

MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA

Sutta 22

The Snake Simile

Translated from the Pāḷi by
Michael M. Olds



BuddhaDust Publications

Los Altos

2021

Majjhima Nikāya

1. Mūla-Paṇṇāsa

3. Tatiya Vagga

Sutta 22

Alagadd'Ūpama Suttaṃ

The Snake Simile

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I HEAR TELL:

**Once upon a time, The Lucky man, Sāvatti-town revisiting,
Jeta Grove,
Anathapiṇḍika's Park.**

**At that time,
in this beggar named Ariṭṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer,
there was born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:**

**"Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,^[1]
these per suits^[2]
are hollow obstacles."**

Then, a large group of beggars heard:

**"In this beggar named Ariṭṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer,
is born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:**

**'Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles.'"**

**There then those beggars approached Ariṭṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer,
and drew near.**

Having drawn near
those beggars said this to Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer:

"Is it really true then,
that in friend Aritṭha,
is born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:

'Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles'?"

"It is indeed so!

Of this, friends,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles."

There then these beggars
made to detach Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer
from his approval
of this inclination
towards this nefarious view,
working with him closely,
asking him for his reasoning:

"But do not speak thus, friend Aritṭha,
but do not speak thus, friend Aritṭha.

Do not speak ill of the Lucky Man,
it is not well to speak badly of the Lucky Man,
nor would the Lucky Man speak thus.

In more than one discourse, friend Aritṭha,
has the Lucky Man spoken of things that are obstacles,
and moreover, that pursuit thereof
is certainly an obstacle.

**Of little gratification
are sense-pleasures
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like a flesh-stripped bone^[3]
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like a piece of meat^[4]
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like a torch of straw^[5]
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like a pit of charcoal
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like a dream
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,**

with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like borrowed goods
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like the fruit of a tree^[6]
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like the chopping block
and knife of the butcher
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like being impaled on a sword
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like a snake's head
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man."

Just so did these beggars
make to detach Aritṭha,

formerly a falcon-trainer,
working with him closely,
asking him for his reasoning,
from his steadfast,
grasping adherence
to declaration of his inclination
towards the nefarious view:

Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles.

Then, since those beggars could see for themselves
that they could not make the beggar Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer
detach himself from his inclination
towards that nefarious view,
these beggars approached the Lucky Man
and drew near.

Having drawn near
and exchanged greetings
they took seats to one side.

Seated to one side then,
these beggars said this to the Lucky Man:

"In this beggar named Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer, bhante,
there was born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:

'Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles.'

Then, a large group of beggars heard:

'In this beggar named Aritṭha,

formerly a falcon-trainer,
is born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:

'Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles.'

There then we approached Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer,
and drew near.

Having drawn near
we said this to Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer:

'Is it really true then,
that in friend Aritṭha,
is born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:

"Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles?'"

'It is indeed so;
of this, friends,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles.'

There then we made to detach Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer
from his approval

of this inclination
towards this nefarious view
working with him closely,
asking him for his reasoning:

'But do not speak thus, friend Aritṭha,
but do not speak thus, friend Aritṭha.

Do not speak ill of the Lucky Man,
it is not well to speak badly of the Lucky Man,
nor would the Lucky Man speak thus.

In more than one discourse, friend Aritṭha,
has the Lucky Man spoken of things that are obstacles,
and moreover, that pursuit thereof
is certainly an obstacle.

Of little gratification
are sense-pleasures
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like a flesh-stripped bone
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like a piece of meat
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like a torch of straw
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;

so says the Lucky Man.

**Like a pit of charcoal
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like a dream
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like borrowed goods
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like the fruit of a tree
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like the chopping block
and knife of the butcher
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.**

**Like being impaled on a sword
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,**

of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.

Like a snake's head
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come;
so says the Lucky Man.'

Just so did we make to detach Ariṭṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer,
working with him closely,
asking him for his reasoning,
from his steadfast,
grasping adherence
to declaration
of his inclination
towards the nefarious view:

'Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles.'

Then, since we could see for ourselves
that we could not make the beggar Ariṭṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer
detach himself
from his inclination
towards that nefarious view,
we approached the Lucky Man."

Then at this point
the Lucky Man addressed another beggar:

"Come you, beggar,
in my name
invite the beggar Ariṭṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer

saying:

'The master invites you friend Aritṭha.'

