



MONTHLY GUIDE



International Buddhist Meditation Center

November 2009

928 S. New Hampshire L.A. CA. 90006

213.384.0850

Metta Meditation Night

Please join IBMC on Sunday November 22, at 7 PM for a evening of Meditation on Metta and Loving Kindness

Ven. Kusala Bhikshu, leads meditation every Sunday night. In the IBMC Zendo. In remembrance of the spirit of the holiday season-Thanksgiving-we have a very special opportunity to come together with our companions on the path of Awakening, and practice the Metta meditation of loving kindness, equanimity and giving.

Please Join us for this very special night.

Metta Mediation

To begin, take a few moments to quiet your mind and focus your attention on the experience of loving-kindness. You can begin by offering Metta to yourself. Recite the following phrases to yourself at a pace that keeps you focused and alert.

1. May I be safe and protected.
2. May I be peaceful and happy.
3. May I be healthy and strong.
4. May I have ease of wellbeing, and accept all the conditions of the world.

Then when you are comfortable, try offering Metta to a loved one, someone who supports you, who has always "been on your side." Forming visualizations of this person while reciting the phrases can be helpful;

1. May s/he be safe and protected.
2. May s/he be peaceful and happy.
3. May s/he be healthy and strong.
4. May s/he have ease of wellbeing, and accept all the conditions of the world.

Once your Metta flows easily to a loved one, begin to include in your practice one or more of the following categories of persons to whom you will offer Metta:

- A close friend.
- A neutral person
- A difficult person
- All beings, individuals, and creatures.

IBMC is Updating our Land Mail Listing and Going Green!

IBMC now offers it's monthly newsletter delivered straight to your inbox, you can also read it in **PDF** form posted on our web site at www.ibmc.info

We would like to be Eco-responsible by January 2010 ! Here is how you can help!

If you have already signed up for our online newsletter and wish to be removed from our land mail list please send an eMail to ibmc09@yahoo.com with your name and address, so we can update our Land Mail Listing,

If you would like to **begin receiving** our newsletter by **eMail** please go to our web site and click on the "newsletter" button at the bottom of the page. Our calendar and special events are also posted at www.ibmc.info

Please remember to send an email to ibmc09@yahoo.com if you wish to be removed from our Land Mail Listing

Three Marks of Existence,

By Venerable Dr. Karuna Dharma

In the first talk the Buddha gave he presented the Four Noble Truths. The second talk presented three factors closely related to the Four Noble Truths. Generally we call them the three marks of existence. The Buddha said that everything has three characteristics: dukkha, anitya and anatman. Dukkha is translated as suffering, or unsatisfactoriness. Even if something appears to be satisfactory, it will not always be that way because it will change. Nothing lasts forever. We know that not only are our lives changing, but also the entire solar system is changing and one day will no longer exist. Everything that has come into existence or will come into existence will also go out of existence.

The other two parts of existence are anitya and anatman. Anitya means impermanence. Everything is impermanent. It underlies all Buddhist thought and practice. It is the foundation of Buddhist understanding of reality. For many centuries Western people thought that the universe was a permanent thing, put into place by a creator god with the earth as its center. They reasoned that such a complex system could not come into existence except through the creation of a superior intelligence. They named that superior intelligence God and declared his permanence.

They believed that humankind reflected the image of God and contained also an immortal essence which they named soul. So, while things around them might change, they reasoned that they were assured of permanence, an eternal existence after death if they lived in accordance with God's will. In India 26 centuries ago Siddhartha Gautama, who became the Buddha, proclaimed that

nothing is permanent. In his enlightenment experience he witnessed the arising and disappearing of entire universe systems. He saw very clearly that all things are impermanent: that they arise, mature and pass away. He recognized that all things are comprised of conditioned states and that there is no permanent essence to anything. He also realized the arising and disappearance of states of existence occurred because of various conditions. Should any condition change the object changed or disappeared. Even those things that appear to be permanent and unchanging also are in a constant state of change. The mountains appear to be permanent and unchanging but their very existence is caused by tectonic forces the crust and mantle of the earth. Volcanoes, inactive for many years come alive and new ones pop into existence, earthquakes build mountain ranges ocean becomes land and land becomes ocean.

