

Comprehensive Metta Bhavana illustrating the three types of feeling

Kayika vedana

Begin with physical feeling. Put your hand on your heart or stomach. Contact the sensations in your physical being, not treating your body as an object but as part of a person that is feeling sensations.

Notice, where you feel it, ... 'I feel physical pleasure. I feel physical pain' Say to yourself - 'Pleasure and pain in my body are an expected part of life. Sometimes I will be able to get rid of that pain. At other times I won't. May I suffer as little physical pain as possible. And when I do feel pain may I also be relaxed' Stay with your physical feelings establishing metta towards them

Samisa / Niramisa / Niramisa Niramisatara vedana

Then move on to feelings brought about by your state of mind. Begin with worldly feelings brought about by greed, hatred and delusion. Reflect that you feel pleasure when your mind is greedy and you get what you want; when your mind is hateful and what you hate is not absent; when your mind is deluded and you are engaged in fantasy. Reflect similarly that you feel pain when your mind is greedy and you don't get what you want; when your mind is hateful and what you hate is present; and when your mind is deluded and you are forced into contact with the real.

Wish yourself well when you are in these states and hope they lead to happiness, but bear in mind that pleasure in these states is dependent on factors outside of your control - on what the world gives you. And that even if they are pleasureable now, if they are unskillful they will bring you pain later on. Be sensitive to the pain they might bring you later on through regret. Not wanting that pain to happen to you, wish you could be in more ethical states more of the time, experiencing pleasureable spiritual feelings like lack of remorse, self sufficiency, friendliness and higher states of consciousness.

But realise too that spiritual feelings may also be painful, as when we empathise with the suffering of other beings. And realise that it is good to feel pain if, through metta, it connects us with the needs of others. Broaden out our concern from 'our pain' to just 'pain' in general. May all pain anywhere decrease. May all beings be happy. May beings experience spiritual feeling rather than worldly feeling and so be connected to and help one another.

But more than 'just the ethical' feeling, may beings experience the bliss of release, the pleasureable feeling that is 'more spiritual than the spiritual' (niramisa niramisatara) through gaining insight. Knowing at times I feel equanimity, but my equanimity is not still impermanent. May it become permanent. May I no longer worry about getting my pleasure from particular types of sense experience, or particular type of existence, or the pain of knowing I am still spiritually ignorant.

Cetasika vedana

Then turn to feeling relating to thoughts and views. First identify how thoughts I have about myself, other people and the world, affect me and make me feel happy or sad. For instance when I think a positive thought about myself even if it is not realistic, I feel happy; when I think a negative thought about myself even if it is not realistic, I feel sad; when I think a neutral thought about myself even if it is not realistic, I feel neutral, and so on. Wanting to feel happy through my thoughts but realising that I will only really be happy when my thoughts are in line with reality.

Not wanting to experience pain in the future when reality breaks in on my thoughts, may my thoughts about myself, other people and the world be realistic ones. Imagining all my thoughts being permanently in line with reality, imagining myself feeling quieted, may I gain insight. May all beings gain insight and so be permanently happy.