

Buddhist Meditation and Human Development

Dr. Sarah Shaw



- Meditation can be practiced at anytime in our daily lives for mental development
- By cultivating compassion, loving kindness and/or wisdom: we are 'making much of' the mind. If we practice and teach meditation, these qualities are more likely to arise.
- During the session we discussed techniques that may be taught to others so that they can develop mindfulness and metta to themselves, for themselves.



“We wish that everyone may be well and happy: but let us find the middle way so that we do not try and impose our views on others.”



Consciousness

- The important feature of a human is that he or she is conscious and has volition (cetana).
- Consciousness is our product and volition our choice in developing it. How do we develop these? How do we encourage and help others to develop their own happiness and wisdom?



The product is helped by

A) sometimes an increase in happiness
(samatha)

B) sometimes a decrease of suffering
(sati/panna)



Human development

- The word bhavana or 'making much of' can be applied in any situation.
- Our conditioning or mental processes we sometimes cannot stop; but we can watch them. Mindfulness refines our product.



Other people have cetana too, but...

“How can we help them to wish for their own happiness?”

“How can we help them to diminish their own suffering?”

“We might feel loving kindness for them; but to what extent can we help them feel it for themselves?”



Self

- We have to start with ourselves. We can find all states inside ourselves: all the hells and lower realms, but also the higher, happier realms.
- The misunderstanding of the self in the world is the cause of conflict.



Others

**“How can we apply understanding
in our dealings with others?”**



Skill in means

- When teaching others we sometimes need great skill in means in offering techniques. We should not despise or see them as different:
 - a) Children
 - b) Adults
 - c) Different age groups



- Samatha and vipassana are ‘yoked together’.
- But sometimes a changed view can help someone to be free. This is purifying the world of perceptions (vipassana).
- Sometimes a moment of sympathy or compassion can change a feeling of sadness to peace and stillness (samatha). This is purifying the world of feeling.



- The Buddha tailored his meditation for specific needs.
- We need to understand what is helpful for different age groups, different temperaments and different disabilities.



- The human mind has been familiar with imprisonment of various kinds for a long time; but it has also developed ways of escaping this.
- The Buddha identified hundreds of different means of arousing a skilful mind.
- He developed all kinds of creative views and meditations.

“Can we do this ourselves?”



Peace

- The recollection of peace is one of Buddhaghosa's meditation objects. He suggests finding peace in one's own body and mind. If we do this, we are more likely to find peace around us.



Thank you

