Snp 5.5 — The Questions of Mettagū

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Text

Anthology of Discourses 5.5

The Questions of Mettagū

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

said Venerable Mettagū,

“for I think you are a knowledge master, evolved.

Where do all these sufferings come from,

in all their countless forms in the world?”

“You have rightly asked me of the origin of suffering,”

replied the Buddha,

“I shall tell you as I understand it.

Attachment is the source of suffering

in all its countless forms in the world.

When an ignorant person builds up attachments,

that dullard returns to suffering again and again.

So let one who understands not build up attachments,

contemplating the inception of suffering and rebirth.”

“Whatever I asked you have explained to me.

I ask you once more, please tell me this:

How do the attentive cross the flood

of rebirth, old age, sorrow, and lamenting?

Please, sage, answer me clearly,

for truly you understand this matter.”

“I shall extol a teaching to you,”

replied the Buddha,
“that is apparent in the present, not relying on legends.
Having understood it, one who lives mindfully
may cross over clinging in the world.”
“And I rejoice, great seer,
in that supreme teaching,
having understood which, one who lives mindfully
may cross over clinging in the world.”
“Once you’ve expelled relishing and dogmatism,”
replied the Buddha,
“regarding everything you are aware of—
above, below, all round, between—
having cast aside consciousness, don’t continue in existence.
A mendicant who wanders meditating like this,
diligent and mindful, calling nothing their own,
would, being wise, give up the suffering
of rebirth, old age, sorrow and lamenting right here.”
“I rejoice in the words of the great seer!
You have expounded non-attachment well, Gotama.
Clearly the Buddha has given up suffering,
for truly you understand this matter.
Surely, sage, those you’d regularly instruct
would also give up suffering.
Having met, I bow especially to you, O spiritual giant;
hopefully the Buddha may regularly instruct me.”
“Any brahmin recognized as a knowledge master,
who has nothing, unattached to sensual life,
clearly has crossed this flood,
crossed to the far shore, kind, wishless.

And a wise person here, a knowledge master,
having untied the bond to life after life,
free of craving, untroubled, with no need for hope,
has crossed over rebirth and old age, I declare.”