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## Phena,piṇḍa Sutta

The Lump of Froth Discourse | S 22.95

Be: **Phena,piṇḍûpama Sutta** The Discourse on the Parable of the Froth

Theme: The true nature of the aggregates

Translated by Piya Tan ©2005

### 1 Introduction

**1.1** The Sāmyutta Commentary tells us that one evening, the Buddha, while dwelling beside the Ganges, in Ayodhya [Ayojjhā],<sup>1</sup> comes out of his fragrant cell and sat down on the river bank. He sees a great lump of froth floating downstream, and thinks, “I will give a Dharma talk regarding the 5 aggregates.” Then he addresses the monks sitting around him. (SA 2:320). **Bodhi**, in his own translation of this sutta, makes this insightful observation:

This sutta is one of the most radical discourses on the empty nature of conditioned phenomena; its imagery (especially the similes of the mirage and the magical illusion) has been taken up by later Buddhist thinkers, most persistently by the Mādhyamikas. Some of the images are found elsewhere in the Pali Canon, eg at Dh 46, 170. In the context of early Buddhist thought these similes have to be handled with care. They are not intended to suggest an illusionist view of the world but to show that our conceptions of the world, and of our own existence, are largely distorted by the processes of cognition.

Just as the mirage and magical illusion are based on real existents—the sand of the desert, the magician’s appurtenances—so these false conceptions arise from a base that objectively exists, namely, the five aggregates; but when seen through a mind subject to conceptual distortion, the aggregates appear in a way that deviates from their actual nature. Instead of being seen as transient and selfless, they appear as substantial and as a self. (Bodhi S:B 1085 n188)

<u>Aggregate</u>	<u>Background</u>	<u>Parable</u>
form	the river Ganges	a great lump of froth
feeling	autumn	a water-bubble
perception	late summer noon	a mirage
mental formations	forest	a large plantain trunk
consciousness	a crossroads	a magical illusion

**Table 1. The aggregate parables**

<sup>1</sup> An ancient capital of Southern Kosala. Kosala or “the kingdom of the Kosalas” was divided into Northern Kosala (*uttara kosala*) on the banks of the Sarayu river (the modern Gaghara) and extending northward to the foothills of the Himalaya, and Southern Kosala (*dakkhiṇa kosala*) extending southward to the Vindhya mountains. During the Buddha’s time, Kosala (under king Pasenadi) was the most powerful kingdom in north India, but eventually it was overshadowed by Magadha. In **Phena,piṇḍa S** (S 22.95/3:140), the Buddha visits Ayojjhā (Skt Ayodhyā) and the city is said to be located beside the Ganges, whereas Ayodhyā was actually on the Sarayu. However, the Sarayu was a tributary of the Ganges which may justify the reference (J Finegan, *An Archaeological History of Religions of Indian Asia*, NY: Paragon House, 1989:92). See E J Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha as Legend and History*, 1949:15. We must allow that ancient rivers might have taken courses different from today’s.

## 2 Commentarial notes on the parables

**2.0 THE 5 PARABLES.** These parables are discussed at length in **the Sārattha-p,pakāsinī** (Saṃyutta Commentary)<sup>2</sup> and **the Sammoha,vinodanī** (the Commentary to the Vibhaṅga),<sup>3</sup> and much of the following notes are based on them, and with other notes:<sup>4</sup>

### **2.1 A GREAT LUMP OF FROTH** (*mahantaṃ phena,piṇḍaṃ*).

**2.1.1** Just as a lump of froth is unsubstantial, so too **form** is unsubstantial due to its lack of any abiding entity, permanent substance or self-essence. The froth cannot be used to make such physical things as a bowl or a saucer, but it merely breaks up. Even so, form cannot be taken as permanent or lasting, or as “I” or as “mine.” It is merely a lump of froth, impermanent, unsatisfactory, not self and foul.

**2.1.2** Just as a lump of froth is full of holes, joined together with many parts, and is the abode of such creatures as the water-snake, etc, even so, form [the physical body] is full of holes and joined together with many parts. Some eight families of worms [bugs] (*kimi*) live there, too. It is their birth-chamber, toilet, sick bay and cemetery.<sup>5</sup>

**2.1.3** And just as a lump of froth begins with the size of a ripe jujube fruit,<sup>6</sup> and gradually becomes mountainous, even so, the human body begins as a tiny foetus, and gradually grows a full fathom.<sup>7</sup> And in the case of animals like oxen, buffaloes, elephants, etc, they become gigantic, and pile up to form mountains. Water creatures, such as fish and turtles, similarly gathered together can measure several hundred leagues.<sup>8</sup>

**2.1.4** But a lump of froth ever breaks up as soon as it has arisen, and even if it lasts for a while, on reaching the sea, it always breaks up. Even so, this body is continually breaking up and changing, but breaks up finally within a century, and after death, it disintegrates into tiny fragments.