"Even so, bhante,"

**replied that beggar to the Lucky man,
and approaching the beggar Aritṭha,
he drew near.**

**Having drawn near Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer
he said this:**

"The master invites you friend Aritṭha."

Then, replying

"Even so, friend"

**Aritṭha, formerly a falcon-trainer,
approached the Lucky Man
and drew near.**

**Having drawn near the Lucky Man
and exchanged greetings,
he took a seat to one side.**

**Seated to one side then,
the Lucky Man said this to Aritṭha,
formerly a falcon-trainer:**

**"Is it really true then,
that in you Aritṭha,
is born the manifestation
of an inclination
towards the nefarious view:**

**'Of this,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,
these per suits
are hollow obstacles'?"**

**"It is indeed so;
of this, bhante,
the Lucky Man's Dhamma as expounded,
this is to be known:
whatsoever the Lucky Man said
is a thing that is an obstacle,**

these per suits
are hollow obstacles."

"Who then do you name,
confused man,
whom I have taught Dhamma
to be known in this way?

Have I not, confused man,
in more than one way
discoursed on things that are obstacles,
and moreover,
that pursuit thereof
is certainly an obstacle,
saying:

Of little gratification
are sense-pleasures
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a flesh-stripped bone
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a piece of meat
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a torch of straw
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a pit of charcoal
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,

**of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a dream
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like borrowed goods
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like the fruit of a tree
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like the chopping block
and knife of the butcher are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like being impaled on a sword
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a snake's head
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

And further you confused man,

you not only produce a hard road
and much bad kamma for yourself,
but at the same time you slander me.

This, confused man,
will bring you many a long night
of unwelcome pain."

Then the Lucky Man addressed the bhikkhus:

"What do you think, beggars?

Has this beggar,
Ariṭṭha, formerly a falcon-trainer,
even warmed^[7] to this Dhamma-Vinaya?"

"How could that be?

No way bhante."

That said,
Ariṭṭha, formerly a falcon-trainer,
having lost face,
was silent,
confused —
with shoulders drooping,
he sat^[8] there burning with shame,
unable to respond.

Then The Lucky Man,
seeing Ariṭṭha, formerly a falcon-trainer,
silent,
confused —
having lost face,
with shoulders drooping,
burning with shame,
unable to respond,
said this to him:

"You, you confused man,
will achieve re noun
through latching onto
this faulty view of yours.

As for me

I will put this question before the bhikkhus."

Then The Lucky Man addressed the bhikkhus:

"Do you, too, beggars, understand this Dhamma I have expounded

in the same way as does
Ariṭṭha, formerly a falcon-trainer,
through latching onto
this faulty view of his
producing a hard road
and much bad kamma for himself,
and at the same time slandering me?"

"No way, bhante! for,
in more than one discourse,
has the Lucky Man spoken
of things that are obstacles,
and moreover, that pursuit thereof
is certainly an obstacle, saying:

'Of little gratification
are sense-pleasures
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a flesh-stripped bone
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a piece of meat
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a torch of straw
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a pit of charcoal
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,

**of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a dream
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like borrowed goods
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like the fruit of a tree
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like the chopping block
and knife of the butcher are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like being impaled on a sword
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a snake's head
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.''**

"Well done, beggars!

**It is well that the Dhamma I have taught
is understood by you thus.**

**For in not simply one formulation
have I elaborated on Dhamma
stating of things that are obstacles
that they are in fact obstacles
and moreover that pursuit thereof
is certainly an obstacle, saying:**

**'Of little gratification
are sense-pleasures
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a flesh-stripped bone
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a piece of meat
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a torch of straw
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a pit of charcoal
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.**

**Like a dream
are sense-pleasures,**

of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like borrowed goods
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like the fruit of a tree
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like the chopping block
and knife of the butcher are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like being impaled on a sword
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.

Like a snake's head
are sense-pleasures,
of plentiful pain,
of plentiful aggravation,
full of wretchedness now,
with more to come.'

But this bhikkhu,
Ariṭṭha, formerly a falcon-trainer
that confused man,
not only produces a hard road
and much bad kamma for himself,
but at the same time he slanders me.

