

LOVINGKINDNESS

*Come to the edge,
he said.*

*We are afraid,
they said.*

*Come to the edge,
he said.*

They came.

He pushed them.

And they flew.

(Guillaume Apollinaire)



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Introduction

Come pause with us dear friends.

Sit by the river

Watch the sun rise and set.

*The texture of days flowing through
again and again and again.*

Rest at ease and know the seasons of your being

The heart beat of this earth.

A time to slow and pause,

To nurture love and life so deep

To let the rush and madness gradually seep away

Returning *naturally to the sea*

on the sound of rivers

the breath of wind

and the flow of wholesome time.

The Tui calls, the Bellbird too

Calls us into beauty,

serene awakeness present here.

A year of cultivating grace

Honouring *our forebears*

Harvesting the fruit of hopeful hearts

A gifting through

breath by breath by breath

Gifting through to children yet to come.



Two thousand years ago, Jesus taught his disciples to love their neighbours as themselves. In this year, at the threshold of the second Christian millennia, we have had wars and fighting in Yugoslavia, Kashmir, the Middle East, Africa, Timor, South America and many other places. Millions of people world wide are barely surviving, as refugees from ethnic conflicts. Even in the wealthy parts of the world there is an escalation of violent crime and an increasing gap between the wealthy and poor. Levels of fear and anxiety are rising everywhere.

What Jesus taught so long ago hasn't become dated. If anything it is more needed today than ever before. It is in response to these needs that the Wangapeka Educational Trust, in the South Island of New Zealand, has decided to dedicate the year 2000 to a year long retreat on the themes of Loving-kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity.

Throughout this time, long and short retreats will be offered, touching many of the issues of life that are important to beings, such as healing, compassionate work, meaningful livelihood, social questions, environmental responsibility and so forth. In addition, a small core of meditators will devote the entire year to cultivating the mind and heart of lovingkindness both within their own beings and in the community at large. The booklet you now hold in your hands will hopefully provide inspirational and practical support for this work.

To compile this collection of writings, I invited many of the teachers who we hope will visit Wangapeka during the year to offer some words of instruction or advice, poetry or inspiration; anything they felt would be useful, on the theme of lovingkindness. The one exception is the essay from Namgyal Rinpoché which is a summary of two talks he gave back in 1974. If we were to add up all their years of teaching and working for the welfare of others, this booklet would represent nearly two hundred years of teaching experience!

The Tibetans often say that the reason why there are so many paths of awakening is because there are so many different types of people. These writings present a number of different approaches to lovingkindness. I am sure that at least a few, if not all of them they will inspire and stimulate you. At the end of the booklet, there is a collection of twenty one exercises and inspirations that will help you to actually practice or will serve to remind you of what, in the world today, is so precious and yet so easily forgotten.

My thanks go to all the contributors, the Venerable Namgyal Rinpoché, Bonni Ross, Catherine Rathbun, Mary Jise Jaksch, Nyanaviro Archer, Karma Chimé Shore, Cecilie Kwiat and Greg Devereux and to Mary Jenkins, Mira Riddiford, Clive Matthew-Wilson, Aaron Skudder, and Peter Woollett who helped with the design and production.

May this work bring joy and inspiration to you the reader and may the wisdom and compassion flowering from the fortuitous meeting of you and this great river of teaching, be of benefit to all beings.

Blessings to all

Tarchin Hearn

Lovingkindness

from talks given

BY VENERABLE NAMGYAL RINPOCHÉ

These notes were compiled from a class given by the Rinpoché in April 1974 on the Polish freighter S.S. Aspasia sailing from Europe to Peru. They were first published years ago in a stapled xerox form. Finding my own notes from the same talk, I have slightly changed the first edition leaving out a few sections for reasons of space and inserting bits to add clarity. I pray that the result conveys Rinpoché's meaning and serves as an inspiration to all –Tarchin

The one force which can draw all things together is love. In Eric Fromm's book "The Art of Loving" he raises the idea that to come to a state of love is the greatest of all disciplines. We suffer from the restricted view that love is solely a spontaneous aspect of freedom. Look at the phrase "love at first sight". Basically this is attraction based on previous associations. It is a strong electrical impulse of thousands of neurons firing through habitual patternings. Needless to say, previous associations aren't necessarily healthy. What if it's a sado-masochistic association? The feeling

of pleasure that arises may well be deceptive. You get a great pleasure from seeing the object due to a number of stimuli but there's no guarantee that they're wholesome. You must decide early in the path whether love is something you fall into or something established and built up. You need to decide between the passive or the active point of view. What's it going to be; active, passive, or an amalgam of the two? Is it to be exclusive love or inclusive love? Better exclusive than none at all. Actually, love by nature is non-exclusive. It tends to establish contact with all beings.

The early Christian church distinguished between Eros and Agapé. They used to have feasts of Agapé in which there was a feeling of total love for everyone in the church community. They greeted each other at the door of the church with a brotherly kiss. It was a bit like the French on ceremonial occasions. In Arab communities, if someone is very close to you, someone you revere, the warmest way to welcome him would be to kiss him on the cheek. To some extent the kiss of peace of those early Christians has been



restored but I must point out that for this to work depends on everyone being in a state of love and there not being any exploiting.

I once went to an evangelical 'people's Church'. One day I experienced great joy and ecstasy; a movement of 'The Spirit'. I fell to the floor, singing out in other tongues. In the midst of this I noticed someone pawing my body. It brought me straight down. To be lifted up and exhalted and then abused in such a way was quite a shock. It's very bad to have your openness exploited by others. To truly have agapé, you need beings who are in a clear loving state seven days a week. I have a feeling that Christians of old were dwelling in this; a transcended Eros moving to all embracing Joy; a diffusion of love incorporating all beings. You should feel the agapé as a beautiful rose cloud going through you. My direct experience of agapé at that time was ruined by a warped eros.

How do we not fall in love but rather, build up into love? As with any meditation there is a formal work to raise the question and then the eclectic realisation of it; the formless spontaneous work. Let's look at an outline of how the meditators of old kept the question always before them. Agapé in the East is called Metta, an all embracing loving-kindness. The following format for developing metta can also be applied to compassion, joy, and serenity.

There are two basic sections to work with. 'May I be well and happy' and 'may everyone be well and happy'. Well usually applies to the physical level and happy applies to the mental level. If you are physically healthy; feeling a good sunshiny day in your body, the mind is lifted from any depression. If you're not men-

tally happy, let's say because of past conditioning, your somatic level will be off. Well and happy is an emphasis on psycho and somatic.

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There is always an order in radiating love; first for self, then for others. "Oh! you put self first.....self love." People who come out with this criticism don't see that you must be in a positive state to send love. You send out what you are. It's very important that you are quite firmly in a state of love in your own being. As the saying goes, "charity begins at home." That 'oh! self-love!' misconception, means that the being doesn't understand love. Whoever is worried that it's just going to become self-love is on the wrong track because the nature of love is sharing and spreading out. You see the contradiction? Non-love is a wrapping up of self and a shutting down. Love is throwing off

clothes and running through the sunny spring fields. Un-love is self poison. Self-love is a narcissistic defence. Love is not defensive.

There are three classical approaches to the meditation on metta. The first is personal, working from individual to individual, the second is by categories and the third is by directions. We will outline these three practices and consider whether they are workable for Westerners.

In the first case, one works with individual beings beginning with oneself. It is very important that only when you the meditator, have a feeling of well-being and happiness arising in both mind and body that you proceed. Next you go to your guru or teacher, who is supposed to be the person next to yourself most easy to establish rapport with. Then you move on to parents and immediate relatives, then to friends, then strangers – people

you have no particular contact with, and finally to enemies. The idea is that eventually you will be able to maintain an even tenor of feeling through all these different types of beings.

Don't rush to your enemies first. If you get smarmy nice feelings towards your enemies right off the bat, you're in danger of experiencing the 'Jesus Christ syndrome' of turning the other cheek leading you into ego feelings of pride. Working methodically at the meditation will wipe out any "I up here am being so good to them down there."

There are many problems for Westerners with this first type of approach. Most people don't have the classical guru-chela relationship. Unfortunately for many, the guru-lama is very blown up and abstracted. In the East, the teacher was always a very close and good friend for whom you had a vast admiration and great friendship.

You would feel warmth and aliveness in the presence of your

teacher. Very few Westerners, however, have this master-disciple relationship. Even ones who do have a guru subject him to all kinds of superman, black magician, good parent/bad parent projections due to unresolved childhood conditioning. So the guru is really an unknown factor; a stranger, not really a close friend. Also a being who is starting on the spiritual path can't afford to wait until they find a guru to do the meditation on love, so this method will not serve their needs.

It is quite erroneous to think in terms of love-hate. All psychiatry is wrong on this point. Psychiatrists have obviously never experienced true love. They have only a false self and the attraction-repulsion principle to go on, so they view love as a commodity exchange. If you love another, you don't love yourself less. It is not a swing. A parent who screams at their child does

not have love swinging to hate. In this case they often say that the parent has love underneath but actually there is only manoeuvring of a false ego view. Love is free and joyful. Love and joy are always inseparable. When you were a young girl or boy playing in a joyful state, then love was present.

Many beings simply cannot get to a point of feeling love towards their parents because they are so wound up with resentment. Much of the psychological need young people feel to love their parents, really is involved with the unresolved need for love from them. It is all confused with performance. Furthermore, many Oedipal complications come into play. Unfortunately, for many beings, their parents are very close to enemies.

And what about the friends you've acquired; people you 'tag around with' and wear their

tags! Often they are just substitute parents. It's hard to find a true friend

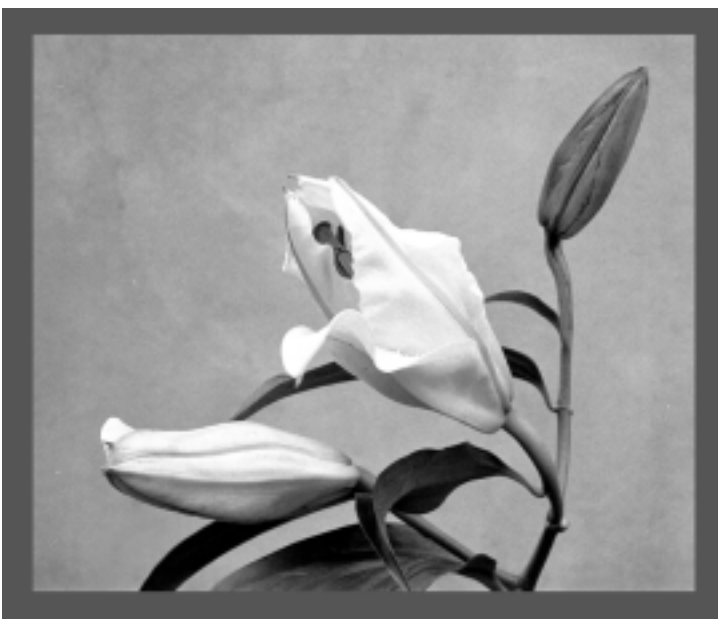
who's really interested in you, so you see, it's very difficult to get this formal method off the ground. They didn't have these problems in ancient times. They had good, loving parents and true friends. But today, in the West, these are rare to find.

Many Eastern teachers who come to the West have given out this meditation in all sweet innocence. One particular monk I know had a beautiful background; his mother used to sit and read scriptures and chant sutras. The whole house would be radiant with warmth. One evening she saw a light under the door and when she opened it there was a seven foot tall being radiating light. That monk certainly had a different upbringing from the average Westerner. However, he didn't have a dicky-bird of a clue that this method of meditation would be so difficult for Westerners.

Love and joy are always inseparable

The whole idea of this meditation is to gradually build up a consistent even flow of good feeling. Your body and mind are radiating with light. You have a beautiful relationship with the teacher. Your parents love you and are giving you such a good example and your friends just add a little more fuel. This accumulates like a power storehouse so that by time you get to the enemies they are swept right up on the wholesome tide of it all. They no longer even exist as enemies. There's no need for negative dialogue. It's not meant to be a meditation in which you fight every inch of the way.

The second method has more merit for a Westerner in that it doesn't provoke so many problems. Here you move in categories and so it's a bit more science-oriented. Beginning with the self, "may I be well and happy", you go to humans, "may all humans be well and happy". You can actually practise this one as it's slightly more abstract. Then you move on to animals. Any of these groups can be expanded, for example in animals, opening to different families of animals: canine, feline, reptiles, birds, insects etc. Gradually it has to expand to incorporate a real appreciation for all categories of life. So far this is feasible for you.



