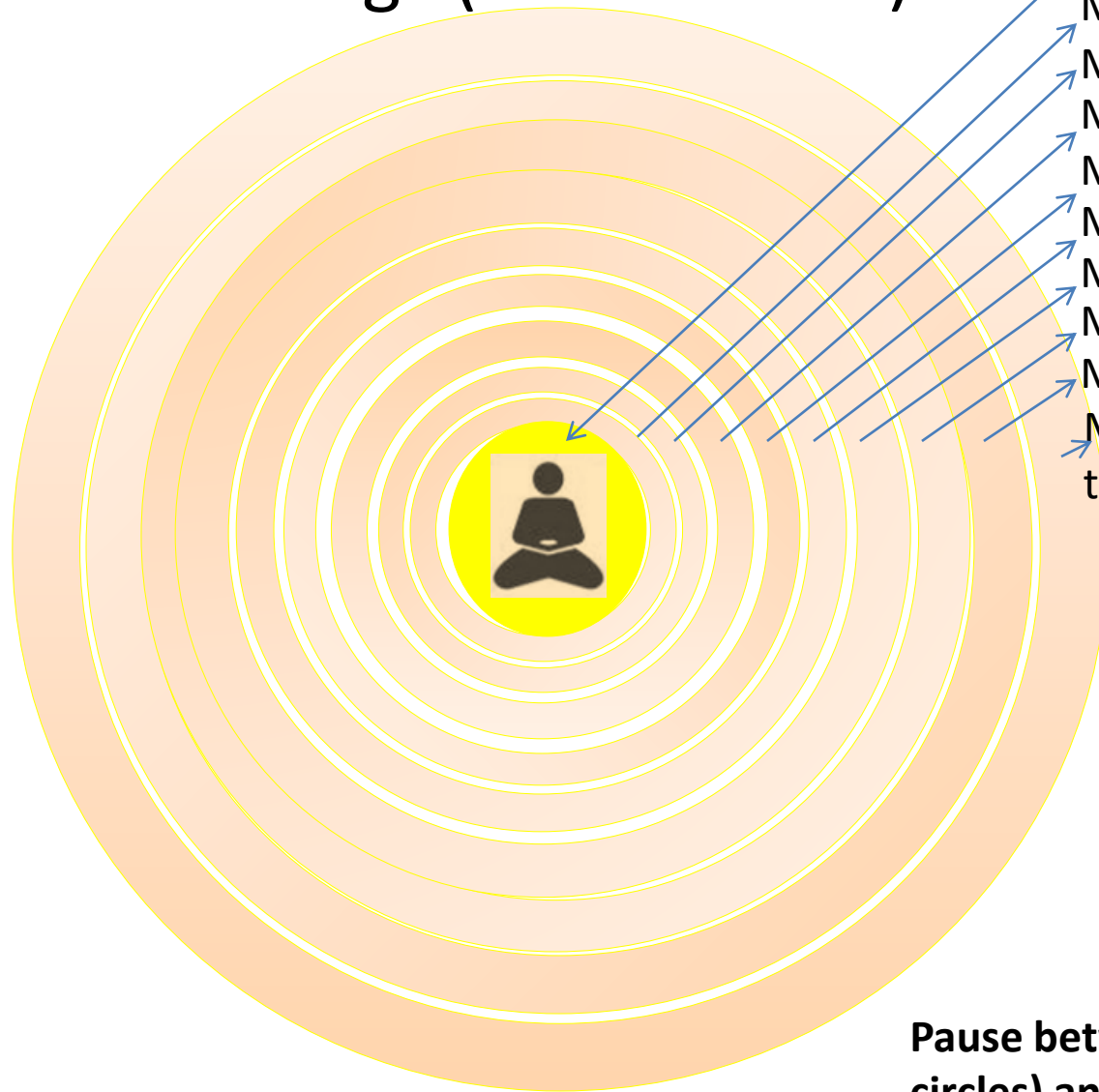


# The Four Sublime States (*Brahma Vihāra*)

1. Universal Love or **Loving-kindness** (*mettā*)
2. **Compassion** or Empathy (*karunā*)
3. **Selfless happiness** (*muditā*)
4. **Tranquility** (*upekkhā*).

