

LOVE IN BUDDHISM

Bhante Walpola Piyananda

DHARMA VIJAYA BUDDHIST VIHARA PUBLICATIONS

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DEDICATION

**This revised book is dedicated on the occasion
of the 70th birthday of Bhante Walpola Piyananda,
to all of the generous supporters of his efforts
to further the work of the propagation of
Buddhadharma in the United States.**

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First, I wish to thank Stan Levinson for the time-consuming and detailed tasks of typing, revising, and editing the entire book for its original publication.

I must also thank the numerous Sangha members and the Dayaka Sabba whose continued support throughout the years enable me to carry out Buddhist activities in this country.

Finally, I wish to thank Cintamani Shimazu for all her work in editing this revised edition.

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REVISING EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

It has been twenty three years since this small book first appeared and in commemoration of the author's seventieth birthday this revised edition is being published.

Bhante Walpola Piyananda, the author of this book, tells the story of when he was a twelve year old samanera (novice monk). His teacher sent him to the front of the temple where there were two jasmine bushes. There was one on each side of the building. The teacher instructed the young novice to tend these two bushes. He was to give each bush the same amount of water and fertilizer. But he was to speak kindly to one bush and speak harshly to the other. The young novice thought this was a funny thing to do and was teased for this odd behavior.

Since the topic of this book is Love, you have probably guessed the results the experiment. The plant to which kind words were spoken grew rapidly and flowered profusely. The other did not fare so well.

As hoped for by his teacher, Bhante Piyananda has been emphasizing the healthy, healing effects of loving-kindness (*metta*) to all he has come in contact with over the years.

It is hoped that this book will serve as an introduction to Love as the Buddha defined it. The development of the feelings of loving-kindness, compassion, joy for another's happiness, and equanimity is its own reward. These are the four aspects of the Buddha's concept of love.

The Buddha observed that humans found birth, illness, old age and death unsatisfactory. Also unsatisfactory: grief, lamentation, suffering, affliction and despair. And the most unsatisfactory was not

getting what one wanted. Then too, the elements responsible for feelings of attachment and clinging were unsatisfactory.

By unsatisfactory the Buddha didn't mean "wrong." He meant that they led to unhappiness. The Buddha also discovered the means by which this unhappiness could be eliminated; first, through understanding their causes and second, by undertaking the practice to remove them.

The principal way to develop one's mind is through the practice of "meditation." In Buddhism, meditation does not mean "strenuous thinking," it means calming the body and the mind. When this is achieved one can then observe all that goes on inside oneself.

Metta (loving-kindness) is used as a meditation technique for mental development to establish peacefulness. It aids in the elimination of all enmity, ill will and anger from one's mind. As these harmful feelings subside, one can further develop the qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity.

May this work enable you to be well, happy, and peaceful.

Cintamani Shimazu
Editor
June 2013

THE SUBLIME STATES

A Brief Survey

“Monks, even if you are being carved limb from limb with a double-handed saw by low-down thieves; if your mind becomes filled with enmity then you will not be following my teaching. You should train yourselves thus: ‘Neither will our minds or speech become defiled with enmity, but with compassion will we dwell; with a friendly mind void of hatred. We will dwell suffusing the whole world with friendly thoughts that are far-reaching, widespread, without enmity or malevolence.’ This is how you must train yourselves, monks.” (1)

“Love” is a concept central to the world’s major religions; yet what it means may differ from one religion to another. Also its meaning in the secular sense and the religious sense are very different.

In Buddhism there is what is known as the “four sublime states (*brahma-vihara*).” You could say that they describe the four aspects of the Buddhist concept of “Love.” They are loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), appreciative joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkha*). The highest goal is to live a life practicing these four states at all times to extend unlimited, universal loving-kindness and good will to all beings; to have compassion for all living beings who are suffering, in trouble, or need help; to have appreciative joy for others’ success, well-being and happiness; to be established in equanimity in all vicissitudes of life. (2)

A person who has successfully developed these qualities is said to be “one who is cleansed internally [of anger, greed and ignorance] in the waters of loving-kindness and compassion for one’s fellow beings.” (3) When the Buddha’s disciple Ananda suggested to him that half of the teaching consisted of loving-kindness,

the Buddha replied that it was not half, but the whole of his teaching.

The Buddha's teaching shows the three causes of unhappiness/suffering (*dukkha*) to be greed (*lobha*), anger/hatred (*dosa*), and delusion/ignorance (*moha*). Following the path set out by the Buddha, one seeks to eliminate these. Metta, an essential part of this path, plays a significant role in the development of moral discipline (*sila*), mental training/meditation (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*pañña*). With development the follower begins to be able to see things as they really are.

The word "metta" (loving-kindness) is an abstract noun for the word "mitra," meaning friend. However, it is not just friendliness, but the same type of love that is discussed in the Metta Sutta (Loving-kindness Discourse):

Just as a mother protects her child,
Her deeply loved only child,
Even as to risk her life for its sake,
So toward all living beings
May one cultivate boundless loving
thoughts. (4)

The Buddha explained the distinction between loving-kindness (*metta*) and personal affection (*pema*) which people usually call love. Metta is an emotion which is non-attaching, non-possessive. The non-attaching aspect of metta implies friendship without sensual affection. Pema on the other hand, forms attachment/clinging (*upadana*), an exclusive affection involving companionship (*samsagga*) and fondness (*sineha*). A verse in the Dhammapada, the most popular Buddhist text among people, says, "From *pema* springs grief [of losing], from *pema* springs fear [of loss]. For one totally free from *pema* there is neither grief nor fear." (5)

The Buddha encouraged his disciples to practice metta, exhorting them by saying, “Monks, go forth, traveling for the welfare of the multitudes, for the happiness of the multitudes, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of humans.” (6)

The basic instruction of the Buddha is in the “Eightfold Path.” The path can be divided into three areas: Discipline, Concentration/Mindfulness, and Wisdom. The steps of the path are all based on loving-kindness for these steps promote harmony within society.

Love guides one:

- To right understanding;
- To right thought;
- To right speech;
- To right action;
- To right livelihood;
- To right effort;
- To right mindfulness;
- To right concentration.

In Buddhism, loving-kindness toward oneself is the important first step. For if you do not have metta for yourself; you cannot give it to others. It is similar to the airline’s instructions for you to put on your oxygen mask first and then help your child or another person. It is only practical, for if you pass out from lack of oxygen, you cannot help anyone.

The Buddha’s boundless loving-kindness extended not only to human beings, but to all living creatures. The Metta Sutta (Loving-kindness Discourse) is found in the earliest collection of suttas. It says:

May all beings be happy and secure.
May they all have happy and healthy
minds.

May all beings, whatever they may be,
Weak or strong, long, stout, medium
or short,
Small or large, seen or unseen,
Living close by or far away,
Already born or yet to be born,
May they all have happy and healthy
minds. (7)

Venerable Piyadassi wrote in *The Buddha's Ancient Path* that metta is an active force. Every act done with a pure mind to help, succor, cheer; to make the paths of others easier, smoother, and more adaptable for the elimination of sorrow was metta in action. The performance of such acts would enable them to attain the highest bliss.

One way to help develop metta is by contemplating the disadvantages of anger/hate versus the advantages of not having anger/hate (of having loving-kindness):

Hate restricts; loving-kindness
releases.
Hate estranges; loving-kindness
enfranchises.
Hate brings remorse; loving-kindness
brings peace.
Hate agitates; loving-kindness calms.
Hate divides; loving-kindness unites.
Hate hardens; loving-kindness softens.
Hate hinders; loving-kindness helps.

