

All love in a word

To be ubuntu to be more than being Buddhist
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Source: Brahmavihara, SD 39.8

2.1.2.5 A beautiful and effective way of understanding and feeling **lovingkindness** (*mettā*) is by reflecting on the African word, **ubuntu** [ùbúnt'ù] which basically means “humanity” in a broad sense we have defined “godliness” (in SD 39.8). In other words, this has nothing to do with any theistic or “power” notion of God, but of godliness—the divine qualities of love, ruth, joy and peace—that are natural and inherent in us.

In fact, the word ubuntu is part of the Nguni Zulu phrase “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,” which literally means that we are a person through others. We are a person, truly human, in wholesomely relating to others. Hence, this has some deeply beautiful connotations such as “I am because we are,” “Humanity is about others,” “I’m about you; you’re about me.” It is a feeling of interbeing, a universal bond, through acceptance and sharing that connects all humanity, indeed, all life.

Ubuntu, however, has a broader sense than *metta*, that is, an all-embracing love that starts from us. When this universal love is shown to others—when we are kind to others even when we do not have to be, and when other needs it—we call it *karuṇā*, “compassion.” This is also a vital aspect of *ubuntu*. Hence, we can say that *ubuntu* denotes both lovingkindness and compassion.

Africa is ever ready for Buddha Dhamma: she has **ubuntu**. Sadhu.

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