# Practice of Loving-kindness (*Mettā*)

# Spreading boundless *mettā* to all beings (an overview)



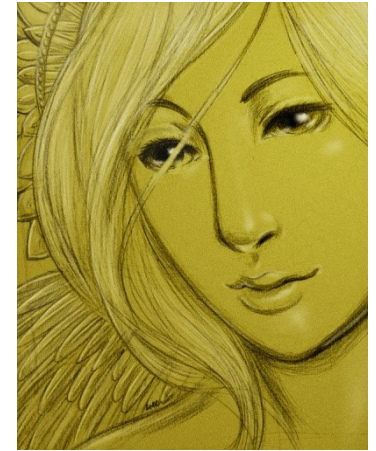
- May **I** be well, peaceful & happy!
- May **all beings** in this room...
- May all beings in this house...
- May all beings in this neighborhood...
- May all beings in this city...
- May all beings in this province...
- May all beings in this country...
- May all beings in this continent...
- May all beings in this world...
- May all beings in this solar system,  
the galaxy and universe...

Just as **I** should be well,  
peaceful & happy, may  
**all beings** be well,  
peaceful & happy!

**Pause between each thought (yellow  
circles) and let it sink deep within you...**

Step-by-step...visualize, and verbalize with feeling

We begin our *mettā* meditation by making good wishes towards oneself. Warm wishes for one's own welfare.



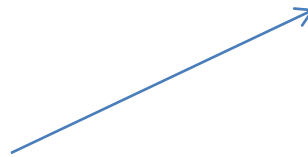
“May I be well, peaceful & happy!”

Imagine looking at yourself (from head to toe) in the mirror, and think of these thoughts with imagination of warm, happy feelings for you, without merely verbalizing.



## Using your imagination and warm feelings...

We are all self-centred to start with. It is these self-centred wishes that we expand to include all beings. This is how we broaden the mind.



Room  
House  
Neighborhood  
City  
Province  
Country  
Continent  
World  
Universe

**Spread your warm wishes as if spreading a cloud of *mettā* over each area.**

## Room

visualize, and verbalize with feeling



“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **room** be well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this **room** whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”

## House/building

visualize, and verbalize with feeling



“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **house** be well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this **house** whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”



## Neighborhood

visualize, and verbalize with feeling



“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **neighborhood** be well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this **neighborhood** whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”





# City

visualize, and verbalize with feeling

“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this city be well, peaceful & happy.”



“May all beings in this city whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”

## Province/State



visualize, and verbalize with feeling

“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **province** be well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this **province** whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”



## Country

“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **country** be well, peaceful & happy.”

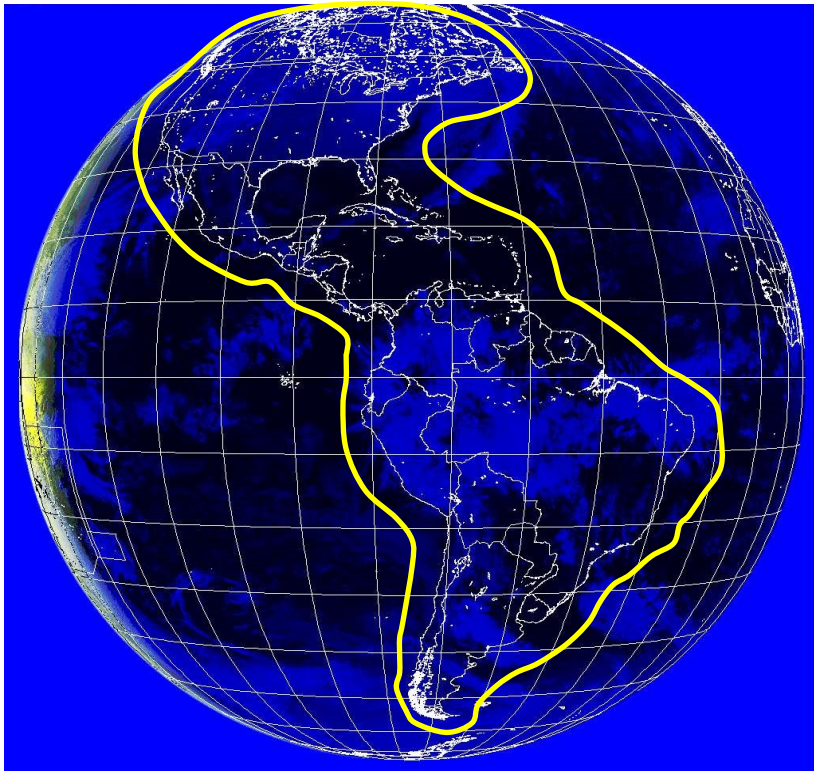
“May all beings in this **country** whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”



