

## (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta or Metta Ceto, vimutti Sutta<sup>1</sup>

The Discourse on the (Eight) Benefits of Lovingkindness  
or The Discourse on Liberation of Mind by Lovingkindness  
A 8.1/4:150 f

Theme: The 8 benefits of lovingkindness cultivation  
Translated by Piya Tan ©2008, rev 2009

### I Benefits of cultivating lovingkindness

There are at least two discourses listing the benefits (*ānisaṃsa*) of cultivating lovingkindness, that is,

- (1) The (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta (A 8.1/4:150 f), and
- (2) The (Ekā, dasa) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta (A 11.16/5:342 f) = SD 2.15.

The (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta (A 8.1) list eight benefits [§3], apparently, for those who do not meditate. The (Ekā, dasa) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta (A 11.16), on the other hand, gives the following list of eleven blessing of one who cultivates lovingkindness:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) One sleeps happily.<sup>3</sup>
- (2) One wakes happily.<sup>4</sup>
- (3) One sees no bad dreams.<sup>5</sup>
- (4) One is dear to humans.<sup>6</sup>
- (5) One is dear to non-humans.<sup>7</sup>
- (6) One is protected by devas.<sup>8</sup>
- (7) Fire, poison and weapons cannot harm one.<sup>9</sup>
- (8) One's mind easily concentrates.<sup>10</sup>
- (9) One's countenance is serene.<sup>11</sup>
- (10) One dies unconfused.<sup>12</sup>
- (11) And, if he penetrates no higher, he goes to the Brahma world.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Be Se *Mettānisaṃsa Sutta*; Ce *Mettā Ceto, vimutti Sutta*.

<sup>2</sup> Explained at Vism 9.59-76/311-314.

<sup>3</sup> Instead of turning over and snoring, one falls asleep like entering a state of meditation attainment.

<sup>4</sup> Instead of waking up in discomfort, groaning and yawning, one wakes up without contortions, like a lotus opening. (This benefit is omitted in A:ÑB.)

<sup>5</sup> One has auspicious dreams, such as worshipping at a shrine, making an offering, listening to a Dharma talk, etc.

<sup>6</sup> One is popular with others and in society.

<sup>7</sup> One will not be harmed by negative energies around one or fall sick due to inexplicable causes.

<sup>8</sup> One will be guarded by divine beings like parents guarding a child.

<sup>9</sup> One will create a positive aura or environment around oneself that would not arouse negative emotions or reactions in others.

<sup>10</sup> One's mind easily concentrates due to lack of negative thoughts that drain one's energies.

<sup>11</sup> "Like a palmyra fruit loosened from its stem" (Vism 9.74), ie one's countenance is relaxed, soothing, delightful.

<sup>12</sup> One passes away peacefully as if falling asleep or one does so mindfully and happily.

<sup>13</sup> If one is unable to attain arhathood, then after death one arises in the Brahmā world (dhyanic existence) as if waking up from sleep.

(A 11.16/5:342) = SD 2.15; PmA 2:129; Miln 198; Araka J, J 169/2:61

Items (8-10), the benefits omitted in the (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta, clearly arise from meditation-based lovingkindness.

## 2 The lovingkindness verse

Both the (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta (A 8.1) [S4] and the Mettā Bhāvanā Sutta (It 1.3.7)<sup>14</sup> have the lovingkindness verses [S4], similar to those found in the (Pasenadi) Yañña Sutta (S 3.9).<sup>15</sup> These verses are also found in the Gandhārī Dharmapada (Dh:G 194-198).<sup>16</sup> All this shows that the verses at least must be very ancient. Here is a comparative table showing the verses in the two texts:

<u>(Attha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta</u>		<u>Gandhārī Dharmapada</u>	
1	<i>Yo ca mettāṃ bhāvayati, appamāṇam patissato tanū saṃyojanā honti, passato upadhi-k,khayaṃ</i> [A 4:150]	194	<i>yo du metra bhavayadi apramaṇa nirovadhī taṇu saṃyoṇo bhodī paśadu vadhi-sakṣaya</i> 12.13
2	<i>Ekam pi ce pāṇam aduṭṭha,citto mettāyati kusālī<sup>17</sup> tena hoti sabbe 'va pāṇe manasā 'nukampī pahūtam ariyo pakaroti puññaṃ</i> [A 4:151]	195	<i>eka bi ya praṇa aduṭṭha-citu metrayadi kuśala teṇa bhodī sarve ya praṇa maṇasaṇu 'abadi prahona ari 'a prakarodī puṇu.</i> 12.14
3	<i>Ye satta,sanḍaṃ paṭhavim jinitvā<sup>18</sup> rājīsayo yajamānānupariyagā<sup>19</sup> assa,medhaṃ purisa,medhaṃ sammā,pāsaṃ vāja,peyyaṃ niraggaḷaṃ</i>	196	<i>yo sata-ṣaṇa pradhavi vicīrya rayeṣṣayu yayamaṇaṇaparyaya aśpa-veka puruṣa-veka same- paśa vaya-veka niragaḍa</i> 12.15
4	<i>mettassa cittassa subhāvitassa --- kalam pi te nānubhavanti soḷasim canda-p,pabhā tāra,gaṇā 'va sabbe yathā na agghanti kalam pi soḷasim</i>	197	<i>metrasa citasa subhavidasa diṭṭhe va dharmi uvavaja va muṇo kala ami nañubhavadi sarvaśo cadri pravha tara-gaṇa va sarvi</i> 12.16 ---
5	<i>Yo na hanti na ghātetī na jināti na jāpaye mettasō<sup>20</sup> sabba,bhūtānaṃ veran tassa na kenacī ti</i>	198	<i>yo na hadi na ghadhedi na jeṇadi na yava 'i mitrisa sarva-bhudeṣu vera tasa na kenayi</i> 12.17

