



# QSA DHAMMA MAGAZINE

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## ARTICLE NUMBER

## DESCRIPTION

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| 5 | An arrangement of Dhamma Topics to keep track of Sermons, Reading and discussions |
| 6 | The four sublime states of mind   |

## *Article 5*

All of us keep learning the Dhamma by listening to sermons, by reading and by participating in discussions. With the advent of internet related facilities, the amount of information placed before us is massive. How can we manage this information and make it easy to retrieve and use it?

To answer this question, the Siddhartha Institute of Buddhism, the educational arm of the Queensland Sangha Association Inc has developed and expandable list of common topics (that can be customised by every individual) and kept on a computer for future use and development.

Such a collection will help noble friends to exchange Dhamma information conveniently.

It will enable each person to recollect or retrieve Dhamma information from his own data bank.

Anyone who likes to have a copy of the topics list please contact QSA on [infoqsa@gmail.com](mailto:infoqsa@gmail.com) or telephone Rahubadde (Rahu) Sarath-Chandra on 07-3278-9021

## **Article 6**

### **THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES OF MIND**

#### **(SATARA BRAHMA VIHARA)**

#### **Loving-Kindness (Metta)**

The mind of a person is at times hard, sometimes soft. A hard mind gets you stuck in your own thinking. If you have a soft mind, you find it easy to hear what others say. You can be one with others. Which style of mind is more useful?

The Buddha taught that a soft mind is more useful both from a practical point of view and from the spiritual point of view. The world belongs to everyone and a person with a soft mind has a good chance of being happy at least most of the time.

In Buddhism (both in Mahayana and Theravada) the belief is that people who honestly practise the soft mind style in this human life have a good chance of being reborn in the higher celestial worlds, called the Brahma Worlds, one of which is the Suddhavasa (Pure Lands).

The term Brahma refers to a higher level of celestial beings above the deities who live in pleasurable Deva worlds. Brahmas are free from lowly mental states such as anger and jealousy.

The four states of mind called sublime states are as follows:

Metta	Loving Kindness
Karuna	Compassion
Mudita	Appreciative joy
Upekkha	Equanimity

Metta has no English word to match it but Buddhist writers use the word loving-kindness. It is close in meaning to goodwill. It is the opposite of ill-will, hatred, aversion, dislike etc. In the discourse on Metta (Karaniya Matta Sutta) the Buddha describes how metta needs to be practised. In metta we extend goodwill and well wishes to all and sundry living or about to be born, small and big, friendly or unfriendly, excluding none. Continuous practice can lead to absorptions (Jhana). Eleven direct results of practising Metta are mentioned in the Dhamma. One result is the ability to sleep peacefully.

## **Compassion (Karuna)**

This is a special application of Metta. In a situation of a person experiencing difficulties like illness, disability or old age problems, one can extend good wishes that the suffering be alleviated. Then the person takes some action aimed at such alleviation. This is compassion or Karuna. Helping people in hospitals and Homes for the disabled or the aged with Chaplaincy or other services is an example.

The Queensland Sangha Association Inc has set up a Buddhist Chaplaincy service to provide such services. There are more than fifty such Buddhist chaplains trained and registered with QSA.

There is a big organisation organised by Taiwanese people (with a branch in Brisbane) who render word-wide compassion relief services expecting nothing in return. In Sri Lanka there is a large hospital services organisation functioning from about 1960 originally set up by the All-Ceylon Buddhist Students federation with just 15 students and one monk.

## **Appreciative Joy (Mudita)**

This is an extended application of metta.

Sometimes people are full of joy because of their success or happiness. If you can be joyous just by seeing it, that mental state is appreciative joy or Mudita.

It is opposite to jealousy.

You are happy when they are happy. It gives you a lot of merit, doing nothing. Students need to be encouraged to practise this. Only some are successful in school work. Not all can be. There are many ways to do well in life.

## **Equanimity (Upekkha)**

A soft mind can be moved from one mental state to another or to stay in the middle.

For example when facing an attractive person or thing one can get attracted more and more or if capable it can stay unmoved. When facing an unpleasant object or person, the can try to push the object or thing away or stay unmoved.

With steadfast practice you can keep the mind unmoved in opposite situations.

The mind stays in balance. It is impartial. It makes life easy. As an extension of Metta one learns to accept the world as it is with little worry or concern. It is useful even in the family or in the community.

Buddhist teaches eight worldly conditions that always fluctuate. It is nice if we can stay calm whichever way things go.

The Buddha's life is full of stores of people insulting him or making false accusations. He stayed unmoved without reacting. Things eventually subsided.

Why not try to be like that.

THE END