visualize, and verbalize with feeling

## Continent

visualize, and verbalize with feeling



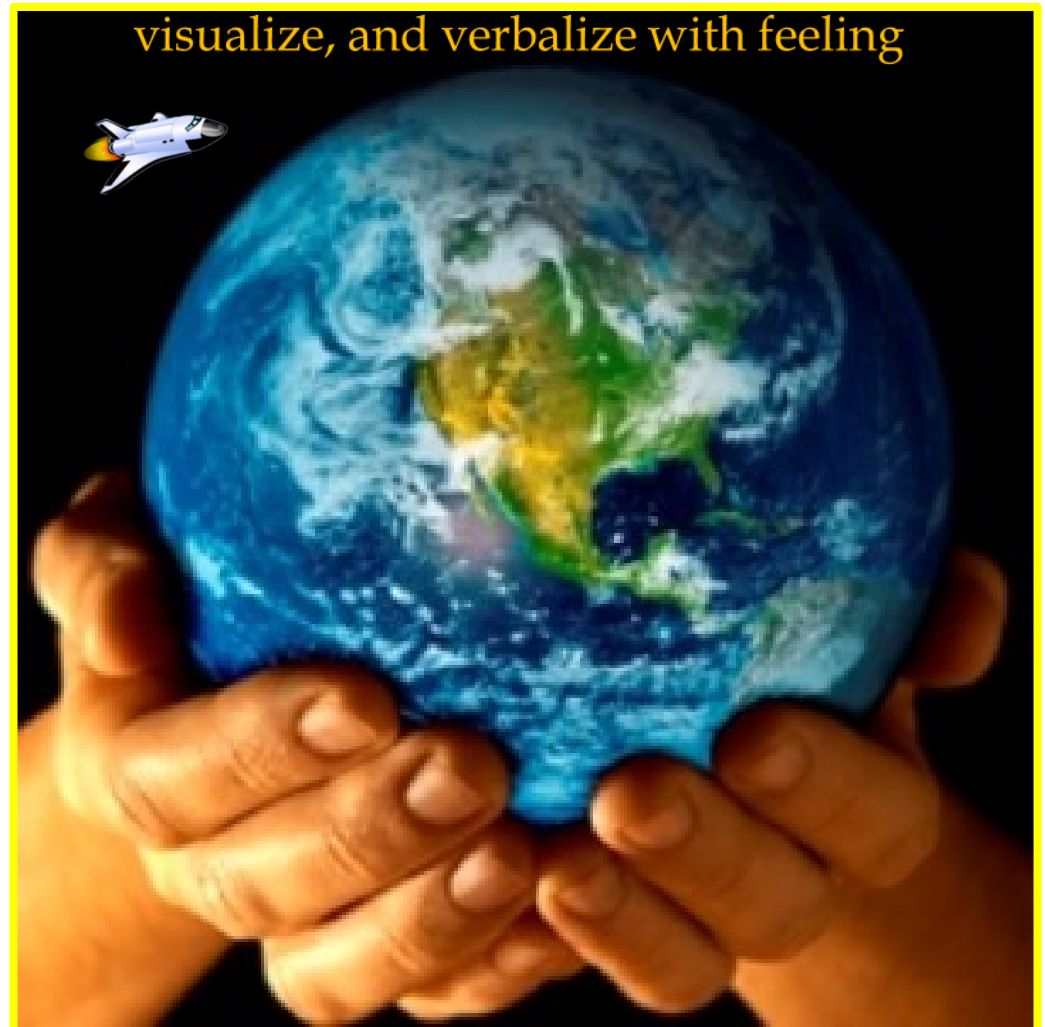
“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **continent** be well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this **continent** whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”

## World

“Just as I should be well, peaceful & happy, may all beings in this **world** be well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this **world** (on land, water or air) whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from worries, anxieties and unhappiness.”





