

The Four Immeasurables (Metta Karuna Mudita Upekkha)

The musical score consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a drone accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The chords are indicated above the vocal line.

Words Traditional Buddhist
 Music Wali & Ariënne van der Zwan
 Chords between brackets are for standard guitar, capo III

The chant has a very simple drone, enabling the chant to be sung as a round. The highly popular AABA structure – either musically, in rhyme or in lyrics ('Happy birthday to you') – is similar to that of Hazrat Inayat Khan's Zikr and Murshid SAM's Ya Muhammad Abdullah Dance.

In *The Heart of Buddha's Teachings* (1998), the Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh tells us how Lord Buddha came about to formulate the 'Four Immeasurables' (Pali: *appamanna*, Sanskrit: *apramana*).

A devotee of the Brahman faith came to Lord Buddha with the question how he could ensure his place in the heavens with Brahma.

As Lord Buddha respected the wish of people to be faithful to their own religion, he answered the Brahman in his own language:

Since Brahma is the source of Love, you have to practice the 'Abodes of Brahma (*brahmaviharas*) in order to be with Brahma. These are love (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkha*).'

Practicing these four *Brahmaviharas* (from BRAHMA, meaning the highest, and VIHARA, to abide), can bring you to the abode or realm of Brahma (in Pali: *Brahmaloka*).

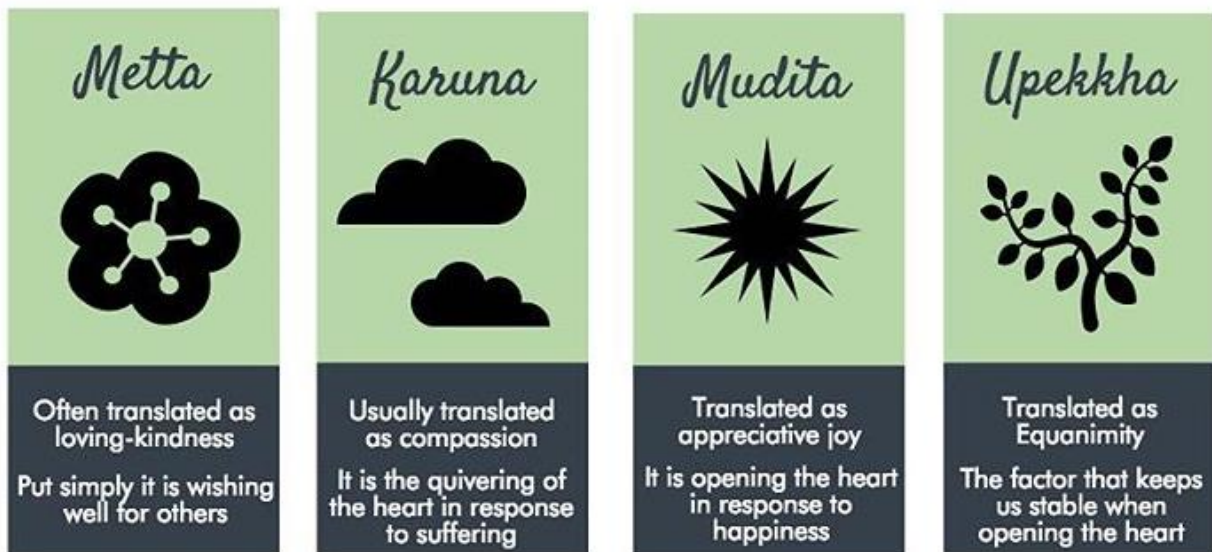
The Four Immeasurables are:

Metta Unconditional love, as expressed in the bodhisattva ideal *Loka Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all beings be well and happy).

Karuna Compassion: May all beings be free from suffering.

Mudita Sympathetic or empathic joy. Typically enough, there is no English or Dutch word for this quality to rejoice because of someone's fortune. The Germans have 'Mitfreude'. There are several for the opposite: jealousy, envy.

Upekkha Equanimity. The capacity to accept whatever comes, to accept loss and gain, sorrow and happiness all equally.



Working with these four qualities in meditation and in daily life will show that they are inter-linked and mutually can strengthen and deepen each other. For instance, unconditional love can be practiced through conditional love by trying to make the 'conditions' smaller and smaller. This will inevitably raise your equanimity and also the two other qualities: they are four shades of the same universal color, the color of the divine.

The Four Immeasurables are found in the *Digha Nikaya* (Collection of Long Discourses, nr. 13):

- I. *Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with loving-kindness, likewise the second, the third, and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.*
- II. *Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with compassion, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with compassion, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.*
- III. *Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with sympathetic joy, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with sympathetic joy, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.*
- IV. *Here, monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with equanimity, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with equanimity, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity and free from distress.*