leaps forward after the fruit of stream-entry or the fruit of once-returning or the fruit of non-returning or after arahatship and performs mental training for the attainment of the unattained, for mastery of the unmastered and for realization of the unrealized. It is thus, sire, that leaping forward is a distinguishing mark of faith."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

35. The Wheel-turning King (*cakkavatti-rājā*) is the benevolent universal monarch of Buddhist legend, who unites the world under the reign of righteousness. See D III 58–63; M III 172–77.

9. The Mark of Energy (I,11)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of energy?"

"Rendering of support, sire, is the distinguishing mark of energy. No wholesome mental state that is supported by energy decreases."

"Make a simile."

"Sire, suppose a house were falling down and a man supported it with more wood so that, supported thus, that house did not fall down—even so, sire, is rendering support the distinguishing mark of energy; no wholesome mental state that is supported by energy decreases."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

10. The Mark of Mindfulness (I,12)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of mindfulness?"

"Not-drifting, sire, is a distinguishing mark of mindfulness and also taking up is a distinguishing mark of mindfulness."

"Revered sir, how is not-drifting a distinguishing mark of mindfulness?"

"When mindfulness is uprising, sire, one does not drift in regard to mental states that are wholesome and unwholesome, blamable and blameless, low and lofty, dark and bright or evenly mixed, but thinking: 'These are the four foundations of mindfulness, these the four right efforts, these the four bases of psychic power, these the five spiritual faculties, these the five powers, these the seven factors of enlightenment, this the Noble Eightfold Path, this is calm, this is insight, this is knowledge, this is emancipation, the one who is devoted to mental training then follows the things that should be followed and does not follow the things that should not be followed, he associates with that which should be associated with and does not associate with that which should not be associated with. It is thus, sire, that not-drifting is a distinguishing mark of mindfulness.'"

"Make a simile"

"As, sire, the store-keeper of a Wheel-turning King reminds him of his glory every morning and evening, saying: 'You have so many elephants, your majesty, so many horses, so many chariots, so many foot-soldiers, so much unwrought gold, so

much wrought gold, so much wealth; let his majesty remember it,' and does not drift in regard to the king's wealth. Even so, sire, when mindfulness is uprising one does not drift in regard to mental states that are wholesome and unwholesome, blamable and blameless ... the one who is devoted to mental training then follows the things that should be followed and does not follow the things that should not be followed, he associates with that which should be associated with and does not associate with that which should not be associated with. It is thus, sire, that not-drifting is a distinguishing mark of mindfulness."

"Revered sir, how is taking-up a distinguishing mark of mindfulness?"

"Sire, when mindfulness is uprising one examines the qualities of mental states that are beneficial and detrimental, and thinking: 'These mental states are beneficial, these mental states are detrimental, these mental states are helpful, these mental states are not helpful,' the one who is devoted to mental training removes the detrimental mental states and takes up the beneficial mental states, he removes the unhelpful mental states and takes up the helpful mental states. It is thus, sire, that taking-up is a distinguishing mark of mindfulness."

"Make a simile."

"As, sire, the adviser-treasurer of a Wheel-turning King knows what is beneficial and what is detrimental for the king and thinks: 'These are beneficial for the king, these are detrimental, these are helpful, these are unhelpful,' and then removes what is detrimental and takes up what is beneficial, removes what is unhelpful and takes up what is helpful, even so, sire, when mindfulness is uprising one examines the qualities of mental states that are beneficial and detrimental ... and takes up helpful mental states. It is thus, sire, that taking up is a distinguishing mark of mindfulness. And this, sire, was said by the Blessed One: 'And I, monks, say that mindfulness is of value in everything.'"

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

11. The Mark of Concentration (I,13)

King Milinda said; "Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of concentration?"

"The distinguishing mark of concentration, sire, is being the chief. All those mental states that are wholesome have concentration as the chief, they lean, tend and incline towards concentration."

"Make a simile."

"As, sire, in a house with a ridge-pole all the rafters go to the ridge-pole, lean towards it and join it, and the ridge-pole is pointed to as their chief, even so, sire, all those mental states that are wholesome have concentration as the chief, they lean, tend and incline towards concentration."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

12. The Mark of Wisdom (I,14)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of wisdom?"

"Earlier I said, sire, that cutting off is a distinguishing mark of wisdom.³⁶ But illuminating is also a distinguishing mark of wisdom."

