

Real merit

Throughout the Buddhist world there is a belief in the making of merit to secure ourselves a better future. People give money, for example, believing that this will mean that they will be rich in a future life. This can come true in different ways, however, or we can think of the teachings on merit to have different depths of understanding or application. The results of our actions can return to us solely within the conventional, worldly sphere or in a higher sense. Most simply on the conventional plane if we are generous to people then they will, perhaps, be generous towards us. If this is not the case, however, the letting go of material wealth can be for our benefit in the renunciant spiritual path. Perhaps this gain is in fact a higher kind of wealth, true wealth even.

Perhaps the Buddha was being very clever not to spell all this out but to let people find it out for themselves. Someone could give up everything looking for a material reward to get nothing in return, only to then find out how wonderful that nothing is compared to all those things. We can thus be drawn into a spiritual life with a worldly understanding and motivation and find ourselves discovering a higher truth and goal.

I offer this for your reflection.

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