

Discourses to the Bereaved in the Four Pāli *Nikāyas**

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Abstract

Lamentation and separation from the beloved are counted among the universal sufferings of human existence. They are closely associated with “death” and “bereavement”, and happen to everyone in the world. However, bereavement may be more than a negative experience, and may possess positive implications. This article is a textual and comparative study of the discourses (*desanā*) taught to the bereaved in the six bereavement cases in the four Pāli *Nikāyas*. It analyzes and integrates the discourses given by the

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Buddha or others. Based on the context of the Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*megga*) in the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariya saccāni*), the processes of the bereavement and the similarities and differences among the discourses are analyzed, and the characteristics and patterns of them are identified. The teachings given to the bereaved on the path from grief to inner tranquility are the main concerns, and the common nine kinds of discourses include mentioning the truth, guiding reflection with questions and answers, and encouraging and dissuading. They are the key to helping the bereaved to heal from grief to peace. Actually, bereavement of the love gives an opportunity for the bereaved to transform themselves, and the assistance does not comprise giving mere comfort, empathy, support, and accompany, but emphasizes the proper understanding of impermanence and the causes of suffering, and also provides a practical way that leads beyond grief.

Keywords: Discourses, the Bereaved, the Buddha, the Pāli *Nikāyas*, the Four Noble Truths

1. Rationale and Background

As stated by the Buddha, death is one of the divine messengers (*devadūtā*) which reminds people to practice good conduct in bodily action, speech, and mind.¹ A “goodly thoroughbred man (*bhaddo purisajānīyo*)”², for example, is moved, penetrates and sees the supreme truth with wisdom after his own relative falls ill or dies.³ Actually, bereavement is a possible and adequate opportunity to face life and death for everyone. These incidents show the significance of bereavement in Buddhism and raise two major aspects of interest: What are the common discourses that the Buddha and the other helpers gave to the mournful bereaved in their bereavement period? What are the proper and useful discourses (*desanā*) can be applied and contemplated by the bereaved in their transition from grief to relief?

This essay is based on materials from early Buddhist literature, the four Pāli *Nikāyas*, which correspond to the four Chinese *Āgamas*. The legitimate approach to understanding the heart of early Buddhism is via discourses ascribed by the Buddha. The best resources that can be used to identify the process of transformation

¹ *Devadūta Sutta* (MN, vol. III, p.182).

² F. L. Woodward and E. M. Hare, trans., 1972-82, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, vol. II, p.118; see also AN, vol. II, p.113.

³ See AN, vol. II, pp.115-6.

from sorrow to serenity are the bereavement cases in these discourses, which clearly demonstrate the application of the Buddha's teaching in everyday life situations, including bereavement and death.

2. Sources and Cases

The primary sources for any research of early Buddhist teachings are the Pāli *Nikāyas* and the Chinese *Āgamas*, which are considered the earliest and the most original collections of discourses of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* and the Chinese *Tripitaka* respectively. The Pāli *Nikāyas* are preserved in the Theravāda school, or the Tāmraśāṭṭiya school. There are six bereavement cases in the Four *Nikāyas* which correspond to the four Chinese *Āgamas*.⁴ There are also some bereavement cases in the *Khuddaka Nikāya*,⁵ found only in the existing Pāli *Tipiṭaka*, but not included in this essay yet. Although corresponding texts are found in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* and the four Chinese *Āgamas*, only a few items in the Chinese *Tipiṭaka* are

⁴ The *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN) corresponds to the *Dīrghāgama* (DA); the *Majjhima Nikāya* (MN) corresponds to the *Madhyamāgama* (MA); the *Samyutta Nikāya* (SN) corresponds to the *Samyuktāgama* (SA); the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN) corresponds to the *Ekottarāgama* (EA).

⁵ In the *Udāna*, the *Theragāthā*, the *Therīgāthā*, and the *Jātaka*. Also see Shao-Yun Chen, 2005, “A Study of Bereavement Cases in the Pāli *Jātaka*”; 2021, “From Grief to Arahatsip: The Process of Women Who Lost Their Only Child in the *Therīgāthā*”.

close to the narrations in the Pāli *Khuddaka Nikāya*. However, the similar bereavement cases from the four Chinese *Āgamas* or other texts of the Chinese *Tipiṭaka* are also important and valuable, and they will be presented or commented upon in the footnotes.

The following table lists the textual information of the six bereavement cases to be investigated.

Table 1: Textual Information and Main Persons of the Bereavement Cases in the four Pāli *Nikāyas*⁶

Case abbr.	Titles and Main Persons	Main Sources
N1	<p>A householder lost his only son.</p> <p>B A brahmin householder in Sāvaththī.</p> <p>D The householder's only son.</p> <p>H1 The Buddha.</p> <p>H2 The gamblers.</p>	MN 87: <i>Piyajātika Sutta</i> ⁷

⁶ **B**=Bereaved: the bereaved person in the bereavement case; **D**=Deceased: the deceased in the bereavement case; **H**= Helper: the helper in the bereavement case; **H1**: the 1st helper in the bereavement case; **H2**: the 2nd helper.

⁷ Also in MA: T, vol. 1, no.26, pp.800c-802a; EA: T, vol. 2, no.125, pp.571b-572c; *Fo-shuo po-luo-men-zi-ming-zhong ai-nian-bu-li jing*《佛說婆羅門子命終愛念不離經》: T, vol. 1, no. 91, pp.915a-916a.

N2	King Pasenadi lost his grandmother. <input type="checkbox"/> Pasenadi, King of Kosala. <input type="checkbox"/> Pasenadi's grandmother. <input type="checkbox"/> The Buddha.	SN III.22: <i>Ayyakā Sutta</i> ⁸
N3	King Pasenadi lost his wife, Mallikā. <input type="checkbox"/> Pasenadi, King of Kosala. <input type="checkbox"/> Mallikā, Pasenadi's wife. <input type="checkbox"/> The Buddha.	AN V.48: <i>Alabbhanīya Sutta</i> AN V.49: <i>Kosala Sutta</i>
N4	King Muṇḍa lost his wife, Bhaddā. <input type="checkbox"/> Muṇḍa, King of Magadha <input type="checkbox"/> Bhaddā, Muṇḍa's wife <input type="checkbox"/> Piyaka, the treasurer of Magadha. <input type="checkbox"/> Thera Nārada.	AN V.50: <i>Nārada Sutta</i> ⁹
N5	Ānanda lost his friend, Sāriputta <input type="checkbox"/> Thera Ānanda, Sāriputta's	SN XLVII.13: <i>Cuṇḍa Sutta</i> SN XLVII.14: <i>Ceḷa Sutta</i> ¹⁰

⁸ Also in SA: T, vol. 2, no. 99, p. 335b-c; CSA: T, vol. 2, no. 100, pp. 392a-c; Fo-shuo bo-si-ni-wang tai-hou beng chen-tu-ben-shen jing 《佛說波斯匿王太后崩塵土塗身經》: T, vol. 2, no.122, pp.545a-546a; EA: T, vol. 2, no.125, p.638a-c.