"How, revered sir, is illuminating a distinguishing mark of wisdom?"

"Sire, when wisdom is uprising it dispels the darkness of ignorance, produces the effulgence of clear knowledge, makes the light of knowing appear, and makes plain the Four Noble Truths. In consequence, one who is devoted to mental training sees what is impermanent, or what is suffering, or what is not-self by means of right wisdom."

"Make a simile."

"As, sire, a man might bring a lamp into a dark house and when he has put it down the lamp dispels the darkness, produces effulgence, makes light appear and makes plain the forms of things—even so, sire, when wisdom is uprising it dispels the darkness of ignorance, produces the effulgence of clear knowledge, makes the light of knowing appear, and makes plain the Four Noble Truths. In consequence, one who is devoted to mental training sees what is impermanent, or what is suffering, or what is not-self by means of right wisdom. It is thus, sire, that illuminating is a distinguishing mark of wisdom."

36. See §6 above.

13. Neither the Same nor Another (II,1)

King Milinda said; “Revered Nāgasena, is he who uprises the same or is he another?”

“Neither the same nor another.³⁷ What do you think about this, sire? Now that you are grown up are you the same as you were when you were a boy, young, tender, lying on your back?”

“No, revered sir. That boy, young, tender, lying on his back was one thing. I, who am now full-grown, am another.”

“That being so, sire, you can have no mother, nor can you have a father, nor can you have a teacher, nor can you be master of a craft, nor can you be one of morality, nor can you be one of wisdom. Can it be, sire, that the mother of the embryo at the first stage in prenatal development is different from the mother at the second stage and she different from the mother at the third stage and she different from the mother at the fourth stage? That the mother of the small (creature) is one thing and the mother of the full-grown (creature) another? That one trains in a craft and another becomes trained? That one does an evil deed and they cut off the hands and feet of another?”

“No, revered sir. But what would you say, revered sir, when it is spoken thus?”

“It is one ‘I’ that was the boy, young, tender, lying on his back and it is the same ‘I’ that am now full-grown, and all these are held together as a unity in dependence on this body itself.”

“Make a simile.”

“It is as if, sire, some person might light a lamp. Would it burn all night long?”

“Yes, revered sir, it might burn all night long.”

“Is the flame of the first watch of the night the same as the flame of the middle watch?”

“No, revered sir.”

“Is the flame of the middle watch the same as the flame of the third watch?”

“No, revered sir.”

37. *Na ca so na ca añño*. This famous dictum has become the definitive Theravāda solution to the problem of reconciling the doctrine of non-self with the continuity of personal identity. For an interesting discussion, see Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 177–85.

"Is it then, sire, that the lamp in the first watch was one thing, the lamp in the middle watch another, and the lamp in the third watch still another?"

"No, revered sir, it was burning all through the night in dependence on itself."

"Even so, sire, a continuity of phenomena is linked together.³⁸ It uprises as one and ceases as another, linked together as though there were no before and no after. Hence it is neither the same nor another, but the subsequent consciousness is reckoned (together with) the preceding consciousness."³⁹

"Make a further simile."

"As, sire, milk on being taken from a cow would turn after a time into curds and from curds into butter and from butter into ghee, so, sire, would one be speaking rightly if one were to speak thus: 'That milk is precisely those curds, it is precisely that butter, it is precisely that ghee'?"

"No, sire, they come into being because of it."

"Even so, sire, a continuity of phenomena is linked together. It uprises as one and ceases as another, linked together as though there were no before and no after. Hence it is neither the same nor another, but the subsequent consciousness is reckoned (together with) the preceding consciousness."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

14. Knowing the End of Rebirth (II,2)

King Milinda said: "Does he who does not take rebirth know: 'I will not take rebirth'?"

38. The continuity of phenomena (*dhammasantati*) refers to the quickly changing succession of the five aggregates, a process in which the phenomena at any given moment condition those at the next moment. It is the rapidity with which these phenomena, discrete at every moment, rise and pass away that gives the illusion of a persisting personal identity. Horner, in her translation, seems to have mistaken *sandahati*, "to be linked together," for *sandhāvati*, "to run on."

