Snp 5.4 — The Questions of Puṇṇaka

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Text

Anthology of Discourses 5.4

The Questions of Puṇṇaka

“To the imperturbable, the seer of the root,”

said Venerable Puṇṇaka,

“I have come seeking with a question.

On what grounds have seers and men,

aristocrats and brahmins here in the world

performed so many different sacrifices to the gods?

I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”

“Whatever seers and men,”

replied the Buddha,

“aristocrats and brahmins here in the world

have performed so many different sacrifices to the gods:

all performed sacrifices bound to old age,

longing for this place.”

“As to those seers and men,”

said Venerable Puṇṇaka,

“and aristocrats and brahmins here in the world

who have performed so many different sacrifices to the gods:

being diligent in the technique of sacrifice,

have they crossed over rebirth and old age, good fellow?

I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”

“Hoping, invoking, praying, and worshiping,”

replied the Buddha,

“they pray for pleasure derived from profit.

Devoted to sacrifice, besotted by rebirth,

they’ve not crossed over rebirth and old age, I declare.”

“If those devoted to sacrifice,”

said Venerable Puṇṇaka,

“have not, by sacrificing, crossed over rebirth and old age,

who then in the world of gods and humans

has crossed over rebirth and old age, good fellow?

I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”

“Having appraised the world high and low,”

replied the Buddha,

“there is nothing in the world that disturbs them.

Peaceful, unclouded, untroubled, with no need for hope—

they’ve crossed over rebirth and old age, I declare.”