

PREFACE

When a practitioner- meditator diligently practices Sīla (practice of morality), Samadhi (practice of meditation) and Prajñā (attainment of experiential wisdom) one can reach a stage of perfection where they are free from craving (Lobha), attachment (rāga) and hatred (Dosa). Reaching this stage of perfection is also called as Brahmavihāra or Abode of sublime states of abode of peace and tranquility. This is my topic of discussion in my doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Calcutta, India titled "CONCEPT OF BRAHMAVIHĀRAS IN PĀLI LITERATURE: AN ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY ".

Brahmavihāras are subjects of meditation in Buddhism and have been mentioned and explained in the list of forty contemplations or Kammaṭṭhānas. The Brahmavihāra is also known as the four immeasurable and the meditator is instructed to radiate out to all beings in all directions the mental states of:

Loving-kindness (Pāli: Mettā, Sanskrit: Maitrī) towards all: the hope that a person will be well; "the wish that all sentient beings, without any exception, be happy".

Compassion (Pāli: Karuṇā, Sanskrit; Karuṇā): The hope that a person's sufferings will diminish; "the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering"

Sympathetic joy (Pāli: Muditā, Sanskrit; Muditā): joy in the accomplishments of a person-oneself or another; sympathetic joy; "the wholesome attitude of rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of all sentient beings"

Equanimity (Pāli: Upekkhā, Sanskrit;Upekṣa): learning to accept loss and gain, praise and blame, and success and failure, all with detachment, equally, for oneself and for others. Equanimity is "not to distinguish between friend, enemy or stranger, but regard every sentient being as

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equal. It is a clear-minded tranquil state of mind-not being overpowered by delusions, mental dullness or agitation.

The work has been studied in detail with Brahmavihāra being examined with its literal meanings and its implications and their utility. The practice of Brahmavihāra can transform a person to make oneself divine and elevate the human life and if the majority of the population cultivate the Brahmavihāra irrespective of cast, creed, race, colour or sex then the entire society would benefit and the human race could become one big peace loving family or one ideal world.

It gives me immense happiness that being a Buddhist monk I have been able to delve on this topic which I am also trying to inculcate in my everyday life as the English maxim goes practice makes perfect and the mind which is in continuous state of flux needs to be tamed and trained never to be given an opportunity to go back in negativity. This study I believe will have reached its objectivity when we as human beings practice the way to reach the higher pinnacles of purification or in other worlds Brahmavihāra is an art of living a balanced life.

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