

The Four Immeasurables

Meditation on Sympathetic Joy

Take nine deep relaxation breaths with long exhalations.

For the first three breaths, breathe in and bring the breath to any tension in the body, releasing the tension with the exhalation.

For the second three breaths, inhale into any emotional tension, feel where you hold it in your body and release it with the exhalation.

And, lastly, breathe into any mental tension. Feel where you hold nervousness, worries, or mental blockages in your body and release them with the exhalation.

Generate a heartfelt motivation to practice for the benefit of one's self and all beings.

You can have your eyes either open or closed for this meditation.

Begin with someone in front of you for whom it is easy to feel sympathetic joy. Maybe someone you love: a child, friend, or beloved. Just choose one person and see them in front of you. See them very clearly. See the look in their eyes; get a sense of their body, their movement, and also what they are wearing. Do this until you have a felt sense of their presence. Feel their joy: see them in a moment of joy. Maybe they are a joyful person, or there was a time that they were very happy. See that joyfulness, wish them well and wish them more joy. Have this feeling go out from your heart. Feel joy in their joy and see that joy increase, really feeling also the effect this has in your body.

Then see to the left of them someone you don't feel particularly envious of, or connected to. It could be someone you don't know very well or someone who is in your life, but you do not have much of a relationship to. Get a clear picture of them and really see the look in their eyes and so on. Notice what they are wearing, how they are feeling and then send out this sympathetic joy (*mudhitta*) to them. See any joy in their life and wish for that to increase. See them become more and more joyful, and at the same time, see your wish for their happiness to increase, and also your wish for them to create the causes of happiness. Feel a deep, heartfelt wish and see their joy increase more and more. Make a connection with their true nature: wish them that kind of joy.

Then on the right side see a difficult person. This can be someone you have felt envious or jealous of or someone whom you feel resentment towards. Perhaps you have a wish for them to be harmed or to lose what they have. See that person. Maybe you don't have someone you feel that way about currently, so it can be someone you have felt that way about in the past. Offer them sympathetic joy. You can do this just for the moment... You can always get your resentment back... But just for the moment let go and feel what it feels like to let go and feel that joy. Release any jealous feelings of them having joy and success, the feeling that somehow their joy would give you less joy. Just let the feeling of *mudhitta*, or sympathetic joy, flow to them. Feel what this releases in you.

Then feel these three beings in front of you and feel the *mudhitta*, or sympathetic joy, going to all of them at once. Feel the joy in their joy all at once and then expand that out to all beings in the room. Just

flash on everyone here and wish them joy, seeing them light up with joy like lightbulbs going on. Feel the expansiveness in your own heart and all of the being felt within the fabric of emptiness.

Then expand that to out the beings at Tara Mandala: the little beings under the earth and all the insects, birds, and small beings above the ground. Wish for their wellbeing, freedom from fear, and that they have what they need. Feel all the animals, the larger animals such as the chickens, dogs, cats, iguana, mice, and rats. Feel all the animals in the ocean, large and small. Send sympathetic joy to all the beings that are here that we don't necessarily see and wish for their wellbeing and happiness.

Send to all the people in the area: your neighbors and friends, all the people you do not know, the owners, the workers, the helpers. See all of them light up with joy and see their joy increasing and expanding and feel the interconnectedness with all those beings. Feel your inseparability from them, our dependence on them, and our interdependence with them and then expand that out beyond, into this whole area. Really make your mind vast enough to feel into all those beings just in this area of the world and wish for the happiness of all those beings. Gradually expand it out to cover the whole earth, the inconceivable number of beings on the earth: beings that fly and the beings that live under the ocean, beings in huge cities and vast countryside. Wish all those beings to be free from suffering and that they may create the causes of ultimate happiness. Feel the wish for them to never be separated from the supreme joy that is beyond all sorrow. Feel the immeasurable quality of sympathetic joy.

Then expand it out even beyond our planet to other possible beings in the universe. Feel the inconceivable size of the universe. Send that wish out. Feel how we really have to break down our own limits in order to feel this immeasurable sympathetic joy, or *mudhitta*. It's really beyond the conceptual mind so at this point we're just emanating it from our hearts.

Then if you have your eyes closed, open them but still feel that *mudhitta* for everyone in this room. Look around and feel that wish and how it feels in your heart when you do that.

Dedicate the merit. Feel that all we've developed through the cultivation of sympathetic joy really is a merit. May that merit spread to all beings without exception, and may they be benefited by the generation of *Bodhicitta*.



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