CHAPTER-I

Origin, definition and different shades of meaning of Mettā

Introduction

The present chapter contains the origins definitions and meaning of the word Mettā and all those were explained based on the Theravāda Buddhist canonical literature.

There is no proper English equivalent for this graceful Pāḷi term Mettā. Goodwill, loving-kindness, benevolence and universal love are suggested as the best renderings.

A benevolent attitude is the chief characteristic of Mettā. He who practices Mettā is constantly interested in promoting the welfare of others. He seeks the good and beautiful in all but not the ugliness in others.

The word “love” one of the most compelling in the English language is commonly used for purposes so widely separated, so gross and so rarefied, as to render it sometimes nearly meaningless. Yet rightly understood, love is the indispensable and essential foundation no less for the growth and purification of the individual as for the construction of a peaceful, progressive, and healthy society.

Mettā is a Pāḷi word which has been translated into English as ‘Love’. When you use the word ‘love’ you have different ideas of the interpretation of this word and you may mean many other things, because it is a word that has been loosely used and in some cases misused or abused. Very interestingly, according to a journal reporting on 2007 U.S. study; “Love” is the most widely used word in the world today.
I think it is completely true because it is abstract, innate, the most influential one and common to all beings, not only human but animals as well. And thinking about it a little bit more even if one does not know English, he/she knows the word “Love” and usually says I love you. I have found many parents who do not know English and taught their children to say to someone I love you. I too knew the word “Love” before I knew English. And if you will try a little to notice the word “Love” in any area, like music, novel, history, or any other kind of thing, you will obviously see the word “Love” in some form, in all of these.

Therefore when you talk about love, people may have a different concept. So we Buddhists use the Pāli word ‘Mettā’ to mean Loving-kindness - not the ordinary, sensual, emotional, sentimental kind of love. As you know, the word ‘Love’ has been defined in many ways in the English language, according to the ideas in the minds of different people professing different religions. Therefore first of all, the definition of Mettā should be known according to Pāli Cannon and its commentaries.

The Background Story of Metta Sutta or the First Teaching of Loving-kindness of Meditation

The background story of Metta Sutta¹ or the first teaching of loving-kindness of meditation given by the Buddha is explained in the Commentary on Dhammapada written by Buddhaghosa Thera. It is told that five hundred monks received instructions on meditation which were suitable to their individual temperaments from the Buddha. They went to forest area to spend

---

¹ Pañcasatabhikkhuvatthu, (The Story of Five hundred Monks), DhA, p.199.
the four months of the rain's retreat (during Vassavāsa), by practising of the meditation.

At that time Lord Buddha was residing at Sāvatthi in the presence of Anāthapindika; and a group of monks received permission from the Lord to meditate in a distant forest during their retreat for the rainy season. The monks took shelter under huge trees as temporary residence and engaged themselves intensively in the practice of meditation.

The tree deities inhabiting in this forest could not stay on their tree-abodes which were above the monks, for the monks were imbued with spiritual powers due to their meditational practices, and therefore they had to come down to stay on the ground. So the deities were very much annoyed and frustrated; and when they realized that the monks would spend the whole rainy season there, they tried to scare the monks away during the nights. They purposely harassed the monks in various ways. It made it practically impossible for the monks to stay in the solitary forests which were very much congenial for the meditators.

The guardian spirits of the trees dwellings in that forest thought that if these monks were staying in the forest, it would not be proper for them to live with their families on the trees. So, they decided to frighten away the monks, by making ghostly sounds and frightful apparitions. They showed up the monks with many terrible appearances. The monks were very upset and left the place and returned to the Buddha. They retold everything that happened in the forest place. On hearing their accounts, the Buddha told them that this had happened because previously they had gone without any weapon and they should go back there armed with a suitable weapon. So, the
Buddha taught them the entire Metta Sutta, Discourse on Loving-kindness. The monks were instructed to recite the Sutta from the time they came to the outskirts of the forest grove and to enter the monastery reciting the same. The monks returned to the forest grove and did as they were told.

In accordance with the instructions of the Buddha the meditators permeate the entire atmosphere with the radiant thoughts of love. The guardian spirits of the trees receiving loving-kindness from the monks were very much pleased with this power of love and reciprocated by readily welcoming and not harming them. The monks stay there to meditate peacefully without any further disturbances.

**The Etymological definition of the term Mettā**

Metta is defined as Love, which by the Enlightened One was named “the liberation of the heart,” “the most sublime beauty”: this is the highest love.

And what is the highest manifestation of love? To show to the world the path leading to the end of suffering, the path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

The word “love” one of the most compelling in the English language is commonly used for purposes so widely separated, so gross and so rarefied, as to render it sometimes nearly meaningless. Yet rightly understood, love is the indispensable and essential foundation no less for the growth and purification of the individual as for the construction of a peaceful, progressive, and healthy society.
In the Pāḷi Buddhist Piṭaka literature, there are various definitions and explanations with regard to mettā. An interesting meaning of mettā is given in the following commentaries and sub-commentaries, such as Āṭṭhasālinī, commentary on Dhammasaṅgaṇī, Visuddhimagga, Suttanipāta, Dīghaniṁya ṭīkā, Netti ṭīkā and Namakkāra ṭīkā, and so on and so forth. In the Āṭṭhasālinī, Visuddhimagga and Paṭisambhidāmagga Āṭṭhakathā, Mettā is defined as Mejjātīti mettā, sinihyatāti attho. Mitte bhavā mettā, mittaṁ ēsa pavattatīti mettā. ²

According to them, mettā is derived from the root mid to be loved. It does mean one loves.³ It signifies one wishes well. Or mettā is so called because it goes on concerning a loved one, or because of the state of being loved.