**This will bring this confused man
many a long night
of unwelcome pain.**

**That, beggars,
one could indulge in the sensual,
without sensuality
without perceiving the sensual
without thinking about the sensual
surely does not stand examination.**

Here, beggars, some confused persons learn Dhamma.^[9]

**These in learning Dhamma,
do not reach wisdom in this Dhamma
through digging into its meaning.**

**These, not reaching wisdom in this Dhamma,
through digging into its meaning,
have no proper appreciation of it.**

**These learn Dhamma
just for the floccinaucinihilipilification of others,
and for out-maneuvering others' put-downs.**

**And because of that
they do not attain Dhamma mastery
or the benefit thereof.**

**This poorly grasped Dhamma
will bring them many a long night
of unwelcome pain.**

How come?

Because of that poor grasp, beggars, of Dhamma.



**It is, beggars, just like some man, who, in want of a snake,
looking for a snake,
walking around in search of a snake,
seeing a great snake,
takes hold of it by tail or coil,
whereupon it rounds back on him, biting
his hand or,
his arm or
a certain other limb, large or small —**

as a result of which he comes to death
or pain amounting to death.

How come?

Because of that poor grasp, beggars, of the snake.



Even so, beggars, here some confused persons learn Dhamma.

These in learning Dhamma,
do not reach wisdom in this Dhamma
through digging into its meaning.

These, not reaching wisdom in this Dhamma,
through digging into its meaning,
have no proper appreciation of it.

These learn Dhamma
just for disparaging others,
and for out-maneuvering others' put-downs.

And because of that
they do not attain Dhamma mastery
or the benefit thereof.

This poorly grasped Dhamma
will bring them many a long night
of unwelcome pain.

How come?

Because of that poor grasp, beggars, of Dhamma.



Again, beggars, here some sons of good families learn Dhamma.

These, in learning Dhamma,
reach wisdom in this Dhamma
through digging into its meaning.

These, reaching wisdom in this Dhamma,
through digging into its meaning,
have a proper appreciation of it.

These learn Dhamma,
not for disparaging others,
nor for out-maneuvering other's put-downs,
and for that reason attain Dhamma mastery
and the benefits thereof.

Well taken hold of, this Dhamma
will bring them many a long night

of welcome pleasure.

How come?

Because of their good grasp of Dhamma.

■

It is, beggars, just like some man, who, in want of a snake,
looking for a snake,
walking around in search of a snake,
seeing a great snake,
securely pins it down with a forked^[10] stick,
having securely pinned it down with a forked stick,
he seizes it at the neck —
however much, beggars, that snake may round back on him,
coil around hand or
arm, or
some other limb, large or small,
he will not for that reason come to death
or pain amounting to death.

How come?

Because of his good grasp of that snake.

■

Even so, beggars, here some sons of good families learn Dhamma.

These, in learning Dhamma,
reach wisdom in this Dhamma
through digging into its meaning.

These, reaching wisdom in this Dhamma,
through digging into its meaning,
have a proper appreciation of it.

These learn Dhamma,
not for disparaging others,
nor for out-maneuvering other's put-downs,
and for that reason attain Dhamma mastery
and the benefits thereof.

Well taken hold of, this Dhamma
will bring them many a long night
of welcome pleasure.

How come?

Because of their good grasp of Dhamma.

■

Wherefore, beggars, that which I have said
which you have understood,
bear that in mind;
and as for that which I have said
that you do not understand
you should question me further,
or some learned bhikkhu.

I will give you, beggars, a Dhamma talk;
a simile of a raft,
for getting across,
not for retaining.

Listen up!

Pay close attention!

I will speak!"

"Very well, Bhante!" those beggars responded to the Lucky Man.

The Lucky Man said this to them:

It is just like a man going along a highway,
who sees a great stream of water —
this side treacherous befraught with the fearful
that side trustworthy, without the fearful —
and there is no boat,
or bridge for conveyance over,
for going from the not-beyond to the beyond.

This might occur to him:

'Here we have a great stream of water —
this side treacherous,
befraught with the fearful,
that side trustworthy,
without the fearful —
but there is no boat,
or bridge for conveyance over,
for going from the not-beyond to the beyond.

How about if I,
collecting grass, sticks, branches, and foliage,
bind together a raft^[11]
straddling which,
striving with hands and feet,

I conduct myself safely over to the beyond?'

**There then, beggars, this man, collecting grass, sticks, branches, and foliage,
binds together a raft**

straddling which,^[12]

striving with hands and feet,

he conducts himself safely over to the beyond.

Having got across to the other side, this occurs to him:

'Of great service to me was this raft!

