

3

Karaṇīya Metta Sutta

The Lovingkindness Discourse on What Should Be Done | Khp 9 = Sn 1.8 (143-152*)

Theme: How to cultivate lovingkindness

Translated by Piya Tan ©1987, rev ed 2003, 2007, 2012

1 History

1.1 POPULARITY

1.1.1 The most popular Pali suttas amongst traditional Sinhalese Buddhists are the (Mahā) Maṅgala Sutta, the Ratana Sutta, and the Karaṇīya Metta¹ Sutta, and who call them the *tun sutraya*, “the 3 suttas.” In fact, these 3 are such popular texts that are often recited as “protective chants” (*paritta*) by the traditional Theravada Buddhists of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Khmer. Here, however, we shall examine, the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta, not as an apotropaic chant, but as a meditation text, a guide to our personal practice, as is originally intended by the Buddha.

1.1.2 Like the other two of “the 3 suttas,” the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta, is found in the Khuddaka, pāṭha² (Khp 9/p8 f), the first book of the fifth and last sutta collection, **the Khuddaka Nikāya**. As there are a number of discourses known as Metta or Mettā Sutta, this popular text is known specifically as Karaṇīya Metta Sutta, *karaṇīya* (“should be done”) being its first word.³

¹ *metta* (adj neut) means “friendly, benevolent, kind” (eg D 3:191, 245), der from the root √MID, to love + suffix *tā*. Here, however, *metta* in the title has its final long vowel (*ā*) shortened in the middle of a cpd by way of sandhi, and is actually *mettā* (n fem): see PED. Comy def *mettā* (f) as: “he fattens (*mejjati*) and tends (*tāyati*), thus he is a friend (*mitta*; Skt *mitra*); meaning that by his inclination to welfare he acts as a lubricant (*siniyhati*) and protects him from harm’s coming. The state of a friend is lovingkindness (*mettā*.” (KhpA 248, Vism 9:92). Comy uses a couple of puns here: *mejjati*, lit “to be fat, to be full of fat”; fig “to be in love with or attracted by, to feel affection” (DhsA 192; vl *mijjati*); a syn of *siniyhati* [√SNIH, to be sticky] lit “to be moist or sticky”; fig “to feel love, to be attached, to be tender.” **Etym:** OED cites its oldest recorded appearance as “louinge kyndnesses” by Coverdale, ie, Lord Myles Coverdale in his tr of the Hebrew *chesed* (the love of God for man) in his Bible (dedicated to Henry VIII). The form “loving-kindness” appeared about 100 years later. The adv “lovingkindly” is attested (1840, OED); hence, we may backform the adj “lovingkind.” The modern Buddhist form adopted here is “**lovingkindness**” (without the hyphen). See Collins 1987:69 n13.

The usu tr for *mettā* is “lovingkindness”: see DhsA:PR 258 f. A number of other texts are also called Metta/Mettā Sutta or have this word in their titles, eg **Mettā Sahagata Sutta** (S 46.54/5:115 f); **Mettā Sutta** (S 46.62/5:131); (**Puñña**) **Mettā S** (A 7.58a/4:88-91), SD 2.11a; **Mettā Sutta** (Be Ee) or **Mā Puñña Bhāyī S** (It 22/1.3.2/14-16), SD 2.11b; (**Nānā Karaṇa**) **Mettā Sutta 1** (A 4.124/2); (**Nānā Karaṇa**) **Mettā Sutta 2** (A 4.125/2:128 f), **Nissāraṇīya S** (A 6.13/3:290 f), **Mettā S** or **Nav’añg’uposatha S** (A 9.18/4:388 f), **Mettā S** (A 11.16/5:342;) and **Mettā Bhāvanā S** (It 1.3.7/19-22). On details of *lovingkindness* (*mettā*), see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (2+3).

² Khuddaka Pāṭha (Khp), “The Minor Readings,” the first book of the Khuddaka Nikāya. A late compilation because all its 9 sections (Saraṇa-t, taya, Dasa Sikkhā, pada, Dva-t, tiṃsākāra, Kumāra, pañhā, Maṅgala S, Ratana S, Tiro, kuḍḍa S, Nidhi, kaṇḍa S and Metta S) are found elsewhere. No mention of it is made in the Canon or Miln (though it mentions *khuddaka, bhāṇaka*, Miln 349). The collection is said to have been compiled in Sri Lanka. See DPPN sv & PBR 2,2:10.

³ For brevity, the Sutta will simply be referred to as “Metta Sutta,” unless it refers to another namesake, which will be stated as such.

1.1.3 Buddhaghosa says that the Sutta is taught by the Buddha as a meditation subject for monks, and as a *paritta* or protective chant to pacify bad spirits or ward them off⁴ [1.2]. Its inclusion in the Khuddaka, -pāṭha shows that it is popular from a relatively early period (but probably after the Buddha's passing). A shorter version of the Khuddaka Commentary story is given, with a few new details, in **the Pañca, sata (Āraddha) Vipassaka Bhikkhū Vatthu** (the story of the 500 monks striving for insight, DhA 3.6/1:313-318).

1.2 THE BACKGROUND STORY TO THE SUTTA

1.2.1 The meditating monks in the forest

The Commentaries⁵ say that this Sutta relates to 500 meditating monks dwelling in the Himalayas. On the invitation of the townsfolk, the monks consented to stay on for the rains retreat.⁶ They went into the forest and arranged that a wood-block be struck for the 3 watches of the night.⁷

Diligently abiding in wise attention, they resorted to the foot of trees for meditation (KhpA 233). The first watch was spent in meditation, the second for sleeping, and the third in meditation again.⁸ The beating of a wood-block to mark the watches is still done today especially in the rural parts of Sri Lanka and southeast Asia.⁹

The local tree devas, alarmed at the activities of the monks, harassed them during the night in an attempt to drive them away. Some of the monks were afflicted with sneezing, some with coughing; some saw a disembodied head, others saw a headless body. The monks, constantly distracted, consulted the Buddha at Sāvathī. He taught them the Metta Sutta as “a weapon” (*āvudha*) and instructed them “to recite this Sutta from the forest-grove, outside the hermitage and then you may enter the hermitage” (DhA 1:315 f).

1.2.2 The Buddha's instructions

1.2.2.1 The Khuddaka Commentary adds that the Buddha then instructs the monks that on every 8th day of the lunar month (that is, a Dharma day, *uposatha*),¹⁰ this procedure or list of duties should be followed: after the gong has been struck, the Metta Sutta should be recited followed by a discourse on the Dharma, and before concluding, gifts should be made and merits dedicated (to other beings, especially the deceased) (KhpA 251 f). **The Dhammika Sutta** details the decorum for the observance (*uposatha*) and all

⁴ KhpA 231 f; DhA 3.6.

⁵ KhpA 232-235 (SnA 193).

⁶ “Rains retreat” (*vass'āvāsa*), lit “rains-residence” (S 5:326, PvA 20). India in the Buddha's time (like today) had 3 seasons of four months each: summer (*gimhāna*, lit “the heat,” Apr-Jul), the rains (*vassana*, Aug-Nov) and the cold season (*hem'anta*, “all the snow,” Dec-Mar). According to the **Vinaya**, during the rains, monastics should stay where they are and remain there for 3 lunar months. The lunar day marking the entrance into the rains- retreat (*vass'upanāyikā*) is fixed by the full moon passing one day in the asterism of Āsāḷha (Jun-Jul or 8th Siamese lunar month). The late entrance would thus be the full moon day of the full month (1st day of the 9th waning moon). The rule was made so that growing crops and creatures that emerge from the ground (because of the rain) would not be trampled by wandering monastics. See V 1 ch 3; C S Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*: vassāvāsa.

⁷ The 3 watches (*yāma*), ie, 6 pm-10 pm, 10 pm-2 am, and 2-6 am: A 1:114, 4:168; Dh 157; J 1:243. See **Suppati S** (S 4.7) @ SD 32.13 (1.1.7): The nights.

⁸ Cf Nm 377 f, VbhA 363 f.

⁹ See KhpA:N 268.4.

¹⁰ Siamese “wan.phra|” (the | represents a glottal stop), Sinhalese “poya,” Burmese “u.bouk.nei.”

the monthly Buddhist holy days are mentioned (Sn 402 f). The Buddha also instructs the monks to constantly meditate on lovingkindness (*mettā, bhāvanā*).

1.2.2.2 The 500 monks salute the Buddha and leave for the forest. Reciting the Sutta, they enter the forest and into the hermitage. Pleased at the radiant atmosphere, the forest devas not only stop distracting the monks, but look after them. The monks' hearts become tranquil. Fixing their minds on the thought of decay and death inherent in their bodies and reflecting on the thought, "On account of its fragile and unstable nature, this body is like a clay pot," they meditate to gain insight (*vipassanā*) (DhA 1:315 f).

1.2.2.3 The Buddha, sitting in his fragrant cell, knows that the monks have begun to cultivate insight, and so addresses them, "That's the way it is, bhikshus. This body, by reason of its fragile and unstable nature, is indeed like a clay pot." So saying, he sends forth a radiant image of himself. Although a hundred leagues away, he appears to be seated face to face with them, present in visible form, diffusing the six-coloured rays of light, he pronounces the following stanza:

*Kumbhūpamaṃ kāyam imaṃ viditvā
nagarūpamaṃ cittam idaṃ t̥hapetvā
yodetha māraṃ paññāyudhassa
jitañ ca rakkhe anivesano¹¹ siyā*

Knowing that this body is (fragile) like a clay pot,
securing this mind like a citadel,
one should fight Māra with the weapon of wisdom,
and guarding that conquest, one should be detached.
(Dh 40; DhA 1:316)

At the end of the discourse, within that rains-retreat itself, the 500 monks become arhats¹² complete with the analytic insights.¹³

¹¹ *Anivesano* = *na* ("no, without") + *nivesana* ("dwelling, abiding, house"), lit "homeless," ie "not attached to the home, or not caught up with worldliness." The aggregates of form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and formations (*saṅkhārā*) are fig said to be the "home or abode" (*oka*) for consciousness (*viññāṇa*): see **Hālidā-kāni S** (S 22.3,4-7), SD 10.12. Comy explains *anivesano siyā* as meaning that "one should be detached" (*anivesano siyā'ti anālayo bhaveyya*, DhA 1:317,16-17). To gain the path of freedom, one must see the aggregates as being impermanent. "Therefore, devoted to guarding what should be guarded, one should be free of 'abiding' [houses], one should not make an 'abode' of the meditation attainments and dwell therein: one should have no attachment" (*tasmā rakkhitabba, yuttakaṃ rakkhanto anivesano siyā, samāpattiṃ nivesanaṃ katvā tattha na niveseyya, ālayaṃ na kareyyāti attha*, DhA 1:318,13-15).

¹² **Arhat** (Skt *arhat*, *arhant*; P *arahanta*), "one who is far from the defilements" (ThaA 2:57; see Tha:N n185; cf DhA 3:272 where *ariya* is mentioned). Various derivations: fr √ARH (to deserve); *ari* + *ha*, "enemy-killer," etc. (See also M 1:280, Vism 198.) The term is used in Pali Buddhism to refer to one of the noble disciples (*ariya* or *ariya-sāvaka*) who have attained the final stage of freedom, ie absolute emancipation or nirvana.

In Ṛgveda 2.3.3, the term *arhat* refers to Agni, the god of fire. It is also an epithet of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. It was applied to the Buddha by his contemporaries and took on a specialized meaning in Buddhist usage, where it is synonymous with *khīṇāsava*, "one whose mental influxes are destroyed." The oldest set is prob that of 3 influxes—of sense-desire (*kāmaśava*), of existence (*bhavāśava*), and of ignorance (*avijjāśava*): see **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216,9); **Sammā Ditṭhi S** (M 9,70/1:55,10); **Cūḷa Suññata S** (M 121,11/3:108,18); **Āsava S** (S 38.8/4:256,4 = 45.163/5:56,15 = 47.50/189,29); **Ti,kaṇṇa S** (A 35.8/1:165,16); **(Te,vijja) Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59,-4/1:167,22); **Nibbedhika Pariyāya S** (A 6.63/3:414,11); **Vbh 914/384,13**; **MA** 1:86,10, 3:41,25 ad M 1:361,24.

¹³ "Analytic insights," *paṭisambhidā*, ie, those in effects (*attha*~), in causes (conditionality) (*dhamma*~), in language (*nirutti*~), and ready wit (*paṭibhāna*~) (A 2:160; Pm 1:119; Vbh 294): see SD 28.4 (4). This verse also at SD 52.13 (1.3.5.1).

2 Cultivation of lovingkindness (theory)

2.1 OPENING PRACTICE

The Karaṇīya Metta Sutta is taught by the Buddha to forest-dwelling (*āraññaka*) monk-meditators [1.2]. Buddhaghosa records that the Buddha teaches the Sutta both as a spiritual protection (*paritta*) and as a meditation practice (*kammaṭṭhāna*) for those meditating in the forest (KhpA 235,9, 244,9).

In fact, whenever we begin our practice in a forest, any remote area, or anywhere, for that matter, the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta should be the first sutta to be recited, or better, to put it into practice by radiating lovingkindness all around us. Lovingkindness envelopes us with a warm and radiant ambience that also makes others feel at ease with us.

2.2 FOREST PRACTICE

2.2.1 Purposes of the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta

The Commentary says that the Sutta has 3 purposes, namely,

- (1) the cultivation of lovingkindness,
- (2) spiritual protection, and
- (3) the attainment of dhyana as the basis for insight.¹⁴ (KhpA 235,22) [2.3]

2.2.2 Forest practices

A serious practitioner, especially a forest dweller, should day and night (*sāyam,pātaṃ,karaṇa,vasena*), that is, at least twice (*dve*) each day, practise the following:

- (1) the cultivation of lovingkindness (*mettā*),
- (2) mindful recitation of the Metta Sutta as a spiritual protection (*paritta*),
- (3) perception of impurity (*asubha,saññā*),¹⁵
- (4) mindfulness of death (*maraṇa,sati*),¹⁶ and
- (5) mindful attention to the 8 objects of great urgency (*aṭṭha,mahā,sarṇvega,vatthu,samāvajjanañ ca*).
(KhpA 235,22). [2.2.3]

2.2.3 The 8 objects of great urgency comprise two sets of topics for meditation:

- (1) birth, decay (ageing), disease, death, and the pain of the 4 lower states (asuras, animals, pretas, and hell-beings);¹⁷

¹⁴ *Mett'atthañ ca paritt'atthañ ca vipassanā,pādaka-j,jhān'atthañ ca*, ie, insight into the 3 universal characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self): see **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59.12-16/3:67 f), SD 1.2.

¹⁵ This term, common in the suttas, refers to the 31 (or Comy, 32) parts of the body. The term *asubha,nimitta* (the sign of foulness) in Comys, refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie bodily remains in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). On details of the practice, see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22,5/2:293 = M 10,10/1:67), SD 13.2-3; **Kāya,gatā,sati S** (M 119,7), SD 12.21 (5).

¹⁶ Also called "recollection of death" (*maraṇānussati*): see **Maraṇa,sati Ss 1-2** (A 8.73/4:316-319, 8.74/4:320-322); discussed in detail at Vism 8.1-41/229-239.

¹⁷ On details of the lower realms, see (**Pañca**) **Gati S** (A 9.68/4:459), SD 2.20.

- (2) birth, decay, disease, death, the pain of the suffering states, suffering rooted in a past life-cycle (*atīte ca vaṭṭa, mūlakam dukkham*), suffering rooted in a future life-cycle, suffering rooted in the present life-cycle, and suffering rooted in the quest for food (*āhāra, pariyeṭṭhi, mūlakam dukkham*). (KhpA 235,16-21)

Both these reflections are meant to be constantly done when we are not meditating, or when we are overcome by distractions. They act as reminders why we need the Dharma, and why we should make every effort to walk the path to awakening.

The 1st reflection is a reminder to cultivate *moral virtue*, that is, respect for the body and speech, especially as laid out in *the 5 precepts* for the laity and *the Vinaya* for monastics. In keeping to the precepts, we prepare our body for mental cultivation.¹⁸ The precepts, especially the 5 precepts, are the foundations for a wholesome human life, the ground for our efforts towards awakening. The precepts *humanize* us, that is, that they prevent us from falling into the subhuman states, where spiritual cultivation is impossible.¹⁹

The 2nd reflection centres around reviewing how *suffering* arises, that is, from clinging to the past and not understanding present conditions. Lovingkindness begins with our accepting ourselves unconditionally, just as we are, so that we begin our practice there, the best place to begin. This body is “old karma, put together, thought out, something that is felt,”²⁰ and everything here arises dependent on conditions.

As sentient beings, we sustain ourselves not only with solid food for our physical bodies and “food” for the physical senses, but also mental foods, that is, mental volitions and consciousness.²¹ We are caught up in a bigger food chain than we have ever imagined before. In our meditations, we will in due course discover a weak point in the chain of our personality and pain. Breaking this chain, we discover our true strength and liberation.

2.3 DHYANA-BASED INSIGHT

2.3.1 Lovingkindness dhyana

The Commentary says that after emerging from the lovingkindness dhyana (*metta-j, jhāna*), the meditator should discern the dhyana-factors (*jhān’āṅga*)²² as “mind” (*nāma*) and the ideas of material form as “form” (*rūpa*). In this way, we are said to be “not falling into views (*diṭṭhiñ ca anupagamma*),” that is, by reflecting that it is all “only a heap of mental formations; no being is to be found therein.”²³ (KhpA 251)

In due course, the meditator becomes virtuous (*sīlavā*) in the supramundane sense with the attainment of the path of streamwinning (which is called “insight,” *dassana*). When the remaining “greed” (*gedha*) is weakened (in the former case) and then totally abandoned (in the latter),²⁴ we enter the paths

¹⁸ On meditation as progressive renunciation, see *Bhāvanā*, SD 15.1 (14.7).

¹⁹ See eg *Chiggaḷa S 2* (S 56.47/5:455 f), SD 57.12. See below (5.6.2.3) n on *Chiggaḷa S 2*.

²⁰ (*Kāya*) *Na Tumha S* (S 12.37), where the Buddha says: “Bhikshus, this body is not yours, nor does it belong to others. It is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something that is felt.” This is followed by an exposition on dependent arising. (S 12.37/2:64 f), SD 5.14.

²¹ See *Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S* (M 38,15/1:261), SD 7.10 & *Āhāra S* (S 12.11/2:11 f), SD 76.1. For reflection on food, see *Putta.māṃsa S* (S 12.63/2:97-100) @ SD 20.6 (3) & (4).

²² On dhyana-factors, see *Dhyana*, SD 8.4 (7).

²³ See *Vajirā S* (S 5.10,553*/1:35), SD 92.2.

