1. Caring for Suffering

Tending the Sick: Adapted from the Theravāda Vinaya (Vin. I, 302), translated by F.L. Woodward

Now, at that time a certain monk was suffering from dysentery and lay where he had fallen down in his own excrements. As the Buddha was walking about, he came to the lodging of that monk. When he saw that monk lying where he had fallen in his own excrements, he went over to him and said, “Brother, what ails you?”

“I have dysentery, Lord.”
“But is there anyone taking care of you, brother?”
“No, Lord.”
“Why is it, brother, that the monks do not take care of you?”
“I am useless to the monks, Lord, therefore the monks do not care for me.”

Then the Buddha said to the venerable Ananda, “Go, Ananda, and fetch water. We will wash this brother.”

When Ananda had fetched water, the Buddha poured it out, and the venerable Ananda washed that brother all over. Then the Buddha taking him by the head and the venerable Ananda taking him by the feet, together they laid him on a bed.

Then the Buddha, in this connection and on this occasion, gathered the order of monks together, and questioned them, saying, “Monks, is there in such a lodging a brother who is sick?”

“There is, Lord.”
“And what ails that brother?”
“Lord, that brother has dysentery.”
“But, brethren, is there anyone taking care of him?”
“No, Lord.”
“Why not? Why do the monks not take care of him?”
“That brother is useless to the order of monks, Lord. That is why the monks do not take care of him.”

“Monks, you have no mother and no father to take care of you. If you will not take care of each other, who else will do so? Monks, those who would attend to me, let them attend to the sick.”

AN 5.124 excerpt (Bodhi translation)

“Bhikkhus, possessing five qualities, an attendant is qualified to take care of a patient. What five? (1) He is able to prepare medicine. (2) He knows what is beneficial and harmful, so that he withholds what is harmful and offers what is beneficial. (3) He takes care of the patient with a mind of lovingkindness [mettā], not for the sake of material rewards. (4) He is not disgusted at
having to remove feces, urine, vomit, or spittle. (5) He is able from time to time to instruct, encourage, inspire, and gladden the patient with a Dhamma talk.

AN 5.162 excerpt (Bodhi translation)

“Suppose a sick, afflicted, gravely ill person was traveling along a highway, and the last village behind and the next village ahead were both far away. They would not obtain suitable food and medicine or a qualified attendant; they would not get [to meet] the leader of the village district. Another person traveling along the highway might see this person and arouse sheer compassion [kāruñña], sympathy [anuddaya], and tender concern [anukampā] for them, thinking, ‘Oh, may this person obtain suitable food, suitable medicine, and a qualified attendant! May they get [to meet] the leader of the village district! For what reason? So this person does not encounter calamity and disaster right here.’”

MN 58 excerpt: To Prince Abhaya (Bodhi translation)

[Note: The teaching on speech is more detailed and nuanced; important parts have been elided for this context]

... On that occasion, a young tender infant was lying prone on Prince Abhaya’s lap. Then the Blessed One said to Prince Abhaya: “What do you think, prince? If, while you or your nurse were not attending to this infant, he were to put a stick or a pebble into his mouth, what would you do to him?”

“Venerable Sir, I would take it out. If I could not take it out at once, I would take his head in my left hand, and crooking a finger of my right hand, I would take it out even if it meant drawing blood. Why is that? Because I have compassion [anukampā] for this child.”

“So, too, prince, such speech as the Tathāgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others, such speech the Tathāgata does not utter. ... Such speech as the Tathāgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others: the Tathāgata knows the time to use such speech. ... Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has compassion [anukampā] for beings.”

AN 8.39 excerpt (Bodhi and Frondsal translations)

“... There are these five gifts, great gifts, primal, of long standing, traditional, ancient, ...

Abandoning the taking of life, one abstains from taking life. This gives freedom from danger, freedom from hostility, and freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of living beings. In giving others freedom from danger, hostility, and oppression one gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, hostility, and oppression. This is the first great gift...

