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Abstract	<p>Friendship is a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in concern on the part of friend for the welfare of the other, for the other's' sake. Friendship is a kind of virtue, and it is also necessary for living. Nobody would choose to live without friends even if he had all the other good things. The perfectly good friend is termed in Buddhism as <i>Kalyana Mitta</i> (the virtuous friend). According to Buddhism, bad friends are those who, only take from others; who only render lip-service by making empty promises; who flatter; who associate in activities that lead to loss of wealth; A truly good friend is someone with the compassion and courage to tell us even those things we would prefer not to hear, which we must confront if we are to develop and grow in our lives. The Buddha said that man's entire life is established on good friends. The Buddha is known as the good friend (<i>Kalyana Mitta</i>) par excellence. Especially, the focal point of this paper is that the concept of friendship how to play as an essential role not only in Buddhist society but also in every society in the world. In order to solve this problem two methods will by used. They are descriptive method and evaluative method.</p>
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## **The Concept of Friendship in *Theravada* Buddhist Thought**

Lay Nwe<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

Friendship is a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in concern on the part of friend for the welfare of the other, for the other's sake. Friendship is a kind of virtue, and it is also necessary for living. Nobody would choose to live without friends even if he had all the other good things. The perfectly good friend is termed in Buddhism as *Kalyana Mitta* (the virtuous friend). According to Buddhism, bad friends are those who, only take from others; who only render lip-service by making empty promises; who flatter; who associate in activities that lead to loss of wealth; A truly good friend is someone with the compassion and courage to tell us even those things we would prefer not to hear, which we must confront if we are to develop and grow in our lives. The Buddha said that man's entire life is established on good friends. The Buddha is known as the good friend (*Kalyana Mitta*) par excellence. Especially, the focal point of this paper is that the concept of friendship how to play as an essential role not only in Buddhist society but also in every society in the world. In order to solve this problem two methods will be used. They are descriptive method and evaluative method.

*Key words:* *Kalyana Mitta*, - friendship, Buddhism

### **Introduction**

Man can not live alone without friends in society. He has to associate with others in order to protect his existence and to obtain what he needs for his livelihood. Man is considered a social being who seeks happiness and contentment through mutual assistance and help at each and every moment of his life. Friendship is undoubtedly central to our lives, in part because the special concern we have for our friends must have a place within a broader set of concerns including moral.

### **The Meaning of Friendship**

Friendship is a type of interpersonal relationship that is found among humans and among animals with rich intelligence, such as the higher mammals and some birds. Cross-species friendships are common between humans and domestic animals. Less common but still of note are friendships between a non-human animal and another animal of a different species, such as dog and cat.

Individuals in a friendship relationship will generally welcome each other's company and often exhibit mutually helping behavior. Friendship is generally considered to be a closer personal relationship than an acquaintanceship, although there a range of degrees of intimacy in both friends and acquaintances. For most people, there is an overlap between friends and acquaintances.

Friendship is a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern on the part of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other's sake. Friendship is a kind of virtue, or implies virtue,, and it is also most necessary for living. Nobody would choose live without friends even if he had all the other good things. There are a few divergent views on friendship.

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<sup>1</sup> Tutor, Dr., Department of Philosophy, Banmaw University.

### **Friendship in Western Philosophy**

In Western philosophy, Plato had listed four virtues (later called cardinal virtues), which Aristotle also endorses, namely, courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom; In addition to these, Aristotle also discusses the virtues of magnificence, liberality, friendship, and self-respect. Aristotle who stated that if people are friends, they have no need for justice, too, has classified friends into three categories in accordance with three motivational factors. The friendship of pleasure (friendship derived from the association of those we call friends). The friendship of utility (friendship based on a temporary alliance and profit). The friendship of virtue (friendship based on the motive of virtues, lofty ideals, and mutual respect).

