CONCLUSION

Buddha tried his best to cultivate the brahma-viharas (divine abidings) throughout his years of teaching. To practice the brahma-viharas he nourishes conditions that awaken states of mind harmonizing our human nature with its own inherent lawfulness. As meditative cultivations mindfulness meets the natural healing impulse in the heart that heals wounds suffered throughout existence, restores magnanimity and brother and sisterhood. With diligence and enduring patience the four divine abidings bring the dharma to life as they offer intuitive answers to all the questions associated with how to integrate practice (vipassana or insight) with daily life.

Emptying the ocean with a tea cup refers to the quality of enduring patience. Patience is timeless in allowing things to unfold gracefully. Patience is the antidote to anger. The advantages of patience and the disadvantages of anger become apparent when we contemplate our own experience of life. We can see how patience protects the heart from falling into reactivity. It allows for poise at the cutting edges of agitation and anxiety. It protects us from being driven in the direction of harm. Patience safeguards the skilful use of our minds, speech and body. Without patience, there is no mindfulness. I have found patience to be my best friend for it allows me to explore the question of love.

METTA LOVING-KINDNESS AND THE CAPACITY FOR FRIENDSHIP:

The question of love is gradually answered through the cultivation of metta. Metta is likened to a soft rain that penetrates the heart relaxing the defense mechanisms associated with fear and ill will. It is exemplified by the bond between a mother and her newborn child. As the heart inclines towards metta it begins to feel a fondness for oneself and others that can be expanded to include everyone. With an active metta practice we find ourselves attending to day to day: life with greater gentleness and thoroughness. “A sense of lightness
accompanies the process of thought, speech and general movements of the body. There is less of the dense burdened feeling associated with ill will.”¹

Selfish affection is metta's near enemy (that which masquerades as the quality). Moments of pleasure can spin dreams that turn to nightmares. We can easily lose our way. Even with those with whom we experience our most sacred moments we can find ourselves manifesting fear and ill will. Metta practice helps to navigate around potential pitfalls associated with causing harm. It can protect us from the confusions associated with love seeking pleasure and fascination. With time, metta finds its way to its more mature expression of devotion.

Painful ill will is the far enemy (the opposing quality) of metta. It takes many forms including self judgment. It can strike at any moment for it lives in the same heart as metta. Once, when I was teaching a metta retreat my disciple asked if I would drive him during lunch to find a birthday gift for his friend. I was happy to do so. “As I parked the car, he turned to me and asked where the store was. A very distinct feeling of ill will arose with the impulse to say something like, "what is wrong with you - just turn around and you will see the sign.”² Instead the saving grace of metta arose spontaneously. It softened the reactionary impulse associated with the mental agitation. As a result warmth and care were expressed. Tears of gratitude came to my eyes as I continued to practice metta while waiting for my disciple to return.

KARUNA-EMPATHY, COMPASSION:
Buddha said: ³

“Karuna is felt as a quivering commiseration in the heart. The compassionate heart is softer than the petals of a flower. Compassion lives in a wise resonance with the tender and painful aspects of life. As the heart opens with acceptance it becomes large enough to hold our existential suffering with increasing trust and respect.”

Rumi wrote that suffering is the mirror that holds itself to where we are working. With growing compassion there is less shame associated with the truth of suffering. The belief that we are somehow being punished dissolves away into an oceanic experience of sympathy and forgiveness.

The compassion exemplar is the same mother child relationship that remains undisturbed by fear and aversion when the child is suffering. The practice of compassion allows for sustained and unobstructed presence of mind as the darker side of life is lifted into the light of awareness.

Pity is the near enemy to compassion for it has a hidden quality of aversion. The delusion of pity comes, in part, from the belief that if we hold ourselves as separate that we are protecting ourselves in some way. Karuna dissolves the boundaries divide our hearts in two. With growing compassion we are less apt to look away - to withdraw our attention - to abandon or be abandoned.

