

Cultivating Sympathetic Joy

Gratitude and Delight

Buddhist tradition honors the intention and qualities of sympathetic joy: delight in every being's wealth, virtues, and buddhanature. The cultivation of sympathetic joy leads to happiness in this life, good fortune in the future, and the uncovering of our potential for kindness and compassion, equanimity and wisdom.

Take delight in the wealth of the world

- ❖ The beauty and bounty of nature: a verdant green and blue planet, intricate self-sustaining ecosystems, water, sunlight, weather, soil, and millions of species providing life to each other
- ❖ The amazing human body, hundreds of bones, joints, muscles, nerves, biochemicals, breathing and balancing and moving as a whole
- ❖ Communities of care and creativity, skills and productivity
- ❖ All the arts: clothing, shelter, medicine, food, and music
- ❖ Success in all endeavors, and good fortune of all kinds

Take delight in the virtues of yourself and all beings

- ❖ Observe and delight in goodness of all kinds: generosity, kindness, compassion
- ❖ Patience, ethical behavior, diligence, enthusiasm for all efforts to be and do good
- ❖ Notice acts of kindness, human and non-human, as they arise spontaneously throughout time and space
- ❖ Delight in how beings exercise good intention, discipline and intelligence, in order to bring genuine benefit and happiness to themselves and others

Take delight in the Dharma

- ❖ *Dharma* is each phenomenon; whatever arises, is the truth of that phenomena. *Dharma* is phenomena arising according to the laws of nature, manifesting and knowable by sentient beings. *Dharma* is life lived in alignment with the laws of nature and the way things are.
- ❖ Every sentient being, without exception, has buddha-nature: inherent, indestructible awareness and intelligence, and the sensitive responsiveness that can work with whatever arises.
- ❖ Even the momentary thought of awakening for the sake of all beings can set in motion the intention and effort to actually do so. Delight in the spirit of awakening whenever and wherever you see it arise.
- ❖ Delight in the Three Jewels: *The Buddha* and all teachers that show us how to awaken for the benefit of all beings. *The Dharma*, the teachings and practices that do awaken wisdom and compassion. *The Sangha*, the community of practitioners, not only Buddhist practitioners, but every human and non-human sentient being who is aware and responsive. Delight in the Three Jewels and take refuge in them.
- ❖ Delight in the benefit you and others have received from every teacher, worldly and spiritual, every mentor, every friend, and one who helps and supports and trains others.
- ❖ Delight in experience itself, revealing the nature of things, showing us exactly what we need to see, self-releasing upon arising, and the miracle of interdependence.