And so there are three bases for friendships, depending on which of these qualities binds friends together. When two individuals recognize that the other person is someone of good character, and they spend time with each other, engaged in activities that exercise their virtues, then they form one kind of friendship. If they are equally virtuous, their friendship is perfect. However, there is a large gap in their moral development (as between a parent and a small child, or between a husband and a wife), then although their relationship may be based on the other person's good character, it will be imperfect precisely because of their inequality.

According to Aristotle, someone who is friendless, childless, powerless, weak, and ugly will simply not be able to find many opportunities for virtuous activity over a long period of time, and what little he can accomplish will not be of great merit.

### **Friendship in Eastern Philosophy**

In Eastern philosophy, according to Confucius, there are six kinds of friendship, three of which being harmful, and the other three being beneficial. Accordingly, the friendship with those who flatter, those who are meek, and those who uncompromised with principles are treated as harmful. The friendship with those who are upright, truthful, and well-formed is considered beneficial.

In Indian thought, the concept of friendship had its roots in the *Rig Veda* itself. The terms such as *Mitra*, *Sakha* (one who eats together), and *Suhra* (good or kind-hearted) can be taken as the classical examples. The term *Mitra* is used to denote the god of intimate friendship, closely linked with *Varuna*.

Both *Varuna* and *Mitra* are considered the guardians of moral law. Hence, friendship appears to have direct reference to ethics and natural law. It is stated in *Rig Veda* that *Mitra*, who is the friend par excellence, speaks to people and stirs them to labor.

### **Friendship in Theravāda Buddhism**

In Buddhist literature the concept of friend is extensively analyzed. According to Buddhism, good (or noble) friend is called a senior monk who is the mentor and friend of his pupil, wishing for his welfare and concerned with his progress, guiding his meditation; in particular, the meditation teacher (*Kammāthānacariya*) is so called.

There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders' sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.

In *Dhammapada*, the Buddha indicated seven types of friends. They are: (1) those who

are friendly only at drinking bars; (2) those who are friendly only when one meets them; (3) those who are friendly only when there is some task at hand; (4) those who are really friends in need; (5) those who are always with one at all times whether one is ill or well; (6) those good friends who lead one along the path to progress, dissuading one from evil; (7) they are good friends who are unhappy when one is in misery but are very happy when one, is all right. He prevents others when they find fault with one and praises those who praise one.<sup>1</sup>

Buddha generally classified two kinds of friendship. They are good friend (*Kalyana Mitta*) and bad friend (*Pāpa Mitta*). The Buddha has described good friend (*Kalyana Mitta*) is someone with the compassion and courage to, tell us even those we would prefer not to hear, which we must confront if we are to develop and grow in our lives, the bad friends (*Pāpa Mitta*) are those who encourage our weakness.

In world, opposite things are capital together such as light and dark, good and bad. There are good ones as well as bad ones. In our life, there can be good friends as well as bad friends. Some people are complaining when they meet bad friends and happy when they meet good friends. However it is not the way to do. We have to find the way how we should live with good friends and bad friends because we really meet both good and bad person in daily life.

The Buddha's advice regarding could be well comprehended by absorbing the contents of the *Sigalovāda Sutta*. There are four characteristics of bad friend. The first character is a person who only takes from others: one only takes from others (and does not give in return); one wants much in return for giving only a little; one renders service only when gets into trouble; one attends on him only for his own advantage.

The second character of bad friend is a person who only renders lip-service by making empty promises: he speaks about what he could have done for one; he speaks about what he would do in the future for one; he tries to please one with empty promises; and when occasion actually arises to render his assistance, he expresses one's inability to do so.

The third character of bad friend is a person who flatters: he approves of the evil actions of his friend; he approves also of the good actions of his friend; he praises him in his presence; and he speaks ill of him in his absence.

The fourth character of bad friend is a person who is an associate in activities that lead to loss of wealth: he is companion when indulging in intoxicants that cause inebriety and negligence; he is companion when sauntering in streets at unseemly hours; he is a companion when frequenting shoes, and entertainments; and he is a companion when indulging in gambling which causes negligence.

