

Kosala Sutta

“In Kosala”

(“The Removal of the Arrow of Grief”)

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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At one time, The Blessed One was living at the monastery offered by Anāthapindika in Jeta’s Park, in the city of Sāvatti. Then, King Pasenadi of Kosala approached The Blessed One, and after paying his respects at the feet of The Teacher, he sat to one side.

This was the very day, that Queen Mallika had just passed away. Then, someone from the court came rushing in as he approached King Pasenadi of Kosala, and whispered to his ear:

“O, Great King! Queen Mallika...has died!”

On hearing this, King Pasenadi suddenly became overwhelmed with sadness; stricken with grief, his head drooped and became distraught, as he sat speechless with slumped shoulders.

The Blessed One, seeing and understanding the situation, and the sudden grief overtaking King Pasenadi of Kosala, said this to him:

“Great King, there are these five things that are impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā. What are these five?

a. “That someone who is subject to old age may become the exception by not growing old, this is impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā.

b. “That someone who is subject to illness may become the exception by not getting sick, this is impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā.

c. “That someone who is subject to death may become the exception by not dying, this is impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā.

d. “That someone who is subject to destruction may become the exception by not being destroyed, this is impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā.

e. “That someone who is subject to fading away into oblivion may become the exception by not fading away, this is impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā.

1a. “Here, Great King, the unlearned ordinary person, while experiencing old age, does *not* reflect:

*‘Old age is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, and was reborn.’*

“Instead, he feels himself to be singled out as he faces old age, and as a result, starts considering:

‘Now, I sit here grieving, as I worry, lament, and beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself getting old, then, as a result, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice on seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will increasingly become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of old age, he worries, laments, beating his chest, and becomes confused.

“Great King, this is the case of an unlearned ordinary person being shot with the poisoned arrow of grief, where he burns in his own anguish, by himself.

1b. “Further, Great King, the unlearned ordinary person, while experiencing illness, does *not* reflect:

*‘Getting sick is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has gotten sick, grown old, died, and was reborn.’*

“Instead, he feels himself to be singled out as he gets sick, and as a result, starts considering:

‘Now, I sit here grieving, as I worry, lament, and beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself getting sick, then, as a result, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice on seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will increasingly become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of illness, he worries, laments, beating his chest, and becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of an unlearned ordinary person being shot with the poisoned arrow of grief, where he burns in his own anguish, by himself.

1c. “Further, Great King, the unlearned ordinary person, while experiencing death, does *not* reflect:

*‘Dying is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, and was reborn.’*

“Instead, he feels himself to be singled out as he is nearing death, and as a result, starts considering:

‘Now, I sit here grieving, as I worry, lament, and beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself dying, then, as a result, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice on seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will increasingly become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of death, he worries, laments, beating his chest, and becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of an unlearned ordinary person being shot with the poisoned arrow of grief, where he burns in his own anguish, by himself.

1d. “Further, Great King, the unlearned ordinary person, while experiencing destruction, does *not* reflect:

*‘Being destroyed is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, been destroyed, and was reborn.’*

“Instead, he feels himself to be singled out as he faces destruction, and as a result, starts considering:

‘Now, I sit here grieving, as I worry, lament, and beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself about to be destroyed, then, as a result, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice on seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will increasingly become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of destruction, he worries, laments, beating his chest, and becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of an unlearned ordinary person being shot with the poisoned arrow of grief, where he burns in his own anguish, by himself.

1e. “Further, Great King, the unlearned ordinary person, while experiencing fading away, does not reflect:

*‘Fading away into oblivion is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, faded away into oblivion, and was reborn.’*

“Instead, he feels himself to be singled out as he faces fading away, and as a result, starts considering:

‘Now, I sit here grieving, as I worry, lament, and beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself about to fade away into oblivion, then, as a result, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice on seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will increasingly become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of fading away, he worries, laments, beating his chest, and becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of an unlearned ordinary person being shot with the poisoned arrow of grief, where he burns in his own anguish, by himself.

