CHAPTER IV
TWO GREAT ASPECTS OF WOMEN IN BUDDHISM

Introduction

In this chapter we will trace the figures of two greatest women presenting in Buddhism. According to Buddhist point of view they are very important in the house as well as in the society. Due to their skillful guiding and good manners the new generations, both son and daughter will become good and valuable persons. The more the numbers of the good sons and daughters are given birth in the society, the more the development of society in future because actually they are the forerunners of the future society. Thus her virtues, behaviors and characters are directly proportional to the future world that we should face and challenge for our new generations.

The Buddha emphasized that two categories of women, who were molested and relegated to a corner during his present days, were restored to their due position by the Buddha. By doing so, the Buddha contributed immensely to create a new social awareness regarding the position of women.

The Buddha had also discussed in greater detail the abilities, virtues, intelligence and qualifications of women as well as their social utility. They are both descriptive and analytical when we look carefully at his entire teaching known as Dhamma.
One of these two categories of women was the wife, bhariyā and the other was the mother, mātā. In the natural sense, she was regarded as only one person for she becomes the mother after she gave birth to the children.

4:1 Buddhists attitude toward The Daughter

In the pre-Buddhist days the status of women in India, which was the place of many religious teachers of diverse faiths, was low and without honor. This point was agreed many religions that have different faiths harmoniously. Accordingly it is, in those days, believed that a daughter was nothing but a source of anxiety to her parents because it was a disgrace to them.

Besides, it is believed in those days that marriage is essential. And even though if the parents could be marry they were often nearly ruined by their lavish expenditure on the wedding festivities. After being married if she give birth to a daughter she was powerless to participate in her father funeral rites for she had not already been insured by the birth of son. Hence the birth of the daughter dissatisfied her parents.

The Buddha appeared to have supported the progressives in the incipient conflict against the predominance of the old views. He has given to King Pasenādi of Kosala on discovering that he was not pleased because his Buddhist Queen Mallikā had given birth to a daughter.270 In fact this point of view which is the ritualism of the Brāhmaṇas had been contributed to strengthen. The Brāhmaṇas thought that the son only could maintain the lineage and the generation of a family in those days.

270 S.N: III: 2: 6
The Buddha pointed out clearly that women had a dignified and an important part to play in society and he defined it with great insight, fitting her harmoniously into the social fabric. She is a lovable member of the household, held in place by numerous relationships and respected above all, as the mother of worthy sons. The Buddha argued that the sex did not matter and added that in character and in her role in society, she may even rival men. Then he said as follow:

“A women child, O lord of men, may prove even a better offspring than a male. For she may grow up wise and virtuous, her husband’s mother reverencing, true wife. The boy that she may bear may do great deeds, and rule great realms, yea, such a son of noble wife becomes his country’s guide.”

This is the only expression of the advanced view that a girl “may prove even a better offspring” than a boy. But it is not unusual to find scholars who have missed this singular virtue of Buddhism.

On the other hand, there is no other place where it was recorded the dissatisfaction for the birth of a daughter in the Pāli literature. In other word, there are no records of joy on the birth of daughter and there are no records of dismay as well. Moreover there is no literary evidence for supposing that boys were more welcome than a girl.

In one section, one does not consider the girls-population was preferred to boys. It was said of the courtesans that, if they had children at all they

---

271 Women under: 28
272 Kindred Sayings. 1.111
will bestow care on a daughter, but not a son for it is through a daughter that their line of business is maintained.²⁷³

Therefore, seeing this point, I.B.Horner assumed in her book named "Women under primitive Buddhism" as follow;

"with this exception the birth of sons or of daughters in whatever circumstances met with a reception unrelated to the sex of the child."²⁷⁴

It is also believed in the pre-Buddhist day that the daughters are inauspicious if they could not marry her. The usual course, in this context, was for the father, not mother to choose the girl’s husband and to give her in marriage.

According to Baudhayana, the author of Dharmasūtras, the father should do this before his daughter had reached the age of puberty²⁷⁵ but if he failed, she might, after having waited for his order for three years, "choose for her at the fourth year a husband of equal rank.²⁷⁶ In this regard the father governed the future of his daughter’s marriage life without independence.

Unfortunately it marked only a passing phase, for the old notions concerning women were too deeply embedded to be easily or completely eradicated, even by the efforts of one who commended such great and

²⁷³ Dhp.A: V: 21 & 23
²⁷⁴ Women under: 20-1
²⁷⁵ Baudhayana. iv: i: 11
²⁷⁶ Ibid: 11-2-4
wide-spread respect as did Gotama. By the time that the Milindapaññhā was written down, the insertion of such a phrase as this was permitted.\textsuperscript{277}

There are, O King, these ten sorts of individuals who are despised and contemned in the world, through shameful, looked down upon, held blameworthy, treated with contumely, in spite of love. And what are the ten? They are:

1) A woman without a husband,
2) a weak creature,
3) one without friends or relatives,
4) a glutton,
5) one dwelling in a disreputable family,
6) the friend of sinners,
7) he whose wealth has been dissipated,
8) he who has no character,
9) he who has no occupation and
10) he who has no means.

These evident were very later from the early Buddhist thought and it was not extreme criticized that the woman without husband, as above mentioned of Milindapaññhā, it also should not be observed the Buddhist attitude to the women without husband.

This point of view is strictly different to the view of the Buddha who focused the due suitable position of the daughter. Under Buddhism, with the greater independence attained by women, the father's responsibility for the selection of his daughter's husband lapsed to some extent and the

\textsuperscript{277} Mil: iv: 8:22
girls themselves came to have more voice in the matter. This is borne out by the case of the princess Kaṇhā who asked her mother to persuade her father to hold an assembly ‘to choose me a husband.’ In the translation of Jātaka stories, it is said of the translator that this was the ‘Svayamvara’ or ‘the public choice of a husband by a princess from a number of suitors assembled for purpose.’

This nominal freedom was much restricted by the strength of the family feeling and girls usually married in accordance with their parents’ wishes and seldom against them.

Here what the matter not neglected is not only the father but also the mother are concerned their daughter marriage life in Buddhism. It is here remembered that the duties of parents instructed by the Buddha in the Sigālovāda Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya that they arrange suitable marriage for them. The duties of the parents including the mother should be here stated as follow: the parents

1) should keep their children away from evil courses, Pāpa nivārenti,
2) should engage them in good and profitable activities, Kalyāne nivesenti,
3) should give them a good education, Sippam sikkhāpenti,
4) should marry them into good families, Patirūpena dārena samyojenti and
5) should hand over the property to them in due course, Samaye dāyajjam niyyādentī.

