

## ***BCA Chapter 1, Verse 24, Text Sections 278***

*If those beings have never before  
Even dreamed of such an intention  
To attain Buddhahood for their own sake,  
How could it ever arise for the sake of others?*

### **BCA 1-24, Text section 278**

*The four states of Brahma* are four stages of meditative absorption upon the following: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These four absorptions are within the mind of the god Brahma, who dwells on the first dhyana within the seventeen realms of form. There are countless beings within the reaches of space who have reached the first dhyana and who have taken rebirth as a Brahma god. These Brahma gods have not the slightest idea about bodhicitta.

The god Brahma believes that all celestial beings who have taken rebirth in his realm have come into existence due to his power; consequently, he regards them all as his children. That is his motivation for considering the beings in his realm with kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Even the great gods like Brahma and Indra, however, lack bodhicitta, the wish to establish all sentient beings on the level of complete enlightenment. This is not so surprising since the śraavakas and pratyekabuddhas also lack bodhicitta.

Buddha taught the meditation on *the four immeasurables*: immeasurable kindness, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable sympathetic joy, and immeasurable equanimity.

The Hīnayaana system teaches the meditation on the *four states of Brahma*, while Mahāyāna teaches *the four immeasurables*, which are qualities of the Buddha. The four states of Brahma are measurable, since Brahma's compassion and love extend only to those beings reborn in his realm. The four immeasurable qualities of the Buddha are truly immeasurable since they include all sentient beings. The god Brahma is not endowed with the four immeasurable qualities of the Buddha.

The four states of Brahma are very limited compared to the four immeasurable qualities of the Buddha. There are four particular reasons why the four states of

Brahma are not called 'immeasurable': 1) they are not embraced by the intention of renunciation, 2) they are not embraced by bodhicitta, 3) they are not embraced by the view of emptiness and 4) they are not embraced by the wisdom that has realized the absence of an ego. At the time of the path, while on the way to enlightenment, the four immeasurables belong to 'the thirty-seven factors conducive for enlightenment'. At the time of fruition, once we have reached enlightenment, the four immeasurables are four qualities of the Buddha.

The lines of the four immeasurables are:

May all beings have happiness and the causes for happiness.  
May they be free from suffering and the causes for suffering.  
May they never be separated from sublime happiness devoid of suffering.  
May they remain in boundless equanimity, without attachment to friends or aversion to enemies.

Making the wish, "May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes for suffering," is to focus with compassion on benefiting others. This is the compassion aspect of the bodhicitta motivation. Making the wish, "May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness," is to focus with knowledge on perfect enlightenment. This is the knowledge aspect of the bodhicitta motivation. 'Happiness' here refers to the temporary happiness of the higher realms as well as to the ultimate happiness of liberation.

The cause for the temporary happiness of the higher realms within samsara is virtue that concords with worldly merit, such as the ten virtuous actions. The cause for the happiness of the arhats and pratyekabuddhas is virtue that concords with the liberation of Hinayana. And the cause for the 'sublime happiness' of the buddhas and bodhisattvas is virtue that concords with the liberation of Mahayana. That latter happiness refers to virtue that is embraced by bodhicitta and by the realization of profound emptiness.

Every practitioner of Buddha's teaching should practice the four immeasurables on a daily basis. When you meditate on the four immeasurables, you should include all sentient beings, expanding your mind to all dimensions at the same time. Connect to all infinite sentient beings. Penetrate the infinity of space with your 'wisdom eye', also called the 'eye of space'. View all infinite world systems. Generate sincere love, compassion, joy and equanimity.

A person who meditates on the four immeasurables can never be harmed by a spirit or a demon, and such a person accumulates inconceivable merit. Someone who presents a gift or an offering to a practitioner who is meditating on these four immeasurables will also receive inconceivable merit. The four immeasurables are a very powerful practice, which creates the conditions for quickly attaining the realization of egolessness. When you generate great devotion, love or compassion, dualistic mind naturally stops, and you have a perfect chance to recognize mind nature. But if a practitioner only develops the different stages of mental stillness based on these four immeasurables, without having embraced his practice by the abovementioned four particular qualities of the four immeasurables, he will take rebirth in one of the four dhyaana states. For a practitioner of the Mahaayaana path it is crucial not to confuse the practice of the four immeasurables with the practice of the four states of Brahma.

Mental training in the four immeasurables brings bodhicitta about easily. Thus, the four immeasurables are a cause for bodhicitta. Although gods and great sages of India had higher perceptions and might have known about teachings on bodhicitta, their own ego-clinging was too strong to allow them to show any interest in bodhicitta. Actually, fathers, mothers, sages and gods—none of them even in their dreams—have the wish to free all beings from suffering and to establish them on the level of complete buddhahood. They all lack the vastly benefiting intention of bodhicitta. Without even the goal to attain enlightenment for their own sake, how could they have the wish to establish all beings on the level of perfect buddhahood? One of the Brahma gods, together with Bodhisattva Vajrapaani, assists all the one thousand buddhas of this fortunate aeon. That particular god Brahma is a bodhisattva and knows about bodhicitta. He requests each of the thousand buddhas to turn the wheel of dharma.