Compassion's far enemy is cruelty. Cruelty is devoid of mercy. Compassion practice is a safe way to expose latent cruelty that may exist at an unconscious level. “Once, when I was a substitute resident teacher at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA, staff members in the Dharma Program decided to practice one Brahma Vihara per week. I was very moved at the end of the week of compassion.” ⁴ The happiness of clear seeing; vipassana happiness, was evident in the radiant light in the yogis faces as each disclosed discoveries of hatred in their own hearts.
MUDITA SYMPATHETIC OR APPRECIATIVE –JOY:

Lord Buddha said:  

“Mudita strengthens the capacity to experience joy and happiness. It is likened to a flower at full bloom. It is the ability to appreciate something as it is blooming and releasing the fragrance of its happiness - without falling over the edge into a skeptical sardonic reaction what is the point, it will only last for a moment."

The practice of mudita lifts the heart out of its preoccupation with insufficiency. As a result, the buoyant energies of gratitude and generosity begin to restore the human spirit. The near enemy of mudita is exuberance. Exuberance is an overly excited, even manic state. It is the sense of deprivation grasping at moments of joy.

The far enemy of mudita is resentment. Mudita is the medicine for the poisons of jealousy envy and derision. It heals the cruel urge to suppress happiness. With the cultivation of mudita we tap a reservoir of joy through sharing times of happiness and good fortune.

Mudita is exemplified in the mother-child connection when the child begins to express its own creative nature. It is the ability to join and support this expanding spirit. Buddha taught that one of our challenges is to cultivate mudita even in a world full of misery.

UPEKKHA MENTAL EQUILIBRIUM OR EQUANIMITY:

The etymological meaning of upekksa is:
“discerning rightly or viewing justly. Equanimity is the capacity to be here in the middle-ness. It is the guardianship of our own karma and the acknowledgment that we are the responsible for what we think, say and what we do. With the equanimity practice this sense of responsibility grows with dignity and integrity. As well, the practice of upekkha strengthens our capacity to be alright with life. Equanimity is spacious balance enabling us to work with, rather than against, change. It is equipoise; sustained presence of mind and confidence to meet all of life's incessantly changing circumstances with increasing poise and acceptance. Equanimity dissolves away the tensions in the mind associated with the struggle between light and dark. Here in the middle-ness is an all inclusive stance that graciously works with each juncture of the awakening process.”

Indifference is the near enemy of equanimity. Indifference is the sad and tragic pretense of equanimity. It is a cold distance from a heartfelt sense of life. It is a state of utter isolation. Its impulse is towards superiority. By nature it suffers a scornful, contemptuous reaction to the beauty of the human process. Indifference blocks the potential to engage the love and freedom life has to offer.

The far to equanimity is craving, clinging and attachment. As a mother of five children one has seen the inbred nature of attachment. Two craving beings come together and create another craving beings. We are born to attach ourselves, to cling to the mother. It is a part of a survival mechanism. Meanwhile, in delusion we continue to attach and cling to the pleasant and push the unpleasant. Craving has us living life on demand. Equanimity is the capacity to let go - to let be. Ajahn Chah points to the practice of equanimity when he suggests that we cultivate a mind that knows how to let go. When we can let go a little, we have a little peace. When we can let go a lot - we have a lot of peace. When we can let go completely we have complete peace. Equanimity practice cultivates a mind that knows how to let go.
Equanimity's exemplar is the mother-child relationship as the child leaves home. The parent's role is fulfilled and, now, it is time to cut the ties that bind. She now belongs to the universe of her own karma. With a heart full of good will, compassion and appreciative joy we stand at the threshold of her departure.

**To sum up:**

Lord Buddha lived for all beings in the world. Particularly he concentrates only human beings because he or she has six senses which only pays an attention on other living beings. No doubt, he or she has mind which thinks always about anything. One has to mind it. We have to care of our mind as well as body. This mind should be controlled by us. Otherwise, we don’t have attention on anything. To restrain the mind we have to follow some method. Metta, karuna, mudita and upakkha are the best method according to Buddha. To attain our good of our life let us Buddha’s method which will be the guidelines for all creatures of the universe.

Notes and References