2a. “Meanwhile, Great King, the learned Noble Disciple, while experiencing old age, reflects thus:

*‘Old age is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, and was reborn.’*

“And by not feeling himself to be singled out as he faces old age, he starts considering:

‘Now, if I grieve, worry, lament, beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself getting old, then, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of old age, he neither worries nor laments; he does not beat his chest nor becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of a learned Noble Disciple who has pulled out the poisoned arrow of grief with which the unlearned ordinary person torments himself. By remaining sorrowless, unagitated, and without any arrows, in this way, the learned Noble Disciple attains Nibbāna.

2b. “Further, Great King, the learned Noble Disciple, while experiencing illness, reflects thus:

*‘Getting sick is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has gotten sick, grown old, died, and was reborn.’*

“And by not feeling himself to be singled out as he faces illness, he starts considering:

‘Now, if I grieve, worry, lament, beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself getting sick, then, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of illness, he neither worries nor laments; he does not beat his chest nor becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of a learned Noble Disciple who has pulled out the poisoned arrow of illness with which the unlearned ordinary person torments himself. By remaining sorrowless, unagitated, and without any arrows, in this way, the learned Noble Disciple attains Nibbāna.

2c. “Further, Great King, the learned Noble Disciple, while experiencing death, reflects thus:

*‘Dying is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, and was reborn.’*

“And by not feeling himself to be singled out as he faces death, he starts considering:

‘Now, if I grieve, worry, lament, beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself dying, then, I won’t even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won’t even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will become worried and sad.’

“Thus, when facing the reality of death, he neither worries nor laments; he does not beat his chest nor becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of a learned Noble Disciple who has pulled out the poisoned arrow of death with which the unlearned ordinary person torments himself. By remaining sorrowless, unagitated, and without any arrows, in this way, the learned Noble Disciple attains Nibbāna.

2d. “Further, Great King, the learned Noble Disciple, while experiencing destruction, reflects thus:

*‘Being destroyed is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, been destroyed, and was reborn.’*

“And by not feeling himself to be singled out as he faces destruction, he starts considering:

'Now, if I grieve, worry, lament, beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself about to be destroyed, then, I won't even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won't even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will become worried and sad.'

“Thus, when facing the reality of destruction, he neither worries nor laments; he does not beat his chest nor becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of a learned Noble Disciple who has pulled out the poisoned arrow of destruction with which the unlearned ordinary person torments himself. By remaining sorrowless, unagitated, and without any arrows, in this way, the learned Noble Disciple attains Nibbāna.

2e. “Further, Great King, the learned Noble Disciple, while experiencing fading away, reflects thus:

*'Fading away is **not** just unique to me, it is common to all beings who sooner or later experience it; everyone who has come and gone, has grown old, died, faded away into oblivion, and was reborn.'*

“And by not feeling himself to be singled out as he faces fading away, he starts considering:

'Now, if I grieve, worry, lament, beat my chest and become confused on seeing myself about to fade away into oblivion, then, I won't even be able to enjoy food, I will become emaciated and ugly to behold. In such a condition, I won't even be able to do much work, and my enemies will rejoice seeing me in that state, while my loved ones will become worried and sad.'

“Thus, when facing the reality of fading away, he neither worries nor laments; he does not beat his chest nor becomes confused. Great King, this is the case of a learned Noble Disciple who has pulled out the poisoned arrow of fading away with which the unlearned ordinary person torments himself. By remaining sorrowless, unagitated, and without any arrows, in this way, the learned Noble Disciple attains Nibbāna.

“Therefore, Great King, these are the five things that are impossible to obtain by anyone in the world, whether one is a recluse, a brahmin, a Deva, Māra or even Brahmā.

*'Grieving and lamenting never bore any fruits, as they are of no use,
Except for causing one's own enemies become pleased in seeing it take place.*

*But, for those who are wise, seeing things as they really are,
They stand sorrowless and unagitated in the face of adversities.*

*As they look for what is useful and helpful, given their situation,
Which only cause disarray for their enemies, who become confused and sad
Seeing the unassailable expression of their face, unfazed.*

*By thinking and reciting the good words handed down,
Whatever method one uses, whether chanting, reciting, or making offerings,
If it is useful, then keep it up, exerting yourself in that way.*

*But, when facing a situation where what you wish for is impossible to obtain,
Then endure it, without grieving, as you continue doing meritorious deeds,
Keeping your precepts and purifying the heart,
For there is nothing else you can do.'*

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