



Wise Paths to the Heart

Is warmheartedness a source of well-being? Are human beings kind by nature? How can we activate a sense of connection with oneself and others? How can we make it a source of true happiness? How far can our inner qualities of love, compassion, joy, and so on be developed?

Description

The course “Wise paths to the heart” focuses on cultivating warmheartedness and prosocial attitudes, which are essential for human evolution, well-being, and flourishing. It presents the four immeasurable attitudes of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, as drawn from the Buddhist tradition, and explores the mind of awakening, which embraces all sentient beings. It is complemented by references to current scientific understanding on the nature and biological basis of altruism, empathy, compassion, and self-compassion.

The Journey

“Wise paths to the heart” gradually unfolds as a journey along different topics:

1. **Warmheartedness as a source of well-being** explores whether warmheartedness is a source of well-being, with research on the nature of altruism and ethics, and on the biological basis of warmheartedness. We also explore whether it can be trained.
2. **To care for yourself to care for others** starts by seeing how to take care of oneself, and how taking care of oneself also entails taking care—or connecting—with others.
3. **The four immeasurables** works with specific aspects of warmheartedness and prosocial attitudes: the four immeasurable qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. It also presents how to move from empathy to compassion.
4. **Warm heart fitness** deepens into the four immeasurables, by exploring their relation with wisdom, and by finding ways to replace afflictions for the four immeasurables.
5. **The mind of awakening** goes further to explore the possibility of fully developing our potential of warmheartedness and wisdom with the mind of awakening, which aims to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.
6. **Alchemy of the heart** presents unique and provoking approaches to cultivating such a mind with methods that allow us to gradually replace egoism and self-centeredness for altruism and awareness of others.

