

tempt—based on the early Pali discourses of Buddha—to show that the concern for others, or love and sympathy for them is very central to Theravada religious life.

The book comprises six chapters. In these chapters the book discusses the context and content of the Theravada teachings on love, sympathy, and the collective meditative set of four sublime attitudes—universal love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. The source for this study is the first four of the five collections of Buddha's discourses.

Traditionally, monks expressed their sympathy for lay people by providing them education at the village level. The traditional system of education confined to the teaching of Pali, Sanskrit, cultural history and so on has little value in civil-service or business careers and therefore the monastic educational system lost its appeal and has declined. Thus the Buddhist monastic communities seem to have lost their only means for expressing their sympathy for others. According to Aronson, the interpretation of Theravada Buddhism as withdrawal from society and abstention from social involvement is not acceptable. Through a rigorous analysis of the specific instructions on social concern, namely, the teaching on love, sympathy and the sublime attitudes, he indicates that this is far from the truth. New ways of expressing sympathy and social involvement are available in Theravada Buddhism.

The book offers refreshing and at the same time scholarly reading material on this matter, for it eloquently advocates that religious love takes deep roots in and through genuine social concerns. The central message of the book can be found in its brief but precise treatment of the sublime attitudes. "When love, compassion, systematic joy, and equanimity are cultivated according to the method of the fourfold instructions they are called "Sublime attitudes...". "Each sublime attitude is an antidote to an unwholesome reaction, such as anger, harmfulness and so forth" (p. 69).

This review may be most appropriately concluded with the citation of a text which presents a very high ethical ideal of Theravada Buddhism.

"Love is the State of desiring to offer happiness and welfare with the thought, "May all beings be happy", and so forth. *Compassion*