

Four Heavenly Abodes

Movements and attunement as performed by Darvesha MacDonald
at Wilderness Camp 2000.

capo 5

G C D G
Metta Karuna Mudita Upekha

Em Am D Em
Metta Karuna Mudita Upekha

(Alternate chords: using no capo, first verse is C, F, G, C, second verse is Am, Dm, G, Am.)

Dance Movements:

Metta Karuna Mudita Upekha

Begin by facing partner, right hand to right hand, covering with the left hands. Sing the four wishes to your partner, then progress past right shoulder.

Meet second partner, left hand to left hand, then covering with the right hands. Sing the four wishes to your partner, then progress past left shoulder.

Continue grand right and grand left, clasping hands and covering them, singing the four wishes to your partner and progressing.

The dance ends with all coming in, singing, arms around.

Attunement:

These words are from the Buddhist tradition, in Pali, the language which the Buddha spoke. These are called the Four Heavenly Abodes, a place to dwell

Metta is Loving Kindness,
Karuna is Compassion,
Mudita is Sympathetic Joy (vicarious joy, the opposite of jealousy),
Upekha is Equanimity (even tempered, undisturbed, no preferences)

As you meet your partners, silently wish them these blessings:

Metta – may you be free from danger, happy, peaceful, strong, healthy, and have ease of being.

Karuna – may you be free from suffering.

Mudita – may your wisdom and goodness ever increase.

Upekha – although I have these wishes for you, you are the heir to your own karma. Your happiness depends on your own actions and not my wishes for you.

Commentary:

"...Another important teaching to cultivate was known to the Theravadins as the Brahma Viharas or Four Heavenly Abodes and to the Mahayanists as the Four Immeasurables. These four are the cultivation of loving kindness, known in Pali as Metta or in Sanskrit as Maitri, compassion or Karuna, sympathetic joy or rejoicing in the good fortune of others, known as Mudita and a balanced or non-discriminating mind, known as Upekha..."

<http://www.buddhistcouncil.org/pureland.htm>

Metta (Love) is characterized as promoting the welfare of others. Its function is to desire welfare. It is manifested as the removal of annoyance. Its proximate cause is seeing the loveableness in beings. It succeeds when it makes ill-will subside, and it fails when it gives rise to selfish affection.

Karuna (Compassion) is characterized as promoting the removal of others' suffering. Its function is not bearing others' suffering. It is manifested as kindness. Its proximate cause is seeing helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering. It succeeds when it makes cruelty subside, and it fails when it gives rise to sorrow.

Mudita (Sympathetic joy) is characterized as joy in the success of others. Its function is being free from envy. It is manifested as the elimination of aversion. Its proximate cause is seeing other beings' success. It succeeds when it makes aversion subside, and it fails when it gives rise to merriment.

Upekkha (Equanimity) is characterized as promoting equipoise towards beings. Its function is to see the equality in beings. It is manifested as quieting like and dislike. Its proximate cause is seeing the ownership of deeds thus: "Beings are heirs to their deeds. Whose, if not theirs, is the choice by which they will become happy, or will be free from suffering, or will not fall away from the success they have reached?" It succeeds when it makes like and dislike subside, and it fails when it gives rise to the indifference of ignorance based on the household life.

Visuddhimagga 318 (The Path of Purification, by the great Indian monk Buddhaghosa, 5th century AD.)

<http://www.escribe.com/religion/dhamma/m10010.html>

Metta – promoting the welfare of all beings, clearly seeing the agreeable side of all beings, wishing for the world's welfare and happiness, kindness.

Upekha – promoting neutrality, reflecting upon all beings inheriting the results of their karma, impartiality towards the desirable or the undesirable, subsiding of attraction and repulsion.

<http://world.std.com/~minding/mlpartbl.html>

Sanskrit Roots:

Maitri or Maitreya (Sanskrit) [from *mitra* friend, a name of the spiritual sun]
Friendly, benevolent, kind, a friend of all creatures

Karuna (Sanskrit) compassion

Mudita (Sanskrit) delight

Upeksha (Sanskrit) [from *upeksh* to consider carefully + the verbal root *iksh* to look at]