



THE PRACTICING OF BRAHAMAVIHĀRA**VEN. Nyarnainda****Research Scholar, Centre for Mahayana Buddhist studies,
Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjuna Nagar Guntur, AP, India.****ABSTRACT**

Mettā is one of the boundless states (appamaññā) or divine abiding (brahmavihāra) which is a common usage in Buddhism. The nature of friendliness, wetness (sensibility) and adherence, is termed mettā; in essence it is "sineha" or "sneha" (friendship) which has the same rendering. It is synonymous with adosa (non-hatred or good-will). Its object is the friendly conceptual being. The Buddha-sāsana has existed through the ages with mettā that is good-will between teacher and disciples, and within the brotherhood. The elder cares for the younger in turn respects the former.



KEY WORDS: Practice of Mettā, Concept of Karuṇā, Theory of Muditā, Theory of Upekkhā.

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is sometimes criticized for idealism: for encouraging way of life that goes against the grain of our main desires and motivations. If we want to reduce poverty, we should be practiced *Brahmavihāra* meditation which promotes worldly well-being, and which apply those principles to improve the lot of undeveloped societies. Buddhism is more down-to-earth in its understanding of the sources of human ill-being and well-being. Its approach happens to correspond more closely to the way most pre-modern communities have understood well-being, and undeveloped societies. Buddhist perspective is not surprising that the institutional efforts that have actually aggravated the social problems. The development approach still taken for granted. Buddhism can help us to see that, and to envision more viable alternatives. Buddha's teaching, a considerable proportion of human suffering, is caused by the psychological unwholesome-roots. Human suffering at all levels can be eradicated only by the destruction of these roots of unwholesome, identified as greed, hatred, and delusion. The ultimate goal is the conquest of miseries of existence (*dukkha*). According to the *Dhamma*, the first and foremost truth about life is the reality of unsatisfactoriness which has a cause and it can be overcome in this life itself. Through understanding and insight (*vipassanā*) developed by following a Noble Eight Fold path and Four Noble Truths, after then will reach *Nibbāna*.

Practice of Mettā

Mettā (lovingkindness) should not be developed at the beginning of the exercise towards The feeling of lovingkindness would be incongruous to send lovingkindness to one whom hate. It is also rather hard or awkward to transmit lovingkindness first to one's beloved ones. Neither will it be easy to develop lovingkindness for people. It is because, if persons for whom have deep love and affection, are found to have become a bit miserable or have suffered, trouble and misery. Leave aside emitting

lovingkindness to an enemy. As regards an enemy, the moment we remember him, feeling of anger will arise recalling the past incidents or memories of wrong doings or faults.

In developing lovingkindness towards others, it is stated that first and foremost lovingkindness. That should be developed towards one's own self giving voice to "May I be happy and free from misery, danger, mental distress, bodily suffering, and be able to." The developing lovingkindness is developed to gain concentration (*samādhi*). One may be developing lovingkindness as: "May I be happy for year and year, for a hundred or thousand years, but there is no possibility of achieving. If one is developing lovingkindness for his own well-being expressing his own sentiment: "May I be happy" it would serve as an evidence that others would also wish to be happy and be free from misery.

Mostly, whenever we talk, "I practice lovingkindness, I meditate on lovingkindness," it just goes to mental lovingkindness. People go to disaster areas, refuge, camps and help them in many ways such as provide them with food, medicine, money, etc. Commentary elaborates that when a householder goes to the monastery thinking, "I will consult the monks," takes hold of a pot with a strainer and strains some water, rubs the monk's feet or their back, and so forth, these are called loving physical activities. When a householder sees the monks enter the village for the sake of alms-food and says, "Respectfully give them rice-milk, give them food," and so forth, this is called loving verbal activities. Also, when he respectfully and warmly listens to the *Dhamma* and says "You said that well," and so forth, these are called loving verbal activities. Lovingkindness meditation had been explained by the Buddha that developing mind with *mettā* (lovingkindness) for a brief period of time, once in the morning, once in daytime and once at night time. Moreover, the eleven advantages of lovingkindness are worthy of note but remembrance are the states of mind which have been developed, observed and depended upon several times. The feeling of lovingkindness should be free from defilements, obstacles, etc. From the point of view of *cetovimutti*, that is the serenity of mind emancipated from human passions, it should be taken as the *jhānic* mind.

