

## **Aggivaccagotta Sutta** **(Majjhima Nikāya Sutta No. 72)**

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### **1. Introduction**

by Victor Gunasekara

This Sutta uses the simile of the fire but in a different way to the more famous “Fire Sermon” which is contained in the Samyutta Nikāya as the *Adiṭṭhāpariyāya Sutta*. Unlike in the previous sutta (MN, No. 71) where the Buddha went in search of Vaccagotta here it is Vaccagotta who comes to the Buddha. It was after this sutta that Vaccagotta was converted to the Buddha’s way of thinking.

Here the simile of the fire is used to explain why no definite answers can be given to the famous ten indeterminate (or “unanswered”) questions of the Buddha. The sutta begins with Vaccagotta posing these questions to the Buddha (sections 3 - 12). These questions relate to four different problems: (1) the eternity of the world, (2) the finitude of the world, (3) the congruence of the soul and the body, and (4) the post-mortem position of the Thathāgata. To each of the first three problems two possibilities are given, and to the last one four possibilities, thus making up the ten. The Buddha answers each of these possibilities in the negative. Before considering the reasons for the Buddha’s answer we may consider the modern scientific-rationalist view of these four problems.

The first problem hinges on the meaning of the term *loka*. Both Bodhi and Horner translate this as “world” while Thanissaro translates it as “cosmos”. I think the last translation is the more appropriate. The world might refer to the planet Earth, and here there could be definite beginning and an end, so it would not be eternal. But the Universe is said, according to the most popular scientific theory called the Big Bang theory to have originated at a particular point in time, and to have expanded since then. However even this theory is not clear how it will end. But the Big Bang theory has been contested on scientific grounds. Thus there is no universally accepted theory of the beginning or of the end of the cosmos. Thus the Buddha’s answer in the negative to both these questions may be compatible with the scientific view of the matter.

On the second problem whether the universe is finite the dominant scientific view is again based on the Big Bang hypothesis. If the Universe is finite then we should be able to identify its boundaries. The Big Bang theory holds that the Universe consists of an expanding sphere whose dimensions can be calculated. However nothing is supposed to exist beyond this sphere, not even empty space as space also belongs to the expanding sphere. Some cosmologists speculate that several spheres can exist in the wider universe. Thus science also does not give a clear answer to the dimensions of the universe. So once again the difference between the Buddha’s position and that of science may not be very great.

The third problem, the difference between the ‘soul’ and the ‘body’, is answered in terms of the “no soul” (*anatta*) theory of Buddhism. Science too would affirm that there is no empirical evidence for the existence of a soul, regarded as an enduring entity that survives the physical death of the body. If the existence of a soul is denied then both the questions whether the two entities are the same or different will have to be answered in the negative.

In the fourth problem, the existence of the Thathāgata after death, the term ‘Thathagata’ is used to denote the fully entitled person who discovers the Noble Truths all by oneself without a teacher. Secular science does not recognize the existence of full enlightened beings, so the question does not arise. The Buddha denies four possibilities for the post-mortem existence of the Thathāgata. In a sense this is another aspect of the *anatta* doctrine when applied to enlightened persons.

Thus there is a broad agreement of the Buddha’s position on these four problems which what may be considered

the modern scientific view. However the way the two arrives at these conclusions are different. Here we are interested only in the method of the Buddha. This is what Vaccagotta sought from the Buddha and was satisfied with the answer he got.

With all the ten questions answered in the negative Vacca asks Gotama why he (Gotama) adopts this position. The Buddha answers that each of these positions is “going to a view (*diṭṭhigatametam*) holding a view (*diṭṭhigahanam*), the wilds of views (*diṭṭhikantāro*), the wriggling of views (*diṭṭhivisūkam*), the scuffling of views (*diṭṭhivipphanditam*), the fetter of views (*diṭṭhisamyojanam*)”. Here a view (*diṭṭhi*), unless it is qualified by ‘right view’, always means a speculative view. Such a view is not verified empirically, and therefore could be rejected. The reason for the rejection of such a view is given as that it “is beset by suffering (*sadukkham*), by vexation (*savighātam*), by despair (*sa-upāyāsam*), and by fever (*sapariḷāham*), and it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana (*na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya samvattati*).

The Buddha then states that he has given up speculative views as they cannot be established by direct experience. In this connection Vacca asks the Buddha where a monk who is liberated thus appears (*upapajjatī*) after death. (Note that this does mean “habitation” as is used by some expositors of the Dhamma). The Buddha states that “appear” is not relevant in this connection, neither is “not appear” or other logical combinations possible. This line of argument puzzles Vacca.

