AN 10.96 — With Kokanada

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 10.96

10. With Upāli

With Kokanada

At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Rājagaha in the Hot Springs Monastery. Then Ānanda rose at the crack of dawn and went to the hot springs to bathe. When he had bathed and emerged from the water he stood in one robe drying his limbs. The wanderer Kokanada also rose at the crack of dawn and went to the hot springs to bathe.

He saw Ānanda coming off in the distance and said to him, "Who's here, reverend?"

"I'm a mendicant, reverend."

"Of which mendicants?"

"Of the ascetics who follow the Sakyan."

"I'd like to ask the venerable about a certain point, if you'd take the time to answer."

"Ask, reverend. When I've heard it I'll know."

"Is this your view: 'The cosmos is eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

"That's not my view, reverend."

"Then is this your view: 'The cosmos is not eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

"That's not my view, reverend."

"Then is this your view: 'The cosmos is finite …' … 'The cosmos is infinite …' … 'The soul and the body are one and the same …' … 'The soul is one thing, the body another …' … 'A realized one still exists after death …' … 'A realized one no longer exists after death …' … 'A realized one both still exists and no longer exists after death …' … 'A realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists after death. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

"That's not my view, reverend."

"Then, sir, do you neither know nor see?"

"That's not so, reverend. I do know and see."

“When asked about all these points, you say that’s not your view.

Yet when asked whether you neither know nor see, you say, ‘That’s not so, reverend. I do know and see.’ How then should we see the meaning of this statement?”

“‘The cosmos is eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile:’ that’s a misconception. ‘The cosmos is not eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile:’ that’s a misconception. ‘The cosmos is finite …’ … ‘The cosmos is infinite …’ … ‘The soul and the body are one and the same …’ … ‘The soul is one thing, the body another …’ … ‘A realized one still exists after death …’ … ‘A realized one no longer exists after death …’ … ‘A realized one both still exists and no longer exists after death …’ … ‘A realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists after death. This is the only truth, anything else is futile:’ that’s a misconception.

I know and see the scope of convictions, the scope of grounds for views, fixation on views, obsession with views, the origin of views, and the uprooting of views. Knowing and seeing thus, why should I say: ‘I neither know nor see?’ I do know and see.”

“What is the venerable’s name? And how are you known among your spiritual companions?”

“Reverend, my name is Ānanda. And that’s how I’m known among my spiritual companions.”

“Goodness! I had no idea I was consulting such a great tutor as Venerable Ānanda! If I had known who you were, I wouldn’t have said so much. May Venerable Ānanda please forgive me.”