

Buddhist Practice and Mutual Benefit

Compiled by Gil Fronsdal

“Monks, a wise person, one of great wisdom, does not intend harm to self, intend harm to others, or intend harm to both self and others. Thinking in this way, such a one intends benefit for self, benefit for others, benefit for both, benefit for the whole world. Thus is one wise and of great wisdom.”

Anguttara Nikaya II, p 179

“Therefore, monks, the teachings which I have realized and explained should be well taken up, practiced, cultivated, and repeated, so that this sublime discipline may endure for a long time, for the benefit of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans.”

Digha Nikaya ii 119

A [truth-telling] brahmin says or thinks, “All living beings are not to be harmed.” So saying, a brahmin speaks truth, not falsehood. He has no conceit he has no conceit of ‘better am I, equal am I, inferior am I’. Moreover, by fully comprehending the truth contained in that saying, he is bent on the practice of mercy and compassion for all living beings.

The Numerical Discourses ii.176

[When the first group of monks had become enlightened, the Buddha said to them,”

“Monks, go forth for the benefit of the multitude, for the happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, benefit and happiness of devas and humans. Two of you should not go the same way.”

Vinaya I 20-21

“Cunda, a person stuck in mud can not pull out by another person stuck in mud. It is the person who is not stuck in the mud who should pull out someone stuck in mud. A person who is untamed, undisciplined, with defilements un-extinguished cannot tame, discipline and help extinguish the defilements of some else. It is the person who is tamed, disciplined, and whose defilements are extinguished who should tame, discipline, and help extinguish the defilements of someone else.”

The Middle Length Discourses

[The following should be read together with and in harmony with the above quotes:]

Don't give up your own welfare

For the sake of others' welfare, however great.

Clearly know your own welfare,

And be intent on the highest good.

(Dhammpada 166)

Mutual Protection

Protecting oneself one protects others;
 Protecting others one protects oneself.
 And how does one, in protecting oneself, protect others?

By the repeated and frequent practice of mindfulness.
 And how does on one, in protecting others, protect oneself?
 By patience and forbearance, by a non-violent and harmless life,
 By loving-kindness and compassion.

Empathy

All tremble at violence:
 All fear death.
 Having likened others to yourself,
 Don't kill or cause others to kill. (129)

All tremble at violence:
 Life is dear to all.
 Having likened others to yourself,
 Don't kill or cause others to kill. (130)

If you surveyed the entire world
 You'd find no one more dear than yourself.
 Since each person is most dear to themselves,
 May those who love themselves not bring harm to anyone.

Raja Sutta: Udana V 1