²⁴ *Ākaṅkheyya S* (M 6,12-13/1:34), SD 59.1.

of once-returning and of non-returning respectively. A non-returner “will not return to lie in a womb,” but is reborn only in the Pure Abodes,²⁵ where he attains arhathood in due course.²⁶

2.3.2 Dhyana as basis for insight (*vipassanā,pādaka-j,jhāna*) (KhpA 235, 244)²⁷

The term *pādaka-j,jhāna*, meaning “foundation-forming dhyana” (BDict), is not found in the suttas, nor apparently in the Abhidhamma, but it occurs frequently in commentarial works. The idea expressed by the term, however, is implied in many places in the old suttas, such as **the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta** (A 9.36), where it is shown how the dhyanas (*jhāna*), one after another, may serve as the basis (or mental object) for insight (*vipassanā*), leading to the supramundane paths (*lokuttara,magga*).²⁸

Many of the older suttas often show how the fourth dhyana forms the basis for the attainment of the six superknowledges (*abhiññā*).²⁹ In fact, for the attainment of insight, any dhyana, properly developed, is suitable as a basis for such a development. Lovingkindness alone, if fully cultivated in meditation, brings us only to the third dhyana. However, lovingkindness is the basis for all the other three divine abodes, which are actually progressively more refined forms of positive feelings that open to us the doors of the higher dhyanas. When equanimity is properly developed, we are able to experience the fourth dhyana and its benefits.³⁰

3 Structure and stages of practice

3.0 SUTTA STRUCTURE

The monk translator, **Ñāṇamoli**, lays out the “architecture” of the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta in this way:

The architectural plan is, in fact, this:

the 1st half of stanza 1 to the 1st half of stanza 3 describes the basic virtues;

the second half of stanza 3 to the end of stanza 6 gives in direct-speech the lovingkindness thoughts of one practising those virtues;

stanzas 7-9 describe the qualities of lovingkindness practised to the full as concentration (*samādhi* or *samatha*), which is called “Divine Abiding” (*brahma,vihāra*)³¹ in this life since it leads to rebirth in the Brahmā (“High Divinity”) Heavens.

Stanza 10 describes the development of insight (*vipassanā*), which leads out from the world of existence/non-existence to liberation or nirvana (cf A 2:128-130).” (KhpA:N 282.34)

Ñāṇamoli apparently attempts to follow the Commentary closely, and his “sutta architecture” can be summarized as follows:

²⁵ The pure abodes comprise a realm only for non-returners and arhats. See Bodhi, *The Root of Existence*, 1980:67 & Aronson 1980 esp 74 ff.

²⁶ Cf esp (**Nāna,karaṇa**) **Puggala S 2** (A 4.124/2:128), SD 23.8b; (**Nāna,karaṇa**) **Mettā S 1** (A 4.125/2:128 f), SD 33.9; (**Nāna,karaṇa**) **Mettā S 2** (A 4.126/2:130).

²⁷ The term *vipassanā,pādaka-j,jhāna* refers to the twin practice of calmness and insight (*samatha.vipassanā*): see BDict: samatha-vipassanā. On the practice of dhyana based on insight, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (10); for details, see **Yuganaddha S** (A 4.170/2:156 f), SD 41.5; also Ency Bsm 8:815-817: Yuganaddha Sutta (Analayo).

²⁸ A 9.36/4:421 f + SD 33.8 (3).

²⁹ On the 6 superknowledges, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (6).

³⁰ See **Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5 (6); also **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (Fig 8.1).

³¹ On *brahma,vihāra* and related terms, see **Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5 (1.1.1).

Sn 143-145ab [§§1-3ab]:	Basic virtues
Sn 145cd-148 [§§3cd-6]:	Lovingkindness practice
Sn 149-151 [§§7-9]:	Calmness practice
Sn 152 [§10]:	Insight practice.

Here, however, we will divide the Sutta more simply into 3 general sections: *theory, practice and realization*,³² thus:

- (1) Sn 143-145b [§§1a-3b]: the theory or introduction or preparation;
- (2) Sn 145c-151 [§§3c-9d]: the practice, that is, 3 methods of cultivating lovingkindness; and
- (3) Sn 152 [§10]: the realization or conclusion.

In fact, it is clear that the whole Sutta is based on the model of the 3 trainings (*ti,sikkhā*), that is, moral virtue [§§1a-3b], mental cultivation [§§3e-9d] and wisdom [§10]. Further details which follow will show this to be more evident.

3.1. INTRODUCTION: MORAL VIRTUE [§§1-3b]

3.1.0 Moral virtue [§3ab]

“Being skilled in good,” we would be able to make every effort to avoid even the slightest misconduct by way of body, speech or mind. In doing so, we not only avoid the gross defilements but also commit no misconduct “whatsoever” (*kiñci*) (KhṃA 243). As **the Dhammapada** warns us:

Do not look down on bad,	thinking, “It will not come to me!”
Like falling drops of water,	they fill the water-pot—
the fool himself fills up with bad,	little by little he is flooded. (Dh 121) ³³

The purpose of keeping the precepts should not be as a mere ritual for accumulating “merit” or good karma, but as a training to support our efforts in mental cultivation and mindfulness, as stated in **the (Agata,phala) Mahā,nāma Sutta** (A 6.10):

Indeed, my various moral virtues are “unbroken, untorn, unmixed, spotless, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, bringing about concentration.”³⁴ (A 6.10,5/3:286), SD 15.3

³² This is traditionally known as the 3 good truths (*saddhamma*) or the 3 basic levels of training or spiritual progress, ie, theory (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*) and realization (*paṭivedha*) (VA 225; AA 5:33): see **The levels of training**, SD 40a.4 esp (2). The first 2 are known as the 2 teachings (*sāsana*) (Nm 143). The first, “theory,” refers to the “ninefold teaching of the Teacher” (*nav’aṅga satthu,sāsana*), viz: *sutta, geyya, udāna, iti,vuttaka, jātaka, abbhuta,dhamma* and *vedalla* (V 3:8; M 1:133; A 2:5, 103, 3:86; VA 31): see SD 15.9 (1.1). The second, “practice” refers to the “seven sets,” viz: the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) [SD 13], the 4 right efforts (*samma-p,-padhāna*) [SD 10.2], the 4 paths to spiritual power (*iddhi,pāda*) [SD 10.3], the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc’indriya*) [SD 10.4], the 5 spiritual powers (*pañca bala*) [SD 10.5], the 7 awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*) [SD 10.15], and the noble eightfold path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*) [SD 6.10]: see **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77,15-21/2:11 f) + SD 6.18 Intro (excerpt), full tr SD 49.5. The third, “realization” is of course nirvana.

³³ *Māppamaññetha [vī māvamāññetha] pāpassa | na maṃ taṃ āgamissati || uda,bindu,nipātena | uda,kumbho’pi pūrāti || pūrati bālo pāpassa | thoka,thokam’pi ācinam* (Dh 121; Uv 17.5-6; Dh:Ptn 193 f; Dh:G 209 f).

³⁴ “Unbroken, ... giving rise to concentration,” *akhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññūpa-saṭṭhehi aparāmaṭṭhehi samādhi,sarivattanikehi*. See UA 268. For details, see Vism 1.143-161/51-58 & 7.101-106/221 f.

Hence, Buddhaghosa advises us to constantly reflect on moral virtue, that is, proper effort in keeping the precepts and the benefits of such conduct and reflection, thus:

And when a monk is devoted to this recollection of moral virtue, he has respect for the training.³⁵ He lives in communion (with his fellows in the holy life). He is diligent in hospitality [welcoming guests]. He is free of the fear of self-reproach, and so on. He sees danger in the slightest fault. He gains abundant faith, and so on. He has much zest and gladness.

If he penetrates no higher, he would at least cross over to a happy destiny. (Vism 106/222)³⁶

3.1.1 Training in moral virtue [§§1-2]

This section, on the training in virtue (*sīla sikkhā*), describes the one “skilled in good” (*attha, kusala*) and his 14 qualities [§§1c+2]. Sn 145ab [§3ab] gives the essence of this as the foundation in “moral conduct” (*sīla*). These introductory verses serve as a preparatory guide to the cultivation of lovingkindness.

Basically, it can be divided into 2 sections: (1) what should be done (*karaṇīya*) (Sn 143-144c) and (2) what should not be done (*akaraṇīya*) (Sn 144d-145b). Each section should then be carefully studied or discussed in greater practical detail.

3.1.2 Living an uncluttered life [§2a]

A monastic or renunciant should not clutter his life up with things. If he owns many chattels, when it is time to leave, he would burden many people with head packs, waist packs, etc, of bowls, robes, rugs, oil, sugar, etc. When it is time to move on, a renunciant carries only the monk’s 8 requisites, namely, a bowl, (a set of 3) robes, razor, needle, waistband and water-strainer. Taking only these, he moves freely as a flying bird with only its own wings [D 1:71] (KhpA 242).

Not only should a monastic’s life be uncluttered in terms of things, but also in terms of time. He should not be busy like a lay-person. Other than keeping to his monastic routine and practice, a renunciant should be available to those who are in spiritual need. A renunciant has no social life, that is, he should not hobnob with people, especially the rich and powerful. A well-known monastic would often be tested in this, and he has to skillfully prioritize his time for the sake of those who would spiritually benefit from the Dharma.

3.1.3 Not lost in action [§2b]

A monastic or renunciant should not be too busy. Whether monastic or lay, we should not be taken up with various activities, such as work, chatting, socializing, and so on that we are unable to keep up without our personal practice. Monastics should not be preoccupied with monastery repair work, community property, instruction of novices and monastery attendants, etc, as to neglect their own practice and giving Dharma instructions to those who need them. Having done one’s head-shaving, nail-cutting, preparing bowl and robes, etc one then engages in Dharma practice (KhpA 241). Shaving, nail-cutting, and preparing one’s bowl and robes are 3 of the lesser impediments (*palibodha*) to meditation [4.1.3].

³⁵ This is the 4th of the 6 kinds of respect (*gāravatā*), namely, to: (1) the Buddha, (2) the Dharma, (3) the sangha, (4) the training, (5) heedfulness, and (6) hospitality (A 6.32/3:330 f).

³⁶ On how moral virtue helps in meditation, see *Silānussati*, SD 15.11.

3.1.4 Restraint of body and mind [§2cd]

A renunciant or a meditator should be restrained in the body, that is, in terms of physical actions and speech, and in the custody of the senses [§2c]. In this connection, especially when in meditation practice, too, we should not be greedily attached to any family, whether our own or those of others. Here, the Buddha warns against being “obtrusive” with families [§2d], that is, being exploitative for the sake of material support and gifts, and against being “emotionally attached” to them, too [§2d].

In the **Aggi-k,khandhūpama Sutta** (A 7.68), the Buddha firmly warns monastics against being “immoral, bad by nature, filthy in conduct and full of doubts, underhand in deeds, claiming to be a recluse when not one, claiming to live the holy life when he does not, inwardly rotten, impure by nature.”³⁷ Such false monastics, who indulge in sex and sensual pleasures, socialize with the rich and powerful, and weasel support and gifts from the faithful, would surely suffer “harm and pain for a long time, and with the body’s breaking up, after death, (they) would be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm.” (A 7.68/4:128-135 = SD 52.12)

3.2 MEDITATION METHODS AND LEVELS [§§2c-9d]

The second section deals with concentration (*samādhi*) training. Here, the cultivation of lovingkindness is laid out as a calmness (*samatha*) practice, and the sutta gives 3 meditation techniques which by themselves lead only to rebirth in the brahma realm:³⁸

- (1) **§§3cd-5d: Samatha I** (welfare and happiness of all beings). Here, there are 3 sub-sections:
 - (a) Opening asseveration wishing all beings to be well and happy [§3cd],
 - (b) Lovingkindness to all beings regardless of their size, realm of existence, or stage of development [§§4-5c], and
 - (c) Closing with a general asseveration [§5d].
 This is the “beings” method of cultivating lovingkindness [5.1].
- (2) **§6: Samatha II** (socially-engaged practice). This section deals with lovingkindness as a social virtue and the overcoming of conceit (*māna*) [§6]. As such, this is also called the “social” method [6.2].
- (3) **§7-9: Samatha III** (non-harming and non-suffering of all beings). There are actually 2 methods of lovingkindness cultivation here, that is, the “mother” method [§7] [6.3] and the “direction” method [§§8-9] [6.4].

This last section opens with the Sutta’s only metaphor [§7ab] of true maternal love and closes with another asseveration [§7cd]. The goal is the all-inclusive radiation of lovingkindness in all directions (mental and physical), in all the four postures and at all times [§§8-9], and the extolling of this as the “**highest living here in this world**” [§9d].

³⁷ See esp **Samaṇa Gadrabha S** (A 3.81/1:229), SD 24.10b.

³⁸ **Rebirth in the brahma realm**. Lovingkindness is one of the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), viz, lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity. They are regarded as “highest” or “divine” (*brahma*) in the sense of the best, and by their faultless nature. For, these states are best as constituting a superlative mode of conduct towards others. As brahmas live with fearless thoughts, so the meditator of such states become fearless and brahma-like or God-like. Because all of them should be cultivated so that “the barrier is broken” (ie without qualification or exclusiveness) and they become boundless, they are known as “the illimitables” (*appamaññā*). These practices also train us to internalize goodness, and not to see it externally in a God idea or some other belief, ritual etc. Those who regularly cultivate lovingkindness, at the point of dying, the momentum of their habitual karma is likely to bring them rebirth in the brahma world. Heaven, in other words, is not the result of faith or belief, but a habitual wholesome state of unconditional love. See D 2:196, 3:220, Dhs 262, Vim:ESK 181-197, Vism ch 9. See **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

This last statement (emphasis added), the Sutta’s last line, is its key message. The greatest prayer or supreme worship is that of *right here silently* freeing our hearts of impure or negative states, filling it completely with *godliness (brahma, vihāra)* of unconditional love (*mettā*), active kindness even to those who do not deserve it (*karuṇā*), rejoicing in the happiness of others (*muditā*), and being a peaceful eye in the world’s storm (*upekkhā*). For the God-believers of his time and for all times, the Buddha declares *here* that “God is not out there, but within us all,” that we can all cultivate *godliness*. Indeed, this is the only place where we can find true peace and freedom.

3.3 CONCLUSION: REALIZATION OR WISDOM

The third and final section, a single stanza [§10], deals with the cultivation of lovingkindness as an insight (*vipassanā*) practice [§10abc], leading to spiritual freedom (*vimutti*) [§10d]. This is also the “wisdom” (*paññā*) aspect or result of the practice.

The Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary account closes with the Buddha’s giving special instructions for forest-dwelling monks [2] with the remark that he has taught the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta as a *protection for the meditators* and for the sake of *the attainment of dhyana as the basis for insight*³⁹ (KhpA 235). **N A Jayawickrama** quotes cases where we should show lovingkindness out of self-love or reciprocal feeling (S 1:75, Sn 705, Dh 129, 130) but adds here that the Metta Sutta method is prompted, not by any of these motives, but by lovingkindness “for its own sake” (PBR 2,2:99).

4 Some key terms and highlights

4.1 THE TWO OPENING LINES [§1ab]

4.1.1 *abhisamecca* [§1b]

4.1.1.1 The translation of these two lines presents some difficulty. They have been popularly rendered as “What should be perfected by one who would, with skill seriously seek the attainment of Peace” (Narada & Kassapa 1975:71). The same sense is reflected in the Siamese translation. The crux of the problem here lies in the word *abhisamecca*, an absolute, “having understood.”

If we have already attained that “state of peace” (here interpreted as nirvana, eg KhpA 238)—meaning our “task is done” (*kata, kicca*), but we are still prescribed various positive qualities in what follows in the Sutta, led by the clause “what should be done ... ,” which then becomes self-contradicting! The Khuddaka,-pāṭha Commentary seems to be aware of this problem, and gives another explanation:

Or alternatively, the intention can be understood as follows. When through hearsay, etc, to this effect, namely, “To have attained (*abhisamecca*) the state of peace,” he knows with mundane understanding the extinction-State (*nibbāna, pada*) to be one of peace (*santa*), and when he wants to arrive at it, then the “what” that (*yan taṃ*) it is proper as the practice should be done (*karaṇīya*) by him is this (*taṃ*) which should be done by one with skill in good (*attha, kusaleṇa*).

(KhpA:Ñ 274, highlights added)⁴⁰

4.1.1.2 In fact, there is no problem at all if we translate **Sn 143ab** as “What should be done by one skilled in good, | having understood [having approached] that state of peace” Here *abhisamecca* is taken as an absolute or gerund, “having understood or approached,” of the verb *abhisameti*, that is, *abhi + sam + eti*. The verb *eti* has two senses: (1) goes (towards), (2) comes, and both are applicable

³⁹ See SD 33.8 (3); also SD 33.1b (1.2.1).

⁴⁰ See KUAN Tse-fu 2008:116 f. See foll n.

here. We could take the sense of *abhisameti* here either as (1) having theoretically understood the spiritual goal or nirvana, or (2) having approached to reach the path (that is, become a saint, but not yet an arhat). (CPD: ¹abhi-sameti.)

Abhisameti here clearly has the sense of a *theoretical* understanding of the spiritual goal or nirvana, or we could stretch the sense to cover streamwinning or once-returning (since here there is more to be done in terms of working towards arhathood). The proper and usual term for “realize” would be *sacchikaroti*, as is clear from the section on “the 3 phases and 12 aspects” in **the Dhamma, cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11).⁴¹

4.1.2 attha, kusalena [§1a]

“By one skilled in good,” that is, “by one adept in finding out what is good or profitable” (= *attha, cheka*).⁴² *Attha, kusala*, the Sutta’s theme, characterizes the ideal Buddhist who is interested in his welfare here and now, and in the next. Jayawickrama says that the emphasis on a life that is beyond the censure of the wise [§3b] may suggest that the *attha* (skill) was connected primarily with this world (PBR 2,2:98).

On a mundane level, we should be mindful that this opening line evokes thus: “One’s duty to be done with wholesome purpose” On a higher level, this refers to “What should be done with wholesome purpose.” Here, we take *attha* to mean “the goal,” that is nirvana, that is, attaining at least streamwinning. All this means that the meditators are not yet fully awakened, but are making efforts to reach the goal of freedom.

Moreover, the Commentary explains *dassanena* (Sn 152b = 9b) as “the right view that belongs to the path of streamwinning” (KhpA 251). This shows that this Sutta does not apply only to an awakened person, especially a non-returner or an arhat. Anyway, this makes good sense, as from the background story [1.2], it is clear that the monks are neither non-returners nor arhats. In fact, the instructions in this Sutta are comprehensive enough and suitable for *anyone* cultivating lovingkindness as a meditation practice.

4.1.3 Impediments to meditation

According to Buddhaghosa, the one who is “skilled in good” would also be able to do his preliminary duties in *kasina* meditation,⁴³ to repair his own bowl, robes, etc (Vism 3.28/89), and to fulfill other such major and minor duties for his companions in the holy life—elsewhere called “cutting off the lesser impediments” (Vism 4.20/122). These are meditation instructions that not only apply to monastic practitioners, but also to lay practitioners, that is, anyone wishing to cultivate lovingkindness.