Thoroughly investigating the effects of hate versus the benefits of loving-kindness, it becomes clear that one should develop loving-kindness. (8)

Through the concept of karma, one can see that there is really no one to be angry with or hate since as

the Buddha said, "...it is not easy to find a being who has not formerly been your mother...your father...your brother...your sister...your son...your daughter in a previous life of this beginningless cycle of lives." (9) Thus it is foolish to feel anger or hatred because that only breeds a darkness that obstructs right understanding.

Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya, one of the foremost Buddhist scholars of our time suggested that with this idea in mind, one could think: When this person was my mother in a previous birth, she carried me in her womb nearly ten months, and when I was a baby, she removed my urine, excrement, spittle, snot, all without any disgust. She played with me on her lap, nourished me, and carried me about in her arms. Thus she nourished me with such deep love.

When this person was my father in a previous life, he risked his life for me in pursuing his trade, doing business in order to earn wealth for my sake. And when this person was born as my brother, sister, son or daughter, too, I was treated with loving care and given every possible kind of help for my well-being. So it is unjust for me to harbor anger for this person merely because of some disagreeable thing done to me in this life. (10) Looking at it in this manner, anger fades away.

There are many illustrations of this in *The Jataka*, a collection of stories of the many previous lives of the Buddha. For example:

Once long, long ago the Buddha was an ascetic known as Khantivadi who visited the city of Benares. The king of Benares, a cruel, materialistic person without regard for the practice of virtues met Khantivadi one day and asked, "What do you teach, monk?" Khantivadi replied

that he taught the value of patience. The king, wanting to prove that it was impossible to practice patience, had Khantivadi flogged with scourges of thorns. Not being able to make the ascetic angry, the king had Khantivadi's hands and feet cut off. Still Khantivadi did not feel the slightest anger. (11)

The Jataka stories show many other examples of the Buddha's qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity throughout his myriad previous lifetimes.

Compassion (*karuna*), the second of the four sublime states is closely tied to loving-kindness (*metta*). Compassion is not merely giving when needed, but to do so with a pure mind; without thought of personal gain. In the Commentary to the Dhammapada there is the following story:

Tissa, a young monk diligently practicing meditation at the monastery became ill. Small boils appearing all over his body developed into big sores oozing with pus. His upper and lower robes became sticky and stained with the fluids bursting from his sores. The Buddha became aware of Tissa's condition and went to the fire-room to boil water to clean the sores.

Some monks noticing what the Buddha was preparing to do carried Tissa into the fire-room. The Buddha began cleaning Tissa's sores. The monks took the robes and bedding, washed them thoroughly and spread them out to dry.

When the Buddha finished, Tissa clothed himself in his clean robes.

With his body refreshed and mind tranquil he lay down on the clean bed. The Buddha, knowing that Tissa was close to reaching arahatship, stood by him, taught him and encouraged him. Tissa attained arahatship together with analytical insight. In this way not only did the Buddha see to the monk's spiritual well-being, but to his physical well-being. (12)

To the monks who had helped the Buddha minister to Tissa, he said, "Monks, anyone taking care of someone who is ill, is taking care of me."

The following quotes are from D. Brandon's *Zen in the Art of Helping*. They present similar sentiments about compassion from a different school of Buddhism:

"Compassion has nothing to do with achievement at all. It is spacious and very generous. When a person develops real compassion, he is uncertain whether he is being generous to others or to himself because compassion is environmental generosity, without direction, without 'for me' and without 'for them'. It is filled with joy, spontaneously existing joy, constant joy in the sense of trust, in the sense that joy contains tremendous wealth, richness...

"At this highest level, karuna (compassion) does not attach itself to the intricacies of suffering or to individual human situations. It is involved with the

salvation of all living things. It spreads out the map of enlightenment for all who care to look.”

“...Compassion is the complete reflection of overall harmony.” (13)

The third sublime state is appreciative joy (*mudita*). It is the wholesome attitude of rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of others. Appreciative joy sees the prosperous conditions of others; welcoming the happiness of fellow human beings.

The fourth state is equanimity (*upekkha*). When we achieve it, we see all sentient beings as equals. In order to do so, one has to keep in mind that one’s particular relationship with one’s relatives, friends, and even enemies is the result of previous karma. Therefore one should not cling to relatives and friends while regarding others with indifference.

The benefits of the divine states can be experienced in daily life. The attitude of loving-kindness is like the feeling which parents have for their newborn child; the wish that the child enjoy good health, have good friends, be intelligent and to be successful in all endeavors. In the same manner one has loving-kindness toward all living beings.

When parents see their child ill, they will naturally be moved by compassion and earnestly wish that the child be free from the suffering of sickness. In the same way one has feelings of compassion upon seeing the suffering of any living beings.

As the parents experience joy at their child’s success and happiness in life, one has feelings of joy at the good fortune of all beings.

When a child becomes an adult with their own family, they begin to have independent lives with their own responsibilities. Although parents still have their feelings of loving-kindness, compassion, and appreciative joy, these are combined with a new feeling of equanimity. They recognize their child's new independence and responsibilities and do not cling to them.

The sublime states of Love in Buddhism are a question of both attitude and practice. As one understands the importance of each of these states, one then implements them. One comes to understand each more profoundly by practicing each of them.

The meditative exercises to practice the sublime states are similar to the other kinds of meditation in Buddhism in that they consist of an activity to be carried out with full mindfulness. There are specific meditative practices designed for each state. In the case of metta, the activity is to consciously emanate metta to the beings around one. When one becomes increasingly adept at this, one becomes very calm and peaceful. One is then in a position to better understand the basic teachings of the Buddha and to tread the path toward the liberation from all suffering called Nibbana.

Each of the four sublime states addresses different ills. Loving-kindness eradicates ill will, anger and hatred (*dosa*). Compassion eradicates greed, craving and worldly attachment (*lobha*). Appreciative joy eradicates jealousy and makes people less self-centered (*issa*), and equanimity eradicates ignorance and delusion (*moha*).

As one travels along the path, one becomes capable of helping others. All of the Buddha's teachings and practices lead to personal growth both for oneself and others. Living in the world, one encounters

unhappiness/suffering (*dukkha*). The use of the four sublime states can aid in relieving dukkha; promoting personal growth.

They lead to the highest happiness. Thus it can be said that the four sublime states are the ultimate description of “Love.”

The following stories illustrate different aspects of the Buddha’s loving-kindness and compassion for all sentient beings.

ANGULIMALA

Angulimala was the son of Bhagga, the Brahmin who was Chief Minister to King Pasenadi of Kosala. His mother's name was Mantani. Angulimala wasn't his real name, but what he came to be called during his killing spree. Ironically, his birth name was 'Ahimsaka,' which means 'harmless one.' He was an exceptionally good-looking young man, highly intelligent, and always at the top of his class in every subject. His parents sent him to Taxila, the capital of Gandhara, whose university was the best in the world.

There Ahimsaka excelled at everything he attempted. At first the young man made many friends and was admired by his fellow students. However, after the first year, when no one could surpass him in any area, his popularity began to wane.

In accordance with the university system at Taxila Ahimsaka had a primary mentor and advisor. His teacher began treating him like a son. The other students became jealous of this close bond. Ahimsaka trusted his teacher totally. Encouraged to think of his teacher's home as his own, Ahimsaka spent most of his free time there.

