

## Mettā Sutta

For many years, our community used to chant or read “Unlimited Friendliness,” a translation from the Pāli of the *Mettā Sutta*, a discourse of the Buddha found in the oldest Buddhist canon, the Pāli tipitaka. *Mettā* derives from the Sanskrit *mitra*, which literally means “friend,” from which the Sanskrit word *maitrī* also comes. The translation used by our saṅgha originally was one published by Edward Conze in the 1950s. *Mettā*, or *maitrī*—translated as “friendliness,” “loving kindness,” or “love”—is widely discussed throughout Buddhist literature, since it is the first of the four limitless ones, followed by compassion, joy, and equanimity (or equality).

During the 1990s, Conze’s translation had been found wanting because of its use of noninclusive language with regard to gender. Kay Landt, who faithfully lead the monthly *maitrī bhavanā* practice in Halifax during that time, researched other translations in order to find a more suitable one. Working with the translation committee and others, she produced a nonsexist reworking of Conze, which we circulated among our community as a temporary replacement. Without reading the original Pāli, it is difficult to judge other translations accurately. So, in the process of reviewing five different translations of the Pāli, we chose to undertake our own, borrowing liberally from our predecessors.

We offer this new translation to our community in the spirit embodied in its words.

## FRIENDLINESS

This is what should be done by those who are skilled in seeking the good, having attained the way of peace:

They should be able, straightforward, and upright, easy to speak to, gentle, and not proud,  
Content and easily supported, with few obligations and wants,  
With senses calmed, prudent, modest, and without greed for other people's possessions.  
They should not do anything base that the wise would reprove.  
May they be at their ease and secure—may all beings be happy.

Whatever living beings there are, whether they be weak or strong—omitting none—  
Whether long, large, average, short, big or small,  
Seen or unseen, dwelling near or far,  
Born or to be born—may all beings be happy.

Let no one deceive another or despise anyone anywhere.  
Let none out of anger or hostility wish suffering upon another.

Just as a mother would protect with her life her own child, her only child,  
So should one cultivate a boundless mind toward all beings and friendliness toward the  
entire world.

One should cultivate a boundless mind—above, below, and across,  
Without obstruction, hatred, or enmity.

Standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, throughout all one's waking hours,  
One should practice this mindfulness; this, they say, is the supreme state.

Not falling into wrong views, virtuous, endowed with insight,  
Having overcome desire for sense pleasures, one will never again know rebirth.

*Buddha Shākyamuni taught this Mettā Sutta, which is found in the Sutta-Nipāta section of the Khuddaka-Nikāya collection of shorter-length discourses. It was translated from the Pāli by the Nālandā Translation Committee with reference to a number of previous translations.*

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