The difficulty however, comes where tradition enumerates beings not on this planet, like Devas, Asuras and Radiant Beings. To do this method you must believe in the existence of other beings on other planets which relative to earth may be hells or heavens. You enter into highly unknown areas as far as Western science is concerned. Which planets? What type of beings are there? If you could struggle with yourself and admit that life does exist in other parts of the universe, it could become a most supreme exploration.

First you must love all creatures on earth. You must have a reverence for this planet, teeming with so many experiments in life. You can't be one of those potty Americans or Canadians that go up North and shoot moose or fish for no reason other than puffing up the ego view. These free and easy killers must be stopped. Look at the seal hunting, the whole fur industry. A second skin is hardly necessary. If it was, that would be another matter. Why not ban unnecessary killing and eventually pass beyond that by working with all our resources to stop the need for slaughtering any animals.

Arthur C. Clarke wrote a book about Buddhists coming to power. They banned all meat eating so what did the scientists do? They resolved the problem by milking whales. Why not put all the fantastic intelligence of man into phasing out the slaughter of innocents? We could program out meat and program in other substances to eat. The whole world could become a park. Animals in their natural state wouldn't hurt humans. "Perfect love casteth out all fear." All you have to do is look at animals; bring them light. They are very perceptive of intelligence. They could be controlled by eye contact alone.

This would be a wonderful way to train man to go out into the universe,

with love, not hate and pollution. This poses the question of getting the house in order to prepare for positive contact with other beings. Maybe through awakening the question through a formal effort, outer space beings might even come and visit you. If we practice this second meditation as outlined here we may begin to be able to love all life on earth and then to move with this love out into space.

For the third method, you create within your heart a red or rose coloured flower or a soft ruby glow. See each petal as a field of energy radiating in a different direction. You could begin this meditation by holding a real flower in your hand and then taking the feel of it into your heart. It should be very tangible. Get the rose light arising as a star with rays in the heart and then expand it as far as you can. A sign that the meditation is working is a warm glow with soft joy and light. The light could be any colour for if you're in a state of love it doesn't matter.

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be filled with light." When you are in a state of love, your eye is single. Picture Guru Rinpoche, the lotus-born child, sending out golden rays. The light will gradually become a flush golden-peach, eventually turning to rainbow with different colours going to different beings according to their needs. With this aura you can build a multidimensional mandala incorporating the cross of stability, the creative cross, the above and the below. The rays expand until they establish a globe of energy around you, the field of merit – *punya*. It's not absolutely accurate to think of a lotus. It would be better to see a rose extending in all directions. Sometimes the body will actually physically move through these planes. You may experi-

ence this in meditation. This is what I like to call the foundation practice. This directional method may be the best one for you to use though the meditation by categories appeals to the minds of science.

There is a fourth meditation which is referred to in the marriage ceremonies of old. "With my body, I thee worship." In pure mind you can explore the field of love through the physical planes. There is a great need for these levels, hence the trends in modern psychotherapy. People are always asking, how do you feel? But they should also ask: how do you think? How do you intuit? How do you sense? The first category of metta meditation, working through individuals is for feeling. The categories one is for thinking. The directional method is for intuition. The fourth way is in reality a very secret method of bringing rays of love into the material levels. This is the empowering of material, the physical bringing of love into nature. You can, for example, send rays of love into plants. Through this comes a raising of nature.

*People are
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But they
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do you
think? How
do you
intuit? How
do you
sense?"*

For the present, I suggest you leave the first method alone unless you are in a highly positive state towards your parents. When you are in a good mood, you are a little more forgiving of your parents and appreciative of the suffering they have undergone in this life. If you are in a good state, you realise that whatever bad they have done to you has been because of the suffering they've been exposed to. You could do the first meditation with a gradual, realistic approach, remembering that it was designed in the first place to be effortless – like a total love experience.

What you really want is to move through the meditation consistently; to be able to go through

to beings with whom you have great interpersonal problems. In the systematic part of meditation, you maintain a consistent form. Avoid just having an emotional bath. Here we are developing a specific theme and purpose in order to resolve unloving relationships. When you're doing this meditation, your mind will accumulate so many positive associations that by the time you get to the enemies you will find that you don't have any. Presumably the more awake you are, the fewer enemies you have; you may be just curious about people with ill-will. There are some people who carry around enemies like punching bags within them. You don't have to go out and find enemies. To practice this meditation, you can think of beings with qualities that you dislike or particular races of people that you don't understand.

Some people think that they have enemies but after a while they get to a Buddhist view; their enemies are merely beings who are caught in suffering. The aim is; whether the guru appears in consciousness or the enemy appears, the whole thing boils down to "be ye not moved". Whether angels or demons appear to you, remain in the same state of an equanimity of love. No matter who comes up in your consciousness, an evenness of temper or timbre is what is called for. So long as the student is going "Wow! Guru" he is not in a state of equanimity. He must level the mountains and raise the valleys. As is sung in the Messiah, "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain made low." Don't try to change beings in your mind. Let things be. This enables you to walk on.

Turning to more everyday considerations, try to surround yourself with good loving vibrations, lovingly made clothes, lovingly cooked food. If you feel the food to be unwholesome, you can place your hands over it and think of love or peace. This will infuse the food and put you in a good mood to receive it. It is better to receive hate-prepared food in a state of love than to eat love-prepared food in a state of hate. The very best is to receive food prepared in a state of love whilst in a state of love. This is the origin of blessing and grace.

Saying grace is a wise though little understood custom. Beings have not got the secret key. What is the real meaning? There is a story of two children who were in the fields and suddenly a great big bull comes after them. The girl clears the fence but her little brother gets stuck. She calls to him to jump over but he says "I can't! I'm stuck" She replies, "Well then, pray!" So he says, "Dear Lord, for what we are about to receive may I be truly grateful!"

All you need to say is "May this food be in a state of love and may I receive it in a state of love." We should get away from being like locusts, eating through materials without breaking up our food and sharing it with others. It was a great loss when man started using knife, fork and spoons as extensions of his being. If you are in a state of love and eat with your fingers, you automatically raise everything's vibration.

Love is a fundamental necessity for the maintenance and preservation of life. If food is prepared without love then there is something missing. For those who feel underfed, it is not the quantity of food that is missing but the quality of love in it. There was not the loving parent in the kitchen.

I know a couple who have everything going for them in a loving way. Her way of doing things is very orderly, no-nonsense and everything she cooks has an absolutely wholesome quality about it. It is all under her own touch. Everything except meat is from her own garden. She and her husband have made a garden of delight. They thrive because the foundation is so good.

Basically the average being is good-tempered if he or she is in the right environment. The simple country life is often better because the individual does not get so overwhelmed. In a city, grouchiness can more easily overcome you. Anyone hoping to fulfil the path ought to make efforts to create a suitable and healthy milieu in which to live.

Possible Healthy Environments



These are some notes that I took during a talk Rinpoché gave the next evening. Though some will find the ideas utterly utopian, I feel a great enthusiasm bubbling up with these wonderful possibilities. We need reminders like these to raise our sights and to create ways of living that are uplifting for all beings – Tarchin

Environment includes where you live, work and play, and *Kalianna Mitta*, your human environment, has to be considered in all three. Many beings don't have any control over who their friends will be. You have with you, whoever you have with you. You may have suitable friends at play but hardly likely at work and maybe not at home. Actually, you should consider the whole planet, at the very least, as being your milieu or environment and every being should strive to make it a place conducive to human development.

These are only some ideas.

The ideal city might be somewhat like a multi-levelled snowflake. All snowflakes are dif-

ferent and so too, all cities would be different. Between the streets would be gardens or parks. When we build cities now, we remove nature and build again. I believe that there should be trees or a garden growing inside the house. This would be a symbol of turning in.

I saw a house in Africa built around a large living tree with the trunk glassed in and open to the sky and the ground. The natural rain could still water the tree and the roots supported the foundation. By doing things like this in a city, it would emphasise man's rising out of nature rather than separate from nature.

Natural rocks and trees, and the forces of nature, are an intuitive awakening tool. This would be a way of creating a suitable milieu for

unfolding human life. Building this way, you could still have rivers flowing without having to put them underground in sewers. Synthetic materials should be used as synthetic in their own right, instead of copies of other natural substances.

Roofs are a vast waste of space. Houses could have vegetable gardens on the roof. This would help stop the split between farmers and city folk. Interconnecting aquariums could be built in the air with all sorts of sea creatures seemingly swimming around in the air. Birds would thrive on their own. Why, in London, they've actually discovered eagles living in the tops of high monuments.

Construction should happen with care to ecology, not as they do now, denuding an area and then trying to recreate nature. When the whole area is ugly, it is difficult to build a place of beauty. But starting fresh in a natural area it would be very easy. The same principles could be extended to factories and offices.

Factories should be a home away from home. In fact, each home should have a place for creative work. Manufacturing actually means building by hand. Jobs like assembly work should be changed so that one person builds the whole car. When building new things, man should concentrate on creating a symbol of the unity of life. Work, home and play are not split. Every being should know about every interconnection of their life; its relationship to art, music, technology, pure science, manufacturing, farming, medicine and organisation so as to feel how their life fits into the whole.

Every house should have an electron microscope which projects pictures on the wall. Children could explore with this. Every house

should have a glass dome roof with a telescope lense inset into it. This way, beings could simultaneously see the sky from different relativities. These things would be easy to build. The problem is liberating man to the extent that he wants to unfold and to bring his achievement closer to his potential.

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Buildings now are ugly because the minds that built them are ugly. It's not so much what you create but what kind of mind you are creating with. What we create reflects the state of our mind. Now most of our structures with their solid opaque walls are defensive, reflecting the defensive minds that create them.

Museums should be spread around in places all over the city to constantly remind beings of their history. Museums and art galleries could even be disbanded and their contents put where people live, not just keeping them as a pile of dead articles. There is usually much too much to absorb at once in a museum anyway. The mass clutter of mere objects reduces any one of them to a valueless state. Why not distribute some of the emeralds of Topkapei to Saskatoon; suspend them above the streets. Take a sheaf of wheat from Saskatchewan and put it in Topkapei. That would raise questions! Share the world around. Every house should have a piece of moon rock. Museums should be left for exhibitions and modern discoveries.

To help this, the whole planet should have one government and one language. You'd think that language construction would be a world scientific project; an ongoing work adapting and incorporating and bringing in new constructions. Most racial prejudice would be dropped by people speaking the same language. The war factor would drop!

Utopian communities will not succeed because even if everything works well inside, it may still be intruded on from outside. The community must have a world view and be an example of building into the future. Communities, at this point in history, will not develop the true communal mind but they will at least be an ongoing exploration, an indication of what is to come. They will have the feeling and

satisfaction of directly contributing to man's evolution. A true community should be able to draw freely from the world bank of resources. Communities won't return to nature to work by hand. They will move on as the mind becomes able to accept man's healthy development. Any thing or process that is part of your being, could very possibly appear in a much larger scale for Mankind.

Venerable Namgyal Rinpoche is a recognised master of meditation and paths of awakening. For more than 40 years he has travelled the world teaching students of many different nationalities and backgrounds and inspiring the formation of many centres for retreat and study. The Wangapeka is one of these centres. As a westerner with profound knowledge of Buddha Dharma, he has a rare ability to present the teachings of liberation, blending eclecticism and tradition in a seamless, natural and innovative way.



Falling in love with the universe, one being at a time

*To write of love is to lack vocabulary:
I could lie beside you on the night grass,
Navigating the vastness of dark and light that is sky;
Smelling the damp mother-body of the good ground;
Ears quickening to silence, to rustle; to the hum and purr of stars;
Tasting coffee to stay awake for the dancing universe
All night long, soft warm breeze on my face . . .
I could celebrate the birth of an idea, so clear, so complete-in-itself and so transient . . .
I could relax in a stillness so vast that even the quick point of attention vanishes . . .*

*On the way to knowing love,
We discover much that is not love, and miss so much that is . . .
To be curious about that is love too.
And so we heal, we grow, we understand.*

BY BONNI ROSS

*"To know, know, know him is to love,
love, love him. Just to see him smile
makes my life worthwhile. To know,
know, know him is to love, love, love
him, and I do."*

— popular song lyric from the '50s

Years ago Venerable Namgyal Rinpoché suggested a wonderful practice: to work through an encyclopedia of animals, radiating the energy of loving-kindness, *metta*, to each one in turn. Arriving at "pseudoscorpion," I read about a tiny creature

related to spiders whose front legs appear to be pincers. It's not really dangerous, it just pretends to be something it is not, in order *not* to have to actually defend itself.

Happily pondering the ironies and similarities of human and insect life, I went for a walk in the woods, and then sat in meditation. When I opened my eyes fully, I saw a tiny black spot on the wall in front of me; a black spot that had not been there when I began my practice. Bending nearer, I could discern what seemed at first to be a fleck of ash from the fire, until it moved!

