SN 22.79 — SN 22:79 Chewed Up | Khajjanīya Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Chewed Up

Khajjanīya Sutta (SN 22:79)

Near Sāvatthī. “Monks, any contemplatives or brahmans who recollect their manifold past lives all recollect the five clinging-aggregates, or one among them. Which five? When recollecting, ‘I was one with such a form in the past,’ one is recollecting just form. Or when recollecting, ‘I was one with such a feeling in the past,’ one is recollecting just feeling. Or when recollecting, ‘I was one with such a perception in the past,’ one is recollecting just perception. Or when recollecting, ‘I was one with such fabrications in the past,’ one is recollecting just fabrications. Or when recollecting, ‘I was one with such a consciousness in the past,’ one is recollecting just consciousness.

“And why do you call it ‘form’ [rūpa]? ‘It is afflicted [ruppati],’ thus it is called ‘form.’ Afflicted with what? With cold & heat & hunger & thirst, with the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles. ‘It is afflicted,’ thus it is called ‘form.’

“And why do you call it ‘feeling’? ‘It feels,’ thus it is called ‘feeling.’ What does it feel? It feels pleasure, it feels pain, it feels neither-pleasure-nor-pain. ‘It feels,’ thus it is called ‘feeling.’

“And why do you call it ‘perception’? ‘It perceives,’ thus it is called ‘perception.’ What does it perceive? It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, & it perceives white. ‘It perceives,’ thus it is called ‘perception.’

“And why do you call them ‘fabrications’? ‘They fabricate the fabricated,’ thus they are called ‘fabrications.’ And what is the fabricated that they fabricate? For the sake of form-ness, they fabricate fabricated form. For the sake of feeling-ness, they fabricate fabricated feeling. For the sake of perception-hood… For the sake of fabrication-hood… For the sake of consciousness-hood, they fabricate fabricated consciousness. ‘They fabricate the fabricated,’ thus they are called ‘fabrications.’1

“And why do you call it ‘consciousness’? ‘It cognizes,’ thus it is called ‘consciousness.’ What does it cognize? It cognizes sour, it cognizes bitter, it cognizes pungent, it cognizes sweet, it cognizes alkaline, it cognizes non-alkaline, it cognizes salty, & it cognizes unsalty. ‘It cognizes,’ thus it is called ‘consciousness.’

“Thus an instructed disciple of the noble ones reflects in this way: ‘I am now being chewed up by form. But in the past I was also chewed up by form in the same way I am now being chewed up by present form. And if I delight in future form, then in the future I will be chewed up by form in the same way I am now being chewed up by present form.’ Having reflected in this way, he becomes indifferent to past form, does not delight in future form, and is practicing for the sake of disenchantment, dispassion, and cessation with regard to present form.

“(He reflects:) ‘I am now being chewed up by feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness. But in the past I was also chewed up by consciousness in the same way I am now being chewed up by present consciousness. And if I delight in future consciousness, then in the future I will be chewed up by consciousness in the same way I am now being chewed up by present consciousness.’ Having reflected in this way, he becomes indifferent to past consciousness, does not delight in future consciousness, and is practicing for the sake of disenchantment, dispassion, and cessation with regard to present consciousness.

“What do you think, monks? Is form constant or inconstant?” “Inconstant, lord.” “And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?” “Stressful, lord.” “And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“… Is feeling constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” …

“… Is perception constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” …

“… Are fabrications constant or inconstant?”—“Inconstant, lord.” …

“What do you think, monks? Is consciousness constant or inconstant?” “Inconstant, lord.” “And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?” “Stressful, lord.” “And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“Thus, monks, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: Every form is to be seen as it has come to be with right discernment as: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Any feeling whatsoever….

“Any perception whatsoever….

“Any fabrications whatsoever….

“Any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: Every consciousness is to be seen as it has come to be with right discernment as: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“This, monks, is called a disciple of the noble ones who tears down and does not build up; who abandons and does not cling; who discards and does not pull in; who scatters and does not pile up.

“And what does he tear down and not build up? He tears down form and does not build it up. He tears down feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness and does not build it up.

“And what does he abandon and not cling to? He abandons form and does not cling to it. He abandons feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness and does not cling to it.

“And what does he discard and not pull in? He discards form and does not pull it in. He discards feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness and does not pull it in.

“And what does he scatter and not pile up? He scatters form and does not pile it up. He scatters feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness and does not pile it up.

“Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“This, monks, is called a disciple of the noble ones who neither builds up nor tears down, but who stands having torn down; who neither clings nor abandons, but who stands having abandoned; who neither pulls in nor discards, but who stands having discarded; who neither piles up nor scatters, but who stands having scattered.

“And what is it that he neither builds up nor tears down, but stands having torn it down? He neither builds up nor tears down form, but stands having torn it down. He neither builds up nor tears down feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness, but stands having torn it down.

“And what is it that he neither clings to nor abandons, but stands having abandoned it? He neither clings to nor abandons form, but stands having abandoned it. He neither clings to nor abandons feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness, but stands having abandoned it.

“And what is it that he neither pulls in nor discards, but stands having discarded it? He neither pulls in nor discards form, but stands having discarded it. He neither pulls in nor discards feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness, but stands having discarded it.

“And what is it that he neither piles up nor scatters, but stands having scattered it? He neither piles up nor scatters form, but stands having scattered it. He neither piles up nor scatters feeling… perception… fabrications… consciousness, but stands having scattered it.

“And to the monk whose mind is thus released, the devas, together with Indra, the Brahmās, & Pajāpatis, pay homage even from afar:

‘Homage to you, O thoroughbred man.

Homage to you, O superlative man—

you of whom we don’t know even what

dependent on which

you’re absorbed.’”

Note

1. This passage suggests that the intentional process of fabrication is needed before the potential for the experience of an aggregate can be turned into a discernible aggregate.

This parallels the teaching that present kamma is needed for past kamma to be experienced. See MN 109, note 2, and SN 35:145.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 35:145; AN 10:6–7; AN 11:10