AN 8.1 — The Benefits of Love

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Text

Numbered Discourses 8.1

1. Love

The Benefits of Love

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, you can expect eight benefits when the heart's release by love has been cultivated, developed, and practiced, made a vehicle and a basis, kept up, consolidated, and properly implemented. What eight? You sleep at ease. You wake happily. You don't have bad dreams. Humans love you. Non-humans love you. Deities protect you. You can't be harmed by fire, poison, or blade. If you don't penetrate any higher, you'll be reborn in a realm of divinity. You can expect these eight benefits when the heart's release by love has been cultivated, developed, and practiced, made a vehicle and a basis, kept up, consolidated, and properly implemented.

A mindful one who develops

limitless love

weakens the fetters,

seeing the ending of attachments.

Loving just one creature with a hateless heart

makes you a true person.

Sympathetic for all creatures,

a noble one creates abundant merit.

The royal potentates conquered this land

and traveled around sponsoring sacrifices—

horse sacrifice, human sacrifice,

the sacrifices of the 'casting of the yoke-pin', the 'royal soma drinking', and the 'unimpeded'.

These are not worth a sixteenth part
of the mind developed with love,
as all the constellations of stars
aren’t worth a sixteenth part of the moon’s light.
Don’t kill or cause others to kill,
don’t conquer or encourage others to conquer,
with love for all sentient beings,
you’ll have no enmity for anyone.”