Houseki no kuni analysis

Phosphophyllite, the 7 Buddhist treasures

How phos symbolize the entirety of the seven treasures?

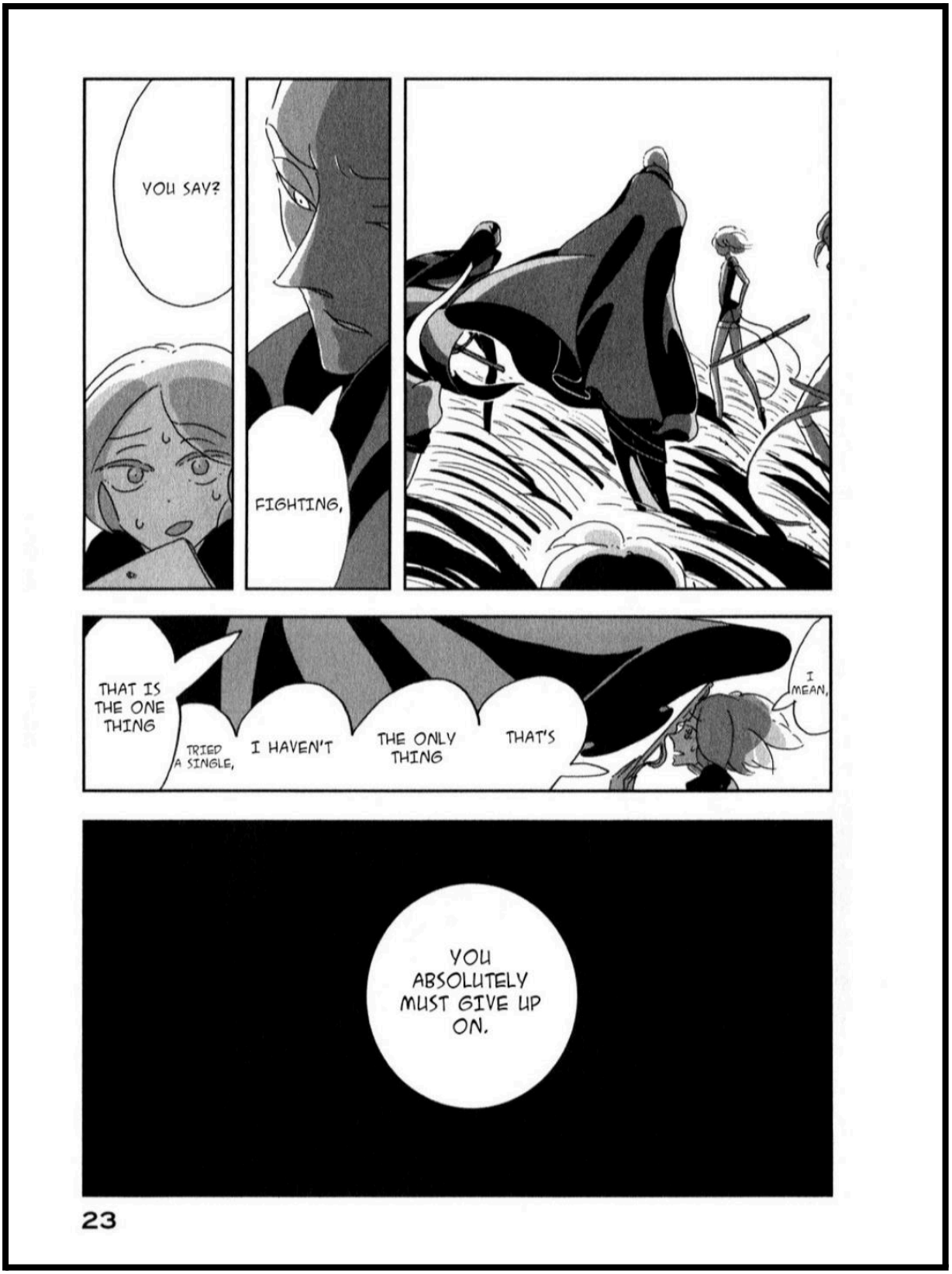
Well, I'll explain it.

First I present the seven treasures(also called Saptaratna).
Crystal/suishō ,Agate/menō ,Gold/kin, silver/gin, lapis lazuli/ruri, Pearl/Shinju, Coral/Sango
I will say what it represents/symbolizes. Because it does not only represent material wealth but also spiritual virtues.
To be clear, this is not a full analysis of the symbol itself, but simply an explanation of how Phos represents the entirety of the 7 treasures, asked by GriffithDaGoat.

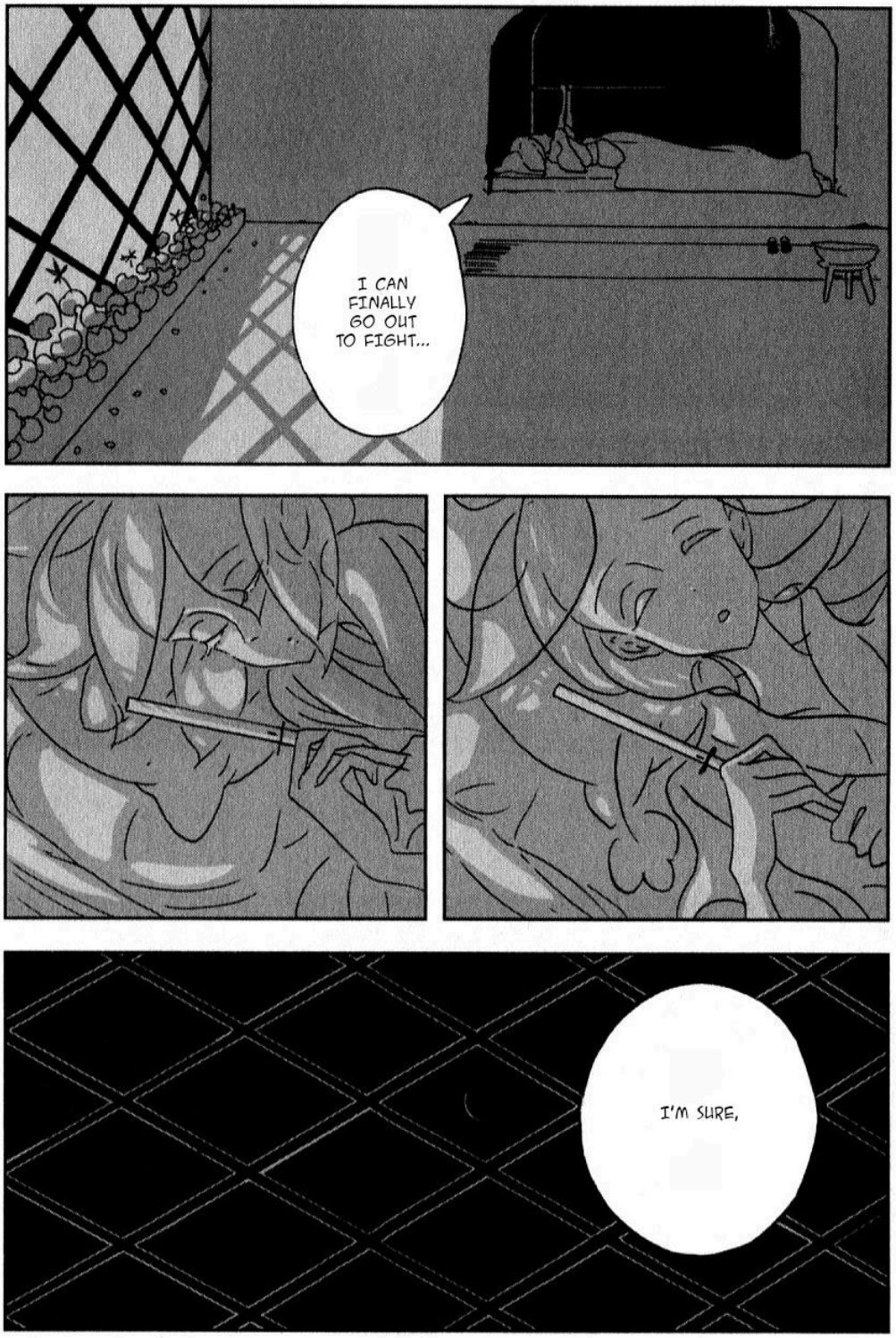
Throughout the manga, Phos replaces his body with materials/with the seven treasures, which transforms him little by little into a human being.