In addition to this, in the Suttanipāta Āṭṭhakathā, it is epitomized as Sabbe sattā sukhitā hontūti ādinā nayena hitasukhupanayana kāmatā mettā,⁴ that is desire of bringing welfare and happiness to one’s fellowmen by sincere wish May all beings be happy, etc.

In the Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā, mettā is defined as Loving by carrying out the benefit to all living beings, lead by knowledge, not affection

---

3 (i) Mettā (love) is thus derived from mid to love. It is implied that it is a dhamma (nature) that loves, and not a person; therefore the view of the heresy of the self is inhibited. Maung Tin, Pe, The Expositor, (London, Pāḷi Text Society, 1976.), P. 258. (ii) Mettā means absence of hatred, and aversion etc, and then loving by wish of welfare of other, not by way of craving. Janakabhipanika, Ashin, Āṭṭhasālinī bhāsāṭikā, Vols.2.( Myanmar Version) (Amarapua, Myanmar, New Burma Press, 2003.), p.43; (iii) Mettā is derived from mida, to soften, to love. Good will, benevolence, loving-kindness are suggested as the best renderings. Mettā is not carnal love or affection. Mettā embraces all beings without exception. The culmination of mettā is the identification of self with all beings. It is the wish for the good and well-being of all. It discards ill-will. Thera, Nārada, A Manual of Abhidhamma (Rangoon, Burma. The Buddhāsāana Council, 1970), p.111.
4 SnA.Vols, i.p.116, line.2.
and craving (Tanhā, Rāga) without being ferocious through aversion (Dosa, Byāpāda).

Siniyhatīti ettha sattesu byāpajjanavasena lūkhabhāvassa paṭipakkhabūtam ūṇapubbaṅgamaṁ hitākāra pavattivasena sinehanam daṭṭhabbām na taṇhāyanavasena.⁵

In the Mahāvaggaṭīkā of the Dīghanikāya, Mettā is given the same meaning as mentioned above as Loving by means of sharing of the welfare of all living beings. Mejjati hitaphragaṅvavasena sinihyatāti metto, hitesī puggalo, mitte bhavā mettā, mittassa vā esāti mettā (hitesitā).⁶ In the Aṭṭhasālinī, the meaning of mettā is defined as Destruction of ill-will (Dosa, Byāpāda) as a result it will destruct cruelty (Vihiṁsa), of dislike (Arati), and of lust (Rāga) as well.⁷ Byāpādappayojanā hettha mettā, vihiṁsa arati rāgapatighatappa yojanā itarā.⁸


In the Nettipakaranāṭikā, the term mettā is explained as Āsannapaccatthikarāgam paṭibāhanti mettā.⁹ According to him, it is called mettā for the sake of getting rid of lust, craving that is near enemy of mettā. The Pāḷi word mettā is true friend. It denotes love, amity, sympathy, friendliness and active interest in others. Out of the Four Brahma vihāras, this mettā which is one of them is good enough to create anything noble,
anything good to bring peace and happiness in home, in society and in the world. It is a very popular word in Buddhism and occurs frequently in Pāḷi texts in connection with the path to emancipation.

In the Theravada Buddhist Abhidhammā texts there are fifty two mental factors (Cetasika).\(^{10}\) There is no particular mental factor as mettā. Adosa (good-will) cetasika is called as mettā. When it is meant to connote wishing other's welfare, peace and progress, is known as mettā. Therefore, it should be noted that mettā is the sincere wish to help others to be well and prosper. In the Nettivibhāvinīṭikā, it is mentioned as Dosassa paṭipakkho adoso.\(^{11}\) Adosa is opposed to Dosa, and in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Anuṭikā, it is cited as Adoso dosasseva ujuvipaccaniko, \(^{12}\) which means that Adosa is the antithesis of Dosa (hatred, anger).

It is not mere absence of hatred, anger, or aversion, but is a positive virtue such as good will, benevolence, or loving-kindness (mettā), etc. Adosa, non-hatred comprises such positive virtues as loving-kindness, gentleness, amity, friendliness, etc. Anything which is opposite of Dosa, of anger, of hatred is Adosa.

In the Aṭṭhasālinī and Visudhimagga, it is stated as Adosa and it has three characteristics. They are;

(i) Non-hatred has the characteristic of lack of ferocity or non-opposing, like a gentle friend. (lakkhana) When there is Dosa, there is opposition to object in the mind. So when there is Adosa, there is no opposition.

---

\(^{10}\) Cetoyuttā dvipanṇāsa dhammā cetasikā maṭṭā. (Abhi.p.19. CmA.p.76.)

\(^{11}\) Np. p.26, line.6.

\(^{12}\) DhasAt, p.98, line.6.
(ii) Its function is to remove annoyance or to remove fever as sandalwood (rasa). Fever means fever of mind. When there is Dosa, the mind is said to be feverish. Adosa removes that fever.

(iii) Its manifestation is agreeableness like the full moon. (Paccupaṭṭhāna)

Adoso acaṇṭikkalakkhaṇo, avirodhalakkhaṇo vā, anukulamitto viya, āghātavinayaraso, pariḷāhavinayaraso vā candanaṁ viya, sommabāva paccupaṭṭhāno, puṇṇacando viya.\(^\text{13}\)

Adosa is synonymous with mettā, loving-kindness which is one of the four Illimitables (Appamañña). (Mettā, Karuṇā, Muditā and Upekkhā). Adosa is also one of the three roots of good (Kusalamūla), Alobha (non-attachment), Adosa (good-will) and Amoha (wisdom).

