

Buddha's Pity

My children,

The Enlightened One, because He saw Mankind drowning in the Great Sea of Birth, Death and Sorrow, and longed to save them,
For this was moved to pity.

Because He saw the men of the world straying in false paths, and none to guide them,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw that they lay wallowing in the mire of the Five Lusts, in dissolute abandonment,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them still fettered to their wealth, their wives and their children, knowing not how to cast them aside,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them doing evil with hand, heart and tongue, and many times receiving the bitter fruits of sin, yet ever yielding to their desires,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw that they slaked the thirst of the Five Lusts as it were with brackish water,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw that though they longed for happiness, they made for themselves no karma of happiness; and though they hated pain, yet willingly made for themselves a karma of pain; and though they coveted the joys of Heaven, would not follow His commandments on earth,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them afraid of birth, old-age and death, yet still pursuing the works that lead to birth, old-age and death,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them consumed by the fires of pain and sorrow, yet knowing not where to seek the still waters of Samadhi,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them living in an evil time, subjected to tyrannous kings and suffering many ills, yet heedlessly following after pleasure,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them living in a time of wars, killing and wounding one another; and knew that for the riotous hatred that had flourished in their hearts they were doomed to pay an endless retribution,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because many born at the time of His incarnation had heard Him preach the Holy Law, yet could not receive it,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because some had great riches that they could not bear to give away,
For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw the men of the world ploughing their fields, sowing the seed, trafficking, huckstering, buying and selling; and at the end winning nothing but bitterness,
For this He was moved to pity.

From the *Upāsaka Sīla Sūtra*. *Takakusu* XXIV, 1036; translated in 428 A.D.

Note: The total number of Buddhist works preserved in Sanskrit does not, I think, exceed a few hundred. Pali literature is much larger, but cannot compare in bulk to the Buddhist literature preserved in Chinese. To read all through the eighty-five volumes of the *Takakusu Tripitaka* for the special purpose of making these extracts was, of course, impossible. (A. Waley)

Source: Conze, E., Horner, I. B., Snellgrove, D. and Waley, A. (trans. and eds.) (1995) *Buddhist texts through the ages*. London: Oneworld Publications.