



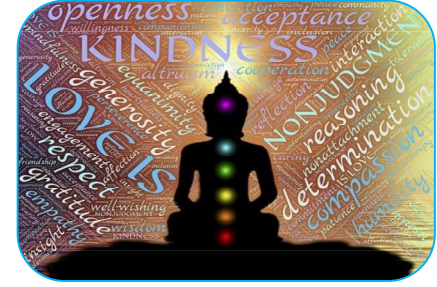
EXPOSITION OF LOVING-KINDNESS (*METTĀ*)

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate goal of Buddhism is Nibbāna (Nirvāna in Sanskrit) where all defilements and sufferings physical and mental are absolutely eradicated. In order to attain that there are various ways to practice in Buddhism and all these ways of practice were summarized as Noble Eightfold Path which can be more summarized in *Sīla* (morality), *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Paññā* (wisdom). To follow and practice this Noble Eightfol Path is nothing but meditation because only those who practice meditation can perfectly achieve these threefold trainings, i.e, *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*.



According to Buddhism, meditation is divided into two; Tranquility Meditation (*Samathabhāvanā*) and Insight Meditation (*Vipassanābhāvanā*). Regarding the former, in Buddhism, there are forty meditational objects (not ways or methods) of Tranquility Meditation and these should be described herein in brief. They are ten meditation devices (*Kasiṇa*), ten impurities or loathsome things (*Asubha*), ten reflections (*Anussati*), four sublime states (*Brahmavihāra*), four non-material (*Arūpa*) realms, one perception (*Saññā*) and one analysis (*Vavatthāna*). The three kinds of Generally Useful Meditation (*Sabbatthakakammaṭṭhāna*) which are presented in this dissertation include among them. But it must be admitted that the usage "*Sabbatthakakammaṭṭhāna*" cannot be found in early canonical texts, but in *Visuddhimagga* and other commentaries such as *Samantapāsādikā*, etc. In which too, Venerable Buddhaghosa deals with just two categories; Loving-kindness (*Mettā*) and Mindfulness of Death (*Maranassati*).

KEYWORDS: Buddhism, Ultimate goal, Tranquility meditation.

RADIATION OF LOVING-KINDNESS

A person who wants to radiate loving-kindness must consider the evil consequences of anger as well as the benefits of forbearance.

He must consider the evil consequences of anger thus: "An angry person loses the power of reasoning, and owing to his anger, he may commit crime as grave as killing others". He must also consider the benefits of forbearance thus; Forbearance is a noble practice. The Buddha regards a man of great forbearance as analogous to an *arahat* who has already discarded all mental intoxicants. No other *Dhamma* can surpass forbearance in preventing unbeneficial events and miseries and in bringing happiness and prosperity.

Procedure of Radiating Loving-kindness

The following four persons should not be taken up first in radiating loving-kindness. They are:

- (1) unbeloved ones,
- (2) intimate friends,
- (3) neutral beings, and
- (4) enemies.

Loving-kindness should not be also developed first towards beings of opposite sex. It should never be radiated towards the dead. Why should it not be developed first towards un-beloved persons and so on? To regard an un-beloved one as a dear one makes one tired. To be indifferent towards an intimate friend also makes one tired. To show respect and love towards a neutral person again makes one tired. Anger arises in him who thinks of his enemy. Lust arises in him when he tries to radiate loving-kindness towards a person of the opposite sex. Radiating loving-kindness towards the dead will not develop the mind even up to neighbourhood concentration.

To Whom Should One Radiate Loving-kindness First?

Before radiating loving-kindness to others, one must radiate it to oneself repeatedly as follows: "I want to be happy, be free from pain, be free from enmity, be free from all sufferings both mentally and physically. May I be able to strive for my happiness".

Cultivation of loving-kindness should be given priority to oneself in order to develop one's sympathetic consideration for others. Setting one as the witness, one considers thus; "As I want to be happy; other beings will also want to be happy; as I want to enjoy longevity, other beings will also want to enjoy longevity; as I want to be free from suffering, other beings will also want to be free from suffering. So, one must cultivate consideration for others."

Persons to whom one should not Radiate Loving-kindness

1. Persons of opposite sex
2. Dead persons

Lust arises in him who radiates loving-kindness towards a particular person of the opposite sex. Radiating loving-kindness towards the dead will not develop the mind even up to neighborhood concentration.

Radiating Loving-kindness to Beloved Ones

After cultivating loving-kindness repeatedly on oneself, one must radiate loving-kindness to one's venerable teachers, other persons as venerable as one's teachers, one's preceptor and other persons as venerable as one's preceptor. And, reflecting on the virtues of their morality, wisdom and other respectable qualities, one cultivates loving-kindness thus; "May this venerable teacher be happy. May he be free from suffering".