These changes never cease. All matter itself is alive with constant change. Its very nature is a mass of constantly moving energy. Rock may appear to be an inert object, but in actuality its structure is one of constant movement. The Buddha taught that all things are states that are constantly changing and that they have no permanent existence.

In fact, humans are made up of five permanent states called Skandas, which are form, sensation, perception, mental formation, and consciousness.

These collections, samskaras, of things are the true nature of the person and are constantly changing. The body grows old, becomes ill and dies. Sense contact leads to perception and conception and these are constantly changing. Our karmic activities never cease and underlying all these is the basal consciousness which at death also disappears with all of the samskaras.

The Buddha explained that we should not become too attached to our bodies and to life because it causes us great dukkha [suffering and misery.] Sense contact brings us sense experiences which we then label desirable or undesirable.

From this judgment arises the desire to re-experience similar sensual experiences which lead directly to a great thirst or craving for the experience. Soon we are entrapped in the need to continue such experiences, for we feel we need or want them. But all experience is very momentary.

As soon as we grasp onto one it disappears, and a new attraction grabs our minds. Soon we are enmeshed in a great, complex transitory web of desire.

This is how we get into the mess of our karma. So, how do we get of it? The easiest way to get out of it, and it is not easy, is to meditate. When we meditate, we take our mind off of our thoughts and concentrate upon something simple, such as our breathing or upon reflecting upon the qualities of the Buddha or a Bodhisattva, such as Kwan Yin. Meditation does not have to be always in a sitting position. We can meditate while walking. (The object of meditation then should be on our walking.) if we want to see clearly, we must meditate. This will help us to understand correctly. So. I wish all of you good meditating.

Explaining The Practice of Metta

The Pali word '*Metta*' is commonly translated in English as 'loving-kindness.' *Metta* signifies friendship and non-violence as well as "a strong wish for the happiness of others." Though it refers to many seemingly disparate ideas, *Metta* is in fact a very specific form of love -- a caring for another independent of all self-interest -- and thus is likened to one's love for one's child or parent. Understandably, this energy is often difficult to describe with words; however, in the practice of *Metta* meditation, one recites specific words and phrases in order to evoke this "boundless warm-hearted feeling." The strength of this feeling is not limited to or by family, religion, or social class. Indeed, *Metta* is a tool that permits one's generosity and kindness to be ap-

plied to all beings and, as a consequence, one finds true happiness in another person's happiness, no matter who the individual is.

Why Practice Metta

The work and repetition required of an individual engaged in *Metta* practice endows the four universal wishes (to live happily and to be free from hostility, affliction, and distress), with a very personal inner love, and by so doing, it has the power for personal transformation. Although serious practitioners of *Metta* meditation offer *Metta* for an hour or more morning and evening, you may wish to begin by offering *Metta* for just 10-15 minutes each day. You may do your practice as a formal sitting meditation or while walking (preferably without destination). You may also choose to integrate your *Metta* practice with daily chores.

***15th Western Buddhist Monastic
Conference October 2009
At the Sagely City of 10,000 Buddhas -
Ukiah California***



November Events

10:30 AM - Meditation

11 AM - Sunday Dharma Talks

11/1 - Ven. Kusala Bhikshu

11/8 - Ven. Karuna Dharma

11/15 - Ven. Havanpola Shanti

11/22 - Ven. Sārani Karuna

11/29 - Ven. Kelsang Chitta Karuna

Special Events

11/22 - 7 PM- Metta Night Meditation

Meditation Times

Friday: 7:30 PM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala

Sunday: 10:30 AM & 7:30 PM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala

IBMC Classes

Mon. 7 PM Tibetan Buddhism - Palmo Ling Nunnery - Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna

Tue. 7 PM English Conversation - Palmo Ling Nunnery. Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna

Wed. 7:30 PM Everyday Buddhism - Zendo Ven. Kusala Bhikshu

Thur. 7 PM Jataka Tales - Palmo Ling Nunnery Ven. Havanpola Shanti

IBMC eMail addresses

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IBMC Web Pages:

www.ibmc.info

www.karunadhharma.info

www.urbandharma.org

<http://palmoling.tripod.com>

<http://bsila.tripod.com>

Prison Dharma, a column devoted IBMC's Prison Outreach Ministry.