39. The phrase "neither the same nor another" refers back to Nāgasena's answer to Milinda's original question which opens this section. The reading of the last sentence follows the Burmese-script edition: *tena na ca so na ca añño, purimaviññāṇe pacchima-viññāṇaṇ saṅgahaṇ gacchati*. The translation of this line follows the gloss of Mil-a.

"Yes, sire. He who does not take rebirth knows that he will not take rebirth."

"How does he know, revered sir?"

"It is from the termination of whatever is the cause, whatever is the condition of rebirth that he knows he will not take rebirth."

"Make a simile."

"As, sire, an agriculturist, a householder, when he had ploughed and sown, would fill his granary; but if, after a time, he should neither plough nor sow but should use his stored-up grain or should dispose of it or deal with it according to circumstances, then, sire, would that agriculturist, the householder, know that his granary would not be filled?"

"Yes, revered sir, he would know."

"How would he know?"

"It is from the termination of whatever is the cause, whatever is the condition of filling the granary that he would know: 'My granary will not be filled.'"

"Even so, sire, it is from the termination of whatever is the cause, whatever is the condition of rebirth that he knows he will not take rebirth."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

15. Knowledge and Wisdom (II,3)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, has wisdom arisen in him in whom knowledge has arisen?"⁴⁰

"Yes, sire, wisdom has arisen in him in whom knowledge has arisen."

"What, revered sir, is knowledge the same as wisdom?"

"Yes, sire, knowledge is the same as wisdom."

"But, revered sir, would he in whom knowledge, which is the same as wisdom, has arisen be bewildered or would he not be bewildered?"

"He would be bewildered at some things, sire, at some he would not be bewildered."

"Where would he be bewildered, revered sir, where not?"

"He would be bewildered, sire, in regard to those parts of the crafts that he did not already know, or in regard to those districts he had not already visited, or in regard to those names and designations he had not already heard."

40. Knowledge is *ñāṇa*, wisdom is *paññā*.

"Where would he not be bewildered, revered sir?"

"In regard to that done through this wisdom, sire, namely, (the comprehension of) impermanence or suffering or not-self; here he would not be bewildered."

"But where, revered sir, does his delusion go?"

"Delusion, sire, ceases the very moment knowledge arises."

"Make a simile."

"It is as if, sire, some person might bring a lamp into a house. In consequence the darkness would cease and light appear. Even so, sire, delusion ceases the very moment knowledge arises."

"But where does wisdom go, revered sir?"

"Although wisdom, sire, ceases then and there when it has done its task, yet that which is done by means of this wisdom, namely, (the comprehension of) impermanence or suffering or not-self, that does not cease."

"Make a simile."

"Sire, it is like a man who wants to send a letter during the night. After he has summoned a scribe and brought a lamp he makes him write the letter. But if he has the lamp put out after the letter has been written, the letter would not be lost because the lamp was put out. Even so, sire, though wisdom ceases as soon as it has done its task, yet that which is done by means of this wisdom, namely, (the comprehension of) impermanence or suffering or not-self, that does not cease."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

16. The Feelings of an Arahāt (II,4)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, does he who does not take rebirth feel any painful feeling?"

"He feels some, some he does not feel."

"What does he feel, what does he not feel?"

"He feels bodily feelings, sire, he does not feel mental feelings."

"Why is it so, sire?"

"It is from the non-termination of the cause and condition for the uprising of a painful bodily feeling that he feels a painful bodily feeling; but it is from the termination of the cause and condition for the uprising of a painful mental feeling that he feels no painful mental feeling. And this, sire, was said by the Blessed One: 'He feels one feeling: the bodily, not the mental.'"⁴¹

“Revered Nāgasena, why does he who does not feel a painful feeling not attain complete Nibbāna?”⁴²

“Sire, arahats have neither approval nor repugnance; nor do arahats destroy what is unripe; wise men wait for full maturing. And this, sire, was spoken by the Elder Sāriputta, the General of the Dhamma:⁴³

I delight not in dying, I delight not in living,
But I wait for the time, as a hireling his wages.
I delight not in dying, I delight not in living,
But I wait for the time, clearly conscious and mindful.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

17. The Quality of Feelings (II,5)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, are pleasant feelings wholesome or unwholesome or indeterminate?”

