SN 15.3 — SN 15:3 Tears | Assu Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Tears

Assu Sutta (SN 15:3)

Near Sāvatthī. There the Blessed One said: “From an inconceivable beginning comes the wandering-on. A beginning point is not discernible, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. What do you think, monks? Which is greater, the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—or the water in the four great oceans?”

“As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Blessed One, this is the greater: the tears we have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying &

weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—not the water in the four great oceans."

"Excellent, monks. Excellent. It is excellent that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me.

"This is the greater: the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—not the water in the four great oceans.

"Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother. The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

"Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father... the death of a brother... the death of a sister... the death of a son... the death of a daughter... loss with regard to relatives... loss with regard to wealth... loss with regard to disease. The tears you have shed over loss with regard to disease while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time—crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing—are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

"Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries—enough to become disenchanted with all fabricated things, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 56:35—36; AN 3:63; AN 10:61; Iti 24