Abandoning the taking of what is not given, one abstains from taking what is not given... abstains from sexual misconduct... abstains from false speech... abstains from liquor, wine, and
intoxicants, the basis for heedlessness. ... This is the fifth gift, a great gift, primal, of long standing, traditional, ancient…”

SN 55.7 excerpt: The People of Bamboo Gate (Bodhi translation)

[Bold added]

[...] “What, householders, is the Dhamma exposition applicable to oneself? Here, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘I am one who wishes to live, who does not wish to die; I desire happiness and am averse to suffering. Since I am one who wishes to live ... and am averse to suffering, if someone were to take my life, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to take the life of another—of one who wishes to live, who does not wish to die, who desires happiness and is averse to suffering—that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from the destruction of life, exhorts others to abstain from the destruction of life, and speaks in praise of abstinence from the destruction of life. Thus this bodily conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to take from me what I have not given, that is, to commit theft, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to take from another what he has not given, that is, to commit theft, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from taking what is not given, exhorts others to abstain from taking what is not given, and speaks in praise of abstinence from taking what is not given. Thus this bodily conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to commit adultery with my wives, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to commit adultery with the wives of another, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from sexual misconduct, exhorts others to abstain from sexual misconduct, and speaks in praise of abstinence from sexual misconduct. Thus this bodily conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to damage my welfare with false speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to damage the welfare of another with false speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from false speech, exhorts others to abstain from false speech, and speaks in praise of abstinence from false speech. Thus this verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If some- one were to divide me from my friends by divisive speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to
divide another from his friends by divisive speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to
the other either....’ Thus this verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to address me with harsh
speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to address another with
harsh speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either....’ Thus this verbal
conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to address me with
frivolous speech and idle chatter, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I
were to address another with frivolous speech and idle chatter, that would not be pleasing and
agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and
disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is dis- pleasing and
disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from idle chatter, exhorts
others to abstain from idle chatter, and speaks in praise of abstinence from idle chatter. Thus this
verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects....”

SN 48.41 excerpt: Old Age (Sujato translation)

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the Eastern Monastery, the stilt longhouse
of Migāra’s mother.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and sat warming his back in the last
rays of the sun.

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and while massaging the Buddha’s
limbs, he said:

“It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how the complexion of your skin is no longer pure and bright.
Your limbs are flaccid and wrinkled, and your body is stooped. And it’s apparent that there has
been a deterioration in your faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body.”

“That’s how it is, Ānanda. When young you’re liable to grow old; when healthy you’re liable to
get sick; and when alive you’re liable to die.”

DN 16 excerpt: Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (Walshe translation)

Sections 2.25-2.26:

“Ānanda, I am now old, worn-out, venerable, one who has traversed life’s path, I have reached
the term of life, which is eighty. Just as an old cart is made to go by being held together with
straps, so the Tathāgata’s body is kept going by being strapped up. It is only when the Tathāgata
withdraws his attention from outward signs, and by the cessation of certain feelings, enters into
the signless concentration of mind, that his body knows comfort.
“Therefore, Ānanda, you should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge...”

SN 22.1 excerpt: Nakulapita (Bodhi translation)

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Bhaggas at Sūṁsumaragira in the Bhesakalā Grove, the Deer Park. Then the householder Nakulapita approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“I am old, venerable sir, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, come to the last stage, afflicted in body, often ill. I rarely get to see the Blessed One and the bhikkhus worthy of esteem. Let the Blessed One exhort me, venerable sir, let him instruct me, since that would lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time.”

“So it is, householder, so it is! This body of yours is afflicted, weighed down, encumbered. If anyone carrying around this body were to claim to be healthy even for a moment, what is that due to other than foolishness? Therefore, householder, you should train yourself thus: ‘Even though I am afflicted in body, my mind will be unafflicted.’ Thus should you train yourself.”

Then the householder Nakulapita, having delighted and rejoiced in the Blessed One’s statement, rose from his seat and, having paid homage to the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, he approached the Venerable Sāriputta. Having paid homage to the Venerable Sāriputta, he sat down to one side, and the Venerable Sāriputta then said to him:

“Householder, your faculties are serene, your facial complexion is pure and bright. Did you get to hear a Dhamma talk today in the presence of the Blessed One?”

“Why not, venerable sir? Just now I was anointed by the Blessed One with the ambrosia of a Dhamma talk.” [...]
2. *Karuṇā*: Meditative Cultivation

**MN 62 excerpt (Bodhi translation)**

“Rāhula, develop meditation on loving-kindness [*mettā*]. For when you develop meditation on loving-kindness, any ill will will be abandoned.

“Rāhula, develop meditation on compassion [*karuṇā*]. For when you develop meditation on compassion, any cruelty will be abandoned.

“Rāhula, develop meditation on altruistic joy [*muditā*]. For when you develop meditation on altruistic joy, any discontent will be abandoned.

“Rāhula, develop meditation on equanimity [*upekkhā*]. For when you develop meditation on equanimity, any aversion will be abandoned.”