# Solar System

visualize, and verbalize with feeling



“Just as I should be well,  
peaceful & happy, may all  
beings in this **solar  
system** be well, peaceful  
& happy.”

“May all beings in this  
**solar system** whether  
human or non-human,  
small or large, far or  
near, visible or  
invisible, known or  
unknown, be free from  
worries, anxieties and  
unhappiness.”



# Galaxy

visualize, and verbalize with feeling

“Just as I should be well,  
peaceful & happy, may all  
beings in this **galaxy** be  
well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this  
**galaxy** whether human  
or non-human, small  
or large, far or near,  
visible or invisible,  
known or unknown, be  
free from worries,  
anxieties and  
unhappiness.”



## Universe

A vibrant, multi-colored starfield with blue, green, and red hues against a black background. The stars are scattered across the frame, with some appearing as bright, multi-colored points of light. The overall effect is a sense of vastness and cosmic beauty.

“Just as I should be well,  
peaceful & happy, may all  
beings in this **universe** be  
well, peaceful & happy.”

“May all beings in this  
**universe** whether  
human or non-human,  
small or large, far or  
near, visible or  
invisible, known or  
unknown, be free from  
worries, anxieties and  
unhappiness.”

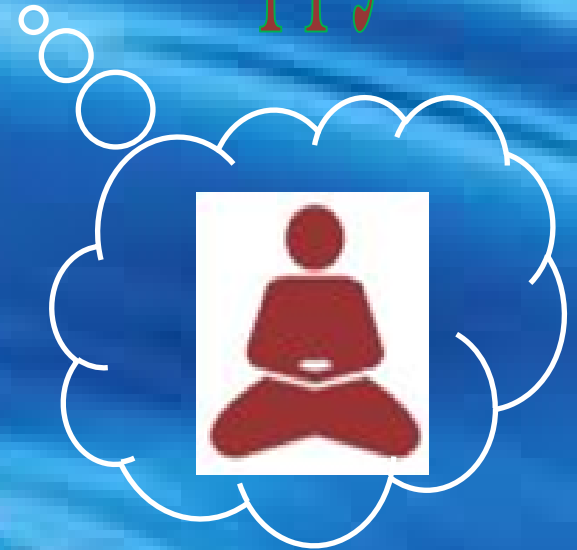
visualize, and verbalize with feeling

# May all beings be well, peaceful & happy!

***In summary:***

***Mettā*** is losing one's self-interest in the interest of all beings without exceptions.

It is like a drop of water that enters the ocean and loses its identity. In the same way self-interest is lost in the interest of all beings, including oneself.



From self-centered to self-less



# Practice of Compassion (*Karunā*)

To be in tune with the sorrows and the happiness of others as if it were one's own.

***Karunā* for unhappy beings... ➡ *Karunā* for happy beings...**

***Empathy for those who:***

- **Worry or regret** their misdeeds.
- **Lost:** loved ones(death); things (theft; disasters, etc.)
- **Cannot get what they want** due to inability.
- **Lost their self-identity** (e.g, social position).
- **Are in difficulty in the human world** (in prisons, hospitals, refugee camps, and those subject to starvation, wars, suppression, disability, etc.).
- **Are less privileged beings** (animals, ghosts, beings in hells).

***Empathy for those who:***

- Are enjoying the freedom from guilt and the benefits of being good and pure in mind.
- Have gained many things they wished for.
- Have gained their self identity.
- Are in the human world who are privileged, comfortable and happy.
- Are heavenly beings.



# *Karunā* for unhappy beings...

Think of all those beings who are suffering, here in the human world, in the animal world, and even in the worlds of ghosts and hells.