I quickly grabbed a magnifying glass and peered at it. As the image of its body was received into the form-recognition part of my brain there was a sudden expansive rush that blew me to bits: it was a pseudoscorpion, and I had just fallen head over heels in love. I carefully moved it from the wall to a lovely little home quickly created in a small box. The encyclopedia had noted that it fed on dust mites, and scrounging under the bed yielded a huge potential food source for my new love.

I attempted to convert my friends to this new fascination: “Can I show you something amazing?” I asked them, launching into the tale. They were polite at first, then increasingly distant. Finally someone became angry. “It’s a bug, Bonni! A bug! You’ve got it in a cage, with no companions of its own kind. You don’t really know whether it can feed off the dust balls from under your bed — you’ll probably kill it!”

And so, like many before me who’ve made unwise choices in love, I let my little friend go. Fondly. Respectfully. Gratefully. To this day, I feel enriched for having known and loved that little creature. But it wasn’t always so simple...

“Jesus loves me, this I know, ‘cause the Bible tells me so. We are weak but He is strong . . . yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.”

— United Church of Canada Hymn Book, circa 1955

Like many of my generation, I grew up with some pretty distorted ideas about love. None of the Sunday-school teachers, none of the books

explained to me why I didn’t FEEL loved. By the end of high school, I had read the Bible and all the Freud I could get my hands on (which added some new ideas about sex to the confusion). Of course, I LOVED — passionately. My dog, Tinker. My best friend, Trudy. An archeologist named Sam who was a character in a movie seen at the drive-in with my parents.



Anna Pavlova and Isadora Duncan, the (dead) dancers who were the contrasting ideals of my heart. But only my dog loved me back, really. And he was fickle: let someone else apply a can opener to a can of dog food, and I was forgotten.

“Love hurts, love scars, love wounds and mars any heart not tough nor strong enough to take a lot of pain, take a lot of pain; love is like a cloud, holds a lot of rain. Love hurts.”

— The Everley Brothers, circa 1963

What I heard on the radio (hidden under my pillow to capture far-away American stations that broadcast all night long) didn’t add much to the themes in the country-and-western mu-

sic that had been the background in childhood. Because so much of my “love life” took place in a fantasy world, there was continual disappointment, and the songs reinforced all the loneliness and desperation. I was different from everyone else, I thought. No one will ever love me. I felt like Joe Blspflthck (spelling guessed-at) in the comic strip “L’il Abner,” who trudged around in a black hat and overcoat under a perpetual cloud of rain which fell only on him. It was time to grow up.

“Love is just a four-letter word.” — Janis Joplin, circa 1969

I marched in place as an eccentrically-dressed ‘love’ child. Idealism, marijuana and recreational sex served to channel the passions of the heart. Erich Fromm helped. Hindu mythology too. Perhaps there was a place where religious experience and day-to-day human life weren’t different worlds. Then came R. D. Laing:

*“It is our duty to bring up our children to love, honour and obey us.
If they don’t, they must be punished,
otherwise we would not be doing our duty.
If they grow up to love, honour and obey us we have been blessed for bringing them up properly.
If they grow up not to love, honour and obey us either we have brought them up properly or we have not:
If we have there must be something the matter with them;
If we have not there is something the matter with us.”*
— from *Knots*, 1970

Inscribed over the archway of the main academic building where I went to university it said: *The Truth Shall Make You Free*. Reading Laing, feeling internal sensations, movements, that I had never felt before, an understanding deeper than the words-in-my head formed. I believed. I wanted to be free, and therefore, I must find out the truth.

Many blind alleys later, I learned that the human heart is a doorway to a completely new cognition of love. I discovered that love is a state of being that can be developed or unfolded deliberately, intentionally and that there are actual methods — mental technologies — that reliably accomplish this. Resting in the exalted presence that is universe (the one-turning) does not depend on conditions such as myself loving someone, or someone loving me, but rather on leaving all such distinctions behind. This doesn’t mean that love isn’t personal any more, only that it is no longer exclusive. How could it be that nothing I had read or heard in my whole life thought to mention this miracle? Had I just not had eyes to see, or ears to hear? Is it this knowing that others refer to as God?

Further discoveries followed as this realization was tested. One could use ‘other’ as a doorway too. At first the Teacher; then, thanks to Carlos Castaneda, who declared that one’s greatest teachers were the “petty tyrants” in one’s life, any one at all, even apparent enemies. This is a wonder. For years I was extremely uncomfortable in the presence of someone who, I had been told, “hated my guts.” That awkwardness resulted in behavior that further antagonized this person. Avoidance seemed the only strategy that didn’t trigger animosity and defense. Imagining her bathed in the heart’s radiance, it gradually became possible to relate to her in ‘reality,’ first in a neutral way, and then as if she was a friend. It was clear that she was working, in her own way, for resolution too. Our paths didn’t cross for many years. When we did meet again, I felt that she was a close and treasured companion with whom I had shared a lot of history.

The healing power accessible through the heart also helps to reclaim and transform long-denied ‘selves’ from childhood — stages of development that have been cut off and repressed because the grip of negative pain is too frightening to hold. With amazement and thankfulness, I now ‘remember’ my childhood as quite happy and full of opportunity to explore. Ten years ago, I would have labeled it scarred by

deprivation and rage and grief. Immense conviction arises from this, which helps others develop the confidence they need to heal their own unacknowledged wounds.

Further work demonstrates that universe evolves from a number of infinite, interpenetrating 'emotional' energy fields (or nested hierarchies, in General Systems terms) which either come into awareness spontaneously as supportive response to a particular situation, or which can be reliably invoked or 'tuned into' for exploration or to provide meditative support to others. Imagine how different our reactions to personal and planetary problems would be if more of us relied on an understanding that love is not a 'thing' to be earned or bestowed, but simply, powerfully / potentially present in every moment!

In the open, spacious field of the heart, one can meet with beings so wonderfully different, so unimaginable and exotic, that one's conditioned set of reference points for what is possible dissolve. And the exploration continues . . . what was learned from the pseudoscorpion applies to every one, every question, that appears in the doorway. Through the great blessing of the Teachings of Liberation, may each and every living being come to realize this great personal and universal truth.

Vancouver, June 1999

*Love does not
depend on
conditions such
as myself
loving
someone, or
someone loving
me, but rather
on leaving all
such
distinctions
behind*

Bonni Ross brings together 30 years of study and practice in the Zen, Theravadin and Vajrayana traditions of Buddhism with motherhood, experience in holistic therapies and Western Mysteries, and a 16-year career as a communications and strategic planning consultant to business and government. She regularly teaches in Canada, California, Australia and New Zealand.

A Heart Must be Broken

*Perhaps a heart must be broken before it is broken open
And from that tear pours forth a river of remorse
For all the breakings and unkindnesses that human beings do to each other*

*Perhaps we must stay broken in order to know how to help others to mend.
Perhaps the universe in its compassion hears our cry of lament
And answers not.*

*For in the majesty of that silence
We learn to stand
Alone :*

*Broken,
Open,
Present.*

*The universal mystery fills us with wonder
How can such majesty exist alongside such misery?*

*Where do we place our drop.....,
Into the pool of kindness or the ocean of callousness?*

*Ours to choose
Ours the choice
Here, now
And in all our days to come.*



SARVA MANGALAM

Catherine Rathbun
SnowPalace Retreat, Ontario
January 1999.

The Skill of Goodness

by
MARY JISE JAKSCH

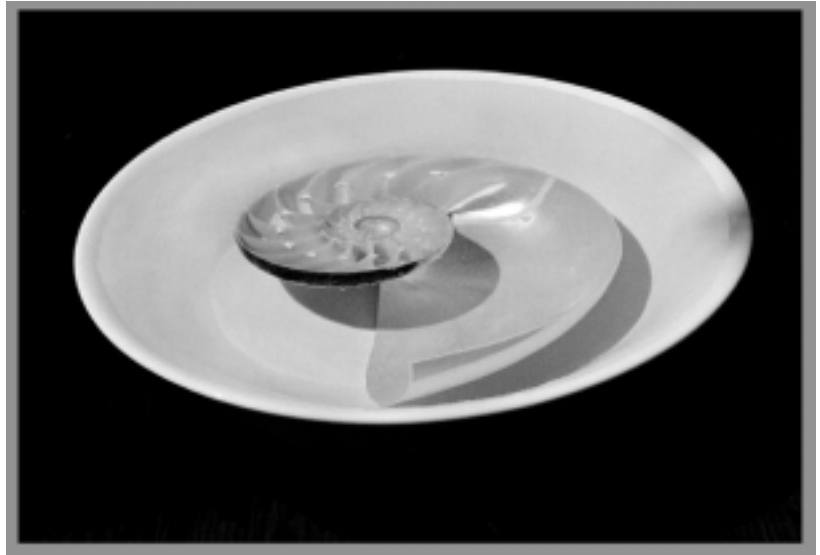
The *Metta Sutra*,
B u d d h a ' s
words on lov-
ing kindness
starts with the words:

*This is what should
be done by those
who are skilled in
goodness. ¹*

Is goodness a skill? We don't usually think of goodness as something we can study, practise and get skilled at. The Christian tradition has instilled in us the belief that goodness is the absence of sin. That is, if only we could expel all that is bad in us, we would arrive at pure goodness.

In Buddhist terms, goodness is not so much a state as a path. As you walk this path your heart opens more and more and you come forth naturally with kindness, compassion and decency. On one hand there is the plodding work of walking the path, step by step and breath by breath, and, on the other hand, there is the sudden grace of kindness and compassion. The work of practice prepares you for grace.

Walking the path is like tilling the soil and planting seeds. Each time you sit in meditation you are tilling the soil and each time you turn towards your intention of love and goodness, you are sowing a seed. Seeds germinate underground and suddenly shoot forth when they are ready. This is like the sudden grace of kindness and compassion coming forth. You cannot force the sprout to grow, you cannot dig, grab the



sprout and drag it into the light so that it may grow faster. Likewise goodness needs to emerge of its own accord and cannot be forced or contrived. Even though some people try and stick a perpetual simper to their face, this cannot compare with the smile that arises naturally as you tell someone that you appreciate them. To walk the path of goodness you need to become real, to become fully human and drop the protection of pretence and deception - like dropping your clothes, garment by garment, till you are bare and naked.

In the *Metta Sutra*, the Buddha describes the path of goodness as the path of love and kindness. It is the path of transformation through love. Even the little, everyday moments of kindness have transformational power. Just imagine that you are standing in line at the supermarket check-out and an older woman in front of you, flustered, drops her purse, bags and bundles and you help to pick them up. A smile passes between you. And in that fleeting moment your

heart expands to include her. For a moment you let go of your restricted sense of self. The smile of the person we meet with love and kindness warms our heart and lights the way.

The poet Thomas McGrath writes of this:
*How could I have come so far?
(And always on such dark trails!)
I must have travelled by the light
Shining from the faces of all those
I have loved.*²

The work of transformation happens on your meditation cushion. There, instead of trying to get rid of that which causes yourself and others anguish - your anger, your fear or pain - you can allow it to transmute into goodness. This process of transmutation happens when you begin to embrace your passions, when you allow your storms of anger, jealousy or fear to flare up and die down - all the while meeting yourself with tenderness and compassion.

What holds us back from the transformation of love is fear. The English psychoanalyst John McMurray spoke of people being either 'fear-determined' or 'love-determined':

*There are two...emotional attitudes through which human life can be radically determined. They are love and fear...The [fear-determined] have no sun in themselves and go about putting out the sun in other people...Whereas the love-determined have life in them, abundant life...They are the people who are really alive, of whom it can be said that they possess eternal life as a well within them perpetually springing.*³

Many years ago I was sitting on a boulder overlooking a mountain lake and beside me was a German woman who, like myself, had just emerged from a Zen retreat. She told me about her life and it seemed like a series of

endless catastrophes, one after another, with her worst fears always coming true. At the time I met her, she had a broken leg in a plaster cast. She had lain for two days by the side of a tramping trail, injured and helpless, before someone found her and alerted rescue services. You can imagine that she was a very lonely, anxious and unhappy person. Now, after her first retreat, she looked at me and said, "I don't know what all these Buddhist words mean. All I know is that I have discovered within me a spring of fresh water welling forth." She had had a glimpse of who she was in the depth and with that glimpse could start the work of transforming fear into love, moving from being a victim to leading a life of ease and joy.