**MN 7 excerpt (Bodhi and Anālayo translations)**

“He considers thus: ‘The imperfections of the mind have in part been given up, expelled, released, abandoned, and relinquished by me,’ and he gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma. When he is glad, rapture is born in him; in one who is rapturous, the body becomes tranquil; one whose body is tranquil feels pleasure; in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. [...]”

“He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness [*mettā*], likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, completely and everywhere; he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.

“He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with compassion [*karuṇā*]...with a mind imbued with altruistic joy [*muditā*]...with a mind imbued with equanimity [*upekkhā*], likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, completely, and everywhere; he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with equanimity, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.”

**MN 99 excerpt (Bodhi and Anālayo translations)**

“He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness [*mettā*], likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, completely and everywhere; he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.

[…] Just as a vigorous conch-shell blower could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the deliverance of mind by loving-kindness [*mettā cetovimutti*] is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there.”

[And likewise for *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*.]
AN 10.219 excerpt: Karajakāya Sutta (Bodhi and Anālayo translations)

[The Buddha asks] “What do you think? Suppose a youth were to develop the liberation of mind by lovingkindness [mettā cetovimutti] from childhood on. Would this person still perform unwholesome deeds later on?”
[The monks reply] “Certainly not, Blessed One.”

...[The Buddha] “Suppose a youth were to develop the liberation of mind by compassion [karunā]... by altruistic joy [muditā]... by equanimity [upekkhā] from childhood on. Would this person still perform unwholesome deeds later on?”
[The monks reply] “Certainly not, Blessed One.”
3. **Kāruṇā**

AN 5.162 excerpt (Bodhi translation) – *repeated from Section 1 above*

“Suppose a sick, afflicted, gravely ill person was traveling along a highway, and the last village behind and the next village ahead were both far away. They would not obtain suitable food and medicine or a qualified attendant; they would not get [to meet] the leader of the village district. Another person traveling along the highway might see this person and arouse sheer compassion [kāruṇā], sympathy [anuddaya], and tender concern [anukampā] for them, thinking, ‘Oh, may this person obtain suitable food, suitable medicine, and a qualified attendant! May they get [to meet] the leader of the village district! For what reason? So this person does not encounter calamity and disaster right here.’”

AN 5.166 excerpt (Sujato translation)

*Setting:* The Venerable Sāriputta has given a teaching, and a junior monk, Udāyī, objects to it.

… “This is not possible, Reverend Sāriputta, it cannot happen!”
But for a second … and a third time Sāriputta repeated his statement.
And for a third time, Udāyī said to him, “This is not possible, Reverend Sāriputta, it cannot happen!”
Then Venerable Sāriputta thought, “Even in front of the Buddha, Venerable Udāyī disagrees with me three times, and not one mendicant agrees with me. I’d better stay silent.” Then Sāriputta fell silent. [...]  

Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda! There is a senior mendicant being harassed, and you just watch it happening. Don’t you have any compassion [kāruṇā] for a senior mendicant who is being harassed?”

MN 26 excerpt (Bodhi translation)

“I considered: ‘This Dhamma that I have attained is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in attachment, takes delight in attachment, rejoices in attachment. It is hard for such a generation to see this truth, namely, specific conditionality, dependent origination. And it is hard to see this truth, namely, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna. If I were to teach the Dhamma, others would not understand me, and that would be wearying and troublesome for me.’ … Considering thus, my mind inclined to inaction rather than to teaching the Dhamma.

“Then, bhikkhus, the Brahmā Sahampati knew with his mind the thought in my mind and he considered: ‘The world will be lost, the world will perish, since the mind of the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, inclines to inaction rather than to teaching the Dhamma.’ Then, just as quickly as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm, the Brahmā Sahampati vanished in the Brahma-world and appeared before me. He arranged his
upper robe on one shoulder, and extending his hands in reverential salutation towards me, said: ‘Venerable sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma, let the Sublime One teach the Dhamma. There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are wasting through not hearing the Dhamma.’ […]

“Then I listened to the Brahmā’s pleading, and out of compassion [kāruñña] for beings I surveyed the world with the eye of a Buddha. Surveying the world with the eye of a Buddha, I saw beings with little dust in their eyes and with much dust in their eyes, with keen faculties and with dull faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach, and some who dwelt seeing fear and blame in the other world.