It is interesting that none of these verses are found in the Pali Dhammapada, but appear in the same sequence in the (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa Sutta,. All the verses of the two texts, except for verse 4 and Dh:G 197, are almost identical. The exceptional verses translate as follows:

<sup>14</sup> It 1.3.7/19-22 = SD 30.7.

<sup>15</sup> S 3.9/1:75 f = SD 22.11.

<sup>16</sup> See Dh:G (tr John Brough, 1962:149 f, 241 f).

<sup>17</sup> Ce PTS; Se *kusalāṃ*.

<sup>18</sup> Ce Se; PTS *vijetvā*..

<sup>19</sup> Ce Se; PTS *-pariyayā*.

<sup>20</sup> Ce Se; PTS *mettāṃso*.

- 4 A well-cultivated mind of lovingkindness, 197 A well-cultivated mind of lovingkindness,  
they attain not even a sixteenth part, *arises here and now in a sage.*  
just as all the starry constellations' light is This does not ever become even a fraction  
*not equal to even a sixteenth of the moon's light.* of the moon's light amongst all the stars.

### 3 Social applications of lovingkindness

The Saṃyutta Commentary on the (Pasenadi) Yañña Sutta explains that in the times of the ancient rajahs, the first sacrifices (*mahā,yāga*) were actually the four bases of welfare (*saṅgaha,vatthu*),<sup>21</sup> namely,

- |                                       |                              |                           |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) giving almsfood to the wise       | ( <i>sassa,medha</i> ),      |                           |
| (2) pleasant speech                   | ( <i>vācā,peyya</i> ),       |                           |
| (3) beneficent conduct                | ( <i>purisa,medha</i> ), and |                           |
| (4) beneficial conduct towards others | ( <i>sammā,pāsa</i> ).       | (S 3.9/1:75 f) = SD 22.11 |

In this way, the people could live happily with their doors “unbolted” (*niraggaḷa*). These are all loving-kindness-based social activities. But during the time of rajah Okkāka, the brahmins reinterpreted the bases of welfare (which they increased to five) as bloody sacrifices involving slaughter and violence (SA 1:144 f).

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<sup>21</sup> The usu 4 bases of welfare (*saṅgaha,vatthu*) are: (1) generosity (*dāna*), (2) pleasant or convincing speech (*piya,vācā*), (3) beneficial conduct (*attha,cariyā*), and (4) just impartiality (*samānatattā*): see Ujjaya S (A 4.39/2:42 f), (Aṭṭha) Mettānisaṃsa S (A 8.1/4:151); (Pasenadi) Yañña S (S 3.9/1:76); Sn303; It 21; J 4:302; SnA 321.

## The Discourse on the Benefits of Lovingkindness A 8.1/4:150 f

Thus have I heard.

1 At one time, the Blessed One was residing in Anātha,piṇḍika's park in Jeta's forest near Sāvattṭhī. There the Blessed One addressed the monks, thus:

“Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks replied to the Blessed One in assent.

2 The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikshus, when the liberation of mind through lovingkindness is practised, cultivated, increased, made as a vehicle, used as a basis, and established, consolidated, and well engaged in—eight advantages are to be expected.<sup>22</sup>

3 What are the eight?

### The 8 benefits of the practitioner of lovingkindness

- |                                                                       |                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) He sleeps happily. <sup>23</sup>                                  | <i>Sukham supati.</i>                                |
| (2) He awakes happily. <sup>24</sup>                                  | <i>Sukham paṭibujjhati.</i>                          |
| (3) He see no evil dream. <sup>25</sup>                               | <i>Na pāpakam supinam passati.</i>                   |
| (4) He is the beloved of humans. <sup>26</sup>                        | <i>Manussānam piyo hoti.</i>                         |
| (5) He is the beloved of non-humans. <sup>27</sup>                    | <i>Amanussānam piyo hoti.</i>                        |
| (6) The gods guard him. <sup>28</sup>                                 | <i>Devatā rakkhanti.</i>                             |
| (7) No fire, poison, or weapon can harm him. <sup>29</sup>            | <i>Nāssa aggi vā visam vā sattham vā kamati,</i>     |
| (8) Penetrating no higher, he goes to the Brahma world. <sup>30</sup> | <i>Uttarim appaṭivijjhanto brahma,lokūpago hoti.</i> |

Bhikshus, when the liberation of mind through lovingkindness is practised, cultivated, increased, made as a vehicle, used as a basis, and established, consolidated, and well engaged in—these are the eight advantages to be expected.