4.2 “ABLE” IN TERMS OF EFFORT [§1c]

The meditator should be “able” (*sakka*) [§1c] in two ways (physical and mental), that is to say:

(1) we should have good health and digestion, and

(2) we should have energy in abandoning the unwholesome and undertaking the wholesome.

These two are the 2nd and the 4th of the 5 limbs of effort (*padhāniy’āṅga*) respectively (KhpA 239).

The 5 limbs of effort (*padhāniy’āṅga*) are:

(1) Wise faith in the Buddha’s awakening (“Such indeed is that Blessed One...”),⁴⁴

⁴¹ S 56.11.11/5:422 (SD 1.1).

⁴² KhpA 236; PED sv.

⁴³ Vism 4/118-176; other *kasinas*, Vism 5/170-177. On kasina meditation, see *Bhāvanā*, SD 15.1 (9.2).

⁴⁴ See eg (**Mahānāma**) *Gilayāna S* (S 55.54.5/5:408), SD 4.10.

(2) Good health, that is, we suffer little distress or sickness, having a good digestion that is neither too cool nor too hot but of a middling temperature suitable for exertion;

(3) Not fraudulent or deceitful, presenting ourselves as we really are to our teachers or to wise colleagues in the holy life or our community. This refers to truthful communications with those capable of helping us in our meditation and spiritual wellbeing.

(4) Effort that is constantly asserted for abandoning unwholesome states and cultivating wholesome states, and is steadfast, firm in advancing and remaining in wholesome states; and

(5) Wisdom, that is, penetrative insight into the rising and falling of things, with noble realization that leads to the destruction of suffering. (D 3:237; M 2:95 = 128; A 3:65 = 5:15)

These teachings and related ones are also found in two consecutive texts, **the (Pañca) Padhāna Sutta** (A 5.53) and **the Samaya Sutta** (A 5.54). Both texts deal with the 5 limbs of spiritual endeavour, that is, the five improper times (*asamaya padhāna*) and five proper times (*samaya padhāna*) for spiritual effort.

The 5 proper times for spiritual effort are:

- (1) when we are in the prime of youth;
- (2) when we are enjoying good health and digestion;
- (3) in time of plenty;
- (4) when people dwell in fellowship, mingling like milk and water; and
- (5) when the monastic community dwells in fellowship, finding comfort in one teaching.

(A 5.53/3:65), SD 51.8, & (A 5.54/3:65 f), SD 51.9

4.3 “UPRIGHT” AND “THOROUGHLY UPRIGHT” [§1c]

The meditator cultivating lovingkindness must be “upright, thoroughly upright” (*ujū ca sūjū ca*). The differences in connotation between being “upright” and being “thoroughly upright,” are as follows:

upright (uju) (socio-moral)

- (1) through non-fraudulence (*asaṭhatāya*), ie, by honesty.
- (2) no crookedness of body and speech.
- (3) no boasting of special qualities (of dhyana or the path) that one lacks.

thoroughly upright (sūjū) (mental)

through non-deceitfulness (*amāyāvitāya*), that is, by straightforwardness (eg S 4:298).
no crookedness of mind.
not tolerating any gain arising on account of non-existent qualities.

While “upright” refers to the cultivation or restraint of *body and speech*, that is, the development of moral virtue, “thoroughly upright” refers to the *mental* aspects of our conduct, that our mind too is wholesome, so that our intentions are pure and reflected so in our actions.

4.4 CONTENTMENT [§2.1a]

The cultivator of lovingkindness should be “**contented**” (*santussaka*) [§2a] in terms of the twelvefold contentment (*dvādasā, vidha santosa*) as explained in the Commentary on stanza 8 of **the Maṅgala Sutta** (Sn 265).⁴⁵ A monastic is contented with the 4 supports—robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicinal support—that he receives, and he is *content* with them in 3 ways, that is, regarding what he has received (*yathā*,-

⁴⁵ KhpA 145-147 :: KhpA:Ñ 157-159. SnA repeats this and refers to it. (SnA 1:300)

lābha,santosa), in terms of his strength (*yathā,bala,santosa*), and with what is befitting (*yathā,sāruppa,-santosa*).⁴⁶

With regard to **robes**, he is content with even simple rag-robes. However, if he has a fine robe but it is too heavy so that it weighs him down, he is content and willing to exchange it with a fellow monastic for a lighter one. If he receives a very fine robe, befitting an elder or teacher, he would happily give it to him accordingly.

With regard to **almsfood**, he is content with the simplest of meals. However, if he is ill and the food causes or worsens his condition, he may exchange it with a fellow monastic for suitable medicinal drinks, such as ghee, honey or milk. If he receives fine almsfood, he happily gives it to elders or those who need such food (such as those recovering from illness).

With regard to **lodging**, he is content with the simplest, such as the open outdoors, a tree-foot, or a leaf-hut. If he receives a pleasurable or luxurious lodging which he thinks might arouse lust, induce indolence or does not conduce to his practice, he would reject it.

With regard to **medicinal support**, he is content with simply fermented cow's urine with gall-nuts as medicine (or whatever health-care that he receives). If he receives some medicine that is other than what he needs, he happily gives it away to other monastics who need it. Even if he has the "four sweets" (of ghee, butter, honey and molasses), he would happily give them away to a fellow monastic who needs them. (KhpA 145-147).

4.5 HEART (*MĀNASĀ*) [§8b]

Mānasa (literally "mind") is a secondary formation from *manas* = *mano*, meaning, "belonging to the mind," that is, intention, purpose, mind (as an active force), mental action. The Majjhima Commentary says that it has 3 senses, namely: lust (*rāga*), mind (*citta*), and arhathood (*arahatta*), defined as follows:

- (1) lust: "The heart is a snare that wanders about mid-air." (V 1:21; S 1:111)
- (2) mind: "Consciousness (*citta*), mind (*mano*), heart (*mānasa*)." (Dhs 10)
- (3) arhathood: "A learner who has not attained his heart's ideal." (S 1:121). (MA 1:40 f)

The expression *appatta,mānasa*, used mainly as a complement to *sekha* (learner) means "who has not attained (the bliss of) perfection (*arahatta*)."⁴⁷ A less common sense is that of "not having attained fulfillment of one's wishes" (J 6:584,30*).

In later texts, *mānasa* is quite synonymous with *hadaya* (Skt *hṛdaya*), "heart." In keeping with the spirit of lovingkindness which the Sutta epitomizes, the term *mānasa* has been rendered here as "heart." One important rationale for this is that the goal of the cultivation of lovingkindness is the feeling, that is, a "direct experience," of lovingkindness.

It is also interesting to note that the Chinese word 心 *xīn* means both "heart" and "mind." What we can think, as a rule, constitutes *knowledge*, but what we feel often inspires a *vision*. Knowledge limits the scope of reality, but vision frees the mind to encompass true reality. We can never *know* lovingkindness; we can only *feel* it.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5), SD 37.7 (3.1); **Anubuddha S** (S 47.3), SD 24.6a (2.3.1(2)).

⁴⁷ M 1:4,7, 1:477,11 = 3:4,14 = A 4:362,20 (= *appatta,arahattā*, AA); S 1:121,19*, S 2:90,22 229,24, Tha 222 1045, J 6:584,30*.

⁴⁸ For a study, see **Vedanā**, SD 17.3; also "To believe, to know, to feel," Reflection R168, 2010.

4.6 “STANDING, WALKING, SITTING | OR LYING DOWN” [§9ab]

Verse 9 of the Sutta says that we should keep up this heart of lovingkindness “while standing, moving, sitting, | or lying down, as long as one is free from drowsiness.” This is a reference to the 4 physical postures (*iriyā, patha*).⁴⁹ Mindfulness of the 4 postures is a part of body-based meditation (*kāyānupassanā*). This refers to the total cultivation of lovingkindness in our waking life.

Of these postures, **walking** is the most comprehensive in that *it encompasses all the other postures*. So, we stand with lovingkindness, sit with lovingkindness, lie down with lovingkindness. All these postures should continuously (that is, without break) flow into one another. From any of these postures, we then rise and walk with lovingkindness. In this sense, all the other three postures are subsumed in walking meditation, of which it is said that the sign (*nimitta*) “is not lost (*na nassati*)” (AA 3:236).⁵⁰

4.7 “AS LONG AS ONE IS UNROWSY” [§9b]

Understandably if we are drowsy, it would be difficult to cultivate mindfulness, much less attain dhyana. Hence, we need to remove this hindrance of drowsiness. The best way to do this is to revert to breath meditation. We can either do this in an undirected manner, that is, simply watching the breathing coming in and out.

Or, we can direct our mind to the nose-tip to feel a gentle touch of the breath, or the rising and falling of the belly, or feeling the rising and falling of the breath in our whole body (or just focusing on the chest or sternum area). This directed method is not really a location of the breath, but an aid to *feel* the breath so that we calm and clear the mind in due course.⁵¹

Otherwise, we can carefully study **the Pacalā Sutta** (A 7.58), and its 8 methods of overcoming drowsiness. Only the first seven are actually methods of overcoming drowsiness, that is, mental noting, reflection, recitation, mindful massage, looking around at the spaciousness, the perception of light, and walking meditation. If all this fails, then we should wisely take a rest or break.⁵²

4.8 “ONE SHOULD KEEP TO THIS MINDFULNESS” [§9c]

If we mindfully cultivate lovingkindness, we will feel zest and joy arising in due course. As we sustain this joy, we abandon, at least temporarily, the hindrances, and attain some level of deep stillness. Or, if we are diligent enough, we will attain dhyana itself.

This lovingkindness dhyana (*mettā jhāna*) should be maintained for as long as possible, and cultivated until we are very familiar with it. In the case of forest monks (to whom this Sutta is first taught) and similar situations, this meditation state should be maintained throughout our waking moments before going on to other practices.

The Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary explains that these 4 kinds of “abiding” or “abode” (*vihāra*) are “the dwelling in the 4 postures that are divine, perfect, and noble” (*catūsu dibba, brahma, ariya, iriyā, patha, -vihāresu*), and abiding thus with lovingkindness, “delighting in the purpose of being blame-free as regards oneself and others” (*niddosattā attano pi paresam atthaka, rattā ca*, KhpA 250,25).

This “divine, perfect and noble” abiding is clearly an allusion to **the Venāga, pura Sutta** (A 3.63), where the Buddha says that “there are these 3 high and great couches that I obtain whenever I like, with neither difficulty nor trouble ...” that is,

⁴⁹ P 2:225, DA 1:183; cf BHSD: iriyāpatha.

⁵⁰ See **Caṅkama S** (A 5.29) + SD 76.3.

⁵¹ Further, see SD 7.13 (2.4) on *parimukha*.

⁵² For details, see **Pacalā S** (A 7.88.2-9), SD 4.11.

the <u>heavenly</u>	great high couch,	<i>dibba uccā,sayana mahā,sayana</i>
the <u>perfect</u>	great high couch, and	<i>brahma uccā,sayana mahā,sayana</i>
the <u>noble</u>	great high couch.	<i>ariya uccā,sayana mahā,sayana</i>

The “heavenly couch, great high couch” refers to his attainment of dhyanas; the “perfect great high couch” to the divine abodes; and the “noble great high couch” to the uprooting of the 3 unwholesome roots.⁵³ The Buddha declares that he enjoys all these “great high couches” in all the 4 postures (standing, walking, sitting and reclining).⁵⁴

5 Types of beings

5.1 CLASSIFICATION OF BEINGS

5.1.1 Beings classified by sets [§§4b-5c].

5.1.1.1 PAIRS AND TRIADS. In the first method of lovingkindness practice [§§4-5], there is an attempt at a simple classification of beings as recipients of our lovingkindness. This section firstly lists beings in a variety of pairs, thus:

moving/still	<i>tasā vā thāvarā cā</i>	[§4b]	[5.3]
seen/unseen	<i>diṭṭhā vā ye vā addiṭṭhā</i>	[§5a]	[5.4]
far/near	<i>ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre</i>	[§5b]	[5.5]
already born/seeking birth	<i>bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā</i>	[§5c]	[5.6]

and then as triads [5.1.1.3]:

long/medium/short	<i>dīgha vā ... majjhimā rassakā</i>	[§4bc]
large/fine/gross	<i>mahantā vā ... aṇuka,thūlā</i>	[§4cd].

5.1.1.2 “MEDIUM.” The meaning of “medium” is implicit in all the three components of each of the triads, while the meaning of “small” is implicit in two of them (KhpA 245). This detailed list is to assist the meditator in mental concentration and in the steadying (*saṅṭhāna*) of the mind (KhpA 244). Mental concentration is assisted by keeping the mind “interested” in a *variety* of mental objects (the kinds of beings), and the mind is steadied (remains attentive and concentrated) by keeping away any distraction on account of the intrusion of any external or physical sense-stimuli.

5.1.1.3 BEINGS CLASSIFIED BY SIZE. The Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary (KhpA 245-247) gives the following examples of beings here [§4cd], classified by size, thus:

The long: serpents, fishes, lizards, etc.

The large: water-beings, such as turtles; land-beings, such as elephants and nagas (serpents); non-humans, such as Dānava demons [Miln 153]; and Rāhu (“eclipse demon,” a dragon swallowing the moon, A 2:17).

The medium: horses, oxen, buffaloes, pigs, etc.

The short: those beings that are neither big nor medium, eg dwarfs, etc.

⁵³ On the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*), see **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205), SD 18.2.

⁵⁴ A 3.63.4-7/1:181-184 (SD 21.1).

The fine: those beings that are invisible to the naked eye but that are perceptible through the divine eye (or scientific instruments), that is, they are microscopic; some are water-generated. Included are lice! Any creature not falling under any of the above categories is classified here. However, germs and bacteria are not regarded as living beings as they are complex chemical structures without any consciousness.

The gross: creatures with rounded form, such as fishes, tortoises, oysters, clams, etc. [The examples given by KhpA for this last category are very curious. This is probably because the term *thūla* also means “low” (in the sense of lowly evolved).]

5.1.1.4 A LATE BUDDHIST CLASSIFICATION. These are clearly not scientific taxonomy, but an early Indian attempt at a classification of living beings, especially for religious and meditation purposes. It is significant, remarks Jayawickrama, that the fourfold classification of *jalābu,ja*, *aṇḍa,ja*, *saṃseda,ja* and *opapātika* (respectively, the viviparous, the oviparous, the moisture-born and the spontaneously-generated), which was used comparatively early in India, does not occur here. It may indicate, Jayawickrama concludes, that the Buddhist commentators had not yet adopted it into their works though the classification occurs in prose sections of the suttas (eg D 3:230; M 1:73; S 3:240) (1977: 97.14).⁵⁵

5.1.2 Beings classified by location [§8c]

5.1.2.1 As a whole, the phrase “**above, below and across**” [§8c] refers to the various world, traditionally ranging from lowest hell (*avīcīto*) right up to the peak of existence (*bhav’agga*), the highest heavens, including all the other realms “across” (that is, in between)—this covers the whole sentient universe! (KhpA 249). This should be the range of our lovingkindness.

The same Commentary further explains the location terms as referring to the “3 worlds,” as follows:

above	(<i>uddha</i>)	the beings of formless realms.	
below ⁵⁶	(<i>adho</i>)	the beings of the sense-worlds (including our world).	
across	(<i>tiriya</i>)	the beings of the form-realms.	(KhpA 248)

These 3 worlds are often mentioned in the suttas, such as **the Sammā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (M 9) and **the Bhava Sutta 2** (A 3.77).⁵⁷

5.1.2.2 More details are given in the suttas on how lovingkindness and the other abodes should be cultivated in the fullest manner. **The Tevijja Sutta** (D 13), for example, describes how lovingkindness should be cultivated to an immeasurable level, thus:

With a heart of lovingkindness, one dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone, one dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness that is vast, exalted, boundless, without hate, without ill will.

(**Tevijja Sutta**, D 13,76-79/1:250 f), SD 1.8⁵⁸ [6.4]

⁵⁵ On the concept of “sentient being,” see Piatigorsky 1984:23 ff.

⁵⁶ In practical terms, “across” (*tiriya*) means the 4 quarters (beginning with the east, “the front”) and the directions in between.

⁵⁷ M 9,30/1:50 (SD 11.14); A 3.77/1:224 f (SD 23.13).

⁵⁸ *So mettā,sahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati. Tathā dutiyāṃ. Tathā tatiyāṃ. Tathā catutthāṃ. Iti uddham adho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokāṃ mettā,sahagatena cetasā vipulena mahag,gatena appamāṇena averena avyāpajjena pharitvā viharati. D 13,76-79/1:251×4, 17,2.4/2:186, 19,46/2:242, 59/2:250, 25,17/3:50×2, 26,28/3:78×2, 33,1.11(6)/3:224×2; M 7,13/1:38×2, 40,9/1:283×2, 43,31/1:297×2, 50,14-15/1:335×4, 52,8/1:351×2, 55,6-11/1:369, 55,6/1:370, 83,5-10/2:76×2, 17-19/2:77×2, 78×2, 82×2, 97,32-35/2:-*

In meditation practice, the phrase “**vast, exalted, boundless, without hate, without ill will**” (*vipulena maha-g, gatena appamāṇena averena avyāpajjena*)⁵⁹ means that the lovingkindness (and the other 3 abodes) should be cultivated to the level of dhyana. Coming out of dhyana, we when direct lovingkindness boundlessly, free from any negative emotions such as hate or ill will. (MA 4:200; ***)

5.2 LIVING BEINGS [§4a]

5.2.0 Commentarial explanations

The Commentary equates “living beings” (*pāṇa, bhūtā*) here with *pāṇa, bhū*, literally meaning, “breathing beings” or “beings with breath.”⁶⁰ Technically, these 2 senses of *pāṇa, bhūta* are explained as compounds that are: (1) a bahuvrihi (“breathing beings”), and as (2) a dvandva (“that which has breath and lives”) [5.2.1]. (KhP 245)

5.2.1 *pāṇa*- as “living beings (that breathe)”

The word *pāṇa* literally means “breath,” but is commonly used as a synecdoche for “life.” In the **Cūḷa, vedalla Sutta** (M 44), it is implied that breath, like nutriment, is inseparable from what is normally called “life.”⁶¹ The Commentary explains that by “(that which has) breath” or “breathing thing” (*pāṇa*) is meant all life-forms having the 5 constituents of existence (*pañca, vokāra, bhava*), that is, they have the 5 aggregates of form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, invariably manifested at the same time (KhP 245).⁶²

Such beings are those of the sense-realm (*kāma, bhava*) and the form-realms (*rūpa, bhava*), except for the non-percipient beings (*asañña, satta*) (Vism 17.253/571). The term “4-constituent existence” refers to the four formless realms (*arūpa, bhava*), where there are only four aggregates (that is, without form), and the “one-constituent existence” is the realm of non-percipient beings (who have only form, but a very refined one, that is, of light).⁶³

195×2, **99**,24-27/2:207, 208, **127**,7/3:146×2; **S 41.7**/4:296×2, **42.8**,17/4:322×2, **42.13**,4.1/4:351, **42.13**/4:352×2, 354, 355×2, 356 f, **46.54**/5:115, 16×4, 117-121; **A 3.63**,6/1:183×2, **3.65**,15/1:192×2, **3.66**,13/1:196, **4.125**/2:129×2, **4.126**/2:129+130, **4.190**,4/2:184, **5.192**,3/3:225×2, **9.18**,10/4:390, **10.208**/5:299+300, **11.17**/5:344+345; **Nc:Be** 248, 304; **Pm 5.20**/2:39; **Vbh** (ch on *Appamañña*) 272×4, 273×2, 274×2, 275×2, 276×2, 282×4; **Vism 9.44**/308 (foll by comy). See SD 33.9 (3.5) for details of refs. For details on the directions of lovingkindness, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

⁵⁹ Comys explain these terms as follows: *vipulena*, “boundless by way of pervasion” (NmA 2:457), “countless beings as meditation subject” (MA 2:100); *maha-g, gatena*, “(pervasion) by way of worlds” (NmA 2:457), “attain greatness of the noble disciples” (AA 3:96, 355), “until the mind is focused, to the level of dhyana” (MA 4:200); *appamāṇena*, “boundlessly by way of beings” (Nm 2:457), “boundlessly by way of meditation skill” (NmA 2:457), “immeasurably” (AA 3:355), “free from the hindrances” (SA 3:149); *averena*, “free from physical suffering” (Nm 2:457), “without anger” (MA 2:100), “free from the unwholesomeness of anger, from angry people” (AA 3:355); *avyāpajjena*, “free from suffering” (MA 2:100), “free from physical suffering” (NmA 2:457), “free from anger and suffering” (AA 3:355), “free from physical and mental suffering” (AA 4:171).