Ahimsaka's teacher was an older man who married a young woman only a few years older than Ahimsaka. The teacher's wife treated Ahimsaka like a younger brother and his jealous classmates saw this close relationship as an opportunity to destroy him. They started rumors that Ahimsaka was having an affair with the young wife. Before long stories reached the teacher, who didn't believe them at first. But the accusations didn't stop. The students gossiped relentlessly and even went directly to the teacher and told him their lies. Finally the teacher believed them.

The teacher wanted to take revenge on innocent Ahimsaka. His first thought was to kill him, or have him killed. But as his mentor, he couldn't risk being found out.

Filled with anger, he accused Ahimsaka. Ahimsaka was devastated to find that his teacher believed all the lies. He said, "I assure you, Sir, that I have done nothing wrong. I would never do anything to hurt you – or your wife."

With his mind poisoned with lies, the teacher told Ahimsaka that the only way to be redeemed was to kill one thousand people and bring him their thumbs. It was the only payment his teacher would accept.

Ahimsaka was shocked. He knew that he could never do such an evil thing, and he told his teacher as much. Without another word the teacher threw him out of the university. The poor young man went home to his parents, knowing that surely they would understand. His father believed the teacher, and was furious with his son. Without even letting the young man explain, he banished him from the family home. His mother, Mantani, believed Ahimsaka but was helpless to go against her husband's decision; she could do nothing to help her unfortunate son.

The young man then went to the home of his bride-to-be. He hoped that they would be understanding and take him in. When they heard he was expelled from the university they cancelled the proposed marriage and forbade him from ever coming to their house again. This was the last straw. The humiliation, anger, fear, and depression caused his mind to snap. He kept hearing his teacher's voice ordering him to collect one thousand human thumbs.

Distraught, Ahimsaka began killing with a vengeance. He put all of his energy into fulfilling his teacher's demand as quickly as possible. His victims were of every age, caste, and race. He killed them, cut off their right thumb and just left the bodies in the open. He tied the thumbs to a string and wore it around his neck. The garland got longer and longer, and he began to be called 'Angulimala,' which means 'finger garland.' People feared him and barricaded themselves in their homes at night. No one wanted to go into the forest where he lived. There was panic and terror in Kosala.

The local security forces could not catch the killer. The people wanted the king to do something to make the countryside safe. He organized five hundred royal soldiers to go into the forest to hunt Angulimala down and kill him.

Angulimala's mother Mantani heard about the king's plan. She decided to go in search of her mentally ill son.

As the Buddha surveyed the world he saw Angulimala, who had nine hundred ninety-nine thumbs on his garland. The Buddha also saw Mantani approaching her son and knew that she would very likely be his one-thousandth victim. The Lord knew that killing his mother would bring Angulimala the worst *karma* possible. He would suffer more for killing her than for all his other innocent victims.

The Buddha came down from his retreat in the mountain and entered the forest. He saw Mantani approaching from one side and Angulimala from the other, so he stepped between them. Angulimala's attention shifted from the woman to the monk and he immediately decided to kill him. Raising his sword, he ran to attack the Buddha. The Buddha used his supernatural powers to leap forward and Angulimala

couldn't reach him. Angulimala ran towards him again but couldn't catch the Buddha. This continued several more times until frustrated Angulimala shouted at the Buddha, "O *Bhikkhu*, Stop! Stop!"

The Buddha turned, faced Angulimala and said, "I have stopped. It is *you* who have not stopped. So now I tell you to stop!"

Angulimala was confused; what was this monk talking about? He looked at the Buddha and said, "O *bhikkhu*! Why do you tell me that you have stopped while I have not?"

The Buddha replied, "I say that I have stopped because I do not kill any living being. I no longer cause harm to anyone. As for you, you have not restrained yourself from harming others. That is why I say that I have stopped – and you have not stopped."

Slowly Angulimala calmed down as he began to comprehend what the Buddha was saying. He saw that this brave monk was actually the Enlightened One and that he had come to rescue him. Angulimala dropped his sword, flung off his wretched garland of human thumbs and prostrating himself at the Buddha's feet he sobbed and begged for ordination. The Buddha said, "Come!" and Angulimala was ordained. When Mantani reached them she was relieved that her son was still alive and had been restored to his senses. She thanked the Buddha profusely. The Master and Angulimala returned to the monastery where he gave him instructions in meditation.

On his way to the forest with his army, King Pasenadi stopped at the monastery to see the Buddha. The Buddha asked him, "Your Majesty, why do you have such an army? Are you going to battle against King Bimbisara, or the Licchavis, or some other king?"

The king answered, “No, Lord, we are on our way to capture the murderer, Angulimala. He has harmed nearly a thousand families in my country.”

The Buddha looked at the king, smiled and said, “What would you do if you were to discover that Angulimala was a monk in my Sangha?”

The king, surprised, said, “I would pay all due respect to him as one of your disciples, Lord.”

The Buddha pointed to Angulimala, who was unrecognizable as the former murderer. His hair was shaved off, he wore the robes of a monk, and he was seated with his eyes half closed in meditation. He looked so calm and peaceful. The Buddha said, “There is the young man you are hunting.”

The king frightened at first, didn’t know what to do. The Buddha said, “There is no cause for fear. Angulimala is a well-subdued monk in my Order.”

The king, completely relieved by this sudden change in events, composed himself and went to where Angulimala was seated. The king very kindly offered to provide Angulimala with robes and other requisites. King Pasenadi then turned to the Buddha and said, “I thank you, Lord, for subduing a murderer like Angulimala without force or violence.” He bowed before the Master and departed.

Venerable Angulimala did his best and eventually attained arahatship. The Buddha once said this of Angulimala:

“Whose evil deed is obscured by good,
He illumines this world like the
Moon freed from a cloud.”

Many *bhikkhus* had often asked the Lord how it was possible that a man who had killed so many people

could attain *Nibbana*. The Buddha replied that Angulimala did many evil things because he was betrayed by those he depended upon; friends, teachers, and family. That his mind broke and he became mentally ill. Later, however, when he found good friends and teachers in the Sangha, with their help and good advice he became steadfast in his practice of meditation. His evil deeds were ultimately overwhelmed by good *karma*, and his mind became completely clean – free from all defilements.

The power of loving-kindness and compassion are strong and they are the absolute conditions for awakening. (14)

SUNITA

Sunita was born a *candala*, a member of the untouchable class. He was not educated; in fact, by law he wasn't allowed to learn. It would have been a grave offence if he had been caught writing or speaking even one word from the Vedas (the holy teachings of the Brahmins). He wasn't allowed to enter a place of worship, and if he had ever been overheard reciting one of the Vedic prayers his tongue would have been cut out. If he was caught even listening to them he would have had a spike driven into his ears. This was their law.

He was born near the Rajagaha area, and people who belonged to the untouchable caste survived by cleaning streets, drains, and toilets. They disposed of dead animals and did other "dirty" unmentionable work that no one else would do. They wore scraps of cloth, which barely covered their nakedness, and weren't allowed access to the public wells. To touch the water reserved for the higher-caste people was to pollute not only the water, but the caste people who used it as well.

Any contact and the high caste person had to perform extensive rituals to cleanse themselves, and the untouchable would be severely punished.

