

MN 87: Piyajātika Sutta

Born from Affection

Translated by Suddhāso Bhikkhu

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatti, in Jeta's Grove, at Anāthapiṇḍika's park. On this occasion, there was a certain householder whose only son, who was loved by him and pleasing to him, had died. Because of that death, he did not work or eat. He would go to the cemetery and cry, "My only son, where are you? My only son, where are you?"

Then that householder approached the Blessed One, paid respects to him, and sat to one side. When the householder was seated to one side, the Blessed One said to him, "Householder, you do not appear to have a stable mind. You appear to be deranged."

"Bhante, how could I not be deranged? Bhante, my only son, who I loved and was pleased by, has died. Because of that death, I do not work or eat. I go to the cemetery and cry, 'My only son, where are you? My only son, where are you?'"

"That's how it is, householder, that's how it is! Householder, sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection¹; they come from affection."

"Bhante, how can you think that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection? Bhante, delight and elation are born from affection; they come from affection." That householder did not delight in the Blessed One's speech; he condemned it, rose from his seat, and left.

On this occasion, several gamblers were playing with dice not far from the Blessed One. Then the householder approached those gamblers and said to them, "Sirs, here I approached the contemplative Gotama, paid respects to him, and sat to one side. When I was seated to one side, the Blessed One said to me, 'Householder, you do not appear to have a stable mind. You appear to be deranged.' Sirs, when this was said, I said to the contemplative Gotama, 'Bhante, how could I not be deranged? Bhante, my only son, who I loved and was pleased by, has died. Because of that death, I do not work or eat. I go to the cemetery and cry, "My only son, where are you? My only son, where are you?"' "That's how it is, householder, that's how it is! Householder, sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection; they come from affection.' 'Bhante, how can you think that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection? Bhante, delight and elation are born from affection; they come from affection.' Then, sirs, I did not delight in the contemplative Gotama's speech; I condemned it, rose from my seat, and left."

"That's how it is, householder, that's how it is! Householder, delight and elation are born from affection; they come from affection."

1 *Piya-jātika*. Lit. "that which is born (*jātika*) from affection (*piya*)."

Then that householder left, thinking “The gamblers agree with me.”

An account of this conversation eventually entered the royal palace. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala said to Queen Mallikā², “Mallikā, this was said by the contemplative Gotama: 'Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection; they come from affection.'”

“Great King, if that is what the Blessed One said, then that's how it is.”

“No matter what the contemplative Gotama says, Mallikā approves of it in this way: 'Great King, if that is what the Blessed One said, then that's how it is.' It is just like when a teacher says something to a student, the student always approves of it [by saying] 'That's how it is, teacher! That's how it is, teacher!' In the same way, Mallikā, no matter what the contemplative Gotama says, you approve of it in this way: 'Great King, if that is what the Blessed One said, then that's how it is.' Bah! Mallikā, get lost!”

Then Queen Mallikā addressed the brahmin Nāḷijangha, “Brahmin, go to the Blessed One, and with your head at his feet, revere him with my words: 'Bhante, Queen Mallikā reveres you with her head at your feet, and asks if you are unafflicted, healthy, unburdened, strong, and comfortable.' Then say, 'Bhante, did the Blessed One make the statement “Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection?”' As the Blessed One explains, carefully learn [what he says] and report it to me. Tathāgatas do not speak what is not true.”

“Yes, Madam,” the brahmin Nāḷijangha replied to Queen Mallikā. He approached the Blessed One and conversed with him. After engaging in the appropriate polite conversation, the brahmin Nāḷijangha sat to one side and said to the Blessed One, “Sir Gotama, Queen Mallikā reveres Sir Gotama with her head at your feet. She asks if you are unafflicted, healthy, unburdened, strong, and comfortable. She also says, 'Bhante, did the Blessed One make the statement “Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection; they come from affection?”'”

“That's how it is, Brahmin, that's how it is! Brahmin, sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection; they come from affection. Brahmin, there is a way that one can understand that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection.

“Brahmin, in the past there was a woman here in Sāvatti whose mother died. Because of that death, she was distraught and mentally disturbed; she would go from street to street, from intersection to intersection, saying 'Have you seen my mother? Have you seen my mother?' Brahmin, this is a way that one can understand that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection.

“Brahmin, in the past there was a woman here in Sāvatti whose father... brother... sister... son... daughter... husband died. Because of that death, she was distraught and

2 Her name means “Jasmine.”

mentally disturbed; she would go from street to street, from intersection to intersection, saying 'Have you seen my husband? Have you seen my husband?' Brahmin, this is a way that one can understand that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection.