It is to clarify his argument to Vacca that the Buddha introduces the simile of the fire. He asks Vacca the question that if a fire is extinguished where has it gone. Vacca answers that the question is irrelevant. In a similar manner the Buddha states that the undetermined questions are irrelevant. Thus fire does not play a significant part in this sutta, except as an analogy to explain something else. What the sutta is concerned is with the validity of (speculative) views which have no basis in human experience.

The Buddha has used the fire simile in a different way in other suttas, notably in the *Adiṭṭapariyāya Sutta* in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, to which reference was made at the beginning of this Introduction. The following quotation from this Sutta gives the alternative usage:

“Monks, the All is aflame. What All is aflame? The eye is aflame. Forms are aflame. Consciousness at the eye is aflame. Contact at the eye is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye – experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain – that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I tell you, with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, and despairs.”

This is then repeated for the other sense organs.

From an epistemological and logical point of view the *Aggivaccagotta sutta* is of great importance.

## 2. To Vaccagotta on Fire

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park.

2. Then the wanderer Vacchagotta went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and asked the Blessed One:

3. “How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view: ‘The world is eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong?’”

“Vaccha, I do not hold the view: ‘The world is eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’”

4. “How then, does Master Gotama hold the view: ‘The world is not eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong?’”

“Vaccha, I do not hold the view: ‘The world is not eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’”

5. “How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view: ‘The world is finite: only this is true,

anything else is wrong'?"

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'The world is finite: only this is true, anything else is wrong.-"

6. "How then, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The world is infinite: only this is true, anything else is wrong'?"

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'The world is infinite: only this is true, anything else is wrong.-"

7. "How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The soul and the body are the same: only this is true, anything else is wrong'?"<sup>1</sup>

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'The soul and the body are the same: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

8. "How then, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The soul is one thing and the body another: only this is true, anything else is wrong'?"

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'The soul is one thing and the body another: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

9. "How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata exists: only this is true, anything else is wrong'?"<sup>2</sup>

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata exists: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

10. "How then, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata does not exist: only this is true, anything else is wrong'?"

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata does not exist: only this is true, anything else is wrong.-"

11. "How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata both exists and does not exist: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'?"

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata both exists and does not exist: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

12. "How then, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist: only this is true, anything else is wrong'?"

"Vaccha, I do not hold the view: 'After death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

13. "How is it then, Master Gotama? When Master Gotama is asked each of these ten questions, he replies: 'I do not hold that view.' What danger does Master Gotama see that he does not take up any of these speculative views?"

14. "Vaccha, the speculative view that the world is eternal is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is beset by suffering, by vexation, by despair, and by fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.

"The speculative view that the world is not eternal ... that the world is finite ... that the world is infinite ... that the soul and the body are the same ... that the soul is one thing and the body another ... that after death a Tathagata exists ... that after death a Tathagata does not exist ... that after death a Tathagata both exists and does not exist ... that after death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is beset by suffering, by vexation, by despair, and by fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. Seeing this danger, I do not take up any of these speculative views."

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1. The view that the soul (*atta*) and the body are the same is materialism, which reduces the soul to the body. The following view that the soul and the body are different is an eternalist view, which regards the soul as a persisting spiritual principle that can exist independently of the body.

2. The view that a Tathāgata exists after death is a form of eternalism that regards the Tathagata, or spiritually perfect individual, as possessing a self that attains eternal deliverance after the death of the body. The view that a Tathagata does not exist after death also identifies the Tathagata as self, but holds that this self is annihilated upon the death of the body. The third view attempts a synthesis of these two, which the Buddha rejects because both components involve a wrong view. The fourth view seems to be a sceptical attempt to reject both alternatives or to avoid taking a definite stand.

15. “Then does Master Gotama hold any speculative view at all?”

“Vaccha, ‘speculative view’ is something that the Tathagata. has put away. For the Tathagata., Vaccha, has seen<sup>3</sup> this: ‘Such is material form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.’ Therefore, I say. with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of all conceivings, all excogitations, all I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit, the Tathagata is liberated through not clinging.”

16. “When a bhikkhu’s mind is liberated thus, Master Gotama, where does he reappear [after death]?” “The term ‘reappears’ does not apply, Vaccha.”<sup>4</sup>

“Then he does not reappear, Master Gotama?” “The term ‘does not reappear’ does not apply, Vaccha.”

“Then he both reappears and does not reappear, Master Gotama?” “The term ‘both reappears and does not reappear’ does not apply, Vaccha.”

“Then he neither reappears nor does not reappear, Master Gotama?” “The term ‘neither reappears nor does not reappear’ does not apply, Vaccha.”

17. “When Master Gotama is asked these four questions, he replies: ‘The term “reappears” does not apply, Vaccha; the term “does not reappear” does not apply, Vaccha; the term “both reappears and does not reappear” does not apply, Vaccha; the term “neither reappears nor does not reappear” does not apply, Vaccha.’ Here I have fallen into bewilderment, Master Gotama, here I have fallen into confusion, and the measure of confidence I had gained through previous conversation with Master Gotama has now disappeared.”

