



Treetop Zen Center
293 Country Club Road
Oakland, Maine 04963
(207) 619-1156
www.treetopzencenter.org
December 12, 2020



L
o
v
i
n
g

K
i
n
d
n
e
s
s

A letter was received from an inmate who is in solitary confinement. He is a person who has a history of violence in his life, his past, his present. He wants to find a way to end the violence. He asked to be taught the way of non-violence. How to do this? Then Margaret suggested Shakyamuni's "Discourse on Loving-Kindness." She is right.

"The Discourse on Loving-Kindness" by Shakyamuni Buddha, is perhaps one of his most important and beautiful teachings. This teaching is given to you in the hope that you will live with it, work with it, and allow it to slowly become part of your being. The wonderful nun, Ayya Khema, has written a beautiful meditation on this discourse. It is also presented in this little booklet, and given to you, for your use. Some of her words have been slightly altered. It would be wonderful if you could find the time to do the meditation at least one a week. Few teachings can help one realize the peace of non-violence, which lies in the depth of the heart.

Simply chant the discourse quietly to yourself, then follow the meditation. Each paragraph is a special meditation subject. Please take your time, do it slowly, and make as much space as you feel you need for each meditation subject.

The Discourse on Loving-Kindness

by Shakyamuni Buddha

What should be done by one
 who's skilled in wholesomeness
 To gain the state of peacefulness is this:
 One must be able, upright, straight and not proud,
 Easy to speak to, mild and well content,
 Easily satisfied and not caught up
 In too much bustle, and frugal in one's ways,
 With senses calmed, intelligent, not bold,
 Not being covetous when with other folk,
 Abstaining from the ways that wise ones blame,
 And this the thought that one should always hold:
 'May all beings all live happily and safe
 And may their hearts rejoice within themselves.
 Whatever there may be with breath of life,
 Whether they be frail or very strong,
 Without exception, be they long or short
 Or middle-sized, or be they big or small,
 Or thick, or visible, or invisible,
 Or whether they dwell far or they dwell near,
 Those that are here, those seeking to exist—
 May beings all rejoice within themselves.

Let no one bring about another's ruin
 And not despise in any way or place,
 Let them not wish each other any ill
 From provocation or from enmity.'
 Just as a mother at the risk of life
 Loves and protects her child, her only child,
 So one should cultivate this boundless love
 To all that live in the whole universe
 Extending from a consciousness sublime
 Upwards and downwards and across the world
 Untroubled, free from hate and enmity,
 And while one stands and while one walks and sits
 Or one lies down still free from drowsiness
 One should be intent on this mindfulness—
 This is divine abiding here they say.
 But when one lives quite free from any view,
 Is virtuous, with perfect insight won,
 And greed for sensual desires expelled,
 One surely comes no more to any womb.

Loving Kindness Meditation

Adapted from Ayya Khema

Please put your attention on your breath for just a moment to become centered.

Take a look into your heart and see whether there is any worry, fear, grief, dislike, resentment, rejection, uneasiness, anxiety. If you find any of those, let them float away like the black clouds they are...

Then let warmth and friendship arise in your heart for yourself, realizing that you have to be your own best friend. Surround yourself with loving thoughts for yourself and a feeling of contentment within you...

Now surround the person nearest to you in the room with loving thoughts and fill that person with peace and wish for that person's happiness...

Now surround everyone here with loving thoughts...

Let the feeling of peacefulness extend to everyone here, and think of yourself as everyone's good friend...

Think of your parents, whether they are still alive or not. Surround them with love. Fill them with peace and gratitude for the good things they have done for you. If they have done evil things for you or to you, fill them with love and forgiveness, be their good friend.

Think of those people who are nearest and dearest to you. Embrace them with love, fill them with peace as a gift from you, without expecting them to return it to you...

Think of your friends. Open up your heart to them, to show them your friendship, your concern, your love, giving it to them without expecting anything in return... Think of your neighbors who live near you, the people you meet at work, on the street, in the shops; if you are in a prison, think of the people in the cell or bunk next to yours, make them all your friends; let them enter into your heart without any reservation. Show them love...

Think of anyone for whom you have dislike or with whom you may have had an argument, who has made difficulties for you, whom you do not consider your friend. Think of that person with gratitude, as your teacher, teaching you about your own reactions.

Let your heart go out to that person because he or she too has difficulties. Forgive and forget. Make him or her your friend...

Think of all those people whose lives are far more difficult than yours, who may be sick, with cancer, or AIDS, or other debilitating disease or illness, in hospital, who may be in prison, in solitary confinement, in an orphanage or in war-torn countries, hungry, crippled, blind, without friends or shelter, never able to hear the Dharma. Open up your heart to all of them. Make them all your friends, show them love, wish them happiness...

Put your attention back on yourself. Feel contentment arising in you from making right effort, happiness which comes from loving and joy which comes from giving. Become aware of these feelings, experience the warmth they create in and around you...
May all beings be happy.

Peace and be well.