Dear Ven. Dr. Karuna Dharma:

A friend introduced me to a high school teacher that was willing to rent me a room and I accepted. As my upbringing had oriented me to do, I trusted the schoolteacher and did not question his authority. In time, I moved on to several universities on track and field scholarships and would be invited to spend my vacations and summers with the schoolteacher. There is no doubt that I was encouraged by him to see him as a mentor, and I accepted his position in my life as such. In retrospect the acceptance had a great deal to do with the parental emotional comfort he provided. It was quite different from my motherless, conservative home. It was during the first Christmas break from school that I first awoke to find the

teacher in my bed. What I experienced was numbness and uncertainty that was quickly dismissed by him saying, 'you're like the son I never had.'

And over an intermittent three-year period, I would awake several times to find the teacher in my bed. Furthermore, my conservative Christian upbringing coupled then with my unknown thirst for emotional comfort found me dismissing the subsequent nightmares of molestation and abuse as the devil's attempt to derail my Christian faith. The truth about the teacher's behavior became clear when I finally established a steady relationship with a college girlfriend who spent lots of time with me. The teacher's anger and hypocritical approach towards me became unexplained and puzzling. Finally he told me that he was a homosexual. Trusting in his social value and authority, coming from a conservative upbringing and operating on unknown emotional dependency issues, I had no idea that he was gay. Furthermore, I lacked the skills to determine what had been done to me and how I was unable to appropriately interpret his behavior and intentions. Any attempt to work through the process triggered a slew of nightmares, so I emotionally slowed down. I then moved to my college without any intentions on returning. Several months later the friend who had introduced me to the teacher contacted me. He apologized for not telling me of the teacher's orientation and said, "I thought you knew." He also confessed that the teacher had climbed in bed with him before and the teacher bragged to him about "turning out" my brother when he was a thirteen year old student in his junior high class. I confirmed that fact with my brother, who also struggled to disclose to me and other family members that he was living a homosexual life style.

On December 11, 1985, I returned to Pasadena to celebrate my father's birthday with dinner for him, my siblings and me. I had been waiting to inform my family that I had signed my first apparel contract with Adidas Shoes. They were to sponsor me as I made my push towards the 1988 and 1992 Olympics. Once I arrived my sister and I went to dinner alone because my father, whom several years earlier began drinking, was not prepared to go out in public and my brother chose to work overtime to avoid any redress of his recent disclosure. I went to my brother's residence after dinner. Our conversation was fine until I began to address the circumstances of the teacher with him in front of my sister. As it became obvious to my sister that my brother and I were in some sort of dysfunctional communication process, she requested to be taken home. So I took her home, and on the way to my college apartment in decided to stop by the teacher's home to ask for an explanation and apology for his behavior towards my brother, and me. Upon entering the home of the teacher I awakened him and directly asked for an apology. He refused, denying his behavior and insisting that he had nothing to apologize for. We then became engaged in an argument. When he finally turned his back to me and said, "Get the f--- out of here." In a rush of emotional rage I turned on the light, reached into his bedroom storage area just several feet away, grabbed the gun I knew to be stored there from time to time, and shot him. I was immediately overcome by panic and I ran. In my emotional and physical imbalance, I was stalked by an unidentifiable noise in the dark and responded by firing two shots in that direction. I would later discover that I had also shot a very, very innocent young man who was sleeping on the couch and that movement was the noise I heard and responded to. Indeed, the aspect of my offense that has been the most difficult to live with. In a lot of ways that young man was a trusting young person like myself whom the teacher was preparing to molest and take advantage of. I subsequently plead guilty and was sentenced to twenty-five years to life I have been incarcerated for 23 consecutive years. Since that time I have completed multiple anger management groups and completed years of individual psychotherapy. I have been active in the group prisoners against child abuse, worked as a tutor and vice chairman of the inmate literacy council, and volunteered as a HIV and Hep-C peer educator in the prison community.

Ven. Dr. Karuna Dharma, I am remorseful for my actions. Even after 23 years of incarceration

I still wish that I could turn back the hands of time and change the outcome.

Sincerely, Diamond Heart

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