

LOVE – Buddhist View



Love is a feeling of warm affection, interest and concern towards others. Love is characterized as promoting the welfare of others, its function is to desire their welfare, it manifests as the removal of annoyance and its proximate cause is seeing the loveable nature of beings. The Buddha spoke of many different types of love, some of which do not have English equivalents; warm regard (*àdara*), closeness (*bhajati*), loving commitment (*daëhabhatta*), genial love (*hita*), erotic love (*kàma*), worldly love (*lokassàdara*), tender love (*mamàyati*), affection (*manàpa*), love of one's mother (*matteyya*), love of one's father (*petteyya*) and devoted love (*sambhajeyya*).

To be psychologically healthy and happy we have to begin by loving ourselves and our direct family. As we grow and mature, we gradually learn to include more individuals in our love of friends, spouse, in-laws, children, etc. To develop into a truly spiritual person, our love has to eventually pervade all the beings we come into contact with. In this process of changing love from being limited to becoming more pervasive, selfishness, jealousy, attachment and the demand for reciprocation gradually subside and love becomes strong, indiscriminating and effortless. The Buddha said to his disciples: `You should train yourselves like this: Our minds shall not be perverted nor shall we speak evil speech but with kindness and compassion we will

live with a mind free from hatred and filled with love. We will live suffusing firstly one person with love and starting with them, suffuse the whole world with a love that is expansive, pervasive, immeasurable and utterly devoid of hatred. This is how you should train yourselves.

If one has developed love really great, rid of the desire to hold and possess, that strong clean love which is untarnished by lust, that love that does not expect gain or profit, that love that is firm but not grasping, unshakeable but not inflexible, gentle and settled, hard but not hurting, helpful but not interfering, giving more than receiving, dignified but not proud, soft but not sentimental, that love which leads to the highest achievement, then one will be freed from all ill-will.