Straddling this raft,

striving with hands and feet,

I conducted myself safely over to the beyond.

**How about if I hoist this raft onto my head or place it on my shoulder
and go about wherever I wish?'**

What do you think, beggars?

**Is that man, doing with that raft
what ought to be done?"**

"No way, bhante."

What, then, beggars,

should that man do with that raft

so as to do what ought to be done with it?

**Here, beggars, to this man,
having got across to the other side,
this occurs:**

'Of great service to me was this raft!

Straddling this raft,

striving with hands and feet,

I conducted myself safely over to the beyond.

How about if I

toss it onto dry land

or submerge it in the water

and go about wherever I wish?'

**Doing this, beggars, that man
is doing with that raft
what ought to be done.**

**Such, beggars, is this Dhamma talk;
a simile of a raft,
for getting across,
not for retaining.**

**This simile of the raft, beggars, understood by you,
you will let go even of The Dhamma,
let alone what is not Dhamma.**

There are, beggars, these six theoretical positions.

What six?

**Here, beggars, an uneducated commoner,
disregarding the Aristocrat,
ignorant of the ways of the Aristocrats,
untrained in the Doctrine of the Aristocrats,
disregarding the good man,
ignorant of the ways of the good man,
untrained in the Doctrine of the good man:**

[1] Of forms thinking:

**'This is mine,
I am this,
this is my self.'**

such is the way he sees.

[2] Of sense experience thinking:

**'This is mine,
I am this,
this is my self.'**

such is the way he sees.

[3] Of sense-perception thinking:

**'This is mine,
I am this,
this is my self.'**

such is the way he sees.

[4] Of own-making thinking:

**'This is mine,
I am this,
this is my self.'**

such is the way he sees.

**[5] Of the seen,
the heard,
the sensed,**

the intuitively known
secured,
sought after,
thought over,
intended,
of that too he thinks:

'This is mine,
I am this,
this is my self.'

such is the way he sees.

[6] Of the theoretical position:

'That which is the world,
that is the self
this, after passing will become
stable,
true,
endless,
a reliable thing,
that will last forever and ever',
of that too he thinks:

'This is mine,
I am this,
this is my self.'

such is the way he sees.



But beggars, the well-educated student of the Aristocrat,
taking note of the Aristocrat,
knowing the ways of the Aristocrats,
well trained in the Dhamma of the Aristocrats,
taking note of good men,
knowing the ways of good men,
trained in the habits of good men:

[1] Of forms, thinks:

'This is not mine,
I am not this,
this is not my self.'

and such is the way he sees.

[2] Of sense experience, thinks:

'This is not mine,

**I am not this,
this is not my self.'**
and such is the way he sees.

[3] Of sense-perception, thinks:

**'This is not mine,
I am not this,
this is not my self.'**
and such is the way he sees.

[4] Of own-making, thinks:

**'This is not mine,
I am not this,
this is not my self.'**
and such is the way he sees.

**[5] Of the seen,
the heard,
the sensed,
the intuitively known
secured,
sought after,
thought over,
intended,
of that too he thinks:**

**'This is not mine,
I am not this,
this is not my self.'**
and such is the way he sees.

[6] Of the theoretical position:

**'That which is the world,
that is the self
this, after passing will become
stable,
true,
endless,
a reliable thing,
that will last forever and ever',
of that too he thinks:**

**'This is not mine,
I am not this,
this is not my self.'**

and such is the way he sees.

He thus seeing non-existence
will not be overly concerned."



This said, a certain beggar said this to the Lucky Man:

"Now then, bhante,
can there be over-concern
with the impersonally non-existent?"

"There can, beggar", said The Lucky Man.

"Here some beggar has this thought:

'Alas! What became mine
is, alack, mine no longer
alas, what might have become mine
that, alack, I have not gained.'

He wearies himself
with grief, we aping and lamentation,
beats his breast,
and acts confused.

This, bhikkhu, is how
there can be over-concern
with the impersonally non-existent."



"Now then, bhante,
can there be being not overly concerned
with the impersonally non-existent?"

"There can, beggar", said The Lucky Man.

"Here some beggar does not have this thought:

'Alas! What became mine
is, alack, mine no longer
alas, what might have become mine
that, alack, I have not gained.'

He does not weary himself
with grief, we aping and lamentation,
nor does he beat his breast,
and act confused.

This, bhikkhu, is how
there can be not being over-concerned
with the impersonally non-existent."