“Brahmin, in the past there was a man here in Sāvatti whose mother... father... brother... sister... son... daughter... wife died. Because of that death, he was distraught and mentally disturbed; he would go from street to street, from intersection to intersection, saying 'Have you seen my wife? Have you seen my wife?' Brahmin, this is a way that one can understand that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection.

“Brahmin, in the past there was a woman here in Sāvatti who went to visit her relatives. Her relatives separated her from her husband and wanted to give her to a different man. She did not want that. Then that woman said to her husband, 'Noble sir, my relatives have separated me from you and want to give me to a different man. I do not want that.' Then that man cut the woman in two and sliced himself open, saying 'We will be together after death.' Brahmin, this is a way that one can understand that sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection.”

Then the brahmin Nālijangha delighted in and approved of the Blessed One's speech. He rose from his seat, went to Queen Mallikā, and reported to her his entire conversation with the Blessed One.

Then Queen Mallikā went to King Pasenadi and said to him, “What do you think, Great King - do you feel affection for Princess Vajiri³?”

“Yes, Mallikā, I feel affection for Princess Vajiri.”

“What do you think, Great King - if there was a catastrophic change⁴ in Princess Vajiri, would you experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Mallikā, if there was a catastrophic change in Princess Vajiri, it would seriously alter my life. How could I not experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Great King, when the Blessed One, the One who Knows and Sees, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One, said 'Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection,' this is what he was referring to.

“What do you think, Great King - do you feel affection for Lady Vāsabhā⁵?”

“Yes, Mallikā, I feel affection for Lady Vāsabhā.”

3 Her name can mean either “diamond” or “lightning bolt.”

4 *Vipariṇāma*. This is often used as a euphemism for serious illness, death, or a disaster of some kind.

5 She is not mentioned elsewhere in the Suttas. Apocryphal texts identify her as King Pasenadi's concubine. While this may be true, there is no evidence of it in the original discourses.

“What do you think, Great King - if there was a catastrophic change in Lady Vāsabhā, would you experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Mallikā, if there was a catastrophic change in Lady Vāsabhā, it would seriously alter my life. How could I not experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Great King, when the Blessed One, the One who Knows and Sees, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One, said 'Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection,' this is what he was referring to.

“What do you think, Great King - do you feel affection for General Viḍūḍabha⁶?”

“Yes, Mallikā, I feel affection for General Viḍūḍabha.”

“What do you think, Great King - if there was a catastrophic change in General Viḍūḍabha, would you experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Mallikā, if there was a catastrophic change in General Viḍūḍabha, it would seriously alter my life. How could I not experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Great King, when the Blessed One, the One who Knows and Sees, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One, said 'Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection,' this is what he was referring to.

“What do you think, Great King - do you feel affection for me?”

“Yes, Mallikā, I feel affection for you.”

“What do you think, Great King - if there was a catastrophic change in me, would you experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Mallikā, if there was a catastrophic change in you, it would seriously alter my life. How could I not experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Great King, when the Blessed One, the One who Knows and Sees, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One, said 'Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection,' this is what he was referring to.

“What do you think, Great King - do you feel affection for the Kāsi district of Kosala?”

“Yes, Mallikā, I feel affection for the Kāsi district of Kosala. Mallikā, it is because of power over the Kāsi district of Kosala that we use sandalwood from Kāsi and wear jewelry, fragrances, and cosmetics.”

⁶ General Viḍūḍabha is identified as King Pasenadi's son in the Kaṇṇakatthala Sutta (MN90). Apocryphal texts say Lady Vāsabhā was his mother.

“What do you think, Great King - if there was a catastrophic change in the Kāsi district of Kosala, would you experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Mallikā, if there was a catastrophic change in the Kāsi district of Kosala, it would seriously alter my life. How could I not experience sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish?”

“Great King, when the Blessed One, the One who Knows and Sees, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One, said 'Sorrow, grief, pain, dejection, and anguish are born from affection and come from affection,' this is what he was referring to.”

“Wonderful, Mallikā! Marvelous, Mallikā! The Blessed One sees so much, with penetrative wisdom. Come, Mallikā, bathe me.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala rose from his seat, arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, extended his hands, with palms together, towards the Blessed One, and proclaimed three times: “Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One! Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One! Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One!”