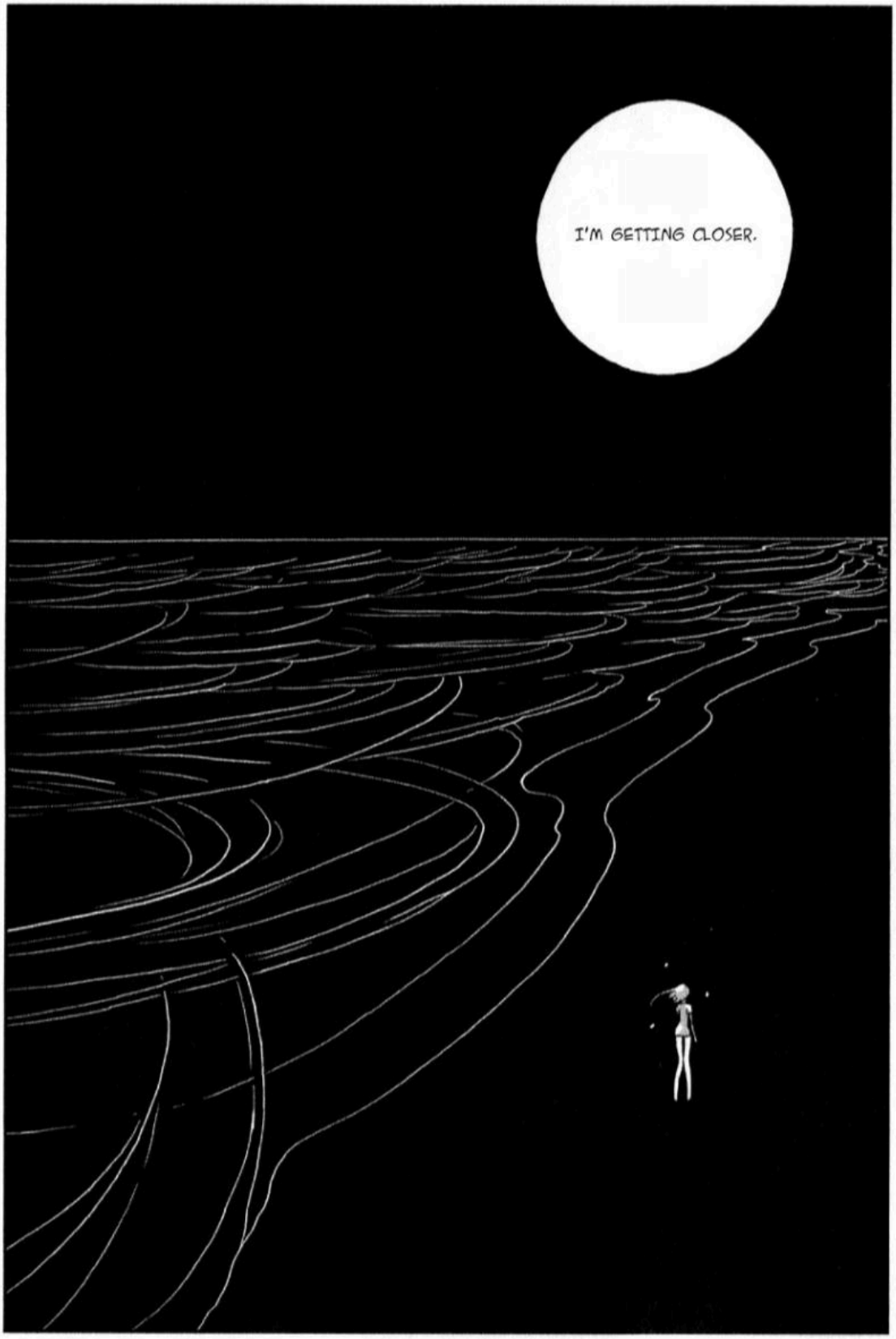
Let's start with the agate legs. Agate/menō is one of the seven treasures that evokes courage and stability, how does it represent phos?
Phos is given agate legs so he can stand upright in a literal and figurative way, this evokes stability, these new legs give a form of courage to Phos who wishes to fight the Lunarians thanks to the capacity of his new agate legs.
But the gain of his legs therefore courage and stability are two things that phos mainly needed before receiving them, each treasure represents a spiritual virtuosity but also a need for phos for its situation.

First of all Phos wanted to help its people against the Lunarians by becoming a "fighter gem" and for that he needed courage, which his legs gave him physically and spiritually, Phos needed stability, social stability to be seen as useful to the gems, what the legs gave him in allowing him to fight the Lunarians.



Kongo responds to Phos by saying that he cannot fight, therefore phos cannot help his people by fighting.
(Chapter 1)


