

Mettā Bhāvanā - Développer la Bienveillance (15 min)

Bhante Bodhidhamma · International Talks · 27:48

Metta bhavana. Developing loving-kindness. Developing benevolent love.

First, we must gather ourselves in a calm and peaceful state. So first of all, we need to settle into a tranquil and peaceful state. Feel the breathing as neutral and pleasant.

When we practise *vipassanā*, we develop the quality of equanimity. But this equanimity can be corrupted into indifference. To prevent this, we must practise *metta*. So in your daily practice, make sure that you end each practice with one or two minutes of *metta*. This means that whatever our understanding of *vipassanā*, it will be transformed into an attitude.

So an attitude is not an emotion. We can help someone even if we don't feel like doing it. We can be kind to someone even if we don't like them. So in the Buddha's scriptures, *metta* is really very important. *Metta* is really this basic relationship that we should develop between ourselves, but really with all beings.

Metta means all the good qualities you would expect from a friend, a good friend. So if we have developed loving-kindness towards someone, the two other boundless qualities will arise naturally. They are called boundless, without limit.

If a good friend of mine is in misfortune, the desire to help him will be born, will be there. Naturally. Compassion appears naturally from *metta*. In the same way, if a good friend of mine is happy, everything is going well for him, I am happy for him. So from *metta*, joy for others appears naturally.

The Buddha calls these qualities boundless because we can develop them infinitely. It's like numbers. Whatever the number, we could always add one more. They are also called the *Brahma Vihāra*. So the dwelling of the highest gods, the highest divinities. So this means that these are the most developed states of mind that we can create.

So the four boundless qualities are with equanimity. So equanimity will prevent these qualities from being corrupted by their near enemies. Love is corrupted by attachment, like loving only those we like. So compassion is corrupted by grief. And joy is corrupted by too much excitement.

So developing *metta* is easy. So simply, we bring to mind certain categories of people and we offer them our blessings. And we can choose the blessings we want. But the traditional blessings are four in number.

The first is safety. Everyone wishes to be safe. So from dangers outside of them, like the financial,

economic crisis. And safety from dangers inside themselves. Everyone wishes to be in good health. Everyone wishes to be happy. No one wishes to be mentally in distress. And we all want to live a life that is at ease with itself. So we all wish to live a life that is comfortable, at ease.

This doesn't mean an easy life. This means being in contentment. Accepting that things are as they are. Being content with what we have. So we mustn't confuse this with resignation. Contentment, when situations are not going well, allows us to accept the situation and see the solutions, the possibilities. But when there is resignation, then at that point we don't see the possibilities and it leads to despair.

So we begin the practice of *metta* with people we know. But at the moment when we begin the practice of *metta*, perhaps the heart or our emotional life is not going well, doesn't feel well. Perhaps we feel a bit depressive. Perhaps we feel a bit depressed. But so we try to put these states, as they are, aside. Like when we park a car. And we, like that, we practise the states above. And so it's as if we were practising *metta* on top. And after a certain time, you will notice that the heart will begin to resonate with this attitude. And we will begin to feel pleasant and good sensations, feelings in the heart and in the body.

When we offer these blessings, some people like to use colours. Or some people like to feel warmth coming from their heart towards the person. So whatever can help you develop this attitude is good.

So remember the four blessings: may you be safe, well, happy and contented.

Bring now somebody to mind who has helped you in your life, a benefactor. And at the same time as you have this image in your head, offer them your blessings. May you be safe, well, happy and contented.

Bring to mind those who are close and dear to us. And when you have the image in your mind, offer them your blessings.

Bring to your mind your colleagues, your friends, whoever you wish.

Bring to mind neutral people that you encounter but don't know.

Turn, direct now this current of loving-kindness towards ourselves. May I be safe, well, happy and contented. And repeat it gently to ourselves. Repeat this several times softly to ourselves.

In the heart of loving-kindness, now bring a person with whom you have difficulties.

And now we can begin to radiate this energy around us. To begin with, with us, in this room. May we be safe, well, happy and contented.

Radiating this energy to our neighbours. So there, we can relocate ourselves to the place where we live. And from there, radiate to all the people in our country. To all the people in Europe. All the people on Earth. And so when you include the whole Earth, go through the places where there is particularly suffering.

And to finish, radiate towards all beings in all directions. So we will do it in the six directions, in front of us, behind us, on our left, on our right, below and above.

Let us offer our loving-kindness to all beings in front of us. All beings behind, at the back. All beings on our left. All beings on our right. All beings below us. And towards all beings in all directions. May all beings be happy.

Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu.

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