Try to put yourself in their shoes and **feel their suffering as if it is your own.**

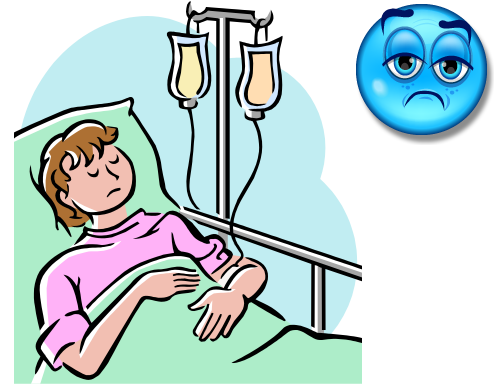
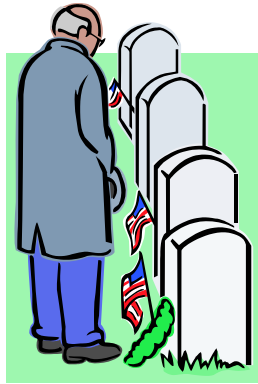
Wish that these beings be free from all suffering as soon as possible. Wish that they find happiness soon.

Wish that they be free from pain, worries, anxieties and unhappiness. May they all be happy and tranquil.

K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
  
:  
  
u  
n  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



Worry



Sorrow



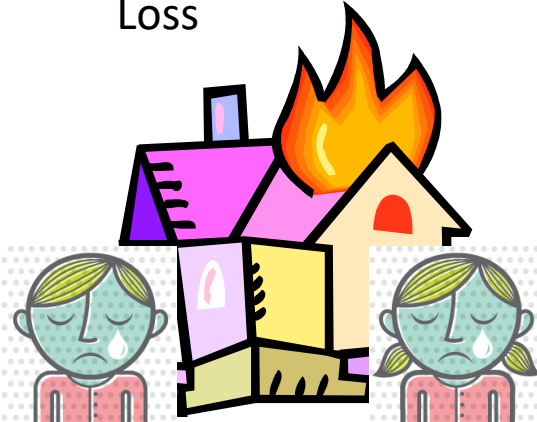
Loss of social position



Regret



Loss



K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:  
u  
n  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



Disability



Starvation



Exploited (sweat shops, child labor)



K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:  
u  
n  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



War victims in refugee camp



War victim: injured child

K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
  
:  
  
u  
n  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



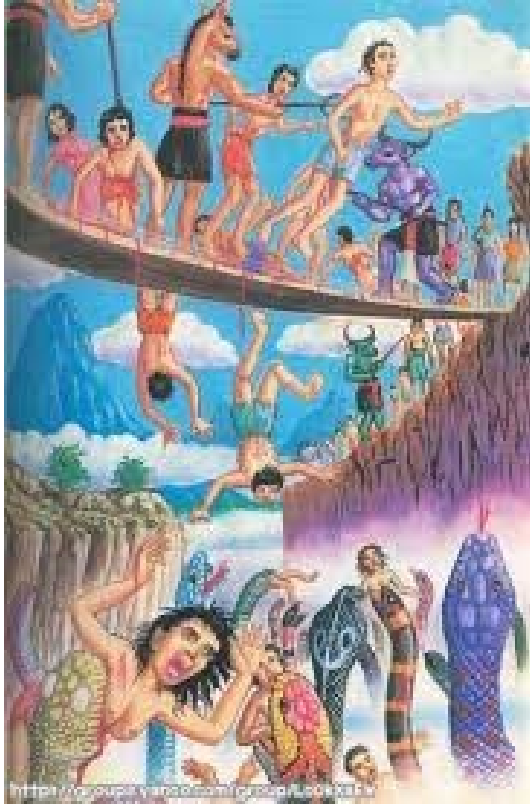
### The realm of hungry ghosts

Lingering around the edges of the mortal realm, trapped by their over-attachment to the world, the hungry ghosts, or *pretas*, are in the grip of their unfulfilled desires. This is symbolized by their huge bellies and tiny mouths that can never satisfy their appetites.



K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:  
u  
n  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s

Beings in hells suffering for their misdeeds



K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:  
  
u  
n  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



The animal world is a hell





# *Karunā* for happy beings...

Think of all beings in pleasant conditions here in this human world as well as outside, in the heavenly pleasure worlds, and the peaceful higher worlds.