⁹ Also in Sutta7 of Shan-Ju-Pin of EA (《增壹阿含·善聚品》第7經): T, vol. 2, no. 125, pp. 679a-680b. See Shao-Yun Chen, 2000, "A Preliminary Study on the Cases of Bereavement Counselling in AN.V. 50 *Nārada*". Actually, Sutta7 of Shan-Ju-Pin of EA and AN.V. 50 *Nārada* are corresponding suttas.

	friend [D] Thera Sāriputta [H] The Buddha	
N6	Ānanda lost his teacher, the Buddha [B] Thera Ānanda, Buddha's attendant [D]=[H] The Buddha	DN 16: <i>Mahāparinibbāna Sutta</i> ¹¹ (DN 17: <i>Mahāsudassana Sutta</i> , DN 18: <i>Janavasabha Sutta</i>)

The criteria for selecting the bereavement cases are mainly according to the bereaved people who took the leading roles, and the discourses given by the Buddha or others are verbal. Although these sad stories sometimes look similar, they are each meaningful with respect to bereavement in early Buddhist literature, as well as different discourses might be delivered by the helpers. Otherwise, in Case N5 and Case N6, there are actually several bereaved persons but only one deceased ([D]), but only the sorrowful and sad one is defined as the bereaved ([B]) here. However, how others faced death and walked through bereavement can be also mentioned in the content.

3. Theory and Methodology

¹⁰ Also in SA: T, vol. 2, no. 99, pp.176b-177b; EA: T, vol. 2, no. 125, pp.639a-642b.

¹¹ Also in DA: T, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 11a-30b.

According to Buddhist doctrine, “the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariya saccāni*)” is the essential heart of the Buddha’s teaching. In applying the Four Noble Truths to the bereavement cases, the explanation may be restricted by the case studies concerned.

■ **Dukkha: The Truth of Suffering.**

→ The reaction of the bereaved, or the suffering, grief.

■ **Samudaya: The Truth of the Cause of Suffering.**

→ The death or the cause of suffering.

■ **Nirodha: The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.**

→ The final consequence of the bereavement experience.

■ **Magga: The Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.**

→ The process of change of the bereaved or the path leading to the final consequence.

The death is the cause of the suffering of the bereaved. Generally, it denotes someone in the last breath of life, including death or *parinibbāna*.¹² The reaction of the bereaved may occur either before or after the actual death.¹³ The process of change suggests the way in which the bereaved obtained help from others,

¹² The death of the man who had attained *nibbāna*. See SN, vol.IV, pp.294-95 for the difference between death and *parinibbāna*. In Buddhism, *nibbāna* means the cessation of suffering, or the craving for becoming has been cut off and the support for becoming has been destroyed. There is no more re-birth.

¹³ In Case N6, the bereaved had reactions before the impending death because this death was anticipated in advance.

either passively or actively, including the type of assistance and any change that happened to the bereaved. “Desanā” in this essay means any advice/instruction/teaching/discourse talked by the Buddha or others, but broadly means something given or displayed by the helper, which gives the bereaved an opportunity to ponder on the bereavement experience and then change themselves. These discourses basically provide some kind of helping instruction, advice, or teaching, which might be physical (Ⓟ), verbal (Ⓥ), or mental (Ⓜ),¹⁴ but the discourses in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* are mainly verbal and expressed in speech.¹⁵ In sum, the discourses are included in the section “Magga”, the process of change of the bereaved or the path leading to the final consequence.

4. Process of the Bereavement Cases

The process of the bereavement cases will be explored and then the discourses to the bereaved will be understood easier.

4.1 A householder lost his only son (Case N1)

¹⁴ “The Three Volitional Formations (*tividha-dvāra/saṅkhārā*)”: physical actions/actions in body; verbal actions/actions in speech; mental actions/actions in mind.

¹⁵ In the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā*, the helpers helped the bereaved also in physical or mental ways.

The bereavement case concerning a householder who lost his only son is found in the *Piyajātika Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The content of this *sutta* can be divided into three sections and the process of the first section is displayed in the diagram below. The second section will be investigated later, and the third will be commented on in 4.3: King Pasenadi Lost His Wife, Mallikā (Case N3).

- (1) The story directly related to the householder who lost his only son.
- (2) The conversation between the Buddha and Brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha.
- (3) The episode concerning King Pasenadi of Kosala and Queen Mallikā.

Diagram 1: A householder lost his only son (Case N1)

1. The Death

- Bereaved: A householder, in Sāvattḥī.
 - Brahmin: A Brahmin householder.
- Deceased: The householder's only son.
 - Brahmin: The son of the Brahmin householder.
- Death: Suddenly.
- Relationship:
 - Father (householder) and only son.
 - The son was the householder's dear and beloved.

2. The Reaction

- Bereaved-Ⓟ: The householder kept going to the charnel ground and crying.
- Bereaved-Ⓥ: The householder cried: "My only child, where are you?"
- Bereaved-Ⓜ:
 - The householder had no more desire to work or to eat.
 - The householder's faculties were deranged and not in control.

3. Process of Change

1st Stage: The householder argued with the Buddha.

- **Intervention:** The householder went to the Buddha.
- **Location:** Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park.
- **Interaction/Discourse:**
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: The householder paid homage to the Buddha and sat down on one side.
 - Helper1-Ⓟ: The Buddha showed consideration, so the householder replied about the happening.
 - Helper1-Ⓟ: “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”.
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: “Who would ever think that...happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ+Ⓟ/Ⓟ: The householder is displeased with and disapproved of the Buddha’s words.
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: The householder rose and left.

2nd Stage: The householder delighted in the gamblers.

- **Intervention:** The householder went to the gamblers.
- **Location:** In front of Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park, not far from the Buddha.
- **Interaction/Discourse:**
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: The householder told the gamblers what happened between him and the Buddha, and asked for their opinions.
 - Helper2-Ⓟ: The gamblers agreed with the householder’s opinion.
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ+Ⓟ: The householder left thinking: “I agree with the gamblers.”

4. Consequences of Bereavement Experience

No statement. (This story reached all over Sāvattthī and also to Pasenadi and Mallikā.)

Although there is no obvious ending for the bereaved householder, and this bereavement case does not present a typical bereavement counselling, two points are noteworthy. First, the circulation of the Buddha's discourses can be divided into two stages: the primary stage, related to the householder and the gamblers; and the secondary stage, the extended stage following the bereavement case.

The Buddha's words that sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear were repeated in the second section of the *Piyajātika Sutta*. Gradually, the story about the householder spread all over Sāvathī and even to King Pasenadi's palace. Pasenadi disputed with Queen Mallikā about the Buddha's words, and as a result, Mallikā sent Brahmin Nālījaṅgha to visit the Buddha in her name, send her regards, and inquire about what had been said to the householder. The Buddha gave a clear and definite answer and some examples to demonstrate them.

In the last section, Mallikā asks Pasenadi several hypothetical and personal questions about his own feeling to illustrate that what the Buddha said is true, and Pasenadi eventually becomes favorably disposed toward the Buddha.¹⁶

¹⁶ MN, vol.II, pp. 110-11; T, vol. 1, no. 26, pp. 801c-2a; T, vol. 1, no. 91, pp. 915c-16a; T, vol. 2, no. 125, p. 572b-c.