---

278 Jat: 536
Hence all parents obeyed this practice that they choose the partner of their children in order to be happy and valuable life of them in future. It is more understood here that the power of the mother, like father, rules over her daughter in Buddhism.

According to pre-Buddhist thought a woman’s plain duty was to become married. In the Vedic age, marriage was at a discount and not renunciation and it was the ideal recommended to society. It is believed that men could not become a spiritual whole, unless he was accompanied by his wife. This notion, in the one hand, was never entirely superseded in Buddhism. This idea of unmarried was a very valuable and practicable thing of a woman who aspirates her perfection under Buddhism.

In the Apadāna of Khuddaka Nikāya, those there were seven girls who practiced *Komārabrahmacariya*, a virtue living without marriage for the whole life time, during the time of the Buddha Padumuttara were as follow:

1) Samañī,
2) Samanaguttā,
3) Bhikkunī,
4) Bhikkhādāyakā,
5) Dhammā,
6) Sudhammā and
7) Samghadāyakā.

---

279 Astreya. Br: I. 2.5
Those above seven girls who were the daughter of King Kiki were interestingly became the famous and popular women during the time of our Buddha Gotama. It is uttered the Nun Khemā in the following verse:

"Ahaṁ Uppalavaṇṇā ca, Paṭācārā ca Kuṇḍala,
Kīsāgotamī Dhammadinnā, Visākhā hotī Sattami.”²⁸⁰

These seven girls, who were the daughters of King Kiki, Samaṇī, Samaṇaguttā, Bhikkhunī, Bhikkadāyakā, Dhammā, Sudhammā and Saṁghadāyakā became Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Paṭācārā, Kuṇḍalakesā, Kīsāgotamī, Dhammadinnā and Visākhā respectively during the time of the Buddha Gotama.

Here one can philosophize that a woman no longer felt bound to marry to save her self-respect and that of her family. It is however found that she could honorably remain unmarried without running the gauntlet of public scorn. That a single life, unmarried life was a wasted life, or a life open to scoffs and sneers, became to a great extent an anachronism. So, one can consider that such life of a woman is a secure life in Buddhism.

Those there are, according to Buddhism, women who are always protected in tenfold ways are; a woman is protected:

1) by her mother, māturakkhitā
2) by her father, piturakkhitā
3) by her parents, mātāpurakkhitā
4) by her brother, bhāturakkhitā
5) by her sister, bhaginārakkhitā
6) by her clan, nātīrakkhitā

²⁸⁰ Apa: v: 435
7) by the Dhamma, *dhammarakkhitā*
8) one adorned with a string of garlands, *mālāgulhaparikkhittā*
9) one the use of whom renders a person liable to punishment, *Saparidāntā* and
10) by her husband, *Sasānikā.*

Among these ten, the eight, the ninth and the tenth are of husband. In other word these three women are protected by their husband. And the other seven are without husband. Furthermore, the first seven are apparently means to be without a husband they are applicable equally to widows and to unmarried women. All of them have suitable protections. According to Buddhist faith the life of all women are in security and welfare in the community of the society by giving various protections.

This is the keystone of the arch of Buddhist ethics. The ideal is that a man should so tame his own mind that, with reference to chastity, he should have the mother-mind, the sister-mind and the daughter-mind toward all women who were not his wife, regarding them as his mothers, sisters or daughters according to their age. Thus the life of the women getting various protections is of peace and happy comfortable life.

Adultery is spoken of as one of the four vices of conduct which bring a man to ruin; either because a man, innocent, but in suspicious circumstances, may have the sins of the adulterer fathered upon him, as the Commentary pointed out; or because he actually “goes to women dear

---

*S.N: 35: iii. 3: 127
Dialogues: iii. 184*
as life to other men." In the saying attributed to the Buddha, it is fitted into its place among the other heinous crimes, the avoidance of which constitutes Buddhist morality in its most fundamental and far-reaching aspects:

"Slaughter of life, theft, lying, adultery -
To these no word of praise the wise award."

Such strong opinions as these, expressed in the Vinaya of the Houseman, Gihivinaya, must be given their due worth in estimating the Buddha's views of chastity, and must not be neglected as if they expressed a mere passing fancy. There was the basis on which Buddhist morality was raised, and are constantly stressed everywhere in the Suttas such as in the Sigālovāda Sutta. This is only Sutta exclusively concerned with the relations of the householder to those about him, and hence all that has been preserved in it no doubt approximates closely to the real view of the Buddha.

Two other Suttas deal partially with the duties of the layman, and, in the Dhammika Sutta of Suttanipāta of Khuddaka Nikāya, the Buddha speaks openly to Dhammika, one of his followers at the Jetavana, about the householder's life. His censure is severe and plain:

"Let the wise man avoid an unchaste life as a burning heap of coals; not being able to live a life of chastity, let him not transgress with another man's wife."

---

283 Ibid
284 Ibid. 182 & A.N. II. 71
285 M.N. I. 286 & Dialogue: iii. 7
286 Sn: 395
A little later the five precepts, *Pañcasīla*, are repeated although they were all framed in the negative and they were none the less binding. The Buddha said “Let us abstain from adultery”\(^{287}\) might equally well have run “Let us be faithful.”

It was said that “Purity in works is to abstain from adultery.”\(^{288}\) While the highest blessing was “Penance and chastity, one can attain the discernment of the Noble Truths and the realization of Nibbāna.”\(^{289}\) But “the intercourse with another’s wife, who have such protections, is *āmagandha*, means what defiles one,\(^{290}\) or small of the raw.

Therefore it should be said that it brings the offender after the body’s dissolution and a state of woe and misery or to purgatory; but he who refrains will pass to a happy state or to heaven.\(^{291}\)

According to the Buddhists point of view, the life of the daughter who is always protected by each of the seven social groups is safe and her life is harmony without look down upon her because she has the virtues that can promote her life here and here after.

### 4:2 Buddhists attitude toward The Wife

The position of the wife in Buddhism is unique and her position was promoted by the Buddha unheard before. In the pre-Buddhist day the only

---

\(^{287}\) Dialogue: iii. 74

\(^{288}\) A.N: 1.271

\(^{289}\) Sn: 267

\(^{290}\) Ibid: 242

\(^{291}\) M.N: i. 313
her duty was obedience to the husband alone and to do so what she hope was to exalt in heaven.²⁹²

This hostile attitude to woman both in religion and in society was repeatedly criticized and challenged by the Buddha on numerous occasions. In the Sigālovāda Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya the Buddha instructed the duties of the wife, ministered to by her husband and loves him in the following five ways:

1) by doing her duties well, Susamvihitakammantā,
2) by hospitality to the attendants, etc., Saṅghitaparijanā,
3) by her fidelity, Anaticārīni,
4) by looking after his earnings, Sambhataṅca anurakkhati, and
5) by skill and industry in all her business dealings, Dākkhā ca hoti analasā sabbakiccesu.