Sunita collected night soil, human waste, and took it to the fields in two large buckets suspended on a pole carried on his shoulders. You can imagine how filthy he was, and how foul the ugly smell was that exuded from every pore. Flies and other insects covered not only the buckets, but his body as well. His unkempt hair was matted and his skin as black as night from dirt and excrement. He was never but an inch away from starvation; every bone in his body protruded against his leathery, sundried skin. He had no home; he slept on the side of the road wherever he happened to wind up at the end of the day.”

Sunita was late on his collection rounds collecting one morning and when he looked up the street he saw a group of monks approaching. There was a beautiful golden aura surrounding them and he could tell by their bearing that they were of the higher castes. Sunita knew that he was not allowed to make eye contact with anyone outside his caste, nor was he to let his shadow even fall across theirs. Immediately afraid, he started to look for a place to hide. He felt ashamed and he didn't want the monks to see him. He didn't want to be accused of unlawfully looking at them.

There was no where to go, no alleyway nearby, so he stood up against the nearest wall, put down his pole, and with his arms folded in front of him bowed as low as he could. He hoped with all his heart that they would pass by without ridiculing him or complaining that he was fouling the air they breathed or the earth they walked on.

Sensing the group of monks close by, he couldn't believe it when he heard a voice call out, “Dear

friend; would you like to join us?" Now his fear was combined with a tentative feeling of joy. He couldn't bring himself to raise his head or even answer the speaker.

The Buddha had stopped in front of him. Sunita whispered, "I am a *candala*, my Lord. I am not even allowed to speak to you, much less join you. I am grateful for your words; no one has ever spoken kindly to me before. Your voice brings joy and light to my heart."

The Buddha stood there waiting patiently. Sunita found himself feeling stronger and happier by the second. Finally he was able to say, "If you would have this miserable, wretched untouchable, I would gladly go with you to become a monk."

The Lord said, "Come, O monk!" and that was Sunita's ordination.

Sunita followed the Buddha and the other monks to their monastery. He was shown where to bathe and his head was shaved. Ananda, the Lord's chief attendant brought him fresh clean robes and showed him how to dress. Everyone at the monastery was so kind that day and everyday. Not a day went by that Sunita didn't bless the Buddha and his brother monks for their limitless compassion."

Sunita blossomed very quickly. The Buddha gave him an object for meditation, and told him to find a secluded corner of the monastery and practice. Sunita was so grateful for the Buddha's kindness. He felt like he owed him – and all of the Sangha members – to try his very best to strive for the highest goal. And Sunita did become enlightened, an arahat. It was far beyond his wildest dreams; in fact, before meeting the Buddha he had had no dreams at all.

From that moment on people of all ranks respected and paid homage to him when he taught them the way to attainment. His attainment set an example for all time. The Buddha showed the world the true meaning of nobility; a person was noble because of good actions. Sunita's story also demonstrated the fact that social conventions are meaningless when viewed in the light of the unlimited compassion and vision of the Buddha.

The Buddha taught that everyone's tears and blood are the same color. By birth no one is of high or low caste. It was by their actions that people were judged high or low. Just as the water of each river has its own name, but upon reaching the ocean the river water became ocean water. Likewise, when any person enters the order, he becomes one with the sangha. (15)

SOPAKA

Sopaka's childhood was not a happy one. His father died when he was only four years old. He and his mother were destitute so she re-married. Her husband turned out to be truly mean spirited. He despised Sopaka from the very beginning and made up excuses to beat him. His mother was powerless to stop the beatings since he beat Sopaka whenever she was out. Little Sopaka knew his mother loved him; but she couldn't protect him.

When a baby girl was born, Sopaka hoped that his little sister would soften his step-father's heart. But the father's attitude didn't change. In fact he seemed to hate the boy even more; he scolded him relentlessly. He would suddenly hit Sopaka for no reason whatsoever. Sopaka got began sleeping with his hands grasped

around his neck to prevent his stepfather from choking him.

One late afternoon his baby sister began crying. His stepfather heard her and immediately rushed toward Sopaka. He grabbed the little boy's ear, nearly twisting it off, and slapped the back of his head. Sopaka started to cry and his sister started to cry even louder. All the noise enraged the man.

Sopaka tried to stop crying, and lay on the floor softly weeping while nursing his ear. His mother wasn't at home; he began to panic. His stepfather kept yelling at him, accusing him of making little sister cry. Then grabbing a rope from the corner of the room, he roughly picked Sopaka up, and dragged him from the house. Sopaka began screaming, but no one came to help him. Struggling desperately he somehow managed to get away and ran as fast as his small legs would carry him. He didn't know where he was going; he just knew he had to get away or he would surely be killed.

His stepfather finally caught up with Sopaka near the charnel grounds, grabbing him by the neck. Sopaka could smell the overpowering stench of the decomposing bodies nearby. The howling of jackals filled the night as they fed greedily on the decaying corpses. His stepfather dragged him to a naked rotting body and began to tie him to it. In spite of his begging, weeping and screaming his stepfather continued to tie him to the corpse. Then he just stood there laughing at Sopaka. When he tired of the amusement, he turned and walked off, leaving the little boy to certain death.

Sopaka laid there sobbing. He could hear the sounds of the jackals devouring the stinking corpse. When he screamed out they would stop for a while, but when he stopped, they started eating it again. Sopaka

was soaked with the fluids from the putrid corpse and slipped in and out of consciousness many times.

Whenever he gather some strength he would scream out for his mother, the person he loved most in the world; the only person that cared about him. As the hungry jackal bit off a piece of flesh from the corpse, one of its sharp teeth cut into Sopaka's back. He screamed as loudly as he could from the pain. The jackals continued to feast and Sopaka knew for certain that any moment he would die. Closing his eyes he prepared himself for death, and suddenly everything became completely quiet and still. Slowly he ventured to open his eyes and saw the Buddha standing there.

The Buddha had heard the little boy screaming. With great compassion he said, "Child! Do not be afraid, I will save you. The *Tathagata* will be your refuge."

The Buddha untied the small child from the revolting mess that had once been a person. In a state of shock Sopaka's body was frozen stiff from fear. He couldn't stand up. The Buddha said with a voice full of love and compassion, "Get up! Regain your senses." Then he patted the child on his head and held the boy's hand to help him up. Relieved the little boy began to cry.

The Buddha led Sopaka to the stream near the monastery not far from the charnel grounds. He let him bathe in the cool, flowing water. He asked, "What happened to you, child?" Sopaka told him his frightening story.

The Buddha told him, "Child, you are safe now with me. Let's go and get you some clothes and food." Together they walked to the monastery.

Ananda saw the Buddha approaching in the distance leading a little boy. When they were in the Buddha's room; the tired child simply crumpled to the floor with his hands clenched around his neck.

The Buddha asked, "Are you going to sleep?"

"Yes, Lord, I know I can sleep near you without any fear," Sopaka replied.

Then the Buddha told him that there was no need to protect his neck for no one would harm him.

The Buddha told Ananda the poor boy's story. Ananda knew that the boy's life had been saved through the Buddha's compassion for the charnel grounds were far from the monastery. Sopaka would stay in the monastery until his parents were found. If they gave their permission he could be ordained and live there in safety. Without saying a word Sopaka embraced the Buddha's feet and then Ananda picked up the small child. Ananda found him some clothes, fed him and found him a suitable place to sleep.

The following day Sopaka's frantic mother came to the monastery for help to find her missing child. Her husband hadn't told her what had happened the night before; he just said that the stupid boy had run off and he didn't know where he went. She went before the Buddha and the Lord summoned the child. She tearfully embraced her son, and the child clung to her.