In *Mangala Sutta*, one in life's journey starts with avoiding the company of the fool as the first blessing because the fool is incapable of differentiating what is beneficial from what is harmful. The bad friends are those who encourage our weakness and destroy our goodness of mind. For example, *Devadatta* was regarded as a bad friend in Buddhism. *Ajatassattu* is now still suffering in *Niraya* because he had *Devadatta* as his close friend. *Devadatta* was one who could even compete with the powerful Buddha. But he did nothing for the good of the people. He had done much harm to people. *Ajatassattu* himself was an educated prince, but because he had *Devadatta* as his teacher he killed his father *Vimvisāra* for his kingship. This story expresses the evil consequences arising from association with the bad friend. If one will have the bad friend as one's leader one would not be able to carry out any other goodness, whether concerning religion, or education or politics or economics.

There are four characteristics of the good friend. The first characteristic of good friend

<sup>1</sup> Weragoda Sarada Maha, Thero, Ven, (1994) "Treasury of Truth" Singapore, Chief Monk Singapore Buddhist Meditation Center , p-165.

is one who protects the inebriated friend: he protects the property of the inebriated friend; he is a refuge for the friend who is in troubled; and when unforeseen needs arise, he comes to the aid of the friend with twice the required assistance.

The second is one who is the same in prosperity and adversity: he confides his secrets in his friend; he keeps the secrets of his friend; he does not forsake his friends when in troubled; he sacrifices even for the sake of his friend.

The third is one who gives good counsel: he restrains his friend from doing evil; he encourages his friend to do good; he tells him about profound matters which his friend has not heard before; and he shows his friend the way to be the virtuous.

The fourth is one who understands and sympathizes: he does not rejoice in the misfortunes of his friend; he rejoices over his friend's prosperity; he restrains others from speaking ill of his friend; and he commends those who speak well of his friend. A wise person having understood these characteristics of good friend should cherish them and associate with them as a mother tends her only son.

The Buddha shows that the guidance of good friends is very essential for life here and hereafter. There is a conversation between the Buddha and his disciple *Ananda* in which *Ananda* enthusiastically declares, "This is half of the holy life, lord: admirable friendship, admirable companionship, and admirable camaraderie."

The Buddha replies: "Don't say that, *Ananda*. Don't say that. Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companion, and comrades, he can be expected to develop and pursue the Noble Eightfold Path."<sup>1</sup>

In the *Pathama Mitta Sutta* of the *Anguttara-nikāya* a good friend possesses with seven qualities is advised to associate with a friend who, (i) gives what is difficult to give (ii) does what is difficult to do (iii) patiently endures what is difficult to, endure (iv) reveals his own secrets (v) protects one's secrets (vi) does not abandon the friend in crisis (vii) does not despise one because of one's loss.<sup>2</sup>

The Buddha elaborates that, through such friendships, one develops each of the path factors through seclusion, dispassion and cessation. Further, the Buddha states that through spiritual friendship with the Buddha Himself followers have gained release from suffering. The Buddha is known as the good friend (*Kalyana-mitta*) par excellence.

If we associate with the virtuous friend, we will be guided by the virtuous friend and we will change even our bad characters. Like *Angulimāla*, he was really a bad man who killed a lot of people and cut the first finger or the index finger of people. A big danger and riot was arisen among the villages by the bad man, *Angulimāla*. People were so much scaring for his action of brutal killing.

However, when he met the Buddha, he listened to the Buddha's talk on *Dhamma*. And he became soft and changed in his characters to the good behaviors. Associating with the virtuous friend like Buddha, all of bad characters of *Angulimāla* were apparently changed. It was the result of associating with the virtuous friend.

"Associate with the wise friends" leads to the following developmental progression: listening to good advice, rational faith, noble thoughts, clear thinking, self control, good conduct, conquest of the hindrances, gaining of wisdom and the consequent liberation.