The terms of Adosa and Mettā are used by means of interchangeable in the light of similar meaning in the following texts, such as Visuddhimagga, Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā, Sub-Commentary on Visuddhimagga, Pāṭhikavaggaṭīkā, and Abhidhammavibhāvinīṭīkā. The former one is given the information as Atthato hi adosoyeva mettā,\(^\text{14}\) the second one is as Mettā nāma atthato adoso.\(^\text{15}\) Mettā is the same with Adosa in meaning. The third one is defined with the same meaning as with the first one as Akopoti adoso, mettāti attho.\(^\text{16}\) In the last one, it is also said as Adosoyeva hi sattesu hitajjhāsaya vasappavatto mettā nāma.\(^\text{17}\) It does mean

---

\(^{13}\) Asl,p.171, line, 2. Exp, p.167.Vism, Vols.ii, p.95, line.1, PP,p.523.  
\(^{15}\) VismṬ, Vols.i, p.350, line,4.  
\(^{16}\) Pāṭhika Ṭ, p.238, line.10.  
\(^{17}\) AbhivṬ, p.112, line.2.
that indeed, only the name of Adosa is Mettā because of both of the terms, Adosa and Mettā is in the sense of wish of welfare of living beings

**Various other definitions of Metta**

Metta is defined as Love, without desire to possess, knowing well that in the ultimate sense there is no possession and no possessor: this is the highest love.

Metta is defined as Love, without speaking and thinking of “I” knowing well that this so-called “I” is a mere delusion.

Metta is defined as Love, without selecting and excluding, knowing well that to do so means to create love’s own contrasts: dislike, aversion, and hatred.

Metta is defined as Love, embracing all beings: small and great, far and near, be it on earth, in the water, or in the air.

Metta is defined as Love, embracing impartially all sentient beings and not only those who are useful, pleasing, or amusing to us.

Metta is defined as Love, embracing all beings, be they noble-minded or low-minded, good or evil. The noble and the good are embraced because love is flowing to them spontaneously. The low-minded and evil-minded are included because they are those who are mostly in need of love. In many of them the seed of goodness may have died merely because warmth was lacking for its growth, because it perished from cold in a loveless world.
Metta is defined as love, embracing all beings, knowing well that we all are fellow wayfarers through this round of existence that we all are overcome by the same law of suffering.

Metta is defined as Love, but not the sensuous fire that burns, scorches and tortures, that inflicts more wounds than it cures flaring up now, at the next moment being extinguished, leaving behind more coldness and loneliness than was felt before.

Rather, love that lies like a soft but firm hand on the ailing beings, ever unchanged in its sympathy, without wavering, unconcerned with any response it meets. Love that is comforting coolness to those who burn with the fire of suffering and passion; that is life-giving warmth to those abandoned in the cold desert of loneliness, to those who are shivering in the frost of a loveless world; to those whose hearts have become as if empty and dry by the repeated calls for help, by deepest despair.

Metta is defined as Love, that is a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands, and is ready to help.

Metta is defined as Love that is strength and gives strength: this is the highest love.

Now love can be considered in two principal moods: that of lovers for each other, and that of a mother for her child. In its spiritualized form, love can draw its inspiration from either the one or the other. Spiritual love idealizing the love of lovers is often conceived as a consuming flame, and then it sometimes aspires to purification through torture and the violence of martyrdom.
But spiritual love that looks for guidance to the love of a mother for her child uplifts itself to the ideal of the pure fount of all safety, welfare, and spiritual health (and a mother best serves her child if she guards her own health). It is this latter kind which the Buddha takes as the basis for his teaching of universal love.

Where Greek distinguishes between sensual Eros and spiritual agape, English makes do with only the one word “love.” But Pāli, like Sanskrit, has many words covering many shades of meaning. The word chosen by the Buddha for this teaching is Mettā, from Mitta, a friend (or better “the true friend in need”).

Mettā in the Buddha’s teaching finds its place as the first of four kinds of contemplation designed to develop a sound pacific relationship to other living beings. The four are: Mettā, which will be rendered here by “loving kindness,” Karuṇā, which is “compassion” or “pity,” Muditā, which is “gladness at other’s success,” and Upākkhā, which is “on looking equanimity.” These four are called “divine abodes” (Brahma-vihāra), perhaps because whoever can maintain any one of them in being, for even a moment, has lived for that moment as do the Brahma-deva, the highest god.

In the Buddha’s teaching these four divine abiding, the “greatest of all worldly merit,” if practised alone, without insight into the true nature of existence, can lead to rebirth in the highest heavens. But all heavenly existence is without exception impermanent, and at the end of the heavenly life-span no matter how long it may last, the being dies and is reborn according to his or her past actions.
This is because some craving for existence (for being or even for non-being), and some sort of view of existence that is not in conformity with truth, still remain latent in that person, to burst out again when the result of the good actions is spent. And where one will be reborn after that is unpredictable though it is certain that one will be reborn.

The Buddha’s teaching of insight is described as the training in knowledge and seeing of how it is that anything, whatever it may be whether objective or subjective, comes to be; how it acquires existence only in dependence on conditions, and is impermanent because none of the conditions for its existence is permanent; and how existence, always complex and impermanent, is never safe from pain, and is in need of a self the will-o’-the-wisp idea, the rainbow mirage, which lures it on, and which it can never find; for the comforting illusion has constantly to be renewed. And that teaching also shows how there is a true way out from the fear of pain.

In its concise form this is expressed as the Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the origins of suffering’s (craving or need), the truth of suffering’s cessation (through abandonment of craving), and the truth of the way leading to suffering’s cessation.

These four truths are called noble truths and the invention of these truths and explanation of these truths was the teaching peculiar to Buddhas (Buddhānam sāmukkamsika-desanā) since the discovery of them is what distinguishes Buddha from other philosophers.