“They may be wholesome, sire, they may be unwholesome, they may be indeterminate.”

“If, revered sir, wholesome feelings are not painful, if painful feelings are not wholesome, to say: ‘That which is wholesome is painful’ is not acceptable.”

“What do you think about this, sire? If one should place a red-hot ball of iron in a man’s hand and in his other hand should place an ice-cold lump of snow, would these both hurt him, sire?”

“Yes, revered sir, both would hurt him.”

“Is this, sire, because both are hot?”

“No, revered sir.”

“Is it then that both are cold, sire?”

“No, revered sir.”

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41. The “cause and condition” for the uprising of painful bodily feeling is the body; thus even an arahat is subject to painful bodily feeling. The “cause and condition” for the uprising of painful mental feeling is aversion (*paṭigha*). Since the arahat has eradicated aversion he no longer experiences painful mental feeling. The statement of the Buddha comes at S IV 209.
 42. Nāgasena’s reply indicates that the king is really asking why arahats do not hasten their attainment of final Nibbāna by committing suicide.
 43. These verses occur at Th 1002–3, though in inverted order and with a difference in reading.

“Acknowledge your refutation. If what is red-hot hurts, but if both of them are not hot, the pain does not arise from that; if what is cold hurts, but if both of them are not cold, the pain does not arise from that. So how is it, sire, that both of them hurt since both of them are not hot and both of them are not cold? And how is it that, though the one is hot and the other is cold, one says: ‘Both of them hurt,’ yet the pain does not arise from that?”

“I am not competent to converse on this assertion with you. It were good, revered sir, if you explained the meaning.”

“Sire, there are six types of happiness connected with the world, six types of happiness connected with renunciation, six types of sorrow connected with the world, six types of sorrow connected with renunciation, six types of equanimity connected with the world, and six types of equanimity connected with renunciation. There are these six sets of six. So there is a thirty-sixfold feeling that is past, a thirty-sixfold feeling that is future and a thirty-sixfold feeling that is present; so assembling them and bringing them together there are one hundred and eight modes of feeling.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

18. Who Takes Rebirth? (II,6)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, who takes rebirth?”

“Mind-and-matter,⁴⁴ sire, takes rebirth.”

“What, is it this same mind-and-matter itself that takes rebirth?”

“This same mind-and-matter does not itself take rebirth, sire; but, sire, by means of this mind-and-matter one does a good or bad deed and, because of this deed, another mind-and-matter takes rebirth.”

“If, revered sir, this mind-and-matter itself does not take rebirth would one not be freed from evil deeds?”

“If, sire, it did not take rebirth one would be freed from evil deeds. But because, sire, it takes rebirth one is not freed from evil deeds.”

“Make a simile.”

“Suppose, sire, some man were to steal another man’s mangoes and the owner of the mangoes were to seize him and bring

44. *Nāmarūpa*. The two terms that enter into this compound will be analysed at §19.

him before the king, saying, 'Your majesty, my mangoes were stolen by this man,' and he were to say, 'Your majesty, I did not steal his mangoes; the mangoes he planted were different from these that I stole; I do not deserve punishment.' Would he, sire, not deserve punishment?"

"Yes, revered sir, he would deserve punishment."

"For what reason?"

"Whatever he may say, the mangoes he stole resulted from the mangoes which, he admits, the other man planted."

"Even so, sire, by means of this mind-and-matter one does a good or bad deed and, because of this deed, another mind-and-matter takes rebirth; therefore, one is not freed from evil deeds."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

19. Mind and Matter (II,8)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, regarding mind-and-matter, which is mind and which is matter?"

"That which is gross, sire, is matter and those subtle mental states form mind."⁴⁵

"What is the reason, revered sir, that mind does not take rebirth alone, nor matter alone?"

"These things, sire, are dependent the one upon the other; they simply arise together."

"Make a simile."