After their reunion, the Buddha smiled and asked Sopaka, "Would you like to live a life of peace and contentment, free from fear, and filled with happiness?"

"Yes, Lord, I would like to follow you for the rest of my life," he answered.

The Buddha turned to the child's mother asking, "Do you give permission for your son to be ordained?"

She replied, "Yes, Lord. I know now that I cannot protect him from my husband. I would be grateful if you would let him do as he wishes and join your Sangha." The Buddha ordained Sopaka as a novice monk (*samanera*). (16)

PATACARA

Patacara was the daughter of a wealthy banker in Savatthi, who fell in love with one of her family's servants. Although he was a good man, he belonged to a different caste and she knew that her family would never accept him. Her father found her many appropriate suitors but she couldn't bear the thought of not marrying her love. Ultimately she ran away with the servant and they married.

When Patacara discovered that she was with child, she wished to return to the home of her parents to give birth, as was the custom at that time. She discussed this with her husband, but he was afraid her parents wouldn't let her come back to him; so he refused to let her go. She decided to go anyway and left word with her neighbors. When her husband found out he ran after her. He caught up with her before she reached Savatthi. That night she gave birth to a son, and no longer needed to visit her parents.

The following year she found herself with child again. Once more she pleaded with her husband to let her go home to deliver her child. Still he refused for the same reason as before, so once again she started out alone. Her husband went after her, but she gave birth to a second son before he found her. It began storming when her husband caught up with her. Her husband

went to gather wood to build a fire. As he reached into a thicket he was bitten by a poisonous snake and died immediately.

Poor Patacara spent the night alone, cold and afraid, caring for her infant and small toddler. Without a fire, she did her best to keep them warm. In the morning the storm ended and she went to look for her husband. She found him dead and was grief stricken. The only thing she could do now was to continue on to her parents' house with her two children.

Reaching the swollen river she found the ford flooded. She had no choice but to try to cross it. She left her newborn son on the riverbank on a pile of leaves and waded out into the swiftly-flowing river holding her older son over her head. When she reached the other side she set him down in a safe place.

Halfway back to her newborn, she heard the cry of a hawk. She saw it swoop down, grab her infant son, and fly away. The baby was crying at the top of his lungs, but she was helpless to save him. As she screamed and shouted at the hawk her toddler son thought she was calling him. She was still trying to cross the swollen river when she saw the toddler entered the fast-moving current. Helplessly she watched the river carry him away.

In a state of shock she finally reached the river bank; there was nothing she could do but return to her parents' house. Nearing Savatthi she heard people talking about a disastrous fire that had just happened; three people who became trapped in their house had died. When she arrived home she found that it was her family that had died in the fire.

Patacara completely lost her mind. She wandered around for days weeping and lamenting, mad

with grief. She didn't even know enough to cover her nakedness, and people drove her from their doorsteps.

One day she stumbled by Jetavana Monastery where the Buddha was preaching. People tried to stop her from entering, but the Buddha called out to her, "Patacara, come forward." A man threw a robe over her shoulders to cover her naked body, and she walked toward the Master. She flung herself down and worshiped at his feet. He said, "Here there is no fear for you. Here there is refuge for you."

Patacara instantly responded to the kind, sweet voice of the Buddha; she stopped weeping and calmed down. Again the Buddha spoke, "Sister, awaken to your senses; look at me with your proper senses. I shall help you. I shall dispel your grief."

The woman, mad with sorrow, looked intently at the face of the Buddha. Softly she said, "Lord, I am the most unfortunate woman on earth. I have no one. I have lost my husband, my two children, my parents, and my brother. I am a mad with grief."

The Buddha said, "Sister, you are not mad. You are awakening from a terrifying dream. Sister, it is your mind that sees both good and bad dreams. Sister, tell me the dreams you saw." Patacara described the events that had occurred which resulted in the deaths of her whole family.

The Buddha asked, "Sister, were those children truly yours?"

"Lord, of course they were mine; they were born of my flesh and blood. Those children were mine," she responded between sobs.

"Good Patacara. You are grieving because of the feeling that they were yours and because you loved

them dearly. There are thousands of young children dying. Yet you are not sorrowing for them because they are not yours. Sister, when there are thousands of young children dying, why should you grieve for only two of them? According to their *karma* they have left you and are gone.

“Sister, it is because of the loss one feels through separation from another that one cannot bear such separation. Why do you create madness and fall into a state of confusion? Liberation is in your hands. I shall help you. Go to the nunnery in Jetavana and look at the nuns there. Like you, they too have gone through trouble, persecution, and disaster. Coming to me they received ordination. Now they are tranquil, leading contented simple lives.”

Listening to the Buddha, Patacara saw a way to return to sanity. Peacefully she walked to the nunnery, was ordained, and soon reached the first level of attainment, *sotapanna*.

One day, while washing her feet, she noticed how the water trickled, sometimes a short distance, and sometimes further. She thought, just in this way do all people die, in childhood, in middle age, or old age. She attained arahatship through the compassion of the Buddha and led a peaceful meditative life. Later she became a great teacher and many people suffering from grief went to her for guidance and consolation. (17)

SUBHADDA

Subhadda was an ascetic who came from a well-known, wealthy Brahmin family. He had been a wandering hermit for years, following the doctrines of various teachers. On the day the Buddha would pass

away and enter *parinibbana* the thought occurred to Subhadda that he should visit the Lord. He traveled to the sala grove of the Malla princes to see the Buddha.

Subhadda approached Ananda, the Buddha's chief attendant and said, "I have heard it said by old and venerable wandering ascetics, teachers of teachers, that only rarely do Perfectly Self-Enlightened *Tathagatas* arise in the world. Today, in the last watch of the night, the *parinibbana* of the *Samana* Gotama will take place. An uncertainty, a problem, has arisen in my mind, and I have faith that the *Samana* Gotama will be able to teach his Doctrine to me so this uncertainty can be removed and my mind made clear. Venerable Ananda please let me see the *Samana* Gotama."

Ananda perceived Subhadda as one of those ascetics who clung to their own views no matter who preached to them, so he answered, "Friend Subhadda, this cannot be allowed. The *Bhagava* is very weary, please do not bother him."

Subhadda would not take 'no' for an answer. He asked Ananda two more times to see the Buddha and both times was refused. Resting nearby the Buddha overheard the request. The Lord called out, "Ananda, it is not fitting to hinder the ascetic from seeing me. He's not trying to trouble me; he just wants to clear up his doubts. I will answer his questions and he will understand."

Hearing that the Buddha would speak with him, Subhadda went forward into the Lord's presence. He offered courteous greetings to the Master and then sat to one side. He said, "O Venerable Gotama, there are a variety of religious leaders who have sects, followers, good reputations, schools, and fame. Do all of them, some of them, or none of them have the knowledge and understanding of the truth they claim?"

The Buddha answered, "Subhadda, do not ask this question about other teachers; it is not fitting and proper. Besides, I do not have the time to discuss them. Listen and keep in mind what I tell you." Then the Buddha explained the Noble Eightfold Path to Subhadda.

The Buddha continued, "Whatever Teachings you find that do not include the Noble Eightfold Path, these are useless in terms of reaching the four stages of spiritual fruition, namely: *sotapanna*, *sakadagami*, *anagami*, and arahat. In my Teachings alone you will find Sangha members who have attained these stages, and if they pass on my Teachings correctly, then the world will always have arahats."

