



Violence and Nonviolence, by The Dalai Lama and Victor Chan

"What is violence? What is nonviolence?" the Dalai Lama had once asked me in one of our interviews in Dharamsala. "Very difficult to make clear. It is related to motivation. If we have sincere motivation, with compassion and caring in our minds, even if we speak harsh words, use physical force, these actions are nonviolent. But with negative motivation, a friendly gesture using nice words and a big smile, and try to exploit others, it is the worst kind of violence. Because of the motivation." Â [...]

"My approach: Today's reality is whole world just one body. Everything is a part of me. Understanding this helps reduce negative emotions. Hatred comes because we don't appreciate interdependence. Suffering comes because we don't understand interdependence. We cause harm, sometimes unintentionally, because we are greedy for money, power. We think these things will make us happy. This is misunderstanding. Real happiness comes from peace of mind. The only way to obtain is be altruistic, be compassionate."

For the Dalai Lama, the essence of the Buddhist worldview can be summed up in two words: nonviolence and interdependence.

Nonviolence

for him is not passivity: the absence of violence is only part of it. We need to actively help others and we should do that with a genuine sense of compassion, not pity. At a minimum, we should not harm others. Not harming others is a logical extension of the idea of interdependence. Since everything is a part of us, harming others would hurt ourselves. Â [...]

"So, taking care of other," the Dalai Lama told us in Delhi, "taking care of other part of the world, is actually taking care of yourself. Because individual future depends on the humanity as a whole. So that's new reality - global economy and also population and technology and also the environment. So long as you have the feeling, you have the sense of concern about the Â well-being of others, then there is no room to cheat, no room to exploit, no room to bully. All is part of you, all part of me."

"And it's very important to make distinction: actor and action. We have to oppose bad action. But that does not mean we against that person, actor. Once action stopped, different action comes, then that person could be friend. That's why today, China is enemy; next day, there's always the possibility to become friend. And that's why I have no problem forgiving the Chinese for what they've done to my country

and people."

--Dalai Lama and Victor Chan, in '_Wisdom of Compassion_'

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