"As, sire, there could not be just a yolk or just an egg-shell from a hen, since both the yolk and the egg-shell are dependent the one upon the other and there is no separate arising of these two, even so, sire, if there were not mind there would be no matter, for that which is mind and that which is matter are both dependent the one upon the other and there is no separate arising of these two. Thus is produced this long time."⁴⁶

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

45. The subtle mental states (*sukhumā cittacetāsikā dhammā*) are feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness; the former three are grouped together as mental factors (*cetasikā*), the last is identical with mind (*citta*). This use of the terms *citta* and *cetasikā* is typical of the Abhidhamma literature.

46. The "long time" is *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirths, which in technical terms is the unbroken chain of the mind-and-matter combination.

20. What is Time? (II,9)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, as to this ‘long time’ you mentioned, what is this time?”

“The past time, sire, the future time and the present time.”

“But does this time exist, revered sir?”

“Some time exists, sire, some does not.”

“But which exists, revered sir, which does not?”

“Those formations, sire, that are past, departed, stopped or changed—that time does not exist. Those mental states that are results and those mental states that are liable to have results and those giving rebirth elsewhere—that time exists.⁴⁷ For those beings who die and arise elsewhere time exists; for those beings who die and do not arise elsewhere time does not exist; for those beings who have attained final Nibbāna time does not exist.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

21. The Root of Time (III,1)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the root of past time, future time and present time?”

“The root of past time, future time and present time, sire, is ignorance. Conditioned by ignorance are kammic formations, conditioned by kammic formations is consciousness, conditioned by consciousness is mind-and-matter, conditioned by mind-and-matter are the six sense bases, conditioned by the six sense bases is contact, conditioned by contact is feeling, conditioned by feeling is craving, conditioned by craving is clinging, conditioned by clinging is becoming, conditioned by

47. Mil-a says that the mention of resultant mental states implies as well matter produced by kamma. The mental states that are liable to have results are the wholesome and unwholesome states of the three planes of existence. It should be noted that the distinction Nāgasena draws between time that exists and time that does not exist seems to run counter to the basic tenet of the Sarvāstivāda school: that the dhammas continue to exist through all three periods of time—past, present and future—becoming manifest only in the present while subsisting in the past and future. This tenet gave the school its name (*sarvam asti* = all exists). This passage seems to rule out the *Milinda* as a doctrinal disquisition of the Sarvāstivādins, though it does not exclude the possibility that the work originated among non-sectarian members of this school.

becoming is birth, conditioned by birth there come into existence old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.⁴⁸ Thus the earliest point of this whole time cannot be shown.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

22. The Chicken and the Egg (III,2)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, as to that which you mentioned—‘the earliest point cannot be shown’—make a simile for that.”

“As, sire, an egg comes from a hen and a hen from an egg and an egg from a hen—is there thus an end of this series?”

“There is not, revered sir.”

“Even so, sire, the earliest point of time cannot be shown either.”

“Make a further simile”

Venerable Nāgasena traced a circle on the ground and asked King Milinda: “Is there an end to this circle, sire?”

“There is not, revered sir.”

“Even so, sire, are those circles spoken of by the Blessed One: ‘Eye-consciousness arises because of eye and visible forms; the meeting of the three is contact; conditioned by contact is feeling; conditioned by feeling is craving; conditioned by craving is kamma and eye is born again from kamma.’⁴⁹ Is there thus an end of this series?”

“There is not, revered sir.”

“And, sire, the same applies to ear-consciousness, ear and sounds; nose-consciousness, nose and smells; tongue-consciousness, tongue and tastes; body-consciousness, body and touch; mind-consciousness arises because of mind and mental

48. This is the chain of dependent origination; the formula is common in the Nikāyas.

49. The last phrase (“conditioned by craving is kamma ...”) is not found as such in the Nikāyas, where the formula continues as in §21 above. The statement “conditioned by craving is kamma” (*taṇhāpaccayā kammaṇi*) may be based on the identification of *bhava*, existence, with *kamma-bhava*, action-existence, explained as kamma leading to new existence in the commentarial texts (see Vism XVII,250–52, referring to Vibh 137). The statement “eye is born again from kamma” may refer to the Buddha’s utterance that the eye (and the ear, etc.) is old kamma (see S IV 132).

objects; the meeting of the three is contact; conditioned by contact is feeling; conditioned by feeling is craving; conditioned by craving is kamma and mind is born again from kamma. Is there thus an end of this series?"