The way (the fourth truth) is also called the Middle Way because it avoids the two extremes of sensual indulgence and of self-mortification. Its
eight members are: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

The practice of loving kindness alone will give effect in some measure to all the members except the first: but it is only with right view (without self-deception) that Nibbāna can be reached. Right view gives insight into the real nature of existence of being and non-being, with all its mirages and deceptions, and it is only with its help that the practice of loving kindness is perfected, lifted out of the impermanence of even the highest heavens, and directed to the true cessation of suffering.

That true cessation comes with the elimination of deception by wrong views and with the exhaustion of the stream of craving in its two forms of lust and hate. This extinction of lust, hate, and delusion, is called Nibbāna.

The discourses that follow show (in that order) the wretchedness of all anger and hate (there is no righteous anger in the Buddha’s teaching); the rewards of loving kindness; the practice of loving kindness as a meditation and contemplation; its result in rebirth; the seeing of all things and all existence as impermanent, suffering, and non-self that is needed in order to have a vision in conformity with truth, without which the first stage of unshakable deliverance cannot be reached (for it is with this insight into how being comes to be that it is seen why the price of birth and life, even in heaven, is death); and lastly the attainment of Arahatship, by which all lust, hate, and delusion is overcome, lust for being and even for non-being cured, and rebirth ended for good.

But first, before coming to these discourses, some details from the meditation manual, the Visuddhimagga or “Path of Purification,” will be the
guide for leading a person towards the practice of higher a body (Brahma Vihāras). The four Brahma Vihāras are Mettā, Karuṇā, Muditā and Upekkhā.

Mettā (loving kindness) is defined in the Visuddhimagga as follows: “Loving kindness has the mode of friendliness for its characteristic. Its natural function is to promote friendliness. It is manifested as the disappearance of ill-will. Its footing is seeing with kindness. When it succeeds it eliminates ill will. When it fails it degenerates into selfish affectionate desire.”

The Visuddhimagga recommends going to some quiet place, where one can sit down in a comfortable position. Then, before starting the actual meditation, it is helpful to consider the dangers in hate and the benefits offered by forbearance: for it is a purpose of this meditation to displace hate by forbearance, and besides, one cannot avoid dangers one has not come to see or cultivate benefits one does not yet know.

Then there are certain types of persons towards whom loving kindness should not be developed in the first stages. The attempt, at the outset to regard a disliked person as dear to one is fatiguing, and likewise trying to regard a dearly loved friend with neutrality, and then when an enemy is recalled anger springs up.

Again, it should not be directed towards members of the opposite sex to begin with, for this may arouse lust. Right at the start, the meditation of loving kindness should be developed towards oneself repeatedly in this way: “May I be happy and free from suffering,” or “May I keep myself free from
hostility and trouble and live happily” (though this will never produce the full absorption of contemplation).

It is by cultivating the thought “May I be happy” with oneself as example, that one begins to become interested in the welfare and happiness of other living beings, and to feel in some sense their happiness as if it were one’s own: “Just as I want happiness and fear pain, just as I want to live and not to die, so do other beings.” So one should first become familiar with pervading oneself as an example with loving kindness. Only then should one choose someone who is liked and admired and much respected.

The meditation can then be developed towards that person, remembering endearing words or virtues of his, and thinking such thoughts about him as “May he be happy.” (In this way the full absorption of contemplation, in which the word-meditation is left behind, can be attained.)

When this has become familiar, one can begin to practise loving kindness towards a dearly beloved companion, and then towards a neutral person as very dear, or towards an enemy as neutral. It is when dealing with an enemy that anger can arise, and all means must be tried in order to get rid of it.

As soon as this has succeeded, one will be able to regard an enemy without resentment and with loving kindness in the same way as one does the admired person, the dearly loved friend, and the neutral person. Then with repeated practice, Jhāna absorption should be attained in all cases.

Loving kindness can now be effectively maintained in being towards all beings; or to certain groups of beings at a time, or in one direction at a time to all; or to certain groups in succession.
Loving kindness ought to be brought to the point where there are no longer any barriers set between persons, and for this the following example is given: Suppose a man is with a dear, a neutral, and a hostile person, himself being the fourth; then bandits come to him and say, “We need one of you for human sacrifice.” Now if that man thinks, “Let them take this one, or that one,” he has not yet broken down the barriers; and also if he thinks, “Let them take me but not these three,” he has not broken down the barriers either.

Why not? Because he seeks the harm of the one whom he wishes to be taken and the welfare of only the other three. It is only when he does not see a single one among the four to be chosen in preference to the other three, and directs his mind quite impartially towards himself and the other three, that he has broken down the barriers.

Loving kindness has its “enemy within” in lust, which easily gains entry in its wake, and it must be well guarded against this. The remedy for lust is the contemplation of foulness (in the body) as in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*¹⁸.

Its “enemy without” is its opposite, ill-will, which finds its opportunities in the intervals when loving kindness is not being actively practised¹⁹.

In many discourses the Buddha lays emphasis on the need to balance contemplative concentration with understanding. The one supplies the deficiencies of the other. Concentration alone lacks direction; understanding alone is dry and tiring.

---

¹⁹ Full details will be found in Chapter IX of the Visuddhimagga.
In the discourses that follow the simile of a mother’s love for her child is given. Now the incomparable value of a mother’s love, which sets it above all other kinds, lies in the fact that she understands her child’s welfare and her love is not blind. Not love alone, nor faith alone, can ever bring one all the way to the cessation of suffering, and that is why the Buddha, as the Supreme Physician, prescribes the development of five faculties in balanced harmony: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding.

So concentration of love in its highest form, the form that only the Buddha, and no one else, has given, seen as a means to the end, becomes absolutely purified in one who has gained personal experience of the “supreme safety from bondage” (*Anuttara yogakkhema*), which is *Nibbāna*, as the ultimate welfare of beings. For he knows from his own experience that their welfare is only assured permanently when suffering has been diagnosed, its origin abandoned, its cessation realized, and the way maintained in being. Then he has verified the Four Noble Truths for himself and can properly evaluate beings’ welfare.