Taken together, the words of the discourse are concise in the first level, or the conversation between the householder and the Buddha; the evidence for it or examples concerning strangers are only given under Nāḷijaṅgha's inquiry in the second level; the introspection and examination of it are manifested through Mallikā and Pasenadi's discussion on the last level. Viewed in this light, this discourse is thoroughly, progressively and systematically analyzed throughout the *Piyajātika Sutta*.¹⁷

4.2 King Pasenadi lost his grandmother (Case N2)

The bereavement case which describes King Pasenadi's loss of his grandmother the *Ayyakā Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* is revealed simply and clearly. This is probably because the bereaved and the helper knew each other and the Buddha had already delivered similar discourses to Pasenadi in the past. In all, the Buddha's teachings seem helpful to the bereaved, Pasenadi, when he was depressed after his dear and beloved grandmother had died.

Diagram 2: King Pasenadi Lost His Grandmother (Case N2)

¹⁷ Utilized in Buddhist literature, the Buddha's statement as to the restatability of his teachings in different ways is called "paryāya", "pariyāya" or "pariyāya-desanā". See Yin-shun, 1994a, *The Complication of the Early Buddhist Canon* 《原始佛教聖典之集成》, pp. 728-31.

1. The Death

- Bereaved: King Pasenadi.
 - Noble: The king of Kosala.
 - Layman: A chief upāsaka.
- Deceased: King Pasenadi's Grandmother.
 - Noble: The grandmother of the king.
 - Laywoman: She made a lasting effort to train in and undertake wholesome states.
- Death: Natural ageing (or sudden/severe illness).
- Relationship:

2. The Reaction

- Bereaved- (V):
Pasenadi told the Buddha: If by means of the elephant-gem and so on, he could have redeemed his grandmother from death, he would have given them away so that she would not die.

3. Process of Change

- Occasion: In the middle of the day.
- Intervention: Pasenadi approached the Buddha.
- Location: The Buddha's place at Sāvathī.
- Interaction/Discourse:
 - Bereaved-(P): Pasenadi paid homage to the Buddha and sat down at one side.
 - Helper-(V)+Bereaved-(V): The Buddha showed consideration and inquired after Pasenadi who talked about his grandmother's death and his thinking.
 - Helper-(V): The Buddha said that all beings are subject to death, terminate in death, and cannot escape death.
 - Bereaved-(V): Pasenadi praised the Buddha's words.
 - Helper-(V): The Buddha said:
 - Impermanence: All beings will die.
 - Kamma: People will fare according to their deeds.
 - Perform good deeds: One should do what is good for the future.

4. Consequences of Bereavement Experience

No statement.

4.3 King Pasenadi Lost His Wife, Mallikā (Case N3)

This case focuses on the process of King Pasenadi's change when he was overcome with grief because of his wife's death: the Buddha taught Pasenadi how to free himself from suffering through a three-part discourse on the subject of five states not to be got to by anyone, the phenomena of unlearned and learned people, and a way to make life better.

Diagram 3: King Pasenadi Lost His Wife, Mallikā (Case N3)

1. The Death

- Bereaved: King Pasenadi.
 - Noble: The king of Kosala. Layman: A chief upāsaka.
- Deceased: Queen Mallikā.
 - Worker: The daughter of a garland-maker.
 - Noble: The queen of the king.
 - Laywoman: A chief upāsikā.
- Cause of death: No statement (After having committed a sin and regretted it).
- Relationship:
 - Husband (Pasenadi) and wife (Mallikā).
 - Mallikā was Pasenadi's chief and beloved wife.

2. The Reaction

- Bereaved-^(M): Pasenadi was sorely grieved and sick at heart.
- Bereaved-^(P):
 - Pasenadi's shoulders drooped.
 - Pasenadi's mouth fell.
 - Pasenadi sat brooding.
 - Pasenadi was unable to speak.

3. Process of Change

- Intervention: Pasenadi was just at the Buddha's place.
- Location: Near Sāvaththī, at Jeta Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.
- Interaction/Discourse:
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: Pasenadi paid the Buddha a visit and, after saluting the Buddha, sat down at one side.
 - Helper-Ⓟ: The Buddha talked to Pasenadi:
 - There are five states not to be got to by anyone in the world:
 - where aging brings no old age;
 - where sickening brings no sickness;
 - where dying brings no death;
 - where wasting brings no destruction;
 - where ending brings no end.
 - The difference between the unlearned average man and the learned Ariyan disciple when old age, sickness, death, destruction, and the end come.
 - Grieving is useless; performing meritorious actions is beneficial.

4. Consequences of Bereavement Experience

No statement.

In summary, the Buddha's teachings are progressive in two ways: from the other to the self and from passive acceptance to positive endeavor.

(1) Centering on the topic of death, the first teaching helped Pasenadi to realize the nature of his grandmother's death, a fact that could not be changed.

(2) With relation to the concept of kamma, the second point was made to encourage Pasenadi to engage in good conduct of body, speech, and mind. This was the effort he should make in his remaining years.

4.4 King Muṇḍa Lost His Wife, Bhaddā (Case N4)

This bereavement case concerning King Muṇḍa and Nārada Thera bears some similarity to the last case in which King Pasenadi lost his queen, Mallikā. Since Muṇḍa ruled the kingdom of Magadha¹⁸ from the fortieth to the forty-eighth year after the Buddha's passing away (B.C. 446-438)¹⁹, this case is not directly connected with the Buddha, but is near the time of the Buddha.

This is a standard bereavement case in which the bereaved was relieved of sorrow and found peace. On the one hand, Nārada Thera successfully consoled King Muṇḍa with the Buddha's teaching for King Pasenadi and plucked out Muṇḍa's dart of sorrow, on the other hand,

¹⁸ A chief kingdom at the time of the Buddha. Magadha covered an area south of the River Ganges and is now in Bihar state of northeastern India. See DPPN (*Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*) s.v. Magadha.

¹⁹ According to the Sinhalese chronology (e.g. Samantapāsādikā), King Bimbisāra was his great-great-grandfather and King Ajātasattu was his great-grandfather, see Lamotte, 1988, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*, pp. 88; 93. However, different versions exist. For example, King Bimbisāra was his great-grandfather, King Ajātasattu was his grandfather, and King Anuruddha was his father, see *Biography of King Aśoka* 《阿育王傳》(T, vol. 50, no. 2042, p. 99c).

Treasurer Piyaka was the go-between who introduced Nārada to Muṇḍa and arranged the visit which facilitated the release from grief. Nārada and Piyaka both played roles in assisting Muṇḍa when he had severe reactions to the death of his dear and beloved wife.

Diagram 4: King Muṇḍa Lost His Wife, Bhaddā (Case N4)

1. The Death

- Bereaved: King Muṇḍa.
Noble: The king of Magadha.
- Deceased: Queen Bhaddā.
Noble: The queen of the king.
- Cause of death: No statement.
- Relationship:
 - Husband (Muṇḍa) and wife (Bhaddā).
 - Bhaddā was Muṇḍa's dear and beloved wife.