18. “It is enough to cause you bewilderment, Vaccha, enough to cause you confusion. For this Dhamma, Vaccha, is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. It is hard for you to understand it when you hold another view, accept another teaching, approve of another teaching, pursue a different training, and follow a different teacher. So I shall question you about this in return, Vaccha. Answer as you choose.

19. “What do you think, Vaccha? Suppose a fire were burning before you. Would you know: ‘This fire is burning before me?’”

“I would, Master Gotama.”

“If someone were to ask you, Vaccha: ‘What does this fire burning before you burn in dependence on?’ - being asked thus, what would you answer?”

“Being asked thus, Master Gotama, I would answer: ‘This fire burning before me burns in dependence on grass and sticks.’

“If that fire before you were to be extinguished, would you know: ‘This fire before me has been extinguished?’”

“I would, Master Gotama.”

“If someone were to ask you, Vaccha: ‘When that fire before you was extinguished, to which direction did it go: to the east, the west, the north, or the south?’ - being asked thus, what would you answer?”

“That does not apply, Master Gotama. The fire burned in dependence on its fuel of grass and sticks. When that is used up, if it does not get any more fuel, being without fuel, it is reckoned as extinguished.”

20. “So too, Vaccha, the Tathagata has abandoned that material form by which one describing the Tathagata might describe him;<sup>5</sup> he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, done away with it so that it is no longer subject to future arising. The Tathagata is liberated from reckoning in terms of material form, Vaccha, he is profound, immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean. The term ‘reappears’ does not apply, the term ‘does not reappear’ does not apply, [4881 the term ‘both reappears and does not reappear’ does not apply, the term ‘neither reappears nor does

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3. In the Pali a word play is involved between *ditthagata*, “speculative view,” which the Tathagata has put away, and *dittha*, what has been “seen” by the Tathagata with direct vision, namely, the rise and fall of the five aggregates.

4. MA says that “does not reappear” actually does apply, in the sense that the arahant does not undergo a new existence. But if Vacchagotta were to hear this he would misapprehend it as annihilationism, and thus the Buddha denies that it applies in the sense that annihilation is not a tenable position.

5. MA says this is the material form by which one would describe the Tathagata as a being (or self) possessing material form. MA adds that the material form has been abandoned by the abandonment of the fetters connected with it, and it has thus become incapable of arising again in the future.

not reappear' does not apply. The Tathagata has Abandoned that feeling by which one describing the Tathagata might describe him ... has abandoned that perception by which one describing the Tathagata might describe him ... has abandoned those formations by which one describing the Tathagata might describe him ... has abandoned that consciousness by which one describing the Tathagata might describe him; he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, done away with it so that it is no longer subject to future arising. The Tathagata is liberated from reckoning in terms of consciousness, Vaccha; he is profound, immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean. The term 'reappears' does not apply, the term 'does not reappear' does not apply, the term 'both reappears and does not reappear' does not apply, the term 'neither appears nor does not appear' does not apply."<sup>6</sup>

21. When this was said, the wanderer Vacchagotta said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, suppose there were a great sala tree not far from a village or town, and impermanence wore away its branches and foliage, its bark and sapwood, so that on a later occasion, being divested of branches and foliage, divested of bark and sapwood, it became pure, consisting entirely of heartwood; so too, this discourse of Master Gotama's is divested of branches and foliage, divested of bark and sapwood, and is pure, consisting entirely of heartwood.

22. "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark [4891 for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

### 3. Discourse to Vacchagotta on Fire

Translated by Horner (PTS)

1. THUS have I heard: At one time the Lord was staying near Sāvattihī in the Jeta Grove in Anithapiṇḍika's monastery.

2. Then the wanderer Vacchagotta approached the Lord; having approached, he exchanged greetings with the Lord; having conversed in a friendly and courteous way, he sat down at a respectful distance. As he was sitting down at a respectful distance, the wanderer Vacchagotta spoke thus to the Lord:

3. "Now, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: 'The world is eternal,<sup>1</sup> this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood'"

"I, Vaccha, am not of this view: 'The world is eternal, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.'"

4. "Then good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: 'The world is not eternal, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood'"

"I, Vaccha, am not of this view: 'The world is not eternal, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.'"

5. "Now, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: 'The world is an ending thing, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood'?"

"I, Vaccha, am not of this view: 'The world is an ending thing, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.'"

6. "Then, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama, of this view: 'The world is not an ending thing, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood'?"

"I, Vaccha, am not of this view: 'The world is not an ending thing, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.'"

7. "Now, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: 'The life-principle and the body are the same, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood'?"

"I, Vaccha, am not of this view: 'The life-principle and the body are the same, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.'"