**2.1.5 Buddhaghosa**,<sup>9</sup> in his encyclopaedic work, **the Visuddhi,magga**, gives this delightful reflection on the 10 stages of human aging:

#### The decades

(1) Herein, as to these decades: firstly, the first ten years of a person living for a hundred years are called the tender decade (*manda,dasaka*). For he is a tender unsteady child then.

(2) The next ten are called the playful decade (*khiḍḍā,dasaka*). For he delights in play then.

<sup>2</sup> SA 2:321-324.

<sup>3</sup> VbhA §§143-159/32-35.

<sup>4</sup> See **Araka S** (A 22.70/4:136-139), SD 16.17 (3).

<sup>5</sup> VbhA §146/33, cf §1125/242.

<sup>6</sup> Jujube (*badara*), ie the Indian jujube, *Ziziphus mauritiana*; the common jujube (*Ziziphus jujube*) is native to China. While the common jujube leaves are smooth beneath, those of the Indian jujube are woolly, and its fruits (looking like Chinese dates) are also smaller and not so sweet. They are eaten fresh, boiled (sometimes in honey or sugar syrup), stewed or baked. Juice obtained from the fruits is used in making small candies called jujubes.

<sup>7</sup> A fathom (*vyāma*) is the length from finger-tip to finger-tip with both arms stretched out, and this refers to the average height of a human being.

<sup>8</sup> A league (*yojana*) is about 1.6 km = 7 mi.

<sup>9</sup> Early 5<sup>th</sup> cent.

(3) The next ten are called the beautiful decade (*vanṇa,dasaka*). For his beauty reaches full bloom then.

(4) The next ten are called the strong decade (*bala,dasaka*). For his power and strength reach full abundance then.

(5) The next ten are called the wise decade (*paññā,dasaka*). For by then his wisdom is well established. Even in one naturally weak in wisdom at this time, there arises at least some wisdom.

(6) The next ten are called the declining decade (*hāni,dasaka*). For his fondness for play, his beauty, strength and wisdom decline then.

(7) The next ten are called the stooping decade (*pabbhāra,dasaka*). For his figure [620] stoops forward then.

(8) The next ten are called the bent decade (*pavaṅka,dasaka*). For his figure is bent like the tip of a plough then.

(9) The next ten are called the silly decade (*momūha,dasaka*). For he becomes silly and forgets whatever he does then.

(10) The next ten are called the prone decade (*sayana,dasaka*). For a centenarian mostly lies prone.

### **2.1.6 Applying the 3 characteristics**

Herein, in order to apply the three characteristics according to “the progressive disappearance of youth”<sup>10</sup> by means of these decades, the meditator (*yogī*) considers thus:

The form occurring in the first decade ceases right there without reaching the second decade. Therefore it is impermanent, unsatisfactory [painful], not self.

The form occurring in the second decade ceases right there...etc.

The form occurring in the ninth decade ceases right there without reaching the tenth decade. Therefore it is impermanent, unsatisfactory, not self.

The form occurring in the tenth decade ceases right there without reaching the next existence. Therefore it is impermanent, unsatisfactory, not self.

This is how he applies the three characteristics.

(Vism 20.51-52/619 f)

### **2.1.7 The 7 ages of man**

Compare Buddhaghosa’s “ten ages” with **Shakespeare’s** “the seven ages of man” written about a thousand years later:

All the world’s a stage,  
 And all the men and women merely players;  
 They have their exits, and their entrances;  
 And one man in his time plays many parts,  
 His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
 Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms;  
 And then, the whining school-boy, with his satchel,  
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
 Unwillingly to school: And then the lover;  
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
 Made to his mistress’ eyebrow. Then a soldier;  
 Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,

<sup>10</sup> *Vayo,vuddh’atthagamato*, lit “the disappearance of what grows in stages.”

Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
 Seeking the bubble reputation  
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice;  
 In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,  
 With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,  
 Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
 And so he plays his part: The sixth age shifts  
 Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;  
 His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide  
 For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice.  
 Turning again towards childish treble, pipes  
 And whistles in his sound: Last scene of all,  
 That ends this strange eventful history,  
 Is second childishness, and mere oblivion;  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.     *As You Like It* (1599) 2.7.137-166

**2.1.8 Impermanence.** Such a reflection constantly done and being ever mindful of impermanence, keeps the mind wholesome, and keeps bad away, as stated in **the Dhammapada**:

<i>pheṇūpamaṃ kāyam imarṃ viditvā</i>	Knowing this body to be like froth,
<i>marīci, dhammaṃ abhisambuddham</i>	Awakening to its mirage-like nature,
<i>chetvāna māraṣṣa papupphakāni</i>	Cutting off the flowers of Māra,
<i>adassanaṃ maccu, rājassa gacche</i>	One would go where the king of death sees not. (Dh 46)

## 2.2 A WATER-BUBBLE (*udake bubbuḷaṃ*)

**2.2.1** Just as a bubble (*bubbuḷa*) is unsubstantial, so is **feeling**. It is feeble<sup>11</sup> and ungraspable, and cannot be used to make a plank or a seat, but breaks up as soon as it is seized. Even so, feeling is feeble and ungraspable, and as such cannot be taken as permanent or lasting, but when seized, does not remain as it was.

**2.2.2** Just as a bubble arises and ends in the same drop of water, and has no duration, even so, feeling, too arises and ends without duration. In a finger-snap, it arises and ends 100,000 crore<sup>12</sup> times. A water bubble arises on account of four conditions: the water surface [surface tension], a drop of water, wetness, and the air that holds it together like a bag (*puṭa*). Feeling, too, arises from four conditions: the physical basis, the object, the fire of defilements, and the impact of the sense-impression.

<i>yathā bubbulakaṃ passe</i>	Just as one would look upon a bubble,
<i>yathā passe marīcikaṃ</i>	Just as one would look upon a mirage,
<i>evaṃ lokaṃ avekkhantaṃ</i>	One who considers the world thus
<i>maccu, rājā na passati</i>	The king of death sees not. (Dh 170)

<sup>11</sup> *Abala*. VbhA:Ñ reads *aphala* and tr it as “leaves nothing behind.”

<sup>12</sup> A crore is a modern word of *koṭi*, which is 10 million, so the above number totals as 1,000,000,000,000, ie one million million or trillion.

### 2.3 A MIRAGE (*marīcikā*, Vedic *marīci*).<sup>13</sup>

**2.3.1** The Vedic form of the Buddhist word *marīcikā* is *marīci* (probably connected with the Vedic *marut*, “the flashing ones,” an old term for gods in general). The Sanskrit-English Dictionary defines *marīci* as “a particle of light, shining mote or speck in the air; a ray of light (of the sun or moon); a mirage.” Of these two words, *marīcikā* is more specifically Buddhist and is closer to the sense of a desert mirage. It can also refer to light patterns that sometimes form on photographs.

**2.3.2** Perception is like a mirage in the sense of being unsubstantial, and in the sense of being ungraspable. For one cannot grasp it to drink it or wash with it or bathe in it or fill a pot with it. Furthermore, just as a mirage shimmers and seems to move in waves, even so, **perception**, too, divided up as perception of blue, etc, for the purpose of experiencing of blue, etc, shakes and shimmers.

**2.3.3** A mirage deceives many and makes them think that they see a full lake or full river; even so, perception fools them and make them say, “This is blue, beautiful, pleasant, permanent.” So, too, in the case of yellow, and other colours.

**2.4 A PLANTAIN PLANT (*kadali*).** Both the plantain and the banana plants<sup>14</sup> always die or are cut down after fruiting or after the fruits are harvested. Then new plants grow from the suckers of the rhizomes (underground storage roots). The plant is destroyed by its own fruit, and, as such, is a fit parable for a bad person who is destroyed by the fruit of his own deeds,<sup>15</sup> and they are reborn into similar circumstances. Moreover, as the plant has no pith, it is often used as a parable for insubstantiality, as in this Sutta.

