

## How to practise Buddhism for mercy

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There are two questions that arise from the title given above. They are what is Buddhism? and what is mercy? If someone asked you these two questions, what answer will you give for them? The first one out of these two is what is Buddhism? One can answer that Buddhism is a religion and the other one can say that Buddhism is about four noble truths or Buddhism is an independent organization. Another person may give a different definition. Whatever they may be, the author is of the view that Buddhism is naturalism as it always talks about nature or the atmosphere which embraces the human being. Buddhism penetrates in to the human mind and searches and researches the function of the human mind. Buddha's teaching is not a blind faith, it is one which provides a practical analytical understanding of the mind and its functions. The next one is what is mercy? There is an important part of Buddhism in the art of noble living and in the cultivation of Brahma – Vihāra, which is translated into English as divine abiding of the sublime states. Brahma – Vihāra (Divine status or Superior status) can be classified into four kinds, namely Mettā, which means love in the sense of benevolence or living kindness, Karuṇā which is compassion or pity for all suffering. Muditā which means joy in the success and happiness of others, and Upekkā which is equality of mind or balance of mind. These four outstanding qualities are also known as infinite sentiments (Appamāññā) as they are extended to all living beings without any distinctions. Definitions from the path of purification quoted can be for further elucidation about compassion which we have discussed, "Paradukkha sati sādhanām hadaya kampanam karoti ti karuṇā." When there is suffering in others it causes (karoti) the heart of good man to move (kampana) and that is and compassion (karuṇā). Again it says in the same text kināti vā paradukkham himsati vināsetīti karuṇā - that is alternatively it combats (kināti) suffering of those, attacks and demolishes them and this is compassion. Those who like to practise Buddhism for mercy have to do meditation on compassion. "One should remember that all beings desire happiness, and that suffering (mental or physical) is inevitable until the state of Nibbāna is attained through the conquest of desire and through insight, which is understanding perfected. For ignorance, in one form or another (and desire born of ignorance), is the cause of suffering" - Buddhist Meditation by G. Constant Lounsbury – 1935, 102p Thus compassion can be comprised of mercy. So mercy is compassion (In Pali Karuṇā). According to Buddhism, those who wish to reach emancipation must develop specific noble virtues in their minds and compassion is one of those noble virtues.

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