6. This passage should be connected with the simile of the extinguished fire. just as the extinguished fire cannot be described as having gone to any direction, so the Tathagata who has attained to final Nibbana cannot be described in terms of the four alternatives. The simile concerns solely the legitimacy of conceptual and linguistic usage and is not intended to suggest, as some scholars have held, that the Tathagata attains to some mystical absorption in the Absolute. The words "profound, immeasurable, unfathomable" point to the transcendental dimension of the liberation attained by the Accomplished One, its inaccessibility to discursive thought.

1. Cf. S. iv. 391 ff., where Vacchagotta is recorded to put all the following questions to Moggallāna; cf. s. iii. 257 ff.

8. “Then, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama, of this view: ‘The life-principle is one thing, the body another, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood’ ?”

“I, Vaccha, am not of this view: ‘The life-principle is one thing, the body another, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.’”

9. “Now, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: ‘The Tathāgata is after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood’ ?”

“I, Vaccha, am not of this view: ‘The Tathāgata is after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.’”

10. “Then, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: ‘The Tathāgata, is not after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood’ ?”

“I, Vaccha, am not of this view: ‘The Tathāgata is not after dying ... falsehood.’”

11. “Now, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: ‘The Tathāgata both is and is not after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood’ ?”

“I, Vaccha, am not of this view: ‘The Tathāgata both is and is not after dying ... falsehood.’”

12. “Then, good Gotama, is the revered Gotama of this view: ‘The Tathāgata neither is nor is not after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood’ ?”

“I, Vaccha, am not of this view: ‘The Tathāgata neither is nor is not after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.’”

13. “Now, good Gotama, the revered Gotama, on being asked whether he is of the view: ‘The world is eternal, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.’ says: ‘I, Vaccha, am not of this view: The world eternal ... all else is falsehood.’ But good Gotama, the revered Gotama, on being asked whether he is of the view: ‘The world is not eternal ...’ .... on being asked whether he is of the view: ‘The Tathāgata both is and is not after dying ...’ ... on being asked whether he is of the view: ‘The Tathāgata neither is nor is not after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood,’ says: ‘I, Vaccha, am not of the view: The Tathāgata neither is nor is not after dying, this is indeed the truth, all else is falsehood.’ What is the peril the revered Gotama beholds that he thus does not approach any of these (speculative) views ?”

14. “Vaccha, to think that ‘the world is eternal’ – this is going to a (speculative) view,<sup>2</sup> holding a view, the wilds of views, the wriggling of views, the scuffling of views, the fetter of views; it is accompanied by anguish, distress, misery, fever; it does not conduce to turning away from, nor to dispassion, stopping, calming, super-knowledge, awakening, nor to nibbāna.

Vaccha, to think that ‘the world is not eternal’ . . . to think that ‘the world is an ending thing’ . . . to think that ‘the world is not an ending thing’ . . . to think that ‘the life-principle and the body are the same’ . . . to think that ‘the life-principle is one thing, the body another’ . . . to think that ‘the Tathāgata is after dying’ . . . [486] to think that ‘the Tathāgata is not after dying’ . . . to think that ‘the Tathāgata both is and is not after dying’ . . . to think that ‘the Tathāgata neither is nor is not after dying’ – this, Vaccha, is going to a (speculative) view, holding a view, the wilds of views, the wriggling of views, the scuffling of views, the fetter of views; it is accompanied by anguish, distress, misery, fever; it does not conduce to turning away from, nor to dispassion, stopping, calming, super-knowledge, awakening, nor to nibbāna. I, Vaccha, beholding that this is a peril, thus do not approach any of these (speculative) views.”

15. “But does the good Gotama have any (speculative) view ?”

“Vaccha, going to ‘speculative view’ – this has been got rid of by the Tathāgata. But this, Vaccha, has been seen by the Tathāgata: ‘Such is material shape, such is the arising of material shape, such the going down of material shape; such is feeling ... perception ... such are the habitual tendencies ... such is consciousness, such is the arising of consciousness, such the going down of consciousness.’ Therefore I say that by the destruction, dispassion, stopping, giving up, casting out of all imaginings,<sup>3</sup> all supposings, all latent pride that ‘I am the doer, mine is the doer,’ a Tathāgata is freed without clinging.”

16. “But, good Gotama, where does a monk arise whose mind is freed thus ?” “‘Arise,’ Vaccha, does not apply.”

“Well then, good Gotama, does he not arise ?” “‘Does not arise,’ Vaccha, does not apply.”

“Well then, good Gotama, does he both arise and not arise ?” “‘Both arises and does not arise,’ Vaccha, does not apply.”

“Well then, good Gotama, does he neither arise nor not arise ?” “‘Neither arises nor does not arise,’ Vaccha,

2. Cf. M. i. 8, 431. Since the Tathāgata knows and comprehends, he does not hold any speculative view; see below. In this paragraph I have mostly translated *diṭṭhi* as view, but speculative view is meant.

