

CHAPTER - II

Conception of Mettā as the Brahmavihāra

1. **Mettā (Skt. Maitrī)** means "friendliness", " loving-kindness". "benevolence" and "goodwill". "Love" should not be its actual English rendering. Love has got a limited scope for the expression of "Mettā", while "friendliness" has got a wider scope. Friendliness seems to indicate the content of the term Mettā with a sufficient degree of accuracy. It is characterized by the desire to do good to others and to provide them with what is useful. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all living beings without exception. it is also explained as the friendly disposition, for a genuine friend who sincerely wishes for the welfare of his friend.

Buddha explains what should be the real nature of Mettā. He says in "Mettā Sutta" as follows :²²

²² Mettā Sutta, Suttanipāta,

**"Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttaṃ āyusā ekaputtaṃ anurakkhe,
Evaṃ pi sabbabhūtesu mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ."**

(Eng. Trans) : "Just as a mother protects her only child even at the risk of her life, even so one should cultivate boundless loving-kindness towards all living beings." Here what has been stressed is not the passionate love of the mother towards her only child, but her sincere wish for the genuine welfare of her child.

Here the Buddha speaks of boundless Mettā which is limitless in scope and range. It has no barrier. It does not make any discrimination. Mettā enables one to regard the whole world as one's motherland and all as fellow-beings.

Just as the sun sheds its rays on all without any distinction, even so sublime Mettā bestows its sweet blessings equally on the pleasant and the unpleasant, on the rich and the poor, on the high and the low, on the vicious and the virtuous, on man and woman, and on human and animal. Such was the boundless Mettā of the Buddha who worked for the welfare and happiness of those who loved him, as well as of those who hated him and even attempted to harm and kill him. Buddha exercised Mettā

equally towards his son Rāhula, his adversary Devadatta, his attendant Ānanda, his admirers and his opponents.

2. How to cultivate Mettā ?

Buddha cultivated Mettā and worked for the welfare and happiness of all his near and dear ones, his admirers and his opponents, beings and non-beings without any exception and discrimination. This gave him a grand success in propagating the Dhamma by winning the minds of his well-wishers as well as his adversaries. But how it was possible for him? As a concrete evidence Buddha recited the Mettā Sutta (otherwise known as Karaṇīya Mettā-Sutta)²³ which is as follows :

a. "Karaṇīyaṃ atthakusalena yantam santam padaṃ abhisamecca"

- He who is skilled in his good and who wishes to attain that state of calm(santam padaṃ) should act (thus) :

b. "Sakko uju ca suju ca suvaco c'ssa mudu anatimāni."

- He should be efficient, upright, perfectly upright, obedient, gentle and humble.

²³ Khuddakapāṭha and Suttanipāṭa, Khuddakanikāya.

c. **"Santussako ca subharo ca appakicco ca sallahukavutti,
santindriyo ca nipako ca appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho."**

contented, easily supportable, with few duties, of light livelihood, controlled in senses, discreet, not impudent, not be greedily attached to families.

d. **"Na ca khuddaṃ samācare kiñci yena viññū pare upavadeyyuṃ,
sukhino va khemino hontu sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā."**

- He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him.

May all beings be happy and secure; May their hearts be wholesome .

e. **"Ye keci pāṇabhūtatti tasā va thāvarā va anavasesā, dīghā
va ye va mahantā majjhimarassakānukathūlā. diṭṭhā vā ye va
adiṭṭhā ye va dūre vasanti avidūre, bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā."**

- Whatsoever living beings there be : feeble or strong, long stout, or medium, short, small or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are to be born--may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded.

f. **"Na paro param̃ nikubbetha, nātimaññetha katthaci naṃ kiñci,vyāroṣaṇā paṭighasanña naññamaññassa dukkham iccheyya."**

- Let none deceive another, nor despise any person what so ever in any place. In anger or ill - will let him not wish any harm to another.

g. **"Mātā yathā niyam puttam̃ āyusā ekaputtam̃ anurakhe, Evaṃ pi sabbabhūtesu mānasam̃ bhāvaye aparimāṇam̃."**

- Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

h. **"Mettam̃ ca sabbalokasmiṃ mānasam̃ bhāvaye aparimāṇam̃, Uddham adho ca tiriyaṃ ca asambādhamaṃ averam̃ asapattam̃."**

- Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world above, below and across - without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.

i. **"Tiṭṭham̃ caram̃ nisinna vā sayāno vā yāvata'ssa vigatamiddho, etam̃ satim̃ adhiṭṭheyya Brahmam̃ etam̃ vihāram̃ idham̃ ahu."**

- Whether he stands, walks, sits, or lies down, as long as he is awake, he should develop this mindfulness. This, they say, is the highest conduct here.

j. **"Diṭṭhim ca anupagamma sīlavā dassanena sampanno, kāmesu vineyya gedhaṃ na hi jātu gabbhaseyyaṃ punareti" ti.**

- Not falling into error, virtuosos, and endowed with insight, he discards attachment to sense-desires. Of a truth, he does not come again for conception in a womb.