Concept of *Karuṇā*

Karuṇā means compassion which is not mingled with any other sense of expression, it is quite precise. Compassion is exact and definite that it conveys the same sense as: "wishing a person who is in trouble, to be free from suffering or misery." That is reason why the intrinsic quality and characteristic of the term "*karuṇā*," is explained in the *Visuddhimagga*. A good people are found suffering and in misery, a noble-minded person will feel like removing this suffering condition. This is nothing but a feeling of compassion and goodwill. A person feels pity having had deep sympathy for another in trouble, may save the other by exercising his faculty of compassion (*karuṇā*). In the other word, the basic quality of preventing have one's own happiness from occurring, or rather deterring one's self-realization. A compassionate person will lose his opportunity to some extent to make himself happy since he has to be rendering help to another so as to let the other escape from misery.

The compassion means a feeling of sympathy towards others and ourselves who are experiencing one type of difficulties and problems. It also wishes them to be free from that suffering. It is softness, a tender heart that is sympathetic and willing to open all of life. But it possesses a strength that is not weighted down by sorrows, this tender heart see that are difficulties and wish to help in some way. In many dictionaries, compassion is defined as a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for other who is stricken suffering. The compassion can shake the heart of the wiser of suffering, it is called *karuṇā*. It wishes to kill, destroy as well as sympathize with their suffering. These things are very beneficial but they are limited in their ability to give happiness.

In *Buddhavaṃsa*, *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha accumulates the merits of perfection (*pāramitās*) to become a Buddha, and save all beings who are weak and mentally deficient. It is quite evident that compassion prevents one's own happiness. After attainment of the full enlightenment as a Buddha, he could have found happiness without having to worry about teaching, and lived comfortably. All beings may be wished to escape from the sufferings of old age, sickness and death which are bound to be met as living beings. They are going through miserable conditions of life existence continuously getting old, sick and

eventually meeting with death. Buddha had taught *dhamma* that there was no savior other, than him to save all living beings with his great compassion. He had to undergo miseries without having opportunity to gain happiness for being deterred by his unparalleled compassion. The extremely noble and gentle of compassion is usual for a virtuous person in trouble. One who has no feeling of sympathy towards others in dire distress, is not a man of virtue but of vice. That is why this compassion should be developed and depended upon by everybody who is noble. Ordinarily, even without practicing insight (*bhāvanā*), one should have a feeling of sympathy towards a pitiable person. Every time feeling of compassion arises, it would amount to developing merits.

Practice of *Karuṇā*

The *mettā-bhāvanā* should not be developed beginning from those who are near and dear to one who is developing at the initial stage. Neither should it be developed starting from the most beloved person nor should it be developed beginning from a neutral person. It is not called compassion. In the case of a person of opposite sex, one should avoid developing compassion towards him or her at the very initial stage. In *Abhidhamma-vibhāṅga*, compassion should be developed and radiated first and foremost towards a very pitiable person who is in great distress. That should be developed initially towards individuals who are in extreme distress. Feeling of compassion will easily arise if such a person in distress is seen. For that reason, instruction is given to start developing compassion, beginning from a poor pitiable person. If such a person deserves compassion, should be developed towards a person who is committing evil deeds by comparing him with a man awaiting orders to be hanged; or an imminent death after receiving capital punishment.

A person develop compassion towards another people who is full of vice. He should develop imagining that the scoundrel, may be happy. But that misery will befall him in the near future. The developing compassion is unlike developing loving kindness which involves many kinds. It is stated as: 'May escape from misery.' This is the way how to develop compassion to all beings and it is developed towards a certain person. Misery should be liberated one which is occurring in the corporeality of a particular individual right at the moment. It is to develop continuously from the bottom of heart that such a person be free from misery (suffering). Even if misery is not prevailing at the present moment. That person will have the inevitable suffering of his life existence.