3. *maññita*. MA. iii. 198 gives three: craving, false views, pride, as does SA. ii. 363. *Vbh.* 390 gives nine. Cf S.iv. 21-22.

does not apply.”

17. “But, good Gotama, on being asked where does a monk arise, whose mind is freed thus, you say: ‘ “ Arise,” Vaccha, does not apply.’ Well then, good Gotama, on being asked if he does not arise, you say: ‘ “ Does not arise,” Vaccha, does not apply.’ Well then, good Gotama, on being asked whether he both arises and does not arise, you say: ‘ “ Arises and does not arise,” Vaccha, does not apply.’ Well then, good Gotama, on being asked whether he neither arises nor does not arise, you say: ‘ “ Neither arises nor does not arise,” Vaccha, does not apply.’ I am at a loss on this point, good Gotama, I am bewildered, and that measure of satisfaction I had from former conversation with the good Gotama—even that have I now lost.”

18. “ You ought to be at a loss, Vaccha, you ought to be bewildered. For, Vaccha, this dhamma is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond dialectic, subtle, intelligible to the wise; but it is hard for you who are of another view, another allegiance, another objective, of a different observance, and under a different teacher. Well then, Vaccha, I will now question you in return. Answer as it pleases you.

19. What do you think about this, Vaccha? If a fire were blazing in front of you would you know: This fire is blazing in front of me ?”

“Good Gotama, if a fire were blazing in front of me I should know: This fire is blazing in front of me.”

“But if, Vaccha, someone were to question you thus: This fire that is blazing in front of you – what is the reason that this fire is blazing ? – what would you, Vaccha, reply when questioned thus ?”

“If, good Gotama, someone were to question me thus: This fire that is blazing in front of you – what is the reason that this fire is blazing? – I, good Gotama, on being questioned thus would reply thus: This fire that is blazing in front of me—this fire is blazing because of a supply<sup>4</sup> of grass and sticks.”

“If that fire that was in front of you, Vaccha, were to be quenched,<sup>5</sup> would you know: This fire that was in front of me has been quenched ?”

“If, good Gotama, that fire that was in front of me were to be quenched, I would know: This fire that was in front of me has been quenched.”

“But if someone were to question you thus, Vaccha: That fire that was in front of you and that has been quenched – to which direction has that fire gone from here, to the east or west or north or south ? On being questioned thus, what would you, Vaccha, reply ?”

“It does not apply, good Gotama. For, good Gotama, that fire blazed because of a supply of grass and sticks, yet from having totally consumed this and from the lack of other fuel, being without fuel it is reckoned to be quenched.”

20. “Even so, Vaccha, that material shape by which one recognising the Tathāgata might recognise him—that material shape has been got rid of by the Tathāgata, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump that can come to no further existence and is not liable to arise again in the future. Freed from denotation by material shape is the Tathāgata, Vaccha, he is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable as is the great ocean. ‘Arises’ does not apply, ‘does not arise’ does not apply, ‘both arises and does not arise’ does not apply, ‘neither arises nor does not arise’ does not apply. That feeling ... That perception ... Those habitual tendencies ... That consciousness by which one recognising the Tathāgata might recognise him – that consciousness has been got rid of by the Tathāgata, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump that can come to no further existence and is not liable to arise again in the future. Freed from denotation by consciousness is the Tathāgata, Vaccha, he is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable as is the great ocean. ‘Arises’ does not apply, ‘does not arise’ does not apply, ‘both arises and does not arise’ does not apply, ‘neither arises nor does not arise’ does not apply.”

21. When this had been said, the wanderer Vacchagotta spoke thus to the Lord: “ Good Gotama, it is like a great sāl-tree not far from a village or market town whose branches and foliage might be dissolved because of their impermanence, whose bark and young shoots might be dissolved, whose softwood might be dissolved, so that after a time the branches and foliage gone, the bark and young shoots gone, the softwood gone, clear of them it would be established on the pith.”

22. It is excellent, good Gotama, excellent, good Gotama. It is as if, good Gotama, one might set upright what had been upset, or disclose what had been covered, or might show the way to one who had gone astray, [489] or bring an oil-lamp into the darkness so that those with vision might see material shapes – even so, in many a figure has *dhamma* been made clear by the revered Gotama. I am going to the revered Gotama for refuge and to *dhamma* and to the Order of monks. May the revered Gotama accept me as a lay-follower going for refuge from this day forth for as long as life lasts.”

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4. *upādāna*, fuel, supply; grasping, attachment.

5. *nibbāyeyya*, were to be extinguished, put out, quenched.

## 4. To Vaccagotta on Fire

### Translated by Thannissaro Bhikkhu

1. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Savatthi, at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery.