Subhadda addressed the Buddha, "Venerable Sir! The Blessed One has expounded the Dhamma clearly, excellently. I now go to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha for refuge, and humbly ask for ordination in your Order"

The Buddha replied, "Subhadda, if a person who previously had been a believer of other doctrines wishes to be initiated and ordained into this Order as a *bhikkhu*, he has to live under probation for four months. After four months have passed and if the *bhikkhus* agree, that person will be admitted into the Order."

Subhadda, ecstatic, said that he was prepared to live under probation for four years if necessary. Then the Lord said that Subhadda could be ordained as a member of the Sangha immediately.

Subhadda bowed low before the Buddha, his eyes full of tears. He stood and Ananda took him outside, poured water on his head, made him repeat the formula of the impermanence of the body, and shaved off his hair and beard. He was then dressed in saffron

robes. Subhadda repeated the Three Refuges, and was led back to the Buddha.

The Buddha himself admitted Subhadda to the higher ordination and gave him a subject for meditation. Venerable Subhadda went to a solitary part of the grove and directed his mind towards the attainment of *Nibbana* without any remission of awareness and with vigorous resolution.

Venerable Subhadda achieved arahatship. He was the very last *bhikkhu* that was ordained in the presence of the Buddha. (18)

At times the Buddha's compassion was expressed through very simple acts.

MAHADUGGATA

A very poor man named Mahaduggata lived in the city of Benares. When the citizens had invited the Buddha and his monks to the city they asked all the people to help look after the venerable ones.

Although Mahaduggata and his wife were very poor, they gladly volunteered to look after one monk, by providing his meal. They both worked very hard to earn the money necessary to buy food and they prepared a simple meal.

When the time came to serve the meal; it was discovered that Mahaduggata and his wife had been overlooked. No monk had been assigned to visit their home for a meal. The poor disappointed man wrung his hands and burst into tears. Someone pointed out to him that nobody had yet entertained the Buddha. Quickly he went and invited the Compassionate One. Outside princes and nobles had been waiting to conduct the

Buddha to their own palaces, but he followed Mahaduggata to his home..

The Buddha ate the food prepared by Mahaduggata and his wife, thanked them and returned to the monastery.

Soon after, Mahaduggata's fortunes improved, and in fact he became rich. He became the wealthiest man in the city and the king appointed him as Treasurer.

While building a new house, Mahaduggata discovered many hidden treasures as workmen dug the foundations. With the money from these discoveries, he offered the Buddha and his sangha food for seven days.
(19)

A hungry man is helped through a simple act of kindness.

THE HUNGRY FARMER

One day the Buddha and his disciples were the guests of a village called Alavi where he was going to deliver a discourse. A Brahmin in that village had decided to go listen to the Buddha. When the day arrived the farmer discovered one of his oxen was missing.

The Brahmin was torn between his desire to hear the Buddha or to find his oxen. He decided if he set out immediately he could still join the meeting afterward. It was after midday before he found the animal. Quickly he returned the oxen to his farm.

The Brahmin was very tired and hungry from his search, but he didn't want to miss the Buddha's talk, so he hurried to the meeting place without stopping to rest or eat. The Buddha and his disciples had finished their

meal and the Buddha was about to express his gratitude by giving a sermon.

Just at that moment, the Brahmin farmer arrived. Seeing this man before him looking so tired and weak, the Buddha asked someone to give the man some food and find him a place to sit and eat. The Blessed One told the man to take his time; to rest and eat for he would wait for him to finish before beginning his sermon.

When the man had rested and satisfied his hunger, the Buddha began his discourse. Some of the townspeople and even some monks thought it was not proper that the Buddha should concern himself about food for a person who was only a householder and not even a follower. Hearing these comments, the Blessed One explained, "If I had preached to this man while he was suffering from the pangs of hunger, he would not have been able to follow what I was saying. There is no affliction like the affliction of hunger." (20)

RAJJUMALA

The Buddha was able to use his wisdom to help people avoid thoughtless actions which would lead to more suffering.

Rajjumala was a slave outside the village of Gaya. Her mistress didn't like her and always mistreated her. She would pull Rajjumala by her hair. To avoid this, one day Rajjumala shaved off all her hair. This did not stop her cruel mistress; she tied a rope around Rajjumala's head and pulled her around.

Unable to stand being mistreated any more, Rajjumala decided to kill herself. She began to walk toward the village and she found the Buddha waiting for her. He spoke to her of the Dhamma. Understanding

what he said she became his follower and reached the first stage of sotapanna.

Thus she was able to return to her mistress, calm and at peace. Her mistress noticed the change in her slave's demeanor. Rajjumala spoke of her meeting with the Buddha. Curious, Rajjumala's mistress went to visit the Buddha and she became his follower also.

The Buddha had explained to them that in a previous birth, Rajjumala had been the mistress, and the mistress had been the slave. Rajjumala had mistreated her slave who vowed to get revenge.

The Buddha's compassion had saved them from continuing this cycle of pain and suffering. (21)

KISAGOTAMI

Kisagotami was from Savatthi and was married to a young rich man. The son born to them died when he was still a toddler. Overcome by grief, Kisagotami couldn't accept the fact that her child was dead. Carrying her dead son she went about the city asking for medicine to cure her son. She was completely out of her mind. Then a wise man told her to go and see the Buddha who was staying nearby.

Carrying her son, she went before the Buddha begging him to restore her child to life. He said, "If you bring me some mustard seeds from a house where there has never been a death, then I will do as you ask."

Full of hope, Kisagotami went from house to house in search of the mustard seeds. Everywhere she went people were more than willing to give her the seeds, but at each house when she asked if there had been a death, she was told that indeed there had been. Eventually she realized that there was not one family

who had not encountered death. Her attitude changed and she returned to her senses. She realized that the Buddha was showing her that everything that was born would pass away. She could now part with her child's lifeless body, and allow it to be cremated.

She returned to the Buddha in a totally different state of mind. She said, "Kind sir, mustard seeds I could find, but a house where there had been no death does not exist."

The Buddha said, "It is good that you now know that you are not the only mother who has ever lost a son. Death comes to everyone; it is the very nature of life."

Perceiving the impermanence of human existence, Kisagotami asked the Buddha for ordination as a nun (*bhikkhuni*). He granted her request. She worked hard developing her meditation skills and performing her religious duties. One day while meditating on the flames of a lamp she thought to herself, "Even as it is with these flames, so also it is with living beings in this world: some shine brightly for a long time, while others go out almost immediately."

The Buddha saw with his supernormal powers that Venerable Kisagotami was close to achieving *Nibbana* and he focused his energy on her. She continued meditating on the impermanent nature of things and achieved arahatship. (22)

CULAPANTHAKA

Culapanthaka and Mahapanthaka were the grandsons of a banker in Rajagaha. The elder, Mahapanthaka would accompany his grandfather to visit the Buddha to listen to his Teachings and later became a monk. He was well versed in the Dhamma.

Culapanthaka, also became a monk, but could not even memorize one verse after four months. One day the Buddha and his monks were invited for a meal. Mahapanthaka was in charge of assigning monks to meal invitations and disappointed with his brother's lack of progress excluded him.

When Culapanthaka learned about this, he became so sad and frustrated. Feeling left out, he decided to give up being a monk. Knowing this, the Buddha went to Culapanthaka and asked him to sit facing east and rub a piece of white cloth with his hand while repeating the word "Rajoharanam," which meant "removing impurity."

The Buddha then went to the residence where he was invited for lunch, accompanied by the monks.