<sup>1</sup> မဟာဝဂ္ဂသံယုတ္တပါဠိ၊ အဝိဇ္ဇာဝဂ္ဂ၊ ဥပဇာသုတ္တ၊ ၈-၂။

<sup>2</sup> အင်္ဂုတ္တရပါဠိ၊ ဒုတိယတွဲ၊ သတ္တကနိပါတ်၊ ဒေဝတာဝဂ္ဂ၊ ပဌမမိတ္တသုတ္တ၊ ၈-၄၁။

In one of the stories traditionally known as *Jatāka* in Buddhist scriptures, there were two brother crows. The crow, *Pupphakasuva*, explained the result from associating with the wise. Even animal can be good when it is associated with the wise friend. It is a good lesson to humanity.

In *Singalovāda Sutta*, Buddha said that everybody ought to do one's duties in relation to others in one's society. True friends may be not only between one's peers but between parents and offspring, or between teacher and student etc.

Learning starts at home in our childhood. The parents are the first teachers of the young, at home. The parents are first teachers who teach them moral and spiritual values necessary to their life. They should set a good example for them in thought, word and deed. Every parent is responsible to take care of children instructing them good discipline in their childhood. In such cases of good living, good instruction and good environment, the parent's role is very important and should be respected by offspring. Most the great and popular leaders of the World had to be grown up in the hands of the good parents. Parents should be regarded as good friends for offspring if only who can truly teach and instruct their offspring. Offspring should also respect and honor to-the parents and take care them as much as they can. Parents as well as offspring mutually heed to be good friend.

The relationship of teacher and student is built on a deep respect for the teacher's knowledge and the student's potential, and through this respect and friendship, the two individuals learn constructive behavior. Constructive behavior is to think, speak and behave in a constructive way towards life, leading to personal happiness and peace, and then, to enlightenment. This relationship is considered an importance to guide the student on the proper path and to avoid the harmful consequences of misunderstanding and incorrect practice. Good society can not be constructed without good friends.

Husband and wife mutually need to be good friend to each other, too. In the story of *Mahāmoggālana*, who had done a great wrong to his own blind parents in one of his past existence. In the beginning, he was a very dutiful son but after his marriage his wife began to make trouble and she suggested that he should get rid of his parents. He took his blind parent in a cord into the forest, and there he killed them by beating them and making them believe that it was some thieves who were beating them. For that evil deed, he suffered in *niraya* for a long time. *Mahāmoggālana* had done that great wrong because he did not have good wife who can be regarded as true friend. The leadership of husband is important for a wife as well as the guidance of wife is important for a husband. They should be mutually good friend for each other.

A president (a king, government and leader) must have good friends who are wise ministers, military, judges and wealth people. A president is held by them only then will he be righteous. Moreover, he will do well to become a peaceful and developed country. He will control foreign relation and national defense, too. A president should also be a good friend for his nation and country. To be a good president who rules in accordance with the ten duties of the king.

One should minister to and help one's relations and friends in five ways: giving generously; being pleasant and courteous in speech; practicing benefits for others; being true to our words and promises; equality (treating them as one treats oneself). We can surely win friends by these ways.

One of the blessings is support of our relatives including friend. Generosity does not only mean material benefits and money but it also sharing love with those who need, and giving good advices when they need. However, some people are unable to make donations because they have neither property nor money to give others. Instead, they may physically serve with activities in some type of service. For example, if we cannot share our material or

money with the victims of a storm, we should go them and give our service as a donation for the suffering people. There are interesting activities practicing benefits for others. The more one works, the better one finds friends. The better one finds friends, the happier one can feel.

Practicing benefit of friendship necessarily involves conversations about well-being and of what might be involved in living the good life. We help our friends who need enough money is an act of small good. We help our friends to find job while they are a jobless is an act of medium good. However if our friend is really suffering because of a basic tendency toward laziness, then constantly helping him or her out may only perpetuate negative habits. The action of true friend is to help the lazy person modify his laziness. It is one of the highest forms.

