Iti 74 — A Child

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Text

So It Was Said 74

The Book of the Threes

Chapter Three

A Child

This was said by the Buddha, the Perfected One: that is what I heard.

“These three kinds of children are found in the world. What three? One who betters their birth, one who equals their birth, one who fails their birth.

And how does a child better their birth? It’s when a child’s parents have not gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, and consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. They’re immoral, of bad character. But their child has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They don’t kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. They’re ethical, of good character. That’s how a child betters their birth.

And how does a child equal their birth? It’s when a child’s parents have gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They don’t kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. They’re ethical, of good character. And their child has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They don’t kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. They’re ethical, of good character. That’s how a child equals their birth.

And how does a child fail their birth? It’s when a child’s parents have gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They don’t kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. They’re ethical, of good character. But their child has not gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, and consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. They’re immoral, of bad character. That’s how a child fails their birth. These are the three kinds of children found in the world.”

The Buddha spoke this matter. On this it is said:

“The astute wish for a child

who betters or equals their birth;
not one who fails their birth,
disgracing their family.
These are the children in the world
who become lay devotees;
faithful, accomplished in ethics,
bountiful, rid of stinginess.
Like the moon freed from clouds,
they dazzle in the assemblies.”
This too is a matter that was spoken by the Blessed One: that is what I heard.