On the other hand, a wife, too, should be ministered to by her husband in five ways:

1) by respecting her, sammanāya,
2) by his courtesy, anavamānāya,
3) by being faithful to her, anaticariyāya,
4) by handing over authority to her, issariyāvossagena,
5) by providing to her with adornment e.g. jewellery..., alarikāranupadanena.

By seeing the relation between the wife and the husband what we should considered is that they have the same number of duties instructed by the Buddha who did not give to any favour, chance and opportunity to them.

²⁹² Manu. V: 153
Hence it can be considered again that the husband and the wife living together in home are equal in Buddhism.

This advice, given over twenty five centuries ago, still stands good till today. Over the centuries, male dominated societies have perpetuated the myth that men are superior to women but the Buddha made a remarkable change and uplifted the status of woman by a simple suggestion that a husband should honor and respect his wife. Such a remark may be common today, but when it is considered that it was made in India 2500 years ago.

The provision of befitting ornaments to the wife should be symbolic of the husband's love, care and appreciation showered on her. This symbolic practice has been carried out from time immemorial in Buddhist communities.

The fact that the Buddha did not forget to state even such a thing as the gifts a husband should make to his wife shows how understanding and sympathetic were his humane feelings towards ordinary human emotions. Love between husband and wife is considered almost religious or sacred. It is called 'the sacred family life,' Sadāra-Brāhmaṇacariya. Here the significance of the term 'Brāhma' should be criticized as a highest respect that is given to this relationship. Wives and husbands should be faithful, respectful and devoted to each other. And they have certain duties toward each other.

The Buddhist attitude towards the happy family life based on the due duties that the member of the family could be performed. The children
too would be fulfilled their duties in their turns. According to Buddhist thought, a child should minister to his mother in five ways:

1) once I was supported by them, now I will be their support, 
   *bato nesaṁ (bhahūsu) barissāmi*,

2) I will perform those duties they have to perform, *kicci nesaṁ karissāmi*,

3) I will maintain the lineage and tradition of my family, 
   *kulavamsaṁ thapessāmi*,

4) I will look after my inheritance, *dāyajjaṁ patipajjāmi* and

5) I will give alms (perform religious rites) on behalf of them when they are dead, *etānaṁ kālaṅkatanaṁ dakkhinaṁ anuppadassāmi*.

Then the Buddha announced that in the noble discipline of his teaching, *ariyassa vinaye*, mother is the eastern quarter sacred in the early Indian thought. This story was seen in the Sigālovāda Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya. A young Brahmin, named Sigāla, used to worship the six cardinal points of heavens; east, south, west, north, nadir and zenith; in obeying and observing the last advice given him by his dying father. Having seeing this Brahmin the Buddha declared the six directions were:

1) east is parents,
2) south is teacher,
3) west is wife and children,
4) north is friend, relatives and neighbors,
5) nadir is servants, workers and employees and
6) zenith is religious persons.
In this discourse the word worship, namasseya is very significant because one worships something sacred, something worthy of honor and respect. The mother is treated in Buddhism as sacred, worthy of respect and worship. Therefore the Buddha said: “the wife is the western direction of the family.”

Here one should be asked that how is one to ‘worship’ them. The Buddha says that one could ‘worship’ them only by performing one’s duties towards them. The duties one practiced in one turn are essential in the life of the happy family according to Buddhist thought.

In the Anguttara Nikāya, it is the Buddha said that the wife who protects five precepts, pañcasīla is an angle. Those are:

1) abstinence from destruction of life, pāṇātipātā veramani,
2) abstinence from taking what is not given, adinnādānā veramani,
3) abstinence from unchastity, kāmesu micchācārā veramani,
4) abstinence from speaking falsely, musāvādā veramani,
5) abstinence from the drinking intoxicating, surāmeraya majjapamādaṭṭhānā veramani.

The aforesaid statement is further identified in the Saṃyutta Nikāya to the Visākhā who was the great patroness of the Buddha. The following are also given as virtues by means of which she can make her life fruitful, both here and hereafter:

1) religious devotion, Saddho,
2) sense of shame, Hirimā,
3) sense of fear, Ottappī,
4) not given to anger, \textit{Akkodhano anupanāhī},
5) not jealous, \textit{Anissukī},
6) not niggardly, \textit{Amaccharī},
7) chaste in behaviour, \textit{Anaticārī},
8) virtuous, \textit{Silavā},
9) learned, \textit{Bahussuto},
10) zealous, \textit{Araddhaviriyo},
11) mentally alert, \textit{Upatthassatī} and
12) wise, \textit{Paññavā}.\footnote{294}

The virtues referred to in the \textit{Aṅguttara Nikāya} are household duties of a woman as wife which lead to domestic peace and concord. They are also calculated to keep the family administration in gear and secure for the family economic stability. This significant part which she is called upon to play is meticulously defined and it reveals neither indifference to nor contempt of women on the part of the Buddha.

Moreover, it is mentioned in the \textit{Aṅguttara Nikāya} that the wife who engages in ten meritorious deeds is an angle.\footnote{295} These are:

1) generosity, \textit{dāna},
2) morality, \textit{sīla},
3) meditation, \textit{bhāvanā},
4) reverence, \textit{apacāyana},
5) service, \textit{veyyāvaccā},
6) transference of merit, \textit{pattidāna},
7) rejoicing in others’ merit, \textit{pattānumodana},

\footnote{294}{S.N: 243-244}
\footnote{295}{A.N: IV: 269}
\footnote{296}{Ibid: II: 57-59}
8) hearing the doctrine, *dhammassavana*,
9) teaching the doctrine, *dhammadesanā* and
10) straightening one’s views, *ditthijukamma*.

In a conversation with Gotama, the Deva is represented as saying: best among wives is the maiden nobly-bred²⁹⁷ to which Gotama is made to reply “best among wives is she that best ministers.”

A woman has the potential to perform her duties as a wife by being one of the following seven:

1) wife as a murder, *vadhakabhariyā*,
2) wife as a thief, *crabhariyā*,
3) wife as a brother, *āyyabhariyā*,
4) wife as a mother, *māṭubhariyā*,
5) wife as a sister, *bhaginibhariyā*,
6) wife as a friend *sakhibhariyā* and
7) wife as a servant. *dāsibhariyā*.