When your life is determined by fear, you continually extinguish your own light: "No use trying!", "I'm hopeless at that!", "I'll never learn!", "This is too difficult!" Each time you play these negative tapes, you extinguish your light, you negate your potential. And when you look at others and their perceived talent and success, you may feel envy which is really a wish to extinguish their light also.

To be skilled in goodness is to become determined by love. How can we move from fear towards love? The key to such transformation is intimacy. We move from fear towards love when we start connecting with ourselves and others.

*Goodness
is not so
much a
state as a
path*

A wonderful way of practising intimacy is metta meditation. *Metta*, or loving-kindness meditation was taught by the Buddha specifically as an antidote to fear.⁴ Metta is the practice of cherishing the goodness in us and others. Thich Nhat Hanh translates the word metta as "the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness."⁵ There are many different ways to practise metta and it is helpful to engage with a teacher to develop and deepen this practice.

Apart from engaging in metta on your meditation mat, there are simple ways of turning your intention towards loving-kindness. Try this, for example: When you get out of bed in the mornings immediately bow and dedicate yourself to the wellbeing of all, saying, "May I and all beings be at ease." In this way you dedicate your day as an offering. At first sight to wish for ease may seem a lowly thing, but really, to be at ease is the life of the enlightened being. Listen to the birdsong, look at a flower, stroke a cat - aren't they all at ease? And what about you? Are you at ease? To be at ease means resting in the moment without leaning forward into the future or backward into the past. To be at ease means being who you are without a thought of how you should be or how others perceive you. To be at ease means to be unselfconscious and natural.

When we are at ease we are content. A while ago I was sitting beside the bed of a young woman who was dying of cancer. She was in great pain. Suddenly she looked up at me and said, "You know, I'm at ease with dying!"

You learn to be at ease through sitting on your meditation cushion. Whatever practice you are following, whether it is working with the breath or a koan or metta - the heart of practice is to come alive in the present moment. When you are in the moment - just as it is - you are practising being at ease. To be at ease in the moment means to be the bare person, unadorned - without pretences, without dreams, without stories. When we come forth as the bare person, stripped of everything, we embody our essential nature, the vast empty void that comes forth as you and I, stars, waves crashing on the beach, val-

leys cloaked in clouds, dewy grasses nodding by the wayside.

Being at ease leads to happiness and contentment. The great Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna who lived in the second century CE, wrote in the Mahaprajnaparamita Shastra :

When we want beings in all directions to be happy, there arises in us an intention to love. This desire to love enters our feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness; and it becomes manifested in all our actions, speech and other mental activities.⁶

This is like setting the autopilot on a plane. You may veer off course, but the autopilot will point you back in the right direction. The intention to love allows you to return to your practice, allowing you to open to forgiveness when the tide of anger turns or gather courage as fear begins to fade. Your modest intention to love is a light of goodness that blesses you and all beings.

You may notice that it is easier to cherish others than to cherish yourself. However, if you do not have love and kindness for yourself, you do not develop love and kindness for others. And you end up with a travesty of love that masks deep unhappiness. As Sharon Salzberg points out:

Generosity coming from self-hatred becomes martyrdom. Morality born of self-hatred becomes rigid repression. Love for others without the foundation of love for ourselves becomes a loss of boundaries, co-dependancy and a painful and fruitless search for intimacy.⁷

To cherish the seed of goodness in ourselves and others is the heart of metta. When you re-

To wish for ease may seem a lowly thing but really, to be at ease is the life of an enlightened being

flect on a moment of your own kindness, you can touch a core of goodness within, that cannot be sullied no matter what you have experienced. And when you enter deeper into that goodness, you will experience that it is vast, reaching far beyond the stars and that it includes even the smallest grain of sand, even the finest blade of grass - nothing left out at all! This vast light lights our way through the darkness of suffering.

This is "...the formless field of benefaction" that the Verse of the Kesa speaks of.

The *Metta Sutra* says:

*So, with a boundless heart
should one cherish all living beings
radiating kindness over the entire world.*

When you see clearly into that boundless heart, when you touch the ground of being, you are liberated from your sense of inadequacy, your preoccupations, your feelings of loss, emptiness and despair. Where there was despair, joy and tenderness will emerge - where there was preoccupation, a focus on what needs to be done, moment by moment, will grow. This transformation from fear to love comes about step by step as you continue to practise. Sometimes you will be angry, sometimes you will be hurt or lonely and will extinguish your light. But through the practice of metta you can find your way out of the darkness into the light again and can walk on to fulfil your destiny. For each one of us is a sun, born to warm and illuminate all beings.

- 1 Metta Sutra in Sharon Salzberg, *Loving-Kindness* (Boston: Shambala, 1997), introduction
- 2 Thomas McGrath, *Collected Poems 1938 - 1988* (Copper Canyon 1988)
- 3 John McMurray, *Freedom in the Modern World* (London: Faber & Faber 1932) p58
- 4 Sharon Salzberg, *Loving-Kindness* (Boston: Shambala, 1997) p20
- 5 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Teachings on Love* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1997) p4
- 6 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Teachings on Love* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1997) p14
- 7 Sharon Salzberg, *Loving-Kindness* (Boston: Shambala, 1997) p26



Mary Jise Jaksch Sensei is a Zen Teacher in the Diamond Sangha lineage, appointed by Ross Bolleter Roshi with the blessing of her elder teacher, Robert Aitken Roshi. She is of English and Czech descent and leads Zen retreats and workshops throughout New Zealand and overseas. She is based at the Matai Zendo in Nelson. Following on from her career as classical musician she now works as a psychotherapist and holds a 3rd Dan Blackbelt in Karate. She lives with her teenage son and three cats.

Sacred Walking

BY TARCHIN HEARN

*Come my friend
My dear dear friend
Come walk with me a while.*

*My foot, my sole
Gently touching your shoulder.
Your quivering birdsounds penetrating my being.*

*A coolness of breath through nose and mouth
Opening – yes inviting forth my heart
To kiss the world anew with laughter
 breaking forth all over
Cascades of shimmering joy and meaning.*

*Come dear friend
Let us hold each other gently.
You in me and I in thee
And let the paths of life walk through.*

*Brother sun and sister river sound
Mother, father,
We are the pathways reaching up
To bless all tender feet
 so tentative
 so wanting deep to know their tread secure.*

*Walking this path creating.
Pathing this
 a walkway.
 Creation
 dancing all over*

*Come my blessed,
Breathe with me the mystery of stillness
Walking through the glades of light and shade
We offer beauty
Pouring forth continuous
Nourishing the world.*

Healing, Growth and Self-Acceptance

BY NYANAVIRO ARCHER

Spiritual work is a response to our human condition, and is based upon the willingness to open, and have an authentic relationship with life and ourselves. This response is the motivating impulse for awakening. Growth is not a compulsory requirement, but if we resist the force of energy which seeks to come through us, then we inevitably experience ourselves as stressed, denying, defended and feeling increasingly threatened. Such is the result of ignoring the evolutionary agenda to become more conscious, and this can also be felt as pain, obstruction, limitation or deadness.

Just as the body is hard-wired to heal itself when it gets sick, and move through a series of developmental stages, so too the psyche has an identical capacity. It is a self-regulating system which rejects unwanted or toxic material in an effort to maintain inner health. And it is capable of developing its self-sense to embrace infinity. But we can actively resist these processes, or unconsciously interrupt them by failing to hear and respond to our inner messages. Some may have gone so far in this direction that their natural ability to trust in the workings of spirit have become lost.

It's important to honour the work of healing as sacred, and to learn to trust its unfolding



For this reason it's important to honour the work of healing as sacred, and learn to trust its unfolding. Becoming obsessively concerned with the particular practices we are doing, and whether we are performing them "correctly" is no substitute for the sincerity of heart needed as we start to open to the unknown. Often, for instance, someone will begin meditation practice and then start doubting.... "is it okay to be feeling this?" It's like we need permission to be ourselves. But this self-acceptance is only effective if it comes from a place behind the stories we hold about who we think we are. In meditation, we will encounter the truth of our being directly, and that speaks for itself. It's unnecessary to identify with the inner commentator who always wants to add something to the moment in order to make it okay. Holding this exquisitely balanced attitude of both letting go and letting be becomes our task, as we slowly learn to initiate ourselves into spirit.

The real test arises when the painful, unacknowledged parts of ourselves start becoming conscious. They can all too easily activate habitual reactions that twist our psyche out of shape, and feed old patterns of energy which limit our ability for creative response.

Our practice at this point is to remain equaniminous and come forward with as much kindness and caring towards ourselves as we can, in order to stay with our present experience.

I sometimes think of this as being like a faithful lover who is committed to staying in relationship (with ourselves), no matter what. The consequent breaking and remoulding of the heart contains an inner healing logic which will carry us through and beyond our pain.

Now all this may sound fine, but how do we develop the inner strength required to do this work? In this respect, I want to outline three practical areas.

The first is our energy. It is necessary to raise some energy and many spiritual practices are designed to do just that. It's valuable because the unenlightened mind has a tendency to mismanage our life force quite indiscriminately. There are two basic ways that this happens, either it gets carelessly spilt or else it gets blocked. For instance, we can flatten our batteries by all kinds of over-indulgence, or cause energy to stagnate by preventing it from flowing through us naturally. We might use our energy to maintain unnecessary patterns of holding. Or we might shut down energy in various places in our physical, emotional and mental bodies due to painful experiences, cultural conditioning, and the times that we have not been true to our hearts. This can also be called giving away our power. And all of this results in keeping us in limited states of awareness.

I think it is important here to see this connection between energy and awareness, because if we learn how to manage our energy appropriately, and can hold it in a self-nurturing way, then our awareness will also change. The qualities of stability, brightness and clarity will appear and begin to replace restlessness, dullness and confusion.

This brings us to the second area, the discipline of attention. Cultivating the ability to sustain full awareness of the present moment is another common feature found in spiritual practices. All of the repetitious mental exercises, recollecting and focussing techniques have this in

*Softening
and opening
the heart is
our way of
saying 'Yes'
to the
present
moment*

common, and are of great value. Here we are teaching ourselves to point attention at the present moment, and resist the tendency for our minds to drag along something from the past, or go arcing into the imagined future. Reality is now, quite simply, and in order to open to reality our awareness must not hold back from the present moment for any reason. Over time meditators become very familiar with all the reasons why they do hold back, as they see these reasons playing out in consciousness again and again until they learn how to let them go.

Being aware, alert and attentive naturally leads to the third area, which is the practice of emotional co-operation. We discover that our holding back from the present is rooted in our feelings, and here we are getting much closer to our energetic core. It's not enough to raise energy and focus the mind if our heart isn't in it. Softening and opening the heart is our way of saying "yes" to the present moment by being willing to feel it too. What we might be feeling is secondary, the main event is the act of feeling

itself, which slowly transforms into an appreciation of our miraculous capacity for relationship. Here the entire range of our emotions needs to be owned and befriended.

Enlivening the energy body, seeing clearly and feeling freely - these are three aspects of healing work. Practising them creates the optimum conditions for deepening to occur, but this happens according to the intelligence of our unfolding spirit and not our personal, time and space bound agendas. Have you ever felt that you weren't getting what you wanted out of spiritual practice? The poet Rumi's saying "We must be suspicious of what we want", is useful here. It's a reminder to be patient, and constantly check out where we are coming from, and just how we're meeting the present moment. With nearly 6 billion of us on the planet now, consider all these different individual viewpoints, opinions and desires. It's almost too much to imagine! Now, perhaps more than ever before, it is worthwhile to make one's practice an offering, and help create the space within which we, and all beings, can be touched by healing.

Nyanaviro Archer

Following an honours degree in eastern religions, Nyanaviro completed thirteen years of formal monastic training as a Theravadin Buddhist monk. He has led workshops for eight years and places particular emphasis on opening the heart through the development of lovingkindness and compassion.