In present age, the notion of human rights, the brotherhood of man and equal treatment became important point around the world. We should give equal treatment for friends without description. We help the other person for their own sake not just for what they are or what they can offer, and we put the interests of the other before our own. We can also see that we separate and different from each other. We know ourselves and the other. The moral excellence of friendship, thus, involves a high level of development and expression of the altruistic emotions of sympathy, concern and a deep caring for and identification with the good of another form whom one clearly knows oneself to be clearly other.

According to *Subāsita Sutta*, it says that we must speak four kinds of speech: pleasant speech, righteous speech, sweet speech, and true speech<sup>1</sup>. Pleasant speech is important to communicate every society successfully. It is the powerful art of relation to a particular career which we are working. If we are not skillful in pleasant speech then we will be difficult to stay together with them.

Most economists are acutely aware of the way in which market societies broke with the dependencies on egoism. They believe that the sense of probity, punctuality, promise and true and sweet speech are very important points in industrial and commercial society.

According to Buddhism, there are six kinds of speech. Among them the word of truth, advantageous but not to pleasing to others and the words of truth, advantageous and pleasing to others are the only speeches for pleasant and fruitful speech. Some people have a tendency to shun good advice and show resentment when their faults are pointed out by even parents.

In *Dhammapada*, someone who points out one's mistakes, declare them as weaknesses and condemns them, think of such a person as one showing one a treasure. We should associate with wise friends of that nature. The true friend could always resort to constructive criticism. The Buddha says that one always keep on talking of one's friend's goodness, kindness, greatness and so on, then one are trying to deceive him. In dealing with friends, one's word should be as clean as the action.

When one treats one's friends, relations and associates in such ways, they will look after him in return in five ways. They will: protect one, the friend, when one is in need of protection; guard over one's property when one is unable; be a refuge when one is in danger; not forsake one in one's troubles; help and respect one descendant.

In one of the stories of *Pakinnaka Nipāta*, *Mahā Ukkusa Jatāka*, the she-hawk told her husband that they must have some one who can defend them against any danger or trouble that may rise, and they must find some friends. After this a couple of hawk struck up a friendship with the osprey, the tortoise and the lion. One day, when a family of hawk was threatened the danger, their friendships helped to save from that danger. They escaped from the danger because they had good friends. From that time, they lived all their lives without breaking the

<sup>1</sup> သံယုတ္တပါဠိ (ပထမတွဲ)၊ သုဘာသိတသုတ္တံ၊ စာ-၁၉၀။

bond of friendship. The good friends must help each other at their need.

Having good friends is like being equipped with a powerful auxiliary engine. When we encounter a steep hill or an obstacle, we can encourage each other and find the strength to keep pressing forward. Even a feeble person will not stumble if those supporting him are strong, but a person of considerable strength, when alone, may lose his footing on an uneven path.

Practicing special duties of friendship, we can also gain civic friendship. Such civic friendship would counterbalance disparities between rich and poor, and individualism that seems so pervasive, as well as provide a way of humanizing a civic space which is often otherwise about the exercise of freedoms, obedience to rules, and a claiming of right.

Buddha has given invaluable advice for all people not only to keep the friendship but also to make the bonds together. One should not visit the friends too often or overstay the welcome. This changes the friend to a foe. If one's friend loses something, then one may be under a cloud. Visiting a friend too often invariably leads to gossip, which will involve one in a vortex of trouble. Buddha says that, it is equally bad not to visit one's friends at all. One should judge for oneself how often one should visit one's friend, how long one should stay and so on. Buddha has pointed out that a friendship deteriorates by asking favors, especially at wrong times. If at all one ask a favors, it should not be unreasonable or of a demanding nature. Asking favors far too often makes one a pest more than a friend.