These quotations reveal the Buddha’s enthusiasm to entrust the responsibility of creating a disciplined society by reorganizing the family through the mother and wife who represent the functional and active manifestations of womanhood. Early Buddhism recognizes the prime importance of the woman as a positive entity through which social welfare can be firmly established in any society.

It is worth noting here that the Buddha accepts the reality and significance of the institution of marriage for women. But, unlike in

²⁹⁷ S.N: I. 2 & 4
Hindu society, it was not the only means for the social elevation of woman. In Hinduism, a woman is supposed to become a *Dvija*, a truly initiated member of the religion and society, only after her marriage.\(^{298}\)

The authority of wife is shared with her husband in the choice of careers for their children. It is seen that these thought of entering the Order they have to obtain the consent of both their parent in the Vinaya. When ceremony of Ordination, *upasampadā* was held one of the questions put to both male and female entrants was: “Have your parents given their consent?”\(^{299}\)

The very fact that the mother’s consent was demanded before her children were allowed to break with the household life reveals Gotama’s sympathy with her for her possible loss and also his fairness of mind no less than his willingness to fall in with any reasonable wishes. It is a proof also of the high esteem in which the mother was held. By endowing her with will-power and authority equal to that of her husband, by crediting her with views which merited deep consideration and by seeing in her a dignity rooted in her qualities of mind and not merely in her life as a child-bearer, a great psychological advance was made upon the customary notions: for until girls were married, they were no longer looked upon as property of their father only, but also of their mother. The girl herself was not much better off, for in the disposal of her life she had still to adhere to the wishes and decisions of these guardians and after she was married, to those of her husband; but the cult of the mother was ennobled by grafting on to it the cooperative power of the wife.

---

\(^{298}\) Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization. 284

\(^{299}\) Vin: III.54 & Vin: IV: X.17
It was not only when there was the prospect of virtually losing a child that parents intervened. Both the father and the mother are not infrequently represented as considering the future career of a child when it is expected to be not a monastic but a worldly one. For instance, Anāthapiṇḍika and his son Kāla were found in the Commentary on Dhammapada.

The unique devotion of a wife at a crisis in her own life and that of her husband is illustrated by the queen who is known as the mother of Ajātasattu. In this story what she did was in order to save not only her husband’s life from being starved to death in prison by their son but also to be a parricide crime of their son, Ajātasattu. She made copious use of the permission her son to grant her to visit his father in prison. And she was full of resource in smuggling in food to him in the golden bowl firstly and then in the flap of her gown. As the next time in her headdress then in her golden shoes until each of these devices were successively detected and stopped by the order of her son. Finally she bathed in scented water and smeared her body with honey for her husband, King Bimbisāra to lick. Nevertheless after this was discovered she was allowed to go to him only once again. Therefore there would be no more food for the King. On her last visit she told him that he had nourished his own enemy and craved for his forgiveness if there were any blame in her. The only blame which there could have been would have lain in her lack of determination to override the king’s wishes not to have the son killed at birth. She may have realized that she was not a dominating woman by nature and not a masterful dowager. She is not represented as pleading with her son for the life of his father, the man who she adored. And it may have been that her knowledge of her own limitations of character made her refrain from embarking on a task which in view of all the
circumstances, seen helpless from the outset. It is said that after Ajātassattu had murdered his father Bimbisāra the queen soon died of grief.200

In the Dhaniya Sutta of Suttanipāta it is light on the wife’s value which a husband attached to obedience in his wife. Dhaniya was a herdsman in this story and he is represented as congratulating himself on a number of circumstances which engender worldly security. Among them he counts it as a boon as follow;

"my wife is obedient, not wanton; ... for a long time she has been living together with me; she is winning, and I hear nothing wicked of her."301

He evidently appreciated his wife’s obedience, according to his outlook which was typical perhaps of the uncultured people of his day; this raised rather than lowered her in his estimation; so that she became included in surrender, a plea and a hope;

“Both my wife and I are obedient;
If we lead a holly life before Sugata,
We shall conquer birth and death,
And put an end to pain.”302

This was no selfishness in which no place could be found for the wife’s happiness. It might be argued that the obedience of the women led them in some cases to imitate their husbands and to believe blindly what they believed. In other words, the husbands assumed that their wives who

200 Da 1 136
201 Sn V 5
301 Ibid V 14
302 Ibid V 14
were part of them and belonging to them. It is also assumed that the husband would unhesitatingly do their bidding. On the one hand, though it might not entirely explain Dhaniya's specific mention of the blessings that were to fall to his wife in this Sutta Brahmān Pokkhārasāti accounted betaking himself with his sons and his wife and his people to Gotama, the Dhamma and the Order.303

In the matter of believing, in view of the fact that the Buddha is preached to have said that women are capable of gaining arahantship.304 It is only to be expected that cases will be recorded of men and their wives who were established in one or other of the four paths. For instance, it is said that the Teacher “perceived that the Brahmān Māgāndiya and his wife possessed the dispositions requisite for the attainment of the fruit of the Third Path” in which they were established at the conclusion of the discourse.305

The wife who combined the two qualities of chastity and devotion was looked upon as a jewel both under Brahmanism and under Buddhism. She was not often the exception. She was the actual and the ideal so matchless that she was only comparable to the faith. Its account is beautifully recorded in the Jātaka commentary that an almsman who threw up the homeless life for the life of a householder is said by the Buddha as follow:

“In bygone days he lost a jewel of a wife, just as now he has lost the jewel of the faith.”306

303 Dialog: I. p. 135
304 Vin: IV.X. 1:3
305 Dhp.A:V: 21&23
306 Jat.A: 32
Before the days of the Jātakas there was admiration for the wife and less insistence on her servility and unreliability. The inclusion of the friend-type of wife is an acknowledgment of her comradeship. There is a beautiful passage in the Decay Suttas, where, in answer to the question, “What, here below, is the comrade supreme?” The Buddha is represented as answering in the next verse: “The wife is here below the comrade supreme.” The commentary says that is one “to whom a secret may be told that can be told to no-one else.”

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya it is also recorded that the power to keep secrets is regarded as befitting in a wife. This definition, narrow but honorable, finds its corroboration, justification and amplification in the Sigālovada Sutta, the Homily for Laymen; and there can be no doubt that the Buddha recognized that the power of wife had to be reckoned with in the home, for there she was no mere cipher if she were possessed of the five powers:

1) the power of beauty,
2) the power of wealth,
3) the power of kin,
4) the power of sons and
5) the power of virtue.

