Snp 5.7 — The Questions of Upasīva

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Source: https://suttacentral.net/snp5.7/en/sujato
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Text

Anthology of Discourses 5.7

The Questions of Upasīva

“Alone and independent, O Sakyan,”

said Venerable Upasīva,

“I am not able to cross the great flood.

Tell me a support, All-seer,

depending on which I may cross this flood.”

“Mindfully contemplating nothingness,”

replied the Buddha,

“depending on the perception ‘there is nothing’, cross the flood.

Giving up sensual pleasures, refraining from chatter,

watch day and night for the ending of craving.”

“One who is free of desire for sensual pleasures,”

said Venerable Upasīva,

“depending on nothingness, all else left behind,

freed in the ultimate liberation of perception:

might they remain there without traveling on?”

“One free of desire for sensual pleasures,”

replied the Buddha,

“depending on nothingness, all else left behind,

freed in the ultimate liberation of perception:

they might remain there without traveling on.”

“If they were to remain there without traveling on,

even for myriad years, All-seer,
and, being freed, were to grow cool right there,
would the consciousness of that sort pass away?”
“As a flame tossed by a gust of wind,”
replied the Buddha,
“comes to an end and cannot be reckoned;
so too, a sage freed from the set of mental phenomena
comes to an end and cannot be reckoned.”
“One who has disappeared—do they not exist?
Or are they free from disease for eternity?
Please, sage, answer me clearly,
for truly you understand this matter.”
“One who has disappeared cannot be defined,”
replied the Buddha.
“They have nothing by which others might describe them.
When all things have been eradicated,
eradicated, too, are all ways of speech.”