### 2.5 A MAGICAL ILLUSION (*māyā*).

**2.5.1 Nāṇananda**, in the very first chapter of his book, *The Magic of the Mind: an exposition of the Kālakārāma Sutta*, delightfully relates his own parable of “the magic show” (1974:5-7). As professional

<sup>13</sup> In optics, **mirage** is the deceptive appearance of a distant object or objects caused by the bending of light rays (refraction) in layers of air of varying density and temperature. Under certain conditions, such as over a stretch of pavement or desert air heated by intense sunshine, the air rapidly cools with elevation and therefore increases in density and refractive power. When sunlight reflected downward from the upper portion of an object—such as a tree-top—will be directed through the cool air in such a way that there is a double image of the tree (one being its reflection), so that the tree appears as if reflected in a body of water. See Nm 2:410; Nc:Be 183.

Sometimes, in an opposite situation, a **looming** occurs, such as over a body of water, a cool dense layer of air underlies a heated layer, so that the light rays will reach the eye that are originally directed above the line of sight. Thus, an object ordinarily out of view, like a ship or oasis below the horizon, will appear lifted into the sky.

<sup>14</sup> Plantain, ***kadali***. SED, PED & CPD say this is *Musa sapientum*, but it is prob ***Musa paradisiaca*** (Ency Brit, 15<sup>th</sup> ed Macro). The plantain tree is tall (3-20 m/10-33 ft), with a “trunk” of overlapping leaf-bases, and has large fleshy treelike stems, having bright green leaves, 1.5-3 m long and about 0.5 m broad. Its fruit is green and larger than the banana. The plantain fruit has more starch than the banana, and is not eaten raw. Because plantain has a maximum of starch before it ripens, it is usu cooked green, or may be dried for storage. Like the plantain, the closely related **common banana** (*Musa sapientum*) is a gigantic herb rising from an underground stem or rhizome, forms a false trunk 3-6 m (10-20 ft) high, composed of leaf sheaths and crowned with a rosette of 10-20 oblong elliptic leaves. After plantain and banana plants have fruited, they die and are replaced by others (suckers) arising from the rhizomes. The life of one stool, or clump, thus continues for many years. “The oldest records of edible bananas come from India (600 BC), described in the Epics of the Pali Buddhist canon” <http://www.botgard.ucla.edu/html/-botanytextbooks/economicbotany/Musa/index.html>. See R Syed, *Die Flora Altindiens in Literatur und Kunst*, 1990: 162 f.

<sup>15</sup> V 2:188 = S 1:154 = 2:241 = A 2:73 = DhA 3:156

magicians often declare, their performances are not really “magic” in the mediaeval sense, but simply illusions; hence, they are “illusionists.” The entertainment derived from such a show is proportionate to the level of the audience’s ignorance or gullibility.

**2.5.2** Similarly, in connection with sense-pleasures, the Buddha declares in **the Aneñja,sappāya Sutta** (M 106):

*Aniccā bhikkhave kāmā tucchā musā mogha,dhammā, māyā,katam etaṃ bhikkhave bālā,-  
lāpanaṃ.*

Impermanent, bhikshus, are sense-pleasures. They are hollow, false, empty by nature. They are a magical illusion, bhikshus, a fool’s prattle [deceiving fools].<sup>16</sup> (M 106,2/2:261)

**2.5.3** A similar reflection is lyrically echoed by Robert Burns (1759-1796), the best known of Scottish poets:

But pleasures are like poppies spread, | You seize the flow’r, its bloom is shed;  
Or like the snow falls in the river, | A moment white—then melts for ever.

*Tam O’ Shanter* (1790)

**2.5.4** REFRAIN. Each of these 5 parable passages has this refrain:

“A man with good eyes would look at it, ponder over it, and wisely examine it, and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence. For what essence could there be in a (lump of froth | a water bubble | a mirage | a plantain tree | a magical illusion).”  
[§§ 3.2, 5.2, 7.2, 10, 12.2]

Also note the predominant verbal clause—“wisely examine it” (*yoniso upaparikkhati* and *yoniso upaparikkhato*)—appears a total of 19 times [§3.2 n], reminding us of our own practice in mindfulness.

**2.5.5** Buddhist mental training is to help us cultivate those “good eyes” so that we can better see through surface reality into true reality, and gain spiritual liberation.

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## Pheṇa,piṇḍa Sutta

### The Lump of Froth Discourse

S 22.95

- 1 At one time, the Blessed One was dwelling on the bank of the river Ganges at Ayodhya [Ayojjhā].
- 2 There the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “The talk of fools,” *bāla,lāpana*, which Norman resolves as *bāla ullāpana* and renders it as “deceiving fools” at Thī 73 = Thī:N 73/11 n. A vi *bāla,lāpinī* appears in a closing stanza (5)b, see below. Cf *lapanā*: see Vbh §862/352 (qu at Vism 23,10), Vism 26,32-27,10; Sn:N 344 (ad Sn 929).