The Mettā Sutta as depicted above gives the best example of the blessings of Mettā. There is a context behind the Buddhist preaching the Mettā Sutta and its immediate effect the context runs as follows :

Once the Buddha was staying at Sāvatti. As the Rainy Season Retreat (Vassāvāsa) was drawing near, several Bhikkhus received instructions from the Buddha about meditation and went in search of a suitable place. In the course of the wanderings they came to a secluded spot with scenic beauty, and decided to stay there and meditate to gain their deliverance.

For this purpose they selected some tree-roots and open spaces. But the Devas who were dwelling on tree tops resented

their unwelcome presence and wanted to drive them away. At night they disturbed the Bhikkhus in their meditation and succeeded in their attempt.

The Bhikkhus, finding it difficult to concentrate their minds amidst such uncongenial surroundings, returned to the Buddha and informed him of their nocturnal adventures.

Thereupon the Buddha taught them this Mettā Sutta and advised them to go to the very spot and act accordingly. The Bhikkhus went back to the spot and did according to the advice of the Buddha.

The Devas were now pleased as they were pervading the whole atmosphere with their radiant thoughts of Mettā and instead of obstructing their spiritual progress, they gave them every possible help and cooperation.

Within the Vassāvāsa period itself all the Bhikkhus gained super-mudane Paths and Fruitions (ariya-magga-phalas, viz. Sotāpatti, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi and Arahatta) according to their merit.

Here the Mettā Sutta serves both as a mark of protection and as a subject of meditation. In the first part of the Sutta are found virtues that should be practiced by anyone who desires

one's welfare, and in the latter part, the method of practicing Mettā or goodwill is explained in detail.

3. The Mettā sutta explicit enough in giving a vivid description of unobstructed cultivation of goodwill (Mettā) for all without any exception and discrimination :

For example :

Evidence No.1 Verse No. 3:

(May all beings be happy and secure. May their hearts be wholesome)

Evidence No.2 Verse No.4:

(Whatever living beings there be feeble or strong, long, stout and medium , short, small or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are to be born --- may all beings without exception be happy-minded.)

Evidence No. 3 Verse No.5:

(Let none deceive another not despise any person whatsoever in any place. In anger or ill-will let him not wish any harm to another).

Evidence No.4 Verse No.6:

(Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.).

Evidence No.5 Verse No.7:

(Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world -- above, below and across--hout any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity).

Evidence No.6 Verse No.8

(Whether he stands, walks, sits, or lies down, as long as he is awake, he should develop this mindfulness (sati). This, they say, is the highest conduct here (Brahmavihāra).

4. Condition given in the Mettā Sutta for developing Mettā :

The Mettā Sutta gives also the conditions for developing Mettā, for each and every one having no virtues cannot develop Mettā. Conditions and virtues have been given by the Buddha in the opening verses of the Mettā Sutta. These are as follows :²⁴

²⁴ The introductory verses of Mettā Sutta.

1. Sakko (capable) :

Capability involves human potentiality and resources. One must have confidence to carry it out, e.g. the cultivation and the application of Mettā : An immoral man cannot urge another practice morality or Mettā effectively.

2. Uju (frank) :

Frankness or straight forwardness is a sign of sincerity. One has to be true to oneself as well as to another's and unless one can be true to oneself, one cannot be so to others. One has to establish a good heart-to-heart communication to have Mettā so that one can grow unhindered.

3. Suju ca (extremely honest) :

Honesty and sincerity signify the dependability and deep trust that one can give. To one with this quality, people would readily open their hearts and go to them in times of trouble.

4. Suvaco (meek, obedient) :

Meekness means one who is obedient, and not stubborn. A person who is stubborn does not listen to others, even if they wish him well. How then can his Mettā be developed effectively? Definitely, people would like to work or live with a meek and obedient person.

5. Mudu (gentle) :

Gentleness in our thoughts, speech and action can work wonders, besides avoiding a lot of unnecessary conflicts. It pleases and soothes like patting a child to sleep. Pride is like an open wound. To cure it we have to be gentle. Learning to be gentle is worthwhile.

6. Anatimānī (not being proud):

Mettā has a lot to do with seeing others as being as important as oneself. Pride on the other hand is self- centre, and so a proud person cannot properly see other's good points or understand their needs well. When we learn that "there is so much good in the worst of us and so much fault even in the best of us", we can see each other better. In our daily life it is even more obvious when trying to apply Mettā. People's pride is hurt when they are put down.

