

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

2. Now on that occasion a certain householder's dear and beloved only son had died. After his son's death, he had no more desire to work or to eat. He kept going to the charnel ground and crying: "My only son, where are you? My only son, where are you?"

3. Then that householder went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, sat down at one side. The Blessed One said to him: "Householder, your faculties are not those of one in control of his own mind. Your faculties are deranged."

"How could my faculties not be deranged, venerable sir? For my dear and beloved only son has died. Since he died I have no more desire to work or to eat. I keep going to the charnel ground and crying: 'My only son, where are you? My only son, where are you?'"

"So it is, householder, so it is! Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear."

"Venerable sir, who would ever think that sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear? Venerable sir, happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear." Then, displeased with the Blessed One's words, disapproving of them, the householder rose from his seat and left.

4. Now on that occasion some gamblers were playing with dice not far from the Blessed One. Then the householder went to those gamblers and said: "Just now, sirs, I went to the recluse Gotama, and after paying homage to him, I sat down at one side. When I had done so, the recluse Gotama said to me: 'Householder, your faculties are not those of one in control of his own mind.'...*(repeat the entire conversation as above)*...'Venerable sir, happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.' Then, displeased with the recluse Gotama's words, disapproving of them, I rose from my seat and left."

“So it is, householder, so it is! Happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”

Then the householder left thinking: “I agree with the gamblers.”

5. Eventually this story reached the king’s palace. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala told Queen Mallikā: “This is what has been said by the recluse Gotama, Mallikā: ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’”

“If that has been said by the Blessed One, sire, then it is so.”

“No matter what the recluse Gotama says, Mallikā applauds it thus: ‘If that has been said by the Blessed One, sire, then it is so.’ Just as a pupil applauds whatever his teacher says to him, saying: ‘So it is, teacher, so it is!’; so too, Mallikā, no matter what the recluse Gotama says, you applaud it thus: ‘If that has been said by the Blessed One, sire, then it is so.’ Be off, Mallikā, away with you!”

6. Then Queen Mallikā addressed the brahmin Nāṇijangha: “Come, brahmin, go to the Blessed One and pay homage in my name with your head at his feet, and ask whether he is free from illness and affliction and is healthy, strong, and abiding in comfort, saying: ‘Venerable sir, Queen Mallikā pays homage with her head at the Blessed One’s feet and asks whether the Blessed One is free from illness...and abiding in comfort.’ Then say this: ‘Venerable sir, have these words been uttered by the Blessed One: “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”?’ Learn well what the Blessed One replies and report it to me; for Tathāgatas do not speak untruth.”

“Yes, madam,” he replied, and he went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said: “Master Gotama, Queen Mallikā pays homage with her head at the Blessed One’s feet and asks whether the Blessed One is free from illness...and abiding in comfort. And she says this: ‘Venerable sir, have these words been uttered by the Blessed One: “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”?’”

7. “So it is, brahmin, so it is! Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.

8. “It can be understood from this, brahmin, how sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear. Once in this same Sāvattḥī there was a certain woman whose mother died. Owing to her mother’s death, she went mad, lost her mind, and wandered from street to street and from crossroad to crossroad, saying: ‘Have you seen my mother? Have you seen my mother?’

9-14. “And it can also be understood from this how sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear. Once in this same Sāvattḥī there was a certain woman whose father died...whose brother died...whose sister died...whose son died...whose daughter died...whose husband died. Owing to her husband’s death, she went mad, lost her mind, and wandered from street to street and from crossroad to crossroad, saying: ‘Have you seen my husband? Have you seen my husband?’

15-21. “And it can also be understood from this how sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear. Once in this same Sāvattḥī there was a certain man whose mother died...whose father died...whose brother died...whose sister died...whose son died...whose daughter died...whose wife died. Owing to his wife’s death, he went mad, lost his mind, and wandered from street to street and from crossroad to crossroad, saying: ‘Have you seen my wife? Have you seen my wife?’

22. “And it can also be understood from this how sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear. Once in this same Sāvattḥī there was a certain woman who went to live with her relatives’ family. Her relatives wanted to divorce her from her husband and give her to another whom she did not want. Then the woman said to her husband: ‘Lord, these relatives of mine want to divorce me from you and give me to another whom I do not want.’ Then the man cut the woman in two and committed suicide, thinking: ‘We shall be together in the afterlife.’ It can also be understood from this how sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”

23. Then, delighting and rejoicing in the Blessed One’s words, the brahmin Nāṇijāṅgha rose from his seat, went to Queen Mallikā, and reported to her his entire conversation with the Blessed One.

24. Then Queen Mallikā went to King Pasenadi of Kosala and asked him: “What do you think, sire? Is Princess Vajīrī dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, Princess Vajīrī is dear to me.”

“What do you think, sire? If change and alteration took place in Princess Vajīrī, would sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in you?”

“Change and alteration in Princess Vajīrī would mean an alteration in my life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair not arise in me?”

“It was with reference to this, sire, that the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened, said: ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’

25-28. “What do you think, sire? Is the noble Queen Vāsabhā dear to you?...Is General Viññā abha dear to you?...Am I dear to you?...Are Kāsi and Kosala dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, Kāsi and Kosala are dear to me. We owe it to Kāsi and Kosala that we use Kāsi sandalwood and wear garlands, scents, and unguents.”

“What do you think, sire? If change and alteration took place in Kāsi and Kosala, would sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise in you?”

“Change and alteration in Kāsi and Kosala would mean an alteration in my life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair not arise in me?”

“It was with reference to this, sire, that the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened, said: ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’”

29. “It is wonderful, Mallikā, it is marvellous how far the Blessed One penetrates with wisdom and sees with wisdom! Come, Mallikā, give me the ablution water.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala rose from his seat, and arranging his upper robe on one shoulder, he extended his hands in reverential salutation towards the Blessed One and uttered this exclamation three times: “Honor to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened! Honor to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened! Honor to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened!”

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Majjhima Nikāya 87

Part Two – The Middle Fifty Discourses (Majjhimaṃ āsapāṃ ī)

The Division on Kings (Rājavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṃ amoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

Contributed by Chris Burke