I CAN FINALLY GO OUT TO FIGHT...
I'M SURE,

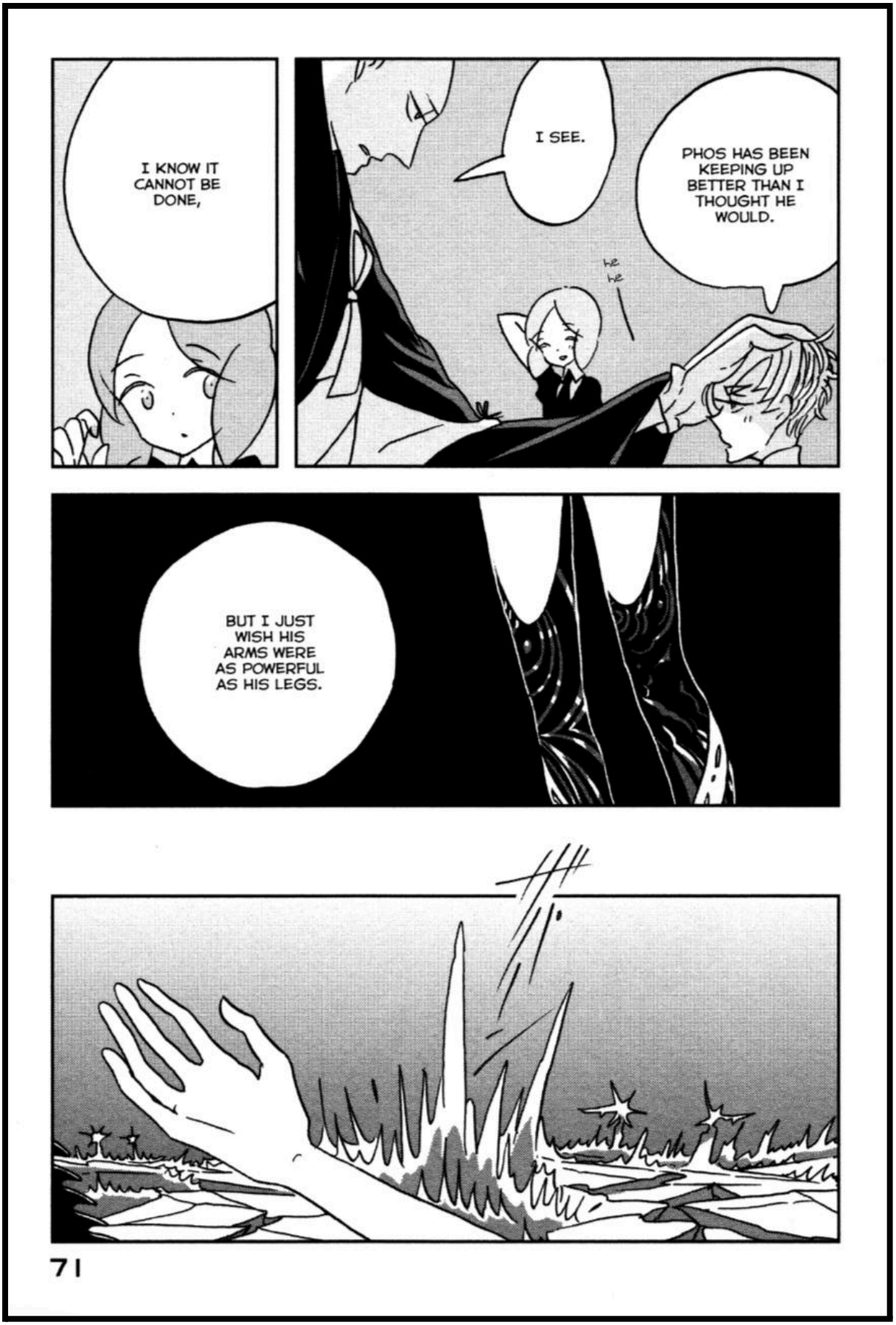

I'M GETTING CLOSER.

After gaining agate legs, Phosphophyllite can physically protect the gems by fighting, but also gains social stability by being useful, in addition to being validated by Kongo who agrees to send Phos into battle with amethysts.
That will allow him to get closer to a greater goal, as this sequence shows.
(Chapter 13)

Gold and silver

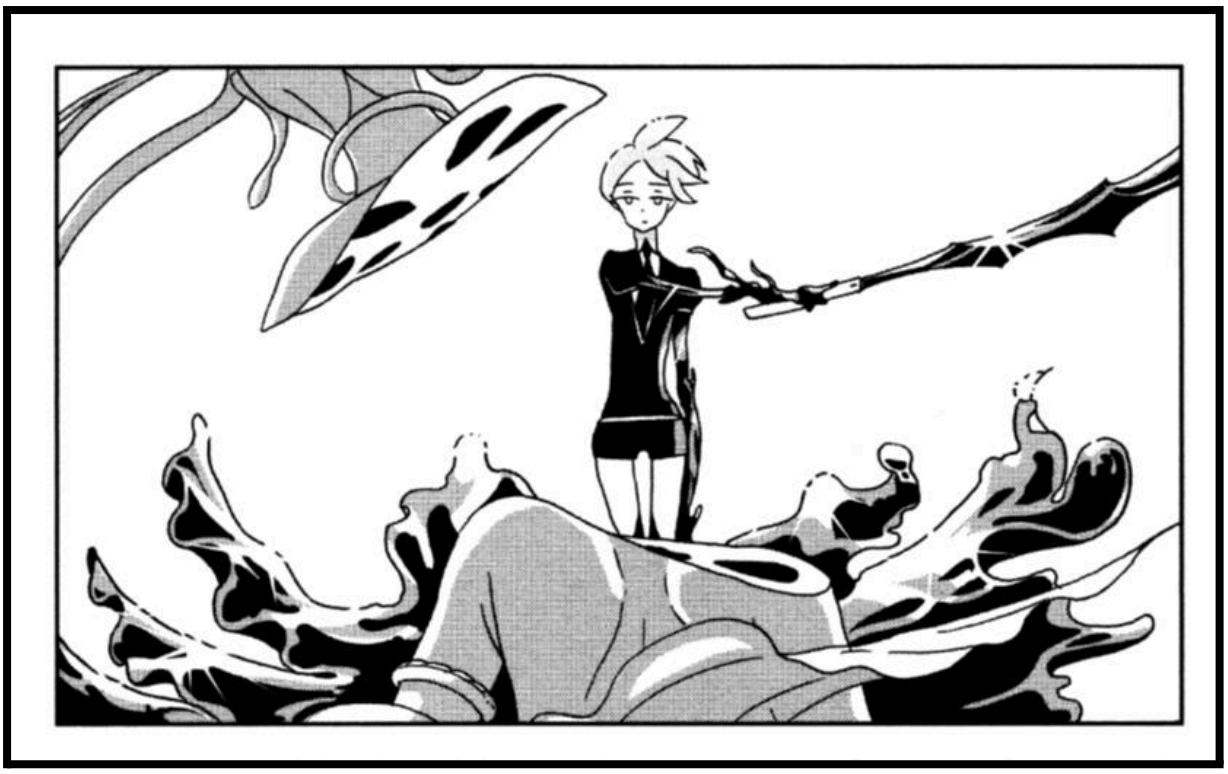
The arms of gold and platinum that phos receives in volume 3 represents the gold/Kin and silver/Gin of the seven treasures.
As a symbol of spiritual virtuosity, gold reflects enlightenment, when phos receives arms in gold and platinum, marking the beginning of a physical strengthening/a form of enlightenment in his quest for truth, a symbol of his will to act.
For Silver it represents detachment, Phos loss of memory and identity is a form of progressive detachment from self.
Phosphophyllite in the first two volumes was a character very attached to others, which changes at the end of volume 3 with a more detached character; Phos becomes significantly less dependent on/attached to other gems.

Phos, in order to effectively fight the Lunarians, needed arms as strong as his legs, and Phos sacrificed a part of his body directly linked to his memory/identity to achieve a form of enlightenment but to do so, Phos must detach from himself/To renounce oneself.



As mentioned previously, Phos needs arms as strong as her legs.

"I know it cannot be done." Antarctica himself says that it cannot or even should not be done, but Phosphophyllite will do it of his own volition.
(Chapter 16)



Phosphophyllite grows stronger and achieves a feat impossible for him at the beginning of volume 3. Thus demonstrating this physical strengthening/Enlightenment.
(Chapter 20)

Lapis lazuli

The lapis lazuli head that Phos receives in volume 7 represents the lapis lazuli/ruri of the seven treasures. As a symbol of spiritual virtuosity it represents wisdom and healing. Phos replacing it heads by that of lapis lazuli gains knowledge/wisdom from lapis lazuli which was known as the most intelligent gem and was in charge of the library, a symbol of wisdom and knowledge, for healing it is quite simple, with the head of lapis lazuli phos was able to heal and continue his quest for truth.

Phos needed a great deal of knowledge and therefore wisdom to be able to reassemble antarcticite and unravel the mystery of Kongo.
And for healing this is really self-explanatory, phos needs a head to be able to continue to exist and pursue his objectives.


RIGHT NOW, I CAN'T
YOU'VE CALMED DOWN.
RIGHT?! GHOST?
IN WHICH WAY?..
IT, WE GET IT.