7. Santussako (being contented) :

Contentment means being satisfied with what is available or suitable. A Discontented person has anger and greed. It is not easy to work or live with a greedy person. You cannot expect Mettā from a greedy and angry person. In monks, contentment

helps in their practice as well as giving a good impression to people.

8. Subharo ca (Being easy to support) :

Everyone has to depend on another in some way. If we demand more for our support, then we become a nuisance and a pain in the neck for others. So what can be done without so as not to trouble others, then that we shall do without. Taking chases people away, giving brings people in. Better to return more than what we have borrowed. Gratefulness begets appreciation.

9. Appakicco (having a few duties) :

To develop any form of meditation it is best that we spend all our time and effort in it. In that way we can deep concentration and fast. This also goes for Mettā even in daily life. If we are to develop greater and deeper Mettā for others, such as our family and friends, we will have to spend a greater amount of time with them. As the saying goes : "they can have the many, but not the Mettā" Time, therefore, is the important factor. Wholehearted involvement in meditative concentration is no doubt essential, but that is not applicable in the case of cultivating Mettā for many people at time.

10. Sallahukavutti (being light and frugal in living) :

This refers to monks who are light and frugal in their living. Light refers to having few worries and attachments. Wherever one may be or go, one is flexible and versatile enough to fit oneself into any practice.

11. Santindriyo (Being serene in faculties) :

To be serene in faculties (sense-organs) means not to get excited with pleasant objects nor disturbed in unpleasant objects. Even with neutral objects one should be mindful and not deluded. The exercise of restraint keeps the mind calm and controlled. It keeps the mind free from defilements. This contributes greatly to the deepening concentration of the mind. It will really strengthen and deepen the Mettā very much.

12. Nipako (prudent, wise) :

Prudence refers to the knowledge as to what is suitable and advantageous, especially in the spiritual sense. With reference to Mettā-bhavanā it will have specific implications as to what is the best internal and external condition to have so that Mettā can be developed most. In our daily life we find that this is all the more important. Mettā without wisdom can be

dangerous. If there is no wisdom we may do more harm than good to ourselves and to others.

13. Appagabbho (not proud, modest) :

Deeper states of consciousness are refined states rather modest states of mind. To develop Mettā we have to refine our thoughts, speech and bodily actions. practicing a lot of mindfulness and wisdom.

Such refinement and modest behavior will definitely avoid a lot of trouble and misunderstanding when dealing with people in our daily lives.

14. Kulesu ananugiddho (not favouring family attachments) :

Family attachment or greed is the failure of Mettā. It fails because its enemy i.e. attachment has won. Then the magic is gone and only some right mare waits.

15. Na ca khuddam samācare kiñci yena viññu pare upavadeyyuṃ

(Should not do even the slightest thing which otherwise men might blame) :

Wise men blame all unwholesome actions, and any of these counteracts the pure mind of Mettā. Even the insignificant evil (s) should not be underestimated, and are best avoided.

HOW TO PRACTISE AND CULTIVATE METTĀ :

METTĀ- BHĀVANĀ :²⁵

Mettā should be practiced first towards oneself. In doing so a person should charge his mind and body with positive thoughts of peace and happiness. He should think how he could be peaceful and happy, free from suffering and free from trouble; he could have the full accomplishment with complete happiness :

("**Ahaṃ avero homi, avyāpajjho homi, anīgho homi, sukhi attānaṃ pariharāmi**").

When he is full of peace and is free from suffering and also free from bodily and mental pains, it is easy for him to radiate Mettā towards others. He feels that what he does not possess he cannot give it to others. So, before he tries to make

²⁵ Mettākathā, Paṭisambhidāmagga, V.R.I. edition, pp.304 - 314

others happy he should first be happy himself. He should know the ways and means and means to make himself happy, so he must be knowing to make others happy.

Now he radiates his Mettā towards all his near and dear ones, say for example, his teacher and preceptor, his parents, his friends and well-wishers, neutrals and the persons inimical to him. Just as he wishes for the peace and happiness of himself, he wishes for the peace and happiness for them all (He radiates Mettā for them saying : "**Ahaṃ viya mayhaṃ ācariyupajjhāyā, mātāpitaro, hitasattā, majjhattika-sattā, verisattāaverā hontu, avyāpajjhā hontu, anīghā hontu sukhī attānaṃ Pariharantu**"). He prays for them further : let them be free from suffering; let them not be deprived of their own possessions. They are all bound by their individual kamma ("**dukkhā muñcantu, yathāladdhasampattito mā vigacchantu, kammassakā**").

