

## **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019: Skype: Lovingkindness and Chimpanzees**

Luang Por Anan: Our daily practice is important. We eat and drink daily, many times, to have life and support our bodies. We also breathe constantly—we cannot stop. So we require air, water, and food. In the same way, we need to practice to give peace and wisdom as food for the heart. Food for the heart is even more important than physical food. To practice one needs mindfulness, which leads to concentration and peacefulness. Use mindfulness with the in and out breathing. One has good and bad thoughts, wholesome and unwholesome, the mind thinks here and there—this is natural, just the nature of the mind. But have mindfulness and come back to the breath. One keeps doing this, and one can attain peacefulness. It gets better and better. One can realize momentary peacefulness, or momentary concentration, which we call ‘khanika samadhi’.

During the day, have mindfulness with the four postures of sitting, lying, walking, and standing. Do retreats sometimes. During the day we have our breath with us always as a support for the body. If one only just sits in the evening after a busy day, and one has had no mindfulness, then one would not have enough strength to practice to peace. One needs mindfulness all day long, just like eating. One needs determination and effort. One needs mindfulness in all activities to give strength to the mind and to give momentary concentration, and this can develop into more and more mindfulness and concentration.

If we do this all the time in a balanced way, then concentration increases, peacefulness increases, momentary concentration arises, then piti, rapture, and sukha, deep pleasure and happiness, arise in the heart. One will feel that the body and mind have changed. One can feel as if floating on a cloud, and one has inner happiness, which are a result of increased concentration. This is called ‘upacara samadhi’, or neighbourhood concentration. This is close to peace and stillness, a real and true happiness. Then one has faith in practice based on direct experience. One will have motivation, strength, confidence, and energy to practice, and one will want to practice more, like diligently practicing in the mornings and evenings.

The mind has the strength and concentration to get more wisdom and insight. Know the in and out breath and see impermanence and uncertainty in the breath. Then see outer phenomena as uncertain and changing. One sees clearly bit by bit. One sees the body clearly like seeing the breath. Deeper knowing arises. When seeing like this, the mind and body separate. One sees clearly that the body is simply these four elements of earth (solidity), water (liquidity or cohesion), fire (heat), and air (movement, breath). One sees that the body is clearly impermanent, unsatisfying, and not one's own. Wisdom and purity arise bit by bit. One knows clearly that rupa, or materiality, is the 4 elements, and nama, or non-material phenomena, like feelings of pleasure, pain, or neutral, don't last long at all. The same goes for perception and memory, mental formation, and sense consciousness—they do not last. All this materiality and mentality arise and pass away.

Seeing impermanence and uncertainty clearly in this way, then one understands clearly and sees the Dhamma. This knowing and seeing the Dhamma starts at the beginning with having generosity, virtue, and lovingkindness. One has virtue and love for others and keeps the five precepts. And this metta, or lovingkindness, is important. Countries need to have metta to each other. People gather together and need lovingkindness—then peace arises. When one has metta to animals, the animals know this. With lovingkindness, one naturally does generosity and morality. Animals sense that metta is there and there are many cases of this. In this video we will see a chimpanzee who was close to death and could sense the metta coming to her. The mind peaceful from lovingkindness as a meditation object can then contemplate and see the Four Noble Truths.

**Video:**

*Homage to the Blessed One, Noble One, the Rightly Self-Awakened One*

Welcome to all the monks and novices, and blessings to all those with an interest to learn and practice Dhamma.

Today we will learn Dhamma on having metta, loving kindness, and karuna, compassion. Having metta and karuna is the aspiration for us to have happiness and to overcome suffering. All our wealth that we possess, may it not be parted from us. May we overcome all suffering. And we have metta and karuna to all beings in every direction. Whether in front, behind, above and below, we establish the mind to have unbounded metta. We have love like a pregnant mother has to her baby in her womb. We have the same metta to all living beings. Everyone likes metta and karuna. If the people we are around have minds of metta, they will have love and karuna to us, and then we will feel love and metta back to them. So in this world, if there is no metta and karuna, then there will simply be people causing harm to one another. Metta is the dhamma that protects the world so that we can live in the world with ease and happiness. We can look at the life of humans and animals, where there is this metta and karuna to one another, there is friendliness to each other, then this leaves an impression in the hearts of those individuals, whether they are a human being or an animal.

I want to talk about a chimpanzee that is a species of ape and native to the African continent. Chimpanzees have bodies and weight that are similar to us humans. They are the most intelligent animal, they learn quickly, and they are the species most closely related to humans. They are a social animal, depending on the pack like a family, and they have relatives. They follow the rules of their society. They have one sole male leader. In the daytime, they search for food on the ground, more than up in the trees. They live off fruits, young leaves, as well as small creatures such as insects. The chimpanzees have the same ability to produce basic tools to hunt for food, similar to prehistoric humans. Chimpanzees have 32 different sounds that they use as a language for communication. When they walk, they lean forward, their arms straight down and their wrists on the ground. They walk on 2 feet like humans with their hands down for balance, or they raise their hands up.