2. The Reaction

- Bereaved-Ⓟ :
Muṇḍa did not bath, anoint, eat, nor take interest in any affairs of state.
- Bereaved-Ⓧ: Muṇḍa summoned Treasurer Piyaka to place Bhaddā's body in an oil vessel made of iron to seeing it longer.
- Bereaved-Ⓜ: Muṇḍa day and night clung in grief to Bhaddā's body as though a-swoon.

3. Process of Change

1st Stage: Muṇḍa heard about Nārada via Piyaka.

- Intervention: Piyaka introduced Nārada.
- Location: Muṇḍa's palace.
- Interaction/Discourse:
 - Helper1-Ⓟ: Piyaka advised Muṇḍa to visit Nārada who would help him to pluck out sorrow.
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: Muṇḍa accepted it and summoned Piyaka to announce his coming to Nārada.

2nd Stage: Muṇḍa got advices from Nārada.

- Intervention: Muṇḍa approached Nārada for advice after receiving permission.
- Location: Nārada's place, near Pāṭaliputta, in the Cock's Park.
- Interaction/Discourse:
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ: Muṇḍa entered the Park on foot, saluted Nārada, and sat down at one side.
 - Helper2-Ⓟ: Nārada said:
 - Five states not to be got by anyone: no old age; no sickness; no death; no destruction; no end.
 - The difference between the unlearned average man and the learned disciple when oldness, sickness, death, destruction, and the end come.
 - Grieving is useless; performing meritorious actions is beneficial.
 - Bereaved-Ⓟ+Helper2-Ⓟ: Muṇḍa asked the title of the discourse and Nārada replied "Plucker Out of Sorrow's Dart".

4. Consequences of Bereavement Experience

- Bereaved-Ⓟ:
 - Muṇḍa said the discourse taught by Nārada plucked out sorrow's dart in truth.
 - Muṇḍa summoned Treasurer Piyaka to burn Bhaddā's body, build a cairn for it, and returned to his own normal life.

4.5 Ānanda lost his friend, Sāriputta (Case N5)

There are three persons in the bereavement case of Thera Sāriputta's passing: Cuṇḍa, Ānanda, and the Buddha, but only Ānanda was sorrowful and defined as the bereaved. The Buddha is defined as the helper although he lost his important student, Sāriputta.

Diagram 5: Ānanda lost his friend, Sāriputta (Case N5)

1. The Death

- Bereaved: Thera Ānanda.
 - (Noble→) Monk: A chief bhikkhu.
 - A stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*).
- Deceased: Thera Sāriputta.
 - (Brahmin→) Monk: A chief bhikkhu.
 - An arahat with the four discriminations (*paṭisambhidā*).
- Place: Among the Magadhans at Nālakagāma.
- Cause of death: *Parinibbāna* (Illness + own volition).
- Relationship:
 - Both the chief disciples of the Buddha in the Saṅgha.
 - Special friends.

2. The Reaction

- Bereaved- \textcircled{P} :
 - Ānanda, with Cuṇḍa, approached the Buddha to inform him of Sāriputta's passing with his bowl and robe.
 - Ānanda's body seemed as if it had been drugged.
- Bereaved- \textcircled{M} :
 - Ānanda had become disoriented, and the teachings were no longer clear to him.
 - Ānanda recollected the nourishment, wealth, and help of Dhamma given by Sāriputta.

3. Process of Change

■ Intervention: Ānanda was one of the two monks who informed the Buddha of Sāriputta's *parinibbāna*.

■ Location: Sāvathī, Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

■ Occasion: When Ānanda gave the news to the Buddha along with Cuṇḍa.

■ Interaction/Discourse:

- Helper-⊕+Bereaved-⊖: The Buddha asked Ānanda if Sāriputta took away his aggregate of virtue, concentration, wisdom, liberation, the knowledge, or vision of liberation, and Ānanda replied, "No", and then stated why Sāriputta was so important to him.
- Helper-⊖: The Buddha said that we must be parted and separated from all who are dear and agreeable to us and may what is born, conditioned, and subject to disintegration not disintegrate is impossible to be obtained, and then used the analogy of the breaking off of a great branch to explain Sāriputta's *parinibbāna*.
- Helper-⊖: The Buddha encouraged Ānanda to dwell with himself and the Dhamma as his island and with no other refuge.

4. Consequences of Bereavement Experience

No statement.

In Ānanda's process of change, the Buddha was the counsellor. This is also a threefold- discourse.

(1) The question was asked: The Buddha firstly asked Ānanda if Sāriputta took away his aggregates of virtue, concentration, wisdom, liberation, or knowledge and vision of liberation. "He did not", Ānanda replied, and then stated how important Thera Sāriputta was for him as above.

(2) Impermanence was exposed: Next, the Buddha started his teaching, which can be divided into two levels. The first level is what cannot be changed. He said that we must be parted and separated from all who are dear and agreeable to us and that for what is born, conditioned, and subject to disintegration not to disintegrate is impossible. The Buddha also gave an example to illustrate that Sāriputta's passing is natural: just like the largest branch's breaking off a mighty hardwood tree, Sāriputta's passing was earlier than the Buddha's.

(3) The path was indicated: the next level is the solution to what should be important to the monks and Ānanda. The Buddha exhorted Ānanda to dwell with himself and the Dhamma as his island and with no other refuge, either now or after he was gone.

We do not know how Ānanda acted or what he said after the Buddha's teaching, but there is a high possibility that he accepted what the Buddha said.

4.6 Ānanda lost his teacher, the Buddha (Case N6)

There are three stages in the case of Ānanda occurring prior to the Buddha's *parinibbāna*. Ānanda's reactions in these stages are referred to as his pre-reactions of anticipatory grief since they occurred before the Buddha attained *parinibbāna*. The advice and help he got from the Buddha also happened prior to the *parinibbāna*.

(1) After recovering from the severe sickness in Beluva, the Buddha told Ānanda that he was aged and exhausted and that he had taught all of the Dhamma. In response to Ānanda's worry about the Buddha's health and his passing away, he exhorted Ānanda and all the monks to take refuge in themselves and in the Dhamma.

(2) In the Cāpāla Shrine of Vesālī, after deciding to attain *parinibbāna* and to release the life-principle as a result of Ānanda's failure to persuade him otherwise in reference to the four roads to power, not to mention the effect of Māra's persuasion, the Buddha declined Ānanda's request that he prolong his lifespan, saying that the time of his *parinibbāna* would not be changed.

(3) Being aware that Ānanda stood lamenting at his residence in Kusinārā, the Buddha comforted him with the teaching of impermanence, praised his excellent qualities, and stated that, through his own endeavours, Ānanda would soon be free.

Diagram 6: Ānanda lost his teacher, the Buddha (Case N6)

1. The Pre-Reaction and the Process of Change

1st Stage: After the Buddha's sickness at Beluva.