The Idea is in the Heart

BY CHIMÉ SHORE

*Restraint is the key: moderation, stability;
responsibility and commitment,
nuclear and solid
orbits, worlds in order.*

*The idea is solidarity, not just conformity.
Protect, conserve, nurture, build;
opportunities recognised,
carefully, developed.*

*Release is the key, adventure, creation;
Life interconnected and free.
At any moment changes offer the chance
to open, experiment and share.*

*The idea is in the heart, the wide embrace;
full caring, not just caring less.*

*Anyone can think the other strange.
No wonder, not data.*

*Place keepers may think the wandering shiftless:
Someone should protect and maintain.*

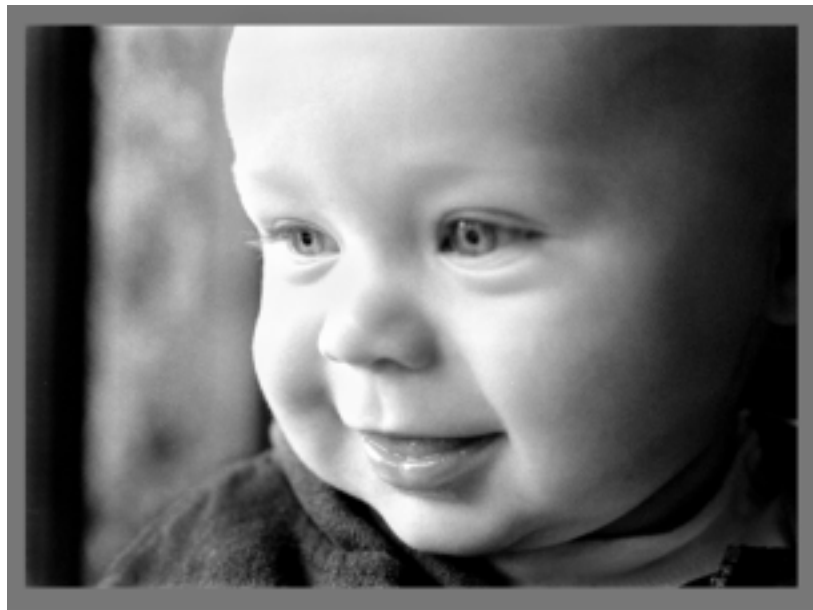
*Wanderers may think the stayers are stuck:
Someone should cross the boundaries.*

*Wealth sees opportunity, abundance;
Poverty sees obstacles, desolation.*

*The world is reeling, raped and forgotten;
The world is resilient, adapting, self healing.*

*The radical sees revolution, a door to the light;
The preserver sees hearthmaking, safety and right.*

*Work is reality, the actual path;
Work too defined is spiritual death.*



Chimé Shore was the founding teacher of the Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre in New Zealand and the Origins Centre near Perth, Australia. He is a warm and compassionate man, a teacher of meditation and Buddha Dharma, an artist and a father. Chimé travels widely and has studied with many eminent teachers including His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa and the Venerable Namgyal Rinpoché.

Lovingkindness and Powerful Activity

BY TARCHIN HEARN

Over the past few years, I have written and spoken a lot on the subject of lovingkindness. In spite of what I thought were clear and passionate appeals for more forgiveness and loving presence, I found when talking to a number of people that they still had reservations. They commented that though lovingkindness was obviously important, surely there were times when one ought to fight and stand up for oneself or one's views. Men especially, expressed concern about becoming overly passive. While appreciating the need for more love in the world they seemed concerned that something essentially masculine would be lost and we could end up with a culture of wimps. It was as if they felt that lovingkindness precluded strength and powerful activity. Tongue in cheek, I thought to write something called, "Lovingkindness is not for Wimps". I guess this is it!



Written about, talked about, sung over; with poetry, art, philosophy and sermons, the topic of love and lovingkindness has revealed all sorts of conflicting ideas and understandings. Many people seem to view lovingkindness as if it were simply an emotion; a warm pink wash, a feeling of wellbeing, a sense of rightness and belonging. It's as if love was a pleasant addition to life in a "real world" that is basically driven by competition and an instinctual need to survive. When not seen as a decorative add-on, it is often treated as a commodity to be bought, sold or traded; something that needs to be balanced with all the other demands

of life. I've given this much love. Have I received an equivalent in return? This credit/debit accountancy love, often blurs into possessiveness and control where love can become more of a problem than a blessing. Have you ever experienced this yourself?

I recall a verse from Sunday school, "Gentle Jesus meek and mild take pity on this little child." Meekness, mildness and pity; in my mind and I'm sure in other people's minds, these attributes became associated with this teacher of brotherly love. This kind of passivity can often evolve into a self sacrificing acceptance that can border on masochism. I've lost count of how

many people have asked during discussions on the nature and need for lovingkindness, "Do you mean acceptance?" If by acceptance we mean a stoic putting up with situations that we'd rather not have happening then no, that's not it at all.

What happens when love is not just a passive affair? When people do allow some energy to infuse their loving, they often get it mixed up with lust and desire and it is obvious that in most religions these have no positive place in the spiritual life. Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, people end up denying the energy of these passions. Through the denial they unwittingly set up either all sorts of largely-unconscious, sexual-sensual fantasies, or else heaps of guilt. It seems that love or lovingkindness, in a religious context at least, must be kept safe, innocent and somewhat sanitised. The texts often use the example of the love of a mother for her child and virtually never, dare we even mention it here, the love of one sexually energised being for another.

It's not surprising that I meet with many people who feel that there is something inherently wrong with the philosophy of Universal Love when love is seen in such a lopsided manner. Something mysterious, precious and enlivening is surely being left out.

Love is often seen as one half of a duality. Love becomes the opposite of anger or hate. Yet this dualism causes all sorts of problems for people. Many have felt that they need their anger to keep at bay or to control some negative aspect of life. "Surely you can't expect me to allow my violent temper a free reign?" "One has to control it." "Think of what would happen if I let it loose." The conundrum arises

when you can't live with love and you can't live without it.

Both of these ideas; that love is essentially passive, self sacrificing and somewhat pre-pubescent; and that love is the opposite of hate, are widespread and quite understandable, given the attitudes and psychological heritage of our current society. They make it very difficult for many people to see that lovingkindness is really an expression of the aliveness and vitality of nature itself. *It's a quality that ultimately transcends taking sides in any duality.*

*Loving
kindness is
really an
expression
of the
aliveness
and vitality
of nature
itself*

Consider the possibility that love is not so much the opposite of hatred but is really the absence of ignorance. Perhaps this is a key to the common religious belief, that God, or the state of Full Enlightenment, is omniscient. A huge misunderstanding may have occurred throughout human history in the idea that omniscience means no more ignorance. You might get a fresh insight into this if you pronounced ignorance with the emphasis on the second syllable instead of on the first. Ignorance as a noun seems to be an unavoidable state of lacking. How on earth can anyone, even God or Buddha expect to know absolutely everything? Ignorance as a verb, on the other hand; the active and even intentional ignoring of manifestations, beings and situations; this we can all do something about.

God is omniscient. God is love. Love is no more ignoring. Love is about the courage to see, to know, to touch; – to feel the world as it is arising in every moment, whether it is pleasurable or not. Courage in English, may have evolved from *cœur*, the French word for heart. Think of courage not as a devil-may-care bravado, but as

a manifesting of what might be thought of as the 'Heart of Being'. The courage to love, to question, to be a field of probing curiosity reaching out to know and appreciate every situation of life is something that grows from a confident knowing and being, of what we are, where we are, and who we are. Love without clear seeing is blind and blind love is eventually always problematic.

It's time our modern culture reconnected with the depth and profundity of love and lovingkindness. First we need to see the limitations of our already cherished views and assumptions about it. One only has to watch an hour of TV to see many of the neurotic distortions. Then we might be able to open into a much more encompassing understanding that, for many, will actually redefine the whole idea.

The foundation and basis of love is a willingness to engage openly and responsively with experience. Billions of years ago, an inconceivable expanse of time for human centred brains

and consciousness, the planet earth was already awash in the story of love. The emergence of life involved the entire planet, actually the entire solar system and galaxy. Photons and chloroplasts interrelating. Rocks being transformed through chemical meetings with biology. Biology being transformed by the changing geological and atmospheric environments. There was no holding back. Life grew through shared intimacies. It has been juicy and physical from the very beginning.

*Spurting and jumping and oozing and flowing
and thoroughly drenched within,
Stretching and binding and reaching
and grinding,
Buzzing of rivers lingering in the cochlea,
Tongue reaches wildly for tastes yet unknown,
Photons from Betelgeuse ripple memories
from childhood
As the salt oceans flow and flow and flow.¹*

All beings live by nutriment. The world unfolded as a vast fabric of eating, digesting and giving off by-products which themselves became the foods and 'medicines' of other creatures. Instead of seeing the Earth as an empty stage upon which individual species and manifestations of life gradually enacted the grand story of evolution, try to see the possibility that the whole planet from micro to macro is an inconceivably rich and dynamic ecology of multilevel embodiment. Your reading this essay right now is an expression of this great interweaving. No creature has ever been at the 'top' of the evolutionary heap, rather all manifestations of being, organic and inorganic alike, are necessary parts of the fabric of life at any given time. They are all supporting each other, mutually embedded in each other. If there is such a thing as evolution, it must be the entire planetary ecology that is evolving, not individual species that make it up.



In early times the most common foods were simple elements, released through chemical reactions. As certain 'foods' or fuels became scarce, self-organising structures that we call living beings, began to digest more complex chemical compounds in order to get the energy they needed to survive. Eventually light from the sun was used through photosynthesis. Creatures began to eat each other and sometimes the creature eaten was not digested and a symbiosis came into being beneficial to both. Multicelled embodiment became possible.

As the web of life grew in complexity, the range of foods necessary for survival also grew until today we could say that in addition to edible food, we need a wide range of other types of nourishment. In order to grow into functioning adults we need to see, to hear, to taste, touch and smell. We eat through our senses. We are nourished by ideas and concepts at many levels. Every identifiable creature is simultaneously eating and being eaten by others. We mutually support each other. Do we love to eat or do we eat to love? Perhaps this is just quibbling.

The courage to allow lovingkindness to manifest involves abandoning the desperate clinging to identity; to seeing oneself and others as independent and self sufficient. It is a strange idea but perhaps the openness of being that allowed the unfolding of life as we know it, is somewhere near the very essence of love. Bacteria exchanging DNA, creatures nourishing each other, birthing into life this wondrous planet of now. Lovingkindness at a personal level is an intuitive reverberating with the vast matrix of life; an interbeing; a communicating of multiple realms from micro through to macro, all functioning well together.

It's only in the last few million years that parts of the life process, especially parts called humans, have begun to lose touch with their roots. The mystery of interpenetrating and interdependent being, the ultimate passion, has been obscured by the chronic addiction to creating and maintaining identity. All of this is aided and abetted by actively ignoring what is actually going on moment to moment.

Today success, meaning, and progress, is measured in dollars per square foot. We have so completely bought into the fantasy of 'world as marketplace' that we have lost sight of the miracle that has always suffused living being.

As biologist Lynn Margulis wrote²

We have a cultural system that ignores the air and water and our biological heritage.

We have a society that believes garbage goes out, not around; mistakes linen paper and metal disks for food,³

searching the world at their demand; and rewards scholars as they increase the rate of cash flow.

We suffer a culture that wants to convert the whole Earth into its own image of God; an angry urban landlord.

Of course our culture resists the lessons of life.

Of course our culture dismisses bacteria, protoctists, and fungi as germs and disdains the stranger.

It knows no other way.

*The courage
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lovingkindness
to shine
through
involves
abandoning
the
desperate
clinging to
identity*

But surely we must find another way. Surely we could discover a strength and power in our loving; meet the arisings of life with some 'guts' and passion, with our senses wide open, with our minds malleable, responsive and filled with appreciation. Surely we could realise that lovingkindness is not just for wimps, for the meek and pitying.

At the personal level it takes energy. It takes courage. It takes strength and determination to cease ignoring, to engage with others in all sorts of situations, to enter the risk of living passionately and full on. It calls us to open our senses again and again and to know that our awakensness and interest, our question and curiosity, is the greatest gift we can offer to others.

In the Mahamudra tradition of Tibetan Buddhism the highest level of realisation is to experience the union of lovingkindness and bright non-clinging awareness. This doesn't mean bringing love and awareness together but realising that they have never been separate.



*One's view of things is all-embracing.
May the Dharmakaya bring blessings.*

*One's thoughts are in tune with
every situation.
May the Sambhogakaya bring blessings.*

*All one's actions spring from this.
May the Nirmanakaya bring blessings.*

*These three become one in the
vision of the ground of being,
May the union of these three
bring blessings.⁴*

This is lovingkindness in action. Through living this way, may you and all beings realise your true nature.

Auckland, July 1999

¹ Excerpt from the poem *Being is a Lonely Place* by Tarchin Hearn

² Lynn Margulis *A Pox Called Man* from the collection of essays called "Slanted Truths" Copernicus NY 1997

³ Linen paper and metal disks are referring to money.

