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Drepung Gomang Monastery
for Advanced studies and Practice on Buddhist Philosophy



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DHARMA TOPICS

General Introduction

The Four Noble Truths འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བཞི་

The Four Foundations: thoughts which turn the mind towards the dharma

Advice to Buddhists in the West

The Heart of Wisdom Sutra བཙམ་ཐུན་འདས་མ་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པའི་སྒྲིང་པོ་

What is Karma?

Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ཚུགས་ཀྱི་ཚོས་སུམ་ཅུ་ཙ་བདུན་

Dependent Arising: Twelve Interdependent Links ཏེན་འབྲེལ་ ཡན་ལག་བརྩ་གཉིས་

Calm Abiding Meditation ཞི་གནས་

Compassion and Loving Kindness

Calm Abiding and insight Meditation

Tara The Liberator སྒྲུ་ལ་མ་

Six Paramitas པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ་དྲུག་

Mantra of the Medicine Buddha སངས་རྒྱལ་སྒྲིན་ཞེ།

Some Helpful Facts

Compassion and Loving Kindness

Two very human qualities that are highly regarded in Buddhism are compassion (karuna) and loving kindness (metta).

Compassion is about recognizing the suffering of others and wishing for that suffering to be alleviated. This suffering can be seen in individuals who we associate with on a daily basis and on a global level. We feel compassion for associates, friends and relatives who are going through a particularly hard time. We identify with their suffering, imagine what they are going through and hope that this suffering will come to an end. We also see the world as it comes through our newspapers, radios and television screens, appalled by the tremendous suffering that is out there resulting from famines, natural disasters, terrorism, war and so on.

The Buddha, shortly after his enlightenment experience, decided to share his teachings with the world, even though he thought that what he had discovered might be too difficult for anyone to understand.

He knew that beings were trapped in the cycle of birth and death (samsara) and the suffering that comes with that. The Buddha's teachings, therefore, have their source in his feeling of compassion. It is easy to see from this why compassion is so highly regarded in Buddhism and is something we are encouraged to develop.

Loving kindness is also a prominent feature of the Buddhist way of life. Extending good will, care and consideration to all beings is something to be developed. Such good will has its immediate expression when it is directed towards friends and relatives. Buddhism goes much further than this, however. Loving kindness is something that should be extended to all beings, without exception. This would include people who we may consider 'neutral' but also those who

do us harm. This aspect of Buddhism is very challenging as it is often quite natural for us to dislike or feel angry towards those that do us harm. There is no doubt that loving kindness is something that we have to work on continually.

Loving kindness meditation is one way to develop this quality more extensively. The method is simple and when applied consistently is also very effective. First one generates feelings of loving kindness to oneself; then to a friend or relative; next to a neutral person and then finally to someone you feel angry towards. In this way feelings of hostility are washed away and the destructive energy that has been directed towards the person in mind can be redirected down more positive channels.

Compassion and loving kindness complement each other. They are antidotes to selfish desire, hatred and cruelty. The aim in Buddhism is to have these two qualities underpinning all our thoughts and actions. It is in this way that we develop a proper attitude to others and the world around us.

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