- Location: The Buddha spent the Rains in Beluva.
- Occasion: After the Buddha recovered from his sickness (more than three months before the *parinibbāna*).
- Intervention: Ānanda came to him, saluted the Buddha and expressed his worry and thinking about the Buddha's sickness and passing.
- Interaction/Discourse:
 - Deceased=Helper-⊙: The Buddha talked to Ānanda:
 - He had taught the Dhamma, making no "inner" and "outer".
 - He was eighty, old, worn out and his body knew comfort only with the cessation of certain feelings and the signless concentration of mind.
 - Be an island and a refuge unto yourselves, with no other refuge.
 - Let the Dhamma be your island and refuge, with no other refuge.

2nd Stage: After the Buddha's decision regarding *parinibbāna* at the Cāpāla Shrine.

- Location: At the Cāpāla Shrine after the Buddha begged for alms in Vesālī.
- Occasion: After the Buddha decided on his *parinibbāna* and renounced his life-principle owing to Ānanda's omission and Māra's request (three months before the *parinibbāna*).
- Intervention: Ānanda came to the Buddha because of the great earthquake due to the decision of the Buddha to enter *parinibbāna*.
- Interaction:
 - Deceased=Helper-⊙: The Buddha told Ānanda he would enter *parinibbāna* after three months.
 - Bereaved-⊙: Ānanda requested the Buddha to stay longer for the benefit of the multitude.
 - Deceased=Helper-⊙: The Buddha refused Ānanda's request.
 - Deceased=Helper-⊙: The Buddha reminded Ānanda of the impermanence and said that it was impossible to withdraw his declaration on *parinibbāna*.

3rd Stage: When the Buddha prepared to attain *parinibbāna* at Kusinārā.

- Place: Where the Buddha lay down, in the Mallas' sāl-grove of Kusinārā.
- Time: Very close to the Buddha's *parinibbāna*.
- Occasion: After inquiring the Buddha about several things, including the cremation, Ānanda stood lamenting, leaning on the door-post of his lodging.
- Intervention: The Buddha summoned Ānanda.
- Interaction/Discourse:
 - Deceased=Helper-⊙: The Buddha talked to Ānanda:
 - Do not weep and wail!

2. The Death

- Bereaved: Thera Ānanda.
 - Monk: A chief bhikkhu.
 - A stream-enterer (sotāpanna).
- Deceased: The Buddha.
- Location: At the Mallas' sāl-grove in the vicinity of Kusinārā.
- Death: *Parinibbāna*. (Aging, illness and own volition)
- Relationship:
 - (Cousins→) Disciple/attendant (Ānanda) and teacher/master (the Buddha).

3. The After-Reaction and Consequences of Bereavement Experience

- Bereaved-Ⓟ:
 - Ānanda uttered a verse about the terrible earthquake due to the Buddha's *parinibbāna*.
 - Ānanda had a conversation with Anuruddha on the deities who were grumbling at the mournful monks.
- Bereaved-Ⓢ:
 - Occasion1 (the rest of the night): Ānanda and Anuruddha spent in conversation on the Dhamma.
 - Occasion2 (next morning): Ānanda, having dressed and taking his robe and bowl, went with a companion to the Mallas to deliver the message of the Buddha's *parinibbāna*.

In summary, the Buddha firstly reminded Ānanda about his old age and poor health as the prelude to his death, secondly decided and announced that he would pass away in three months, and finally decided upon and attained *parinibbāna*. Through these primary teachings and gradual guidance, the Buddha gave Ānanda adequate time to prepare for his *parinibbāna*.

Thus, after the Buddha attained *parinibbāna* at the Mallas' *sāl*-grove in the vicinity of Kusinārā, Ānanda's words and deeds indicate that he had attained peace. Ānanda spent the rest of that night conversing with Anuruddha about the Dhamma and helped to deal with the remains in accordance with the last words of the Buddha. In fact, Ānanda played a significant role in the Buddha's life and also after his *parinibbāna*: as the attendant, Ānanda was the Buddha's closest constant companion and disciple for twenty-five years; endowed with a remarkable memory, Ānanda was able to remember the words of the Buddha so well that he was able to recite the Dhamma at the First Great Convocation.

5. Helpers and Discourses

As we see in “Table 1: Textual Information and Main Persons of the Bereavement Cases in the four Pāli *Nikāyas*”, the helpers are the wisest men like the Buddha in most cases and Thera Nārada in Case N4, but also persons around or encountered by the bereaved like the treasurer in Case N4 and the gamblers in Case N1. In Case N6, the helper is also the deceased, and gave discourses to others before his death, *parinibbāna*.

In the Pāli texts, we usually read that when the bereaved person was sorrowful because of the death of someone he/she was attached to, some people or groups of people came to lend a hand or give advice, or were asked to help. In some cases, more than one

helper assisted the bereaved person in the same case; in some instances, the same helper supported different bereaved people in diverse cases or situations; in some cases, there is no helper at all in the texts, that is when the bereaved was already an *arahat* or under some special condition.²⁰ In the case of the bereaved who got aid from more than one helper, there is usually one major helper who assisted the bereaved in a direct and powerful way, and another accessory helper who did something that influenced the bereaved in another positive and practical way. They both helped the bereaved a lot, but the main helper did more than the accessory.

In the table below, the backgrounds and statuses of the helpers at the time they influenced the bereaved persons are listed under the following six headings: Name, Gender, Age group, Caste/Class (*vaṇṇa*), Buddhist assembly (*parisā*), and then the case in which the helper actively helped the bereaved, or where the bereaved passively obtained some assistance from that helper. For easier recognition and calculation, every helper has been allocated an individual code: h1, h2, h3, and h4.

²⁰ Cuṇḍa and the Buddha in Case N5, and Anuruddha and Kassapa in Case N6 were all *arahats*; the death of the deceased was a good thing for Subhadda in Case N6 because the deceased cannot admonish him anymore.

Table 2: The Helpers in the Bereavement Cases in the Four Pāli Nikāyas²¹

Code	Name/Title	G.	Age Group	Caste	Buddhist Assembly	Statistics
						Cases/Person ²²
h1	The Buddha	♂	Adult ↗	(Noble: Prince→) Recluse	Monk: Buddha (Arahat↗)	5 situations (in 5 cases and to 4 bereaved persons) ²³
						N1-1st helper (major), N2, N3, N5, ²⁴ N6 ²⁵

²¹ G: gender; ♂ : male; ♀ : female; —: unknown; ×: not; →: became/changed to; ↗: at least.

²² When the case has one bereaved person and also one helper, only the case abbreviation will be shown; when the case has one bereaved person and several helpers, both the case abbreviation and the helper abbreviation will be shown; when the case has one helper but more than one bereaved person, both the case abbreviation and the bereaved abbreviation will be shown.

²³ The bereaved in Case N2 and in Case N3 is the same person (Pasenadi); the 2nd bereaved person in Case N5 and the 1st bereaved person in Case N6 is also the same (Ānanda).

²⁴ In Case N5, the Buddha was both the bereaved and the helper.