Try to imagine their enjoyment in those pleasant states and **feel happy about their happiness.**

Wish that their happiness lasts long. Wish that they be free from desires, hatreds, confusion, and free from unhappiness, and wish that they be happy and tranquil.



parents, siblings,  
relatives,  
benefactors, friends,  
neutral persons

Celebrate other's joy, be happy for their happiness and success and wish:

“May your happiness , success, virtue increase and continue for a long time, and not diminish.”



Extend your *karunā* to all happy beings in the world and beyond. Rejoice in their happiness!



K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



Kate Winslet accepts the Best Actress Oscar



Lottery winner



Olympic Gold medalist





K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:  
h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



People with great wealth & luxury



K  
a  
r  
u  
n  
ā  
:



Heavenly beings – *devas* enjoying pleasures

h  
a  
p  
p  
y  
b  
e  
i  
n  
g  
s



Those who have achieved deep happiness through meditation



# Selfless Happiness of *Muditā*

With the cultivation of *mettā* and *karunā*, self-consciousness has extended beyond its limits to become the consciousness of all beings.

Self-consciousness has been transformed into universal consciousness.

This loss of self-consciousness brings all unhappiness to an end. What is left is the experience of happiness.

**This is the happiness of selflessness of *Muditā*.** Maintain this happiness by thinking, “may all beings be well and happy.”

Try to remain in this selfless state of happiness as long as possible without self-consciousness.

# Tranquility (*upekkhā*)

*Upekkhā* is resting of the mind with a peaceful heart and a selfless happiness.

Reflecting on the eight worldly winds that beings experience we learn to find peace in the midst of this changing world.

Eight worldly winds: gain/loss; praise/blame; fame/disrepute; pleasure/pain.

Nothing can disturb the still mind. It's a caring from a peaceful heart.

Like the rain that falls on everyone's garden (without favouring only those who are good), the quality of equanimity wishes well for every being.

In tranquility we rest with a peaceful heart.



# Tranquility (*upekkhā*)...

The happiness of selflessness is not an excitement. It is a state of tranquility. Try to maintain this tranquility (calmness or stillness) of mind as long as you can:

Observe the calmness of the breathing. Maintain calmness by keeping the breathing calm.

Notice that when happiness is experienced within, attention stays within, without running to external objects. When the attention is focused within, the mind remains undisturbed by changing external circumstances. This is called *upekkhā* (introspection). Remain in this healthy, calm, tranquil, peaceful state as long as possible.

Tranquility is produced by focusing attention on the experience within, and is accompanied by the comfortable feeling of relaxation. It is a resting of the mind, due to the absence of emotions and a relaxation of the body.

Regular cultivation of the *Brahma-vihāra* meditation enables us to think, feel and act selflessly bringing much happiness to ourselves and others.

# The 11 Benefits of *Mettā* Meditation



1. One sleeps happily.
2. One wakes up happily.
3. One has no bad dreams.
4. One is dear to human beings.
5. One is dear to non-human beings.
6. One is protected by the gods.
7. One's appearance is radiant.
8. Fire, poison and weapons do not affect one.
9. One's mind becomes still quickly.
10. One dies without bewilderment.
11. If one develops no further, one will be reborn at least in the Brahma World.

# References

- The Four Sublime States: Contemplations on Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity by Nyanaponika Mahathera; 1994.  
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nyanaponika/wheel006.html>
- *Ariyamagga Bhavana: The Sublime Eightfold Way* by Ven. Mahathera Madawela Punnaji; 2010. Publication of the Sasana Abhivurdhi Wardhana Society, Buddhist Maha Vihara, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Author: Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

## Notes & Acknowledgement

- This Power point slide series is only a part of a presentation on the Four Sublime States and is therefore missing the teacher's classroom explanation together with everyday life examples, stories and video clips that enhance the understanding in students. More importantly, the slides only present the theory. Students are therefore encouraged to practice the accompanying 30 minute guided meditation by Venerable Mahathera Madawela Punnaji.
- The author gratefully acknowledges all those who contributed images used in the slides. I share any merit from this *Dhamma dāna* with all of you.

**May all beings be well, peaceful & happy!**