⁶⁰ KhP 245; J 5:79; cf M 1:301, 3:5; A 2:210; see PED sv.

⁶¹ M 44,13-15/1:301 (SD 40a.9).

⁶² *Pāṇā eva bhūtā pāṇa, bhūtā. Atha vā pāṇantīti pāṇā, etena assāsa, passāsa-p, paṭibaddhe pañca, vokāra, satte gaṇhāti. Bhavantīti bhūtā, etena eka, vokāra, catu, vokāra, satte gaṇhāti.* (KhP 245)

⁶³ Comys generally give a twofold def of *deva*, playing on the stem, *dibba*, meaning “playful” or “radiant.” “They are playful, hence they are called *devas*, meaning that they sport with the 5 cords of sense-pleasures, or they radiate with their own glory” (*dibbantīti devā, pañcahi kāma, guṇehi kīlanti, attano vā siriya jotentīti attho*, KhP 123; SnA 1:300; more elaborate def at ItA 1:177, which mentions that their powers are dhyana-based). The first def (sporting with sense-pleasures) refers to the sense-world gods) (BA 32; NmA 1:154; VbhA 454), while the 2nd

Here, in the Sutta, *pāṇa-* [§4a] refers specifically to “living beings.”

5.2.2 –*bhūta*

The suffix *-bhūta* literally means “that which exists,” and refers to “living things.” The Commentary explains that “they exist, therefore they are called beings (*bhavantī ti bhūtā*),” which includes 1-constituent and 4-constituent beings (*eka,vokāra,catu,vokāra,satte*) [5.2.1] (KhpA 245).

5.2.3 *ek’indriya*

The term *ek’indriya jīva* (“single-facultied life-form”) is often found in the early texts and commentaries in reference to plant life,⁶⁴ that is, it only has a sense of “touch.”⁶⁵ The term is evidently a borrowed one but used in reference to popular belief in ancient India. **Pācittiya 10** is perhaps the only place in the early texts where the earth is clearly mentioned as *ek’indriya jīva* and regarded as having life or consciousness (*jīva,saññino ... paṭhaviyā*), that is, in the eyes of the world (V 4:32).⁶⁶

5.3 “MOVING OR STILL” (*tasā vā thāvarā vā*) [§4b]

5.3.1 Traditional explanation

This is one of the problematic expressions in the Sutta Nipāta. According to the Pali-English Dictionary (PED), the term *tasa* is metaphorically used of people who are in fear and trembling, as distinguished from *thāvara*, a self-possessed and stable being (= arhat, KhpA 245). In this sense, the first word, *tasa*, is derived from *tasati* both in the senses of:

- (1) *tyati* (Sanskrit), “to be thirsty”; figuratively, “to crave” (S 2:13, Miln 254), and
- (2) *trasati* (Vedic), “to tremble, shake, to have fear, to be frightened” (Sn 394, Nc 479, KhpA 245).

Dines Andersen equates *tasa* with the Sanskrit *trasa*, and explains it as “moving, trembling, feeble” (A *Pali Glossary* 111). The PED adds that *thāvara* is always used in connection with *tasa*, referring to “movable” beings (the animal world) in contrast to the “immovable” (the vegetable world and the inanimate).⁶⁷

Most traditional translators render *tasā vā thāvarā vā* (Sn 146b) as “the frail or the firm” or such like, and interpret it as referring to those who still have craving (*tasā*) and the arhats (*thāvarā*) respectively, in keeping with the Commentary (KhpA 245). These beings are to be included in our lovingkindness.

Unawakened beings need our lovingkindness, but do arhats need our thoughts or wishes that they may “be happy-minded” (Sn 147d)? Arhats, on account of their full awakening and natural moral virtue, are beyond good and bad, and have transcended happiness and sorrow.⁶⁸

def (“radiant”) is a general one (ItA 2:158). Vbh comy: they sport with sense-pleasures “in various ways on account of their psychic powers” (*nāna-p,pakārehi vā iddhi,visesehi*, VbhA 518)

⁶⁴ V 1:137 f 3:156 4:34 = SnA 1:3 f = DhA 3:302 4:296.

⁶⁵ In modern botany, this includes characteristics such as taxis, a locomotor response toward or away from an external stimulus by a motile (and usually simple) organism. In other words, plants can only respond to external stimuli (presence and changes), such as light (phototropism), water (hygroscopy) and heat, in predictable ways.

⁶⁶ This illustrates an occasion when the Buddha makes a Vinaya rule out of respect for popular opinion, even though he does not actually endorse such opinions (as is obvious from the word *saññino*, “who perceive” or “who regard”). On concept of sentient being, see Piatigorsky 1984:ch 2 esp n11.

⁶⁷ It quotes as examples Sn 394, It 31 f. Cf M 2:105 & M:H 2:290.4, SnA 2:468 493 & esp Khp:N 285.40.

⁶⁸ See **Beyond good and evil**, SD 18.7.

On the other hand, we certainly should not regard them with ill will, as lovingkindness is an all-inclusive and unconditional wholesome emotion. On the other hand, arhats (like the Buddha) are not “beings” (*sattā*), as they have gone beyond any classification (Sn 209d).

5.3.2 Scholarly views

Scholars like **K R Norman** and **L Schmithausen** take the expression in the sense of “(all beings) moving and unmoving.” Schmithausen however believes that, from a historical viewpoint, the expression refers to “animals and plants” (“Status of Plants in Earliest Buddhism,” 1990).⁶⁹ Norman derives *tasa* from the Sanskrit *trasa*, “moving,” that is, “the collective body of moving or living beings”—with the synonyms of “movable” (*jaṅgama*) and “trembling” (*cala*)—as opposed to *sthāvara*, “standing still, stationary, not moving, fixed, stable, immovable” (SED svv).⁷⁰

Both Norman and Schmithausen suggest that the meanings of *tasa* and *thāvara* were extended during the Commentarial period. Norman quotes the Sutta Nipāta Commentary, which says that “*tasa* is a synonym for those who have cravings or fears; *thāvara* means that they are standing still. This is a synonym for those who are rid of their cravings, that is, arahants” [KhpA 245] (Norman 1984:80).

Schmithausen, in his paper presented at the International Buddhist Conference (Bangkok, 1990), asserts that:

The expression “*tasa* and *thāvara* living beings” is frequent in Jaina sources, where it cannot mean anything but “moving and unmoving living beings,” the unmoving living beings consisting in earth-beings and plants. The dichotomy (though not the terminology) goes back to Vedic times, and is common also in Hindu sources. And even in later Buddhist sources *sthāvara* occurs in the sense of “plant.”

It is difficult to imagine that any auditor at the time of earliest Buddhism would have understood these common terms in a different sense, and hence I for one do not find it probable that they were used differently without any explicit warning. (1990:4 f)

Schmithausen’s explanation, that is, the historical interpretation, would render *tasā vā thāvarā vā* as “animals or plants” or “beings or plants,” and this would fit many sutta contexts.⁷¹ But there is a problem here (at least in the case of Sn 146b): the expression here is an extension of the word *sattā* (beings) at Sn 147d: “May all beings be happy-minded.” Surely, we cannot regard plants as “(sentient) beings” nor can they be “happy-minded” (Schmithausen seems to regard plants as being sentient).

5.3.3 Sutta evidence

5.3.3.1 There is evidence in the suttas that the early Buddhists did not regard trees as being sentient, certainly not as having a mind. In **the Bhaddiya Sutta** (A 4.193), for example, the Buddha says to Bhaddiya: “Why, Bhaddiya, if these great sal trees could be converted by this magic (*māyā*), it would be to their profit and happiness for a long time [that is, if they could think], to say nothing of one who has become human.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Cf Mvst 1:207 *jaṅgama,sthāvara* (Mvst:J 1:164 “animal or plant”), 2:10 *cala sthāvara* (Mvst:J 2:10 “animal or plant”).

⁷⁰ Skt *sthavara* is cognate with P *thera*, “elder,” ie one who is stable, unmoving (in moral virtue, wisdom, etc).

⁷¹ Sn 394d, 704d, 967b = Nc 487, M 2:105 = Tha 867, M 2:196, S 1:141, 4:117 351 ff = 5:393 = It 31 f, Dh 405c = Sn 629b, Nc 221, J 5:221.

⁷² A 4.193/2:194 (SD 45.8).

The Vinaya (eg the Saṅgh’ādi, sesa rule regarding Channa felling a sacred tree),⁷³ regards trees as being “one-facultied” (*ek’indriya*), that is, having only the sense of touch or taxis.

5.3.3.2 Furthermore, if plants were regarded as sentient, they would have been included as a fifth class in the “modes of life” (*yoni*), which however are fourfold: the oviparous, the viviparous, the moisture-born and the spontaneously born (D 3:230, M 1:73). (The “moisture-born” are life-forms that arise in rotting fish, corpses or rice, or in a dirty pool.)

5.3.3.3 This problem in translation is avoided when we render the correlative expression as “moving or still” (Sn:N 146b) or even “mobile or stationary.” It is possible to give it an amplified translation, as “moving (beings) or stationary (plants),” but this would be too narrow an interpretation. The term “still” or “stationary” (*thāvarā*) could well refer to plants, but more likely, it refers to the beings inhabiting the plants, such as arboreal deities (as in the case of **Pācittiya 11** regarding the Āḷavī monk who, while felling a tree, struck the arm of the tree deity’s child).⁷⁴

5.3.3.4 Moreover, in the **Cūḷa, dhamma, samādāna Sutta** (M 45), the Buddha explains to the monks that the terror that results from wrongful sense-indulgence is comparable to the terror of a “deity residing in that sal tree (already overgrown with maluva creeper), afraid, agitated, might fall trembling,”⁷⁵ and be killed should the tree collapse in a storm because of the weight of the creepers covering it (MA 2:372).

This Sutta (M 45) and the **Gilāna Dassana Sutta** (S 41.10) further mention devas as residing in gardens, forests and trees, and in medicinal herbs, grasses and forest trees (*osadhi, tiṇa, vana-p, patīsu devatā*).⁷⁶ The Saṃyutta Commentary says that the garden deities are those that dwell on flowers and fruits (SA ad loc).

5.3.3.5 One of the clearest evidence for the lack of consciousness (in the sense of having some kind of free will) in plants is found in the **Sarakāṇī Sutta** (S 55.24), where the Buddha declares that anyone (or anything) with consciousness (we might today say, “intelligence”) –even plants—they would be able to awaken to spiritual freedom:

Even these great sal trees,⁷⁷ Mahānāma, if they could understand what is well spoken and what is ill spoken, I would declare them to be streamwinners, no longer bound for the lower world, sure of going over to self-awakening!
(S 55.24, 13/5:377), SD 3.6

5.3.4 Interpretations of *tasa, thāvara*

In the other occurrences of the correlatives ***tasa*** and ***thāvara*** in Sn (394d, 629b, 704d), we have the following possibilities, all of which are applicable:

	<u><i>tasa</i></u>	<u><i>thāvara</i></u>
Historical:	“living beings”	“plants” (the life in plants)
Commentarial:	“frail (beings)” (the afflicted)	“firm (beings)” (the unafflicted)
Natural or neutral:	“moving (beings)”	“still (beings)”
Broad sense:	the unawakened	arhats and those on the path

⁷³ V 3:136, cf 3:4 4:32 34.

⁷⁴ V 3:4, cf SnA 3 f = DhA 3:302 f.

⁷⁵ M 45,4/1:306 @ SD 32.4.

⁷⁶ S 41.10,2/4:302 @ SD 16.16.

⁷⁷ Comy says that the Buddha was pointing to 4 sal trees nearby (*Shorea robusta*) (AA 3:288).

The rendering of *thāvarā* as “still” (eg K R Norman) has the advantage of a general sense that can mean both (a) “stationary” (referring to “plants”), and (b) “awakened” (referring to arhats). While traditional Buddhists are likely to favour the Commentarial interpretation (“frail and firm”), modern scholars and environmentalists would probably choose the historical rendition (“beings and plants”). I have here, however, chosen the general translation of “moving and still.”

In conclusion, it might be said that the early Pali texts use the correlatives in both the historical sense (as used by the Jains, for example) as well as in the special Buddhist sense (as found in the Commentaries). The Commentarial sense, however, is likely to be later.

5.4 “SEEN OR UNSEEN,” *diṭṭhā vā ye vā adiṭṭhā* [§5a]

The Commentary says that the “seen” (*diṭṭha*) are those beings which are within our natural range of vision, while the “unseen” (*adiṭṭha*) are those beyond the seas, mountains, world-system, etc (KhpA 246). In more realistic terms, the “seen” refers to those people or beings whom we meet and interact with in our daily lives. The “unseen” include those people we care about who are absent or some distance away, even in some distant land, or even in outer space. Our lovingkindness is not limited by distance, and can reach anyone anywhere.

5.5 “THAT DWELL FAR OR NEAR,” *ye ca dūre ... avidūre* [§5b]. The Commentary gives this categorization:

Those that dwell near

- (1) the footless and bipeds near us;
- (2) beings dwelling inside our body;
- (3) those dwelling in our homes;
- (4) those inhabiting our abodes, village;
country, continent, world-system.

Those that dwell far away

the footless and bipeds far from us;
beings that are outside our body;
those dwelling outside our homes;
those inhabiting outside our abodes, etc.
(KhpA 246)

The commentarial division here is in spatial terms, that is, by “near” is meant close proximity, and by “far” is meant some distance away, probably out of the range of the naked eye. What is interesting, also problematic, here is that under the “near” category is included “creatures dwelling inside our body,” to whom we should cultivate lovingkindness.

Normal beings infesting our body would include parasites (such as lice and intestinal worms). **The Tissa Thera Vatthu** depicts the Buddha as instructing the monks not to harm a louse (*ūkā*) but let it live out its life (DhA 18.3 on Dh 240) as a louse.⁷⁸ Pācittiya 61 and 62 prohibits monastics from harming “living beings” (*pāṇa*), including those living in plants or in water.⁷⁹ The Vinaya, however, also records the doctor Jīvaka as healing a patient by trepanning him and removing two “worms” (*pāṇaka*) from his brain (Mv 8.1.18).⁸⁰

Such accounts highlight the value of life, even the lowliest. Even if in our daily lives as lay practitioners, we might not be able to reach such ideals, it remains that we should make every effort to be guided by them, and to at least work towards sustaining conditions that would respect life. In meditation practice, however, such ideals remind us to include all living beings in our lovingkindness, of which this Sutta is instructive.

⁷⁸ DhA 18.3/3:341-344: see SD 26.9 (1.6.3.3); also SD 48.1 (8.2.1.2). Cf **Lāḷudāyī Thera Vatthu** (DhA 18.4/3:344-348); **Lāḷudāyī Thera Vatthu** (DhA 11.7/3:123-127); **Sūkara J** (J 153/2:9-12).

⁷⁹ Pāc 61-62 @ V 4:124 f.

⁸⁰ Mv 8.1.18/1:274.

5.6 “THOSE ALREADY BORN AND THOSE SEEKING BIRTH” [§5c]

5.6.1 “Those already born” (*bhūtā*)

The phrase “**those already born**” (*bhūta*) here means “living beings” in general. I have translated it almost literally, reflecting its grammatical form as the past participle of *bhavati*, “to be,” that is, meaning “that which is born.” This translation gives a broad sense, encompassing all beings that are living, whether worldly or awakened, such as arhats (KhpA 246). In the broadest sense, we can take “beings” (*bhūta*) here, to which to direct our lovingkindness, as encompassing the world of “sentient beings” (*satta,loka*), the world as space (*okāsa*), and the world of formations (*saṅkhāra,loka*).⁸¹

Besides directing our lovingkindness to living beings, which is the most common way the meditation is understood, we could and should also direct our lovingkindness to the world as space which hold and shelter us, just as the Buddha meditates by gratefully gazing at the Bodhi tree during the 2nd week after his awakening.⁸²

The world of formations (*saṅkhāra,loka*) is the self-created universe of our senses, which we need to spiritually work on to fully understand, so that we can be fully liberated from it. This is the true “world” conquest that effectively begins with the attaining of streamwinning. Interestingly, here we need to properly cultivate lovingkindness first to ourselves so that we are fully free of self-hate, and then direct our lovingkindness to all beings and all things, regarding them as we regard ourselves in a most wholesome way. This is also a great way of preparing ourselves for an understanding of non-self.

5.6.2 “Those seeking birth” (*sambhavesī*)

5.6.2.1 DEFINITION OF *SAMBHAVESI*. The Commentary defines *sambhavesī*⁸³ as follows:

(1) Learners (*sekha*)⁸⁴ and ordinary worldly beings still “seeking existence” (*sambhavaṃ esantānaṃ*) because they have not yet abandoned the fetter of being.

(2) The oviparous (egg-born) or viviparous (uterus-born) creatures (eg M 1:73) who have not yet broken the egg-membrane or caul (KhpA 247).⁸⁵

In the case of the moisture-born and the spontaneously-born (that is, the higher divine beings), with the arising of their first thought-moment (that is, the moment of rebirth), they are *sambhavesī*; from the second thought-moment onwards, they are known as *bhūtā* (those born or “beings”) (KhpA 246 f).