²⁵ In Case N6, the Buddha was both the deceased and the helper who helped the bereaved person (Ānanda) in three situations of three stages: after the Buddha's

h2	Thera Nārada	♂ ↗	Adult	Recluse	Monk: <i>Arahat</i>	1 situation
						N4-2nd helper (major)
h3	The gamblers playing with dice ²⁶	♂ ↗	Adult	—	× ²⁷	1 situation
						N1-2nd helpers (accessory)

sickness at Beluva, after the Buddha’s decision about *parinibbāna* at the Cāpāla Shrine, and when the Buddha prepared to attain *parinibbāna* at Kusinārā.

²⁶ The gamblers in Case N1 were not typical helpers just like others. However, because of their agreement with the bereaved’s opinion that “happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”, the bereaved person felt happy, felt supported. Because they gave some comfort to the bereaved, they are also regarded as a group of helpers.

²⁷ One of the parts of the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*) is right livelihood, gambling is discouraged. For this reason, these gamblers would probably not be followers of the Buddha. See DN 31: *Sigālaka Sutta*: “There are these six dangers attached to gambling: the winner makes enemies, the loser bewails his loss, one wastes one’s present wealth, one’s word is not trusted in the assembly, one is despised by one’s friends and companions, one is not in demand for marriage, because a gambler cannot afford to maintain a wife” (Maurice Walshe, DN Trsl, p.463; DN, vol. III, p.183). Maurice Walshe, trans. 1995, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)*.

h4	Treasurer Piyaka	♂	Adult ↗	Laborer	(Layman) ²⁸	1 situation
						N4-1st helper (accessory)

The so-called “discourse” here broadly means something given or displayed by the helper, which gives the bereaved an opportunity to ponder bereavement experiences and then change from grief to relief. These discourses basically provide some kind of helping instruction, advice, or teaching that might be physical, verbal, or mental in Buddhist texts. However, the discourses given in the bereavement cases in the Four *Nikāyas* are all verbal.

The discourses that the helper gave to the bereaved person through speech can be divided into three groups according to the nature of the words:

(1) Doctrine or fact (D/F): We usually see that the helper taught the bereaved doctrines, instructions, gave advice and teachings, and talked about the fact and truth in the world.

²⁸ Treasurer Piyaka was probably a layman for his understanding on the spiritual attainment of Thera Nārada.

(2) Question and answer (Q&A): The helper sometimes used a series of questions and answers to help the bereaved to understand impermanence.

(3) Encouragement or discouragement (E/C): Through speech, the helper sometimes discouraged or encouraged the bereaved not to do something useless or to do something helpful.

Every verbal discourse has an individual code “d” which means “discourse”: **d1** to **d4** are doctrines or facts; **d5** is of questions and answers; **d6** to **d9** are encouragements or discouragements. In sum, there are nine kinds of discourses found in the six bereavement cases in the Four Pāli *Nikāyas*.

5.1 Doctrine or Fact (D/F)

In most bereavement cases, the helpers gave the bereaved persons certain advice, doctrines, teachings, or instructions which are performed through speech. They can be divided into four main topics.

Table 3: Discourses: Doctrine or Story

Topic	Detail	Statistics
d1: Imper- manence	Reason: ■ N2: All beings are subject to death. ■ N3, N4 (2 nd helper in 2 nd stage): Five states that could not be attained by anyone in the world: no old age; no sickness; no death; no destruction; no end. ■ N5 (to 2 nd bereaved): What is born, comes to be: it is conditioned and subject to disintegration, must disintegrate. ■ N6 (to 1 st bereaved in 2 nd +3 rd stages): What is born, what became and is compounded is subject to decay.	6 times (in 5 cases)
	Phenomenon: ■ N2: All potter's vessels are breakable, fragile.	

d2: Suffering	<p>Reason: Why do people suffer or not?</p> <p>■ N1 (1st helper in 1st stage): “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”²⁹ ⇔ N1 (2nd group of helpers in 2nd stage): “Happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”³⁰</p> <p>Phenomenon: Unlearned and learned person</p> <p>■ N3, N4 (in 2nd stage): How the unlearned and the learned person treat the five states that cannot be reached by anyone in this world.</p>	4 times (in 3 cases)
d3: Kamma	<p>■ N2: People fare according to their deeds so performing acts of merit is important.</p>	1 time (in 1 case)
d4: Refuge: Self and Dhamma	<p>■ N5, N6 (in 1st stage): Dwell with yourself and the Dhamma as your island and without other refuges.</p>	2 times (in 2 cases)

²⁹ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, MN Trsl, p.718; see also MN, vol. II, p.106. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. 1995, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikāya)*.

³⁰ As above.

d1: Impermanence (*anicca*)

Impermanence is one of the three important doctrines of the Buddha. The Buddha taught it five times in six bereavement cases. This topic was explained in two aspects: “Reason” and “Phenomenon”.

As to the reason, the Buddha usually used simple and clear words to narrate the topic of impermanence, such as in Case N2, Case N5, and Case N6. In Case N3 and Case N4, he described the five states that cannot to be obtained by anyone in the world.³¹ This is another face of impermanence.

In Case N2, the Buddha told King Pasenadi of Kosala that “all beings, great king, are subject to death, terminate in death, and cannot escape death.”³² In Case N5, he said that “we must be parted, separated, and severed from all who are dear and agreeable to us”³³ and it is impossible to hope “may what is born, come to be, conditioned, and subject to disintegration not disintegrate!”³⁴ In Case N6, the Buddha reminded Ānanda twice about his teaching on impermanence. When Ānanda requested him to live

³¹ See AN, vol.III, pp.54; 59.

³² Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.188; see also SN, vol. I, p.97. Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. 2000, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Saṃyutta Nikāya)*.

³³ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.1643, see also SN, vol. V, p.162.

³⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.1643, see also SN, vol. V, p.163.

longer for the benefit and happiness of the multitude at the Cāpāla Shrine, he said: “All those things that are dear and pleasant to us must suffer change, separation and alteration... Whatever is born, become, compounded, is liable to decay.....”³⁵; Ānanda lamented over the Buddha’s coming death and when the Buddha was preparing to attain *parinibbāna* between the twin *sāl*-trees in the vicinity of Kusinārā, he asked Ānanda not to weep and cry, and reminded him again: “Whatever is born, become, compounded is subject to decay.”³⁶

As to the phenomenon, in Case N2, the Buddha took pottery as an example, he said: “All the potter’s vessels, whether unbaked or baked, are subject to a breakup, terminate in their breakup, and cannot escape their breakup.”³⁷ In Case N5, he took the largest branch as an example to explain Sāriputta’s *parinibbāna*: “It is just as if the largest branch would break off a great tree standing possessed of heartwood: so too..... Sāriputta has attained final *nibbāna*.”³⁸

d2: Suffering (*dukkha*)

³⁵ Maurice Walshe, DN Trsl, p.252; see also DN, vol. II, p.117.

³⁶ Maurice Walshe, DN Trsl, p.265; see also DN, vol. II, p.144.

³⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.189; see also SN, vol. I, p.97.

³⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, pp.1643-44, see also SN, vol. V, p.163.

The topic referring to suffering is mentioned four times in three bereavement cases of the *Four Nikāyas*. Once again, it was illustrated in its two aspects: “Reason” and “Phenomenon”.

