

## Buddha's Guide to Marriage

by Blue Lotus

A happy marriage seems to only exist in a fairytale these days when divorce and infidelity are common occurrences. In the age of information, people cannot find contentment in relationship easily when they constantly see better options elsewhere from outside. This lure, combined with the corrupted government that favors division by consistently rewarding women and punishing men in divorce courts, makes happy marriage nearly impossible. In this post, I explore Buddha's teachings on what marriages should be like and how to achieve them.

In short, the two qualities both that men and women must have for good marriages are responsibility and honor. Contrary to the popular belief, love and desire are not required for lasting marriage. But before going into Buddha's teachings on marriage, one must understand Buddha's view on marriage first.

### Marriage is Suffering

Unlike most religions, Buddhism does not have a marriage ceremony. Buddha did not encourage marriage because he saw suffering in it. Modern marriage is suffering for both men and women. I wrote about this in *Why Women cannot be Happy in Marriage*. Women want their husbands to be rich, young, sexually attractive and obliging. With feminism, women today have unreal expectations of themselves and their husbands. Married men can try to make women happy for all their lives and they can only die trying. Female nature in women naturally makes women insatiable. Once a desire is fulfilled, there is always more to be done. Such is the nature of foolish desire.

The sea is not satisfied with all rivers, nor the fire with fuel, nor a king with his kingdom, nor a fool with sins, nor a woman with three things, intercourse, adornment and child-bearing, nor a brahmin with sacred texts, nor a sage with ecstatic meditation, nor a sekha with honour, nor one free from desire with penance, nor the energetic man with energy, nor the talker with talk, nor the politic man with the council, nor the believer with serving the church, nor the liberal man with giving away, nor the learned with hearing the law, nor the four congregations with seeing the Buddha.

Sattubhastha Jataka

But what about the best case scenario where both the husband and wife are completely happy with one another? Even then, their feelings are subject to change over time. Their contentment cannot remain the same forever as they both get older and bored with one another. One of them might meet someone more attractive one day and change his mind like this painful story in a Reddit comment. All things are subject to change. Impermanence is universal.

Even if the couple never betrays one another, they both inevitably will suffer when they must separate. In the end, old age, disease, and death will separate everyone. The separation from loved ones is an inevitable suffering in a lasting marriage.

Don't ever — regardless —

be conjoined with what's dear

or undear.

It's painful

not to see what's dear

or to see what's not.

Dhammapada 210

All marriage, whether pleasant or painful, lasting or short, always ends in suffering.

Desire and Marriage

Because desire is the immediate root of suffering, Buddha never mentions desire or love as a necessity to a happy and lasting marriage. People who enter monogamous relationships to fulfill their desires will never be happy. The more one tries to satisfy a desire, the stronger it gets like a fire that grows stronger as it burns. When a desire gets stronger, one must satisfy it with more things. For example, whenever we were children, we can be happy with very little things like toys or candies. As we grew older, these things become ordinary. We look for things that will satisfy our desire in a greater degree like expensive smartphones and luxurious cars that we have no need for.

In the same way, a marriage formed by desire or love will eventually become ordinary. The first stage of a marriage is always exciting, fun and pleasant. But as two people spend a lot of time together, the relationship they created will become ordinary at some point. This change cannot keep up with the increasing desire resulted from satisfying it. For example, two people can have sex only so many times before it becomes unexciting.

As the desire grows stronger in marriage, the people naturally get older as time goes. Consequently, their bodies become less physically attractive, making fulfilling the ever growing desires more difficult. Because desires are the cause of most, if not all, modern marriages today, married people are increasingly becoming unhappy as they get older.

To be happy in marriage, fulfilling desires should not be the end goal. Desire only leads to suffering.

#### Marriage is Responsibility

To avoid suffering, Buddha taught married couples to be responsible to one another above all else.

In five ways should a wife as the western direction be respected by a husband: by honoring, not disrespecting, being faithful, sharing authority, and by giving gifts.

And, the wife so respected reciprocates with compassion in five ways: by being well-organized, being kindly disposed to the in-laws and household workers, being faithful, looking after the household goods, and being skillful and diligent in all duties.

#### Sigalovada Sutta

The Thai Tripitaka's commentary of this sutta goes as follows:

#### Responsibilities of a Husband

### 1. Honor his Wife

A husband should acknowledge his wife by honoring her properly.

### 2. Respect his Wife

He should not speak to her as if she is a slave or laborer.

### 3. Being Faithful

A husband should not entertain himself with other women.

### 4. Sharing Authority

A husband should delegate certain household authorities of his wife. The commentary specifically mentions the kitchen. A husband should let his wife take care of food preparation. The commentary said a wife without the authority to prepare foods, resent her husbands.

### 5. Giving his Wife Gifts

The commentary text defines gifts as jewelry. A husband should give his wife jewelry within his financial mean.