In the same way, one must keep on radiating loving-kindness to intimate friends, neither beloved nor unbeloved ones nor enemies.

How to Radiate Loving-kindness to Enemies

It has been mentioned that after radiating loving-kindness to neither beloved nor unbeloved ones, one must radiate it to an enemy.

When one is about to radiate loving-kindness to an enemy, one shall feel angry if one remembers his offences to oneself. Then one must radiate loving-kindness to the person, i.e., neither beloved nor unbeloved person on whom one has been permeating loving-kindness before. By doing so, he will be able to dispel the anger towards his enemy. If the anger does not subside, one should reflect on the Buddha's admonition: "One who feels angry and returns his anger upon the enemy, is more low-minded than the enemy. One who can forbear the offence and suppresses his anger towards the enemy achieves the greatest victory".

And again, if one's anger does not subside yet, one must recall the admirable and lovable physical, verbal and mental qualities of one's enemy to eliminate one's anger. If the enemy does not possess admirable physical, verbal and mental qualities, one should dispel one's anger by developing compassion thus: "this person is born as a human being only in this life. He will be surely reborn in a miserable realm in his future existence".

If one's anger still persists, one must overcome it by reflecting on the Buddha's admonition: "An enemy had insulted me with anger. Drive this anger away. Why am I exhausting myself by being angry with him? One may further console oneself by contemplating: "My enemy and I are conditioned by the law of *kamma*" or by following the example of the *Bodhisatta* in *Jātaka* stories thus: " The elephant king, *Chaddanta*, forgave the hunter who shot him with an arrow to kill him, cut off his tusk and gave it to the hunter. Again the monkey king, the *Bodhisatta*, saved a man who had fallen into a ravine while he had lost his way in search of his missing cow. Although that man hit his head with a stone to kill him, he forgave him and guided him safely to the right way".

"When the dragon king, *Bhūridatta*, the *Bodhisatta*, was tortured by the Brahmin snake-charmer in various ways, he forbore the pain and did his best for the charmer's welfare even though he could kill the Brahmin with his scorching nasal air". If one's anger still remains active one must reflect on the benefits of permeating loving-kindness, such as enjoying a sound sleep, waking up peacefully, etc.

If one's anger still does not subside, one must reflect thus: "Now, am I angry with my enemy's hair? Or, am I angry with his nails? Or, am I angry with the element of extension (*pathavī dhātu*) which exists in every part of his body? Or, am I angry with the element of cohesion (*āpo dhātu*), Or the element of heat (*tejo dhātu*), Or the element of motion (*vāyo dhātu*), etc.?"

If one cannot analyze the enemy into four elements, one can eliminate one's anger by exchanging gifts with the enemy or if he earns his giving by improper means by giving him presents for one should not receive anything obtained by improper means.

When one can extinguish one's anger towards one's enemy by any means mentioned above, one will feel affectionate towards that enemy just like towards beloved ones, intimate friends and neither beloved nor unbeloved ones. When this happens, one has to radiate loving-kindness towards him repeatedly.

After that, one must make attempts to maintain loving-kindness equally on the four types of person, viz., oneself, intimate friend, neutral person and enemy.

Suppose these four types of persons are staying together when dacoits come and ask them: "Give one of you to us. We will cut his throat and offer his blood as a sacrifice to God". If one wishes to offer oneself of anyone of the remaining three persons, one does not possess unbounded benevolence towards these four types of person equally.

The reason is that when one is willing to give away one of the four to the dacoits, one is being partial to the remaining three as against the one who is going to be sacrificed. Only when can one maintain equal benevolence towards all the four, he is said to have broken all barriers which separate between love and unloved ones, and to have developed impartial loving-kindness towards all beings. At this state, one is said to have attained the neighbourhood concentration which is called *Upacāra-jhāna*. If one keeps on radiating loving-kindness, one will attain the first *jhāna*, the second *jhāna*, the third *jhāna* and the fourth *jhāna*.

One who has attained *jhānas* can radiate loving-kindness effectively to all beings without specification (*Anodhisopharaṇa mettā*), to all beings with specification (*Odhisopharaṇa mettā*) and to all beings living in all directions (*Disāpharaṇa mettā*).

Radiating Loving-kindness to All Beings without Specification (*Anodhisopharaṇa Mettā Bhāvanā*)

Anodhisopharaṇa mettā means loving-kindness radiated to all beings without specifying them as male, female, etc.

The method of pervading loving-kindness without specification is as follows:

1. (a) *Sabbe sattā* = May all beings be free from danger.
averā hontu
- (b) *Sabbe sattā* = May all beings be free from mental
abyāpajjā hontu suffering.
- (c) *Sabbe sattā* = May all beings be free from
anīghā hontu physical suffering
- (d) *Sabbe sattā sukhī* = May all beings be
attānaṃ able to maintain
pariharantu themselves happily.
2. *Sabbe pāṇā* = May all sentient beings be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
3. *Sabbe bhūta* = May all existing beings be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
4. *Sabbe puggalā* = May all individuals be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
5. *Sabbe attabhāva* = May all those who have come
pariyāpannā into existence be free from
averā hontu danger, etc.