He then radiates his Mettā towards rich and influential people and goods (simatthakadevatā) of this monastery (or residence), this neighbourhood, this city, this province, , this Jambudipa, and this world-circle. Let all beings be peaceful and happy, free from suffering, and free from trouble. Let them

have the full accomplishment with complete happiness; let them be free from bodily and mental pains; let them not be deprived of their own possessions. They are all bound by their individual kamma.

(I masmim vihāre, imasmim̃ gocaragāme, imasmim̃ nagare, imasmim̃ jambudīpe, imasmim̃ cakkavāle, issarajanā, simatṭhakādevatā -- sabbe sattā averā hontu, avyāpajjhā hontu, anighā hontu, sukhi attānam pariharantu dukkhā muñcantu, yathāladdhasampattito ma vigacchantu, kammassakā').

He radiates further his Mettā to the beings of the ten directions (east, south, west, north, intermediate directions like north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west, nadir and zenith). Here 'beings' means 'all beings', all beings who have life and breath, all conspicuous living beings, all individuals, beings who have the material khandhas, all females, all males, all Ariyas (Noble Ones), all Anariyas (Puthujjanas), i.e. world lings, all Devas(celestial beings), all human beings, all non-human beings, all apāya-beings - - all be peaceful and happy, be free from suffering and be free from trouble. Let them have the full accomplishment with complete happiness; let them be free from bodily and mental pains; let them not be reproved of

their own possessions. They are all bound by their individual kamma (**Puratthimāya disāya, dakkhināya disāya, pacchimāya disāya, uttarāya disāya, puratthimāya anudisāya, dakkhināya anudisāya, pacchimāya anudisāya, uttarāya anudisāya, heṭṭhimāya disāya, uparimāya disāya, sabbe sattā, sabbe pāṇā, sabbe bhūtā, sabbe puggalā, sabbe attabhāva-pariyāpannā, sabbe ariyā, sabbe anariyā, sabbe devā, sabbe manussā, sabbe amanussā, sabbe vinipātikā, averā hontu, avyāpajjhā hontu, anīghā hontu, sukhī attānaṃ pariharantu, dukkhā muñcantu, yathāladdha-sampattito mā vigacchantu, kammassakā**).

At last the meditator cultivating Mettā will say praying :

"Let the powerful Devas residing in the east, in the south, in the west and in the north protect my health and happiness. May the four powerful guardian kings, namely Dhatarattha of the East, Virulhaka of the South, Virupakkha of the West and Kuvera of the North protect my health and happiness". From the above "Mettā-bhāvanā" it is clear that the practitioner of Mettā, at the very outset, desires for his own well-being with positive thoughts of peace and happiness. Then he radiates his Mettā gradually towards all his near and dear ones, then towards

neutrals and enemies. Then he extends his Mettā towards all beings of the world living in ten directions of the universe, viz. human beings, Devas and the beings of the four Lower Worlds (i.e. the animal world, ghost world, demon world and hell). Thus he identifies himself with all, making no distinction whatever. He merges himself in the whole universe and is one with all.

At the end of his Mettā-bhāvanā, the practitioner seeks his own safety and security from the Devas of the ten directions and the four guardian kings. This is undoubtedly peculiar.

Why does the practitioner of Mettā seeks his own protection from the Devas?

The probable answer may be as follows : Shielded by Mettā, the practitioner cuts off all hostile vibrations and negative thoughts. He returns good for evil and love for anger. He becomes ever to leant and tries his best not to give occasion for generating anger to any. But it is not possible for the practitioner to practice Mettā day-and-night twenty-four hours. In his daily life there are responsibilities and personal works to discharge. In those moments he might obviously be not shielded by Mettā. As a result hostile vibrations and negative thoughts may ruin his mental equilibrium. So, he seeks

protection from the Devas so that under any circumstances he might not lose his positive thoughts of peace and happiness for himself and also for others.

Blessings of Mettā : Mettānisamsa :²⁶

There are eleven blessings of Mettā. They are as follows :
(N. B. see also Introduction I (d), p. 20) :

1. Sukhaṃ supati :

(sleeps well) : One who practices Mettā sleeps happily. He goes to sleep with a light heart free from hatred. Naturally he falls asleep at once.

2. Sukhaṃ paṭivujjhati :

(Wakes up with a smiling face) : As he goes to sleep with a loving heart, he awakes with an equally loving heart.

3. Na pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati :

(He does not dream a bad dream) : Even in sleep the benevolent and compassionate persons are not perturbed by bad dreams. As they are full of love during their waking hours, they

²⁶ Anguttara V, 342; Patisambhidamagga, V.R.I. Edition, p.304;
Visuddhimagga, 258ff; Milindapanha, 198

are peaceful in their sleeping hours too. Either they fall into deep sleep or have pleasant dreams.

