

(Lujjati) Loka Sutta**The Discourse on the World (“It breaks up”)**

[The world is constantly breaking up.]

(Sāmyutta Nikāya 35.82/4:52 f)

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2003

Introduction

The Loka Sutta is a brief and simple text meant for reflection or “meditation.” 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. In the 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 an etymological analysis but a didactic skillful means to convey the insight into the impermanence of all existence.

The Loka Sutta is closely related to **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23/4:15), where “the world” is declared to be the 12 sense-bases. **The Lok’anta Gamana Sutta** (S 35.11/4:93-97), where the Buddha similarly uses the word “world” (*loka*) in two senses: in the sense of the physical world and the world of formations, can be read as a commentary on this Loka Sutta..

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The Discourse on the World**(“It breaks up”)**

(S 35.82/4:52 f)

2 Then a certain monk approached the Buddha...

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

“Venerable sir, it is called ‘The world. The world.’ In what way, venerable sir, is it called ‘the world?’”

“Bhikshu, it is ‘breaking up,’ therefore it is called ‘world’ (*lujjatī ti loko*).¹

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.

¹ *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 Sutta 1** (S 35.116/4:93-97), we find the sense-bases as the “world.”

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’ .”

— evam —

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