

Muditā

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Muditā (sympathetic joy) is the third sublime virtue. It is not merely sympathy, which in most cases is passive. But it is active in so far as it completely destroys jealousy. *Muditā*, therefore, is an antidote to jealousy. Narada Thera says the following about jealousy: “One devastating force that endangers our whole constitution is jealousy. Very often some cannot bear to see or hear the successful achievements of others. They rejoice over their failures but cannot tolerate their successes. Instead of praising and congratulating the successful, they try to ruin, condemn and vilify them. In one way *muditā* is concerned more with oneself than with others as it tends to eradicate jealousy, which ruins oneself. On the other hand it aids others as well since one who practices *muditā* will not try to hinder the progress and welfare of others.” (The Buddha and His Teachings, p.635).

One can easily rejoice over the success of one’s near and dear ones but it is very difficult to be happy at the success of one’s enemies. *Muditā*, therefore, is very difficult to practice, more difficult than *mettā* and *karuṇā*.

But if *muditā* is practiced sincerely, if the poor rejoices over the rich, if the developing nations rejoice over the developed ones, if the people belonging to one religion are not jealous of the people following another religion, if one institution is not jealous of another, if the unsuccessful are not jealous of the successful then a lot of trouble, tension and suffering caused by jealousy will not arise. Shakespeare calls jealousy ‘a green-eyed monster’ that can cause havoc.

So, if the individuals and groups practice *muditā* (appreciative joy), the world will become a paradise.

I remember one incident of jealousy in my life. Some of my classmates who were from town were very jealous of me because I, coming from a village, used to stand first in the class. One of them became so jealous of me that one day he persuaded me to go to a garden nearby where he would give me guavas. I went there but lo and behold, instead of giving me guavas he took out a blade and wanted to cut one of my right-hand fingers. I felt helpless because he was physically a bully. But fortunately, an elderly man appeared on the scene and the bully ran away. On being asked why I looked sad and afraid I told him all

about it and he himself being a town dweller must have taken the boy to task. Even now, sometimes I think what would have happened to me if he would have cut the index finger of my right hand.

Muditā, in fact, is a great sublime mental state. It must be cultivated to drive out jealousy.

Questions:

1. Define *muditā*. How is *muditā* an antidote to jealousy?
2. ‘One can easily rejoice over the success of one’s near and dear ones but it is very difficult to be happy at the success of one’s enemies.’ Elaborate.
3. Why is jealousy called a ‘green-eyed monster’?
4. *Muditā* should be cultivated to drive out jealousy. Discuss.
5. If people practice *muditā*, the world will become a veritable paradise. Elaborate.