4. **Manussānaṃ piyo hoti :**

(He becomes dear to human beings) : He becomes dear to human beings. As he loves others, so do others love him. When a person looks at a mirror with a smiling face, a similar face will greet him. If on the contrary, he looks with a wry face, he will see a similar reflection. The outside world reacts on one in the same way that one acts towards the world.

5. **Amanussānaṃ piyo hoti :**

(He becomes dear to non-human beings too) : He who practises Mettā is dear to non-human beings as well. Animals and wild beasts are also attracted to him. It is a known fact that radiating their Mettā, ascetics live in wild forests amidst ferocious beasts without being harmed by them.

6. **Devatā rakkhanti :**

(Devas i.e. invisible deities protect him) : The invisible deities protect him in his danger because of the power of his Mettā.

7. **Nassa aggi va visam vā satthaṃ vā kamati :**

(Neither fire, nor poison nor weapon can do any harm to him) : Owing to his power of Mettā he becomes immune from fire, poison and weapon, unless he is subject to some inexorable kamma. As Mettā is a constructive healthy forces it has the power to counteract hostile influences. Just as hateful thoughts can produce toxic effect in the system, even so living thoughts can produce healthy physical effects.

8. **Tuvaṭṭam cittam samādhīyati :**

(leads to quick mental concentration) : Mettā leads to quick mental concentration. As the mind is not perturbed by hostile vibrations, one-pointedness of the mind can be gained with ease. With mind at peace he will live in a heaven of his own creation. Even those who come in contact with him will also experience that bliss.

9. **Mukhavaṇṇo vipasīdati :**

(Beautifies one's facial expression): The face is the index of the mind. When one gets angry, the heart pumps blood twice or three times faster than the normal rate. Heated blood rushes up to the face, which then turns red or black . Loving thoughts,

on the contrary, gladden the heart and clarify the blood. The face then presents a loveable appearance.

It is stated that when the Buddha after enlightenment reflected on the causal relations, his heart was so pacified and his blood so clarified that rays of different hue (such as blue, yellow, red, white, orange, and a mixture of these) emanated from his body.

10. Asammulho kālaṃ karoti :

(He dies peacefully without being confused) : A person imbued with Mettā dies peacefully as he harbors no thoughts of hatred towards any throughout his life. Even after death his serene face reflects his peaceful death.

11. Uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto Brahmaloḷūpago hoti :

If he does not gain higher jeans (ecstasies), after death he will be born at least in a Brahma World. Since a person with Mettā dies peacefully and happily, he will subsequently be born in a blissful state. If he gained the Jhānas, he will be born at least in Brahma World.

POWER OF METTĀ :

Apart from the attendant blessings of Mettā, Mettā possesses magnetic power too. It can produce a good influence on others even at a distance and can attract others to oneself. There are so many instances of inevitable magnetic power of Mettā. They are as follow :

1. Story of Sāmāvatī :

Sāmāvatī is reckoned among the most eminent of the lay-women who were followers of the Buddha, and was declared by him foremost among those who practiced Metta throughout.²⁷

Through the cultivation of Mettā and listening to the sermons of the Buddha she gained Iddhi (Supernatural power). Her Iddhi helped her in warding off the arrow shot at her by Udena, the king.²⁸

Sāmāvatī happened to be the chief consort of King Udena. She was a devoted disciple of the Buddha. But Māgandiyā, the second consort, was dead against Buddha and she was willing to

²⁷ "aggam mettvihārinam" - Aṅguttara, I, 26

²⁸ Buddhavaṃsa - aṭṭhakathā, p. 24; Aṅguttara - aṭṭhakathā, II, 791

kill Sāmāvatī and become the chief queen of the king. First time Māgandiyā's plot failed, but second time she succeeded, and Sāmāvatī and her companions were burned to death in their own house. Sāmāvatī, the most skillful practitioner of Mettā, eventually died in a fire as a result of previous harmful actions she had performed.²⁹ In some previous birth she burned down one Pacceka Buddha along with a tangle of grass. The Pacceka Buddha was in Samādhi and nothing could therefore harm him, but it was this act which brought retribution to Sāmāvatī.

2. **Story of Roja :**

Once when the Buddha and Ānandā visited Kusinārā, many distinguished noble came to welcome Buddha, amongst whom was a noble man named Roja, who was a friend of Venerable Ānandā. Seeing Roja, Venerable Ānandā said : " It is very kind of you, Roja, to have come to welcome the Buddha."

Roja replied :

"No, Venerable sir, it is not out of any reverence towards the Buddha that I have come to greet him. . We agreed amongst ourselves that whoever would not go to greet the Buddha would

²⁹ Dhammapada - aṭṭhakathā, I, 187 -91; 205 - 25; Aṅguttara - aṭṭhakathā, I, 232ff.

be fined 500 gold coins. It is through fear of the fine that I have come here to welcome the Buddha."