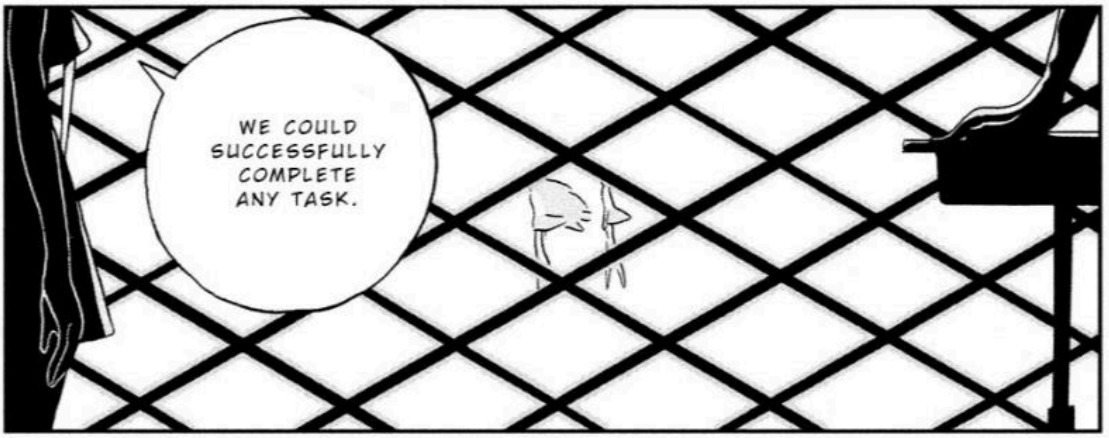
Phosphophyllite himself says that he cannot solve the mystery of Kongo.

(Chapter 40)

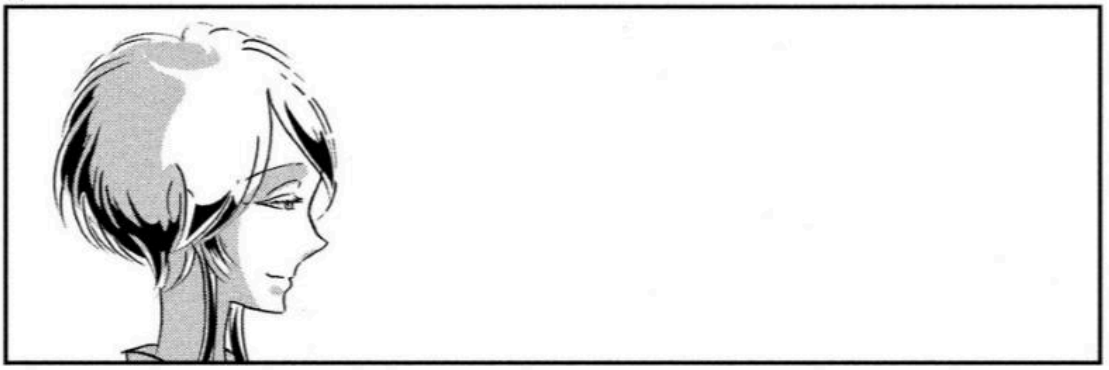

IN ADDI-
TION...
HE ENTIRELY MEMORIZED THE CONTENTS OF THE WHOLE BOOK COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY.
LAPIS IS EXTREMELY SMART.
AH!
THAT REMINDS ME, PHOS, YOU PROBABLY FORGOT ABOUT LAPIS?
I'M DEEPLY SORRY.
ALSO LISTENED TO LAPIS...
IN ADDITION, EVEN THE LITTLE ONE INSIDE ME
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Quartz Phantom himself states that Lapis Lazuli was extremely intelligent, and Phantom adds that the "Little one inside me" listens to Lapis Lazuli. This person is Cairngorm who will listen to Phos with his head replaced by Lapis lazuli head. (Chapter 35)


WITH THE TWO OF US,


WE COULD SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE ANY TASK.


THAT IS HAPPINESS, ISN'T IT.



Quartz phantom amplifies the fact that both of them (Lapis and him) working as a team, could complete any task, which is the goal of Phosphophyllite by completing its task, which is to unravel the mystery of Kongo (Phos has several objectives, but this is his most prominent goal of phos in volume 5) And this is clearly shown through the words "That is happiness, isn't it."

Synthetic pearl eye

In volume 8 Aechmea replaces Phos right eye with a synthetic pearl eye, this represents the pearl one of the seven treasures, the pearl as spiritual virtuosity represents wisdom (again) suffering and compassion.
Phos gains pain through the revelation about the fate of the gems that were taken and also the truths about Kongo, but also develops a form of empathy towards the Lunarians, suffering becomes a bridge to compassion.
Phos needed truth/more knowledge-wisdom except that his truth/knowledge led him to a form of suffering necessary to be able to save his people.


OUR
BETRAYAL.


I'LL PERSUADE
SOMEONE


TO GO TO THE MOON.

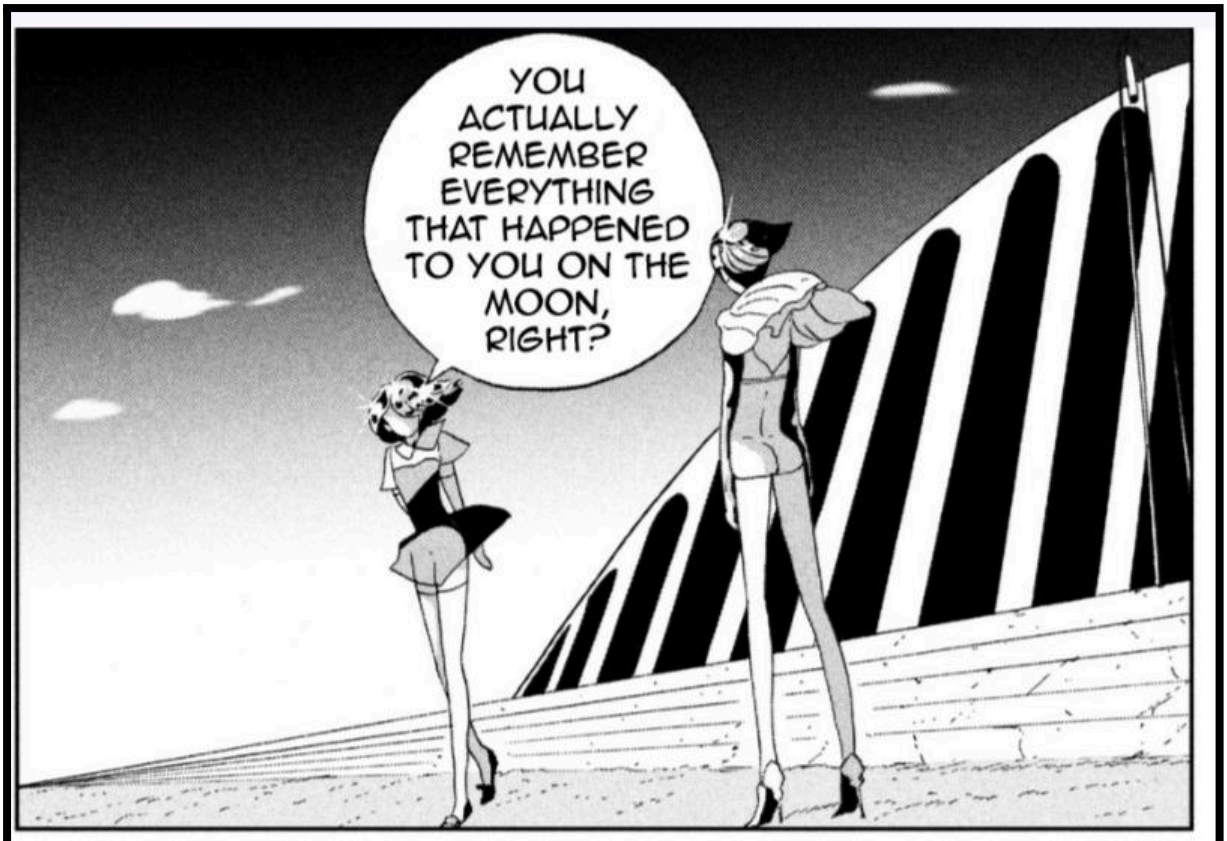

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THIS IS A SYNTHETIC PEARL,
A CRYSTAL OF OUR WISDOM.