"There is not, revered sir."

"Even so, sire, the earliest point of time cannot be shown either."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

23. Formations and Becoming (III,5)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, are there any formations that are produced without a becoming?"

"Sire, there are no formations that are produced without a becoming."

"Make a simile."

"What do you think about this, sire? Was this house where you are sitting produced without a becoming?"

"There is nothing here, revered sir, that has been produced without a becoming. These pieces of wood were in the forest and the clay was in the ground, and it is through proper effort on the part of women and men that this house is existing."

"Even so, sire, there are no formations that are produced without a becoming."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

24. No Experiencer is Found (III, vi)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, is there such a thing as an experiencer?"⁵⁰

"What does this 'experiencer' mean, sire?"

"A soul within that sees a visible form with the eye, hears a sound with the ear, smells a smell with the nose, tastes a taste with the tongue, feels a touch with the body and discriminates mental states with the mind. Just as we who are sitting here in the palace can look out of any window we want to look out of, even so, revered sir, this soul within can look out of any door it wants to look out of."

50. *Vedagū*. The word, which might also be rendered as "the one who knows," is a surrogate for self. The synonymous "soul within" (*abbhantare jīvo*) makes it clear that a permanent subject of experience is intended.

"I will talk to you, sire, about the five doors.⁵¹ Listen and attend carefully. If the soul within sees a visible form through the eye just as we who are sitting here in the palace can look out of any window we want to look out of, can it not then see a visible form not only through the eye but also through the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind? Likewise, can it not hear a sound, smell a smell, taste a taste, feel a touch and discriminate mental states through each of the other five doors besides the one you have specified in each case?"

"No, revered sir."

"Again, sire, we who are sitting here in the palace will see visible forms out there before us more clearly in the great space if these network windows are removed. Thus too, would this soul within see visible forms more clearly when the doors of the eyes are removed? And if the ears were removed, the nose removed, the tongue removed, the body removed, would it hear a sound, smell a smell, taste a taste and feel a touch more clearly on account of the great space?"

"No, revered sir."

"Again, sire, suppose this Dinna had gone out and were standing out on the porch outside the gateway. Would you know, sire, that he had done so?"

"Yes, I would know, revered sir."

"Suppose, sire, Dinna were to come in again and stand in front of you. Would you know that he had done so?"

"Yes, I would know, revered sir."

"Even so, sire, if a tasty object had been put on the tongue, would the soul within know whether it were acidic or salty or bitter or sharp or astringent or sweet?"

"Yes, revered sir, it would know."

"But when the tasty object had passed into the stomach would it know whether it had been acidic or salty or bitter or sharp or astringent or sweet?"

"No, revered sir. I am not competent to discuss this with you. Please explain."

"Because, sire, of the eye and visible form eye-consciousness arises. Co-nascent with that are contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, psychic life and attention.⁵² Thus these things are produced from a condition and there is no experiencer found here. The same applies to the ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and touch,

51. Though five doors are mentioned there is reference to six doors.

and mind and mental states. These are things produced from a condition and there is no experiencer found here.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

25. Seeing and Thinking (III,7)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, where eye-consciousness arises, does mind-consciousness also arise there?”

“Yes, sire, mind-consciousness also arises there.”⁵³

“Now, revered Nāgasena, does eye-consciousness arise first and mind-consciousness later, or does mind-consciousness arise first and eye-consciousness later?”

“Eye-consciousness arises first, sire, mind-consciousness later.”

“Now, revered sir, does eye-consciousness instruct mind-consciousness, saying ‘Where I arise do you likewise arise,’ or does mind-consciousness instruct eye-consciousness, saying ‘Where you arise I will likewise arise’?”

“No, sire, there is no conversation between them.”

“Then how is it, revered Nāgasena, that where eye-consciousness arises there mind-consciousness also arises?”

“It is because of tendency, sire, because of door, because of habit and because of practice.”