The last comment on the explanation of *sambhavesī* by the the Commentary is very curious: “They are those ‘that yet seek to be’ (*sambhavesī*) as long as they do not reach any posture other than that in which they were born, while after that they are called those ‘that are’ (*bhūtā*)” (KhpA 247). This seems to suggest a sort of “suspended animation” or “hibernation” stage—could this be some kind of existence between one life and the next?

5.6.2.2 THE INTERMEDIATE BEING. Most Buddhist teachers (including Theravada monastics) today accept that the term *sambhavesī* refers to the “intermediate state” (*antarā,bhava*, Tib *bardo*) or “intermediate being” (*antarā,bhava sattva*), which is a state between one birth and the next, and which, according to Northern Buddhism (Mahayana and Vajrayana), may last up to 49 days. During that period, according to

⁸¹ These are “3 worlds,” as def in comys: Vism 7.37/204 f; DA 1:173; MA 1:397, 2:200.

⁸² MA 2:184; UA 52; BA 8; J 1:77. See **Dhamma and Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1 (5).

⁸³ M 38.15/1:261; S 12.64.2-3/2:101; Sn 147/26 = Khp 9/8,20.

⁸⁴ “Learners” (*sekha*) are saints short of an arhat, ie, the streamwinner, the once-returned, the non-returned and the arhat-of-the-path (arhat-to-be). See eg **Sekha S** (M 53), SD 21.14.

⁸⁵ Cf M 1:48, S 2:11.

Tibetan Buddhism, the deceased's consciousness encounters many visions of both peaceful and wrathful deities which are personifications of one's past karma.

From the early suttas, we can deduce that this intermediate state arises when the dying being is still very attached to its previous existence, and is caught in a sort of limbo, while its supporting karma lasts.⁸⁶ Like a preta, such a being can be assisted through the radiation of lovingkindness so that, uplifted with positive emotion, he lets go of attachment, and is reborn in a happier state.⁸⁷ Rebirth for the saints is evidently immediate on account of their wholesome minds. However, worldlings are more likely to be caught in an intermediate state on account of their attachment to their previous existence or some negative dying thought.⁸⁸

5.6.2.2 ASAṄGA ON ANTARĀ, BHAVA. Asaṅga (4th-5th cent CE), the founder of the Yogācāra system, accepts the *antarā, bhava*, that is, an existence between the death and rebirth of a being (Abhsy 42). The *antarā, bhava*, according to him, is an intervening existence for beings who are going to be born in the sense-world or in the form world, and for those who are departing from the formless world. Such a being, called *gandharva* (P *gandhabba*), is mind-made (*mano, maya*). He lives for seven days at the most and may depart even earlier, and then he is reborn in another existence.

The Sarvāstivāda also accepts the *antarā, bhava* (Abhk 3:36 ff) and regards it to be the death-consciousness (*cuti, citta*) which conditions the rebirth-consciousness. According to the Pubba,seliya and Sammitiya schools, the *antarā, bhava* is the *antarā, parinibbāyī*, a type of non-returner.⁸⁹

The Theravāda teachers who reject the *antarā, bhava* (Kvu 2:361 ff), generally refer to the “being-to-be-born” as the *gandhabba* (Skt *gandharva*—not to be confused with the “divine minstrels”), taking it as the object of rebirth consciousness (*paṭisandhi, citta*).⁹⁰ It would be difficult to reconcile such a view with the teachings, for example, of the **Chiggaḷa Sutta 2** (S 56.47), which says that it is difficult for a being in a subhuman plane to be reborn as a human.⁹¹

5.7 FIGURES AND DEFINITIONS

5.7.1 Explaining the word “without enmity” (*asapatta*) [§8d], the Commentary notes that the words for “enemy” (*paccatthiko, sapatto*) are figurative terms (*pariyāya, vacana*) (KhP 249). They are “figurative” (or “in a manner of speaking”) because all descriptions in terms of persons are non-factual definitions (*avijjamāna, paññatti*).

⁸⁶ On the intermediate state, see **Is rebirth immediate?** SD 2.17 (3).

⁸⁷ On how this occurs, see **Tiro, kuḍḍa S** (KhP 7/6 = Pv 1.5/4 f) + SD 2.7 (2+3).

⁸⁸ For a study, see **Is rebirth immediate?** SD 2.17.

⁸⁹ Kvu 361; UA 92 93; SA 2:373; KvA 106.

⁹⁰ On the *gandhabba*, see **Assalāyana S** (M 93.18/2:157), SD 40a.2.

⁹¹ **Chiggaḷa S 2** (S 56.47/5:455 f), SD 57.12. A being in any of the subhuman planes, esp the hells, would find it very difficult to be reborn as a human. On the other hand, it is very easy for celestial beings to “fall” (*cavati*) from their divine state and be reborn into the human realm, even lower. On the famous parable of the blind turtle and the plough-yoke, see also **Bāla Paṇḍita S** (M 129,24/3:169), SD 2.22; Thī 500 (the parable alluded to at Miln 204; DhsA 60) should be understood in this context. Cf **Chiggaḷa S 1** (S 56.45/5:453 f), SD 57.11. On defs of *antarā, parinibbāyī* & *antarā, bhava*, see CPD svv. On *antarā, parinibbayī*, see Masefield 1986:108 ff. On *bardo*, see EB Micro sv; cf Saddharma Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra ch 34, T 721, 722 = TK 20:1, 33:931. On *antārā, bhava*, see Ency Bsm 2:143 f; Wayman 1974, 1984 ch 12. For more details & refs, see **Is rebirth immediate?** SD 2.17.

5.7.2 The 6 ways of definition

5.7.2.1 The Puggala Paññatti and later works mention 6 ways of defining or describing (*paññatti*) things:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) defining the factual | <i>vijjamāna,paññatti</i> |
| (2) defining the non-factual | <i>avijjamāna,paññatti</i> |
| (3) defining the non-factual by the factual | <i>vijjamānena avijjamāna,paññatti</i> |
| (4) defining the factual by the non-factual | <i>avijjamānena vijjamāna,paññatti</i> |
| (5) defining the factual by the factual | <i>vijjamānena vijjamāna,paññatti</i> |
| (6) defining the non-factual by the non-factual | <i>avijjamānena avijjamāna,paññatti</i> |

(PugA 171 f, Abhs 41 f :: Abhs:AR 198 :: AbhsT:PTS 194)

5.7.2.2 The term “non-factual” or “non-existing” (*avijjamāna*) is the opposite of “factual” or existing (*vijjamāna*, literally meaning “being found,” “being known”). Ñāṇamoli prefers the former translation, and suggests that the word “existing” better suits *hoti* and *atthi* and their derivatives (KhpA:N 109,19). While the “**factual**” manner of definition or description refers to the “ultimate meaning” (*param’attha*), the “non-factual” definition is a “current usage” (*vohāra*) or “convention” (*sammuti*).

Definition or description in terms of the “factual” (*vijjamāna,paññatti*) is a commentarial term for what *is* or *exists*, and refers to something which exists in the real or highest sense, such as the 5 aggregates: form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness.⁹²

5.7.2.3 Definition in terms of **the non-factual** (*avijjamāna,paññatti*) refers to what is not “factual” in that way, being only describable “derivatively” upon those “facts” (eg “woman,” “man,” “land,” “hill”), which are regarded as “conceived” depending on that basis, that is, “substantiated merely by worldly language” (*loka,nirutti,matta,siddhi*), but are impossible to isolate from that (*na upalabbhati*). In the ultimate sense, such things do not exist (as they are derived from some mode of physical changes in nature).⁹³

5.7.2.4 The remaining ways of definition may be understood by a combination of the 2 terms respectively, for example, as:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| (3) “a <i>possessor</i> of the 6 superknowledges,” | <i>cha-!-abhiñña</i> |
| (4) “a <i>woman’s</i> voice,” | <i>itthi,sadda</i> |
| (5) “visual cognition,” and | <i>cakkhu,viññāṇa</i> |
| (6) “a <i>king’s</i> son.” | <i>rāja,putta</i> |

In these examples, the “non-factual” predicates have been *italicized*.

5.7.2.5 While the 6 superknowledges are factual or existent, their “possessor” is only a *name* given to the 5 aggregates. Similarly, in the expression “a woman’s voice,” while the voice exists as a sound, “woman” is only a name given to the 5 aggregates. The Pali Abhidhamma tradition, as such, accepts the existence of the aggregates in the real or ultimate sense, but denies the (real) existence of such predicates as “possessor,” “woman,” “king,” “son,” etc.

5.7.2.6 In the *Compendium of Philosophy* (a translation of the Abhidhamm’attha,saṅgaha), Shwe Zan Aung notes that:

⁹² On the 2 languages (*sammuti* and *param’attha*): MA 1:137,20-139,24; AA 1:94,19-97,14; ItA 1:82,4-83,33. Also DA 2:382,20-383,29; SA 2:391,18-392,18 types; KvuA 34,13-36,22 = JPTS 1889:33 f; Nett 903:1:176.

⁹³ See eg Abhs 8.29-32 :: Abhs:SR 198-201, Abhs:BRS 325-328

Buddhists do not recognize the existence of the Platonic Idea, corresponding to any name they may give to a thing. They countenance nominalism by denying to name existence as a fact in nature; they countenance conceptualism by holding that copies of things exist in mind as ideas; they countenance realism by holding that the four essentials [primary elements, *mahā, bhūta*] and their derivatives do exist as a reality. In denying the existence of “land” or “hill,” Buddhists must not be understood as denying the existence of the four Essentials and of the derivatives known as earthy matter. (Abhs:AR 200.1; cf App: Attha)

5.7.2.7 The description of nirvana, says *Ñāṇamoli*, is factual definition (*vijjamāna, paññatti*) and unconditioned definition (*asamkhata, paññatti*), but not conditioned definition (*samkhata, paññatti*). The “appositional definition” (*upanidhā, paññatti*) simply describes something by naming it as a member of a set, such as “long” as against “short,” “heard” as against “seen,” etc. (KhpA:N 110.19)

6 Methods of cultivating lovingkindness

6.0 PREPARING FOR THE PRACTICE

6.0.1 Moral conduct [§§1a-3b]

The instructions on the cultivation of lovingkindness proper begin in §2a (Sn 144a). In meditation practice and living as practitioners, we should be content with what there is, that is, we should abandon excessiveness of wishes.⁹⁴ We should neither approve of the desirable nor disapprove of the undesirable, but should mindfully work at being equanimous towards all objects (KhpA 241). For lay practice, there is much more latitude but guided by the same spirit of mind-training as for monastic meditators. Lay practitioners should be *moderate* in food, have healthy eating habits, and live generally healthy lives.

As lay practitioners, we should wear clean, comfortable and simple clothes so that we easily keep to a good posture and inspire joyful faith in others.⁹⁵ We should avoid wearing any kind of clothing or uniform that might be construed as a symbol of worldliness, power or status, such that we attract the wrong kind of devotion, and distracting people from the only one true devotion, that is, the practice of the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.

Our home or living space should exude warmth and simple comfort, conducive to spiritual practice and fellowship at any time we wish to. It should be clean and uncluttered so as not to attract other unwelcome creatures who might discomfort us or be hurt by us. We should constantly radiate lovingkindness in our homes and to all living therein, and shine it outwards into the neighbourhood like the bright rising sun.

⁹⁴ MA 2:138 f, Vbh 350 f.

⁹⁵ The suttas often refer to “white dressed lay disciples” (*sāvaka gihi odāta, vasana*), such as the non-returner, **Sandhāna** (D 25.3/3:36 @ SD 1.4), who becomes an arhat in due course (A 3:450): other such laymen at D 3:210; M 2:23, 244; A 5:185, 190. These saints are also said to be celibate (*brahma, carī*, M 1:490) or who enjoy sense-pleasures (*kāma, bhogī*, M 1:491) (ie as streamwinners or once-returners): also D 3:37, 124 f. There are numerous refs to “white-dressed householder” (*gihi odāta, vasana*): D 1:211, 212, 3:37, 117, 210; M 1:340, 2:23, 244, 3:261; S 4:301; A 1:73, 74, 3:123, 217 f, 242, 261, 296-298, 5:185, 190; Miln 243. Such laymen are often said to be either celibate (*brahma, carī*) or who enjoy sense-pleasures (*kāma, bhogī*) (ie as streamwinners or once-returners): D 3:123-126; M 1:490-493; Miln 243. **Gihi S** (A 5.179) refers to such laymen as dhyana-attainers: “whose acts are restrained by the 5 training-rules, who attains at will, with neither trouble nor difficulty, the four higher mental states, providing pleasant dwellings [abidings] here and now,” for whom streamwinning is easily attainable (A 5.179, 2/3:211), SD 70.10.

We should respect our own body and those of others by being mindful of the 3rd precept,⁹⁶ and living a physically and mentally healthy life-style. This includes a proper balance between work and rest, and spending harmonious time with loved ones and those who need spiritual support. At proper intervals, we need to spend quiet solitary time (*paṭisallāna*), preferably daily, in meditation or Dharma reflection.⁹⁷

6.0.2 Practice methods [§§3c-10]

The Sutta's practice section are of 2 kinds: what to do (*karaṇīya*) [§§3c-5, 8-9] and what not to do (*akaraṇīya*) [§§6-7, 10]. However, the latter is not really meditation instruction, but a sort of reminder in keeping up our moral conduct in not showing any negative emotions towards others. As a practice, it describes the constant mindfulness we must maintain even when not actually sitting in lovingkindness meditation. In short, it reminds us to constantly radiate lovingkindness to others [5.2].

6.1 THE 1ST (OR "BEINGS") METHOD [§§3cd-5]

The Buddha starts his actual instruction on the cultivation of lovingkindness at **§3cd (Sn 145cd)**. The purpose of these two lines [§3cd] is to provide the monks (fearful of the tree spirits) with a safeguard or mind-tool to dispel their deities' fear, and as a meditation-object for inducing dhyana as the basis of insight [2.2].

Lovingkindness can be cultivated in different ways, such as directing it to various beings [4.6] with the aspirations, "Let all beings be happy!" or "Let all beings be safe!" or "Let them be happy at heart!" (KhpA 244). We usually begin our lovingkindness practice by mentally saying (subverbalizing) such words. This helps to overcome immediate distractions. We could also *visualize* certain happy events and *feel* their positive emotions. As we become more focused on the lovingkindness, we silently and fully *feel* it.⁹⁸

This explanation constitutes what is in brief the cultivation of lovingkindness from access concentration (*upacāra*) to full concentration (*appanā*) [Vism 3.6, 4.32 ff]. Lovingkindness is said to be capable of producing only the first 3 dhyanas but not the 4th [Vism 9.111].⁹⁹

6.2 THE 2ND (OR "SOCIAL") METHOD [§6]

This method of cultivating lovingkindness is clearly meant for dealing with negative emotions that have arisen, or when we are interacting with others. It helps us refine our social virtue and the overcoming of conceit (*māna*).¹⁰⁰ Lovingkindness is the unconditional acceptance of others, which means that we should not measure ourselves against others in terms of being superior, or equal, or inferior to others.¹⁰¹

This practice also trains us not to be biased or judgmental about others, but to try to accept others just as they are, in *the present*.¹⁰² This means giving a generous allowance, even letting go, of past perceptions and baggages we have had of them. This practice becomes easier and more wholesome when we combine it with the breath meditation.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ On the 3rd precept (*kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam samādyāmi*), see **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (4.2).

⁹⁷ See *Paṭisallāna S* (It 45/2.2.8/38 f), SD 41.4.

⁹⁸ For details and instructions, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (3).

⁹⁹ See **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (7.4). For the 40 types of meditations, see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (Fig 8.1).

¹⁰⁰ On conceit, see **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a.

¹⁰¹ See eg **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35.24b/1:234 f), SD 26.5 & **Anattā, lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59.17-21/3:68), SD 1.2.

¹⁰² See eg **Bhaddeka, ratta S** (M 131/3:187-189) + SD 8.9 (3-5).

¹⁰³ On the breath meditation, see **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118), SD 7.13 (2) & **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22; M 10), SD 13 (3.9d). See also **Mahā Rāhu'ovāda S** (M 62.24-30/1:425 f) + SD 3.11 (2).

6.3 THE 3RD (OR “MOTHER”) METHOD [§7]

This is an analogue or visualization method. By “analogue” here is meant that we “identify”¹⁰⁴ ourself with **a loving mother’s unconditional love for her only child**, and, feeling that joyful emotion pervading our whole being, we in due course direct it to others. It is directed to a dear friend, someone neutral, and someone unfriendly (even hostile or who has hurt us), and then directionally to everyone around us at that moment, to the whole house or building, the neighbourhood, the whole country, the regions nearby, the whole world, and then the whole universe (that is, the totality of our heart or being). [6.4]¹⁰⁵

Another way to practise this 3rd method is by *visualizing* ourselves as a loving mother (this would generally be easier for women, especially if they are pregnant). We then reflect on how we have all gone through countless rebirths so that we are somehow related to one another, especially being children to us. We could vary the practice, making it more interesting, by reflecting on other age-appropriate relationships.

These suttas are relevant here:¹⁰⁶

Mātā Sutta	(S 15.14/2:189)	SD 57.2	We have been <i>mothers</i> to others before.
Pitā Sutta	(S 15.15/2:189)	SD 57.3	We have been <i>fathers</i> to others before.
Bhata Sutta	(S 15.16/2:189)	SD 57.4	We have been <i>brothers</i> to others before.
Bhaginī Sutta	(S 15.17/2:189)	SD 57.5	We have been <i>sisters</i> to others before.
Putta Sutta	(S 15.18/2:190)	SD 57.6	We have been <i>sons</i> to others before.
Dhītā Sutta	(S 15.19/2:189)	SD 57.7	We have been <i>daughters</i> to others before.

This method, however, may be difficult initially for those of us who are *too close* to our mothers, or who have painful issues with them, or simply do not like women. In such cases, we should “centre” our meditation, that is, clear away our negative memories by doing breath meditation. When we feel calm enough during the breath meditation, then we go on to do just a bit of this method, gradually extending the session until it becomes naturally healing and enjoyable. Or, we could make use of the other methods of cultivating lovingkindness given here.

6.4 THE 4TH (OR “DIRECTION”) METHOD [§§8-9]

This method is the best known in the suttas. A famous pericope from **the Te,vijja Sutta** (D 13) defines it in these words:

With a heart of lovingkindness, he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone *as well as to himself*, he dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness that is vast, exalted, boundless, without hate, without ill will.¹⁰⁷

(D 13,76-79/1:250 f), SD 1.8 [5.1.2]

¹⁰⁴ We should not make anything more of this provisional word, which is here used in the sense of being inspired by a loving and wise mother, and using that positive mind as the basis for our cultivating lovingkindness.

¹⁰⁵ For details, see **Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5 (3).