It was said that she might dwell at home in confidence, overpowering her husband and continuing to get the better of him. Although wife was treated as a thing that could be sold in ancient tradition the power of wealth is of her in Buddhism. It is supported by the term _dampati_ in

---

307 S.N: I. 6
308 S.A: I. 88
309 A.N: I. 282
310 S.N: 38.3: 25-27
Sanskrit, *dampati* or *dampati* in Pāli. In culture circles, therefore, the wife was regarded as the co-owner of the family property along with her husband.

Apart from these, in the Aṅguttara Nikāya the power of anger is ascribed to her apart from the other. The husband, on the other hand, is said to continue to get the better of her by virtue of the power of authority alone against which her powers could not prevail. Doubtless this monk-talk contains a germ of truth and theoretically it would hold good. But practically many of the women appear to have acquired a position of command and to have made themselves queen in their own homes.

In the discourse of Blessings, Maṅgala Sutta of Suttanipāta of Khuddaka Nikāya, the Buddha preached that cherishing one's wife and children is the Highest Blessing, *puttadārassā sāgaho, etam maṅgalamuttamam*.314

4.3 Whether Buddhism accepts Monogamy or Polygamy?

According to Hindu belief, the institution of marriage was well established in the Rig-Veda. It is also thought that not only marriage was well established in this period but it was also regarded as a social and religious duty and necessity. This opinion was accepted by seeing one of Avesta's believe: obligations offered unto gods or ancestors by a maiden

311 Kaccāyana: Chap:IV., Both in Pāli mean wife and husband.
312 A.N: iv: 223
313 S.N: 37:3.28
314 Sn: ii. 4
or a bachelor are unacceptable to them. A Vedic passage also says that a person, who is unmarried, is unholy.

From the religious point of view, he remains incomplete and is not fully eligible to participate in sacraments. This continues to be the view of the society even now; the modern practice of keeping a betel nut by one's side in the absence of the wife or the older one of having her image to indicate her symbolical presence at the time of a sacrament both are due to the same belief.

Due to the dominant of these believes marriage was treated with the great pleasure in the society of the ancient time. It is to be here asked a counter question dealing with the number of wife that whether Buddhism accepts Monogamy or Polygamy?

When it is observed the whole Buddha’s teaching, called Pāli Nikāya, especially the concept of marriage accepted in Buddhism, it is focused to see the solace that Buddhism brought to woman by adhering to the principle of monogamy is quite remarkable.

The present day opinion is that monogamy is a discovery of the Western culture. However, about twenty five centuries ago the Buddha brought forward an institution of marriage where monogamy was the rule. What was generally accepted during the time of the Buddha is the system of

---

315 Ashi Yashta: c., X. 54
316 Titreya Br: II, 2, 2, 6
317 Women in Hindu: 31
polygamy.\textsuperscript{318} This point of view was confirmed and further identified by I.B. Hornor using the quotation as follow:

"...there was no hard-and-fast rule and no condemnation of polygamy. Public opinion on the subject was fluid and meted out neither praise nor blame. It was inured to the existence of polygamy as a customary right of kings and nobles and of anyone who could afford to support more than one wife."\textsuperscript{319}

In the Rig-Veda it is clearly proved by many passages that a Vedic Indian could have more than one wife. The king, according to Rig-Veda, regularly has four wives attributed to him. Those are:

1) the Mahisi,
2) the Parivrkti,
3) the Vavata and
4) the Palagali.”

Among them, according to Śatapatha Brahmaṇa, the Mahisi appears to be the chief wife, being the first one married. The Parivrkti, ‘the neglected,’ is explained by Weber and Pischel as one that has had no son. The Vavata is ‘the favorite,’ while the Palagali is, according to Weber, the last of the court officials. The evidence points to the wife first wedded alone being a wife in the fullest sense.\textsuperscript{320}

Although the Khasas are an ancient people mentioned in the Mahābhārata their exact status is not very clear from the epic. A typical Khasa family consists of a group of brothers as husbands with one, two or more wives

\textsuperscript{318} Reappraisal the position of Women: JACBO. Vol: I. 1
\textsuperscript{319} Women Under : 35
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid: Chap: III. Footnotes.
and children. Poor families cannot afford to have more than one wife whom the brothers share among themselves. But as the economic condition of the brothers improves more wives may be added. Likewise, when a substantial family falls on evil days and finds it hard to maintain a number of wives. The latter find it more convenient to leave the household and seek divorce on economic grounds.

The Manusmṛti on one occasion prescribes that a Brahmin can have three wives, a Kṣatriya two and a Vaisya and Śūdra one. However, on another occasion, the Manusmṛti recommends six wives for a Brahmin and four for Kṣatriya. On this occasion, monogamy is recognized as suitable to the Vaisyas and Śūdras only.

Confucius too accepts polygamy when he instructs the landlord to marry nine women including his chief wife. This shows that polygamy was the accepted norm not only in India but also in China during the time of the Buddha. It is not apparent that there was any limit to the number of wives that a man might have.

In the Buddhist literature it is found that the kings and the millionaires, who were contemporary of the Buddha, had more than one wife. King Pasenadī had at least five wives. Those are Mallikā, who was his chief queen, Vāsabha, Soma Ubbiri and Sakula. On the other hand, king Udena had Sāmāvatī as his chief consort, Vasuladattā as another queen-consort and Māganḍīya. Bimbisra’s queens are Khemā and the Vedeha princess, sometimes called Kosaladevī, who was the sister of Pasenadī and

---

321 Manus: III. 13
322 Ibid: III., 23
323 The Ethic : 155
Chellana. Abhirūpā Nandā’s mother was the chief wife of Khemaka of the noble Sakyan clan.

And the three brothers who were householders and evidently prosperous merchants, Cūḷa Kāla, Majjima Kāla and Mahā Kāla had respectively two, four and eight wives. Contemporary with these was the Brahmin who had ‘forty wives equal in rank’.\(^{324}\)

It is believed that not only in India but also in various parts of the Western world, polygamy was accepted as the rule of law from time immemorial. This was no doubt, a hurdle to various forms of freedom and development of skills of woman. There is explicit Canonical evidence to show that Buddhism challenged this trend in the name of the interest of womanhood.

Two sentences of the Sigalovadasutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, to which we paid our attention above, are of vital significance here. They are:

1) sāmikena bhariyā paccupaṭṭhātabbā, means the husband should ministered to his wife and
2) bhariyā sāmikaṃ anukampati, mean the wife ministers to her husband.

These two sentences highlight one husband and one wife relationship. The singular noun ‘bhariyā’ in the passive voice in the first sentence and in the active voice in the second confirms this.