<sup>17</sup> On the narrative background of this sutta, see Intro.

## The lump of froth

**3** (1) “Bhikshus, suppose that this river Ganges were carrying along **a great lump of froth**.

3.2 A man with good eyes would look at it, ponder over it, and wisely examine<sup>18</sup> it, and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.

For what essence could there be in *a lump of froth*?

**4** So, too, bhikshus, whatever kind of **form** there is,

whether past, future, or present,

internal or external,

gross or subtle,

inferior or superior,

far or near,<sup>19</sup> **[141]**

4.2 a monk looks at it, ponders over it, and wisely examines it,

and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.

For what essence could there be in form?

## The water bubble

**5** (2) Bhikshus, suppose that in autumn, when it is raining and large rain-drops are falling, **a water bubble** appears and bursts on the water surface.

5.2 A man with good eyes would look at it, ponder over it, and wisely examine it, and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.

For what essence could there be in *a water bubble*?

**6** So, too, bhikshus, whatever kind of **feeling** there is,

whether past, future, or present,

internal or external,

gross or subtle,

inferior or superior,

far or near,

6.2 a monk looks at it, ponders over it, and wisely examines it,

and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.

For what essence could there be in feelings?

## The mirage

**7** (3) Bhikshus, suppose that in the last month of the hot season, at high noon, **a mirage** appears.

7.2 A man with good eyes would look at it, ponder over it, and wisely examine it, and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence. For what essence could there be in *a mirage*?

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<sup>18</sup> This is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 19 reminders by the Sutta that we should “wisely examine” (*yoniso upaparikkhati*) the nature of impermanence. This verb is synonymous with “wisely consider” (*yoniso manasikaroti*): see SD 55.14 (3.1.2).

<sup>19</sup> On this “totality formula,” see **Khandha S** (S 22.48/3:47), SD 17.1a.

8 So, too, bhikshus, whatever kind of **perception** there is,  
 whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,

8.2 a monk looks at it, ponders over it, and wisely examines it,  
 and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.  
 For what essence could there be in perception?

### The plantain trunk

9 (4) Bhikshus, suppose that a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, would take a sharp axe and enter a forest. Then he would see **the trunk of a large plantain tree**,<sup>20</sup> straight, fresh, without a solid pith.<sup>21</sup> He would cut it down at the root, cut off the crown, and unroll the coil. As he unrolls the coil, he would not find even softwood, let alone heartwood.

10 A man with good eyes would look at it, ponder over it, and wisely examine it, [142] and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.  
 For what essence could there be in *a plantain tree*?

11 So, too, bhikshus, whatever kind of **formations** there are,  
 whether past, future, or present,  
 internal or external,  
 gross or subtle,  
 inferior or superior,  
 far or near,

11.2 a monk looks at it, ponders over it, and wisely examines it,  
 and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.  
 For what essence could there be in formations?

### The magical illusion

12 (5) Bhikshus, suppose that a magician or a magician's apprentice were to display **a magical illusion** at a crossroads.

12.2 A man with good eyes would look at it, ponder over it, and wisely examine it, and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.  
 For what essence could there be in *a magical illusion*?

13 So, too, bhikshus, whatever kind of **consciousness** there is,  
 whether past, future, or present,

<sup>20</sup> Plantain, *kadali*: see Intro (2).

<sup>21</sup> "Without any defect..." *akukkuka, jātaṇi*, "grown without fault or defect" (CPD). Comy: Without any solid core inside (*anto asaṅjāta, ghana, daṇḍakam*) (SA 2:323). MA: at flowering time, a shoot, the size of a thumb (or large toe) appears inside the pith; the meaning is that there is no such shoot (*akukkuka, jātan ti puppha, gahaṇa, kāle anto aṅguṭṭha-p, pamāṇo eko ghana, daṇḍako nibbattati, tena virahitan ti attho*, MA 2:279). "Without shoots" (*akukkuka, jātam*) (DP). Also at M 1:233, 18 = S 3:141, 28 = 4:167, 32 ≠ A 2:220, 22. See (**Anattā**) **Udāyī S** (35.234.10/-4:167), SD 26.4.



internal or external,  
gross or subtle,  
inferior or superior,  
far or near,

13.2 a monk looks at it, ponders over it, and wisely examines it,  
and it would appear to him, wisely examining it, to be void, hollow, without essence.  
For what essence could there be in consciousness?