“*Bhikkhus*, it is through not discovering, not penetrating to four truths that both you and I have been trudging and travelling through the round of rebirths for so long”.

For the benefit of all those who have not yet done this, the way has been discovered and pointed out by the Buddha and its practicability attested by the *Arahats*. The last discourse given in this collection, in fact, shows how this personal discovery and penetration to the Four Noble Truths can be achieved by using loving kindness as the vehicle.
Mettā is a Pāḷi word which has been translated into English as ‘Love’. When you use the word ‘love’ you have different ideas of the interpretation of this word and you may mean many other things, because it is a word that has been loosely used and in some cases misused or abused. Very interestingly, according to a journal reporting on 2007 U.S. study; “Love” is the most widely used word in the world today.

I think it is completely true because it is abstract, innate, the most influential one and common to all beings, not only human but animals as well. And thinking about it a little bit more even if one does not know English, he/she knows the word “Love” and usually says I love you. I have found many parents who do not know English and taught their children to say to someone I love you. I too knew the word “Love” before I knew English. And if you will try a little to notice the word “Love” in any area, like music, novel, history, or any other kind of thing, you will obviously see the word “Love” in some form, in all of these.

Therefore when you talk about love, people may have a different concept. So we Buddhists use the Pāḷi word ‘Mettā’ to mean Loving-kindness - not the ordinary, sensual, emotional, sentimental kind of love. As you know, the word ‘Love’ has been defined in many ways in the English language, according to the ideas in the minds of different people professing different religions. Therefore first of all, the definition of Mettā should be known according to Pāḷi Cannon and its commentaries.
Specific Characteristics of Mettā

Mettā as other mental concomitants has four kinds. The characteristics, its function, its manifestation and its proximate cause. A person who cultivates mettā it is always necessary to observe these four:

(i) The characteristic of mettā is to promote other beings' welfare and happiness. (*Hitākārapavatti-lakkhaṇā*)

(ii) Its function is to prefer welfare of others, rather than ill. (*Hitūpasamhara-rasa*)

(iii) Its manifestation is the removal of ill-will, hostility. (*Āghātavinaya-puccaṭṭhāna*)

(iv) And its proximate cause is the tendency to see the good side of things and beings and never the faults. (*Sattānaṁ manāpabhāvadassana-padaṭṭhāna*)

Mettā succeeds when it loves, and it loves, and it fails when it degenerates into worldly affection. We can consider from this analysis that only when one tends to see the good quality of people, and prefers the welfare of others, and accordingly is in offensive to remove any frustration or hurt and its actively promotes the well-being, then does mettā function as a solvent.

It is said that the ultimate purpose of mettā is to attain transcendental insight, and if that is not possible, it will at least affect a rebirth in the sublime state of Brahma world. Hence, the Buddha explains in the Metta Sutta that Holding no more to wrong beliefs (*Diṭṭhiṁca anupagamma*), with

---

virtue and vision of the ultimate (Siḷavā dassanena sampanno), and having overcome all sensual desire (Kāmesu vineyya gedhamī), never in a womb is one born again (Na hi jātugabhaseyya puna reti).\textsuperscript{21}

**Differences between the two terms of Mettā and Adosa**

Though some commentators have said that Adosa and Mettā are synonymous and the two terms are the same in meaning, the dissimilarity of mettā and Adosa is given by Mingun Tipiṭakadhara Sayādaw in the following passage. Mettā is a reality which exists in ultimate sense (Paramattha). But when ultimate realities are enumerated mettā is not shown as a separate item, for it is covered by the term Adosa Cetasika (mental concomitant of hatelessness) which has wide connotation. Mettā forms a part of that mental concomitant (Cetasika) of Adosa.\textsuperscript{22} According to Abhidhammatthasangaha, adosa cetasika is associated with 59 sobhanacitta, beautiful consciousness.\textsuperscript{23} Whenever these 59 citta arise, there arises Adosa Cetasika, too. Adosa can contemplate various objects, but Mettā can have only living-beings as its object. In performing different acts of Dāna, offering something or observing various kinds of Siḷa, morality there invariably arises Adosa. But each time Adosa arises in this way, it is not necessarily Mettā. Only when one contemplates living-beings with the thought May they be well and happy, wishing their prosperity, can Adosa Cetasika be called Mettā.

\textsuperscript{21} Sn, p.302, line.2
\textsuperscript{23} Sobhanesu pa sobhanasadharanā tāva ekunavīsatime cetasikā sabbesupi ekūnasatthi sobhancittesu samvijjanti. (CMA), p.96-7
Different shades of Meaning of Metta (Loving-kindness)

“Mettā” is translated as ‘loving-kindness’, It is compared with ‘adhesive’ or gum’ which is used when things are joined together or stuck together. They stick or stay together without breaking apart. In like manner, the Loka is prevented from breaking up as if it is held together by Mettā (loving-kindness)

When in fact Loka is held together by Mettā, it becomes compact. Though it is not one unit, it seems to be one. The essence of Mettā is Adosa (absence of anger or hatred) and when Loka is held together by Adosa, it become compact. If it is held together by Dosa (anger, hatred), It is disorderly. Mettā is, therefore, necessary to prevent the Loka from being disorderly. Compactness of Loka means peacefulness of Loka. Loka being disorderly means Loka in turmoil.

To bring about the reign of peace in Loka, beings should cultivate loving-kindness (Mettā) towards one another. The more Mettā is cultivated, the more the Loka will be peaceful. The more beings love one another, the more the Loka will be pleasant. The more the Loka is pleasant, the more benefits one will gain by being born as a human being, which according to Dullabha is a very rare and difficult thing to attain.