Before receiving the synthetic pearl eye, Phos agrees to help the Lunarians and proposes its plan, which is to betray Kongo. The betrayal is direct proof of suffering, for Kongo but especially for Phosphophyllite himself. In chapter 76, it proves that Phos still has feelings/attachment for Kongo, so this betrayal also causes suffering within him, and if this explanation is not enough, the 10,000 years of suffering are quite self-explanatory.

Furthermore, Aechmea, by giving the eye to Phos, said "A crystal of *our* wisdom", I emphasize the word "our" because it carries a link with compassion.
(Chapter 56)



Aechmea shows compassion towards phosphophyllite (Chapter 55)

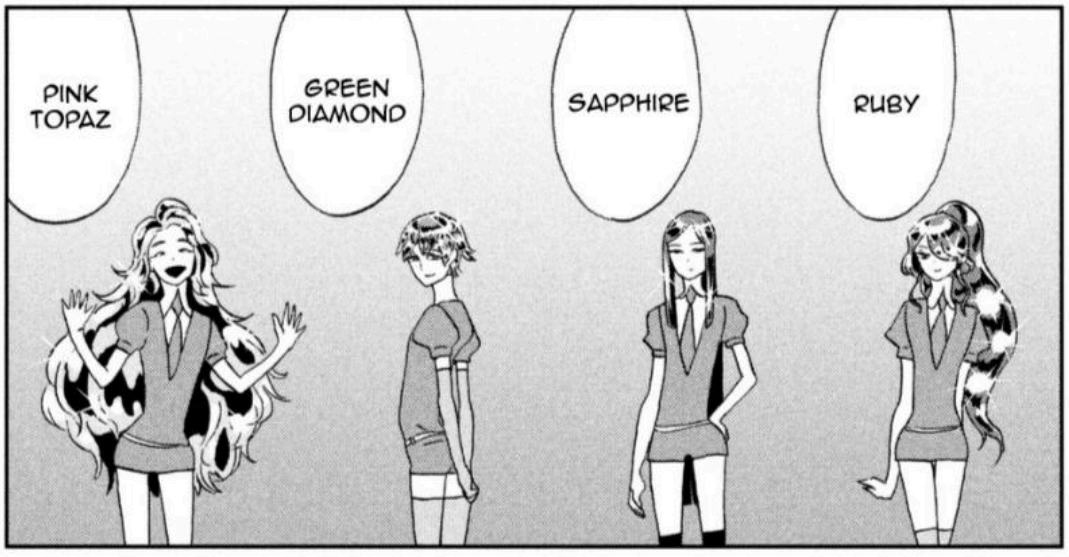

YOU ACTUALLY REMEMBER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU ON THE MOON, RIGHT?


AM I WRONG ?
AND TO AVOID SHOCKING US, YOU TELL US AS LITTLE AS YOU CAN, LIKE IF YOU DIDN'T.
BUT YOU ARE KIND,

Proof that Phosphophyllite uses compassion to manipulate the gems and take them to the Moon.


I WANT TO TELL THEM I'M SORRY.
DO YOU WANT TO MEET WITH THEM?

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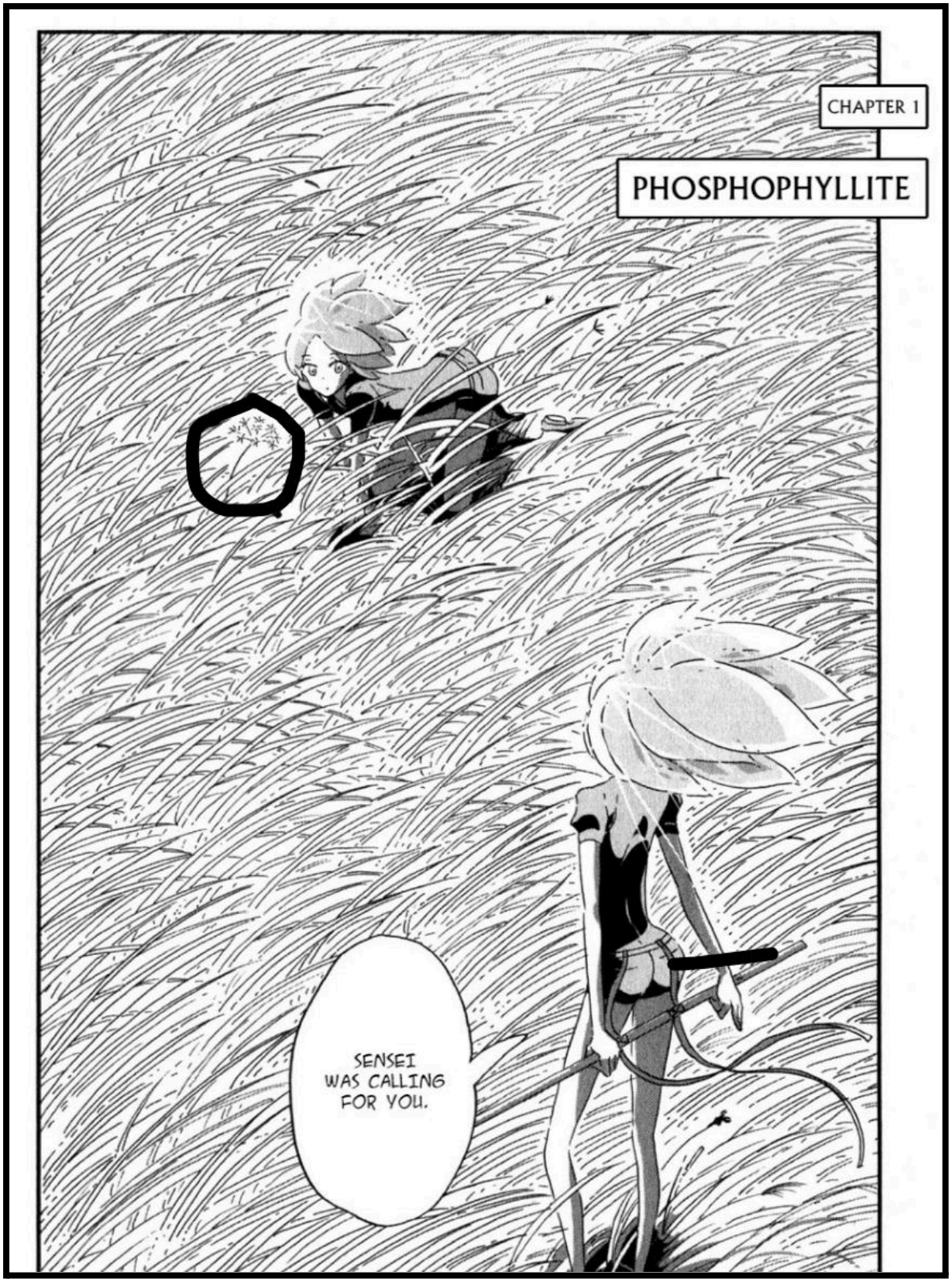

PINK TOPAZ
GREEN DIAMOND
SAPPHIRE
RUBY


YOU DIA-MONDS ARE ALSO SPECIAL.
I WANT TO TALK WITH THEM AGAIN, EVEN IF THEY CAN'T RETURN LIKE YOU.

