AN 6.41 — A Tree Trunk

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Source: https://suttacentral.net/an6.41/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Numbered Discourses 6.41

4. Deities

A Tree Trunk

So I have heard. At one time Venerable Sāriputta was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain.

Then Venerable Sāriputta robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, descended the Vulture's Peak together with several mendicants. At a certain spot he saw a large tree trunk, and he addressed the mendicants, "Reverends, do you see this large tree trunk?"

"Yes, reverend."

"If they wanted to, a mendicant with psychic powers who has mastered their mind could determine this tree trunk to be nothing but earth. Why is that? Because the earth element exists in the tree trunk. Relying on that a mendicant with psychic powers could determine it to be nothing but earth. If they wanted to, a mendicant with psychic powers who has mastered their mind could determine this tree trunk to be nothing but water. … Or they could determine it to be nothing but fire … Or they could determine it to be nothing but air … Or they could determine it to be nothing but beautiful … Or they could determine it to be nothing but ugly. Why is that? Because the element of ugliness exists in the tree trunk. Relying on that a mendicant with psychic powers could determine it to be nothing but ugly."