The process of renunciation of the lay people is given in a stereotyped passage in the discourses where the phrase ‘puttabhariyāṃ pahāya’ is

\(^{324}\) Dialogues: II: 245
always found. The indication there is that they had to leave only one wife to become mendicant monks. In another stereotyped passage where household ethics and consumption of wealth are discussed, ‘puttadāraṇī’ is always given in singular. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya, it is recorded the term Sadārasantuttho, means being satisfied with one wife, as a commendable ethical practice on other occasions, in the Aṅguttara Nikāya.325

By pointing out the destitute nature of a householder who had four wives in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha seems to have conveyed the exemplary message of monogamy.326 On another occasion in the same Nikāya, Ugga’s decision to leave his four wives after his conversion to Buddhism is praised as a miracle.327

If Buddhism accepted the polygamy this situation would have been quite different. The Buddha declared that the symbol of the wife is her husband, bhatta paññānamitthi.328 Buddhist culture therefore accepts monogamy and women’s social status based on her husband. These further pinpoints the impropriety of the assumption that recognition of the wife in her husband’s name is alien and unacceptable to the Eastern culture since its root are in the west. What may be implied in the statement that the woman is noble among the commodities, itthi bhandanamuttamā, is that the most precious thing that a husband can have is his wife. It is possible only under the system of monogamy.

325 A.N: III. 347
326 Ibid: I. 187
327 Ibid: IV. 210&214
328 S.N: I. 42
In the Jātakas a curious story represents polygamy as the natural course to adopt in the following circumstances. Four suitors wooed the four daughters of certain Brahmin. One of the suitors was virtuous, one noble, one beautiful and one elderly. It seems as if it would have been a simple proposition for the Brahmin to have allotted one of his daughters to each of the suitors. But he only entertained the thought of selecting one suitor and presenting him with all four daughters. It is said that he told Gotama of his difficulty in choosing and far from being discouraged in this polygamous venture, he elicited from the teacher his own predilection for virtue.

There is evidence to show that polygamy was by no means always the practice, even among the wealthy at the same time. In the Samyutta Nikāya there was the Mahāsāla, magnate or millionaire, who had the four sons. All of his sons, whom he had divided his fortune, seen to have had only one wife each.\(^{329}\)

The less wealthy are sometimes spoken of as having a second wife. Four cases are mentioned in the Vinaya. Further light is thrown on the incidence of the practice by Kisa Gotami’s description of woman’s desire as follow:

"woeful when sharing homes with other wives," sapattikampi dukkham.

In the statement of Uppalavaṇṇā who found herself living in enmity with her own mother, ubho mātā ca dhītā ca mayām āsūṃ sapattiyo, the two of

\(^{329}\) S.N: VII. 2:4
them ‘bound to one man.’ In the Jātaka, the Nāga woman was well aware that her temper could not stand the strain of being a co-wife and refuse to be put into that position by warning her husband that ‘the anger of a co-wife is a serious thing.’

In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, it is mentioned that a woman might wish for one of the five conditions and of them, the following two main conditions are concerned in this regard. Those are:

1) born in proper family, *paṭirūpa,*
2) may I dwell at home without a rival another wife, *asapatti.*

Here the word ‘*sapatti*’ occurs in the sense of co-wife in the Rig-Veda also. And the hope of the wife is to dwell at home without co-wife and it is totally accepted the husband with the great attention to his only wife in order to peace and harmony in one family.

The compendium of Buddhist morality consists of five main precepts, *pañcasīla,* however, it should be discussed here in greater detail the Buddhist interpretation of third precept is monogamy. There is to be loyal to a single wife and not to have premarital sexual intercourse. The legal and practical value of this attempt of the Buddha, through which man’s harassment of woman can be minimized and her respect and protection can be established, was understood only very recently by many in most of the countries.

---

330 Thag: 1.14
331 Jat: 543
332 S.N: 37: iii. 3, 32
The Buddhist analysis of third precept is the rejection of leniency enjoyed by man in sexual affairs and advocacy of equal responsibility for both man and woman in chastity. The worldwide principle hitherto accepted has been that man’s attempts to satisfy his sex urge should be treated leniently. Chastity, restraint and patience have become a bulk of taboos imposed only on women. This was common to all societies at all times.

The Manusmṛti observes thus: although the husband is immoral, lustful in behavior and devoid of good qualities, the wife should wait on him always regarding him as a good. 333

Woman was liberated from this disaster by the Buddhist analysis of the third precept. There is no gender distinction in morality. Going to a man belonging to another woman is equally wrong as going to a woman belonging to another man. Buddhism does not impose sexual taboos on woman not applicable to man.

4:4 The reasons why the husband takes the second wife

We have to try here that the most usual reasons why the husband take the second wife in not only Pāli literature but the contemporary sources also. It in fact is an important field dealing with the study of the status of women. Therefore it should be argued that what the wife needs or what the husband commits in the family.

Firstly, the barrenness of the wife was the reason for taking a second wife. Because in Hindu tradition it is necessary for sons and it could not

333 Manu: 154
easily be uprooted as a public opinion that was hard to move. Hence this step continued to be regarded as justifiable. Moreover it is believed that ‘without children a family dies out.’ Therefore if a wife were barren her husband could either put her away as Bandula, the commander-in-chief of the army of Kusinărā attempted to do with Mallikā or he could procure another wife while retaining the first.

Secondly, both Dhammapada Commentary and Vinaya text suggested that a husband might take a second wife if his first wife came to him empty-handed. In this regard the story between Kana and her husband is clearly stated. While a laywoman, Kāṇā was at her mother’s house her husband sent a messenger to her three times to say that he desired her to return to him. The third time he sent by adding that if she did not came he would marry another wife. For this occasion her immediate departure was hindered by her mother who said that she would cook a cake so that her daughter might not go empty handed. For each time the cake was ready her departure was prevented by a stream of almsmen who poured into the house having pass on to one another the news that the laywoman was cooking cake and rice-cakes, pūva, and giving them to eat. In this way they accounted for every cake as it was fried and Kāṇā could not save one to take to her husband. She was indeed in a quandary. Her husband had sent her definite commends but her fear of not relieving the almsman’s wants and so of losing an opportunity of storing up merit for herself.

---

334 Dhp.A: V: 5
335 Ibid: II, 222
336 Ibid: I, 372
337 Vin: II, 106
It is to be supposed that since a husband usually took his bride home with him after the wedding Kāṇā had gone on a visit to her mother and was not being sent to her husband for the first time. This is corroborated by the Jātaka version which states that Kāṇā was married to a man of the same caste in another village and some errand or other made her go to see her mother.\textsuperscript{338}

The Dhammapada Commentary appears to interpret this story to mean that if her mother sent her daughter empty-handed to her husband, he might take to himself another wife. But no such precept as this is attributed to the Buddha either in the Vinaya or in any other part of the texts. Hence it appears as if this attempt to justify Kāṇā’s husband for marrying another wife was invented either as a new reason for allowing a man to do so. In other word she was disobedience to his commands because it does not stress her as a counter stroke to Brahmanism which, following Manu, allowed a man to marry another wife at once if his first wife were disobedient.