Three kinds of Mettā

In practice, there are three kinds of Mettā in the Loka. There are the Mettā of lovers on each other, the Mettā of the members of a family on one another and the Mettā of noble ones on the Loka.
Of these three kinds, when lovers are attached to each other by *Mettā*, the bond between them is stable. Though they are two by appearance, they are like one in essence. When *Mettā* is, however, lost between them and is replaced by *Dosa* (hatred, anger), the unity is broken, the essence is destroyed and the life of the lovers falls apart. This falling apart of the lovers might bring about the breaking up of the family.

When a family is held together by ties of *Mettā*, there is solidarity. Though by appearance, they are many; in essence, they are like one. When love goes away and *Dosa* comes into the family, there will be no more unity in the family. The essence will be gone. Then solidarity will break down. The collapse of solidarity in the family might often bring about the breaking up of the national life of a country. Therefore, *Mettā* among the members of a family can bring about peace in the national life.

**Pāramī Mettā**

The love of the noble ones on the *Loka* should be called *Pāramī mettā*. One who loves the *Loka* with *Pāramī Mettā* is said to be a human being living the life of a Brahma.

Rebirth as a human being in a country where those who love the *loka* with *Pāramī mettā* live is a very rare achievement (*Dullabha*), because the national life of such a country can naturally be peaceful. *Pāramī mettā* has the power to reorganise a country which has broken up into a unified state in essence.

Only those who can love the *Loka* with the *Mettā* of a Brahma can keep up family *Mettā* and lovers’ *Mettā* by their *Pāramī Mettā*. The guardian *Devas* of *Loka*, therefore, always long for and hope for those who love the
Loka with Pāramī Mettā. Human being and Devas also long and hope for such persons.

In truth, to love Loka with Pāramī Mettā is difficult, but it is not an impossible thing to do. It can be done. There have been such persons in the uncountable worlds that have past, and there will be such persons also in the future. We can have them at present also. Only the desire to become one is necessary. In fact, our births are not at all inferior. We are born in the human world which is a very rare achievement (Dullabha). It is the resultant of meritorious deeds in the past. It, therefore, truly has power. It only needs the ability to make good use of it.

**Mettā makes Loka happy and peaceful**

All persons have experienced Mettā of one kind or another in their lives and have enjoyed its benefits. If one really loves, one should have experienced the benefits arising out of one’s sacrifices made for the sake of the loved ones. The fact that Mettā can create the happiness and peace of the Loka, therefore, calls for no proof. It is truth. It is the truth in its own way with respect to Mettā between lovers, among the members of a family and for the Loka. All Mettā is truth in its respective way, but there are differences from case to case.

**Mettā between lovers**

Mettā between lovers is confined to the loved one. It is not directed at anyone else. It is, therefore, limited. Lovers do not care about others, whether they die or live. It embraces only the loved one. It gives protection and is ready to give its life only for the loved one. There are innumerable beings besides the loved one, but the Mettā is not directed at any of them. It
is directed only at the loved one. As the result, there arises a conflict between the loved one and the others.

When conflict arises, there can be no peace in that locality, for this reason, Mettā between lovers is called Taṇhā pema. It is based on craving (lust) which can be found even in the animal world. Therefore, Mettā of the Taṇhā pema kind cannot produce happiness and peace in the Loka.

Family Mettā

Family Mettā is confined to only the members of each family; it does not go beyond it. In reality, out of the bounds of one’s own family, there are innumerable families, but it does not concern them. As family, Mettā is thus limited, it has the nature of conflict. As long as it has the nature of conflict, there can never be peace. Therefore, family Mettā is called Gehassita pema which means love depending on family.

It is based on Lobha (greed) which is Akusala (demeritorious). Happiness and peace of the Loka cannot be brought about by Mettā based on Akusala.

Loka Mettā and Pāramī Mettā

Only Mettā for the Loka is limitless. It embraces all. That is the reason why it is called Pāramī Mettā. Only the noble ones can love the Loka with this kind of Mettā. Because they can love the Loka with such kind of Mettā, they become the noble ones. Limitless Mettā and nobility of nature have no cause and effect relationship with each other. They are related only in features, points of view and quality.
When *Pāramī mettā* is looked upon from the *Loka* point of view, its limitless nature is observed. “He is loved; I am loved; all are loved,” No one is left out, everybody is included. It is, therefore, called limitless or boundless. When looked at from the point of view of morality, the nature of nobility is seen. Therefore, limitlessness and nobility of nature are two viewpoints, features or qualities of *Pāramī mettā*. They are not two separate things like cause and effect.

*Pāramī mettā* can embrace both the lovers’ *Mettā* and the family *Mettā*. In fact, according to the nature of this world, everybody has *Mettā*. He has the lovers’ *Mettā*, the family *Mettā* and *Mettā* for the *Loka*, but his *Mettā* for the *Loka* is the weakest. It is just a seed (*Bīja*). But in fact, if there is seed, it can be nursed to grow into a tree. It is, therefore, said that it is possible for everybody to love the *Loka* with *Pāramī mettā*.

**The relation between these three kinds of Mettā with Pārami Mettā**

When the “I” is most involved in the *Metta*, it becomes the lovers’ *Mettā*. When it is least involved, it is the *Metta* of *loka*. In the family *Mettā*, the “I” occupies the middle position; it can either lean towards the growth or the diminishing of the “I”.

The family *Mettā* can, therefore, be shown as good or bad. If it is a danger to the *Loka*, it is bad. If it is a medicine (of benefit) to the *Loka*, it is good.