Meanwhile, Culapanthaka sat rubbing the piece of cloth muttering the word that the Buddha gave him. Soon the cloth became soiled. Seeing this change, Culapanthaka came to realize the impermanent nature of all things.

Sensing Culapanthaka's progress, the Buddha appeared before him saying, "It is not only the piece of cloth that becomes dirty with dust; within oneself also dust exists. Only by removing the dust could one achieve one's goal of arahatship."

Culapanthaka understood and attained arahatship.

As the meal was about to be served, the Buddha covered the bowl with his hand and asked if there were any monks left at the monastery. He was told that there was none, but he replied that there was one. He asked that they summon Culapanthaka from the monastery.

When the messenger arrived at the monastery, he saw not one, but one thousand identical monks. Culapanthaka, possessing supernormal powers had created them. The baffled messenger returned and reported what he had seen. The Buddha sent him a second time and instructed him to say that the Buddha summoned the monk named Culapanthaka.

The messenger delivered the message, but was answered by one thousand voices saying, "I am Culapanthaka." Still baffled, the messenger returned to the Buddha. The Buddha sent him back saying that he was to get hold of the first monk who said that he was Culapanthaka. The messenger did this and all the rest disappeared. Culapanthaka accompanied the messenger to the Buddha. (23)

ANIMALS

The Buddha's love and compassion were universal, extending to all living beings, not just one group, nation or even one species. The sanctity of life is expressed in the first of the five training guidelines undertaken by Buddhists: "I undertake the discipline to refrain from killing."

The following four stories illustrate the Buddha's compassion toward animal life.

Sacrifice I

In India during the time of the Buddha some misguided people thought that the sacrificial killing of animals could influence their gods. This act was supposed to make the gods happy and in return the people would be rewarded with whatever they had prayed for: wealth, fame, or rain for their crops.

Wherever he went, the Buddha told people that it was not right to sacrifice animals. Some people became angry, saying that their holy books said that it was what they should do: kill animals and offer them to their gods. They questioned why he should teach a way different from their holy books.

The Buddha replied, "It is not right to make another unhappy just so you can be happy. Every living being wants to remain alive just as you do. Therefore, if you sacrifice an animal, you are acting selfishly. I have observed that a selfish person finds nothing but unhappiness in life."

"Any god who demands the blood of an animal before he will help you is not a kind god. He is not worthy of being worshipped by anyone. But if you act with love and kindness toward all –animals and people alike – then the gods themselves should worship you!"

Many people who heard these words thought that it was wise to follow the Buddha's suggestion and immediately gave up the custom of sacrificing animals. In this way a great deal of unhappiness was ended. (24)

Sacrifice II

At one time a great sacrifice was arranged for the benefit of King Pasenadi of Kosala. They were going to sacrifice five hundred bulls, five hundred bullocks, and as many heifers, goats, and rams in one day.

The animals were fearful. Also the slaves, menials and craftsmen making these preparations were fearful of being beaten if everything was not perfectly arranged.

A number of monks rose early, dressed and entered the city of Savatthi for alms that day. Upon their return to the monastery, they sought the Buddha and told him of the preparations for the great sacrifice.

The Exalted One, understanding the matter, uttered these verses:

These sacrifices:

the Horse,
the Man,
the Peg-thrown site,
the Drink of victory,
the Bolts Withdrawn,

These are fraught with violence,
They do not bring great fruit.

The great seers of right conduct
Do not attend that sacrifice
Where goats, sheep, and cattle
Of various kinds are slain.

But when sacrifices free from violence
Are always offered by family custom,
Where no goats, sheep, or cattle
Of various kinds are slain;
The great seers of right conduct
Attend a sacrifice like this.

The wise person should offer
A sacrifice that brings great fruit.
For one who makes such a sacrifice
It is indeed better, never worse,
Such a sacrifice is truly vast
And the gods too are pleased.” (25)

The Snake Beating

Once in Savatthi the Buddha came across some youths searching for snakes to beat with sticks. When

questioned, the youths answered that they thought it was great fun to beat snakes.

The Buddha admonished them saying, "If you do not want to be harmed, you should not harm others. If you harm others, you will not find happiness even in your future existence."

Realizing the harm they would cause, and reflecting mindfully on what the Buddha said, all the youths became sotapannas. (26)

Releasing a Deer

One day while walking in the woods, the Buddha came upon a deer struggling in a trap. The Buddha released the deer at once and let it run away. Then he sat under a nearby tree to rest.

After a while the hunter came to check his trap. He could see that a deer had been caught, but that someone had released it. Looking around, he saw an ascetic dressed in saffron robes sitting under a nearby tree. The hunter thought that the ascetic was responsible for his empty trap. Angrily he thought, "There are getting to be too many of these holy men. They are always sneaking about interfering with an honest man's livelihood with their pious ways."

In his anger he aimed an arrow at the Buddha who was sitting perfectly still. "Now I am going to rid the world of one of them," he thought. But his hand began trembling so much as he aimed at this strangely serene ascetic that his arrow missed its mark.

Never in his life had the hunter missed hitting a target so close; enraged now, both at himself and the ascetic, he fired once more. Again he missed. After a third attempt, he became afraid. Dropping his bow and

arrows he slowly approached the Buddha and humbly asked who he was.

The Buddha answered the hunter. Mildly and gently he told him that taking a life was easy, but giving it back, very difficult. And he explained the harm that comes from killing. The hunter listened to the Buddha's words. He could feel how concerned the Buddha was for him and he promised never again to kill a living being. (27)

A favorite story is about King Udena of Vatsa and his elephant, Bhaddavati.

BHADDAVATI

Bhaddavati was the king's prized elephant. The king rode on Bhaddavati when he eloped with his queen, Vasuladatta. He always said that he owed his life, queen, and kingdom to this great beast that could travel tirelessly fifteen leagues in a day. He treated the elephant with great affection and respect, having her stall perfumed with costly fragrances and decorated with colorful fabrics. The king personally fed her royal food, honoring her as a favored member of his court.

As the elephant grew old, the king forgot about her and she was neglected. He stopped seeing her. Pining away for the king, she nearly starved to death. One day while visiting Vatsa, the Buddha entered the capital city of Kosambi to collect his alms food. The elephant saw the Buddha from a distance and walked slowly toward him. She fell at his feet and he could tell by her sorry state that she had been abandoned by the king.

In his great compassion for all beings the Buddha sent word to the king that he shouldn't mistreat Bhaddavati this way, reminding him that he had at one time loved the elephant as a member of his own family. The king felt remorse for his neglect and restored Bhaddavati to her previous high status. (28)

AKKOSAKA

A Brahmin named Akkosaka Bharadvaja approached the Buddha and his monks to complain that a large number of his clansmen were leaving home to join the Lord's Sangha. He felt they were being stolen from their families who needed them. The man was well-known for being particularly abusive, and this encounter with the Lord was no exception.

Angry and displeased he approached the Blessed One and abused and reviled him with rude, harsh words.

When he had finished speaking the Blessed One asked, "What do you think, Brahmin? Do your friends and colleagues, kinsmen and relatives, as well as other guests come to visit you from time to time?"

"Sometimes they come."

"But if they do not accept the food you offer them, then who does it belong to?"

"If they do not accept it from me, then the food still belongs to me."

"So here it is, Brahmin. The abuse, the scolding, the reviling you hurl at us who do not abuse or scold or insult, we do not accept from you. It all belongs to you, Brahmin! It still belongs to you, Brahmin!"