## Responsibilities of a Wife

### 1. Being Well-organized

A wife should perform her duties in an organized and timely manner. The commentary gives an example that a wife should not forget when to cook foods. In another sutta, Buddha explained the duties of a wife.

For her husband, she must wake up before him, go to bed after him, be of service to him, conduct herself to please him and speak words that are loving to him.

Anuruddha Sutta

## 2. Take care of her Husband's in-laws

A wife should honor whoever her husband honors. This includes the husband's mother and father.

## 3. Being Faithful

A wife should not abandon her husband for another man even by thinking about it.

## 4. Keep her Husband's Wealth ("looking after the household goods")

A wife should keep her husband's wealth safe by not spending it wastefully.

Of things her husband earned such as money, rice, silver, or gold, she guards them safe. She is not a gambler, thief, or drinker. She does not waste money

Anuruddha Sutta

## 5. Skillful and Diligent in all Duties.

A wife should be talented in her duties such as preparing foods. For example, she should not sit and stand idly. Being generous, she should perform all her duties to their completion.

She is a skillful and diligent worker who helps her husband in his domestic works such as sewing wool or cotton. She is diligent and helps her husband's with her skills.

Of her husband's slaves, servants or workers, she knows whose work has been done or yet to be done

#### Anuruddha Sutta

As unexciting and unpopular being responsible may sound, it is the simple definition of marriage. Most people who marry in good faith expect to live with their partner for the rest of their lives. Keeping the promise to be responsible and take care of one another is the path to happy and lasting marriages. It worked in the past until women decided to be like men and let go of their responsibilities.

#### Irresponsibilities

Having witnessed many failed marriages, I do not know if people do not understand what marriage is or if they do not know how to conduct themselves responsibly. Most men, instead of being men, are becoming like women as they submit to their wives by being too overly obliging. I discussed this already in Buddha Predicted Feminism. Husbands are too nice to their wives. Since women are like children mentally, they become spoiled when adults treat them too well.

Today, wives don't have to do anything for their husbands as Buddha described. They don't have to have sex with their husbands since 1993 when most states in the US criminalized marital rape. Yet, these wives expect their husbands to be faithful to only them.

In Thailand, women, both single and married, are stupidly crazy for TV soap dramas that cast handsome male celebrities. They will always make time to watch these dramas to not miss a single episode. They enjoy seeing attractive men. This is an example of how modern media today promotes unfaithfulness in

relationships. Married women who watch these dramas will always fantasize about men who are unrealistically better than their husbands.

When one person in marriage fails to be responsible, the other has the reason to do the same. Being irresponsible is always easy. That's why marriage is difficult. Just because a marriage does not end in divorce does not mean a couple is happy in it.

To overcome the difficulty of marriage, one must diligently work on it constantly.

### Women to Avoid for Marriage

The first step for a happy marriage is to pick the right partner to marry. Here are the types of women Buddha told men to avoid.

Women who very clever are or very fair to view,

And such as many men admire—all these one should eschew:

A neighbour's wife and one that seeks a man of wealth for mate,

Such kind of women, five in all, no man should cultivate.

### Kunala Jataka

Women who are very beautiful obviously attract many men. Since female nature in women makes them always wanting, these women will not be faithful and responsible to only one husband. When they see men who have more money or better look than their husbands, their beauty can easily seduce these men under their control. Men who marry beautiful women will have a difficult time keeping their wives to themselves unless they are billionaires. But as Elon Musk's divorce shows, even being a billionaire cannot always keep women. For these reasons, Buddha advised men to not marry women who are very beautiful.

In the same way, men should stay way from popular women such as prostitutes, dancers, singers, and entertainers. They may not be as beautiful. Their popularity with men still allow them to seduce men easily as well. Prostitutes include social media whores as well in the age of Internet.

Men should stay away from wives of other men to avoid the temptation of female nature. Women can never satiate their desire. Given a proper opportunity, they will always cheat. There are countless stories of women who with someone they or their husbands know. Read this story of how a wife cheated with her friend's brother. Her friend didn't tell the husband of the affair even though she knew him.

For obvious reasons, Buddha advised men to also avoid women who marry for wealth. With the divorce courts as corrupted as they are today, women have all the incentives to marry a rich man and divorce him. Stephen Baskerville wrote a book Taken Into Custody to expose this corruption.

#### Men to Avoid for Marriage

Although Buddha didn't say much about the types of men women should avoid marrying, we can examine the same advice he gave to men above. Since Buddha told men to essentially to avoid very desirable women for marriage, his advice to women should be to avoid very desirable men as well. However, the criteria that make men desirable to women is different.