Ānandā was bitterly disappointed and asked the Buddha to discover some means by which Roja could be changed. The Buddha instantly radiated Mettā towards Roja and retired to his chamber.

Roja's body was saturated with the Mettā of the Buddha. He was electrified so to say, with the magnetic power of the Buddha's irresistible Mettā. Just as a calf would run after its mother, Roja ran from cell to cell in the monastery inquiring where the Buddha was. The monks directed him to the Buddha's chamber. He knocked at the door.

The Buddha opened it. He went in, saluted the Buddha, heard him preaching and became a convert. Such is the magnetic power of Mettā which anybody can exercise according to his ability.³⁰

³⁰ Vinaya, I, 247ff.

3. **Nālāgiri the elephant subdued by Buddha's Mettā** :³¹

Devadatta, after several vain attempts to kill the Buddha, obtained Ajātasattu's consent to use the royal elephant Nālāgiri as a means of encompassing the Buddha's death. Nālāgiri was a fierce animal and to increase his fierceness Devadatta intoxicated him and released him in front of the Buddha to kill him. Just at that time, a woman carrying a child, saw the elephant coming and fled, in her terror dropping the child at the Buddha's feet. As the elephant was about to attack the child, the Buddha spoke to him, suffusing him all the love at his command, and, stretching out his right hand, he stroke the animal's forehead. Thus Nālāgiri was subdued.

4. **Story of Suppiyā** :³²

Suppiyā was an Upāsikā (a female devotee) of Vārānasi. She and her husband both were greatly devoted to the Buddha and his Holy Order.

One day, while on a visit to the monastery, Suppiyā saw a sick monk who needed a meat broth. On her return home, she sent an attendant to fetch meat from the market. But the attendant could not collect meat from the entire city of Varanasi. Suppiyā, therefore, with a knife, cut a piece of flesh from her

³¹ Vinaya, II, 194ff; Jātaka, V, 333ff

³² Vinaya, I, 216f.

thigh and gave it to her servant to make into soup for the monk. She sent the meat soup for the monk in the monastery. She then went to her room and lay on her bed. When her husband returned and discovered what had happened he was overjoyed, and going to the monastery, invited the Buddha to a meal the next day. The Buddha accepted the invitation and the next day Buddha arrived at Suppiyā's house with his monks.

Buddha asked for Suppiyā. On hearing that she was ill, Buddha desired that she be brought to see him. At the moment when the Buddha saw her the wound was healed, covered with good skin. The peaceful thought vibrations of the Buddha and Suppiya combined to produce this salutary effect.

Suppiyā is given as an example of one whose good deeds bore fruit in this very life.³³ She was declared by the Buddha foremost among women who waited on the sick.³⁴

5. Mettā as the antidote to snake - bite :

In the Anguttaranikāya,³⁵ the Buddha explains that a certain monk had been fatally bitten by a snake, because he had

³³ Milinda, 115

³⁴ A, I, 26

³⁵ Aṅguttara, II, 72 - 73

not related to the four familiar of snakes with a loving mind (**Mettena Cittena**). Buddha came to know the fact. He addressed the monks saying that in order to protect themselves from snake - bite, practitioners should relate to the four families of snakes with Mettā using the following reflections :

" Virūpakkhehi me mettaṃ, mettaṃ erāpathehi me,

Chabbyaputtehi me mettaṃ, mettaṃ kanhagotamakehi ca,

apādakehi me mettaṃ, mettaṃ dvipadakehi me,

Catuppādehi me mettaṃ, mettaṃ bahuppadehi me.

Mā maṃ apādako hiṃsi, mā maṃ hiṃsi dvipādako,

mā maṃ catuppādo hiṃsi, mā maṃ hiṃsi bahuppado.

Sabbe sattā sabbe pāṇā sabbe bhūtā ca kevalā,

Sabbe bhadraṇi passantu, mā kaṃ ci pāpam āgamā.

Appamāṇo Buddho, appamāṇo dhammo, appamāṇo saṅgho,

pamāṇavantāni sirimśapāni ahi vicchikā, satapadī,

uṇṇanābhi, sarabhū, mūsikā. Katā me rakkhā, katā me

parittā. paṭikkamantu bhūtāni so'haṃ namo bhagavato

namo sattannaṃ sammāsambuddhānaṃ. " ti.

(Eng. Trans) :

I have Mettā for (snakes) Virūpakkhas and Mettā for Erāpathas. I have Mettā for the Chabbyāputtas and Mettā for the kaṇhagotamakas. I have Mettā for those having no feet, and Mettā for those having two feet. I have Mettā for those with four feet and Mettā for those with many feet.

