

The Questions of King Mikinda

Anonymous

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Venerable Nagasena, men and women in this world see dreams pleasant and evil, things they have seen before and things they have not, dreams peaceful and terrible, dreams of matters near to them and distant from them, full of many shops and innumerable colors. What is this that men call a dream, and who is it who dreams it?"

"It is a suggestion, O king, coming across the path of the mind which is what is called a dream. And there are six kinds of people who see dreams - the man who is of a windy humor, or of a bilious one, or of a phlegmatic one, the man who dreams dreams by the influence of a god, the man who does so by the influence of his own habits, and the man who does so in the way of prognostication. And of those, O king, only the last kind of dreams is true; all the rest are false."

"Venerable Nagasena, when a man dreams a dream that is prognostication, how is it? Does his own mind set out itself to seek the omen, or does the prognostication come of its own accord into the path of his mind, or does someone else come to tell him of it?"

"His own mind does not itself seek the omen, neither does any one else come to tell him of it. The prognostication comes of its own accord into his mind. It is like the case of a looking glass, which does not go anywhere to seek for the reflection; neither does anyone else come and put the reflection on the looking glass. But the object reflected comes from

somewhere or other across the sphere over which the reflecting power of the looking glass extends."

"Venerable Nagasena, does the same mind which sees the dream also know: 'Such and such a result, auspicious or terrible will follow?'"

"No, that is not so, O king. After the omen has occurred, he tells others and then they explain the meaning of it."

"Venerable Nagasena, when a man dreams a dream, is he awake or asleep?"

"Neither the one, O king, nor yet the other. But when his sleep has become light, and he is not yet fully conscious, in that interval it is that dreams are dreamt. When a man is in deep sleep, O king, his mind has returned home (has entered again into the Bhavanga), and a mind thus shut in does not act, and a mind hindered in the actions knows not the evil and the good, and he who knows not has no dreams. It is when the mind is active that dreams are dreamt."