“Make a simile.”

“When it is raining by what means may the water run away?”

“It might run away by means of some slope.”

“But, sire, if it continued to rain, by what means would that later amount of water run away?”

“It would take the same course as the earlier water.”

“Then, sire, does the earlier water instruct the later, saying ‘You run away by the same course as I do,’ or does the later water instruct the earlier, saying ‘I will also run away by the same course as you will take’?”

“No, revered sir, there is no conversation between them; they run away because there is a slope.”

52. These seven mental factors are called, in the Abhidhamma, “universals” (*sabbacittasādhāraṇa*) because they are common to every state of consciousness.

53. Eye-consciousness has the function of simply seeing a visible form, mind-consciousness conceptualizes and discriminates the form. The same relationship holds between mind-consciousness and the other senses.

"Even so, sire, it is because of tendency that where eye-consciousness arises, mind-consciousness arises there too."

"How is it, revered sir, that because of door mind-consciousness also arises where eye-consciousness arises? Make a simile."

"A king's border-town has strong ramparts and only one gateway. If a man wanted to leave that town how would he do so?"

"Through that gateway, revered sir."

"If another man wanted to leave that town how would he do so?"

"In the same way as the first man, revered sir."

"Does the first man instruct the second, saying 'You go out in the same way as I do,' or does the second man instruct the first, saying 'I too will go out in the same way as you do'?"

"No, revered sir, there is no conversation between them. They go out because there is the door."

"Even so, sire, it is because of door that where eye-consciousness arises mind-consciousness arises there too."

"How is it, revered sir, that because of habit mind-consciousness also arises where eye-consciousness arises? Make a simile."

"If one cart went ahead, then which way would the second cart go?"

"By the same way as the first cart, revered sir."

"Does the first cart instruct the second, saying 'You go by the same way as I go,' or does the second cart instruct the first, saying 'I too will go by the same way as you do'?"

"No, revered sir, there is no conversation between them. They go because of habit."

"Even so, sire, it is because of habit that where eye-consciousness arises mind-consciousness arises there too."

"How is it, revered sir, that because of practice mind-consciousness also arises where eye-consciousness arises? Make a simile."

"As, sire, a beginner is clumsy in the crafts of reckoning on the fingers, calculation, reckoning and writing, but after a time by practice in careful working he becomes deft, even so, sire, it is through practice that where eye-consciousness arises there too mind-consciousness arises. There is no conversation between them. They arise because of practice."

"Revered Nāgasena, does mind-consciousness arise likewise where ear-consciousness arises? ... Does mind-consciousness arise where nose-consciousness ... tongue-consciousness ... body-consciousness arises?"

"Yes, sire. Where body-consciousness arises, mind-consciousness also arises."

"Now, revered sir, does body-consciousness arise first and mind-consciousness later, or does mind-consciousness arise first and body-consciousness later?"

"Body-consciousness arises first, sire, mind-consciousness later."

"Now, revered Nāgasena ..."

"... there is no conversation between them. They arise because of practice."

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

26. The Mark of Contact (III,8)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena does feeling arise where mind-consciousness arises?"

"Yes, sire, where mind-consciousness arises there contact arises, feeling arises, perception arises, volition arises, applied thought arises and sustained thought arises, and all mental states that arise there are headed by contact."

"Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of contact?"

"Touching, sire, is the distinguishing mark of contact."

"Make a simile."

"Suppose, sire, two hands are clapped together. One of these hands should be understood as the eye, the other as visible form, the meeting of the two as contact."⁵⁴

"You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena."

27. The Mark of Feeling (III,9)

King Milinda said: "Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of feeling?"

"Sire, being felt is a distinguishing mark of feeling, and experiencing is a distinguishing mark."

"Make a simile."

54. In the Nikāyas contact is explained as the coming together of three things, as at §24 above (see e.g. M I 111). Here it seems that fidelity to the simile has led to the jettisoning of consciousness.