Buddhist concept of friendship can perhaps be seen most clearly in *Metta* (loving kindness). *Metta* or loving kindness is one of the highest values to all Buddhist. After they try to extend their loving kindness to all living beings with no exception, they should practice the same with other three virtues, namely, compassion, joy and equanimity.

Buddha always advised people to live in harmony and intimate friendship without any dispute whatsoever. We have no friendships; we are not able to do other good things. In Buddhist community, people are living altogether on friendly terms, in harmony, in dispute free regarding each other with the eye of affection.

### **Conclusion**

It may be conclude that, friendship is one of the virtues in Buddhism. According to Buddhism, we may be friends with anybody. The Buddha guides us how to choose friends, win them and keep them since in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The Buddhist concept of friendship remains a vibrant force forever.

Friendship promotes the general good by providing a degree and kind of consideration for others' welfare. An essential part of being a good friend is being concerned about one's friendlier their own sake.

The greatest enemy in life is the self. .Both too little self-love and too much self-love destroy the balance between self-love and love for the other person that is the foundation of genuine friendship. So the value of friendship does not fit into the teleological conception.

Everyone has to accompany with one or more friends in daily life. All best friends are friends, but not all friends can be best friends. It is necessary to find good friends. Admirable friendship is actually the whole of the holy life. The practice of friendliness would finally lead to gentleness of character, positive state of mind, inner peace, freedom from conceit, absence of anger inner joy and eventually freedom from birth and death. If one is to have the bad friend as ones leader one will not be able to carry out any other goodness, whether concerning religion, or education or politics or economics.

If people lack a mutual sense of friendship toward one another, whatever plans and



programs are set up for their country and whatever is done, will come nothing. Practicing the duties of friendship contribute to universal peace and welfare of the world. The guidance of good friends is very essential for life here and hereafter in Buddhism.

In practicing duties of friendship, one does not violate rights and laws. Everyone ought to do these duties by good will (*cetanā*) and wisdom (*paññā*) and to have good results to human society. Although we are able to do in accordance with the duties of friendship, we are not only responded worse but also destroyed to our benefits. When we' face these situations, we should not disappoint. We are going to go to our goal to reach associate with good will (*cetanā*), wisdom (*paññā*) and effort (*viriya*).

In present age, Friendship Day is celebrated all over the world on the first Sunday of August, commemorates the unique bond shared by friends. It is a wonderful opportunity for people to honor their friendship and extend their sincere gratitude to their pals, for being an important part of their life. This feeling and affection are expressed in myriad ways; some of the most common being the exchange of gifts, flowers and cards.

So the concept of friendship has played an essential role not only in Buddhism but also every society in the world. Nevertheless it should be considered as a crucial factor for promoting personal virtue as well as common moral conscience of public sector in order to sustain the development of social relationship of local and global welfare in the Age of Knowledge.

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၁။ ကဝိန္ဒာဘိဝံသမဟာထေရ်၊ အရှင် (၁၉၉၃)၊ *ငါးရာငါးဆယ်ဇာတ်ဝတ္ထု*၊ (ဒုတိယတွဲ၊ တတိယတွဲ၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ပဉ္စမတွဲ) ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာန၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။

၂။ တိလောကမထေရ်၊ အရှင်၊ (၂၀၀၄)၊ *ဒီပနီပေါင်းချုပ်*၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ ခင်ချိုထွန်းစာပေ။

၃။ တိုးလှ၊ (၂၀၀၅) *မြန်မာ့ကျင့်ဝတ်သိက္ခာနှင့် လူမှုတန်ဖိုး*၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ နဝရတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။

၄။ နန္ဒာသိန်းဇံ၊ (၁၉၈၅) *မိတ်ကောင်းဆွေကောင်းနှင့် ခရီးသွားခြင်း*၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ လှိုင်းသစ်စာပေ။

- ၅။ **မဟာဝဂ္ဂသံယုတ္တပါဠိ**၊ (၂၀၀၆) ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ သာသနာရေးဦးစီးဌာန၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်။
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