May those without feet not harm me, nor those with two. Many those with four feet not harm me, nor those with many.

May all sentient beings, all breathing beings, all living beings, all together see auspicious sights. May evil come to none.

Buddha is measureless, the Dhamma is measureless and the Sangha is measureless. Serpents, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, spiders, lizards and mice have a measure. I have spread protection, I have established a safeguard. May all living beings retreat. I pay homage to the Buddha.

I pay my homage to the seven Perfectly Enlightened Ones (Sammāsambuddhas)'

6. Aṅgulimāla, a highway robber and murderer, subdued by Buddha's Mettā :

Aṅgulimāla, a highway robber and murderer was subdued by Buddha's Mettā. Buddha's unlimited compassion and Mettā made him converted from a murderer to a member of the Buddha's Holy Sangha. He became also an Arahant.³⁶

7. Buddha's admonition to monks to maintain high standard of Mettā :

In the Majjhima Nikāya the Buddha admonishes his monks regarding forbearance and Mettā thus :

"O monks, if bandits sever your limbs with a two-handed saw, yet if you thereby defile your mind, you would be no follower of my teaching.

Thus should you train yourselves : 'unsullied shall our hearts remain. No evil word shall escape our lips. Kind and compassionate, with loving heart (Mettā), harboring no ill-will shall we abide, enfolding even these bandies with thoughts of Mettā. And forth from them proceeding, we shall abide, radiating the whole world with thoughts of Mettā, vast expansive, measureless, benevolent and unified.'³⁷

³⁶ Angulimāla Sutta, Majjhima, II, 97ff

³⁷ Kakacūpama Sutta (Sutta No. 21), Majjhima Nikāya

CULTIVATION OF METTĀ IN DAILY FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL LIFE :

In our daily family lives as well as social life we are engaged in manifold activities. In all these respects if Mettā is cultivated thoroughly then family life and social life become peaceful and happy. But the question is when to use Mettā and when not to use Mettā. Secondly, if we use Mettā, how much and in what way to use?

Mettā plays a vital role to maintain human relationships in the family and also in the society, Buddha has preached the Singālovāda Sutta³⁸ to the householder Singāla (or Sigāla). In this Sutta Buddha has very clearly focused on the categories of people in a family and in a society and also their mutual relationships. They are as follows :

1. Parents and children :

Duties of parents towards children :

- (a) Restrain them from doing evils and speaking evils. (**Pāpā nivarenti**)

³⁸ Dighanikāya, Vol. III, Sutta No. 8.

- (b) Support him in doing good (**Kalyāṇe nivesanti**)
- (c) Teach him some skills (**Sippaṃ sikkhāpentī**)
- (d) Find him a suitable wife (**Paṭirūpena dārena saṃyojenti**)
- (e) Hand him over his inheritance in time (**Samaye dāyajjaṃ niyyādentī**)

Duties of children towards their parents :

- (a) Support them in their old age (**Bhato nesaṃ bharissāmi**)
- (b) Perform their duties for them (**Kiccaṃ nesaṃ karissāmi**)
- (c) Keeps up family tradition (**Kulavaṃsaṃ ṭhappessāmi**)
- (d) Acts worthy of his inheritance (**dāyajjaṃ paṭipajjāmi**)

(e) After their deaths distribute gifts on their behalf

**(Petānam kālaṅkatānaṃ dakkhinaṃ
anupadassāmi)**

Clearly the relationship of Mettā between them involves responsibility and gratefulness. Normally Mettā and compassion (karuṇā) do arise spontaneously in parents, but gratefulness has to be learned by the children, however, if the morality of parents is in question, then the children would suffer.

2. Teacher and pupils :

Duties of teachers towards pupils :

- (a) Give through proper instructions (**Suvinitaṃ vinenti**)
- (b) Make sure they have thoroughly learned their lessons
(**Suggahītaṃ gāhāpenti**)
- (c) Give thorough groundings in skills (**Sabbasippassutaṃ
samakkhāyino bhavanti**)
- (d) Recommend them their friends and colleagues
(**Mittāmaccesu paṭiyādenti**)

- (e) Provide security in all directions (**Disāsu parittāṇaṃ karonti**)

Duties of pupils towards teachers :

- (a) Rise to greet them (**Uṭṭhānena**)
- (b) Wait on them (**Upṭṭhānena**)
- (c) Listen to them attentively (**Sussusāya**)
- (d) Serve them (**Paricariyāya**)
- (e) Masters the skills taught (**Sakkaccaṃ sippapaṭiggahanena**)

