HRCE 3002:
Buddhist Ethics: Loving Kindness in Buddhism

The class will provide an introduction to Buddhist ethics and the role of love in this ethical system as found in the Theravada Buddhist tradition. We will begin with exploring what the Buddha taught about love and then how these teachings changed and developed through Theravada history up to the present. The theme of loving-kindness will be used to understand some of the historical, doctrinal, and sociological issues that are important for understanding Theravada Buddhism. With this as a foundation, we will also study how Theravada teachings on loving-kindness have been both adapted by Western Buddhists and applied to secular, therapeutic purposes by contemporary psychologists. The class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. The intended audience is MDiv, MA and MTS students. Grading will be based on:

- Three-page analytical paper due October 1 (10%)
- Mid-term paper due November 5 (20%)
- Final research paper due December 12 (60%)
- Class participation (10%)

Attendance policy: students may miss one class and still complete the course. In the event of a second absence students may make up the missed class by writing a 4-page research paper on an assigned topic related to the missed class. Missing a second class and not writing a paper will drop a student's grade a half a grade.

Time: Mondays 9:40 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Office hours: Mondays 8:00 a.m. – 9:20 a.m. at Sonoma Cafe
Instructors:
Gil Fronsdal (gil@sati.org)
Nona Olivia (SITBSDean@sati.org)

Texts:
Peter Harvey, Introduction to Buddhist Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Harvey Aronson, Love and Sympathy in Theravada Buddhism (Motilal Banarsidass, 2008)


Thomas Jay Oord, Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement (Grand Rapids, MI: BrazosPress, 2010).
Syllabus

**September 10 - Introduction to Love in Buddhism**

A. Place of Loving-kindness and Compassion in Buddhism and Modern Society

B. What are we studying when we study love in Buddhism?
   1. Brief overview of Theravada Buddhist History
   2. *anukampa, metta, karuna, mudita, upekkha, anudaya, kama, pema, bhakti*
   3. Issues of cross cultural comparisons between different periods of human history.
   4. Issue of theories or "theologies" of love in Buddhism

C. Discussion of student’s interest and questions regarding our study of love.

**September 17 – Introduction to Buddhist Ethics**

A. Fire Sermon and Liberation
B. Kalama Sutta and the Foundations of Buddhist ethics
C. Loving-kindness and Ethical Purification
D. Compassion as a basis for the Buddhist Precepts

Reading:
- Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, pp. 1-122
- Kalama Sutta, Cula-Assapura Sutta, Tevijja Sutta (posted)

**September 24 - Scriptural Foundation of Theravada Buddhist Love**

A. The Buddha’s Compassion and Loving-kindness
B. Empathy (*anukampa*) as the foundation for Brahmaviharas
C. Sutta descriptions of Metta and other Brahmaviharas

Reading:
- Metta Sutta (posted)
- Misc. suttas (posted)

**October 1 – Functions and Ethical applications of loving-kindness**

A. Social Harmony
B. Overcoming anger
C. Countering Brahmanical beliefs  
D. Eleven Benefits  
E. Source of merit  
F. Response to Interpersonal difficulties  
G. Protection (paritas)  
H. Meditation Practice  
I. Path to Liberation (Iti 27; Anuruddha sutta MD 127)  
J. Is Metta altruistic? Altruism in Buddhist Ethics

Reading:  
- Harvey Aronson, *Love and Sympathy in Theravada Buddhism* pp. 39-59  
- Richard Gombrich, “Kindness and Compassion as a Means to Nirvana in Early Buddhism” (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science; 1988. (posted or available at Academic Works page of ocbs.org)  
- Various Suttas (posted)

**October 8 – Columbus Day (no class)**

**October 15 – Meditation Practice of Metta in the Suttas**  
A. Meditation Practice  
B. Benefits of meditation practice  
C. Liberation through Metta Meditation

Reading:  
- suttas (posted)

**October 22 – Reading Week (no class)**

**October 29 – Ethics of Love and Sexuality**

Reading:  
- Suttas (posted)  
- “Genuine and Fictious Metta” and “Family Love” by U Pandita, in On the Path to Freedom (1995) pp. 262 – 264 and 266 (found at Buddhanet.net)  
- “Love’s Diverse Forms and Multiple Recipients” in Oord, *Defining Love*, pp. 31-64  
- “On Knowledge of Beginnings” from *Long Discourses of the Buddha*; DN27 (handout);  

**November 5 - Metta in later Theravada and Theravada commentaries**  
A. Intro to Theravada History and Commentarial tradition  
B. Abhidhamma and Patisambhidamagga  
C. Visuddhimagga
D. Metta as a Perfection
E. Metta in Jataka Tales
F. Love, Faith, and Devotion (pema, saddha, bhakti)

Reading:
- Selections from Abhidharma and Jatakas (class handouts)
- Buddhaghosa, The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), Chapter 9 (available at Accessstoinsight.org).
- Dhammapala, A Treatise on the Paramis, selected passages (posted or available at Accessstoinsight.org).
- View on YouTube or show in class:
  - On YouTube, view “Vesak Bhakti Gee 2011 Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara Los Angeles - Wandanawe Yamu” (3:54 minutes)
  - On YouTube, view “Buddham Sharanam Gachchami The Three Jewels Of Buddhism I Bhagwan Buddha” (2:47 minutes)

November 12 – Metta in the West
A. Sharon Salzberg
B. Jack Kornfield
C. Joseph Goldstein

Reading:
- Jack Kornfield, “The Path of Service” in Seeking the Heart of Wisdom (Shambhala, 1987), pp 159-170

November 19 - Metta in Modern Asian Theravada
A. The appearance of Metta teachings in modern Asia.
B. Asian Teachers
   1. Mahasi Sayadaw
   2. U Pandita
   3. U Indeka
   4. Nyanaponika
   5. Ven. Piyasilo

Reading:
- Mahasi Sayadaw, Brahnavihara Dhamma (1985) pp 1-76 in printed version. (found at yellowrobe.com; pp1-38 in online version)

**November 26 – The Intensive Practice of Metta**

**Guest Speaker – Donald Rothberg, Metta retreat teacher**
- include a guided meditation on loving-kindness.

**Reading:**
1. Sujiva, selections from *Meditation on Loving Kindness and other sublime states* (handout)
3. Thanissaro Bhikkhu,"Metta Means Goodwill" (posted and at Accessstoinsight.org)

**December 3 - Metta, ethical evaluation, and engaged Buddhism**

**A.** For speech (AN V. 198)
**B.** Medical ethics
**C.** Metta as motivation for engaged Buddhism
**D.** Burmese Saffron Revolution

**Reading:**
- Bhikkhu Bodhi, “A Challenge to Buddhists” in *Buddhadharma* Fall 2007
- Byama-so taya [the Brahmviharas]: social meditation and the politics of influence” in Gustaaf Hourman, *Mental Culture in Burmese Crises Politics*, 1999 – (posted)

**December 10 – Contemporary secular uses of metta and clinical studies and Conclusion**

**A.** Different ways love is defined in clinical studies
**B.** Different ways love is measured in clinical studies
**C.** Value and role of clinical studies
**D.** What is the relationship between Buddhist suttas and contemporary scientific publications?
**E.** Toward a Theology of Love in Theravada Buddhism.
Reading:

- “God and the Turn of Love” in Oord, Defining Love, pp 182 – 189.