The very fact that the meaning could be called in question might be used as an argument to emphasize the acceptance of this practice as one of the features of the society of the day.

4:5 **Buddhists attitude toward The Mother**

In considering the position of the mother, a fundamental and striking aspect of all Indian thought is encountered and one which is not

\textsuperscript{338} J.A: 137
peculiarly Buddhist. Buddhism took up the cult for such it had been for ages, as it found it and did nothing to alter it.

In the story of Kisāgotamī of Therīgāthā she was called a nobody’s daughter when married and she was disdainfully treated by the neighbors until she bore a son and then they paid her honor. This constitutes a unique record in Buddhist literature of such a complete change of front from the attitude taken to the mere wife to that taken to the mother. It serves to show that Buddhism did not encourage the cult. But neither did it detract from it. There is so much evidence pointing to the greater respect commanded by women in very capacity that mother homage only appears to be less obvious and less prominent because it was merged in the improved position of women generally.

The mother cult may account for the many passages in early Indian literature including Sanskrit, Pāli and Jain. Laymen and laywomen are referred to these literature and the women are almost invariably mentioned first. In addition the Sanskrit word for parents is matapitri while the Pāli word for it is mātāpitara. These in fact are combinations of the words for mother and father in which ‘mother’ precedes ‘father’.

To illustrate the phrase ‘parents’ a few quotations gathered at random from those widely scattered throughout the Pāli literature. The Deva Ghaṭikāra, in the Saṃyutta Nikāya says: "My mother and father I maintained," mātāpettiḥbha ṛ asim.\textsuperscript{339} Whoso his mother and his father keep, mātāpettiḥbho\textsuperscript{340} is also mentioned in the same Nikāya again.

\textsuperscript{337} S.N: I. 5. 10
\textsuperscript{340} Ibid XI. 2.1
The mother's constant hope is nothing but the welfare of her children.\textsuperscript{341} In addition it is the increased warmth of her body conditionally generated at child-birth for our sake during the earliest phase of our life here that gave us infants the sense of safety and security. Thus we call the mother the friend in the home, \textit{mātā mittaṃ sake gare}.\textsuperscript{342} The Buddha pointed that the mother is the highest symbol of respect in the home. She is after the entire progenitor, the one who beget us. Biologically, she is the one who is nearest to us.

The Buddha also says that "parents are called Brāhmā, \textit{brāhmāti mātāpitaro}. The term 'Brāhmā' denotes the highest and most sacred conception in Indian thought and in it the Buddha includes parents. It in fact is the promotion of the position of mother by the Buddha. It is also note to here that the comparative of the mother and 'Brāhmā' recorded in the Canon.\textsuperscript{343}

So in good Buddhist families at the present time children literally 'worship' their parents every day, morning and evening. Moreover, they have to perform certain duties towards their parents according to 'the noble discipline,' \textit{ariyassa vinaye}. Hence the parents are sacred to their children in five ways:

1) they should look after their parents in their old age, \textit{bhato nesaṃ bahūsu bharissāmi},

2) should do whatever they have to do on their behalf, \textit{kiccaṃ nesaṃ kārissāmi},

\begin{footnotes}
\item[341] J: I. 14
\item[342] S.N: I. 32
\item[343] A.N: I. 131
\end{footnotes}
3) should maintain the honor of the family and continue the family tradition, *kulavamsaṃ thapessāmi*,

4) should protect the wealth earned by their parents, *dāyajjaṃ paṭipajjāmi*, and

5) perform their funeral rites after their death, *etānaṃ kālaṅkātānaṃ dakkhinam anupadassāmi*.\[^{344}\]

One of the reasons why the children observed the above five kinds of duties is due to the parents do much for their children; they support them, *āpādakā*, nourish them, *posakā* and show them this world, *maggassa dassetā*.\[^{345}\]

On one occasion the Buddha perached to the proud Brahmin as follows:

```
"To mother and to father shouldst thou show
Humility, to eldest brother too,
And fourthly to thy teacher."\[^{346}\]
```

The above mentioned verse is reported in the Samyutta Nikāya and it is perhaps a sign of the potency and immutability of the old-age idea that, of the four objects, mother, father, eldest brother and teacher, to whom humility should be shown. Here what we should emphasize is the mother is placed first.

In the Jātaka passage, it is testified that "A mother like sire should be with reverend honor crowned."\[^{347}\]

---

\[^{344}\] D.N: no. 31
\[^{345}\] A.N: I. 61
\[^{346}\] S.N: I. 179
\[^{347}\] J: 532
"Whoso his mother and his father keeps....
On such a one the three and thirty gods
Do verily confer the name: ‘God Man.’" 348

The Buddha pointed out that “Whoso being rich does not support mother and father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast. Whoso strikes or by words annoys mother, father, brother or sister and mother-in-law, let one know him as an outcast.” 349

The failure of a rich man to support his old parents is also said to be “the cause of loss to the losing man.” 350

Moreover, the mother showed us how to go, how to stand, how to speak, how to do, how to eat and so on. Therefore, according to her guiding, her children grow up physically and develop mentally as well. They can easily play in their world without other difficulties by getting the right of guiding of the mother. Hence their futures are bright and fortune. Thus she is the first teacher of us, Pubbācariya. 351

In addition, “she, by doing so, is the eastern direction of the family” said by the Buddha. 352

The mother in fact prays not only for the happiness of her children but also for the welfare of her children. 353

---

348 Dialog: III. 189
349 Sn: V. 123 & 124
350 Vin: IV. 286
351 A.N: I. 62
352 D.N: III. 189
353 Theri: 33
When her children face something suffering what the mother bravely do is that she protects her children at the risk of her life.\textsuperscript{354}

The values of the mother accepted by Buddhism are vividly seen in the case of the serious offences promulgated by the Buddha in the Vinaya Piṭaka. The Buddha confessed the deeds those are various serious offences, matricide, \textit{mātughātaka} and parricide, \textit{pituğhātaka} and he formulated the general rules to the effect that “no one who was guilty of matricide or of parricide should receive the Upasampada Ordination and such a one had received it, he should be expelled from the Order.”\textsuperscript{355}

In the Kausītaki Upanisad, matricide, \textit{matr-vadha}, is also mentioned as a very grave crime but as one that can be expiated by the knowledge of the truth.