**"Now then, bhante,
can there be over-concern
with the personally non-existent?"**

"There can, beggar", said The Lucky Man.

"Here some beggar holds the theoretical position:

**That which is the world,
that is the self
this, after passing will become
stable,
true,
endless,
a reliable thing,
that will last forever and ever.**

**He hears the Tathāgata
or a student of the Tathāgata
condemning all theoretical positions,
resolutions,
pre-conceived notions,
adherences,
and tendencies;
discoursing on a Dhamma
for the calming-down of all own-making,
all uprisen attachments;
for the eradication of thirst;
for dispassion,
ending,
Nibbana.**

He has the realization:

'Phooey! Cut off am I for sure!

Phooey! Destroyed am I for sure!

Phooey! There is no becoming for me for sure!'

**He wearies himself
with grief, we aping and lamentation,
beats his breast,
and acts confused.**

**This, bhikkhu, is how
there can be over-concern
with the impersonally non-existent."**



"Now then, bhante,
can there be being not overly concerned
with the personally non-existent?"

"There can, beggar", said The Lucky Man.

"Here some beggar does not hold the theoretical position:

That which is the world,
that is the self
this, after passing will become
stable,
true,
endless,
a reliable thing,
that will last forever and ever.

He hears the Tathāgata
or a student of the Tathāgata
condemning all theoretical positions,
resolutions,
pre-conceived notions,
adherences,
and tendencies;
discoursing on a Dhamma for the calming-down of all own-making,
all uprisen attachments;
for the eradication of thirst;
for dispassion,
ending,
Nibbana.

He has no such realization as:

'Phooey! Cut off am I for sure!

Phooey! Destroyed am I for sure!

Phooey! There is no becoming for me for sure!'

He does not weary himself
with grief, we aping and lamentation,
beat his breast,
and act confused.

This, bhikkhu, is how
there can be no over-concern
with the impersonally non-existent.

**You might wish, beggars, to possess
that possession
which possession
was reliable,
true,
endless,
an unchanging thing
that stood fast forever and ever,
but do you see, beggars,
that possession
which possession
was reliable,
true,
endless,
an unchanging thing
that would stand fast forever and ever?"**

"No way, bhante!"

"It is well, beggars.

**Neither do I see that possession
which possession
was reliable,
true,
endless,
an unchanging thing
that would stand fast forever and ever.**



**You might wish, beggars,
to grasp that grasping after self
which grasped
did not result in grief and lamentation,
pain and misery
and despair,
but do you see, beggars,
that grasping after self
which grasped
did not result in grief and lamentation,
pain and misery
and despair?"**

"No way, bhante!"

"It is well, beggars.

**Neither do I see
that grasping after self
which grasped
did not result in grief and lamentation,
pain and misery
and despair.**



**You might wish, beggars,
that view-establishment^[13]
through which view-establishment
this established view-establishment
did not result in grief and lamentation,
pain and misery
and despair,
but do you see, beggars,
that view-establishment
through which view-establishment
this established view-establishment
did not result in grief and lamentation,
pain and misery
and despair?"**

"No way, bhante!"

"It is well, beggars.

**Neither do I see
that view-establishment
through which view-establishment
this established view-establishment
did not result in grief and lamentation,
pain and misery
and despair.**

**Were there, beggars, a self,
could one say of it:**

'It belongs to me.'?"

"Even so bhante."

**"Or were there, beggars, that which belongs to self,
could one refer to that as:**

'My self.'?"

"Even so bhante."

**And about this self
that belongs to the self, beggars,
it not being taken as real and true,^[14]
is not the theoretical position:**

**That which is the world,
that is the self
this, after passing will become
stable,
true,
endless,
a reliable thing,
that will last forever and ever.**

**a complete
and utterly
foolish thing?"**

**"How indeed, bhante, could it not be
a complete
and utterly
foolish thing?"**

**What do you think, bhikkhus?
Form: is it stable or unstable?"**

"Unstable, bhante."

**"That which is unstable:
is that painful
or is that pleasurable?"**

"Painful, bhante."

**"That which is an unstable, painful, reversible thing;
is it well that it should be seen as:**

**'This is mine,
I am this
this is my self'?"**

"No way, bhante."



"What do you think, bhikkhus?

Sense-experience:

**is it stable
or unstable?"**

"Unstable, bhante."