On one side, the Buddha declared the reason why people suffer or not in Case N1. He repeated that “Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear”³⁹ for three times. *Dhammapada* verse 213 states: “From love comes grief, from love comes fear. For one who is freed from love there is no grief, much less fear”.⁴⁰ The *Gāmaṇisaṃyutta* also has a clearer account of “the origin and the passing away of suffering”⁴¹: “Whatever suffering arises, all that arises rooted in desire, with desire as its source; for desire is the root of suffering”.⁴² “Suffering” in the *Gāmaṇisaṃyutta* is equal to “sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair” in Case N1 (in the *Piyajātika Sutta*), and “desire” in the *Gāmaṇisaṃyutta* is equal to “those who are dear” in Case N1 (in the *Piyajātika Sutta*). In brief, “sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair” are “suffering”, and “those who are dear” can be considered as “objects of desire”. So, when there is no desire or attachment, there is no suffering.

³⁹ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, MN Trsl, p.718; see also MN, vol. II, p.106.

⁴⁰ K. R. Norman, Dhṛp Trsl, p.32. Norman, K. R., trans, 1997. *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*.

⁴¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.1348; see also SN, vol. IV, p.327.

⁴² Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.1350; see also SN, vol. IV, p.330.

On the other hand, the Buddha gave certain types of people as examples of those who suffer or those who do not when unpleasant things come to their lives. In Case N3 and Case N4, the Buddha and Thera Nārada said that the unlearned average man “should mourn and pine, weep and wail and beat the breast and fall into distraction”⁴³ when old age, sickness, death, destruction, and the end come but the learned disciple who “has cooled the self entirely”⁴⁴ does not.⁴⁵

When teaching the doctrine of the origin of suffering, the Buddha sometimes gave a brief statement, sometimes narrated a detailed exposition, sometimes took positive examples, and sometimes gave negative instances. The words he said look all different but really have a very similar meaning. Moreover, these examples and instances are not only real and vivid, but also gave the bereaved persons a good model of someone who does not suffer or a bad model of someone who suffers when their beloved dies. At the moment of death it is important that the bereaved know which model they want to follow in their mind. Although the Buddha did not ask them to choose from beginning

⁴³ Woodward and Hare, AN Trsl, vol. III, p.45; see also AN, vol. III, p.54.

⁴⁴ Woodward and Hare, AN Trsl, vol. III, p.46; see also AN, vol. III, p.55.

⁴⁵ In *Fo-shuo yi-zu jing* 《佛說義足經》 (T, vol. 4, no.198, pp.174b-175a) and *Fa-ju pi-yu jing* 《法句譬喻經》 (T, vol.4, no.211, p.576), when they lost their daughters the Buddha also taught the bereaved Brahmins the five or four states that could not be reached by anyone in the world.

to end, they did have choices about how to understand, face, and overcome the suffering in their lives.

d3: *Kamma*

In Case N2, the Buddha said to Pasenadi: “They will fare according to their deeds, reaping the fruits of their merit and evil... Therefore one should do what is good as a collection for the future life.”⁴⁶ The Buddha taught the concept of *kamma* to encourage the bereaved to perform meritorious acts, because one’s actions of body, speech, and mind (*kamma*) determine one's future course.⁴⁷

“Kamma”, originally implying “deed; action; job; work”⁴⁸, is also translated as “intentional action”. The Buddha offered a clear definition in AN VI .63: *Nibbedhika Sutta*: “I say that determinate thought is action. When one determines, one acts by deed, word or thought.”⁴⁹ In AN V.57: *Upajjhatthana Sutta*, he talked about “taking responsibility for one's actions”:

⁴⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.189; see also SN, vol. I, p.97.

⁴⁷ See also MN 41: *Sāleyyaka Sutta*.

⁴⁸ CPD (*Concise Pali-English Dictionary*) s.v. *kamma*.

⁴⁹ AN Trsl, vol.III, p.294; see also AN, vol.III, p.414. Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s translation is “Intention, I tell you, is *kamma*. Intending, one does *kamma* by way of

*I am the result of my own deeds; heir to deeds; deeds are matrix; deeds are kin; deeds are foundation; whatever deed I do, whether good or bad, I shall become heir to it!.....*⁵⁰

In brief, as good *kamma* leads one to bright places and bad *kamma* leads one to dark places, one should understand the result of one's actions before, during, and after, and practice the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-atthangika magga*)⁵¹ to improve his deed to be a better person.

d4: Refuge (*saraṇa*): Self and Dhamma (*atta-saraṇo dhamma-saraṇo/atta-dīpo dhamma-dīpo*)

In two bereavement cases, the Buddha told the bereaved persons that only they themselves and the Dhamma were their

body, speech, & intellect” (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, AN Trsl: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an06/an06.063.than.html>).

⁵⁰ AN Trsl, vol. III, p.59; see also AN, vol. III, p.71. Thanissaro Bhikkhu's translation is “I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir” (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, AN Trsl: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an05/an05.057.than.html>).

⁵¹ See also MN 61: *Ambalaṭṭhikā-rāhulovāda Sutta* (MN, vol.I, pp.414-420); AN IV.235: *Ariyamagga Sutta* (AN, vol.II, pp.237-38); AN V.43: *Ittha Sutta* (AN, vol.III, pp.47-49).

refuge, not their relatives or any other persons or things. In Case N5 and Case N6, the Buddha reminded Ānanda and monks: “Dwell with yourselves as your own island, with yourselves as your own refuge, with no other refuge; dwell with the Dhamma as your island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge”⁵² and “you should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge,with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as your refuge,”⁵³ This is regarded as one of the most significant teachings of the Buddha just before his *parinibbāna*.

The Buddha gave a direct statement to point out “one’s own island and refuge” in Case N5 and Case N6. He did not want Ānanda to feel regret because of Sāriputta’s *parinibbāna* and also his own oncoming *parinibbāna*. Be positive to face his own life, only himself and the Dhamma are reliable and trustworthy.

5.2 Question and Answer (Q&A)

The helper did not simply give the bereaved person certain doctrines, but also applied a series of questions and answers to help them understand impermanence and life.

Table 4: Discourses: Question and Answer

⁵² Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.1644, see also SN, vol. V, p.163.

⁵³ Maurice Walshe, DN Trsl, p.245; see also DN, vol. II, p.100.