“Then I replied to the Brahmā Sahampati in stanzas:

‘Open for them are the doors to the Deathless, Let those with ears now show their faith. Thinking it would be troublesome, O Brahmā, I did not speak the Dhamma subtle and sublime.’

[...]

“I considered thus: ‘To whom should I first teach the Dhamma? Who will understand this Dhamma quickly?’ …”
4. **Anukampā**

*Gil Fronsdal translates this term simply as “care”*

The Buddha acts and teaches out of *anukampā*

**SN 4.11 excerpt: (Bodhi translation)**

[The Buddha in reply to Māra] “... I sleep in peace, full of compassion [*anukampā*] for all beings.”

**MN 58 excerpt: To Prince Abhaya (Bodhi translation) – repeated from Section 1 above**

[...] “So, too, prince, such speech as the Tathāgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbenefficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others, such speech the Tathāgata does not utter. ... Such speech as the Tathāgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others: the Tathāgata knows the time to use such speech. ... Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has compassion [*anukampā*] for beings.”

**MN 103 excerpt: (Bodhi translation)**

[The bhikkhus think of the Buddha]: “The Blessed one is compassionate [*anukampaka*] and seeks our welfare; he teaches the Dhamma out of compassion [*anukampā*].”

**SN 43 excerpt: (Bodhi translation)**

“Whatever should be done, bhikkhus, by a compassionate [*anukampaka*] teacher out of compassion [*anukampā*] for his disciples, desiring their welfare, that I have done for you.”

Hearing the teachings, disciples also become inspired to the quality of *anukampā*

**MN 27 excerpt: (Sujato translation)**

“A Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He realizes with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely complete and pure.

A householder hears that teaching... They gain faith in the Realized One and... [at some later time] they take up the training and livelihood of the mendicants. They give up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They’re scrupulous and kind, living full of compassion [*anukampā*] for all living beings...”
Disciples are instructed to practice or to “wander forth” out of anukampā

**DN 16 excerpt: Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (Walshe translation)**

Section 3.50:

“Monks, ...those matters which I have discovered and proclaimed should be thoroughly learned by you, practiced, developed, and cultivated, so that this holy life may endure for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion [anukampā] for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans. And what are those matters...? They are: The four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four roads to power, the five spiritual faculties, the five mental powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, the Noble Eightfold Path.”

**AN 4.5 excerpt: The Buddha sends his arahant disciples out into the world (Bodhi translation)**

“Wander forth for the welfare of the multitude, for the happiness of the multitude, out of compassion [anukampā] for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans.”

**Preventing / dispelling delusion**

**MN 85 excerpt: Prince Bodhi (Sujato translation)**

... Now at that time a new stilt longhouse named Pink Lotus had recently been constructed for Prince Bodhi. It had not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any person at all.

[After inviting the Buddha to be the first to enter it, and laying out a white cloth over the entry stairs] Prince Bodhi was standing outside the gates waiting for the Buddha. Seeing the Buddha coming off in the distance, he went out to greet him. After bowing and inviting the Buddha to go first, he approached the Pink Lotus longhouse. But the Buddha stopped by the last step of the staircase.

Then Prince Bodhi said to him, “Sir, let the Blessed One ascend on the cloth! Let the Holy One ascend on the cloth! It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.” But when he said this, the Buddha kept silent.

For a second time ... and a third time, Prince Bodhi said to him, “Sir, let the Blessed One ascend on the cloth! Let the Holy One ascend on the cloth! It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.”

Then the Buddha glanced at Venerable Ānanda. So Ānanda said to Prince Bodhi, “Fold up the cloth, Prince. The Buddha will not step upon the white cloth. The Realized One has compassion [anukampā] for future generations.”
Ud 1.10 excerpt (Sujato translation)

...At that time Bāhiya of the Bark Cloth was residing by Suppāraka on the ocean shore, where he was honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. And he received robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind: “I am one of those in the world who are perfected or on the path to perfection.”

Then a deity who was a former relative of Bāhiya, having compassion [anukampā] and wanting what’s best for him, approached him and said: “Bāhiya, you’re not a perfected one, nor on the path to perfection. You don’t have the practice by which you might become a perfected one or one on the path to perfection.”

[This prompts Bāhiya to seek out the Buddha for teachings, and he becomes awakened]

Exemplar

MN 4 excerpt (Bodhi translation)

Then the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said: “Master Gotama, when clansmen have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of faith in Master Gotama, do they have Master Gotama for their leader, their helper, and their guide? And do these people follow the example of Master Gotama?”