Same as for diamond.
(Chapter 58)

Phosphophyllite

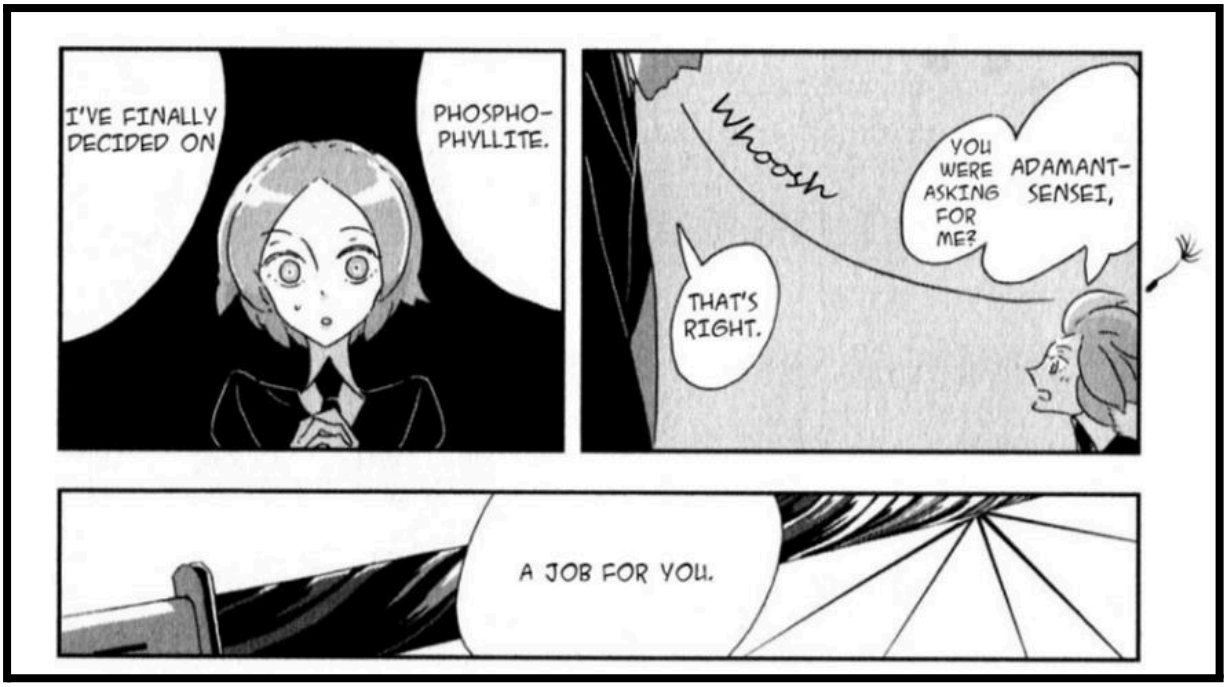
The Phosphophyllite (original body) also represents one of the seven treasures, the crystal/Suishō , this represents as spiritual virtuosity the absolute purity and transparency of the spirit/mind.
Phos is presented as fragile and pure at the beginning of the manga, his mind possesses neither knowledge nor malice to make phos impure, this transparency will be broken little by little by suffering , but the desire for truth remains intact, like a crystal heart, his phosphophyllite heart will remain until the end even after becoming a god because as tragic as it is phos was already perfectly pure at the beginning and it is form/treasure which was supposed perfecting it only damaged it. Why do the seven treasures that only have positive characteristics impact phos in a negative way? I will explain this at the end because I have one last treasure to explain.



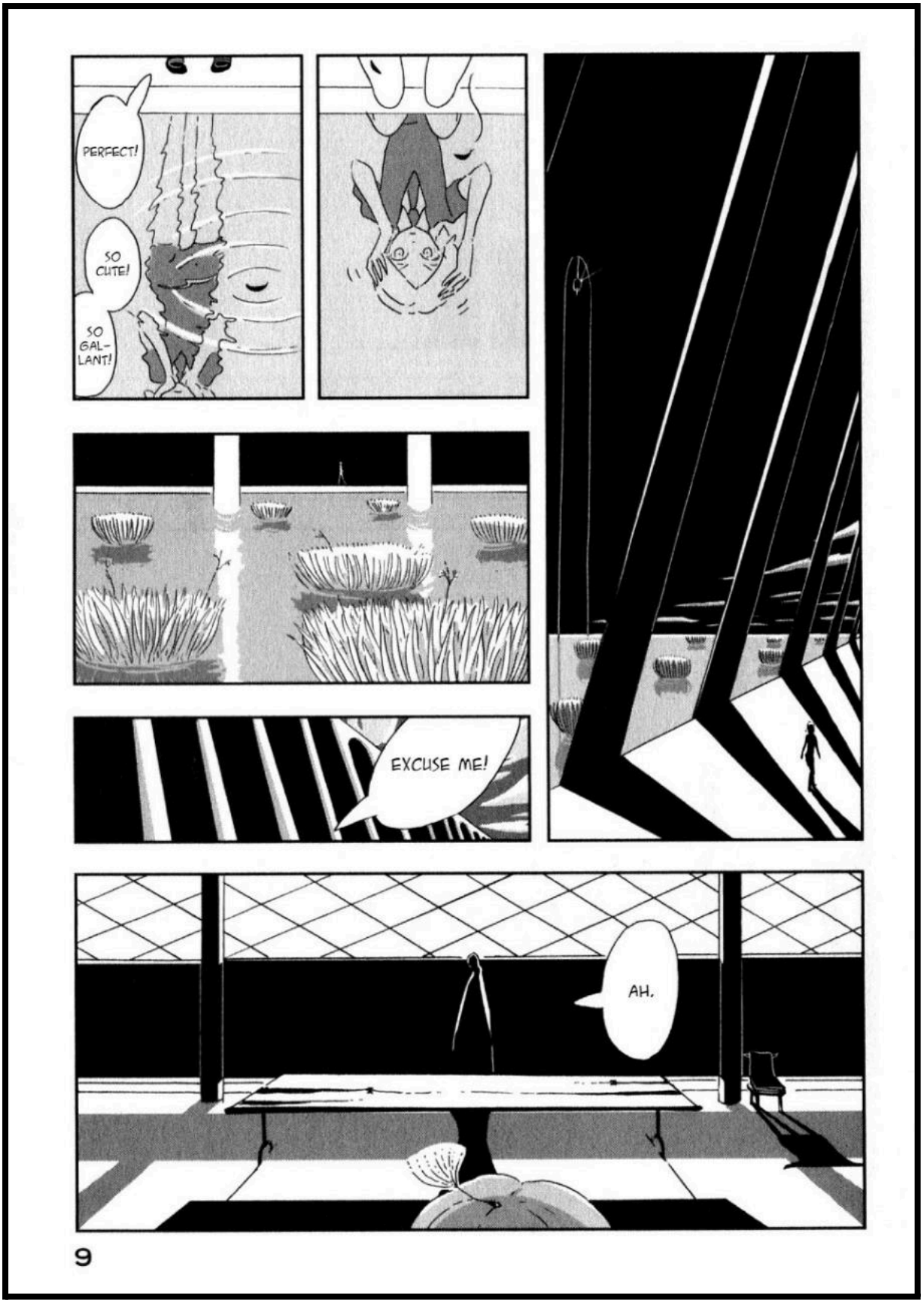
In one of the first pages of the work, we can see a Dandelion, an important symbol that appears repeatedly throughout the work, present here in the introduction of phosphophyllite, it represents purity and will even become attached to Phos during the

beginning of chapter 1, amplifying this idea of a Pure phosphophyllite that was present at the beginning of the work.