## Revulsion

**14** Seeing thus, bhikshus, the instructed noble disciple is revulsed [disillusioned] towards form;  
he is revulsed towards feelings, too;  
he is revulsed towards perception, too;  
he is revulsed towards formations, too;  
he is revulsed towards consciousness, too.

Through revulsion, he becomes dispassionate [abandons lust].

Through dispassion, his mind is freed.

When it is freed, there arises the knowledge: ‘Freed am I!’

He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth. The holy life has been lived. What needs to be done has been done. There is no more of this state of being.’”

**15** This what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Well-gone One, the Teacher, further said this:

(1) Like a lump of froth is form,  
like a water-bubble are feelings,  
like a mirage, perception,  
formations, like a plantain trunk,  
and like an illusion is consciousness—  
so the Kinsman of the Sun has shown.<sup>22</sup>

(2) However one may ponder over it,  
when wisely one examines it,  
it appears hollow and empty  
when one sees it wisely. **[143]**

(3) And regarding this body,  
the one of wisdom vast has taught  
that with the abandoning of three things  
you see this form discarded.

(4) When vitality, heat and consciousness  
leave this physical body,  
then, it lies there cast away,  
without volition, food for others;<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cf Dh 170.

<sup>23</sup> *Āyu usmā ca viññāṇam | yadā kāyam jahantimam | apaviddho tadā seti | parabhattam acetanam*. This is a hapax legomenon (found nowhere else), but cf Sāriputta: *āyu usmā ca viññāṇam, athāyam kāyo ujjhito avakkhitto*

- (5) that is to say, just this continuum,<sup>24</sup>  
 this illusion, a fool's prattle [deceiving fools].<sup>25</sup>  
 a murderer, this is shown to be:  
 here no substance is found.<sup>26</sup>
- (6) A monk with energy roused  
 should look upon the aggregates thus,  
 whether by day or by night,<sup>27</sup>  
 fully aware, ever mindful.
- (7) One should abandon all the fetters  
 and make oneself a refuge;  
 let one fare as with head ablaze,  
 yearning for the death-free state.

— evaṃ —

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*seti yathā kaṭṭham acetanam* (When this body discards vitality, heat and consciousness, it then lies like a log without volition) in **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.24/1:296,9-11), whose comy qu the S 3:143 stanza (MA 2:351; also at PmA 1:153). Cf "In no long time, this body, alas, | will lie on the earth, | cast away, bereft of consciousness, | like a useless log (*aciram vat'ayam kāyo | paṭhavim adhisessati | chuddho apeta, viññāṇo | nirattham va kalingaram*, Dh 41).

<sup>24</sup> *Etādisāyam santano*. A "continuum" (**santāna**) means a single beginningless series of life-processes extending into the indefinite future, and contains within itself a number of individual life-terms. The word "continuity" (**santati**) is used for this individual life-term, with its distinct birth, life and death. Each continuity, in turn, comprises of a rapid succession of dharmas or momentary mental and physical factors, held together by laws of causal relationship. (Summarized from Bodhi, *The All-embracing Net of Views*, 1978:192 n1.) See SD 25.3.49.

<sup>25</sup> "A trickster of fools," *bāla, lāpinī*, which Comy glosses as the consciousness aggregate (SA 2:324). See Intro ("A Magical Illusion" n) & foll n.

<sup>26</sup> *Etādisāyam santano | māyāyam bāla, lāpinī | vadhako eso akkhāto | sāro ettha na vijjati*. Comy: **māyāyam bāla, lāpinī** (see prec n) refers specifically to the aggregate of consciousness. The mass of aggregates is a murderer in two ways: (1) they slay each other, and (2) murder appears on account of the aggregates. As for (1), when the earth element breaks up, it takes along the other elements, and when the form element breaks up, it takes along the other (mental) aggregates. As for (2), when the aggregates exist, such things as murder, bondage, injury, etc, arise. (SA 2:324). On the aggregates as murderers, see also **Yamaka S** (S 22.85.48/3:114,20-24).

<sup>27</sup> Reading: *divā vā yadi vā rattim*, as suggested by Bodhi (S:B 1087 n197).