“That is so, brahmin, that is so. When clansmen have gone forth from the home life into homelessness out of faith in me, they have me for their leader, their helper, and their guide. And these people follow my example.”

[...]

“Now, brahmin, it might be that you think: ‘Perhaps the recluse Gotama is not free from lust, hate, and delusion even today, which is why he still resorts to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest.’ But you should not think thus. It is because I see two benefits that I still resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest: I see a pleasant abiding for myself here and now, and I have compassion [anukampā] for future generations.”

SN 16.5 excerpt (Bodhi translation)

[Ven. MahāKassapa:] “For a long time, venerable sir, I have been a forest dweller and have spoken in praise of forest dwelling; I have been an almsfood eater and have spoken in praise of eating almsfood; I have been a rag-robe wearer and have spoken in praise of wearing rag-robes; I have been a triple-robe user and have spoken in praise of using the triple robe; I have been of few wishes and have spoken in praise of fewness of wishes; I have been content and have spoken in praise of contentment; I have been secluded and have spoken in praise of solitude; I have been aloof from society and have spoken in praise of aloofness from society; I have been energetic and have spoken in praise of arousing energy.”
[The Buddha:] “Considering what benefit, Kassapa, have you long been a forest dweller … and spoken in praise of arousing energy?”

“Considering two benefits, venerable sir. For myself I see a pleasant dwelling in this very life, and I have compassion \textit{anukampā} for later generations, thinking, ‘May those of later generations follow my example!’ For when they hear, ‘The enlightened disciples of the Buddha were for a long time forest dwellers and spoke in praise of forest dwelling … were energetic and spoke in praise of arousing energy,’ then they will practice accordingly, and that will lead to their welfare and happiness for a long time.”

\textbf{Visiting the sick and dying}

\textbf{SN 22.88 excerpt: Assaji (Bodhi translation)}

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rajagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrel Sanctuary. Now on that occasion the Venerable Assaji was dwelling at Kassapaka’s Park, sick, afflicted, gravely ill. Then the Venerable Assaji addressed his attendants: “Come, friends, approach the Blessed One, pay homage to him in my name with your head at his feet, and say: ‘Venerable sir, the bhikkhu Assaji is sick, afflicted, gravely ill; he pays homage to the Blessed One with his head at his feet.’ Then say: ‘It would be good, venerable sir, if the Blessed One would approach the bhikkhu Assaji out of compassion [\textit{anukampā}].’”

“Yes, friend,” those bhikkhus replied, and they approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and delivered their message. The Blessed One consented by silence.

Then the Blessed One dressed and, taking bowl and robe, approached the Venerable Assaji. The Venerable Assaji saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and stirred on his bed. The Blessed One said to him: “Enough, Assaji, do not stir on your bed. There are these seats ready, I will sit down there.”

The Blessed One then sat down on the appointed seat and said to the Venerable Assaji: “I hope you are bearing up, Assaji, I hope you are getting better. I hope that your painful feelings are subsiding and not increasing, and that their subsiding, not their increase, is to be discerned.”

“Venerable sir, I am not bearing up, I am not getting better. Strong painful feelings are increasing in me, not subsiding, and their increase, not their subsiding, is to be discerned.”

“I hope then, Assaji, that you are not troubled by remorse and regret.”

“Indeed, venerable sir, I have quite a lot of remorse and regret.”

“I hope, Assaji, that you have nothing for which to reproach yourself in regard to virtue.”

“I have nothing, venerable sir, for which to reproach myself in regard to virtue.”
“Then, Assaji, if you have nothing for which to reproach yourself in regard to virtue, why are you troubled by remorse and regret?”

“Formerly, venerable sir, when I was ill I kept on tranquillizing the bodily formations, but now I do not obtain concentration. As I do not obtain concentration, it occurs to me: ‘Let me not fall away!’”

“Those ascetics and brahmins, Assaji, who regard concentration as the essence and identify concentration with asceticism, failing to obtain concentration, might think, ‘Let us not fall away!’ ”

“What do you think, Assaji, is form permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.”… “is feeling permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.”… “is perception permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.”… “are mental formations permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.”... “is consciousness permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.”...

AN 10.60 excerpt: Girimānanda (Bodhi translation)

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park.

Now on that occasion the Venerable Girimānanda was sick, afflicted, and gravely ill. Then the Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Bhante, the Venerable Girimānanda is sick, afflicted, and gravely ill. It would be good if the Blessed One would visit him out of compassion [anukampā].”