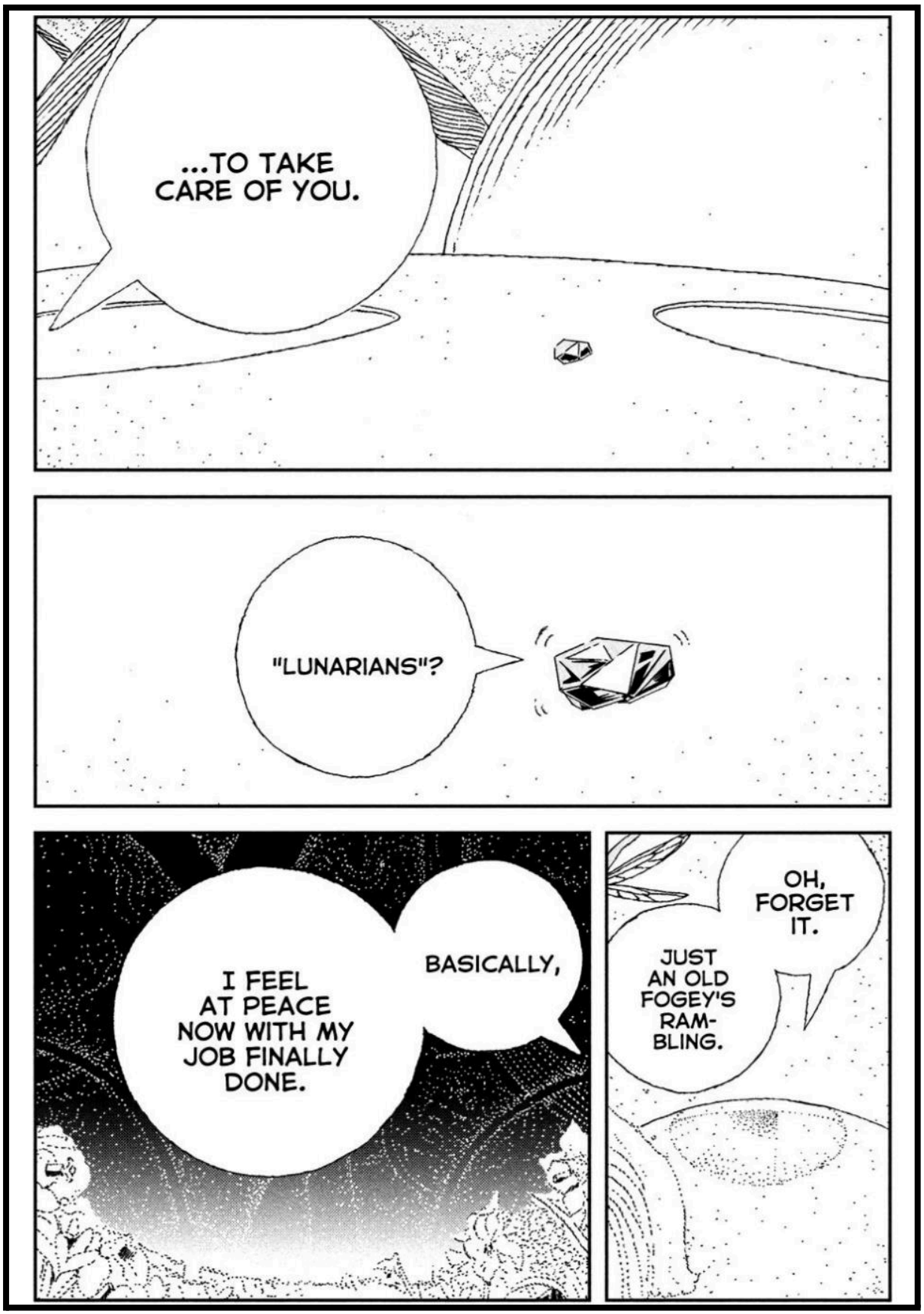




Two more panels from the beginning of chapter 1 to prove my point.



Phosphophyllite compliments himself while looking at his reflection in the water; Phosphophyllite, in the beginning, does not lie to himself compared to the rest of the work during his "evolution". Proof of purity and transparency.



At the end of the work, a final fragment of the original phosphophyllite body rests on the new planet/Pure land. As its name suggests, no trace of impurities is present.

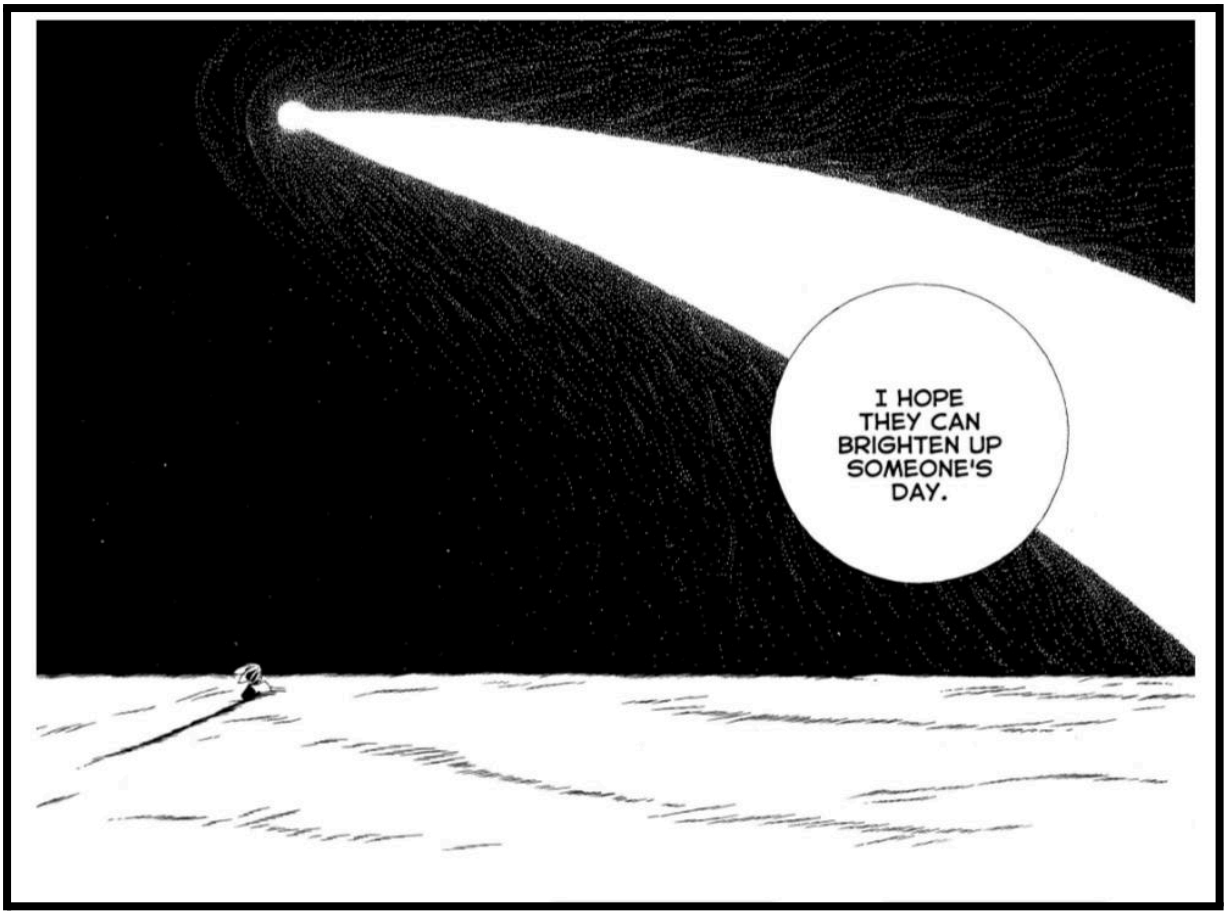
This is also proven by the fact that phosphophyllite, being only a small fragment, has practically forgotten everything and therefore does not remember the lunarians.

"Divine" form

Coral/Sango is the last of the seven treasures that I must mention which is connected to Phos in volume 13 with the link with humanity, so with the Lunarians, Gems and also with admirabilis who are marine species.
The spiritual virtuosities of coral are vitality, connection with marine life and the cycle of life and death.
The cycle of life and death clearly refers to the cycle of samsara, the connection with marine life with admirabilis and vitality with nirvana.
Phos in volume 13 wishes is to reach nirvana to end his loneliness but also to break the cycle of samsara, a cycle presented in the first page of Hnk when Phos wakes up, this scene is a direct parallel to the conclusion of Hnk where we see Phos wake up in the same plain under the comet.