2. Then the wanderer Vacchagotta went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he asked the Blessed One:

3. "How is it, Master Gotama, does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The cosmos is eternal: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

4. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The cosmos is not eternal: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

5. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The cosmos is finite: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

6. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The cosmos is infinite: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

7. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The soul & the body are the same: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

8. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'The soul is one thing and the body another: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

9. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathagata exists: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

10. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathagata does not exist: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

11. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathagata both exists & does not exist: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

12. "Then does Master Gotama hold the view: 'After death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless?'" "...no..."

13. "How is it, Master Gotama, when Master Gotama is asked if he holds the view 'the cosmos is eternal...!... 'after death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist: only this is true, anything otherwise is worthless,' he says '...no...' in each case. Seeing what drawback, then, is Master Gotama thus entirely dissociated from each of these ten positions?"

14. "Vaccha, the position that 'the cosmos is eternal' is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by suffering, distress, despair, & fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, full Awakening, Unbinding. "The position that 'the cosmos is not eternal'... "...the cosmos is finite'... "...the cosmos is infinite'... "...the soul & the body are the same'... "...the soul is one thing and the body another'... "...after death a Tathagata exists'... "...after death a Tathagata does not exist'... "...after death a Tathagata both exists & does not exist'... "...after death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist'... does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, full Awakening, Unbinding."

15. "Does Master Gotama have any position at all?"

"A 'position,' Vaccha, is something that a Tathagata has done away with. What a Tathagata sees is this: 'Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception... such are mental fabrications... such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.' Because of this, I say, a Tathagata — with the ending, fading out, cessation, renunciation, & relinquishment of all constructions, all excogitations, all I-making & mine-making & obsession with conceit — is, through lack of clinging/sustenance, released."

16. "But, Master Gotama, the monk whose mind is thus released: Where does he reappear?" "Reappear,' Vaccha, doesn't apply."

"In that case, Master Gotama, he does not reappear." "Does not reappear,' Vaccha, doesn't apply." "...both does & does not reappear." "...doesn't apply." "...neither does nor does not reappear." "...doesn't apply."

17. "How is it, Master Gotama, when Master Gotama is asked if the monk reappears... does not reappear... both does & does not reappear... neither does nor does not reappear, he says, '...doesn't apply' in each case. At this point, Master Gotama, I am befuddled; at this point, confused. The modicum of clarity coming to me from your earlier conversation is now obscured."

18. "Of course you're befuddled, Vaccha. Of course you're confused. Deep, Vaccha, is this phenomenon, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. For those with other views, other practices, other satisfactions, other aims, other teachers, it is difficult to know. That being the case, I will now put some questions to you. Answer as you see fit.

19. What do you think, Vaccha: If a fire were burning in front of you, would you know that, 'This fire is burning in front of me'?" "...yes..."

"And suppose someone were to ask you, Vaccha, 'This fire burning in front of you, dependent on what is it burning?' Thus asked, how would you reply?"

"...I would reply, 'This fire burning in front of me is burning dependent on grass & timber as its sustenance.'"

"If the fire burning in front of you were to go out, would you know that, 'This fire burning in front of me has gone out'?" "...yes..."

"And suppose someone were to ask you, 'This fire that has gone out in front of you, in which direction from here has it gone? East? West? North? Or south?' Thus asked, how would you reply?"

"That doesn't apply, Master Gotama. Any fire burning dependent on a sustenance of grass and timber, being unnourished — from having consumed that sustenance and not being offered any other — is classified simply as 'out' (unbound)."

20. "Even so, Vaccha, any physical form by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form, Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the sea. 'Reappears' doesn't apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply.

"Any feeling... Any perception... Any mental fabrication..."

"Any consciousness by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, like an uprooted palm tree, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of consciousness, Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the sea. 'Reappears' doesn't apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply."

21. When this was said, the wanderer Vacchagotta said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, it is as if there were a great sala tree not far from a village or town: From inconstancy, its branches and leaves would wear away, its bark would wear away, its sapwood would wear away, so that on a later occasion — divested of branches, leaves, bark, & sapwood — it would stand as pure heartwood. In the same way, Master Gotama's words are divested of branches, leaves, bark, & sapwood and stand as pure heartwood.

22. "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or were to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama has — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life."

## 5. Pali Text of the Sutta

### Aggivacchasuttam

1. Evaṃ me sutam— ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvattīyaṃ viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme.  
2. Atha kho vacchagotto paribbājako yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodi. Sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sāraṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho vacchagotto paribbājako bhagavantam etadavoca—

3. “Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, ‘sassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti— evaṃdiṭṭhi , bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi— ‘sassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

4. “Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, ‘asassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti— evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi— ‘asassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghaman’”ti.