Code	Speech of the helper	Change of the bereaved	C.
d5	The helper asked the bereaved person if the dead took away his aggregates of virtue, concentration, wisdom, liberation, the knowledge and vision of liberation. ⁵⁴	The bereaved person gave a negative answer and said how important the dead one was in his and the monks' spiritual lives.	N5

In Case N5, Ānanda grieved over Sāriputta's *parinibbāna*. As Sāriputta's teacher, the Buddha who was the helper and also one of the bereaved asked him: "Why, Ānanda, when Sāriputta attained final *nibbāna*, did he take away your aggregate of virtue, or your aggregate of concentration, or your aggregate of wisdom, or your aggregate of liberation, or your aggregate of the knowledge and vision of liberation?"⁵⁵ As a stream-enterer, Ānanda replied: "No,

⁵⁴ "Kinnu kho te ānanda, sāriputto sīlakkhandha vā ādāya parinibbuto, samādhikkhandha vā ādāya parinibbuto, paññākkhandha vā ādāya parinibbuto, vimuttikkhandha vā ādāya parinibbuto, vimuttiñā adassanakkhandha vā ādāya parinibbutoti?" (SN, vol. V, p.162, 18-22)

⁵⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, SN Trsl, p.1643, see also SN, vol. V, p.162.

he did not”⁵⁶ and explained that the reason why he and the monks recollected the nourishment of Dhamma given by Sāriputta was because his teaching was very helpful and inspiring. Afterwards, the Buddha reminded Ānanda about impermanence and encouraged him to dwell with himself and the Dhamma as his refuge.⁵⁷

5.3 Encouragement or Discouragement (E/C)

Table 5: Discourses: Encouragement or Discouragement

Topic	Code	Detail	Case/Person	Statistics
Encouragement	d6	Return to the important duties of the life: Perform meritorious acts.	N2, N3, N4 (in 2nd stage)	8 times (in 4 cases)
	d7	Meet someone who can really help.	N4 (in 1st stage)	
	d8	Make the effort and the bereaved “will be free of the corruptions.” ⁵⁸	N6 (in 3rd stage)	

⁵⁶ As above.

⁵⁷ See SN, vol. V, p.163.

⁵⁸ Become an *arahat*. Maurice Walshe, DN Trsl, pp.265, 574; see also DN, vol. II, p.144.

Discouragement	d9	Grieve not; Weep not.	N3, N4 (in 2nd stage), N6 (in 3rd stage)
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Eight times in four bereavement cases, the helper used verbal communication to either encourage or discourage the bereaved persons. Strictly speaking, discouragement and encouragement cannot be regarded as discourses given by the helper. However, expressed by the helper through speech, they also impact on the bereaved in a certain way.

In Case N2, Case N3 and Case N4, the Buddha and Thera Nārada uttered some verses to encourage Pasenadi and Muṇḍa to perform meritorious actions in their lives; in Case N4, Treasurer Piyaka encouraged Muṇḍa to ask Nārada and the Buddha for advice; in Case N6, the Buddha praised Ānanda and agreed that he has potential for attaining the state of an *arahat*.

As to discouragement, in Case N3 and Case N6, the Buddha advised Pasenadi and Ānanda not to weep and grieve; in Case N4, Nārada advised Muṇḍa also. These words are simple and short but powerful for the bereaved persons at that moment.

6. Conclusion

In the process of change in six bereavement cases of the four Pāli *Nikāyas*, there were four bereaved persons, and nine kinds of verbal discourses were given twenty times in sum. The frequency of the discourses related to particular cases is delivered to the table below.

Table 6: Distribution and Statistics of the Discourses Given by the Helpers

Case	Bereaved Person	Doctrine/Fact				Q & A	Encouragement/discouragement				Sum of Discourses Given
		d1	d2	d3	d4		d5	d6	d7	d8	
N1	Householder		✓								1
N2	Pasenadi	✓		✓			✓				3
N3	Pasenadi	✓	✓				✓			✓	4
N4	Muṇḍa	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	5
N5	Ānanda	✓			✓	✓					3

N6	Ānanda	✓			✓				✓	✓	4
Sum	4 persons	5	3	1	2	1	3	1	1	3	20

Although we cannot read the obvious consequences in the six bereavement cases, the discourses to the bereaved persons are clear and complete in the four Pāli *Nikāyas*. As we see above, d1 (impermanence) · d2 (suffering) · d6 (perform meritorious acts) · and d9 (grieve not) are more frequently given by the helpers. Discourse d1 and d2 both indicate the facts in human life, d6 is an encouragement of returning to the important duties of the life, and d9 is a discouragement of weeping and crying. We also see how the Buddha applied d5 (Q&A) to lead the bereaved realize the impermanence by re-flection. We may say that the discourses to the bereaved in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* are mainly cognitive and reasoned. Furthermore, the discourses can be also given by the deceased himself and before the end of his life, and everyone can introduce the wise men to the bereaved ones to lead them from grief to relief if he does not know how to help.

List of Abbreviations

1. Pāli Texts

AN: *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 6 vols (PTS, 1958-76)

DN: *Dīgha Nikāya*, 3 vols (PTS, 1976-82)

Dhp: *Dhammapada* (PTS, 1995)

MN: *Majjhima Nikāya*, 4 vols (PTS, 1974-9)

SN: *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 6 vols (PTS, 1973-89)

2. Chinese Texts

CSA: Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* 《別譯雜阿含》(T, vol. 2, no. 100)

DA: Chinese *Dīrghāgama* 《長阿含經》(T, vol. 1, no. 1)

EA: Chinese *Ekottarāgama* 《增壹阿含經》(T, vol. 2, no. 125)

MA: Chinese *Madhyamāgama* 《中阿含經》(T, vol. 1, no. 26)

SA: Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* 《雜阿含經》(T, vol. 2, no. 99)

T: *Taishō Tripiṭaka* 《大正大藏經 (大正新修大藏經)》

3. Other Abbreviations

CPD: *Concise Pali-English Dictionary* (Motilal Banarsidass, 1997)

DPPN: *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* (PTS, 1974)

PTS: Pali Text Society

☐**B** = Bereaved: Bereaved person in the bereavement case

☐**D** = Deceased: Deceased person in the bereavement case

☐**H** = Helper: A person who helps the bereaved

Death: Death that occurred in the bereavement case

Discourse: The discourse/advice/instruction/teaching given by the helper

Interaction: Interaction between the bereaved and the deceased

Intervention: The approach to the bereaved by the helper

Location: The location where the death occurred

Occasion: The occasion on which the death occurred

Relationship: The relationship between the bereaved and the deceased

C.: Case abbreviation

G.: Gender

☉: Citta/Manasā: Mental actions

☉: Kāyena: Physical actions

☉: Vācāya: Verbal actions

=: Also; equal to

+: And

/: Or

—: Unknown; no statement

×: No or not

♂: Male

♀: Female

→: To; became; changed to

↗: At least

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巴利四部《尼柯耶》中對喪親者的教說*

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摘要

愛別離苦中的喪親之痛，為人類生存世間的必然遭遇，此傷痛與如何看待死亡和喪失所愛的態度密切相關，且世上無人可倖免，然而，喪親不僅是一種消極負向的經歷，反而可能更具有積極正向的意涵。本文為巴利四部《尼柯耶》六個喪親案例中，對喪親者開示教說內容的文本比較，以四聖諦中的道諦為基礎，彙整並分析巴利原典中佛陀和他人對喪親者的引導與協助的過程，探究教說的異同、特徵與風格，給予喪親者的教說共有九項，並分為提醒事實真相、以問答引導反思，及鼓勵與勸阻三大類，是協助喪親者從悲傷到平靜的療癒關鍵。事實上，喪親之事提供喪親者自我蛻變的成長機會，不僅是安慰、同理、支持、陪伴能給予幫助，強調對無常和苦因的如實知見，更是超越悲傷的實際究竟之道。

關鍵詞：教說、喪親者、佛陀、尼柯耶、四聖諦

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