

The Seven Principles of Buddhist Activism

Seven Beginning Principles of Buddhist Activism

What distinguishes Buddhist activism from any other kind of activism?

1. Setting Motivation

Our political actions can be dedicated to the benefit and awakening of all beings. Holding this, the action itself moves beyond mere do-gooding or fighting so-called oppression and into the realm of dharma practice.

2. Interbeing

First, we see alive and present in our own minds the same external structures of greed, hatred, and delusion that we are fighting against. We bow to them. Then we realize there is no "other" to fight against anyway.

3. Not Knowing

Our job as activists is to learn to hold the multiple questions that arise in our work. We don't have to have the answer; we want to be present with whatever is coming up. Maybe we are wrong.

4. Opening to suffering

Through our meditation practice, we learn to be present in the face of suffering. We take this skill out into the world and don't turn away as we face all levels of injustice.

5. Knowing Equanimity

Can we bring equanimity to all of our actions? Can we act without being attached to the result of our actions? Can we recognize the impossible nature of our tasks and act anyway?

6. Being Peace

Beyond ideological differences, there is a place we can, as Buddhist activists, stand together: our commitment to be in ourselves that which we are trying to bring about in the world.

7. Mindfulness in Action

The nondistracted state of mindful awareness must accompany and underlie Buddhist activists in our work to change the world. It is the fundamental nature of our being. There is no separation.

--Excerpted and reworked from "Intersection Point: Buddhist Activism at the WTO" by Diana Winston, Turning Wheel, Spring 2000 www.bpf.org

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