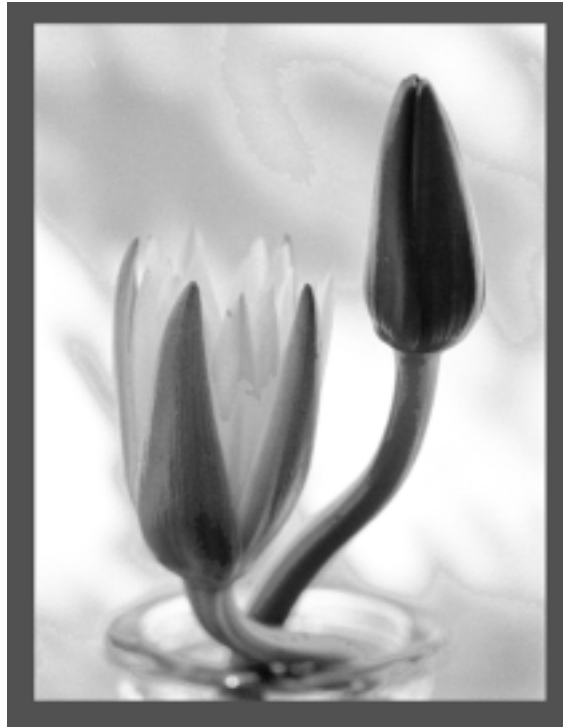
⁴ This prayer is from the visualisation and practice of Guru Padmasambhava translated by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoché

Tarchin Hearn is a widely respected teacher of meditation and the practice of awakening. He has experience in Theravadin and Mahayana schools of Buddhism and was an ordained monk in the Tibetan tradition for 12 years. Since 1977 he has taught in many countries and helped establish a number of centres for study and practice. Tarchin has a deep interest in blending the vision of interconnectedness born from studies of nature and ecology with the teachings of Buddha Dharma. He is author of six books, and is currently based at the Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre.

Why Love?

BY CECILIE KWIAT

By considering two truths of Buddhism, it becomes obvious that one who does not value the practice of loving kindness is creating circumstances for unhappiness. The first of these two truths states that all that arises dependent on conditions is impermanent. The second calls to mind the inevitability of cause and effect.



All compounded things, all relative existence, whatever exists in time, is impermanent. All that we get or refuse to get, keep or refuse to keep, try to make ourselves into or refuse to acknowledge - all relationship is subject to change. Because the conditions that support manifestation do not stay put, everything is in flux.

Because it is difficult to continuously be aware of impermanence, people tend to downplay the importance of motive in favour of striving for worldly satisfaction. This continuous desire for what one doesn't have causes much

*As a seed
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when
suitable
conditions
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reflect
intention*

unnecessary suffering. We think there is something to get that will make everything all right. We buy lottery tickets while ignoring the prize we've already won. Even spiritual practice can become a struggle to get something other than what is present. Or keep something from dissolving. Or keep away from something we deem as unworthy. And yet there is no lasting value in positions or things, because they are all in the process of passing away.

The Tibetans have a saying:

*For every gathering there is a dispersal.
For every building there is a ruin.
For every meeting there is a parting.
For every birth there is a death.*

Although whatever comes into being is subject to dissolution, the motives or intentions continue to have power. The opening statement of the

Dhammapada (sometimes called the verses of the law) clearly proclaims this truth. I will quote from a translation by Shri Silananda Brahmachari.

"Mind leads all the mental factors and excels them, which are made of mind. As such, if with a defiled mind one speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the wheel behind hoofs of the ox and if, with an undefiled mind one speaks or acts, happiness follows him like the shadow that never leaves."

As a seed bears fruit when suitable conditions are met, so a deed yields results that reflect intention. In the above quotation, mental factors refer to the part played by consciousness when the sense doors come in contact with their respective objects: eye and form, ear and sound, and so forth. In this case, the mental factors are equivalent to perception. The sense doors meet with an object, which stimulates the part of consciousness that is linked to that sense. Immediately there arises a feeling of pleasure or non-pleasure, which is coupled to a mental feeling of pleasure, non-pleasure or neutrality. It is on the basis of this that perception will arise.

Regardless of the physical feeling, if the mental feeling is tainted with greed, hatred, delusion, pride, or jealousy (called by the Tibetans the five poisons), it is very likely that an action motivated by these painful states will occur. When this happens, the consequence is suffering. Should the consciousness be motivated by devotion, non-clinging, loving-kindness, compassion and the like, then - as inevitably as a shadow follows one - happiness results.

Whatever is arising is due to past cause. We have no power to influence it. Whatever will arise is due to present motive. In every moment we have the power of choice. The practice of loving-kindness is one of the excellent tools to train the mind to move in the way of joy, choosing to live each moment with an open heart. When one practices honesty - that is, accepting what is present - and develops a habit of investigating what is given freely without mental revulsion, happiness will grow.

The fifteenth century mystic poet of India, Kabir, wrote:

*The best of all true things is a true heart.
Without truth, no happiness, though you
try a million tricks.*

Calgary, Canada. February 15, 1999

Cecillie Kwiat was born November 1, 1939, and raised in Alberta, Canada. For the past 35 years Cecillie has been actively involved with alleviating emotional suffering in herself and others. In addition to her investigations and sharing of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, Cecillie is a poet and a member of the performance poetry trio "Uncritical Mass".

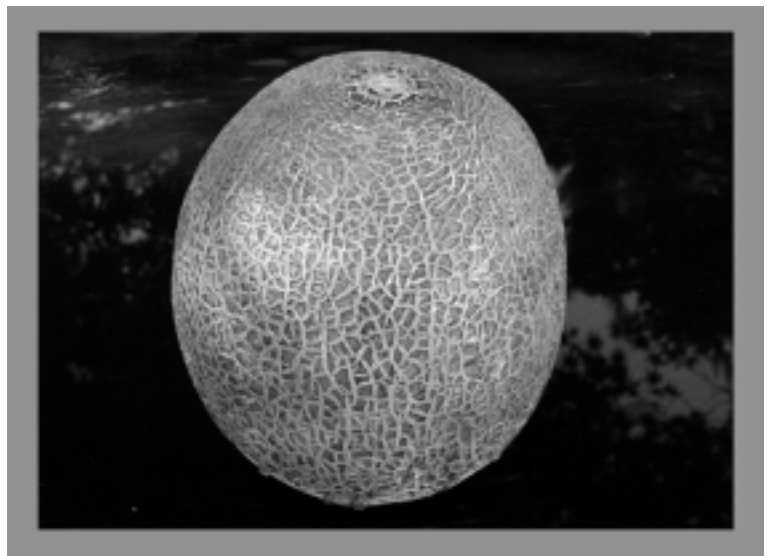
What have ye, if ye not have Love?

BY CATHERINE RATHBUN

Love is a topic which probably consumes more thoughts and words than any other in the history of human development. Yet it is hard to pinpoint and its various stages difficult to comprehend, for it is mixed up with ideas of lust and attachment, dogooderism, and even indifference. I have met angry people who speak of vegetarianism as the way to cure aggression and promote the state of love. I have met monks who pretend to demonstrate loving kindness while showing their narrowness of view, a kind of self satisfied narcissism. I have listened to the old saw that one must be cruel to be kind. I have yearned for lovers missing and lost. I have known the deep contentment from a love relationship founded on mutual respect and caring. I have cradled babies at my breast and walked the floors all night with sick ones. I have waited in the darkness for the dawn and watched the eternal mystery of the sky paintings of sunset wash over me. I have read and I have pondered and this is what I have found.

Love is a multistoried tower; its layers both uniquely individual as well as common to us all. We begin our journey in life with the love attraction of our parents, however momentary this may be. The attraction principle is so strong

that it pulls our consciousness like a comet down from the others into the womb. For nine long months we dwell there, feeling so at one with our mothers that we cannot differentiate between her selfness, and our own. Washes of feelings, good and bad, come over us and our consciousness and our sense of self is slowly formed by this nourishment. We ourselves trigger our birth with a chemical release. How we are re-



ceived into this world, whether with gentle kindness or the rough forgetfulness of drugs and forceps affects our ability to function for the rest of our lives. At the breast, we learn the blessing of abhisheka, the flow of milk bliss pouring into our stomachs. Or we learn the smell of polyethylene and feel a coldness in our subtle

veins. As teenagers and as young adults, we experience the excitement and torment of the energy that dwells within our loins, as it leaps and twists its way up from our bellies, flushing our faces and causing endless turnings of the mind. As parents we enter the field of tenderness, the exquisite flow of feeling that pours forth to the divine child and we experience the rage of frustrated love when all does not go well as the child develops into the young adult. Then we experience the ache that love brings when the child departs and we know that love's action is to let them go free. Again we experience the ache in the chest when our loved ones die. Finally we experience the ache of departure ourselves, sometimes held for too long by those who care for us, unwilling or unable to let us go as we return to the pool of consciousness.

Love is, then, always and everywhere a part of us and this, our human journey. At any step in life, when love is missing, our life flow is halted or twisted from its natural state. So the first step must be to repair the love within us. The teachings of Buddha and of Christ speak of loving others as we love ourselves. But frankly, sometimes this seems the hardest step of all.

The Buddha said:

*I visited all quarters with my mind
Nor found I any dearer than myself
Self is likewise to every other dear
Who loves himself will never harm another*

Clearly, there is an underlying assumption that the sense of self is wholesome and appropriate, at least as long as we love ourselves. In the West, however, this is often not the case and many people have to spend years trying to rebuild the self which has been destroyed or never formed because of the psychological damage

caused by lack of love or the wrong kind of love. This repair may take the form of therapy or insight practice. It can be found in the development of a craft or a skill. Perhaps best, it can be found in nature, where the ebb and flow of life seems to have love and inevitability of change at its core in equal measures. My observations tell me that when self hatred dies, when guilt dissolves, when occupations which are wholesome and positive are taken up, that loving kindness begins to dawn within, like a valued guest who sneaks quietly into the party unannounced but not uninvited.

*When the
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In the patriarchal religious forms which we know today, love became divisible; its parts evidencing different aspects of it. Christian theological treatises have been written on the differences between agape and eros. Buddhists have given discourses on the attachment of the lay life which needs to be abandoned in order to take up a life of the spirit. These different aspects of love became ranked as higher and lower, reinforcing the view that the single, celibate life was somehow better, higher, or more refined

than married life with children and social responsibilities. Blind following of these dictates too often resulted in abandonment of those too fragile to bear the burden they were left with. In effect, the celibate was often really running away from the healing necessary for the wound within himself or herself and the church or temple colluded by offering safe haven and deifying the action as a higher aspiration.

Contrary to popular and established belief, I think there is error here. The nature of love is that it is indivisible. By that I mean, that the state of love when we are in it produces an intense experience of union, a sense of oneness that is experienced at all levels of our being. Physically, science tells us that people who are in love

are less likely to fall ill; in a similar way, those who perform activities for the love of the Divine are often credited with having boundless energy. Psychologically, we know that caring for another with a heart full of love surpasses just looking after ourselves. Why? Because there is a loosening that takes place within us, a loosening and a lightening that somehow refines our innermost being. When we cease to think of our selves alone, the citadel of self, so long protected, begins to dissolve and we open to a miracle. The grip of self lets go and we see in our opening hearts the ebb and flow of life between beings; the law of interdependent arising becomes a living reflection, no longer a dry observation of particle physics. Paradoxically, when we focus on giving love, we find we are the greater recipients, for the love flow that comes to us comes from everywhere, certainly not just from the object of our love. When we are called upon to give up our loved ones, through death or separation or even betrayal, the depths of anguish can open us still further into love. Keeping the heart open and tender in these moments of life can result in our compassion being forged in the fires of hell, purifying our innermost nature into

a place of honesty and humility in the august presence of Nature and the Divine.

Obviously, to dwell in a state of love is good for us, both physically and because it opens us to a wider field of attention and knowledge than before. To act with kindness from this base becomes a natural event, for it flows from the sense of non division which love engenders.

So when the Buddha said in the Sutra on Metta, that we should act with loving kindness in the same way as a mother would care for her only child, he surely did not mean that this love bond was somehow lesser, than the love for the Divine. Rather, he used this example to indicate how knowledge of one kind of loving contact can be used to open us to a broader kind, deepening our experience of this principle. As we become secure in acting from a basis of loving kindness, its reach develops, until finally, there is no place where this cannot extend, even into the darkest corners of our souls. In the extension, the sense of self becomes ever more transparent until finally there is only Openness and Presence: Divine Love has entered and we are One.

SARVA MANGALAM
BLESSINGS TO ALL

Catherine Rathbun is the founder and principle teacher of "Friends of the Heart Meditation and Healing Centre", based in Toronto, Canada. A wife and mother and one time professional dancer, she has extensive experience in various schools of Buddhism as well as having studied Christian, Sufi and Western Mystery teachings.

Some thoughts on...

Dharma and the photographic process

BY GREG DEVEREUX

photography is not an art; it is a tool.