While feeling of compassion occurs or visualizes the person in distress, an enemy from near and afar, they may appear. If he still has his grievance against another person, unpleasant thoughts of animosity may occur. This is the enemy who is said to be near. The essential development of compassion render to the person in distress both physically and verbally to the best of ability. This is for the sake of the person in distress to get relief. If physical assistance is offered it amounts to compassion of bodily action. If help is given verbally, it is called compassion of speech action. If both physical and verbal assistance cannot be rendered, compassion of mental action will have to be developed merely by way of radiating compassion. If feeling of compassion as: 'May be free from suffering' is radiated, it brings merit. If he has his special perfection, he can even achieve *karuṇā-jhāna* while developing *karuṇā*. If the compassion wants to get purposely desirous of developing as to gain *karuṇā-jhāna* when *jhāna* has been achieved by developing as stated.

Concept of *Muditā*

The term *muditā* (sympathetic) means rejoicing and getting pleased with others in their happiness and prosperity. Some people do not wish to see others prosper, happy and successful in their life's career. This reflects the nature of envy and jealousy, known as envy (*issā*). The sympathetic is diametrically opposite to envy. A person is overwhelmed with the feeling of envy will not be desirous of seeing others becoming prosperous and happy. A person with sympathetic gets pleased and rejoiced in finding and seeing others successful. He can bring into his mind the feeling of joy and pleasure, saying: 'May be prosperous.' This bent of mind or rather goodwill is sympathetic. It is the nature of noble or mindedness with extreme moral purification. They gain wealth, power, success and popularity, because

they have sown seeds of wholesome and noble actions in the past, and now they are reaping their due harvest. This is true sympathetic.

Feeling of sympathy should be spread out, first and foremost, to a very intimate friend who is in the habit of speaking with a smile on his face. Just as compassion feels with suffering, sympathetic joy feels with own and others' growth, happiness, and success in life. Compassion helps breakdown the sense of separateness by dissolving. It also starts to dissolve isolation by helping take joy with own and others' growth. It was said that by minds of sympathy has to be radiated all direction. When we see a person who is lovely, we have compassion on them. Sympathetic joy also acts as a balancing quality for compassion. There is realization and is a way out of suffering. We experience in walking the path and seeing the fading away of suffering. When we see other benefiting in life, receiving something we would like. Or possessing and developing strengths and beneficial qualities admire, rather than bringing up envy, jealousy, unworthiness. We can try to view life in joy and happiness. Contentment

Practice of *Muditā*

Practitioner begins the development of gladness, should not start with the dear person and the rest. He should be the first to be pervaded with gladness which can still be aroused by remembering past happiness and apprehending in this way: "In the past he had great wealth, a great following and was always glad." Or gladness can be aroused by apprehending the future glad aspect in this way: "In the future he will again enjoy similar success and will go about in gold palanquins, etc." Having thus aroused gladness with respect to a dear person. He should make it subside in the same way as described under lovingkindness. Sympathy should be developed by bringing him into one's mind as 'May not this person's wealth diminish and may not suffer loss. It is to be developed likewise as: "May their wealth and prosperity which have been acquired, be not diminished or lost; and may they be able to retain their wealth in full with luxury and be as happy as before." That can be developed visualizing with a deep feeling of joy towards a person who is fairly wealthy and a great affluence for whom. Even those beings were continuously pain and misery in the burning fires of hell. At the time when the supreme Buddha and noble *Arahats* had made a visit to the realm of hell (*apāya*) and preached the *dhamma*. Therefore, *muditā* can be very well developed with a benevolent feeling towards all beings.