No. (2) (3) (4) and (5) must be pervaded in four ways as shown in No. (1).

Therefore, there are altogether (5x 4=20) twenty ways of *Anodhisoppharaṇa mettā bhāvanā*. Although, different terms, i.e, *satta, pāṇa, bhūta, puggala, attabhāvapariyāpanna* are used, they all mean all beings.

Radiating Loving-kindness to All Beings with Specifications (*Odhisoppharaṇa Mettā Bhāvanā*)

Odhisoppharaṇa mettā means loving-kindness which is pervaded to all beings specifying them as male, female, noble persons, worldlings, etc.

The method of pervading loving-kindness with specification is as follows:

1. (a) *Sabbā itthiyo* = May all female beings be free
averā hontu from danger.
- (b) *Sabbā itthiyo* = May all female beings be free
abyāpajjā hontu from mental suffering.
- (c) *Sabbā itthiyo* = May all female beings be free
anīghā hontu from physical suffering.
- (d) *Sabbā itthiyo* = May all female beings be able to
sukhī attānaṃ maintain themselves happily.
Pariharantu
2. *Sabbe purisā* = May all male beings be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
3. *Sabbe ariyā* = May all noble persons be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
4. *Sabbe anariyā* = May all worldlings be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
5. *Sabbe devā* = May all celestial beings (*devas* and
averā hontu *brahmas*) be free from danger, etc.
6. *Sabbe manussā* = May all human beings be free
averā hontu from danger, etc.
7. *Sabbe vinipātikā* = May all miserable beings in *apāya*
averā hontu be free from danger, etc.

All must be pervaded with *mettā* as shown in No (1). Thus, *Odhisopharaṇa mettā bhāvanā* amounts to (7x 4=28) twenty-eight ways

Disāpharaṇa Mettā Bhāvanā

Disāpharaṇa mettā means loving-kindness radiated to all beings in all ten directions. It is radiated as follows:

1. (a) May all beings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (b) May all sentient beings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (c) May all existing beings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (d) May all individuals in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (e) May all those who have come into existence in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (f) May all female beings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (g) May all male beings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (h) May all noble persons in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (i) May all world lings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (j)) May all celestial beings (*devas* and *brahmas*) in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (k) May all human beings in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.
- (l) May all miserable beings in *apāya* in the east be free from danger, mental suffering, physical suffering and be able to maintain themselves happily.

In the same way, one must radiate loving-kindness to all beings in other nine directions – west, north, south, south-east, north-west, north-east, south-west, lower direction and upper direction (in 12 ways in each direction). Those who have not attained *jhāna* can also radiate loving-kindness in this way.

A person who radiates loving-kindness in one of those ways will enjoy the following benefits:

- (1) He enjoys sound sleep.
- (2) He wakes up peacefully.
- (3) He does not have bad dreams.
- (4) He is loved by human beings.
- (5) He is loved by celestial beings.
- (6) He is guarded by celestial beings.
- (7) He is unaffected by fire, poison and weapons.
- (8) He can develop concentration quickly.
- (9) His face is serene and cheerful.
- (10) He dies without bewilderment.
- (11) He will be reborn in the *brahma* realm when he dies.

Special Notes on Loving-kindness

It is mentioned above that there are 20 ways of radiating *anodhisopharaṇa mettā* and 28 ways of radiating *odhisopharaṇa mettā*. So there are 48 ways of radiating loving-kindness without specifying direction. When they are radiated in ten

directions, we get $48+10=480$ ways of radiating loving-kindness. Combining them together, we get $48+480=528$ ways of radiating loving-kindness.

This method of radiating loving-kindness in 528 modes is described in *Paṭisambhidā magga Pāli*. It can be practiced effectively only by those who have attained *jhānas*. “Those who have not attained any *jhāna*, can also practice this method to gain merit by meditation. However, for beginners, it will be difficult even to develop concentration, because the object of meditation is very widespread. Thus, one should develop *jhānas* by radiating loving-kindness to a specified person first, and then to other persons.

According to the method used by the Buddha in pervading loving-kindness to *Pañcavaggi* (group of five ascetics) and to the elephant *Nāḷāgiri* as described in the Commentaries on the life of the Buddha, *Apadāna* and *Jātakas*, the best way for beginners is to visualize the person whom he wishes to suffuse with loving-kindness from head to toe and pervade him with intense loving-kindness from head to toe and pervade him with intense loving-kindness by contemplating repeatedly: “ May he be free from danger; may he be well and happy”.

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