*the macroscope; investigates the "outer" regions
the microscope; investigates the "inner" regions
the camera; investigates the "human" regions*

Some useful similes...

the camera is like:

a bridge between the observer and the observed; (what you see is where you are)

*"I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." – Walt Whitman, Song of Myself*

the photograph is like:

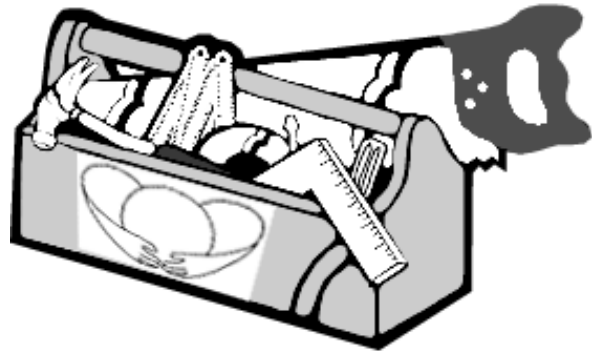
the hand print of the cave dweller; (pregnant with duration)

*"Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future
and time future contained in time past" – T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets*

Greg Devereux was born in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1945. He first became interested in photography while studying for a BSC at Dalhousie University. Following graduation, he worked with a professional photographer before receiving a grant to study in New York. His interests then took him to Toronto and a meeting with the Venerable Namgyal Rinpoche. A second grant allowed him to travel with the Dharma group through Africa, India and then New Zealand where he established his base, giving away photography for a busy family life. Some 30 years later, with a camera again in hand, it is now his fulltime study.

A Lovingkindness Toolbox

BY TARCHIN HEARN



As we've seen through many of the preceding essays, lovingkindness is not a technique or a method. It is really a quality of being; an attitude brought to every moment of life; an embodiment of friendly, easeful awakeness; life functioning; open, joyful and well. To talk about it or to try to develop it is to often completely miss the point. On one hand it is so natural there really is nothing to practice. In a sense true love, the unconditionally responsive openness and supportiveness of being, is the very nature of the universe unfolding. On the other hand we live in a world that is so disconnected, so driven by hopes and fears about achievement and performance, that this naturalness can seem to be quite strange, untrustworthy and even unnatural. In trying to develop lovingkindness, the effort of 'trying' can obscure the very thing we are wanting to bring forth.

In this last section we offer a number of different approaches that could, in a sense, make up a basic 'lovingkindness toolbox'. Hopefully, with some experimenting, you will find a few methods that work well for you and can provide a solid foundation for a lifetime of deepening this profound yet always available mystery. Like any toolbox, it's not necessary to use all the tools all the time. A skilled trades person will first evaluate the job at hand and then use what is most suitable for doing the job. There's no point in trying to cut a piece of wood with a screwdriver,

whereas a hammer is just the thing for banging in a nail. With practice, you will develop some skill in this work. Then you may find yourself inspired to invent tools of your own that are not included in this general 'startup kit'.

Much more important than any powerful or sophisticated tools or techniques is to have a clear understanding or appreciation of the task needing to be done. When you realise the profundity and necessity of lovingkindness you will inevitably find ways to bring it forth without anyone telling you about techniques. You just stop the blocking, the clinging, the controlling and allow each moment to flower. If you are still struggling in the critical mode of trying to correct the world, your lovingkindness practice will inevitably become another unconscious attempt to control or escape from things that are challenging or difficult. If this happens, one's practice only serves to deepen the mess.

Traditionally, lovingkindness practice begins with oneself. Once there is a warm, open, easeful, awake, forgiving, accepting, appreciating, awareness, present throughout your entire being, then the work moves to extending this quality out to others. Today, many people find bringing lovingkindness to themselves to be the most difficult of tasks. Though often able to feel forgiveness, acceptance and tolerance for others, they still get bogged down in a mess of intolerance and impatience with themselves. If

you find yourself in this type of situation, it is sometimes more functional to begin with lovingkindness for others and then, having contacted a warm glow, to extend it to yourself. Whatever you do, approach the work with flexibility. Try it one way and then another. What supports a flowering today, might not work tomorrow. A flexible mind is already well on the way to a flowering heart.

I suggest you begin by reading through all the methods as some of the things that are said in one section can be creatively applied to others. You may even find yourself combining some

of the techniques. Once you have gone through the 'menu', then select the one that seems most interesting at this time and give it a go. The exercises are not in any particular order. Some are very simple and others more involved. To really give them a chance to speak to you, try working with one for fifteen minutes or more, each day for a week before trying another.

May these practices water the seeds of wholesome unfolding and may these seeds grow and flower for the benefit of all beings.



Charity begins at home

• Earth Support

Stand with your knees slightly flexed and your arms hanging easefully by your side. Be aware of your breathing. Beginning with your head, slowly bring your awareness down through your body feeling all the sensations and inviting each area to soften and relax. When you get to your feet, feel the weight of your whole body standing on the earth. Each time you exhale, sink a little into your knees.

Notice the points of contact between your feet and the floor or the ground. (It is good if you can do this without shoes.) Imagine that roots are growing from these points of contact, extending deep down into the earth. Your whole body is like a tree, well rooted and gently swaying in the wind. As you breathe in, mentally think,

“Breathing in, the earth supports me”. And as you breathe out, mentally think, “Breathing out, sharing deeply”.

“Breathing in, the earth supports me. Breathing out sharing deeply.” As you breathe like this, allow your whole being to open and soften.

• Simple breathing

Many times during the day, pause for a moment and stop what you are doing. Give all of your attention to the physical sensations of breathing. Don't attempt to control the breath in any way. Simply feel the entire inhalation followed by the entire exhalation. Begin to make friends with the breath and the sensations arising in your body. If you discover any places of

tension or holding, bring a gentle awareness to the area and while still appreciating the breathing, invite the area to soften. Using the breath as a centre, scan through your whole body, softening and releasing.

• “I’m here for you”

Sit comfortably and feel your body resting in its chair. Feel the movements of your breathing. A living body is a breathing body. Feel the alternating sensations of warm and cool at your nostrils or lips. Soften into the movements of your chest and abdomen. If you can become very still, you may have a sense of the rhythms of breathing moving throughout your entire body. Become very intimate with this; touching this alive body with kindness and interest.

Take care not to slide into a pattern of “watching your breath”; standing to one side, observing and analysing. Instead, actually feel your body breathing; a tactile reality. Meditation is intimate and personal. On the inhalation, allow your whole being to quieten, as if you were listening with every cell; listening to the silent symphony of now. Within this rich texture of stillness, imagine that the entire of your being is saying your name. “Tarchin.....” Then on the exhalation, hear it whispering, “I’m here for you”. “Tarchin.....I’m here for you.” “(Your own name)..... I’m here for you.” Breathe like this for a while.

If any difficulties arise, you might name them. “Critique.....I’m here for you.” “Worry.....I’m here for you.” “Impatience.....I’m here for you.” “Exhilaration.....I’m here for you.” “Sound of the traffic I’m here for you.” No more running. No more fighting. No more escaping. “Present moment.....I’m here for you. Allow generosity to flower and give your undivided attention to this present mystery of breathing.

• *Gattas* or memory verses

To enhance the process of breathing, you could add one of the following three exercises. Sometimes by simply remembering a key word or phrase we can rediscover this place we so value. Merge the words with your breath so that the awareness of breathing and the meaning of the words become one flowing movement.

Ah-ing

Become aware of your breathing and on the exhalation, mentally think the sound Ahhhh. You don’t have to say it out loud. Simply feel the sound reverberating through your body. A great sigh of satisfaction. A great sigh of letting go. A great sigh of letting be. After a while you may feel a warm tingling glow spreading through your being.

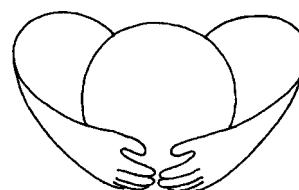
Creating your own mantra

This is the same as the Ahhing exercise except you could try using a simple word that speaks deeply to you, something like, love or peace, or mercy or some other word that evokes a feeling of release and letting go.

I have arrived. I am home.

This gatta or memory verse was proposed by the Vietnamese Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh.

Becoming aware of the breathing, scanning through the body and releasing tensions, on the inhalation think, “I have arrived.” On the exhalation think, “I am home.”



Embracing all Beings

• Through individuals

Resting easefully with an awareness of your breathing, bring a quality of lovingkindness to yourself. Use any of the preceding methods that work for you. A sign of success will be a warm, friendly, joyful glow suffusing your body and mind. Once this is established, either send this warm friendliness to your teacher or invite your teacher to dwell in the midst of this glow. Then in a similar way, extend it to your parents, then to immediate relatives, then to distant relatives, then to friends, to strangers and finally to beings you have difficulties with.

With each of these people, hold them in your mind's eye until you feel a quality of friendly openness throughout your being, then, wish them well, and move on to the next person. The main sign of success in the development of *metta* is that you can maintain an evenness of lovingkindness in the presence of all of these different beings; the same quality of love for strangers or enemies as for ones who are very close.

• Through categories

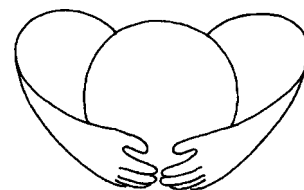
Again with awareness of breathing, establish a feeling of lovingkindness throughout your being. Then extend the feeling to all humans. You could do this all at once or you could divide them up into categories. May all

people in Australasia be well and happy. May all people in Africa be well and happy. And so forth. Another approach might be; may all people in hospitals be well and happy. May all people in prisons be well and happy. May all mothers in childbirth be well and happy. You can see there is limitless scope here.

After spending time with humans then move to animals, plants, fungi and micro organisms. There are many books that can help you with these categories for example: *The Larousse Book of Animal Life*, or *Five Kingdoms* by Lynn Margulis. As a discipline, I once worked my way through these two books, reading each section and then extending metta to the beings thus described. It really opened my appreciation of the diversity of life forms on Earth.-

After going through all the categories of life, then hold the entire planet, one great dynamic living system, *Gaia*. From here, send lovingkindness out to other planets and the beings that are manifesting them.

Finish off by holding the vision of all of these beings as one vast interdependently unfolding ecology. May all beings be well and happy.



• Through direction

Imagine in your heart a beautiful many-petalled rose-coloured flower. Alternatively, you could imagine a soft ruby glow, a sphere of light. The rose light radiates in all directions filling your body and being with lovingkindness.

Join the experience of this light, this lightness of being, with the sensations of your breathing. Then allow the radiance to expand further. Think that whoever or whatever finds itself within this sphere of light is being bathed in the light of lovingkindness. This sphere of open friendliness expands in all directions, front, back, right, left, up and down, until it embraces the entire planet. From there you can allow it to move into space holding the solar system, the galaxy and so forth.

To strengthen this visualisation, try holding a real flower in your hands as you meditate, or sit in the presence of an actual ruby coloured light source. Alternatively you could paint flower mandalas or create mandalas from flower petals. Any of these activities will help to make your visualisation more tangible and alive. The light might eventually become flush golden-peach in colour or even go towards rainbow.

• Physical Massage

Although this could be done at any time, it is a very good practice to do before going to bed at night. Have a hot bath or a sauna then take some massage oil and slowly and methodically massage your own body. Take time with

each part. As you do, become aware of your breathing and let it harmonise with the movements of your hands. Massage slowly but thoroughly and on each exhalation, think “foot, (or whatever part of the body you are working on) may you be well and happy.” Work your way through the whole body allowing your hands to express love and caring and support.

Finish by lying on your back with your hands by your sides. Hold an awareness of breathing and gently centre in your heart as you go to sleep. Alternately you could allow a sphere of well being to radiate from your heart embracing all beings. May all beings be well and happy.

• Eating with love

Before you begin to eat, pause for a few moments and be aware of your breathing. Scan through your body and let everything relax. Look at the food you are about to eat and mentally say, “May this food have been prepared in a state of love and may I receive it in a state of love.”

Another method which is good, if you are together with friends who value this kind of work, is to surround the table and to link hands in a circle. Be aware of your breathing and at the same time, open all your senses. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting and thinking of the food, your companions and the circumstances bringing you all together. Consider some of the factors that are supporting this moment. Vegetable gardens, rain, farmers, sun, parents, plate makers and so forth. Open your appreciation to the vast symbiosis of being arising as this unique moment. See the food and your friends. Feel your breathing. You might finish with a short prayer. Then enjoy your meal.

• Walking with love

Can you walk so that moment by moment you are completely present, not leaning into the future or escaping into the past? Here are four reminders that together can transform your coming and going into a wonderful meditation.

1 - *Smiling*

Allow a smile to illumine your being.

2 - *Breathing*

Become aware of your breathing, just as it is, without trying to control it.