Buddha preached a person who is envious of other's success in acquiring wealth and prosperity, and enhancement of reputation or prestige. That is likely to go down to the four *apāyas* and reach hell for unwholesome action of envy. After his release from the hell, if he is reborn as a human being by virtue of the strength of his merits. He will be lacking in companions and attendants. Commentary illustrated as resembling "One who is without his hands after being cut off, when becoming thirsty, will have no assistance even to offer him water to drink for the purpose of quenching his thirst." On the other hand, a person is rejoicing with others in their well-being and happiness, will be elevated to the abode of *sugata* for his wholesome action. If he happens to be reborn in the world of human beings, he will have the positive result of being equipped with a large number of attendants and the attributes of power and fame. And by cultivating the sign, developing and repeatedly practicing it should increase the absorption (*jhāna*) in the way already stated under lovingkindness. Next, the advantages described as "He sleeps in comfort," etc., should be understood in the same way as stated under lovingkindness. This is the detailed explanation of the development of gladness.

Concept of *Upekkhā*

Upekkhā translated as equanimity that observes things keeping at heart with equanimity, and equally balanced mind taking a neutral attitude without discrimination. Equanimity is even-mindedness on all beings, it is referred to as *tatramajjhata*. And the equanimity conveys the sense denoting the feeling of indifference without being worried by rejecting or discarding all kinds of anxiety, such as wishing others happy by radiating lovingkindness, wishing others free from misery with compassion, and wishing them to be able to retain the same state of prosperity as before without diminution, by developing sympathetic.

Practice of Upekkhā

Practitioner wants to develop equanimity should see danger in the former because they are linked with attention given to beings' enjoyment in the way beginning "May they be happy." And he should also see the advantage in equanimity because it is peaceful. Then he should arouse equanimity by looking on with equanimity at a person. Just as he would feel equanimity on seeing a person who was neither beloved nor unloved, so he pervades all beings with equanimity." And he should cultivate that sign, develop and repeatedly practice it. One who wishes to develop insight-equanimity is to nurture the spirit of indifference to pain and pleasure of others. One should render assistance as far as possible in the interests of others by way of developing *mettā* and *karuṇā*. Only if circumstances do not permit to do for the welfare of others by any means, one should remain indifferent by the exercise of equanimity. The fourth *jhāna* cannot be achieved by developing *mettā*, *karuṇā* and *muditā-bhāvanā*. It is attainable only by *upekkhā-bhāvanā*. If a person who has already achieved the third *jhāna* through *mettā*, *karuṇā* and *muditā-bhāvanā*, wishes to attain the fourth *jhāna*, *Upekkhā* must invariably be developed. After arising from the trance of that third *jhāna*, he should ponder upon the faults of *mettā-jhāna*, etc. It should be reflected as: "these *jhāna* being closely connected and conjoined with the innermost feeling of loving attachment to beings wishing them happiness, it is linked with love or hate. As it is combined with joy and exultant feeling. The noble faculty and attributes of *upekkā* should be reflected upon realized, and imagining.

CONCLUSION

The general purpose of these divine abiding is the bliss of insight and an excellent existence. That peculiar to each is respectively the warding off of ill-will, etc. Herein, lovingkindness has the purpose of warding off ill-will, while the others have the respective purposes of warding off cruelty, aversion, and greed. This is the escape from ill-will, boredom, and greed, this is to say; mind-deliverance of compassion, gladness, and equanimity. Buddha is asked the way to fellowship, and communion with *Brahma*. He personally knows the world of *Brahma* and the way to it, and explains the meditative method for reaching it by using an analogy of the resonance. A practitioner suffuses the world in the four directions with a mind of benevolence, then above, and below, and all around. The whole world from all sides, completely with a benevolent, all-embracing, great, boundless, peaceful and friendly mind. A powerful conch-blower makes heard with no great effort in all four directions, so there is no limit. This is a way to communion with *Brahma*. Someone practice radiating the four immeasurables, he will be destined for rebirth in a heavenly realm in their next life. In briefly, a person develop and frequently practice the four divine-abodes which take place in *jhāna*, after then he will become bliss and finally he will reach to *Nibbāna*.

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VEN. Nyarnainda

Research Scholar, Centre for Mahayana Buddhist studies,
Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjuna Nagar Guntur, AP, India.