Of the three kinds of *Mettā*, that of the lovers’ is an extreme *Mettā*. As it involves only the well being of one’s lover, it is an extreme case of ‘*Lobha’*. As it excludes others, it becomes an extreme case of ‘*Dosa’* also, likewise, if one wishes only for the well being of one’s family, the family
Mettā becomes an extreme case of Lobha (Greed). If there is no consideration for other families, it becomes an extreme case of Dosa also. All kinds of extreme Mettā are dangerous to the Loka. To prevent them, therefore, from becoming dangerous to the Loka, extreme Mettās should be restrained by Loka mettā, which diminishes the “I” more and more. That is the reason why Loka mettā is called Pāramī mettā.

In-as- much as the “I” diminishes more and more, the lovers’ Mettā will become Pāramī mettā. Likewise the family Mettā will become Pāramī mettā. That is why; Pāramī mettā includes Lovers’ mettā and family Mettā. Actually, Mettā is divided into three kinds according to the growth and the decline of the ‘I’. As much as the ‘I’, declines, the lovers’ Mettā and family Mettā gain the status of Pāramī mettā.

However, as powerful support (Upanissaya paccaya), lovers’ Mettā is more powerful than family Mettā, which in its turn is more powerful than Loka mettā.

That is the reason why the Bodhisatta treated the ones he loved and his family as comrades in his various existences in his effort to raise the level of lovers’ and family Mettā to that Loka mettā and to fulfill the Pāramīs concerned.

One only needs is to love the Loka truly. If one truly loves the Loka, there will be no trouble to sacrifice for the Loka one loves. The ability to sacrifice is the nature of Dāna Pāramī. As one loves the Loka without expecting anything from it in return, one is content with the privilege to serve it. It will be no trouble at all. Doing a deed without expecting anything out of it has the nature of Nekkhamma Pāramī (Renunciation).
When this Pāramī is fulfilled, the other Pāramīs will also play their respective roles by themselves. Therefore, when one resolves to perform deeds for the good of the Loka, it will be necessary to have real love for the Loka so that one's resolution may not be broken. Only when one really loves, the resolution to work for the good of the loved one can be firm. When the resolution is firm, there will be no difficulty to fulfill other Pāramīs.

In might be thought that sacrificing without expecting any gain is foolishness. Indeed such thinking is extremely wrong.

Doing a deed as a sacrifice, employing to the utmost one’s physical, mental and economic strength without expecting anything whatever in return, is called the achievement of a benefit of very great magnitude with very keen intellect. The attainment of that a benefit means the gaining of the ability to kill Lobha (greed).

There is no greater benefit. The Buddha's fulfillment of Pāramīs for four asaṅkheyyas and a hundred thousand worlds was to enable himself to kill Lobha and to teach the Veneyyas (those to be converted) how to kill Lobha. He had no other aim.

That is the reason why it is said that the ability to kill Lobha is the attainment of a very great benefit. The ability to have such a view in all one's deeds is not possessed by those with ordinary knowledge (Samañña ñāṇa). Only those who have achieved (Arahattamagga Sabbaññutāṇāṇa) can have such a view.

If it is said that this view can be attained by other Ēḷāṇa (knowledge), and it could only be just a conjecture. It cannot be a really direct view. Even
if it were a conjectural view, the knowledge which enables one to make such a conjecture can only be a very keen on and nothing else. That is why it is said that it is not foolishness and madness but is real knowledge.

In truth, the ability to kill Lobha is, according to the Dhamma, the attainment of Nibbāna, which is Santi sukha (tranquility and peace). There is no happiness as tranquil and peaceful as Santi sukha. For this reason, it is clear that those who attain Santi sukha cannot in any way be inferior persons.

According to the Buddhist teaching, they are all Ariyas (winners of Maggas and Phalas) who deserve the homage of men and Devas. In reality, even though one may not be able to totally get rid of Lobha, but one can strive to diminish Lobha gradually. That person will also deserve the homage of men and Devas.

The Bodhisattas were striving to get rid of Lobha step by step, not just their khandha (bodies), but even the garments they put on and they were enshrined in the Dussa pagoda of the Akaniṭṭha Brahma abode and paid homage. The hair of the Bodhisatta (or Buddha Gotama) was enshrined by Sakka, king of devas, in the Cūḷāmani pagoda in the Tāvatiṁsa deva realm. If the inanimate objects of the Bodhisattas were paid so much special homage by objects and Brahmas, it might be guessed how much the animate Khandhas (of the Bodhisattas and Buddhas) deserve special homage of men, Devas and Brahmas.

In truth, these benefits are those that are attained only when they are not longed for. In fact, no one can deny the truth of the saying ‘The more one wants, the less one gets. The less one wants, the more one gets’. If one is
not attached to what one gets, one gets the more. The more one gets the less one is attached to what one gets.

**The Wretchedness of Anger**

*Bhikkhus*, seven things gratifying and helpful to an enemy befall one who is angry, whether a woman or a man. What are the seven? 24

(1) Here, *Bhikkhus*, an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him be ugly.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s beauty. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, be he ever so well bathed and well anointed, with hair and beard trimmed, and clothed in white, yet he is ugly through his being a prey to anger. This is the first thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

(2) Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him lie in pain.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s lying in comfort. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, for all he may lie on a couch spread with rugs, blankets, and counterpanes with a deerskin cover, a canopy, and red cushions for the head and feet, yet he lies only in pain through his being a prey to anger. This is the second thing gratifying to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

(3) Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him have no prosperity.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s prosperity. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he mistakes bad for good and he mistakes good for bad, and each being taken wrongly in the other’s sense, these things for long conduce to his harm and suffering,

---

through his being a prey to anger. This is the third thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

(4) Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him not be rich.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s having riches. Now when a person is angry, a prey to anger, should he have riches gained by Endeavour, built up by the strength of his arm, earned by sweat, lawful and lawfully acquired, yet the king’s treasury gathers (in fines) through his being a prey to anger. This is the fourth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

