

The Discourse to Kaccānagotta
Kaccānagottasuttam (SN 12.15, PTS S ii.16.)
Jayarava Nov 2010.

Staying at Sāvatti. Then the elder Kaccānagotta¹ approached the Blessed One, and having greeted him he sat to one side and asked the Blessed One: right-view [is called] ‘right-view’, Sir, to what extent, then, is there right-view?

Ordinarily, Kaccāna, this world is constructed on a dichotomy – ‘existence’ and ‘non-existence’. The origin of the world of experience, Kaccāna, seen with full understanding as it is [shows] there is no non-existence in the world. Cessation of the world, Kaccāna, seen with full understanding as it is [shows] there is no existence in the world. Usually, Kaccāna, this world is bound by the tendency to grasp at stratagems (upāya). This [one with right-view] doesn’t have that tendency, doesn’t insist on [views such as] ‘the self is mine’. He is not uncertain or sceptical about, and has independent knowledge of, this: ‘arising is only arising of disappointment. What ceases with cessation is disappointment’. To this extent, Kaccāna, there is right-view.

Kaccāna: one extreme is to say that everything exists; and the second extreme is to deny that anything exists. The Tathāgata points to a foundation in the middle, which avoids both extremes. From the condition of ignorance there are processes (*saṅkhārā*); from processes there is consciousness... etc [i.e. the forwards *nidāna* sequence]. Thus the whole mass of disappointment originates. With the remainderless cessation of ignorance, processes cease... etc [i.e. the reverse *nidāna* sequence] thus there is the cessation of the whole mass of disappointment.

¹ The suffix *gotta* (Sanskrit *gotra*) indicates that Kaccāna is his clan name, or surname in English terms, and that he is probably a Brahmin.