"That which is unstable:

**is that painful
or is that pleasurable?"**

"Painful, bhante."

**"That which is an unstable, painful, reversible thing;
is it well that it should be seen as:**

**'This is mine,
I am this
this is my self'?"**

"No way, bhante."



"What do you think, bhikkhus?

Perception:

**is it stable
or unstable?"**

"Unstable, bhante."

"That which is unstable:

**is that painful
or is that pleasurable?"**

"Painful, bhante."

**"That which is an unstable, painful, reversible thing;
is it well that it should be seen as:**

**'This is mine,
I am this
this is my self'?"**

"No way, bhante."



"What do you think, bhikkhus?

Own-making:

**is it stable
or unstable?"**

"Unstable, bhante."

**"That which is unstable:
is that painful
or is that pleasurable?"**

"Painful, bhante."

**"That which is an unstable, painful, reversible thing;
is it well that it should be seen as:**

**'This is mine,
I am this
this is my self'?"**

"No way, bhante."



"What do you think, bhikkhus?

**Sense-consciousness:
is it stable
or unstable?"**

"Unstable, bhante."

**"That which is unstable:
is that painful
or is that pleasurable?"**

"Painful, bhante."

**"That which is an unstable, painful, reversible thing;
is it well that it should be seen as:**

**'This is mine,
I am this
this is my self'?"**

"No way, bhante."



**"Wherefore, beggars, form —
past, future or present,
external or personal,
gross or subtle,
low or exalted,
far or near —
all form,
as it really is,
should be seen with consummate wisdom as:**

**'This is not mine,
I am not this**

this is not my self'.



**Wherefore, beggars, sense-experience —
past, future or present,
external or personal,
gross or subtle,
low or exalted,
far or near —
all sense-experience,
as it really is,
should be seen with consummate wisdom as:
'This is not mine,
I am not this
this is not my self'.**



**Wherefore, beggars, perception —
past, future or present,
external or personal,
gross or subtle,
low or exalted,
far or near —
all perception,
as it really is,
should be seen with consummate wisdom as:
'This is not mine,
I am not this
this is not my self'.**



**Wherefore, beggars, own-making —
past, future or present,
external or personal,
gross or subtle,
low or exalted,
far or near —
all own-making,
as it really is,
should be seen with consummate wisdom as:
'This is not mine,
I am not this
this is not my self'.**

Wherefore, beggars, sense-consciousness —
past, future or present,
external or personal,
gross or subtle,
low or exalted,
far or near —
all sense-consciousness,
as it really is,
should be seen with consummate wisdom as:
'This is not mine,
I am not this
this is not my self'.

Thus seeing, beggars,
the well-educated student of the Aristocrats,
grows weary of form
grows weary of sense-experience,
grows weary of perception,
grows weary of own-making,
grows weary of sense-consciousness;
weary he is dispassionate,
dispassionate he is freed
in freedom, finding freedom,
he has this knowledge:
'Left behind is rebirth,
lived is the best of lives,
done is duty's doing,
no further it'n-n-at'n me.'

This beggar, beggars, is one of whom it is said that
he has thrown aside the bar,
filled in the moat,
pulled out the spiller,
drawn out the bolt,
a bannerless, burdenless, unyoked Aristocrat.

And how, beggars, has a beggar thrown aside the bar?
Here, beggars, a beggar has let go of blindness,
has cut it off at the root,
has made it like a palm-tree cut down to the ground,

a thing no longer able to rise up again.

This is how, beggars, a beggar has thrown aside the bar.



And how, beggars, has a beggar filled in the moat?

**Here, beggars, a beggar has let go of again-becoming
in the round-and-round of births,
has cut it off at the root,
has made it like a palm-tree cut down to the ground,
a thing no longer able to rise up again.**

This is how, beggars, a beggar has filled in the moat.



And how, beggars, has a beggar pulled out the spiller?

**Here, beggars, a beggar has let go of thirst,
has cut it off at the root,
has made it like a palm-tree cut down to the ground,
a thing no longer able to rise up again.**

This is how, beggars, a beggar has pulled out the spiller.



And how, beggars, has a beggar drawn out the bolt?

**Here, beggars, a beggar has let go of the five yokes to the lower worlds^[15],
has cut them off at the root,
has made them like a palm-tree cut down to the ground,
something no longer able to rise up again.**

This is how, beggars, a beggar has drawn out the bolt.



