



Meditation Of Loving Kindness - Compassion -

Loving-kindness is friendliness that will benefit both the giver and the receiver of that friendliness. When one is friendly to oneself one would comfort and help oneself – one would not cause trouble to one's life.

When one is friendly to another, one would give help and cause well-being to that person – one would not cause trouble.

We must get closer to this friendliness in our daily life. Meditation of loving-kindness is a meritorious action that will accumulate good karma-results for us. Let us discuss how we should practice the meditation of loving-kindness.

Question:

What is the meditation of tranquility (samatha bhavana)?

Meditation of tranquillity is concentration to subdue and try to eliminate the five hindrances. The hindrances (*nivarana*¹) are qualities that are obstacles to the mind. They blind our mental vision. We cannot reach concentration when hindrances are present. The five hindrances are: sensuous desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and sceptical doubt (*kamacchanda, vyapada, thinamiddha, uddhacca kukkuccha, vicikiccha.*)

We must practice upon an object selected from the four foundations of mindfulness and meditate keeping the mind focused on the object without distraction. Meditation of tranquillity will calm the mind and subdue the five hindrances.

Question:

Is there a preparatory action before commencing meditation of tranquillity?

The Doctrine mentions a few preparatory actions before commencing any meditation. One must hear the Doctrine about the meditation, or read the appropriate discourses and fully understand them. One must have devotion and faith in the Doctrine which one has heard or read. One must find an

¹ Nirvana – similar to word ‘nibbana’ – enlightenment.

environment conducive to doing meditation without distraction. These are essentially the preparatory actions.

Nevertheless, one hears about a proliferation of wrong practices taught as preparatory action before meditation. One such practice is to chant an invocation to the Supreme Buddha to disperse the five-fold Mara (*panca Mara*). The five-fold Mara is often mentioned in later Pali literature but not in the Doctrinal texts.

Question:

Does one need a teacher to practice meditation?

On a certain occasion the Supreme Buddha said to the Venerable Elder Ananda,

"Ananda, after I am gone, let the Doctrine and the Code of monastic conduct become your mentor and teacher."

The meaning of the Supreme Buddha's words is clear:

"Conform strictly to the Doctrine and the Code of monastic conduct, and then one will be doing the right thing."

Therefore, a good instructor must be a person who has taken the Three Refuges, understands the Dhamma deeply, and lives by it. Such a person has no false affectations about his or her role as

a meditation instructor. An incompetent instructor would very likely miss the intent and guidance of the Doctrine.

Question:

What is loving-kindness (*metta*)? How does a person develop it as an object of meditation?

Loving-kindness is heartfelt friendliness one extends to oneself as well as to others. When one is friendly to oneself one will not cause harm or duress to one's life. When one is friendly towards others one would not cause harm or duress to others' lives. Behaviour that results in the well-being of oneself and others is loving-kindness.

There are two methods of practicing the meditation of loving-kindness described in the Doctrine (***Majjhima Nikaya: Anuruddha Sutta***). The Venerable Elder **Arahant Anuruddha** taught these two methods to a carpenter named **Panca Vajjika**:

1. Boundless deliverance of mind (***appamana ceto vimutti***), and
2. Exalted deliverance of mind (***mahaggata ceto vimutti***) are these two methods.

Boundless deliverance of mind is the spreading of loving-kindness in all directions without limit. A person can easily learn the following words and do this meditation.

“May all beings to the North become free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to the East become free from hate, anger, jealousy, and pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to the South become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to the West become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to North-East become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to the South-East become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to the South-West become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

May all beings to the North-West become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.

***May all beings up above become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.
May all beings down below become free from hate, anger, jealousy, pain. May they all be well and happy. May peace engulf them.”***

Exalted deliverance of mind is the extending of the range into which one spreads thoughts of loving-kindness. Firstly, one extends loving-kindness upon oneself, then to the community, country and the world.

“May I be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May I be well and happy. May peace engulf me.

May everyone in my house be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May everyone in my house be well and happy. May peace engulf everyone in my house.

May all beings in my community be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May all being in my community be well and happy. May peace engulf all beings in my community.

May all beings in my village be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May all beings in my village be well and happy. May peace engulf all beings in my village.

May all beings in my country be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May all beings in my country be well and happy. May peace engulf all beings in my country.

May all beings in the world be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May all beings in the world be well and happy. May peace engulf all beings in the world.

May all beings in the universe be free from hate, anger, jealousy and pain. May all beings in the universe be well and happy. May peace engulf all beings in the universe.”

Question:

To what level could one develop the meditation of loving-kindness?

One must necessarily practice the meditation according to the Doctrine to reach any absorption (*jhana*). Then, the five hindrances are fully subdued and the mind remains concentrated upon loving-kindness. As a person continues to maintain that concentration, the five factors of absorption develop in that person: thought-conception, discursive thinking, rapture, joy and concentration (*vitakka, vicara, piti, sukha and samadhi*). Thus one reaches the first absorption. With continued meditation on loving-kindness one can reach the second and then the third absorption.

Question:

What are the merits of meditating upon loving-kindness?

The Doctrine has a list of good results from the meditation upon loving-kindness (*Anguttara Nikaya: Mettanisansa Sutta*).

1. One sleeps well.
 2. One wakes up well.
 3. Nightmares and unpleasant dreams will not disturb one's sleep.
 4. One will become dear to all around one.
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5. Non-human beings will respect one.
6. Devas will protect one.
7. One will suffer no harm from poisons and weapons.
8. One will reach concentration with lesser effort.
9. One's physical demeanour will be pleasing and assuring.
10. One will remain delusion-free and mindful at death.
11. If one does not reach the holiness of *Arahant* in this birth one will have rebirth in a Brahma world.



Translated by
Jayati Weerakoon