The Chimpanzees have a very good memory. Research conducted in Japan found that chimpanzees have better memories than human adults. They also have similar emotions as humans. Chimpanzees younger than 3 years of age will be exempt from punishment if they do anything wrong. But after they are 3 years old, they begin to enter into the rules of the pack. This is general information about the chimpanzees.

And there was one chimpanzee who had a very strong connection to humans. Her name was Mama. Mama lived to 59 years old. She lived in the Royal Burgers Zoo in the Netherlands. She was the oldest and most well respected in the pack of Chimpanzees. People became very familiar with this one chimpanzee. Later, when she knew that she was very sick and that she would die soon, she was in despair and lost hope. She refused to eat or drink any water, and did not want treatment at all. She was simply lying in her straw bed.

But, when her old friend discovered that Mama was sick, he came immediately to visit her. The friend's name was Professor Jan Van Hooff, a Dutch biologist. He had met Mama for the first time in 1972 and since then had a long-term close relationship with Mama for 47 years. Upon hearing the news of Mama's sickness, he rushed to go see Mama. He came to the Chimpanzee's bedside.

At first Mama did not recognize the Professor. The man who was her companion, extended his arm out to hold her, and made her look at him. She then showed signs of recognising him. She cried out with utmost joy. Her face flared full of joy, and her indifference and sloth was replaced with enthusiasm. They both embraced each other and Jan gently caressed her with love, kindness, and compassion. Mama had great happiness that her old friend had returned to come to her again when she was about to die. They had known each other for 47 years since 1972.

We can see that they had a deep, special bond. This was able to bring enthusiasm and made Mama able to eat a little given by her friend. She was very happy and the two embraced each other. They spoke to each other in a special way that was the language of the heart. The current of the mind that was imbued with metta came out and passed through her eyes, which sparkled, and this current brought life back into her. The two spoke softly and her friend was able to take care of her for a few minutes. Then, Mama began to feel tired again. After they said their goodbyes, it was the last farewell that came from their hearts. Then Mama fell back on her bed and within a few minutes she passed away peacefully and with happiness.

So we can see that the mind that has metta is important in love and relationships. We can see this in the chimpanzee Mama. Chimpanzees have less intelligence than humans, but they are still very receptive to the metta and karuna from the current of the minds of others. This metta and karuna is something important that humans need to maintain in their hearts. This will make the mind feel fresh and joyful, and then people won't harm one another.

The Buddha has said that there are 11 benefits for the one that has metta:

1. One sleeps in comfort. That is, they sleep well and deeply.
2. One wakes up in comfort. When they wake their body and mind are at ease; they have overcome their tiredness and don't feel drowsy.
3. One has no nightmares. That is, they don't dream of seeing bad things that gives them a shock in the middle of the night or causes them evil dreams.
4. One is loved by human beings in general. They are charming and wherever they go they don't have enemies or those that have ill-will towards them. And even those that don't like them will change to liking them.
5. One is loved by non-human beings. Even animals love those who have metta. They don't bite or harm them, and they are safe from all sorts of dangers.
6. The devas protect and look after one. Going travelling, or wherever they go, the devas will look after them and keep them safe at all times. They won't experience various dangers on land, water, or in the air.
7. Fire, swords, and poison cannot touch one. These things cannot be a danger to them and they are safe from them.
8. One's mind can become concentrated quickly. The one who spreads metta regularly, if they meditate, their minds will become peaceful quickly. Or if they read books or do their work, their mind won't be distracted. The mind will be quickly steadfast. And the work one does will gain success according to one's wishes.
9. One's facial features will be bright. That is, one who has a mind of metta regularly, their face and complexion will be charming, smooth, and will be noticeable to others. They will seem radiant at all times. Even if they are older, they may not be beautiful,

and though they may have no make-up, their face is always bright and pleasant to look at.

10. One does not die in confusion. That is, when the time is close to death, they don't lose their mental faculties, become mad or struggle, or fall into a distressed state. They die in peace as if they are falling asleep.
11. If one fails to attain arahantship, one will be reborn in the deva or Brahma realms. One who has metta regularly, even if they have not attained to Dhamma, they will be reborn as a deva or higher than that, a Brahma god. A Brahma god refers to the individual who has entered samadhi and gained jhana or the mental absorptions.

Those who wish to be loved and respected by others, who want peace and happiness in their heart, they should spread metta a lot. Please do this. And this will bring us and those around us peace and calm. The people that we spread metta to will have happiness, as well.

Whatever thoughts we have, this produces a current of the mind, or an energy that is sent out from our body, so that others can receive those thoughts. Because of this, some who have good samadhi or meditative concentration can read others' thoughts. Or they can communicate through the currents of the mind.

Many researchers, like Professor Fukurai in Japan and De Lavar in England, have tried to take pictures of their thoughts and it showed that thoughts are projected out from us. So we need to be careful of our thoughts. If we think good and beneficial thoughts, others may receive those good thoughts and gain benefit from those thoughts.