Here gain the loving - kindness relationship is compassion (karuṇā) and respectfulness. This occurs more frequently when the question of money is not involved. Otherwise the teacher's dissatisfaction with their career may interfere with the relationship

3. Husband and wife :

Duties of husband :

- (a) Honoring her (**Sammānanāya**)
- (b) Not disparaging her (**Anavamānanāya**)
- (c) Being not unfaithful (**Anaticariyāya**)
- (d) Giving her authority (**Issaria-vossaggena**)
- (e) Providing her with ornaments (**Alaṅkāranuppa-
dānena**)

Duties of wife :

- (a) Properly organizing and discharging her work (**Susaṁvihita - kammantā hoti**)
- (b) Properly behaving with the attendants (**Saṅgahita-
parijanā ca**)
- (c) not being unfaithful (**Anaticāriṇī ca**)
- (d) Protecting stores (**Sambhatañ ca anurakkhati**)
- (e) Skilful and diligent in all she has to do (**Dakkhā ca
hoti analasā sabbakiccesu**)

The Mettā relationship here hinges on trust and faithfulness. As you may expect, the Indian lady in those days

was often considered more as a maid. The Buddhist clause of handing over authority to her demonstrates that her position was more than that. The other aspects of good wives, viz. motherly, sisterly or friendly aspects, show the favorable relationship the Buddhist looks for.

4. Friends and Companions :

Duties of Friends :

- (a) Buying Gifts (**Dānena**)
- (b) Having kind words (**Peyyavajjena**)
- (c) Looking after one's welfare (**Atthacariyāya**)
- (d) Treating one as they would treat themselves
(**Samānattatāya**)
- (e) Keeping their word (**Avisaṃvādanatāya**)

Duties of companions :

- (a) Looking after when one is slothful and inattentive
(**Pamattaṃ rakkhanti**)

- (b) Looking after one's property when one is slothful and inattentive (**pamattassa sāpateyyaṃ rakkhanti**)
- (c) Being a refuge to one when one is afraid (**Bhītaṃ saraṇam honti**)
- (d) Not deserting one when one is in trouble (**Āpadāsu na vijahanti**)
- (e) Showing concern for one's children (**Aparapajā c'assa paṭipūjenti**)

The Mettā relationship here involves sincere care and protection for each other, with mutual self - expect obviously playing a part.

5. Master and servants :

Duties of master :

- (a) Arranging their work according to their capacity (**Yathābalaṃ kammanta-saṃvidhānena**)
- (b) Supplying necessary food and wages (**Bhattavetanā-nuppādānena**)

- (c) Looking after them when ill (**Gilānupaṭṭhānena**)
- (d) Sharing delicacies with them (**Acchariyānaṃ rasānam Saṃvibhāgena**)
- (e) Letting them off work at the right time (**Samaye vossaggena**)
- (f) Getting up before him (**Pubbuṭṭhāyino ca honti**)
- (g) Going to bed after him (**Pacchā nipātino ca**)
- (h) Taking only what is given (**Dinnādāyino ca**)
- (i) Doing their work properly (**Sukatakammakarā**)
- (j) Bears of his praise and good reputation (**Kittivaṇṇaharā ca**)

The Mettā relationship here hinges on generosity on the master's part and diligence and trustworthiness on the part of the servant.

6. Ascetics (Spiritual people) and laymen :

Duties of ascetics (Spiritual people) :

- (a) Restrain him from evil (**Pāpā nivārenti**)
- (b) Encourage him in good (**Kalyāṇe nivesenti**)
- (c) Benevolently compassionate towards him (**Kalyāṇena manasā anukampamti**)
- (d) Teach him what he has not heard (**Assutaṃ sāvanti**)
- (e) Point out him the way to heaven (**Saggassa maggaṃ ācikkhanti**)
- (f) Purify what he has heard (**Sutam pariyodāpentī**)

Duties of laymen :

- (a) Show kindness in bodily deed (**Mettena kāyakammaṇa paccupaṭṭhātabbā**)
- (b) Show kindness in speech (**Mettena vacikammaṇa paccupaṭṭhātabbā**)

(c) Show kindness in thought (**Mettena manokammena paccupaṭṭhātabbā**)

(d) Keep open house for them (**Anāvaṭadvāratāya paccupaṭṭhātabbā**)

(e) Supply them necessary food (**Āmisānuppādānena**)

An elucidation in these relations (as mentioned above) would be compassion (karuṇā) on the upper hand and humility and obedience on the other. There is then reciprocation between generosity and diligence. Trust and faithfulness also play a part in the relationship. If the role by one party is not fulfilled, e.g. the servant is lazy, we may expect the relationship to suffer. Then it depends largely on the virtue of the other party (e.g. the employer), whether his compassion or patience lasts long.