It is said in the Milindapaññā that he who has slain his mother or his father will not attain to insight into the Dhamma.\textsuperscript{356}

Those there are five kinds of Weighty Kamma, \textit{garukamma}, according to Buddhism, are:

1) the creation of a schism in the Saṅgha, \textit{saṅghabhedaka},
2) the wounding of the Buddha, \textit{lohituppataka},
3) the murder of an Arahant, \textit{arahantaghātaka},
4) matricide, \textit{mātughātaka} and
5) patricide, \textit{pituğhātaka}.\textsuperscript{357}

\textsuperscript{354} SN: 149
\textsuperscript{355} MV: I. 64
\textsuperscript{356} Mil: IV: 8.53
\textsuperscript{357} A manual: 259
Of them, the matricide is, according to Buddhist Abhidhamma, considered as one of the 'Anantariya Kamma' because it definitely produces its effect in the subsequent life.\textsuperscript{358} If any person commits the matricide-crime his good Kamma would be obliterated by the powerful evil Kamma. His subsequent birth will be conditioned by the evil Kamma in spite of his having gained the Jhāna earlier. Devadatta, for instance, lost his psychic powers and was born in an evil state because he wounded the Buddha and caused a schism in the Saṅgha.

Thus the Buddha said "Monks, I declare that mother’s milk in my discipline is her blood itself, lohitāṅcetaṁ bhikkhave ariyassa vinaye yadidam mātuthaṅñaṁ.\textsuperscript{359} It is seen that mother's love is supreme that she uses to give even her blood by changing as the milk to her children.

4:6 The Love of Mother is more superior to The Father

In the stories of Dhammapada give this account that the mother’s love is more superior to that of father. The mother’s love of her children is frequently represented as more intense than the father’s.

In this regard the Dhammapada Commentary stated one story of one mother who steadfastly refused to forsake her son while the father cuts a lamentable figure that they are facing the great suffering called the hungry when they are going to. He urged his wife to desert the child, using the heartless argument. He said that “Wife, if we live we shall have another son.” But when she replied with decision “I could never cast

\textsuperscript{358} A manual; 259-260
\textsuperscript{359} M.N: 1333
away a living child, *putta,*” he waited until it was again his turn to carry their little son. He then surreptitiously left him under a bush and resumed the journey. When she discovered the ruse the mother was distracted; she cried, “Husband, do not kill me,” and smiting upon her breast and weeping she prevailed upon him to go back and retrieve their child. A picture of her baby crying in his fear and loneliness may have leapt to her mind.

Yet it was only the power of children residing in their tears, *ronnabala daraka,* which bound their mothers to them; there was something deeper and stronger impelling them to preserve their lives, not to be explained away by such a proverb as “a mother’s heart is tender.”

In the story of the mother of Aṅgulimāla, the robber, it is also stated that the dominating of mother’s love. While the father was content to remain passive and made no effect to prevent his son from committing acts of theft, or to protect him from arrest by the King’s force the mother could thought of such disasters. “I will bring my son and stop him” said mother in love took provisions and set out.

Mother’s love for daughters is mentioned in such distress as Ubbiri evinced when her daughter died, or as Sumedhā’s mother showed when her daughter proposed to enter on the religious life. It may justly be argued that this was due more to the fear of virtually losing a dear child than to the hope of seeing her daughter safely and properly married.

---

360 Dhp.A: on verses 21&23
361 M.A: II.325
362 Thig: V., 51-53
363 Ibid: V., 463
In the story of Soreyya who was unfortunately change the sex of him beautifully stated that the mother’s love is greater than the father’s. On one occasion, Soreyya accompanied by a friend and some attendants was going out in a luxurious carriage for a bath. At that moment, Thera Mahakaccayana was adjusting his robes outside the city, as he was going into the city of Soreyya for alms-food. The youth Soreyya, seeing the complexion of the Thera, thought, “How I wish the Thera were my wife or else that the complexions of my wife were like that of his.” As the wish arose in him, his sex changed and he became a woman. Very much ashamed he got down from the carriage and ran away, taking the road to Takkasila. His companions missing him, looked for him, but could not find him.

Soreyya as a woman offered her signet ring to some people going to Takkasila, to allow her to go along with them in their carriage. On arrival at Takkasila her companions told a young rich man of Takkasila about the lady who came along with them. A young rich man finding her to be vary beautiful and of a suitable age for him, married her. As the result of this marriage two sons were born; there were also two sons from the previous marriage of Soreyya as a man.

One day, a rich man’s son from the city of Soreyya came to Takkasila with five hundred carts. Lady-Soreyya recognizing him to be an old friend sent for him. The man from Soreyya city was surprised that he was invited because he did not know the lady who invited him. He told the lady-Soreyya that he did not know her and asked her whether she knew him. She answered that she knew him and also enquired after the health of her family and other people in Soreyya city. The man from Soreyya
city next told her about the rich man’s son who disappeared mysteriously while going out for a bath. Then the lady-Soreyya revealed her identity and narrated all that had happened about the wrongful thoughts towards the respected Thera.

Lady-Soreyya then respectfully asked pardon of Thera Mahākaccāyana. The Thera then said, “Get up, I forgive you.” As soon as these words were spoken, the woman was changed back to a man. Soreyya then pondered how within a single existence and with a single body he had undergone change of sex and how sons were born to him, etc. And feeling very weary and repulsive of all these things, he decided to leave the household life and joined the Order under the Thera.

After that, he was often asked, “Whom do you love more, the two sons you had as a man or the other two you had as a wife?” To them he would answer that his love for those born of the womb was greater.

This question is very important to the conclusion of the love of mother or father is more upon their children. As a father and mother as well Soreyya stood at the two sides and he can assume that question properly. Seeing his answer what we totally say is the love of mother is more than that of father.

This question was put to him so often, he felt very much annoyed and ashamed. So he stayed by himself and, with diligence, contemplated the decay and dissolution of the body. He soon attained Arahantship together with the analytical insight.
When the old question was next put to him he replied that he had no affection for any one in particular. Other Bhikkhus hearing him thought he must be telling a lie. When reported about Soreyya giving a different answer, the Buddha said as follows:

“My son is not telling lies, he is speaking the truth. His answer now is different because he has now realized Arahantship and so he has no more affection for anyone in particular. By his well-being which neither the father nor the mother can bestow on him.”

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

“Not a mother, nor a father, nor any other relative can do more for the well-being of one than a rightly-directed mind can.”

---

364 Dhp: V. 43