Men who are very wealthy attracts many women. Women have the natural responsibility to bear children so they want as much money as possible to make it easy for them. For this reason, wealthy men have a lot of options with women. Most women are willing to have sex with men who show his wealth. That's what Donald Trump means when he said, "Grab them by the pussies." As unpopular as it sounds, the statement is very true. When a man is a billionaire, he can easily get any woman. If a woman wants a husband who will be faithful, he must not have too much money that attracts other women.

Women should avoid marrying popular men like how men should avoid popular women. Male celebrities, singers, and actors can get most women to bed very easily. The reason why relationships between two celebrities don't last long is because they both can attract the opposite gender easily. They do not have to fix a broken relationship when getting into a new one is easier.



Finally, women should not marry men who are only interested in sex. Sex is easy to get today in the age of online dating and hookup culture. If sex is the only thing a wife offers, she is no better than prostitutes.

#### Some Attractiveness is Okay

Although Buddha advised men to not marry the most attractive women, he did not say they should marry the body positive land whales either. Husbands should find their wives attractive to some degree to satisfy their sexual desire. If husbands cannot be happy with their wives at all, they cannot be responsible and faithful to their wives easily.

Same for women, they should marry men who earn enough money to support a family, not men who have no job at all. Wives must be able to satisfy their material desire to some degree so that they can be responsible and faithful to their husbands.

As Buddha said, marriage is not the path to total happiness because it is rooted in desire. Most men and women will never get enough sex. Most women will never have enough money. There is no point in fulfilling these desires to the extreme because any effort will never be enough.

#### Marriage Conduct

Once married, the couple must properly conduct themselves properly to one another. In Sujata Jataka, Buddha taught about seven kinds of wives.

One is bad-hearted, nor compassionates

The good; loves others, but her lord she hates.

Destroying all that her lord's wealth obtains,

This wife the title of Destroyer gains.

Whate'er the husband gets for her by trade,

Or skilled profession, or the farmer's spade,

She tries to filch a little out of it.

For such a wife the title Thief is fit.

Careless of duty, lazy, passionate,

Greedy, foul-mouthed, and full of wrath and hate,

Tyrannical to all her underlings

All this the title High and Mighty brings.

Who evermore compassionates the good,

Cares for her husband as a mother would,

Guards all the wealth her husband may obtain—

This wife the title Motherly will gain.

She who respects her husband in the way

Young sisters reverence to elders pay,

Modest, obedient to her husband's will,

The Sisterly is this wife's title still.

She whom her husband's sight will always please

As friend that friend after long absence sees,

High-bred and virtuous, giving up hen life

To him—this one is called the Friendly wife.

Calm when abused, afraid of violence,

No passion, full of dogged patience,

True-hearted, bending to her husband's will,  
Slave is the title given to her still.

They who are called Destroyer in this life,  
The High and Mighty, or the Thievish wife,  
Being angry, wicked, disrespectful, go  
Out of the body into hell below.

They who are called the Friendly in this life,  
Motherly, Sisterly, or Slavish wife,  
By virtue and their long self-mastery  
Pass into heaven when their bodies die.

Sujata Jataka

To put it simply, the proper conduct of wives is to please their husbands.

In Women are from Hell, I wrote about why beings reincarnate with male or female gender according to Buddha. Because women are inferior to men by their past karma, wives have the responsibilities to please their husbands. Men have the responsibilities to honor their wives and be faithful. Unlike what feminism wants people to believe, men and women are not equal in reality. Husbands and wives should see this reality and conduct themselves properly.

A man who desires to keep being male from birth to birth, let him avoid another's man wife as a man with washed feet the mire.

A woman who desires to become male from birth to birth, let her worship her husband like he is the king of heaven.

## Mahanaradakassapa Jataka

### Example

To illustrate good and bad marriages, here are some examples from Tripitaka.

### Uttara Nandamata

Uttara was a Buddhist wife who was married to a non-Buddhist husband. She wanted to practice Buddhist precepts that include sexual abstinence. She hired a prostitute for her husband during her practice to please her husband. This is a proper conduct of a good wife.

### Puppharatta Jataka

A husband tried to steal a fine dress from a palace for his wife. He got caught and was executed. At his last minute, he kept thinking about how his wife will be sad because she will not get the dress. This is how a greedy wife can bring a man's demise.

### Culla Paduma Jataka

A husband cut himself so that his wife can drink his blood when no water was available. Time passed, his wife cheated and pushed the husband off a cliff. This is how a wife can be ungrateful.

### Manicora Jataka

A king fell in love with an extremely beautiful married woman. The king tried to frame her husband for a crime so that he take the wife. The wife saved her husband from execution by asking angels for help. This is how a faithful and virtuous wife wields great power.

## Conclusion

Marriage requires a lot of effort. Buddha did not recommend it even though he spoke about it. Instead of desire, a happy and lasting marriage depends on responsibility and honor. A marriage that is formed by strong desires does not last because desires only get stronger as people get older. A husband and a wife should conduct themselves properly to one another if they want their marriage to be happy and lasting.