The **brahmavihāras** (sublime attitudes, lit. "abodes of brahma") are a series of four Buddhist virtues and the meditation practices made to cultivate them. They are also known as the **four immeasurables** (Sanskrit: *apramāna, Pāli: appamaññā*).[1][2] According to the *Metta Sutta*, Gautama Buddha held that cultivation of the four immeasurables has the power to cause the practitioner to be reborn into a "Brahmā realm" (Pāli: *Brahmaloka*).[3] The meditator is instructed to radiate out to all beings in all directions the mental states of: 1) loving-kindness or benevolence 2) compassion 3) empathetic joy 4) equanimity . . . . These virtues are also highly regarded by Buddhists as powerful antidotes to negative mental states (non-virtues) such as avarice, anger and pride. . . .

When developed to a high degree in meditation, these attitudes are said to make the mind "immeasurable" and like the mind of the loving *Brahmā* (gods).[9]

Other translations: English: ....four **divine emotions**, four sublime attitudes.

The four immeasurables are:

1. **Loving-kindness** (Pāli: *mettā*, Sanskrit: *maitrī*) towards all: the hope that a person will be well; "the wish that all sentient beings, without any exception, be happy."[11]
2. **Compassion** (Pāli and Sanskrit: *karuṇā*): the hope that a person's sufferings will diminish; "the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering."[11]
3. **Empathetic joy** (Pāli and Sanskrit: *muditā*): joy in the accomplishments of a person—oneself or another; sympathetic joy; "the wholesome attitude of rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of all sentient beings."[11]*
4. **Equanimity** (Pāli: *upekkhā*, Sanskrit: *upekṣā*): learning to accept loss and gain, good-repute and ill-repute, praise and censure, sorrow and happiness (*Attha Loka Dhamma*),[12] all with detachment, equally, for oneself and for others. Equanimity is "not to distinguish between friend, enemy or stranger, but regard every sentient being as equal. It is a clear-minded tranquil state of mind—not being overpowered by delusions, mental dullness or agitation."[13]

. . . . while the four immeasurables might be delineated as attitudes to the future or past, they contain the seed of the "present" within their core; as they manifest new ways to act (a living embodied practice). In this context, a living bodied practice can be a dedicated intention that we are in the "here and now"; that is to say we experience both a tranquil awareness of at once a) our own and other being's gifts and accomplishments and b) tranquil awareness of moments where our own and other being's actions do not reflect the four immeasurables.[14]—[Loving-kindness and compassion can both be viewed as hopes for the future leading, where possible, to action aimed at realizing those hopes.]

. . . . Central to Buddhist spiritual practice is a deep appreciation of the present moment and the possibilities that exist in the present for **waking up and being free of suffering**.[15] . . . .

*[“Buddhist teachers interpret *mudita* more broadly as an inner spring of infinite joy that is available to everyone at all times, regardless of circumstances. "The more deeply
one drinks of this spring, the more securely one becomes in one's own abundant happiness, the more bountiful it becomes to relish the joy of other people." Joy is also traditionally regarded as the most difficult to cultivate of the **four immeasurables** (*brahmavihārā*: also "four sublime attitudes"). To show joy is to celebrate happiness and achievement in others even when we are facing tragedy ourselves.[2]

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Although this form of these ideas has a Buddhist origin, the ideas themselves are in no way sectarian. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement uses them in public meditation events in Sri Lanka bringing together Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Rudyard Kipling's inspirational poem *If* refers to the idea of *upekkhā* in calling Triumph and Disaster impostors.

In the Tevijja Sutta: *The Threefold Knowledge* of the Majjhima Nikaya set of scriptures, Buddha Shākyamuni is asked the way to fellowship/companionship/communion with Brahma. He replies that he personally knows the world of Brahma and the way to it, and explains the meditative method for reaching it by using an analogy of the resonance of the conch shell of the*aṣṭamaṅgala*:

A monk suffuses the world in the four directions with a mind of benevolence, then above, and below, and all around – the whole world from all sides, completely, with a benevolent, all-embracing, great, boundless, peaceful and friendly mind ... Just as a powerful conch-blower makes himself heard with no great effort in all four [cardinal] directions, so too is there no limit to the unfolding of [this] heart-liberating benevolence. This is a way to communion with Brahma.[16]

The Buddha then says that the monk must follow this up with an equal suffusion of the entire world with mental projections of compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (regarding all beings with an eye of equality) . . . . In an authoritative Jain scripture, the Tattvartha Sutra (Chapter 7, sutra 11), there is a mention of four right sentiments: Maitri, pramoda, karunya, madhyastha.