

MEDITATION ON THE MERITS OF BRAHMA VIHARA BHAVANA* [Cultivation of the Four Immeasurables]

For any ways I have helped to free myself and others from suffering,
I pay homage to these actions and to their fruition.
For any ways another has helped to free me and others from suffering,
I pay homage to their actions and to their fruition.

For any ways I have contributed to my own happiness
And that of others,
I pay homage to these actions and to their fruition.
For any ways another has contributed to my happiness
And that of others,
I pay homage to their actions and to their fruits.

For any ways I have helped myself and others
To know peace of mind,
I pay homage to these actions and to their fruition.
For any ways another has helped me and others
To know peace of mind,
I pay homage to their actions and to their fruition.

For any ways I have acted with generosity and kindness of heart
Toward myself and others,
I pay homage to these actions and to their fruition.
For any ways that another has acted with generosity and kindness of heart
Toward me and others,
I pay homage to these actions and to their fruition.

**[See reverse for sources, terms, and practice suggestions]*

Sources From The Pali Canon Regarding The Benefits Of Reflection On One's Beneficial Actions And On The Merits Of Those Actions:

II SAMYUTTA NIKAYA 12.VI.51. *Nidanasamyutta*. Book of Causation (Wisdom Publications: Vol I. Bhikku Bodhi trans. P. 587).

ANGUTTARA NIKAYA XI.13. *Mahanama Sutta*. Discourse to Mahanama (2). (Access to Insight: Thanissaro Bhikku trans.).

Use of Terms In This Meditation:

Fruit—(in Pali, *Phala*): the fruits of beneficially intended actions; that which proceeds, issues from, is generated by the flowering of an action based on wise intention. The image is not one of individually hoarded points in a spiritual stock market, but rather that of an abundance of nutriment to be shared by all as a result of one's actions. It is like the simile of the farmer who gives seeds from her or his most productive plants to neighboring farmers, with the understanding that everyone's yield will benefit from their cross-pollination.

Pay Homage – To acknowledge with respect; to honor; to give thanks for.

Practice Suggestions:

1. Before doing this guided meditation on one's beneficial actions and their merits, read through the entire text. Bring to mind an actual example of whatever action(s) you will be using as an object of meditation.
2. It is possible to devote an entire sitting to doing all three aspects of all four forms of action (compassion, happiness, peace, kindness); or to begin or end a sitting by doing all three aspects of just one or two forms.
3. Note with care any resistance that might arise to doing this practice, since that in itself can be a worthy object of Insight Meditation. As the Buddha explained it, the underlying intention of this form of contemplation is not self-reification, but rather the necessary step of developing what Thanissaro Bhikku translates as a "wise sense of self", as a prelude to beginning to let go of the concept of self altogether. It's acknowledging the manifestation of your own Buddha Nature—the incremental, ongoing process of self-liberation.