5. “Kiṃ (2.0151) nu kho, bho gotama, ‘antavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti— evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi— ‘antavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

6. “Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, ‘anantavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti— evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi— ‘anantavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

7. “Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, ‘taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– ‘taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

8. “Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, ‘aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– ‘aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

9. “Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, ‘hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– ‘hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

10. “Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, ‘na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– ‘na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

11. “Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, ‘hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– ‘hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

12. “Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, ‘neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo”ti? “Na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– ‘neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’”ti.

13. “Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, sassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na (2.0152) kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– sassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, asassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– asassato loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, antavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– antavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, anantavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– anantavā loko, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi.

“Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi. ‘Kiṃ pana, bho gotama, neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti– evaṃdiṭṭhi bhavaṃ gotamo’ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na kho (2.0153) ahaṃ, vaccha, evaṃdiṭṭhi– neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṇ’ti vadesi.

“Kiṃ pana bho gotamo ādīnavaṃ sampassamāno evaṃ imāni sabbaso diṭṭhigatāni anupagato”ti?

14. “Sassato loko’ti kho, vaccha, diṭṭhigatametam diṭṭhigahanam diṭṭhikantāro , diṭṭhivissūkam diṭṭhivipphanditam diṭṭhisamyojanam sadukkham savighātam sa-upāyasaṃ sapariḷāham, na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya samvattati. ‘Asassato loko’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘antavā loko’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘anantavā loko’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṇ’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṇ’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā’ti kho, vaccha ...pe... ‘neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā’ti kho, vaccha, diṭṭhigatametam diṭṭhigahanam diṭṭhikantāro diṭṭhivissūkam diṭṭhivipphanditam diṭṭhisamyojanam sadukkham savighātam sa-upāyasaṃ sapariḷāham, na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya samvattati. Imam kho ahaṃ, vaccha, ādīnavaṃ sampassamāno evaṃ imāni sabbaso diṭṭhigatāni anupagato”ti.

15. “Atthi pana bhoto gotamassa kiñci diṭṭhigatan”ti?

“Diṭṭhigatanti kho, vaccha, apanītametaṃ tathāgatassa. Diṭṭhañhetam, vaccha, tathāgatena– ‘iti rūpaṃ, iti rūpassa samudayo, iti rūpassa atthaṅgamo; iti vedanā, iti vedanāya samudayo, iti vedanāya atthaṅgamo; iti

saññā, iti saññāya samudayo, iti saññāya atthaṅgamo; iti saṅkhārā, iti saṅkhārānaṃ samudayo, iti saṅkhārānaṃ atthaṅgamo; iti viññāṇaṃ, iti viññāṇassa samudayo, iti viññāṇassa atthaṅgamo'ti. Tasmā tathāgato sabbamaññitānaṃ sabbamathitānaṃ sabba-ahaṃkāramamaṃkāramānānusayānaṃ khayā virāgā nirodhā cāgā paṭinissaggā anupādā vimuttoti vadāmī'ti.

16. “Evaṃ (2.0154) vimuttacitto pana, bho gotama, bhikkhu kuhiṃ upapajjatī'ti? “Upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti”.

“Tena hi, bho gotama, na upapajjatī'ti? “Na upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti”.

“Tena hi, bho gotama, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatī'ti? “Upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti”.

“Tena hi, bho gotama, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatī'ti? “Neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti”.

17. “Evaṃ vimuttacitto pana, bho gotama, bhikkhu kuhiṃ upapajjatī'ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti’ti vadesi. ‘Tena hi, bho gotama, na upapajjatī'ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘na upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti’ti vadesi. ‘Tena hi, bho gotama, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatī'ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti’ti vadesi. ‘Tena hi, bho gotama, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatī'ti iti puṭṭho samāno ‘neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti kho, vaccha, na upeti’ti vadesi. Etthāhaṃ, bho gotama, aññāṇamāpādiṃ, ettha sammohamāpādiṃ. Yāpi me eṣā bhoto gotamassa purimena kathāsallāpena ahu pasādamattā sāpi me etarahi antarahitā'ti.

18. “Alañhi te, vaccha, aññāṇāya, alaṃ sammohāya. Gambhīro hāyaṃ, vaccha, dhammo duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍitavedanīyo. So tayā dujjāno aññaditṭhikena aññakhantikena aññarucikena aññatrayogena , aññatrācariyakena” .

“Tena hi, vaccha, taññevettha paṭipucchissāmi; yathā te khameyya tathā naṃ byākareyyāsi.

19. Taṃ kiṃ maññasi, vaccha, sace te purato aggi jaleyya, jāneyyāsi tvaṃ– ‘ayaṃ me purato aggi jalatī'ti? “Sace me, bho gotama, purato aggi jaleyya, jāneyyāhaṃ– ‘ayaṃ me purato aggi jalatī'ti.