And how, beggars, is a beggar a bannerless, burdenless, unyoked Aristocrat?

**Here, beggars, a beggar has let go of 'I-am' pride,
has cut it off at the root,
has made it like a palm-tree cut down to the ground,
something no longer able to rise up again.**

This is how, beggars, a beggar is a bannerless, burdenless, unyoked Aristocrat.



**With his heart freed like this, beggars,
the gods, with Indra, with Brahma, with Pajāpati
seeking, can not see:**

'This Tathagata's sense-consciousness is seated here.'

How come?

Even here in this visible thing, beggars,
the Tathagata is not to be found,
say I.

But even so saying, beggars,
even so proclaiming,
some shaman and brahmins
no good,
hollow;
falsely,
deceitfully,
slander me, saying:

'A nihilist^[16] is the shaman Gotama,
he declares the cutting off
the ruination,
the extinction
of living beings.'

But this, beggars, I am not,
nor is this what I say,
but there are shaman and brahmin who
wrongly
baselessly
deceitfully
falsely
slander me saying:

'A nihilist is the shaman Gotama,
he declares the cutting off
the ruination,
the extinction
of living beings.'

I, beggars, previously and currently
just declare pain,
and the ending of pain.

As to this, beggars,
if others revile,
disrespect,
harass the Tathāgata,
the Tathāgata, beggars,
has no agita,

no resentment,
no disturbance of heart as to that.

As to that, beggars,
if others honor,
esteem,
respect,
venerate the Tathāgata,
the Tathāgata, beggars,
has no mental joyous elation,
no exultation of heart as to it.

As to that, beggars,
if others honor,
esteem,
respect,
venerate the Tathāgata,
the Tathāgata, beggars, just thinks:

'Whatever is now such as what ought to be done for me,
is done because of the thorough comprehension that was wrought earlier.'^[17]



As to this, beggars,
if others revile,
disrespect,
harass you,
you should, beggars,
have no agita,
no resentment,
no disturbance of heart as to that.

As to that, beggars,
if others honor,
esteem,
respect,
venerate you,
you, beggars,
should have no mental joyous elation,
no exultation of heart as it.

As to that, beggars,
if others honor,
esteem,
respect,
venerate you,

you, beggars, should just think:

**'Whatever is now such as what ought to be done for me,
is done because of an earlier thorough understanding.'**

**Wherefore beggars, that which is not yours,
put that away,
putting that away
will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.**

And what, beggars, is not yours?

**Form, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.**

**Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.**

**Sense experience, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.**

**Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.**

**Sense-perception, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.**

**Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.**

**Own-making, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.**

**Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.**

**Sense-consciousness, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.**

**Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.**

What do you think, beggars?

**If some person were to fetch,
consume by burning,
or do whatever he wants**

with the the grass, sticks, branches, and foliage of this Jeta Grove,
would it then occur to you:

'Some person is arresting us,
burning us,
doing whatever he wants with us'?"

"No way, Bhante!

How come?

Because such things are neither our self
nor our possessions."



Wherefore beggars, that which is not yours,
put that away,
putting that away
will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.

And what, beggars, is not yours?

Form, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.

Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.

Sense experience, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.

Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.

Sense-perception, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.

Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.

Own-making, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.

Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.

Sense-consciousness, beggars, is not yours,
put that away.

Put away, that will be for your benefit and happiness
for many a long night.

Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.

Being well-taught by me, beggars, Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings —
of those corruptions-destroyed Arahants,
who have lived the life,
done their duty,
put down the burden,
attained the highest goal,
thoroughly destroyed the yokes to existence,
by consummate-knowledge freed —
there is no discovering the comings and goings.

Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
open,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.



Being well-taught by me, beggars, Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings —
of those bhikkhus who have let go
the five yokes to the lower worlds —
all of these arise spontaneously,
in such a way as to there attain final Nibbāna
a thing not returning from that world.

Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
open,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.



Being well-taught by me, beggars, Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings —
of those bhikkhus who have let go
the three yokes,
diminished lust, anger and stupidity —
all of these are Once-returners;
returning to this world but once more,
they will make an end of pain.

Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
open,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.



Being well-taught by me, beggars, Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings —
of those bhikkhus who have let go
the three yokes,
all of these are Stream-enterers;
not liable to states of punishment
certain of ending up self-awakened.

Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
open,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.