<sup>22</sup> *Mettāya, bhikkhave, ceto, vimuttiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulī, katāya yānī, katāya vatthu, katāya anuṭṭhitāya paricitāya susamāraddhāya atth'ānisaṃsā pāṭikaṅkhā.* Eleven advantages are given at **(Eka,dasa) Mettānisaṃsā S** (A 11.16/5:342) = SD 2:15; also listed at Miln 198; at PmA 2:129; Araka J, J 169/2:6; for detailed expl, see Vism 9.59-76.

<sup>23</sup> Instead of turning over and snoring, he falls asleep like entering a state of meditation attainment.

<sup>24</sup> Instead of waking up in discomfort, groaning and yawning, he wakes up without contortions, like a lotus opening. (This benefit is omitted in A:ÑB.)

<sup>25</sup> He has auspicious dreams, such as worshipping at a shrine, making an offering, listening to a Dharma talk, etc.

<sup>26</sup> He is popular with others and in society.

<sup>27</sup> He will not be harmed by negative energies around him or fall sick due to inexplicable causes.

<sup>28</sup> He will be guarded by divine beings like parents guarding a child.

<sup>29</sup> He will create a positive aura or environment around himself that would not arouse negative emotions or reactions in others.

<sup>30</sup> If he is unable to attain arhathood, then after death he arises in the Brahmā world (dhyanic existence) as if waking up from sleep.

4 The verses<sup>31</sup>

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 <i>Yo ca mettāṃ bhāvayati,<br/>appamāṇam patissato<br/>tanū saṃyojanā honti,<br/>passato upadhi-k,khayaṃ</i>                                                           | Who cultivates lovingkindness<br>immeasurably, ever mindful,<br>his mental fetters are<br>destroyed, because he sees.                                                                                                          |
| 2 <i>Ekam pi ce pāṇam aduṭṭha,citto<br/>mettāyati kusala<sup>33</sup> tena hoti<br/>sabbe<sup>34</sup>va pāṇe manasā`nukampī<br/>pahūtam ariyo pakaroti puññaṃ</i>       | <sup>32</sup> If he has a hate-free mind for even a single living being,<br>he shows lovingkindness: he is thereby wholesome.<br>He has a mind of compassion towards all life,<br>the noble one creates abundant good [merit]. |
| 3 <i>Ye satta,saṇḍaṃ paṭhaviṃ jinitvā<sup>34</sup><br/>rājīsayo yajamānānupariyagā<sup>36</sup><br/>assa,medham purisa,medham<br/>sammā,pāsam vāja,peyyaṃ niraggaḷaṃ</i> | Having conquered the earth and its multitude of beings, <sup>35</sup><br>the royal seers go about sacrificing<br>the horse sacrifice, the human sacrifice,<br>the peg-throw, and the lavish soma fertility drink—              |
| 4 <i>mettassa cittassa subhāvitassa<br/>kalam pi te nānubhavanti soḷasim<br/>canda-p,pabhā tāra,gaṇā`va sabbe<br/>yathā na agghanti kalam pi soḷasim</i>                 | a well-cultivated mind of lovingkindness,<br>they attain not even a sixteenth part, <sup>37</sup><br>just as the starry constellations' light is not equal<br>to even a sixteenth part of the moon's light.                    |
| 6 <i>Yo na hanti na ghātetī<br/>na jināti na jāpaye<br/>mettaso<sup>38</sup> sabba,bhūtānaṃ<br/>veran tassa na kenacī ti</i>                                             | Who kills not, nor causes another to kill,<br>who conquers not, nor causes another to conquer,<br>he is one with lovingkindness to all beings:<br>there is no hate in him towards anyone.                                      |

— evaṃ —

080117; 090925; 091108

<sup>31</sup> Verses 3-4 are qu at KhA 168. See Intro (2).<sup>32</sup> On the occurrence of both *kusala* and *puñña* here, see SD 18.7 Intro (6.4).<sup>33</sup> Ce PTS; Se *kusalaṃ*.<sup>34</sup> Ce Se; PTS *vijevā*..<sup>35</sup> “Multitude of beings,” *satta,saṇḍa*, foll DPL: *saṇḍa*; PED (sv *saṇḍa*): “teeming with beings”; A:H 4:104: “the teeming earth”; but Brough (Dh:G 1962: 242 n192) disagrees.<sup>36</sup> Ce Se; PTS *-pariyayā*.<sup>37</sup> “A sixteenth part,” *kalam pi...soḷasim* (ie, an iota). Comy, however, often gloss it as “a sixteenth of a sixteenth” (eg SA 1:59, 314; UA 172).<sup>38</sup> Ce Se; PTS *mettāso*.