AN 7.63 — Kinds of Wives

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/an7.63/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Numbered Discourses 7.63

6. The Undeclared Points

Kinds of Wives

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, where he sat down on the seat spread out.

Now at that time people in Anāthapiṇḍika's home were making a colossal racket. Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Householder, what's with the people making that colossal racket in your home? You'd think it was fishermen hauling in a catch!"

"Sir, that's my daughter-in-law Sujātā. She's been brought here from a wealthy family. She doesn't obey her mother-in-law or father-in-law or her husband. And she does not honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the Buddha."

Then the Buddha addressed Sujātā, saying, "Come, Sujātā."

"Yes, sir," she replied. She went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to her:

"Sujātā, a man can have seven kinds of wife. What seven? A wife like a killer, a wife like a thief, a wife like a lord, a wife like a mother, a wife like a sister, a wife like a comrade, and a wife like a bondservant. These are the kinds of wife that a man can have. Which one of these are you?"

"Sir, I don't understand the detailed meaning of what the Buddha has said in brief. Please teach me this matter so I can understand the detailed meaning."

"Well then, Sujātā, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

"Yes, sir," she replied. The Buddha said this:

"With a mind full of hate and no kindness, lusting for others, looking down on her husband, she longs to murder him who paid the price for her. A man's wife of this sort is called a wife and a killer.

A woman's husband earns his wealth by focusing on a profession, trade, or farming. And even if it's only a little, she wants to take it. A man's wife of this sort is called a wife and a thief.

She’s an idle glutton who doesn’t want to work. Her words are harsh, fierce, and rude. He works hard, but she lives as his master. A man’s wife of this sort is called a wife and a lord.

She’s always caring and kind, looking after her husband like a mother her child. She keeps the wealth that he has earned secure. A man’s wife of this sort is called a wife and a mother.

She respects her husband as a younger sister respects her elder. Conscientious, she does what her husband says. A man’s wife of this sort is called a wife and a sister.

She’s delighted to see him, like one reunited with a long-lost comrade. She’s of good pedigree, virtuous, and devoted. A man’s wife of this sort is called a wife and a comrade.

She has no anger when threatened with violence by the rod. Without hate or anger, she endures her husband and does what he says. A man’s wife of this sort is called a wife and a bondservant.

The kinds of wives here called killer, thief, and lord; immoral, harsh, and lacking regard for others, when their body breaks up they set course for hell.

But the kinds of wives here called mother, sister, comrade, and bondservant; steadfast in their own morality, restrained for a long time, when their body breaks up they set course for a good place.

Sujātā, these are the seven kinds of wife that a man can have. Which one of these are you?”

“Sir, from this day forth may the Buddha remember me as a wife like a bondservant.”