¹⁰⁶ Cf the Buddha’s remarks in **(Saddha) Jāṇussoṇī S** (A 10.177) that the preta realm is never empty of “departed ones,” ie, our deceased relatives (A 10.177.7a/5:270 f. Cf **Paṭhavi S** (S 15.2/2:179. See also **Tiro,kuḍḍa S** (Kh 7/6 = Pv 1.5/4 f), SD 2.7 (3).

¹⁰⁷ *So mettā,sahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharivā viharati. Tathā dutiyāṃ. Tathā tatiyāṃ. Tathā catutthāṃ. Iti uddham adho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokāṃ mettā,sahagatena cetasā vipulena mahag,gatena appamāṇena averena avyāpajjena pharivā viharati.* See (5.1.2) n for refs. See SD 33.9 (3.5) for details of refs. For details on lovingkindness practice, see **Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5 (2.1).

A full seated cultivation of lovingkindness, as a rule, would begin with any of the first three methods, and then end with this fourth method. Note also that in this method, the cultivation ends with directing the lovingkindness just as we have started. This completes the lovingkindness cycle so that we constantly exude lovingkindness in our hearts.

If we are able to, we could visualize a beautiful white lotus, bright like the sun, radiating lovingkindness from the centre of our heart, brightening up our bodies and minds, purifying them, cleansing them, healing them. Lovingkindness is always there, ever ready in our hearts. In other words, we should live every moment of our waking life with lovingkindness. In this manner, we are abiding in a “divine abode,” living a divine or godly life.¹⁰⁸ [7.1]

7 Significance of the divine abodes

7.1 LIVING THE DIVINE ABODES

7.1.1 Living like God (Brahma)

7.1.1.1 The pre-Buddhist (and pre-Abrahamic) Indian conception of God as a supreme being is one who is unequivocally compassionate without any tinge of anger or “power” mode. This ancient conception—since it was not against the Buddha’s teaching on compassion—is accepted as “godliness” (*devatā*) by early Buddhism, internalized by us as the “**divine abodes**” (*brahma, vihāra*). This is a term for the ideal (mental) qualities of unconditional love at different levels.¹⁰⁹

7.1.1.2 There is evidence in the Pali Nikāyas suggesting that the practice of the divine abodes is pre-Buddhist, that is, going back even before the current Indian civilization itself. This is a time before any of the Indian religions arose, perhaps in mythical time. King Sudassana and king Makhā,deva (both of whom are said to have lived before the Buddha), for example, cultivated the divine abodes and are reborn in the Brahma world (D 17; M 83).¹¹⁰

The practice was, however, prevalent among the other religious sects even during the Buddha’s time. Some wanderers (*paribbājaka*) are said to have the benefit of a whole exposition of the 4 divine abodes, as stated in **the Mettā Saha,gata Sutta** (S 46.54).¹¹¹ Their practice, it is said, if properly practised, brings about union with (that is, rebirth amongst) the brahmas (*brahma, saavyatā*) (D 1:250; M 2:195, 207).

7.1.1.3 The nature of the divine abodes is distinctly buddhicised (made Buddhist) when they are tempered or upgraded with the “freedom of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*).¹¹² For the wanderers and non-Buddhists in general, the practice of the divine abodes leads at best to rebirth in the brahma-world, amongst the high gods (in “heaven,” as some might say today). The *Buddhist* cultivation of “freedom of mind” through the divine abodes, however, can lead up to the state of non-returning (*anāgāmi*), that is, just a sure step before nirvana itself (A 10.208).¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ For further details on the directions of lovingkindness, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

¹⁰⁹ For details, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

¹¹⁰ **D 17, 2.13/2:194** (SD 36.12); **M 83, 6/2:76** (SD 60.8). On def of *brahma*, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (1.1).

¹¹¹ S 46.54/5:115-121 (SD 10.11).

¹¹² *Ceto, vimutti* is sometimes tr as “freedom by concentration,” ie through destruction of the mental hindrances, and is often contrasted with *paññā, vimutti*, “freedom through wisdom (or insight).” The differences between the 2 types of freedom are given in **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kiṭṭa, giri S** (M 1:477 f).

¹¹³ **(Karaja, kāya) Brahma, vihāra S** (A 10.208, 2+3c+3f+4/5:300 f), SD 2.10.

7.1.1.4 The 4 divine abodes are mentioned in the **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33)¹¹⁴ and explained in its Commentary as the 4 immeasurables (*appamaññā*),¹¹⁵ “the 8 attainments (*aṭṭha samāpatti*),¹¹⁶ and the attainment of fruition (*phala,samāpatti*)”¹¹⁷ respectively (DA 3:1006).¹¹⁸ Even before the 4 divine abodes were standardized, the term *mettā* is associated with such qualities as *upekhā*, *karuṇā*, *vimutti*, and *muditā* (Sn 3:39ab) (Jayawickrama, 1977: 96 & n13).

They are also called the **“4 immeasurables”** (*ap-pamāṇa* = *a,parimāṇa*; Skt *apramāṇa*), because here we need to “break the barrier”¹¹⁹ of limited and neurotic application in order to truly effect them. The importance of the *brahma,vihāra* in Buddhist practice is attested by their many epithets: the divine abodes, the immeasurables or boundless states, the abidings of the great ones, the qualities of a great person, the virtues of a true leader, the social emotions, the positive emotions, the qualities of a true professional, and so on.

7.1.2 Lovingkindness as the basis for wisdom

7.1.2.1 The greatest spiritual significance of the divine abodes is in its use as the cultivation of unconditional love and joy as *the basis for experiencing non-self*. This is, of course, most effective when any of the abodes is cultivated to the level of dhyana.¹²⁰ However, even without dhyana, but with some level of focused practice, we can enjoy the profound bliss of lovingkindness. In our daily lives, we should at least make every effort to keep our hearts imbued with lovingkindness, no matter what.

With such a practice, one thing we are certain to notice is that it is not always easy to sustain lovingkindness in this way. In difficult and troubled times, when we least expect it, we might find ourselves allowing anger or hate to have the better of us when we are painfully affected by the badness, foolishness or weakness of others. We become like a lion with a splinter stuck in our paw, roaring in pain and anguish, but with no Androcles to remove the splinter.¹²¹ As humans, we are ourselves Androcles, unless we choose to go on lionising ourselves.

7.1.2.2 When we review such moments, we will discover that we are “not ourselves,” that is, we would not under “normal circumstances,” react in such a negative way. Our negative habitual tendencies (the “old self” or past karmic habits) have overtaken us.

However, if we cultivate lovingkindness well enough, we would be able to quickly overcome, even prevent, such reactions to negative situations. The fact remains that we are clearly aware of the unwholeness of such negative situations, and even wish to get away from them. These situations are not

¹¹⁴ D 33,1.11(6)/3:223 f.

¹¹⁵ For a description of the 4 immeasurables with similes, see **Tevijja S** (D 13,76-79/1:251), SD 1.8.

¹¹⁶ On the 8 attainments are the 4 form dhyanas (see SD 8.4 (5)) and 4 formless attainments (see SD 24.11 (5)); cf 8 liberations (*aṭṭha vimokkha*): see **Maha,parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33 n), SD 9.

¹¹⁷ *Phala* means “fruition, result,” which denotes, according to Abhidhamma, those moments of supramundane consciousness which flash forth immediately after the moment of path-consciousness (the moment of attaining sainthood), and which, until the attainment of the next higher path, may with the practice of insight, recur countless times. In such a situation, it is called “fruition attainment” (*phala,samāpatti*) (sv BDict): see Vism 23.6-15/-699-702.

¹¹⁸ D 1:250 f 3:223 f, M 1:38 297 276 195 207 3:146, S 4:296, A 5:299 344.

¹¹⁹ Vism 9:40; cf Khp 248.

¹²⁰ See **Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5 (7.4 & 8.3).

¹²¹ On the fable, see <http://classclit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/aesop/bl-aesop-androcles.htm>. See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Androcles>.

“places” we could move or keep away from, but they are mental states we need to overcome within ourselves.

7.1.2.3 One important way to know that we are heading in a self-healing direction is that we are more naturally able to direct our lovingkindness to those very people who are hurting or harming us. In fact, we might even feel a great compassion in our hearts that these people are incapable of behaving otherwise because they have their own issues or are spiritually weak themselves. Hence, all the more we need to invoke and sustain a healing ambience for them through our lovingkindness.

7.1.2.4 On some higher level, we would come to realize that it is the idea of some kind of abiding “self” (“*this* is what I am,” “he or they are like *that*,” etc), that is causing all the hurt and hate. Lovingkindness allows us to see, even feel, as others would: it helps us to empathize with others. At some point in such a sustained practice, we might just catch a profound glimpse of what non-self is or is like. If not, we would surely have greater wisdom in understanding the nature of human feelings. [7.3.2]

Even on an unawakened level, lovingkindness when regularly and properly developed, harmonizes our head and heart, balancing wisdom with compassion. Lovingkindness, in other words, brings about mental focus, giving us a calm heart, which in turn clears our mind so that it is capable of penetrating vision into true reality and liberating wisdom. In this sense, lovingkindness is the basis for beauty and truth.¹²²

7.2 DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY BASED ON THE DIVINE ABODES

7.2.1 The 4 sevens

7.2.1.0 OVERVIEW. Buddhaghosa compares *lovingkindness* to a mother-to-be’s care and hope for the child in her womb; *compassion* to the mother’s concern and response to her infant’s needs; *gladness* to the mother’s pride and confidence in her youthful child; and *equanimity* to the mother’s “loving unconcern” for her grown-up married son (AA 2:204).¹²³ This set of parables serves as a basis for a useful hypothesis for a developmental psychology of child-raising, which I call “the 4 sevens.”¹²⁴

We can, ideally speaking, see wholesome child-raising as comprising a sequence of 4 stages of 7 years (septennia) so that he becomes a healthy individual. The 4 stages are as follows:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) 0-7 years | — the 1st seven years (childhood): | mother’s lovingkindness | (humanization stage); |
| (2) 7-14 years | — the 2nd seven years (puberty): | father’s compassion | (socialization stage); |
| (3) 14-21 years | — the 3rd seven years (youth): | teacher’s gladness | (tutelage stage); |
| (4) 21 onwards | — the 4th seven years (adulthood): | personal independence | (individuation stage). |

7.2.1.1 THE 1ST 7 YEARS: THE CHILD. As a rule, a **mother’s lovingkindness** or unconditional love for her *child*, especially her only one, is proverbial. Nothing can compare to a loving mother’s feeling that her child was a part of her own body, and came from it. It is this sense of connection that is always nourishing

¹²² See **Right livelihood**, SD 37.8 (6.1.2.7).

¹²³ Cf Visuddhi, magga, where he gives another set of parables, that of a mother with 4 sons: a young child, a sick child, an adolescent, and one busy with his own affairs. “she wants the young child to grow up; she wants the sick child to get well; she wants the adolescent to long enjoy the benefits of youth, but is not at all bothered about the one busy with his own affairs.” (Vism 9.108/321)

¹²⁴ This idea of the “four sevens” was first presented in Piyasilo 1991:145 f.

for the child physically and psychologically during these critically formative years. The mother's touch and love are vital in *humanizing* the child.¹²⁵

Indeed, if a child is completely deprived of this vital human closeness during this period, the child would probably never be human. We might be born with a human *body*, but it is our mother's loving presence, or even that of an adopted parent, that makes us a human *person*.¹²⁶ It is for this gift of humanity that we must rightfully be grateful to our parents.

If this mother-centred humanizing stage of the child is compared to that of a growing chrysalis, a developing human child in a mother's protective cocoon, then that child must emerge from that tight cocoon if he is to fully develop into an emotionally healthy person. This is where the father, or a father-figure, or a mother assuming a loving yet firm father-role, would benefit the child.

Ideally, by the latter half of this period, the child should be taught basic hygiene, good manners and civil conduct. Such training is best given by both precept and practice by both parents, with wisdom and compassion. The child should be inspired with the understanding that mistakes and failures are only steps to success. As soon as the child has learned to speak and communicate (around 1-2 years), he should be encouraged to be aware of others, learning to share things, and to understand a parent's saying "no" to certain negative actions or attitudes.

This early training helps to prevent narcissism¹²⁷ in him. Since a single child, raised as a lone lord or little emperor, is likely to become a narcissist, it is good to have at least two children, which also helps in the socializing process at this early stage. Still, single children can grow up healthily if they are encouraged to socialize early and wholesomely with others by loving and wise parents.

7.2.1.2 THE 2ND 7 YEARS: THE STUDENT. A wise and compassionately attentive **father** is the ideal parent during the second seven years when the child's growing curiosity and capacity for learning are burgeoning. Both parents should work to create a healthy environment that educates both the head and the heart of the child. The parents' conduct would now be naturally imbibed and internalized by the growing *student*. As such, the parents themselves have to ensure that they exude a morally healthy, emotionally supportive and intellectually rich presence.

Whether the child-student is a boy or a girl, the father's advice and guidance are vital in preparing him or her for life beyond the family, that is, society at large. Family outings in the great outdoors are a good way of revealing to the growing student the healing presence and pleasures of nature. Bringing him on visits to relatives, friends, and suitable public places and events would further socialize the child in the safety of parents' presence and guidance.

This training could, of course, begin much earlier, around the latter half of the first seven. As the child or student becomes more confident in new environments and experiences, the parents should be observant in noticing the developing personality and potential of the child-student. He would become very inquisitive and ask questions. The answers should be as playfully and compassionately factual as possible.

Some questions only need to be answered *yes* or *no*; some need a more *elaborate* answer, perhaps over time; sometimes a *counter-question* would help; and there are times when the questions should be gently pointed out to be *wrongly put*, and need to be rephrased.¹²⁸ This is the kind of training that will give the child-student an invaluable foundation and propensity for an inquiring mind and creative nature as a learner —a valuable support for the next seven.

¹²⁵ See further SD 54.3d (2.5.2).

¹²⁶ On the effects of the lack of this humanization stage, see **Love**, SD 38.4 (4.4.42) Feral children. On being a person, **The person in Buddhism**, SD 29.6b.

¹²⁷ On narcissism, see **Love**, SD 38.4 (3.2.2)

¹²⁸ These are the 4 ways of answering a question: see **Kathā,vatthu S** (A 3.67/1:197-199), SD 46.11, & **Pañha Vyākaraṇa S** (A 4.42/2:46), SD 46.12 .

7.2.1.3 THE 3RD 7 YEARS: THE LEARNER. This stage of the child's life would be dominated by schooling and his peers, and he would especially benefit from an inspiring **teacher** or mentor. As such, it is time now for the parents to step back more into the background of the individual's life as he develops his own qualities, abilities and personality as he interacts with school and society. For some learners, this might be a difficult period as they try to make sense of the myriad of realities, visions and choices that flood their growing minds and self-awareness. This is a time when the learner is greatly energized with the appreciative gladness shown to him as a person of action.

This is a time when the learner, as an adolescent, would often be more adventurous and experimental. He would often make mistakes and feel their painful consequences, such as a sense of failure or loss, sadness, anger, desire, and other emotions. If the learner has had the benefit of early love and learning from his parents, then they only need to be a safety-net into which the learner can any time fall back on.

This is a time when the learning is more effective when *asked* rather than given. Indeed, no matter how lost the learner might find himself, he would always have his early education in the first two sevens to act as an emotional gyroscope and steering wheel. His eyes might now be on a distant star that would guide his course, and this is a course he must personally decide for himself, with or without parental advice.

7.2.1.4 THE 4TH 7 YEARS: THE INDIVIDUAL. In this stage, parents are trees from whose seed the **individual** would sprout and flower, but not in their shadows. The farther the seed is cast into the bright open space of life, the healthier the individual blossoms. This is a time when it is best that parents look on with equanimity, for the child is now a man or woman, and like a parent, or ready to be one.

Man reaches his evolutionary peak and spiritual apex when we are able to truly see ourselves for what we really are. To do this, we have to rise above the noise and sway of the unthinking and unfeeling crowd. We have to fully be ourselves, and to do so we must be *alone* in full sight of our own heart, rising even beyond the limitations of our physical body to explore the inner space of our mind and enjoy the blissful beauty of our heart.

If some vital aspects of the first three sevens were missing, we might spend the rest of our life seeking a mother-figure¹²⁹ or a father-figure.¹³⁰ On the other hand, if any of our parents had abused us, then we may grow up rejecting, hating or even harming those we perceive as parent-figures or authority-figures. All is not lost if we truly understand why we are doing this, so that we would be able to heal ourselves by filling up such hollowness or loop-holes with love and understanding. Self-healing is possible at any stage of our life, that is, as long as we have some depth in self-understanding,¹³¹ helped by spiritual mentorship, a truly loving partnership, or good friendship.¹³²

¹²⁹ On a negative side, the dominance of a mother over a man may delay, even prevent, him from a happy marriage. One solution is for the new couple to live together on their own so that they are able to build their life friendship and partnership. As long there is warm love between the couple. Whether a wife is a mother, a sister, a friend or a handmaid to her husband, is no issue: see **Bharyā S** (A 7.59/4:91-94), SD 38.9.

¹³⁰ A father who is too dominant may end up with a rebellious child who in due course might reject all that the father is or stands for, such as his religion. Or, the child might himself become dominant, even violent, echoing the conditioning he has received. If a child is used to an over-protective father-figure, he might be inclined to a father-figure religion, usu dependent on a God-idea. It should be noted that certain teachings in Buddhism, such as Amitabha or Guanyin worship, if taken as a God-figure (forgiving sins, providing succour, warding off bad luck, etc) could have similar effects or act as symptoms for underlying psychological difficulties which need to be addressed. Buddhist training is about self-understanding and healing through mindfulness and spiritual friendship.

¹³¹ On individuation, see **Saññoga S** (A 7.48) @ SD 8.7 (4).

¹³² See **Spiritual friendship**, SD 8.1.

This is the stage when we need to understand the difference between *having* and *being*. What we have—friends, things, wealth, property, status—must really be *external* to us. Hence, they often turn out to be something other than what we have expected. They are beneficial insofar as they make us happy: we are happy with them. Yet, even what we are—happy, healthy, learned, rich, famous—all these would not always be what we expect them to be. We truly are *only this moment*: live it well, share it well—we are then on the way to being a healthy and fulfilled individual.

7.2.1.5 GUIDING IDEALS. This fourfold set of 7 years is not meant to be numerically exact, but serve only as a guide where the best (or better) person could effect a natural and wholesome development of a child. Furthermore, it is not meant to be strictly sex-oriented, that is, it is possible that the father can be just as lovingkind as the mother, or even more so, or that the mother can be just as compassionately firm as the father, or even more so. Ideally, both parents should work together to raise their child in loving and wise interbeing.

