SN 3.19 — Childless (1st)

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 3.19

2. Childless

Childless (1st)

At Sāvatthī.

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha in the middle of the day, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, “So, Great King, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?”

“Sir, here in Sāvatthī a financier householder has passed away. Since he died childless, I have come after transferring his fortune to the royal compound. There was eight million in gold coin, not to mention the silver coin. And yet that financier ate meals of sour gruel with false black pepper. He wore clothes consisting of three patches of sunn hemp. He traveled around in a vehicle that was a dilapidated little cart, holding a leaf as parasol.”

“That’s so true, Great King! That’s so true! When an untrue person has acquired notable wealth they don’t make themselves happy and pleased. Nor do they make their mother and father, partners and children, bondservants, workers, and staff, and friends and colleagues happy and pleased. And they don’t establish an uplifting religious donation for ascetics and brahmins that’s conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven. Because they haven’t made proper use of that wealth, rulers or bandits take it, or fire consumes it, or flood sweeps it away, or unloved heirs take it. Since that wealth is not properly utilized, it’s wasted, not used.

Suppose there was a lotus pond in an uninhabited region with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. But people don’t collect it or drink it or bathe in it or use it for any purpose. Since that water is not properly utilized, it’s wasted, not used.

In the same way, when an untrue person has acquired notable wealth … it’s wasted, not used.

When a true person has acquired notable wealth they make themselves happy and pleased. And they make their mother and father, partners and children, bondservants, workers, and staff, and friends and colleagues happy and pleased. And they establish an uplifting religious donation for ascetics and brahmins that’s conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven. Because they make proper use of that wealth, rulers or bandits don’t take it, fire doesn’t consume it, flood doesn’t sweep it away, and unloved

heirs don’t take it. Since that wealth is properly utilized, it’s used, not wasted.

Suppose there was a lotus pond not far from a town or village with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. And people collected it and drank it and bathed in it and used it for their own purpose. Since that water is properly utilized, it’s used, not wasted.

In the same way, when a true person has acquired notable wealth … it’s used, not wasted.

As cool water in an uninhabited region

evaporates when not drunk;

so too when a reprobate acquires wealth,

they neither use it themselves nor give it away.

When the attentive and sensible acquire wealth,

they use it, being dutiful.

That boss, having supported the family unit,

blameless, goes to a heavenly place.”