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(Lujjati) Loka Sutta

The Discourse on the World (“It breaks up”) | S 35.82

Theme: The world is constantly breaking up

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2003

1 Introduction

1.1 The (Lujjati) Loka Sutta (S 35.82) is a brief and simple text serving as a reflection or “meditation” on the nature of **the world**. The teaching style is the same as that of **the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta** (S 35.28/4:19 f), where fire is used as the simile.¹ In the (Lujjati) Loka Sutta, the simile is an abstract one, that of “breaking up” or disintegration: the world “**breaks up**” (*lujjati*), therefore, it is called “world” = “broken up” (*loko*).

This is actually a metaphor since the reference is to the action of the world. It is not grammatically an etymological analysis but a didactic skillful means to inspire insight into the impermanence of all existence.

1.2 The (Lujjati) Loka Sutta is closely related to **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), where “the world” is declared to be the 12 sense-bases.² **The Lok’anta Gamana Sutta** (S 35.116), where the Buddha similarly uses the word “world” (*loka*) in 2 senses: in the sense of the physical world and the world of formations,³ can be read as a commentary on this (Lujjati) Loka Sutta..

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(Lujjati) Loka Sutta

The Discourse on the World

(“It breaks up”)

S 35.82

2 Then, a certain monk approached the Buddha...

3 Seated thus at one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, it is called ‘The world. The world.’ In what way, bhante, is it called ‘the world’?”

“Bhikkhu, it is ‘**breaking up**,’ therefore, it is called ‘**world**’ (*lujjatīti loko*).⁴”

¹ **Āditta Pariyāya S** (S 35.28/4:19 f), SD 1.3.

² **Sabba S** (S 35.23/4:15), SD 7.1.

³ **Lok’anta Gamana S** (S 35.116/4:93-97), SD 7.4.

⁴ *Lujjatī ti loko bhikkhu tasmā loko ti vuccati*. In **Puppha S** (S 22.94/3:139) the 5 aggregates (*khandha*) are called *loka, dhamma* (worldly conditions) because it is their nature to break up (*lujjana, sabhāvattā*). Here in (Lujjati) Loka S, we find *loka* being derived from *lujjati* (it breaks up). This is not a proper etymology but a wordplay with a didactic purpose. In the foll sutta, **Lok’anta Gamana S 1** (S 35.116/4:93-97), we find the sense-bases as the “world.”

And what, bhikshu, is breaking up?

4 The eye, bhikshu, is breaking up.

Forms are breaking up.

Eye-consciousness is breaking up.

Eye-contact is breaking up.

And whatever feeling arising with eye-contact as condition—whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that, too, is breaking up.

5 The ear, bhikshu, is breaking up.

Sounds are breaking up.

Ear-consciousness is breaking up.

Ear-contact is breaking up.

And whatever feeling arising with ear-contact as condition—whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that, too, is breaking up.

6 The nose, bhikshu, is breaking up.

Smells are breaking up.

Nose-consciousness is breaking up.

Nose-contact is breaking up.

And whatever feeling arising with nose-contact as condition—whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that, too, is breaking up.

7 The tongue, bhikshu, is breaking up.

Tastes are breaking up.

Tongue-consciousness is breaking up.

Tongue-contact is breaking up.

And whatever feeling arising with tongue-contact as condition—whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that, too, is breaking up.

8 The body, bhikshu, is breaking up.

Touches are breaking up.

Body-consciousness is breaking up.

Body-contact is breaking up.

And whatever feeling arising with body-contact as condition—whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that, too, is breaking up.

9 The mind, bhikshu, is breaking up.

Mind-objects are breaking up.

Mind-consciousness is breaking up.

Mind-contact is breaking up.

And whatever feeling arising with mind-contact as condition—whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that, too, is breaking up.

It is **'breaking up,'** bhikshu, therefore it is called **'world'.**"

— evaṃ —

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