The ideas expressed here are at best rudimentary, serving as basic guidelines for parents, and as an inspiration for thinkers and specialists in Buddhism and such fields as developmental psychology to expand on. Some communities, especially traditional ones, already have time-tested culture and networking, but a nuclear family lacking the benefits of an extended family in an urban setting may need more skills and guidance. The task is made easier when parents have a good grounding in Buddhist social teachings and mind-training, especially the practice of lovingkindness meditation.¹³³

7.2.2 The aryas

The aryas (*ariya*) or “noble ones” are the Buddhist saints, namely, streamwinners, etc. The Commentaries (such as that on **the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta**) play etymologically on the term *ariya*: The aryas are so called because they are “remote from defilements” (*ārahatā kilesehi*), because they are “not heading towards (spiritual) decline” (*anaye na irīyanato*), because they are “heading towards growth” (*aye irīyanato*), and because they are “worthy of being honoured by the world together with its gods” (*sa,devakena ca lokena araṇiyato*). Or the Buddhas alone are called aryas, while the phrase “the good people” (*sappurisā*) applies to pratyeka-buddhas and disciples as well.¹³⁴ People who shine (*sobhana*) through their having supramundane qualities are called “good people.” Or both words apply to all three; that is, buddhas, pratyeka buddhas, and disciples are all both aryas and good worldlings (MA 1:21).¹³⁵

7.3 BENEFIT OF CULTIVATING LOVINGKINDNESS

7.3.1 “Accomplished in insight”

“Accomplishment in insight” (*dassanena sampanno*) [§10d], that is, perfected in the right understanding belonging to the path of streamwinning, and which is associated with supramundane virtue (KhpA 251). The term insight (*dassana*) here refers to right understanding (*sammā,diṭṭhi*), that is, insight into true reality that is liberating.

The Sinhala monk, **Ñāṇananda**, notes that the truth-value of the Dharma, that is, right view (*sammā,diṭṭhi*), pertains to the path, and it is essentially a view of the goal but not the goal itself. The Dharma as *sammā,diṭṭhi*, he adds, is neither more nor less true of the goal than the raft is of the farther bank. Being a form of *diṭṭhi* or view, it presupposes a viewpoint, and it is, or ought to be, the viewpoint of the noble disciple (that is, a follower who is a saint).

¹³³ On family and social training, see eg **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31/3:180-193), SD 4.1; see also **Love**, SD 38.4.

¹³⁴ Comy qu verse 77 of **Sarabhaṅga J** (J 522/5:146,21).

¹³⁵ See Bodhi, *The Root of Existence*, 1980:42 f.

As already noted, he says, the emancipated sage has *no* viewpoint—indeed he needs *none* as he has reached the goal. He has transcended all views of truth and has a clear vision of it (Sn 152ab).

Thus, concludes Ñāṇananda, we arrive at another paradox, as in the case of “the silence” of the *muni*. The silent sage does not entertain any views, not only when he refutes false views (*micchā,diṭṭhi*), but also when he teaches right understanding (*sammā,diṭṭhi*). It may also be mentioned that *sammā,diṭṭhi* itself embodies the seeds of its own transcendence, as its purpose is to purge the mind of all views inclusive of itself. (*Concept and Reality*, 1971:39).¹³⁶

7.3.2 Awakening through lovingkindness

The successful cultivation of lovingkindness [§10d] allows us to attain the path of once-returning or of non-returning. As a non-returner, we would be reborn in **the pure abodes** (*suddhāvāsa*) of the brahma-world and there attain arhathood “never again coming to a womb” (KhpA 251). While all the realms of existence pertain to the rounds of births and deaths (*vaṭṭa saṃsāra*), the Pure Abodes pertain to the ending of the rounds (*vivaṭṭa*, Nett 113), as they are only inhabited by devas who are non-returners (*anāgāmī*) and arhats (*arahata*). The life-span of these devas is a few thousand world-cycles (*kappa*), and they exist only during the time when a Buddha has appeared in the world (MA 1:36). For this reason, the pure abodes are not included in the nine abodes of beings (*nava sattāvāsa*, Khp 86 f).

The cultivation of lovingkindness, in other words, can lead us to spiritual freedom or awakening. It should be noted, however, that this practice must be accompanied by insight (*dassanena*, Sn 152b; or *vipassanā*). Having attained a concentrated mind of lovingkindness or even before that, we should reflect on the three characteristics (namely, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, non-self).

In **the Mahā Govinda Sutta** (D 19), the Buddha declares that the cultivation of lovingkindness outside of the Dharma-Vinaya does not lead to awakening. This passage refers to the brahminical practice (D 2:-251), where there is a belief in an abiding entity (a soul).¹³⁷ This should not be misconstrued as the Buddha’s condemnation or rejection of the practice itself; for, there are numerous sutta references extolling the cultivation of lovingkindness.¹³⁸

Even on a worldly level, the proper practice of lovingkindness can bring 11 advantages: sleep happy; wake happy; no disturbing dreams; personal popularity; beloved by non-humans; divine protection; safety from fire, poison and weapons; easy mental concentration; serene countenance; unconfused mind at death; and a good rebirth.¹³⁹

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¹³⁶ Cf **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22,20/1:137 f), SD 3.13.

¹³⁷ D 19,61/2:251 @ SD 63.4.

¹³⁸ See eg A 2:128-130, 5:300; Dh 368; It 19 f etc.

¹³⁹ (**Eka,dasa**) **Mettānisamsā S** (A 11.16/5:342), SD 2.15; P 2:130; Vism 9:37/306 f.

For recital

Karaṇīya Metta Sutta

The Lovingkindness Discourse on What Should Be Done

Khp 9 = Sn 1.8

1 Preparation: Moral Conduct

[Khp 8]¹⁴⁰

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 <i>Karaṇīyam attha, kusalena
yan taṃ santam padaṃ abhisamecca
sakko ujū ca sūjū ca
suvaco c'assa mudu anantimānī</i></p> | <p>What should be done by one skilled in good,
who, having understood that state of peace (nirvana), is this:
one should be able, upright and thoroughly upright
easy to speak to, gentle, and not arrogant, Sn 143</p> |
| <p>2 <i>santussako ca subhara ca
appa, kicco ca sa-l, lahuka, vutti
sant'indriyo ca nipako ca
appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho</i></p> | <p>contented and easily supportable,
with little busyness and living a simple life,
with the senses calmed, and prudent [wisely careful],
unobtrusive, and not running after families. Sn 144</p> |
| <p>3 <i>na ca khuddam samācare kiñci
yena viññū pare upavadeyyum</i></p> | <p>And let one not do even a small wrong
for which others who are wise might censure.</p> |

2 (A) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: 1st method (“beings”)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>sukhino vā khemino hontu
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhit'attā</i></p> | <p>May they be happy and safe!
May all beings be happy at heart! Sn 145</p> |
| <p>4 <i>Ye keci pāṇa, bhūt'atthi
tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā
dīgha vā ye mahantā vā
majjhimā rassakā aṇuka, thūlā</i></p> | <p>Whatever living beings there are—
be they moving or still, without any exception:
be they long, or be they large,
medium, short, fine or gross; Sn 146</p> |
| <p>5 <i>diṭṭhā vā ye vā addiṭṭhā
ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre
bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhit'attā</i></p> | <p>be they seen or unseen;
those dwelling far or near;
those already born or those seeking birth—
may all beings be happy at heart! Sn 147</p> |

2 (B) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: 2nd method (“social”)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>6 <i>Na paro param nikubbetha
nātimaññetha katthaci nam kañci¹⁴¹
vyārosanā paṭigha, saññā
nāññam aññassa dukkham iccheyya</i></p> | <p>Let none humiliate another.
Despise not anyone anywhere in any way.
On account of anger, or at the sign of dislike,
one should not wish anyone ill. Sn 148</p> |
|--|--|

¹⁴⁰ This ref means “Khuddaka, pāṭha Pali page 8.”

¹⁴¹ Be Ce Ee kañci; Se kiñci.

2 (C) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: 3rd method (“mother” metaphor)

- 7 *Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttāṃ
āyusā eka, puttāṃ anurakkhe
evam pi sabba, bhūtesu
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ* Just as a mother would guard her own child—
her one and only child, with her own life—
even so, towards all beings
let one cultivate a boundless heart! **Sn 149**

2 (D) Cultivation of lovingkindness

- 8 *Mettañ ca sabba, lokasmiṃ
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ
uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañ ca
asambādhaṃ averaṃ asapattaṃ* And let one cultivate to all the world
a boundless heart of lovingkindness:
above, below and across,
unhindered, without hatred, without enmity. **Sn150**
- 9 *Tiṭṭhaṃ caraṃ nisinno vā
sayāno vā yāvat’assa vigata, middho
etaṃ satiraṃ adhiṭṭheyya
brahmam etaṃ vihāraṃ idha-m-āhu* While standing, moving, sitting,
or lying down, as long as one is not drowsy,
one should keep this mindfulness—
this is the “divine abode” here, they say. **Sn 151**

3 Conclusion: Insight & liberation**[Khp 9]**

- 10 *Diṭṭhiñ ca anupagamma
sīlavā dassanena sampanno
kāmesu vineyya gedhaṃ
na hi jātu gabbha, seyyaṃ punā-r-etī ti* And not falling into views,
virtuous, accomplished in insight,
having discarded greed for sense-pleasures—
one will not return to lie in a womb. **Sn 152**

— evaṃ —

[Annotated translation]

Karaṇīya Metta Sutta

The Lovingkindness Discourse on What Should Be Done

Khp 9 = Sn 1.8

Preparation: Moral Conduct

[Khp 8]

1 ¹⁴² *Karaṇīyam attha, kusalena*¹⁴³ What should be done by one skilled in good,¹⁴⁴ who
¹⁴⁵ *yan taṃ* ¹⁴⁵ *santaṃ padaṃ abhisamecca* having understood¹⁴⁶ that state of peace (nirvana),¹⁴⁷ is this:
sakko ujū ca sūjū ca one should be able,¹⁴⁸ upright¹⁴⁹ and thoroughly upright¹⁵⁰
*suvaco c'assa*¹⁵¹ *mudu anatiṃānī* easy to speak to,¹⁵² gentle¹⁵³ and not arrogant,¹⁵⁴ **143**

¹⁴² **§§1-3b.** These intro verses deal with training in moral virtue (*sīla, sikkhā*) as a foundation for an effective cultivation of lovingkindness [3.1]. Clearly, the whole Sutta is based on the 3 trainings (*ti, sikkhā*). See (6.0.1).

¹⁴³ **§1ab.** The tr of these 2 lines presents some difficulty: see (4.1.1). *Attha, kusalena* = *atthe* (locative) + *kusalena* (instrumental neut sg): a *tadpurusha* (P *tappurisa*, a dependent compound).

¹⁴⁴ Alt tr: "What should be done with wholesome purpose." This is also the sense of this line, which also means: "One's duty to be done with wholesome purpose." **Skilled in good**, *attha, kusalena*, "by one skilled in good": see (4.1.2).

¹⁴⁵ *Yan taṃ*, lit "(the one) who," demonstrative and relative prons. Or, we can take it as *yaṃ* (*purisaṃ*), "the (person) " ... *taṃ santaṃ padaṃ*, "that state of peace (nirvana)," as a correlative phrases.

¹⁴⁶ **having understood** [having approached], *abhisamecca* (absolute of *abhisameti*): see (4.1.1). This is a dura- tive (taking time) verb construction; hence, means "with the understanding of": see SD 8.4 (5.1.1.2 (3)).

¹⁴⁷ **state of peace**, *santa pada* = nirvana (KhpA 236). Yet, the state mentioned here is capable of a more general interpretation as evident from the qualities listed at Sn 143cd-145ab [§§1cd-3ab] which do not apply to one who has attained nirvana. The first part of this Sutta basically deals with well-being here and now. However, from context (as translated here), it is clear that nirvana is the *goal*. See Piatigorsky 1984 §2.3.2.

¹⁴⁸ **able**, *sakko*. The one who is skilled in good should be able in 2 ways, physical and mental, ie in terms of the 5 limbs of effort (*padhāniy'āṅga*): see (4.2).

¹⁴⁹ **upright**, *uju*, ie, with possession of the 3rd limb of effort (KhpA 239): being not fraudulent or deceitful, showing ourselves as we really are to our teacher or to the wise among our companions in the holy life (D 3:237, M 2:95 = 128, A 3:65 = 5:15) [foll n]. If we take *uju* here to refer to openness and honesty in communication, that is, interpersonally and socially, then *sūjū* refers to the wholesome mental state that precedes such communication. In short, we are true in both body and mind. See (4.3).

¹⁵⁰ **thoroughly upright**, *sūjū*, vl *suhuju*: *su* + *uju*. *Su* (indeclinable prefix) + *uju* (nominative masc sg); an adv compound (*avyayībhava*). Instead of being content with upright only once (*sakim*), we would be *thoroughly* (fully and consistently) upright as long as we live (KhpA 239). As previously mentioned [above (2)], while *uju* is the speech aspect, *sūjū* here refers to the accompanying wholesome mental aspect. "Upright" refers to proper moral conduct (body and speech), while "thoroughly upright" refers to the mental aspects of our conduct. See (4.3).

¹⁵¹ *C'assa* = *ca*, "and" (connective) + *assa*, "one ought to, should (see prec line)" optative 3rd sg.

¹⁵² **easy to speak to**, *suvaco* = *sovacassa*, ie, amenable to counsel and correction. **Kakacūpama S** (M 21) presents the monk Phagguna as one who is difficult to speak to (*dubbaca*),¹⁵² while **Puṇṇ'ovāda S** (M 145) presents the elder Puṇṇa as someone who is amenable to counsel: M 21,1-6/1:122-124 (SD 38.1); M 145,1-6/3:267 f (SD 20.15).

¹⁵³ **gentle**, *mudu*, lit, "malleable." The one skilled in good is firmly against improper practices for a monastic, such as running errands or carrying messages for lay people, yet he is gentle (like well-refined gold) in the performance of duties in the holy life [M 2:18]; or, he is of friendly countenance and easily approachable [Vism 1:61] (KhpA 239).

¹⁵⁴ **not arrogant**, *an-atiṃānī* or "without conceit," a neg adj + nom masc sg (*avyayībhava*). The one who is skilled in good would not be proud towards others on account of birth, race, etc, but would abide like Sāriputta,

2 ¹⁵⁵ *santussako ca subharo ca appa, kicco ca sallahuka, vutti*¹⁵⁸
sant'indriyo ca nipako ca appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho

contented¹⁵⁶ and easily supportable,¹⁵⁷
 with little busyness¹⁵⁹ and living a simple life,¹⁶⁰
 with the senses calmed,¹⁶¹ and prudent [wisely careful],¹⁶²
 unobtrusive,¹⁶³ not running after families.¹⁶⁴ **144**

even-minded to all alike whether an outcaste or a royal prince [A 4:376] (KhpA 240). In other words, he is not one who measures others by way of the “3 discriminations” (*tayo vidhā*), ie, the 3 conceits (*māna*), namely, the conceit, “I am better” (*seyyo’ham asmi, māna*), the conceit, “I am equal” (*sadiso’ham asmi, māna*) and the conceit, “I am worse” (*hīno’ham asmi, māna*). The 3 conceits are the theme of such discourses as (**Māna**) **Soṇa S** (S 22.49), on how they arise and are abandoned (S 22.49/3:48 f @ SD 31.13); (**Tisso**) **Vidhā S** (S 45.162), on how they are given up through the noble eightfold path (S 45.162/5:56 @ SD 84.4); and (**Pahīna**) **Vidhā S** (S 46.41), on how they are given up by cultivating the 7 awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*) (S 46.41/5:98), SD 84.5. On *satta bojjhaṅga*, see SD 19.2a.

¹⁵⁵ **§2 (Sn 144)** The qualities listed here are also those of a silent sage (*muni*) who, as a rule, is not influenced by the outside world as he has attained true inner peace. Cf **Khagga, visāṇa S** (Sn 3/35-75); **Muni S** (esp Sn 213b, 214b); **Nalaka S** (Sn 712c); **Magandiya Pañha** (Sn 844).

¹⁵⁶ **contented**, *santussako* means being content in term of the twelvefold contentment (*dvādasā, vidhā santosa*) regarding the 4 supports: see (4.4).

¹⁵⁷ **easily supportable**, *subharo*, lit “a light burden.” With a cheerful and radiant face, a monastic enjoys what he gets, be it coarse or fine, little or much. A monastic does not ask uninvited for things from the laity, but may accept allowable offerings from the laity: see **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5), SD 37.7 (3.2); **Anubuddha S** (S 47.3), SD 24.6a (2.3.1(2)). If a monastic is contented with his 4 supports, as described above, he would also be easily supportable. A layman, on his part, should not give unallowable things or services to a monastic. “Unallowable” (*akappiya*) here means that it is against the Vinaya. Unallowed as gifts incl money¹⁵⁷ and living beings. As a rule, monastics are not allowed to ask for things from the laity, unless the latter have given the “invitation” (*pavāraṇā*), except for close relatives. In other words, monastics are not beggars, nor allowed to be so. See eg Nis Pāc 7 (V 3:214, 19-22); Ariyesako 1998: 67-72.

¹⁵⁸ **§2b (Sn 144b)**. *Sa-l, lahuka, vutti = sa-lahuka* (adj) + *vutti*, lit “light in living” (nom feminine sg): a karmadharaya (P *kamma, dhāraya*, descriptive cpd). Whether as a renunciant or a layman, we are here exhorted not to be drowned by work so that we are alienated from other people. A good Buddhist is one who is available to those in need, especially when we are skilled and capable enough to help others. Cariyā, piṭaka Comy, however, advises that we should be neither altogether inaccessible to others, nor too accessible, and we should not associate with others at the wrong time (*na ca paresu sabbena sabbaṃ asevinā bhavitabbaṃ, na anāsevinā bhavitabbaṃ, na akāla, sevinā*, CA 313). In other words, our compassion must be tempered with wisdom, and our wisdom moved by compassion.

¹⁵⁹ **having with little busyness**, *appa, kicco*. A renunciant should not have a busy life: see nn at (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99,5/2:197), SD 38.6; also above, (3.1.2).

¹⁶⁰ **living a simple life**, *sa-l, lahuka, vutti*. A renunciant’s life should be uncluttered with things: see (3.1.3).

¹⁶¹ **with the senses calm**, *sant’indriyo = santa* (adj) + *indriya* (nom masc sg): a karmadharaya. Our sense-faculties should remain unagitated and unmoved by lust for desirable objects or by ill will towards undesirable objects (KhpA 242). A helpful practice here is the perception of impermanence, that all such distractions are impermanent and not worth pursuing. It is also useful to understand the nature of sense-restraint and wise attention, and practise them. See eg **Nimitta and anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

¹⁶² **Prudent [wisely careful]**, *nipako*, ie, wise, knowledgeable, intelligent in terms of keeping the mind undistracted. This entails understanding how to keep up moral conduct, and, for a renunciant, includes understanding about managing robes and the other supports, and understanding the 7 kinds of suitability (*sappāya*), ie, regarding abode, alms-resort, speech, person, food, climate, and posture [Vism 4.35-41] (KhpA 242).