Being well-taught by me, beggars, Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings —
of those bhikkhus who live
in accordance with Dhamma,
in accordance with faith,

all of these are certain of ending up self-awakened.

**Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
open,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.**



**Being well-taught by me, beggars, Dhamma,
laid out,
opened up,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings —
of those bhikkhus who place in me
a measure of faith,
a measure of affection
all these are bound for the heavens.**

**Thus well-taught by me, beggars, is Dhamma,
laid out,
open,
made comprehensible,
stripped of dressings.**

**That is what the Lucky Man said.
Pleased in mind, the beggars said:
"Wonderful"
to the Lucky Man."**

The Snake Simile

[1] *Antarāyikā dhammā*. A 'coming between thing'; an obstacle.

[2] *Paṭisevato*. To 'reflexively-serve'; follow after, pursue. As opposed to passively experience.

[3] Tossed to a dog by the butcher. See: MN 54 for a more fully developed set of these obstructions.

[4] Snatched up by one vulture who is then ruthlessly pursued for it by others.

[5] Held against the wind.

[6] In the tree, having climbed up and eaten of the fruit one sees another man chopping the tree down to get the fruit.

[7] *Usmīkato*. [ped]: heat-made; [DPL]: MA. ii. 104 "has he the least glimmering of knowledge;

Chalmers: a spark of illumination; Horner: even a glimmering; Bhk. Thanissaro: even warm; Bhk. Bodhi: kindled even a spark of wisdom; Nyanaponika Thera: any spark (of understanding). Bhk. Thanissaro's translation is getting warm to the meaning. He goes back to kindling fire, but this is down the road from that as in the children's game or when someone is coming close to something he is looking for and others comment on his progress. "You're getting warm!" But I have translated this as a degree of liking: "He has warmed to the idea." In other words it is not so much that he has no clue, but he has no appreciation of the meaning.

[8] Ms. Horner forgets that he was already seated, and has him sit down here.

[9] Here the editors have clumsily inserted a list of teachings that come much later and by that have put the whole sutta in danger of being dismissed as being 'late.' *Suttam geyyam veyyākaraṇam gātham udānam iti-vuttakam jātakam abbhuta-dhammam vedallam*. Lord Chalmers (see his note 3): "*the Suttas in prose or in prose and verse, with the Poems and the Triumphant Utterances and the Quotations and the Jātakas and the Miracles and the Miscellanies.*" I have eliminated the list from this translation.

[10] *Ajapada*. Goat-footed = cloven.

[11] *Kullam*. A hollow tube. A pontoon, but that does not fit the description. A float would be more accurate than a raft, but the fact is that sometimes history overpowers reality and it would be a disservice to the lesson to switch from 'raft' at this point.

[12] *Nissāya*. Normally we would see that seated he would not be able to use his feet, but here I imagine the float to be relatively small ... he does contemplate carrying it. The usual translation, 'depending on' does not help us see the situation ... which is that this is being done by most of us seated.

[13] *Nissaya*. Seating.

[14] *Anupalabbhamāne*. Lord Chalmers, and Bhks. Nyanaponika, Thanissaro, Ñanamoli, and Bodhi all understand this to mean that the idea of a self (or soul) has not been proven, or has been disproved and that therefore the idea of an everlasting stable existence is absurd. Ms. Horner is alone in reading this as being an indication that the reality of a self is not the issue, that beyond this issue this theory is bunk.

[15] *Pañc'ora-m-bhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni*

- (1) sakkāyadiṭṭhi, own-body view;
- (2) vicikicchā, doubt and vacillation;
- (3) sīlabbataparāmāso, attachment to trust in good works, ethics and rituals;
- (4) kāmacchando, wishing, wanting, desiring sensual pleasures;
- (5) vyāpādo, deviance, anger, hate; going the wrong way.

[16] *Venayika*. This is the holding of the view that at the end of a living being's lifespan there is nothing further. Professed beliefs aside, this is what the behavior of nearly everyone here today is saying they believe. "Eat drink and make Mary, for tomorrow we die!" "I'm not here for a long time, I'm here for a good time." "You only live once!" YOLO Etc.

[17] That is, the Tathāgata. I.e., to the impersonal, the khandhas. In other words he views such compliments as being directed at a stage of his life and accomplishments about which he is now indifferent. Sister Upalavanna has the simplest, most direct, if not literal, translation in: "It is on account of what I have thoroughly understood, that they do it."