(5) Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him not be famous.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s having fame. Now when a person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, what fame he may have acquired by diligence he loses through his being a prey to anger. This is the fifth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

(6) Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him have no friends.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s having friends. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, the friends he may have, his companions, relatives, and kin, will keep away from him through his being a prey to anger. This is the sixth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

(7) Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: “Let him, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a state of deprivation, in a
bad destination, in perdition, even in hell.” Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s going to a good destination. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he misconducts himself in body, speech, and mind, and by his misconduct in body, speech, and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell, through his being a prey to anger. This is the seventh thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

When anger does possess a man,
He looks ugly; he lies in pain;
What benefit he may come by
He misconstrues as a mischance;

He loses property (through fines)
Because he has been working harm
Through acts of body and speech
By angry passion overwhelmed;

The wrath and rage that madden him
Gain him a name of ill-repute;
His fellows, relatives and kin,
Will seek to shun him from afar;

And anger fathers misery:
This fury does so cloud the mind
Of man that he cannot discern
This fearful inner danger.

An angry man no meaning knows,
No angry man sees the Dhamma,
So wrapped in darkness, as if blind,
Is he whom anger dogs.

Someone a man in anger hurts;
But, when his anger is later spent
With difficulty or with ease,
He suffers as if seared by fire.

His look betrays the sulkiness
Of some dim smoky smoldering glow.
Whence may flare up an anger-blaze
That sets the world of men aflame.

He has no shame or conscience curb,
No kind words come forth from him,
There is no island refuge for
The man whom anger dogs.

Such acts as will ensure remorse,
Such as are far from the true Dhamma:
It is of these that I would tell,
So harken to my words.
Anger makes man a patricide,
Anger makes him a matricide,
Anger can make him slay the saint
As he would kill the common man.

Nursed and reared by a mother’s care,
He comes to look upon the world,
Yet the common man in anger kills
The being who gave him life.

No being but seeks his own self’s good,
None dearer to him than himself,
Yet men in anger kill themselves,
Distraught for reasons manifold:

For crazed they stab themselves with daggers,
In desperation swallow poison,
Perish hanged by ropes, or fling
Themselves over a precipice.

Yet how their life-destroying acts
Bring death unto themselves as well,
That they cannot discern, and that
Is the ruin anger breeds.

This secret place, with anger’s aid,
Is where mortality sets the snare.
To blot it out with discipline,
With vision, strength, and understanding,
To blot each fault out one by one,
The wise man should apply himself,
Training likewise in the true Dhamma;
”Let smoldering be far from us.”

Then rid of wrath and free from anger,
And rid of lust and free from envy,
Tamed, and with anger left behind,
Taintless, they reach Nibbāna.

**How to Get Rid of Anger**

Enmity arises due to clash of interests, feelings of supremacy and rivalry. Finding an opportunity, a defeated person attacks his adversary and thus enmity is born, therefore, the Buddha says: to get rid of enmity, one should not have the feeling of victory and defeat. To establish pleasure and peace in life one should keep in mind the following Buddha vacana: ‘He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me’: the hatred of those who harbour such thoughts is not appeased (*Acoccimāṃ avadhimāṃ, ajinimāṃ ahāsime. Te catam upanayahnti, veram tesūpasammanti*)²⁵, ‘Hatred is indeed never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law’ (*Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanāṃ. Averena ca sammanti esadhammo, sanantarō*)²⁶.

---
²⁵ Dhammapada, verse no, 3.
²⁶ Dhammapada, verse no, 5.
Bhikkhus, there are these five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed by a Bhikkhu when it arises in him. What are the five? Loving kindness can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed: this is how annoyance with him can be removed. Compassion can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed.

Equanimity can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. The forgetting and ignoring of a person with whom you are annoyed can be practised; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed.

Ownership of deeds in a person with whom you are annoyed can be concentrated upon thus: “This good person is owner of his deeds, heir to his deeds, his deeds are the womb from which he is born, his deeds are his kin for whom he is responsible, his deeds are his refuge, he is heir to his deeds, be they good or bad.” This too is how annoyance with him can be removed. These are the five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed in a Bhikkhu when it arises in him.

**Loving kindness as a Contemplation**

What should be done by one skillful in good
So as to gain the State of Peace is this:
Let him be able, and upright and straight,
Easy to speak to, gentle, and not proud.

---

Contented too, supported easily,  
With few tasks, and living very lightly;  
His faculties serene, prudent, and modest,  
Unswayed by the emotions of the clans;  
And let him never do the slightest thing  
That other wise men might hold blame able.  

(And let him think :) “In safety and in bliss  
May creatures all be of a blissful heart!  
Whatever breathing beings there may be,  
No matter whether they are frail or firm,  

With none excepted, be they long or big  
Or middle-sized, or be they short or small  
Or thick, as well as those seen or unseen,  
Or whether they are dwelling far or near,  
Existing or yet seeking to exist.  

May creatures all be of a blissful heart!  
Let no one work another one’s undoing  
Or even slight him at all anywhere:  
And never let them wish each other ill  
Through provocation or resentful thought”

And just as might a mother with her life  
Protect the son that was her only child,  
So let him then for every living thing
Maintain unbounded consciousness in being;

And let him too with love for all the world
Maintain unbounded consciousness in being
Above, below, and all round in between,
Untroubled, with no enemy or foe

And while he stands or walks or while he sits
Or while he lies down, free from drowsiness,
Let him resolve upon this mindfulness:
This is divine abiding here, they say.

But when he has no trafficking with views,
Is virtuous, and has perfected seeing,
And purges greed for sensual desires,
He surely comes no more to any womb.28

28 Sn, Myanmar, p.300. PTS, 25.