¹⁶³ **unobtrusive**, *appagabbho* (Skt *a-pragalbha*; opp: *pagabbha*, impudent): *a* (*na*) + *p* (infix + *pagabbha*), neg adj + nom masc sg (avyayībhava), “not forward; importunate, modest” (CPD). Sometimes, in late works, spelt as *apagabbha* (cf Skt *apa-gabbha*, “abortive”), “timid, lacking boldness” (DP: *apagabbha*; also CPD sv). For further details, see SD 38.2 (3.2). A renunciant should not show any kind of bodily impudence, or the 4 kinds of verbal impudence, or the numerous kinds of mental impudence (KhpA 242; cf Nc 228); Sn 144 = Khp 9.2). Comy explains

- 3 ¹⁶⁵*na ca khuddaṃ samācare*¹⁶⁶ *kiñci*
*yena viññū pare upavadeyyum*¹⁶⁷ And let one not do even a small wrong
for which others who are wise might censure.

(A) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: First (“Beings”) method¹⁶⁸

- ¹⁶⁹*sukhino vā khemino hontu*
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhit’attā May they be happy and safe!
May all beings be happy at heart! **Sn 145**
- 4 *Ye keci pāṇa, bhūt’atthi*
*tasā vā thāvarā vā*¹⁷² *anavasesā*¹⁷³
dīgha vā ye mahantā vā
*majjhimā rassakā’ṇuka, thūlā*¹⁷⁶ Whatever living beings¹⁷⁰ there are¹⁷¹—
be they moving or still,¹⁷⁴ without any exception:
be they long, or be they large,¹⁷⁵
medium, short, fine or gross; **Sn 146**
- 5 *diṭṭhā vā ye vā adiṭṭhā*¹⁷⁷
*ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre*¹⁷⁹ be they seen or unseen,¹⁷⁸
those dwelling far or near,¹⁸⁰

this as the refraining from being importunate or exploitative through the body (physical actions), speech and thought (KhpA 1:242,7). In **Candūpama S** (S 16.3), the Buddha exhorts monastics to be “ever a newcomer amongst families, unobstrusive” (*nicca, navakā kulesu appagabbho*) (S 16.3,6/2:198,2 f, qu at Miln 389,11; Sn 852, 941; A 3:433,12; Dh 245 ≈ Jtkm 98,23*). See Intro (3.1.4).

¹⁶⁴ **not running after families, kulesu ananugiddho** (*an* (*na*), “not” + *anugiddho*, “greedy”), where *anugiddha* means “show parallel emotion with” families, ie, fawn upon families (KhpA:N 281), either out of greed (*gedha*) for items of support or through unwholesome mingling with the laity, esp by being forward in engaging oneself in business or work (of the laity) that has arisen (KhpA 244; cf Sn 65c). The Buddha often warns monastics against socializing with the laity, through which they are likely to be enticed by sensual pleasures, so that they are unable to keep up their practice, or even leave the order. In short, a renunciant should not be emotionally attached to any family. See eg **Cātumā S** (M 67,14-20/1:459-461) + SD 34.7 (6.3). See (3.1.4).

¹⁶⁵ **§3ab (Sn 145ab)**. These 2 lines exhort us to keep up moral virtue in preparation for cultivating lovingkindness: see (4.5)

¹⁶⁶ *Samācare*, lit, “he should do, conduct himself,” opt 3sg; qualified by *na*, “not.”

¹⁶⁷ *Upa-vadeyyum*, lit “might find fault (with),” opt 3 pl of *upa-vadati*, “to criticize.”

¹⁶⁸ On the structure of meditation instructions, see (6.0.2). On this 1st method, see (6.1).

¹⁶⁹ **§3cd (Sn 145cd)**. At this point, the Buddha starts his actual instruction on the cultivation of lovingkindness: see (3.0.1).

¹⁷⁰ “Living beings,” *pāṇa* (adj) + *bhūtā* (nom neut pl), lit, “breathing beings”: a karmadharaya.

¹⁷¹ “There are,” *atthi*, indicative 3 pl. On the classification of beings in these 2 verses [§§4+5], see (5.1.1).

¹⁷² *Tasā vā thāvarā vā* = *tasa, thāvarā*: **Nālaka S** (Sn 7-4d), SD 49.18. See (5.2). “Or,” *vā* is disjunctive.

¹⁷³ *Anavasesā* = *an* (*na*) + *ava-sesa*, “remnant the rest”: neg prefix + adj qualifying *pāṇa, bhūtā* (nom neut pl) (*avyayībhava*).

¹⁷⁴ See (5.3).

¹⁷⁵ On the classification of beings in these 2 lines [§4cd], see (5.1.1.3).

¹⁷⁶ *Rassakā’ṇuka, thūlā* or *rassakā aṇuka, thūlā* = *rassakā + aṇukā + thūlā*, “short or tiny or thick (compact)” with implicit *vā*, disjunctive; adj qualifying *pāṇa, bhūtā* (nom neut pl) (dvandva, P *dvanda*, twin compound, here with 3 elements).

¹⁷⁷ *Be ye va adiṭṭhā*; *Ce yeva addiṭṭhā*; *Se ye ca adiṭṭhā*; *Ee ye vā addiṭṭhā*.

¹⁷⁸ **seen or unseen**. Comy says that the “seen” (*diṭṭha*) are those beings which are within our visual range while the “unseen” (*adiṭṭha*) are those beyond the horizon (KhpA 246). See (5.4).

¹⁷⁹ *A-vidure*, lit, “not far,” nom neut pl qualifying *pāṇa, bhūtā*. *Vidūra* is rare: Sn 147; PvA 14, 31, 78, 81.

¹⁸⁰ See (5.5).

bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā those already born¹⁸¹ or those seeking birth¹⁸²—
*sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhit'attā*¹⁸³ may all beings be happy at heart! **Sn 147**

(B) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: Second (“Social”) method¹⁸⁴

6 *Na paro param̃ nikubbetha*¹⁸⁵ Let no one humiliate another.¹⁸⁶
*nâtimaññetha katthaci*¹⁸⁷ *naṃ kañci*¹⁸⁸ Despise not anyone anywhere in any way.¹⁸⁹
*vyārosanā paṭigha,saññā*¹⁹⁰ On account of anger, or at the sign of dislike.¹⁹¹
nāññam aññassa dukkham iccheyya one should not wish anyone ill.¹⁹² **Sn 148**

(C) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: Third (“Mother”) method¹⁹³

7 *Mātā yathā niyam̃*¹⁹⁴ *puttam̃* Just as a mother would guard her own child¹⁹⁵—
*āyusā*¹⁹⁶ *eka,puttam anurakkhe*¹⁹⁷ her one and only child, with her own life—
evam pi sabba,bhūtesu even so, towards all beings
*mānasam*¹⁹⁸ *bhāvaye*¹⁹⁹ *aparimāṇam̃* let one cultivate a boundless heart! **Sn 149**

¹⁸¹ “Those already born,” *bhūtā*, lit, “those who are born,” adj qualifying *pāṇa,bhūtā*.

¹⁸² See (5.6).

¹⁸³ *Sukhita*, “happy” (adj) + *attā* “hearts, minds” (nom masc pl): a karmadharaya.

¹⁸⁴ On the 2nd method of lovingkindness cultivation, see (6.2).

¹⁸⁵ *Nikubbetha*, 3 polite pl of *nikubbati* = *nikarot*, “he deceives, cheats, is dishonest.”

¹⁸⁶ Ie, let one not betray another (KhpA 247).

¹⁸⁷ *Katthaci*, wherever (indecl).

¹⁸⁸ *Nam̃ kañci*, “anyone,” demon pron indecl. Be Ce Ee *kañci*; Se *kiñci*.

¹⁸⁹ **Despise not anyone**, *nâtimaññetha*, or: let not one, surmounting others, show conceit (KhpA 247).

¹⁹⁰ *Paṭigha,saññā* = *paṭighassa* (genitive) + *saññā* (inst fem sg), a tadpurusha.

¹⁹¹ Here “anger” (*vyārosanā*; Be *byārosanā*) refers to our reaction by way of bodily action or speech; “dislike” (*paṭigha*) or aversion refers to resistive thought, ie by way of the mind (KhpA 247).

¹⁹² In explaining this line, Comy says that lovingkindness should be cultivated not just in considering thus: “May (you and all beings) be happy and safe ...” etc, but it should also be cultivated as: “Indeed, let no person whatsoever undo any other person at all with such undoing as betrayal, etc, or slight any other person at all in any place on the grounds for conceit (*māna,vatthu*) consisting in birth, etc [M 3:37], and that one not wish one another ill.” (KhpA 248). On conceit, see **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a.

¹⁹³ On the 3rd method of lovingkindness cultivation, see (6.3).

¹⁹⁴ *Niyam̃*, lit “one’s own”; adj qualifying *puttam̃* (nom masc sg).

¹⁹⁵ This is the only simile or parable in the whole Sutta and marks its climax. If we are inclined to, we could visualize ourselves as a mother (or father if it feels better) and regarding other people as our own children. Or, if this is difficult, we could regard others in an age-appropriate way: see **Piṇḍola S** (U 4.6/42 f), SD 27.6a(2.3). We could also reflect on the teaching and truth that, on account of our countless rebirths, we have been somehow related to one another in some way, as a parent, a brother, a sister, etc [6.3].

¹⁹⁶ *Āyusā*, ins fem sg of *āyu*, “age, life,” ie, “with one’s own life”; see SnA 248,14. On *āyusa*, see Kacc 183; Sadd 663,11.

¹⁹⁷ *Anurakkhe*, “would guard,” opt 3 sg of *anurakkhati*, “he protects.”

¹⁹⁸ *Mānasam̃*, lit “thought,” acc neut sg. Here tr idiomatically.

¹⁹⁹ *Bhāvaye*, lit “he should cultivate,” opt 3 sg.

(D) Cultivation of Lovingkindness: Fourth (“Directions”) method²⁰⁰

- 8 *Mettañ ca sabba, lokasmim* And let one cultivate to all the world²⁰¹
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam a boundless heart²⁰² of lovingkindness:²⁰³
uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañ ca above, below and across,²⁰⁴
asambādham averaṃ asapattam unhindered,²⁰⁵ without hatred,²⁰⁶ without enmity.²⁰⁷ **Sn 150**
- 9 *Tiṭṭham²⁰⁸ caraṃ nisinno vā* ²⁰⁹While standing, moving,²¹⁰ sitting,²¹¹
sayāno vā yāvata’ssa vigata, middho²¹² or lying down, so long as one is not drowsy,²¹³

²⁰⁰ On the 4th method of lovingkindness cultivation, see (6.4).

²⁰¹ **§7d = §8a** *mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam*. *Bhāvaye*, “he should cultivate,” opt 3 sg. The Sutta’s main theme is the cultivation of a mind (*mānasam bhāvayati*) of lovingkindness (*mettā bhāvanā*, Miln 199) which is boundless (*aparimāṇa*), ie starting with the cultivation of wholesome thoughts towards (1) oneself, (2) those near and dear, (3) neutral persons, (4) enemies or negative people, and (5) all the 4 kinds of people together and progressively including all beings (Vism 9:40-42; cf KhpA 248). For detailed instructions, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (3).

²⁰² **heart**, *mānasam* (cf §7d): see (4.5).

²⁰³ = §7d, qv. On **lovingkindness** (*mettā*), see (1) n on Metta.

²⁰⁴ “Across” (*tiriya*) here refers to the 4 quarters (beginning with the east, “the front,” *pubba*), and also includes the directions in between. For details, see (5.1.2) and esp SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

²⁰⁵ **unhindered**, *a-sambādham* = *bhinna, sīmaṃ*, “breaking the barriers” (KhpA 149; cf Vism 9:40-42). This is the culminating stage of the cultivation of lovingkindness when we develop lovingkindness towards all alike—ourself, loved ones, neutral persons, hostile people and other beings. On *sambādha* as “limits, narrowness.” see **Sambādh’okāsa S** (A 6.26), SD 15.6.

²⁰⁶ **without hatred**, *avera*, meaning “devoid of malice, ie devoid of the manifestation of malicious intention, even occasionally” (KhpA 248 f). Such a person has no hatred (or malice) because his own with others has been removed.

²⁰⁷ **without enmity**, *a-sapatta*, “without enemies.” Comy: “For a person abiding in lovingkindness is dear to humans as well as to non-humans, and he has no enemies at all ... and has no enemy because others’ annoyance with him has been removed” (KhpA 249). On “enemy” as a figurative term, see (5.7).

²⁰⁸ *Tiṭṭham*, lit, “standing,” present participle (*parassapada*).

²⁰⁹ **§9abc**. Comy says that here, instead of adopting a single posture as “one sits down, having folded one’s legs crosswise, set one’s body upright” (D 1:71), one may adopt any of the 4 postures to dispel discomfort in any particular one (KhpA 150).

²¹⁰ On the significance of “moving,” *caraṃ* (syn with *gata*, “going, moving”), here instead of “walking” (*caṅkama*), see SD 76.3 (3.2).

²¹¹ **standing, walking, sitting | or lying down**, *tiṭṭhañ, caraṃ nisinno vā sayāno vā* [§9ab]. These are the 4 physical postures (*iriyā, patha*, P 2:225, DA 1:183; cf BHSD: iryāpatha). Mindfulness of 4 postures is a part of the meditation on the body (*kāyānupassanā*). This is the total cultivation of lovingkindness in one’s waking life. See (4.6).

²¹² *Vigata-middho* (normally neuter), adj + nom mas sg (karmadharaya).

²¹³ **as long as one is not drowsy**, *yāvata’ssa vigata, middho* [§9b], which Comy resolves as *yāvata vigata, middho assa*, “as long as there is no drowsiness for him” (KhpA 250). As long as we are awake and mindful we should cultivate lovingkindness. The advice here is that we should maintain a heart of lovingkindness throughout our waking life. Indeed, all our meditation, including breath meditation, should begin with lovingkindness and be founded on it. With a joyful mind, it is easier to attain concentration and dhyana. Other possible alt trs are: “one should be undrowsing; during that while...”; “for as long as one is undrowsing”; “for the while that one is undrowsing”; “for as long as one is awake.” Alt trs by other translators: C A F Rhys Davids: “till drowsiness be gone from him” (Khp:R 1931: 159); E M Hare: “till overcome by drowsiness” (Sn:H); M Walshe: “Or he lies down, still

*etaṃ satim̄ adhiṭṭheyya*²¹⁴ one should keep this mindfulness²¹⁵—
*brahmam*²¹⁶ *etaṃ vihāraṃ idha-m-āhu*²¹⁷ this is the “divine abode”²¹⁸ here, they say. **Sn 151**

Conclusion: Insight & liberation

[Khp 9]

10 *Diṭṭhiñ ca anupagamma* ²¹⁹And not falling into views,
silavā dassanena sampanno virtuous, accomplished in insight,²²⁰
*kāmesu vineyya*²²¹ *gedham̄* having discarded greed for sense-pleasures—
*na hi jātu gabbha,seyyam̄*²²² *punā-r-etl ti* one will not return to lie in a womb.²²³ **Sn 152**

— — —

free from drowsiness” (*The Lion’s Roar*, 1962:23); K R Norman: “As long as one is free from drowsiness” (Sn:N). On its meditative significance, see (4.7).

²¹⁴ *Adhiṭṭheyya*, lit, “he should be resolved (on),” opt 3 sg.

²¹⁵ **one should keep to this mindfulness**, *etaṃ satim̄ adhiṭṭheyya* [§9c], we should cultivate it until we reach dhyana. This lovingkindness dhyana (*mettā jhāna*) should be maintained for as long as possible, and cultivated until we are very familiar with it. In the case of forest monks (to whom this Sutta is first taught) and similar situations, this meditation state should be maintained throughout our waking moments before going on to other practices. See (4.8).

²¹⁶ *Brahmam̄*, lit, “perfect, spiritual,” qualifying *vihāraṃ* (acc masc sg).

²¹⁷ *Idha-mahu*: the infix *-m-* is a euphonic particle between a terminal vowel and an initial vowel.

²¹⁸ **this is the “divine abode,”** *brahmam etaṃ vihāraṃ* [§9d]. *Brahma, vihāra*, lit “living like Brahṃā” or “the state of Brahṃā.” *Brahma* (adj) “perfect,” so that we can also render it as “the perfect abiding,” or “highest state, sublime state, brahma abode,” or on a more mundane level, even as “positive emotions, social virtues.” See (7).

²¹⁹ **§10abc** Both *diṭṭhi* and *dassana* come from the same root, √DRŚ, to see, but are used in a mutually contradictory manner from the earliest times (cf Jayawickrama 1977 n18). The term *diṭṭhi* occurs 45 times in Sn and refers to all philosophical views and speculations which were later designated as *micchā, diṭṭhi*, while *dassana* usu is the special term for Buddhist “insight” (*sammā, diṭṭhi*), a term meaning “to see things as they really are.” Cf BHSD: darśana. On the attaining of lovingkindness dhyana, see (2.2.1).

²²⁰ **accomplished in insight**, see (7.3.1).

²²¹ *Vineyya*, lit, “having removed” (absol).

²²² *Gabba, seyyam̄* = *gabbhe* (loc) + *seyyam̄* (acc masc sg) (tadpurusha).

²²³ **to lie in a womb**, *gabbha, seyyam̄* < *gabbha, seyyā* (f) < *gabbha* (Skt *garbha*, womb, in the sense of being born again, Dh 126, 325 = Tha 17, Sn 278; also: “cavity,” J 3:55; “room,” V 2:303 3:119 4:45) + *seyyā* (Skt *śayyā*, a bed, couch, Sn 29, 152, 353). The term *gabbha, seyyā* refers to the womb and is used only in expressions relating to rebirth, such as *na puna-r-eti* (or *upeti*) *gabbha, seyya*, (of an arhat) he does not go again into a womb (Sn 29, 152, 535; Vv 53); and *gabbha, seyyaka* (adj) one who enters a womb (again) (Vbh 413 f; Vism 272, 559, 560). “The fool comes to the womb again and again...” (Tha 101). “One comes to the womb and the next world, undergoing cyclic existence in succession; another with little wisdom who puts his faith in him, comes to a womb and the next world.” (Tha 785).

The connotation of *gabbha, seyya* in the last line of **Mettā S** seems broader than at Sn 29 and 535 (both of which alludes to rebirth). The practitioner of lovingkindness could (1) be reborn in a brahma realm (as an unawakened worldling), but more likely (2) become a non-returner (5 kinds are described at A 1:233, 4:414, 70, 380, 5:120, Pug 42-46—some of them are reborn in successive stages of the pure abodes). In view of this point, our tr here does not have the amplification “(of rebirth)” as at Sn 29 and Sn 535b. Here *seyyā* is tr as “lie” in the sense of “sleeping” is to contrast it with its opp of “awakening” (*bodhi*). See Piatigorsky 1984:25-28. On *gabbha* as rebirth-consciousness, see **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38, 26/1:265 f), SD 7.10. See (7.3) above; also SD 60.2 (3.2.1.2).

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