“If, Ānanda, you visit the bhikkhu Girimānanda and speak to him about ten perceptions, it is possible that on hearing about them his affliction will immediately subside. What are the ten?
(1) The perception of impermanence, (2) the perception of non-self, (3) the perception of unattractiveness, (4) the perception of danger, (5) the perception of abandoning, (6) the perception of dispassion, (7) the perception of cessation, (8) the perception of non-delight in the entire world, (9) the perception of impermanence in all conditioned phenomena, and (10) mindfulness of breathing.” [...]

MN 143 excerpt: Advice to Anāthapiṇḍika (Sujato translation)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Now at that time the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then he addressed a man, “...Please go to Venerable Sāriputta, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: ‘Sir, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.’ And then say: ‘Sir, please visit him at his home out of compassion [anukampā].’”

Yes, sir;” that man replied. He did as Anāthapiṇḍika asked. Sāriputta consented with silence.
Then Venerable Sāriputta robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went with Venerable Ānanda as his second monk to Anāthapiṇḍika’s home. He sat down on the seat spread out, and said to Anāthapiṇḍika, “I hope you’re keeping well, householder; I hope you’re getting by. And I hope the pain is fading, not growing, that its fading is evident, not its growing.”

“I’m not keeping well, Honorable Sāriputta, I’m not getting by. The pain is terrible and growing, not fading, its growing, not its fading, is evident. […]”

“That’s why, householder, you should train like this: ‘I shall not grasp the eye, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on the eye.’ That’s how you should train. You should train like this: ‘I shall not grasp the ear, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on the ear.’ …

[...]

You should train like this: ‘I shall not grasp whatever is seen, heard, thought, known, attained, sought, and explored by my mind, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on that.’ That’s how you should train.”

When he said this, Anāthapiṇḍika cried and burst out in tears.

Venerable Ānanda said to him, “Are you failing, householder? Are you fading, householder?”

“No, Honorable Ānanda. But for a long time I have paid homage to the Buddha and the esteemed mendicants. Yet I have never before heard such a Dhamma talk.”

“Householder, it does not occur to us to teach such a Dhamma talk to white-clothed laypeople. Rather, we teach like this to those gone forth.”

“Well then, Honorable Sāriputta, let it occur to you to teach such a Dhamma talk to white-clothed laypeople as well! There are gentlemen with little dust in their eyes. They’re in decline because they haven’t heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!”

And when the venerables Sāriputta and Ānanda had given the householder Anāthapiṇḍika this advice they got up from their seat and left. Not long after they had left, Anāthapiṇḍika passed away and was reborn in the host of Joyful Gods. […]
5. The Buddha’s Compassionate Teaching

Introduction: Wisdom and Welfare

AN 4.186 excerpt (Bodhi translation)

[Questioner]: “In what way is one a wise person of great wisdom?”

[The Buddha responds]: “[A] wise person of great wisdom,... when he thinks, he thinks only of his own welfare, the welfare of others, the welfare of both, and the welfare of the whole world. It is in this way that one is a wise person of great wisdom.”

How do these examples show compassion?

SN 36.6 excerpt: The Dart (Bodhi translation)

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SN 36.6 excerpt: The Dart (Bodhi translation)

“How do these examples show compassion?

The Commentary on the Verses of the Theris: Kisā-gotamī (Acariya Dhammapala translation), 223-224

[The death of Kisā-gotamī’s son changes her life profoundly]
[...] Then her son ran around, ran in all directions at playtime, and he died. Then the madness of grief arose in her. She said to herself, “Previously I was treated with contempt, but from the time of the birth of my son, I attained honor. They will try to throw my son away.” Because of her madness from grief, she went from door to door of the houses in the village with the dead body fastened to her hip, saying, “Give me a medicine for my son.” The people treated her with contempt, saying, “What good is medicine?” She did not understand what they said. [...] The teacher saw she possessed the basis for attaining the goal. “Go, enter the town,” he said, “and bring me some white mustard seed from any house where there has never been any death.”

“Very well, sir,” she said. Pleased, she entered the town, and at the first house she said, “The Teacher has told me to bring white mustard seed as medicine for my son. If this house has never had a death, give me white mustard seed.”

“Who can count the dead people here?” they replied.

Going to the second and third houses, she thought, “What use is white mustard seed?” Through the power of the Buddha, her madness went away, and established in her normal mind, she thought, “This will be true for the whole town. The Blessed One, who is friendly and sympathetic, saw this would be so.” [...]