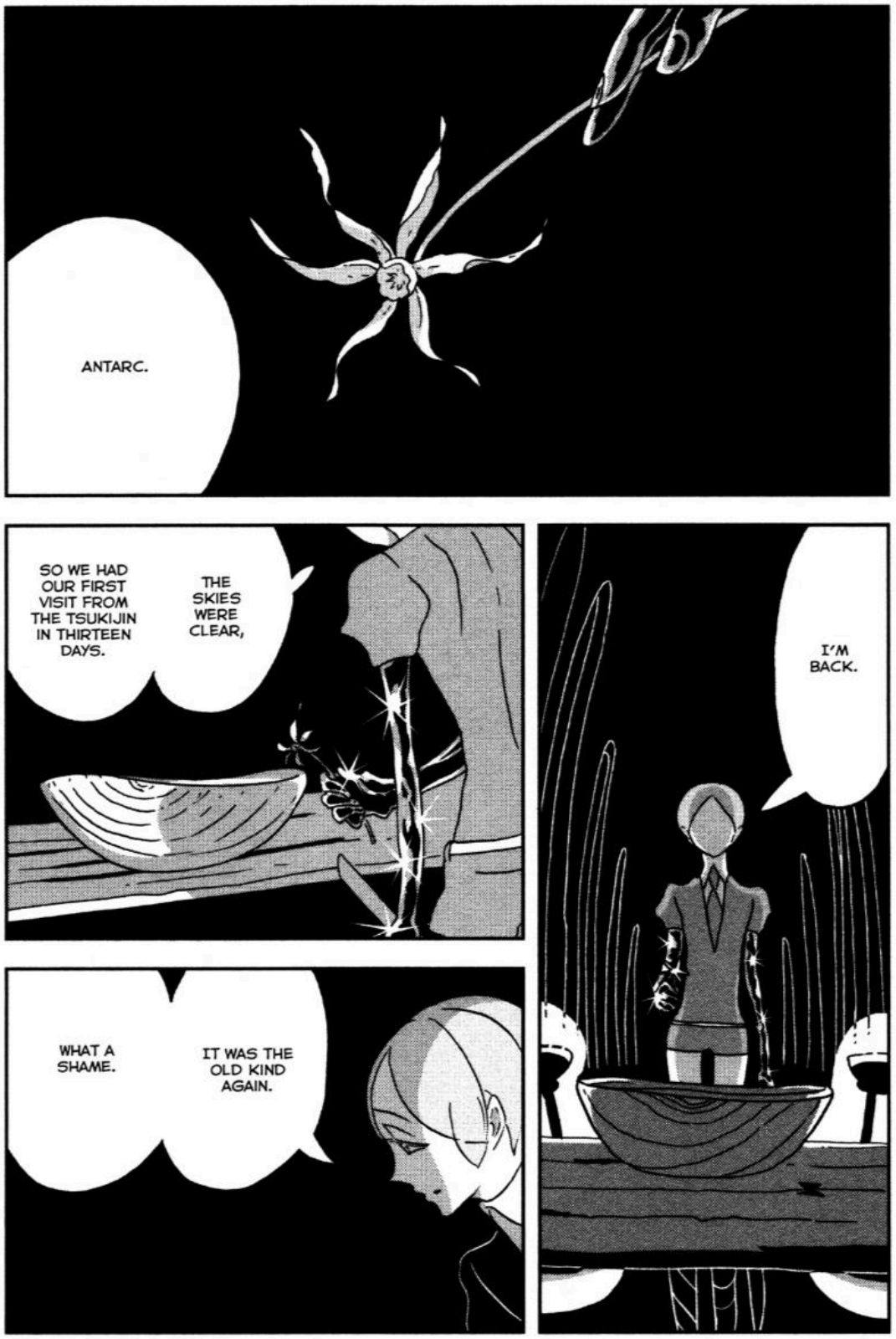
Agate legs are literally made from elements of marine life.
(Chapters 10)



Phosphophyllite conclusion, clearly shows the parallel with chapter 1. Phosphophyllite is everywhere and nowhere at the same time in the new universe proving the link with the "connection" spiritual virtuosities.

Negative impact

Finally, why do the seven treasures impact phos in a negative way?
Because phos accumulates its treasures/virtues until it becomes a karmic weight, to reach the path to awakening one must make sacrifices, Phos obsessively assimilates the seven treasures which is a negative aspect of humanity, so Phos, by becoming more and more human, dehumanizes himself at the same time by losing his original purity.
The Seven Treasures in Buddhism are not mean to be sought or accumulated materially, but that they represent the state of the awakened mind. In this, Phos goes the opposite way he assimilates them physically, believing that he will achieve wisdom and liberation, but fails as long as he remains attached to matter, which perfectly reflects the theme of desire and illusion (Māyā) in Buddhism.


UFO
ANTARC.
SO WE HAD OUR FIRST VISIT FROM THE TSUKIJIN IN THIRTEEN DAYS.
THE SKIES WERE CLEAR,
I'M BACK.
WHAT A SHAME.
IT WAS THE OLD KIND AGAIN.

The dandelion, now dead in Phosphophyllite's hands in volume 3, shows that Phosphophyllite no longer has his original Purity after assimilating some Buddhist treasure (The purity is still there, but not as complete as in volume 1).

Important detail

Just a heads-up, I'm aware of the different versions of the 7 Buddhist treasures, and in some "versions", Phos only truly assimilates 6 out of 7 treasures, this could be mentioned, as it does add nuance (HNK is not a completely faithful representation of certain Buddhist concepts, it's totally done on purpose, Haruko Ichikawa criticizes/parodies some of his concepts, that's why, by the way, the most expensive interpretation of the saptaratna in HnK is the fact that Phos doesn't even assimilate all the Buddhist treasures, which carries a great significance to the character, but well, that's not the subject), but the final message of these versions remains more or less the same as the view from my analysis, on the fact that Phos assimilates Buddhist treasures in a bad way and especially the critique of humanity and also of the Buddhist pure land, although the critique of pure land is a large topic and should be addressed in another analysis, it is a separate and relevant subject.
To mention a few modifications to these other versions, there is the Cornelian, which is an orange/red colored gem, which as a spiritual virtue, brings courage, self-confidence and creativity.

Courage is something that agate also mentions; Self-confidence is linked to stability, Creativity was something that was necessary for Phos for his encyclopedia; self-confidence was also necessary for Phos at that time.
The funny thing is, the Cornelian stone for sale is apparently often just dyed agate, Carnelian is also a stone that is rather incompatible with lapis lazuli; it seems to me that no version of the Seven Treasures features both at the same time.
I think it's mainly the different translations that change the versions. I'm not going to mention all the versions, but here are some of them:

-Kumarajiva's translation of the Amitabha Sutra lists gold, silver, lapis lazuli, coral , giant clam shell , red pearl, and agate.
The red pearl is very similar to just the pearl. The giant clam shell surely refers to the tridacna shell; we can also link this to phos.

-Xuanzang's translation of the Pure Land Sutra lists gold, silver, lapis lazuli , crystal , cinnabar, red pearl, and agate.

-The Prajnaparamita Sutra lists gold, silver, lapis lazuli, coral, amber, giant clam shell, and agate.

-I use the Lotus Sutra list variant of the Seven Treasures, (this version itself may vary depending on the translation) I used this variant because it was the one suggested to me by "GriffithDaGoat", the person who requested the analysis.

The version/translation of the saptaratna that I find most often mentioned is this following list: gold,silver,lapis lazuli,crystal,coral,amber (or sometimes mother-of-pearl), agate.

I hope I have been able to clarify some doubts about my choice of the 7 treasures.

Thanks for reading!