"If a man replies to abuse with abuse, to scolding with scolding, to insults with insults, Brahmin;

that is like him joining as a guest for dinner. But we are not joining you for dinner. It is all yours, Brahmin, it still belongs to you!”

“The king and his retinue understand the ascetic Gotama to be an arahat, yet Master Gotama still gets angry,’ said Akkosaka Bharadvaja. The Buddha then recited these verses:

“How can anger arise in one who’s free,
wrathless; all his passions tamed; at
peace,
Freed by the highest insight, by himself,
so abiding, perfectly serene?
If a man’s abused and answers back, of
the two he shows himself the worse.
Who does not answer back in kind,
celebrates a double victory;
From his action both sides benefit, he
himself and his reviler too.
Understanding that man’s angry mood,
he can help him clear it and find
peace.
He’s the healer of them both because he
and the other benefit thereby.
People think a man like that’s a fool, for
they cannot understand the Truth. (29)

After this was said, the Brahmin Akkosaka Bharadvaja took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. He asked to receive the going forth under Master Gotama; to receive the higher ordination.

ACCEPTING CRITICISM OF THE TEACHING

The Buddha taught his disciples how to deal with outsiders' opinions, good or bad, of himself, his teachings and his followers.

One day, some of the Buddha's monks overheard Brahmadata, the disciple of the ascetic Suppiya arguing about the merits of the Buddha's teaching.

Brahmadatta was praising the Buddha's teaching while his teacher was finding fault in all sorts of ways. The argument continued for a long time as each would not concede to the other.

Later as the monks were discussing these events, the Buddha joined them. They told him what had occurred.

The Buddha advised his monks thus: "If anyone should speak against me, my teaching or my disciples, you should not be angry, resentful, upset or hold that against them. For if you were angry with them, how would you know if they were right or not?

"On the other hand, if anyone should praise me, my teaching, or my disciples, you should not be pleased or proud. For if you were pleased or proud, how would you know if they were exaggerating?"

The Buddha continued, "Therefore, whether people praise or criticize me, my teaching, or my disciples, be neither proud nor angry. Rather, be impartial, and acknowledge whether they are right or calmly explain where they are wrong. More importantly both anger and pride would be a hindrance to your development." (30)

LOVING-KINDNESS FOR EVERYONE

Most of us are a long way from being able to express loving-kindness (*metta*) and compassion (*karuna*) as the Buddha did. Yet the lessons in these stories are ones we can all learn. We can cultivate the aspects of Buddhist Love to improve ourselves, as we work toward ending our own suffering. By doing so, we may be able to help all beings.

To cultivate metta, it is advisable to find a quiet place where you can release all tensions and will not be disturbed. Somewhere that is comfortable for you. Also, for the best results, it is good to choose a particular time to do this. Sit keeping the body erect and the eyes closed.

If you practice twice daily, morning and evening for at least five minutes each, you will, as the Buddhist texts say,

Sleep and wake in comfort;
See no evil dreams;
Be dear to humans and non-humans;
Be protected by deities.
Your mind quickly concentrates,
Your countenance is serene... (31)

Loving-kindness is to be practiced first toward oneself. If you do not have loving-kindness toward yourself, how can you have it for others? Therefore be friendly toward yourself.

Do not burden yourself with an unhealthy guilty conscience or regrets. Human nature is human nature. No one is all good; no one is all bad. Even if you do something wrong, you need not dwell in guilt, but take advantage of the opportunity to correct yourself.

Do not dwell in the past, nor brood over the future. Look inside yourself to gently eradicate feelings of superiority or inferiority. You will reach a point where unhealthy thoughts and actions will no longer arise.

You can give others only what you yourself have. You cannot give others what you have not experienced. Directing loving-kindness toward yourself involves appreciating your own value. As you appreciate your own value, you begin to appreciate the value of others and their service to humankind.

Loving-kindness is the best antidote for anger. It is the best medicine for those angry with themselves. Let us extend metta to all, including ourselves, with a free and boundless heart.

Loving-kindness teaches us to be hospitable and charitable to one another; to speak pleasantly and agreeably. To not quarrel, but to work for each other's welfare.

We even extend loving-kindness to those who dislike or hate us for perhaps in a previous life we disliked or hated them; or perhaps they may have done us a service and we are in their debt.

When anger arises we can counteract it by reflecting on the impermanence of life with the following thought:

That person has now changed completely,
mind and body:

What can I be angry with there?

Am I angry with hair, nails, teeth or skin?

Looking within, one finds that often one is not angry with the other person, but that it is one's own ideas and feelings that are causing the anger. That is

why it is good to start the practice of loving-kindness toward oneself first as follows:

**May I be free from sorrow and always
happy;
May those who desire my welfare be
free from sorrow and always happy;
May those who are indifferent toward
me be free from sorrow and always
happy;
May those who hate me be free from
sorrow and always happy;
May all beings living in this city be free
from sorrow and always happy;
May all beings living elsewhere be free
from sorrow and always happy;
May all beings living anywhere in the
world be free from sorrow and
always happy;
May all beings living in every galaxy
and each element of life in each of
those systems be free from sorrow
and always happy;
May all achieve the highest bliss.**

**A traditional chant from Sri Lanka can also
serve as a good base for establishing loving-kindness:**

**Aham avero homi
May I be free from enmity.
Abyapajjho homi
May I be free from hurt.
Anigho homi
May I be free from troubles of mind and
body.
Sukhi attanam pariharami
May I be able to protect my own happiness**

Sabbe satta avera hontu
Whatever beings there are, may they be free
from enmity.

Sabbe satta abyapajjha hontu
Whatever beings there are, may they be free
from hurt.

Sabbe satta anigha hontu
Whatever being there are, may they be free
from troubles of mind and body.

Sabbe satta sukhi attanam pariharantu
Whatever beings there are, may they be able
to protect their own happiness.

These reflections and meditations form a part of traditional Buddhist practice. We can say that loving-kindness is the basis of Buddhist ethics. For those following the path of the Buddha to the end of suffering, loving-kindness can be the foundation of a meditative practice that will lead to awakening. We recommend starting the day by chanting and reflecting on the following Loving-kindness meditation:

May I be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to me; may no difficulties
come to me; may no problems come to
me.

May I always meet with success.
May I also have patience, courage,
understanding and determination to
meet and overcome inevitable
difficulties, problems, and failures in
life.

May my parents, family and relatives be well,
happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties
come to them; may no problems come to
them.

May they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage,
understanding and determination to
meet and overcome inevitable
difficulties, problems, and failures in
life.

May my teachers and friends be well, happy,
peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties
come to them; may no problems come to
them.

May they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage,
understanding and determination to
meet and overcome inevitable
difficulties, problems, and failures in
life.

May my enemies and those unfriendly to me be
well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties
come to them; may no problems come to
them.

May they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage,
understanding and determination to
meet and overcome inevitable
difficulties, problems, and failures in
life.

May all beings everywhere be well, happy,
peaceful and prosperous.

May no harm come to them, may no difficulties
come to them; may no problems come to
them.

May they always meet with success.

May they also have patience, courage,
understanding and determination to
meet and overcome inevitable
difficulties, problems, and failures in
life.

Continue your meditation with a period of holding only
the thought of loving-kindness in your mind, feel
yourself infused with loving-kindness and radiate it out
in every direction. May all benefit from this practice.

May the suffering not suffer,
The fearful not fear,
The grieving not grieve;
May all beings be well and happy.

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