# AN 3.62 — Bhaya Sutta (Terrifying Danger)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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## Text

62. Bhaya Sutta (Terrifying Danger) Bhikkhus, the common, ordinary, untrained and undisciplined person (puthujjana) says that there are three terrifying dangers, which are indifferent to and unaffected by the bond between a mother and a child. Thus, these terrors come to separate the mother from her beloved son, and the son from his mother, where neither could find the other.

Now, what are these three?

a. Bhikkhus, there comes a time, when a great fire arises, threatening the lives of sentient beings, as it burns and blazes mercilessly through villages, cities, and towns. Now, as it ravages on while burning through villages, cities, and towns, the mother does not find her son, and the son does not find his mother.

Therefore, the puthujjana calls this the first terrifying danger, as a result of which mother and son become separated, losing each other.

b. Next, Bhikkhus, there is a time when a great storm arises, bringing mighty torrential rains to villages, cities, and towns. When villages, cities, and towns become flooded and submerged in that chaos, the mother does not find her son, and the son loses sight of his mother.

This, the puthujjana calls the second terrifying danger, as a result of which mother and son become separated, losing each other.

c. Further, Bhikkhus, there is a time when the marauding tribes mount their chariots as they assault and invade the land, threatening the lives of the natives, pillaging villages, cities, and towns, where citizens flee in all directions. In such chaos, the mother does not find her son, and the son does not find his mother.

The puthujjana calls this the third terrifying danger, as a result of which mother and son become separated, losing each other.

These, therefore, Bhikkhus, the common, ordinary, untrained, and undisciplined person calls the three terrifying dangers that do not recognize the bond between a mother and a child. Thus, these terrors come to separate the mother from her beloved son, where neither could find the other.

In contrast, Bhikkhus, the common, ordinary, untrained and undisciplined person (puthujjana) also knows of three terrifying dangers, wherein having been separated, mother and son reunite by finding each other.

And what are these three?

aa. Here, Bhikkhus, there comes a time, when a great fire arises, threatening the lives of sentient beings, as it burns and blazes mercilessly through villages, cities, and towns. Now, as it ravages on burning through villages, cities, and towns, the mother finds her son, and the son finds his mother.

Therefore, the puthujjana calls this the first terrifying danger, whereby having been separated due to the fire, later however, the mother finds her son, and the son finds his mother.

bb. Next, Bhikkhus, there is a time when a great storm arises, bringing mighty torrential rains to villages, cities, and towns. Although they had been separated as the villages, cities, and towns became flooded and submerged in that chaos, later, the mother does find her son, and the son finds his mother.

This, the puthujjana calls the second terrifying danger, wherein the mother finds her son, and the son finds his mother.

cc. And, Bhikkhus, there may come a time, when the marauding tribes mount their chariots as they assault and invade the land, threatening the lives of the natives, pillaging villages, cities, and towns, where citizens flee in all directions, and in such chaos, both mother and her son get separated. But later, the mother does find her son, and the son also finds his mother.

The puthujjana calls this the third terrifying danger, as a result of which the mother finds her son, and the son finds his mother.

Thus, Bhikkhus, the common, ordinary, untrained, and undisciplined person (puthujjana) calls these three terrifying dangers, wherein having been separated, mother and son reunite by finding each other.

However, Bhikkhus, there are these three other terrors, which truly separate the mother from her son, and the son from his mother; terrors which are indifferent to and unaffected by the bond between a mother and a child.

And what are these three?

They are the terrifying facts of getting old; falling sick; and dying.

1. Thus Bhikkhus, while the son is getting old, no matter how she might try to protect him from ageing, that loving mother cannot save her son from aging, by saying:

“Please, let me get old, instead of my son! May my son not get old.”

And similarly, while the mother is getting old, the son cannot save her from ageing, by saying:

“Please, let me get old, in my mother’s stead! May my mother not get old.”

2. Also, Bhikkhus, while the son has fallen sick, no matter how she might try to protect him from sickness, that loving mother cannot save her son from falling sick, by saying:

“Please, let me get sick, instead of my son! May my son not get sick nor be afflicted with anything.”

Similarly, when the mother has fallen sick, the son cannot save her from illness, by saying:

“Please, let me get sick, instead of my mother! May my mother not get sick.”

3. And, Bhikkhus, when the son is dying, no matter how much she might try to protect him from death, that loving mother cannot save her son from dying, by saying:

“Please, let me die, instead of my son! May my son not die.”

Similarly, when the mother is dying, no matter how much he tries, the son cannot save her from dying, by saying:

“Please, let me die instead of my mother! May my mother not die.”

Bhikkhus, these are the three other terrors, which truly separate the mother from her son, and the son from his mother; terrors which are indifferent to and unaffected by the bond between a loving mother and her child.

However, Bhikkhus, there is a Path and a method to dispel and overcome the terrors that separate a loving mother from her son; terrors which are indifferent to and unaffected by the bond between a mother and her child.

And what, Bhikkhus, is the Path, that very method to dispel and overcome these terrors?

Bhikkhus, it is this same Noble Eightfold Path.

That is: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Lifestyle, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Collectedness of Mind.

Bhikkhus, this is The Path and method to dispel and overcome the terrors that separate a loving mother from her son; terrors which are indifferent to and unaffected by the bond between a mother and her child.