“Sace pana taṃ, vaccha, evaṃ puccheyya– ‘yo te ayaṃ purato aggi jalati ayaṃ aggi kiṃ paṭicca jalatī'ti, evaṃ puṭṭho tvaṃ, vaccha, kinti byākareyyāsi'ti? “Sace maṃ, bho gotama, evaṃ puccheyya– ‘yo te ayaṃ purato aggi jalati ayaṃ aggi kiṃ paṭicca jalatī'ti, evaṃ puṭṭho ahaṃ, bho gotama, evaṃ byākareyyaṃ (2.0155)– ‘yo me ayaṃ purato aggi jalati ayaṃ aggi tiṇakaṭṭhupādānaṃ paṭicca jalatī'ti.

“Sace te, vaccha, purato so aggi nibbāyeyya, jāneyyāsi tvaṃ– ‘ayaṃ me purato aggi nibbuto'ti? “Sace me, bho gotama, purato so aggi nibbāyeyya, jāneyyāhaṃ– ‘ayaṃ me purato aggi nibbuto'ti.

“Sace pana taṃ, vaccha, evaṃ puccheyya– ‘yo te ayaṃ purato aggi nibbuto so aggi ito katamaṃ disaṃ gato– puratthimaṃ vā dakkhiṇaṃ vā pacchimaṃ vā uttaraṃ vā'ti, evaṃ puṭṭho tvaṃ, vaccha, kinti byākareyyāsi'ti? “Na upeti, bho gotama, yañhi so, bho gotama, aggi tiṇakaṭṭhupādānaṃ paṭicca ajali , tassa ca pariyādānā aññassa ca anupahārā anāhāro nibbuto tveva saṅkhyāṃ gacchatī'ti.

20. “Evameva kho, vaccha, yena rūpena tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya taṃ rūpaṃ tathāgatassa pahīnaṃ ucchinnamūlaṃ tālāvathukataṃ anabhāvaṃkataṃ āyatīṃ anuppādadhammaṃ. Rūpasāṅkhayavimutto , kho, vaccha, tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāḷho– seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo. Upapajjatīti na upeti, na upapajjatīti na upeti, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti na upeti, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti na upeti.

“Yāya vedanāya tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya sā vedanā tathāgatassa pahīnā ucchinnamūlā tālāvathukatā anabhāvaṃkatā āyatīṃ anuppādadhammā. Vedanāsaṅkhayavimutto kho, vaccha, tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāḷho– seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo. Upapajjatīti na upeti, na upapajjatīti na upeti, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti na upeti, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti na upeti.

“Yāya saññāya tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya sā saññā tathāgatassa pahīnā ucchinnamūlā tālāvathukatā anabhāvaṃkatā āyatīṃ anuppādadhammā. Saññāsaṅkhayavimutto kho, vaccha, tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāḷho– seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo. Upapajjatīti (2.0156) na upeti, na upapajjatīti na upeti, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti na upeti, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti na upeti.

“Yehi saṅkhārehi tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya te saṅkhārā tathāgatassa pahīnā ucchinnamūlā tālāvathukatā anabhāvaṃkatā āyatīṃ anuppādadhammā. Saṅkhārasaṅkhayavimutto kho, vaccha, tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāḷho– seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo. Upapajjatīti na upeti, na upapajjatīti na upeti, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti na upeti, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti na upeti.

“Yena viññāṇena tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya taṃ viññāṇaṃ tathāgatassa pahīnaṃ ucchinnamūlaṃ tālāvathukataṃ anabhāvaṃkataṃ āyatīṃ anuppādadhammaṃ. Viññāṇasaṅkhayavimutto kho, vaccha, tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāḷho– seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo. Upapajjatīti na upeti, na upapajjatīti na upeti, upapajjati ca na ca upapajjatīti na upeti, neva upapajjati na na upapajjatīti na upeti”.

21. Evaṃ vutte, vacchagotto paribbājako bhagavantaṃ etadavoca– “seyyathāpi, bho gotama, gāmassa

vā nigamassa vā avidūre mahāsālarukkho. Tassa aniccatā sākhāpalāsā palujjeyyūṃ ,, tacapapaṭikā palujjeyyūṃ, pheggū palujjeyyūṃ ; so aparena samayena apagatasākhāpalāso apagatacapapaṭiko apagataphegguko suddho assa, sāre paṭiṭṭhito; evameva bho gotamassa pāvacaṇaṃ apagatasākhāpalāsaṃ apagatacapapaṭikaṃ apagatapheggukaṃ suddhaṃ, sāre paṭiṭṭhitaṃ.

22. Abhikkantaṃ, bho gotama ...pe... upāsakaṃ maṃ bhavaṃ gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatan”ti.

Aggivačchasuttaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ dutiyaṃ.