3 - *Walking*

Become aware of the physical sensations of your body moving. Feel your feet touching the earth. The way your arms swing, your head and torso. Allow your breathing to harmonise with the rate of walking.

4 - *Moving through a living being*

As you walk realise that you are stepping upon innumerable living beings; grass, micro organisms and so forth. Even the air is full of life. Life moving through life.

Every once in a while stop and check through these four points. Don't worry if you can't get them all together. You'll likely find you can combine two or three and from time to time you'll get all four. Try walking for the sheer pleasure of walking.

There is a story that when the Buddha was born, he took 17 steps and a flower sprang up from each footstep. You might try this. As you walk, imagine that you are blessing the earth and that through your feet, the earth is blessing you. With each step imagine a flower springs up from the earth.

• Working with difficulties

Here is a meditation that can often bring more space and light into difficult relationships.

1 - *Posture*

Sit in a posture that supports a sense of relaxation and alertness.

2 - *Breathing & Scanning*

Become aware of your breathing and scan through your body allowing any tight spots to soften.

3 - *Aspiration*

Bring to mind your aspiration for deepening love and understanding.

4 - *Seeing Others*

Imagine in your mind's eye the person with whom you are having difficulties.

See that person just as you usually do. Then, as if you were pressing the fast rewind button on a video, run their life backwards until you see them around the age of three. Basically you take them back to an age where you can see them as innocent. In your imagination, watch them growing towards today. Certain types of foods are flowing in, emotional experiences, interactions with parents, hopes, fears, dreams, illnesses, accidents.

All these factors are weaving together a fabric of body-mind called this person. As they get older, they are shaped by experiences at school, by books and films and media, by social pressures, religious and political views. All of these together are shaping the being you know today.

Allow the video to accelerate showing you a growing 'interbeing' of uncountable circumstances and situations. Eventually you get them up to now and you observe them as a dynamic of all these factors. Then you let go of them and come back to the breathing and to simply sitting where you are.

5 - Seeing Self

Now imagine yourself in front and do the same thing you did in step four.

Take yourself back to the age of two or three and then watch yourself grow as a constantly changing, miraculously unfolding mystery of interbeing.

Appreciate how you are really an arising of uncountable factors; food, education, genetics, parents, social realities, economic fluctuations and so forth. In your mind's eye, watch yourself grow to this present moment, then, when you get up to who you are and how you are today, let go of the exercise and come back to simply breathing and sitting.

6 - Seeing Self & Others

Finally imagine yourself and the person you are having difficulties with are standing in front of you in a typical interaction.

See the interbeing them interacting with the interbeing you. Where is the basis of blame?

Although this meditation will not necessarily solve any problems, it will often give such a new perspective to the situation that a degree of tolerance, or understanding will emerge that wasn't there before. At this point forgiveness may become a real possibility.



• Spontaneous presence

Sit in a posture that is easeful and alert. Settle into awareness of breathing and apart from that make no effort whatsoever to control or direct your attention. Allow the senses to operate freely and wherever your attention goes, look deeply into that thing or phenomena and mentally say, "May you be well and happy". It doesn't matter whether you are focusing on a tree, or on a sound or on a feeling or emotion, just stay with the awareness and wherever it alights, wish that thing well.

Working in this way you will often find the heart mind opening until rather than focusing on individual things that are arising in consciousness, you are appreciating the entire richness of present moment. "Present moment, may you be well and happy."

• A Flowering Jewel

Sit comfortably and make friends with your breathing. Imagine in your heart a beautiful jewel-like flower radiating light in all directions. On each inhalation, sink deeply into the vision and on each exhalation sound the mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum*.

The word *mani* means jewel and the word *padme*, usually pronounced pay-may means flower or flowering.

Let your whole being rest in the sound and feeling of the mantra. If you are less focussed it

will help to murmur the mantra audibly but as you become more focussed, the volume will naturally die away as you sense the sound in the silence.

Discover the flowering jewel that you are and then move to seeing the flowering jewel that is everyone else.

• Looking with greatly merciful eyes

In the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism there is a great Bodhisattva named *Avalokitesvaro* in Sanskrit and *Chenrezi* in Tibetan. *Chenrezi* is thought to be the manifestation of wisdom–compassion. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is considered by the Tibetan people to be an embodiment of *Chenrezi*.

In the actual practice and meditation of *Chenrezi*, there is a prayer and in this prayer there is the line, “Looking with greatly merciful eyes on all that lives.” Try taking this line to heart. Can you look with greatly merciful eyes on all who live, not only those who live outside of you such as plants and animals and other people but also those who live within you, such as your feelings, thoughts and memories.

You can extend this to all the senses. Listening with greatly merciful ears. Touching with greatly merciful hands or skin. Smelling with greatly merciful nose. Tasting with greatly merciful tongue. Thinking with greatly merciful mind.

Take this into every moment of the day. This is *Chenrezi* in action.

• Tonglen

In the Tibetan tradition there is a wonderful meditation called the practice of receiving and sending. In Tibetan it is called *tonglen*. This method grapples very directly with the work of compassion and the flowering of lovingkindness.

Tonglen is taught in many ways. In this booklet we’ll take a very simple approach that you could adapt and apply to many situations.

Begin by sitting in a posture that is easeful and alert. Become aware of your breathing and relax into the sensations currently arising in your body. As you inhale, imagine all illness and suffering is drawn through your nostrils, into the mandala in your heart where it is transformed in the light of clear seeing and deep understanding. As you exhale, the clear light of compassion goes back out nurturing and supporting all beings. Breathe like this for a while.

In this meditation, you can invite the difficulties of someone you know or you can invite the suffering of whole categories of beings. The entire meditation rests on putting the well being of others ahead of one’s own well being; receiving the difficulties of others and sending them your strengths.

The practice can be combined with the mantra of *Chenrezi*, *Om Mani Padme Hum* and the visualisation given in the exercise, “The Flowering Jewel”. Begin visualising the jeweled flower in your heart and blend this with the mantra. Once you have established a sense of well being, then, on the inhalation invite in the suffering of beings and on the exhalation, with the mantra, send out lovingkindness and support.

Classical Inspiration

• The Four Divine Abidings

(From *Daily Puja* published by Wangapeka Books)

*May I be friendly, calm and free from ill-will
and may I live in happiness. As I am, so, may
all beings be friendly, calm and free from ill-will and
may they live in happiness.*

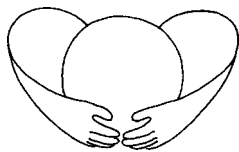
Ahaṃ avero homi, abyāpajho homi, anigho
homi, sukhi attānaṃ pariharāmi.

Ahaṃ viya sabbe sattā averā hontu,
abyāpajjhā hontu, anighā hontu, sukhi attānaṃ
pariharantu.

Now I become aware of my breathing. As I
breathe, I imagine in my heart, a jewelled flower
or a soft globe of light, radiating lovingkindness,
compassion, sympathetic-joy and equanimity to
every part of my body.

(Breathe with this for a few minutes.)

As feelings of easefulness, spaciousness and
clarity flower in my experience, I send the light
of these four divine abidings in all directions,
touching beings throughout the universe, sup-
porting their health and unfolding.



• The Bodhisattva Vow

Bodhi means awakening and *sattva* means
being. Bodhisattva means awakening being.
In it's most general sense, everyone is
bodhisattva as everyone is a manifestation of life
awakening. In the Mahayana schools of
Buddhism the word bodhisattva refers
particularly to someone who is dedicating their
life to the welfare of all beings.

This great aspiration has been taken as a path
in itself by millions of beings all over the world.
It is sometimes expressed as the Bodhisattva
Vow. These four vows have appeared in differ-
ent expressions throughout the centuries but the
essential intent has always remained the same.

Try reciting this first thing each morning and
then try to manifest it throughout the day.

*However innumerable beings are,
I vow to meet them with kindness and interest.
However inexhaustible the states of suffering are,
I vow to touch them with patience and love.
However immeasurable the Dharmas are,
I vow to explore them deeply.
However incomparable the mystery of interbeing,
I vow to surrender to it freely.*

*From this day forth, with Wisdom and
Compassion as my Lamp and Staff,
I dedicate all my life energies to the welfare
of all beings.*

• Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

This prayer by St Francis is loved by people all over the world. Try reading it with the breath, by pausing at the end of each line to mindfully breathe in and breathe out. Allow the meaning behind the words to shape your experience.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.

Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.

Where there is despair, let me sow hope.

Where there is darkness, let me sow light

Where there is sadness, let me sow joy.

Oh, Great Spirit, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console.

Seek to be understood as to understand.

Seek to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

And it is in dying that we are born again to everlasting life.



• Lovingkindness Sutra

This ancient teaching on lovingkindness has been practised virtually unchanged since the time of the Buddha. It is still used by many Buddhists today as the basis for their loving kindness practice. This version has been taken from “The Mirror of the Dhamma” published by the Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka. The translation was done by the Venerable Narada Mahathera. The sutra is often chanted as a daily practice. Try reading through each verse and then pause to reflect and bring the experience into your life.

Karaṇiya Metta Sutta

(Pali version)

Karaṇiyam atthakusalena – yaṃ taṃ santam padaṃ abhisamecca

Sakko ujū ca sūjū ca – suvaco c’assa mudu anatimāni

He who is skilled in goodness and who wishes to attain that state of calm should act thus:

He should be able, upright, perfectly upright, obedient, gentle and humble.

Santussa ko ca subharo ca – appakicco ca sallahukavutti

Santindriyo ca nipako ca – appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho

Contented, easily supportable, with few duties, of light livelihood, controlled in sensing, discreet, not impudent, not greedily attached to families.

Na ca khuddaṃ samācare kiñci – yena viññū
pare upavadeyyuṃ

Sukhino vā khemino hontu – sabbe sattā
bhavantu sukhitattā

*He should not commit any slight wrong
such that other wise men might censure
him. May all beings be happy and
secure; may their minds be wholesome!*

Ye keci paṇabhūtatti – tasā vā thāvarā vā
anavasesā

Diḡhā vā ye mahantā vā – majjhimā
rassakāṇukathūlā

Diṭṭhā vā yeva adiṭṭhā – ye ca dūre vasanti
avidūre

Bhūtā vā sambavesi vā – sabbe sattā bhavantu
sukhitattā

*Whatever living beings there be:
– feeble or strong, long, stout, or
medium, short, small or large,
seen or unseen, those dwelling far
or near, those who are born and
those who are to be born
– may all beings, without exception,
be happy-minded!*

Na paro paraṃ nikubbetha – nātimañña
kattacināṃ kaṃci

Byārosanā paṭighasañña – nāññamañña
dukkham iccheyya

*Let not one deceive another
not despise any person whatever
in any place.
In anger or illwill let him not wish
any harm to another.*

Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttaṃ – āyusā ekaputtam
anurakkhe

Evampi sabbabhūtesu – mānasaṃ bhāvaye
aparimāṇaṃ

*Just as a mother would protect her only
child even at the risk of her own life,
even so let him cultivate a boundless
heart towards all beings.*

Mettaṃ ca sabba-lokasmiṃ – mānasaṃ
bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ

Uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyaṅca – asambāhaṃ
averaṃ asapattaṃ

*Let his thoughts of boundless love
pervade the whole world:
– above, below and across – without any
obstruction,
without any hatred, without any enmity.*

Tiṭṭhaṃ caraṃ nisinno vā – sayāno vā
yāvat'assa vigatamiddho

Etaṃ satīṃ adhiṭṭheyya – brahmam etaṃ
vihāraṃ idha māhu

*Whether he stands, walks, sits
or lies down, as long as he is awake,
he should develop his mindfulness.
This, they say, is the Highest Conduct.*

Diṭṭhiṅca anupagamma silavā – dassanena
sampanno

Kāmeso vineyya gedhaṃ – na hi jātu
gabbhaseyyaṃ punar eti'ti.

*Not falling into error,
virtuous and endowed with insight,
he gives up attachment to sense desires.
Of a truth he does not come again
for conception in a womb.*



Wangapeka Educational Trust



The primary purpose of the Trust is to foster an attitude of open-heartedness and natural curiosity into all the wonders of life, to encourage healing in a deep and pervasive way and to support the growth of Wisdom and Compassion through the deepening of Awareness.

Though completely non-sectarian in nature, most of the Trust's guiding teachers are thoroughly rooted in the practice of Buddha Dharma in many of its universal forms and manifestations. The word Buddha comes from

the Sanskrit syllable *budh* which means to awaken. Dharma means truth or teaching. Buddha Dharma is the teaching that leads to the awakening of wisdom, compassion and non-clinging awareness. It is a teaching for people of all religions and philosophical backgrounds.

For more information about the Trust and its activities, please contact the Centre.
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