

How to Develop Loving-Kindness (Metta)

Metta (loving-kindness) means heartfelt friendliness and goodwill towards oneself and others. If a person is friendly towards himself, he will not harm or trouble himself. If a person is friendly towards others, he will not cause harm or trouble to others. Therefore, the friendship that brings benefit to oneself and to others is called **Metta (loving-kindness)**.

According to the **Anuruddha Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya**, two methods of cultivating loving-kindness meditation are explained. The Venerable Arahant **Anuruddha Thera** clearly described these two methods. They are:

- **Appamāṇa Ceto-Vimutti (Boundless Liberation of Mind)**
- **Mahaggata Ceto-Vimutti (Exalted or Expanded Liberation of Mind)**

How to Practice Appamāṇa Ceto-Vimutti

Appamāṇa Ceto-Vimutti means spreading loving-kindness **limitlessly in all directions**. This means extending loving-kindness to the **ten directions** separately. A person who wishes to practice loving-kindness in this boundless way can memorize and recite the following meditation phrases.

1. May all beings in the **northern direction** be free from hatred... free from anger... free from jealousy... free from suffering and distress... may they live happily... may they attain peaceful happiness.
2. May all beings in the **north-eastern direction** ...
3. May all beings in the **eastern direction** ...
4. May all beings in the **south-eastern direction** ...
5. May all beings in the **southern direction** ...
6. May all beings in the **south-western direction** ...
7. May all beings in the **western direction** ...
8. May all beings in the **north-western direction** ...

9. May all beings in the **upper direction** ...

10. May all beings in the **lower direction** ...

How to Practice Mahaggata Ceto-Vimutti

Mahaggata Ceto-Vimutti means gradually **expanding the area of loving-kindness step by step**. First loving-kindness is developed towards oneself, then towards the people in one's village, then towards the people in the region, and finally towards the whole world.

A person who wishes to practice loving-kindness in this way can memorize the following meditation phrases.

1. May **I** be free from hatred... free from anger... free from jealousy... free from suffering and distress... may I live happily... may I attain peaceful happiness.
2. Just like me, may all beings in **this village** ...
3. Just like me, may all beings in **this city** ...
4. Just like me, may all beings in **this province** ...
5. Just like me, may all beings in **this country** ...
6. Just like me, may all beings in **this world** ...
7. Just like me, may **all beings everywhere** ...

Development up to the Metta Jhānas

Through loving-kindness meditation, the mind can actually be developed **up to the third jhāna (meditative absorption)**. To attain these jhānas through Metta meditation, one must practice in the way taught by the Buddha.

When practicing in this way, the **five hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇa)** are suppressed and the mind becomes concentrated on the object of loving-kindness. With that concentrated mind, by continuing the practice of loving-kindness meditation, one can attain the **first**

jhāna, which contains applied thought (vitakka), sustained thought (vicāra), non-sensual joy, happiness, and one-pointed concentration.

By further developing loving-kindness meditation, it is possible to attain the **second and third jhānas**.

Benefits of Loving-Kindness Meditation

In the **Metta Anisamsa Sutta of the Anguttara Nikaya**, the benefits of practicing loving-kindness meditation are clearly explained. A person who practices Metta meditation:

1. Sleeps peacefully.
2. Wakes up peacefully.
3. Does not have bad dreams while sleeping.
4. Becomes dear to human beings.
5. Becomes dear to non-human beings.
6. Is protected by deities.
7. Will not easily be harmed by poison or weapons.
8. Can develop concentration quickly.
9. His or her complexion becomes bright and pleasant.
10. Dies without confusion of mind.
11. If one does not attain arahantship in this life, one will be reborn in the **Brahma world**.