“Suppose, sire, some man should render a king a service and that king, being delighted, should repay the service and that, because of this, the man should go about possessed of and provided with the five strands of sense pleasures,⁵⁵ and that it should occur to him: ‘Earlier I rendered the king a service and the king, delighted, repaid the service of mine so that I am now experiencing such and such feelings.’ Even so, sire, being felt is a distinguishing mark of feeling, and experiencing is a distinguishing mark.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

28. The Mark of Perception (III,10)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of perception?”

“Perceiving, sire, is the distinguishing mark of perception. What does one perceive? One perceives blue, and one perceives yellow, and one perceives red, and one perceives white, and one perceives crimson.”

“Make a simile.”

“As, sire, when a king’s store-keeper has gone into the store-room and seen the things that are the property of the king, he perceives that they are blue, yellow, red, white and crimson. Even so, sire, is perceiving the distinguishing mark of perception.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

29. The Mark of Volition (III,11)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of volition?”

“Being willed, sire, is a distinguishing mark of volition and effective preparation is also a distinguishing mark.”

“Make a simile.”

“Suppose, sire, some man has prepared poison and were to drink it himself or make others drink it—either he or the others would become afflicted. Even so, sire, some man here, having through volition willed an unwholesome deed, would arise, after death, in a bad bourn, and those who follow his example also arise, after death, in a bad bourn. Even so, sire,

55. The five strands of sense pleasures (*pañca kāmagaṇa*) are delightful forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tangibles.

is being willed a distinguishing mark of volition and effective preparation a distinguishing mark.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

30. The Mark of Consciousness (III,12)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of consciousness?”

“The distinguishing mark of consciousness, sire, is cognizing.”

“Make a simile.”

“As, sire, the superintendent of a city, sitting at the cross-roads in the middle of the city, could see a man coming from the eastern, southern, western or northern quarters, even so, sire, whatever form a man sees, he cognizes it by consciousness, and whatever sound he hears, whatever smell he smells, whatever taste he tastes, whatever touch he feels and whatever mental state he cognizes, he cognizes it by consciousness. Even so, sire, is cognizing a distinguishing mark of consciousness.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

31. The Mark of Applied Thought (III,13)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of applied thought?”

“Fixing (the mind), sire, is the distinguishing mark of applied thought.”⁵⁶“Make a simile.”

“As, sire, a carpenter fixes a well-turned piece of wood in a socket, even so, sire, is fixing (the mind) the distinguishing mark of applied thought.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

32. The Mark of Sustained Thought (III,14)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of sustained thought?”

“Constantly pondering, sire, is the distinguishing mark of sustained thought.”

“Make a simile.”

56. Fixing (*appanā*), the distinguishing mark of applied thought (*vitakka*), comes to acquire, in the Commentaries, the meaning of absorption. The term is used in reference to the *jhānas*.

“As, sire, a bronze gong that has been struck reverberates afterwards and the sound lingers on, even so, sire, applied thought is to be understood thus as ‘striking’ and sustained thought is to be understood thus as ‘reverberating.’”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”

33. Telling the Difference (III,15)

King Milinda said: “Revered Nāgasena, is it possible, having again and again analysed these mental states the nature of which it is to arise together, to point to a difference between them, saying: ‘This is contact, this is feeling, this perception, this volition, this consciousness, this applied thought, this sustained thought?’”

“It is not possible, sire.”

“Make a simile.”

“Suppose, sire, a king’s cook were to make a soup or a sauce and were to throw into it curds, salt, ginger, cumin-seed, black pepper, and other ingredients, and suppose the king should speak thus to him: ‘Bring me a sauce of curds, bring me a salt sauce, bring me a ginger sauce, bring me a cumin-seed sauce, bring me a black-pepper sauce, bring me a sauce into which everything has been thrown’—now, is it possible, sire, having again and again analysed these sauces the nature of which it is to arise together, to bring forward a sauce and speak of its acidity or saltiness or bitterness or sharpness or astringency or sweetness?”

“It is not possible to do so, sire, though all these tastes are present each with its own distinguishing mark.”

“Even so, sire, it is not possible having again and again analysed these mental states the nature of which it is to arise together, to point to a difference between them, saying: ‘This is contact, this is feeling, this perception, this volition, this consciousness, this applied thought and this sustained thought,’ though all are present each with its own distinguishing mark.”

“You are dexterous, revered Nāgasena.”