If we think bad thoughts, others may have bad thoughts following from us as well. If there is someone who is angry and they want to argue with us, or harm us, we shouldn't argue with them or want to harm them back. But we should establish the mind to be peaceful and spread metta to them. And if we have spread metta regularly, the person angry at us will receive some of the current of metta from us. And this makes our mind more peaceful. They may stop being angry at us, or stop wanting to harm us. And we should practice in the same way with dangerous animals. Don't run away or show fear. Just be still and spread them metta. Then in a little while that animal will go away and will not harm us.

Spreading metta has positive effects on vegetation and trees as well. There was an experiment done by a group of students who experimented with spreading metta to a tree. They spread some vegetation into 2 plots of land. For the 1st plot they spread metta, and for the other plot of land they didn't spread metta. Both plots of land were given the same amount of water, fertiliser and had the same weather conditions. But the result was that the tree that they spread metta to grew quickly and beautifully. But the other plot which was not spread metta developed at the normal rate. One difference was that the tree that was spread metta grew beautiful flowers, but the tree that was not spread any metta produced no flowers at all. And the trees also had a difference in height of 44.9%. So the spreading of metta is effective. It has great benefit towards us and to the environment in which we live.

Even our Buddha had cultivated metta meditation in many lifetimes. In the lifetime that he was born as Suvanna Sama the ascetic, he cared for his blind parents. Our Buddha had metta and karuna to all the animals, and those animals did not harm each other. This was the life that the Buddha cultivated metta as a supreme spiritual perfection.

So we as Dhamma practitioners, we bring up awareness, and we have mindfulness to know the in and out breath as our object of the mind. We make the mind peaceful and still. And then we contemplate into impermanence, seeing the arising, persisting and ceasing of all phenomena. We have the 4 Brahma viharas, the divine abidings of loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity to look after the heart always. Our sila will be perfect. And ultimately we will develop wisdom. May we all establish the mind in goodness. May we have metta to our human friends and all living beings. May you grow in Dhamma and blessings.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. Q: Instead of lovingkindness to mother earth and all animals and so on, would it be better to all engage in a plant based diet? With catastrophic climate change near, some scientists have said that the best one thing we can do is all have a plant based diet. Then every meal is metta for all beings and the world. What are your thoughts on this?

Luang Por Anan: With lovingkindness for the world and the four elements then the world will be balanced and just right. One can use one's life to bring happiness to others. If one lives harmfully and selfishly, living with greed, aversion, and delusion, then this destroys the environment and the climate. Then the climate and the environment come back to harm us. Having no metta is a danger to us. We do what we can, even if it is just a little bit; then at the least we have a good feeling in our own mind. If you have contentment, simplicity, few needs, and can do with less, then this will harm less. For example, keeping the 5 or 8 precepts helps the world and helps to not harm others, oneself, or the world. People with sila can help the world a lot, can help lower the heat in the world and help the environment. Those with sila love nature and want contentment. To help reduce global warming then reduce the heat in the heart first and foremost.

2. Q: A mother has metta for her children. Her son, a novice monk, lives in a separate place. The mother goes to another temple. The novice does good and sends metta to his mother—will she receive that metta?

Luang Por Anan: It is possible for her to receive the metta if the mind stream is strong. Or the mother can recollect her son when she goes to the temple and the son can receive metta, as well. The novice can dedicate merit to his mother. Doing this, then both the mother and son can feel peaceful and happy. The mother and son are naturally connected. Keep practicing meditation and metta.

3. Q: I did a meditation course and felt sad after the teacher left at the end of the retreat. I was sad for 3-4 days. Why was I so sad?

Luang Por Anan: One feels peaceful during the retreat and can love the teacher like a parent. After the teacher leaves, then one will feel this way—being separated from that which is loved. This sadness is normal and happens sometimes. One must have



mindfulness, just as the teacher taught to have mindfulness. First mindfulness is not strong and one feels sad, but reflect that the teachings are still with oneself—one can still practice and keep trying to have mindfulness.

4. Q: True metta leads to actions like the 5 precepts. What about dietary change as a practice and a challenge? I think of this as doing the action first before waiting to have enough metta to change.

Luang Por Anan: This is correct—we help the world and help global warming. For example, in metta practice, we think wholesome thoughts all the time. We can put food on the ground and think of giving it to the ants and other life forms; when we put water on the ground we can think of giving it to the plants; or we can do other actions that help global warming. This is metta being often in our thoughts, which is sila, or virtue, in the mind. This is training the mind. This can help the mind become peaceful and realize insight into change, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self. We practice on the inside and the outside.

5. Q: Did you have any special feelings attending a chedi ceremony?

Luang Por Anan: The Dhamma connects us all. The building of goodness connects us all. Like the chedi at Wat Marp Jan, the bottom is Thai style, the middle is Sri Lankan style, and the top is Chinese style. Whether in a monastery in Thailand or at a chedi in another country, we recollect the Buddha, whose virtues of great wisdom, purity, and compassion inspire purity in ourselves. Then we put relics in chedis with faith and recollection, which connects all of us up until the present day. If one has the physical buildings of Buddhism and faith, then individuals need to practice the Dhamma and gain true understanding of the teachings. This helps the Dhamma to prosper. These things need to be in harmony. Wherever we are we can help the dispensation of the Buddha.