



REVIEW ARTICLE

LORD BUDDHA'S TEACHING OF THE FIRST SUBLIME STATE OF MIND

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ABSTRACT

Metta is the most important thing should be cultivated or practiced. According to persons, there are so many metta such as Lord Buddha's metta, parents' metta, teachers' metta, my metta and your metta etc. If metta is practiced by everyone, the world would be very peaceful. The following paragraphs will be mentioned what the Buddha taught on metta, the history of mettasuttara and how metta is should be developed. As matter of fact, it is not easy to practice metta by correcting way but we ourselves should try to practice. It is easier to practice metta by going to any meditation center than staying at home or at work. If we are frightened by ghosts, we must radiant our metta deeply. For example, when some Myanmar people were frighten by some ghosts on the ship then they recited some verses such as mettasuttara, pathana and paritta etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's our discussing is on "Lord Buddha's teaching of the First Sublime State of mind." There are four Sublime States in the Abhidhammapitaka. They are Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha. Let's see what the Lord Buddha taught about Metta. Metta means loving-kindness. In the world, we, human beings love each other. Parents love their children in return children love their parents. Husbands love their wives and wives love their husbands. Friends love friends. Boyfriends love their girlfriends etc.

The history of Metta Suttara

We have Metta Sutra in Buddhist scriptures. First of all, I would like to tell you the history of Metta Suttara. When and why the Buddha taught it? Once, the Lord Buddha was staying at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi. A group of monks received permission from the Lord Buddha to meditate in a distant forest. Each of the monks took shelter under a big tree as a temporary residence and an engaged themselves intensively in the practice of meditation. On account of the spiritual power of their meditation, the tree deities could not stay in their trees-abodes above the monks, so they had to come down to the ground. Realizing that the monks would spend the whole rainy season there, the deities were much annoyed. So they tried to scare the monks away during the night by harassing them in various ways. After living under such situation for sometimes, the monks could not bear it any longer

and rushed back to the Buddha and informed him about their difficulties. So the Buddha advised them to recite the text of loving kindness (Metta Sutta) and to radiate the spirit of love to all beings. Encouraged by this discourse, the monks returned to their respective places. They practiced in accordance with the instructions given them to permeate the entire atmosphere with radiant thoughts of love. The tree deities were much pleased to be affected by the power of love, and so let the monks (meditators) stay without any further disturbances.

Metta (loving-kindness)

Metta is the most important thing which is needed in the world today. Indeed it is more needed than ever before because in this new world, there are sufficient materials, money and brilliant wise men and scientists. In spite of these, there is no peace and happiness. It shows that something is lacking. That is Metta. What is the Buddhist idea of Metta? The Pali word "Metta" means "loving kindness", not the ordinary one, such as sensual, emotional, sentimental kind of love. Metta has been translated by modern translators into English as generous, loving, loving kindness, sending out thoughts of love towards others" but according to the words of Buddha, Metta has a far wider significance, and a much more extensive implication than this. It means a great deal more than loving kindness harmless, sympathy.

In the "Metta Sutta" the Buddha has chosen the love of a mother for her child as an example. When her child is hungry, she watches carefully to feed her child even before it asks her for food. When the child is in danger, she will risk her own life. So the Buddha taught us to love all beings as a mother loves her only child. If we can do this even to a small extent, the world will become happier and more peaceful place. In the

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Dighanikaya, the Buddha said that almost every virtue such as unselfishness, loving sympathy and loving kindness is included in this "Metta".

Though we talked much about Metta and repeat the formula "Sabbesatta averahontu, abyapajjhahontu etc. "(May all sentient beings be free from danger; may they be free from oppression etc.), without Metta how can it be effective? This passage is not to be merely recited. The Buddha does not ask us to learn any of his teachings for recitation only. So the recitation of the "MettaSutta" is good, but the Buddha did not mean it to be merely recited. He exhorted us to follow and practice the instructions in it so that we might realize Metta as the best state of heart in the world. Therefore, do not be satisfied with the mere recitation of the "MettaSutta" but strive to know its meaning with a view to practice it and to make it suffuse your being. That is the most essential fact. Meditation does not mean merely to think about it, but to practice it in your daily life. Let's go to see the discourse of loving kindness.

Discourse of loving-kindness

This discourse of loving kindness serves as a mark of protection and as a subject of meditation. In the first part of the discourse virtues are found that should be practiced by anyone who desires his own welfare and in the later part the method of practicing Metta or good will is explained in detail. The Buddha taught us to follow and practice the following principles:

- He who is skilled in good and who wishes to attain that state of Calm should act (thus): He should be able, upright, perfectly upright, compliant, gentle, and humble.¹
 - Contented, easily supported, with few duties, of simple livelihood, controlled in senses, discreet, not impudent, he should not be greedily attached to families.
 - He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him. (Then he should cultivate his thoughts thus:)
 - May all beings be happy and secure; may their minds be contented.
 - Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, long (or tall), stout, or medium, short, small, or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, be happy minded! Let not one deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or illwill let not one wish any harm to another.²
 - Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.
 - Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world—above, below and across—without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.
 - Whether one stands, walks, sits or lies down, as long as one is awake, one should maintain this mindfulness. This, they say, is the Sublime State in this life.³
- Not falling into wrong views, virtuous and endowed with Insight, one gives up attachment to sense-desires. Verily such a man does return to enter a womb again.
 - If the meditator, not falling into wrong-view (egoism), be virtuous and endowed with perfect insight, and expel his passion for sensual pleasure, then, of a truth, he will never be conceived in any womb again.
 - It says, in the Dhammapada "One should first establish oneself in what is proper then only he should advise another; such a wise-man will not be reproached".⁴ If one cannot find happiness in himself, he cannot find happiness anywhere else. It is also said that people who cannot control themselves cannot find happiness.⁶
 - According to the Buddhist method, training oneself comes first. Individual perfection must be first, so that the organic whole may be perfect. The state of the outer world is a reflection of our inner-selves. The world is like a great mirror, and if you look at the mirror with a smiling face, you will see your own beautiful smiling face. If you look at it with a shrinking face, you will see your own ugly face. It means that "Every action must have equal and opposite reaction."
 - So if you treat the world properly, kindly, the world will treat you kindly. We should not expect other persons to treat us kindly first. We should start by ourselves treating them kindly.
 - "May all beings be happy, may all beings be secure, may all beings be happy minded and may their hearts be wholesome."

Conclusion

We can see discourses about metta in different kinds of Buddhist scriptures. For example, metta is one of the four Sublime States in the Abhidhammapitaka. If we talk about mettataught by the Lord Buddha, we must learn mettasuttara and its history. And we have to know what the meaning of metta and discourse of metta. And we should know the way or path how to develop or cultivate metta. Furthermore, we should know what kind of benefits we can get by developing metta and why mettasuttara should be recited.

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