



offers you

Dharma Friends

**Dedicated to Sharing the Dharma, Healing Each Other,
All Sentient Beings, and Ourselves**

February 2012 issue # 180 copyright 2012, a project of Compassion Works for All

The Dhammapada
The teachings of the Buddha



Chapter 20 – The Path

273 The Eight-fold Path is the most honorable way, the Four Noble Truths the most honorable utterance, freedom from craving the most honorable state, and the all-seeing Buddha the most honorable being.

274 This is the only Way; there is no other that leads to clear seeing. Follow this Way and Mara becomes disoriented.

275 If you walk the path you will arrive at the end of suffering. Having beheld this myself, I proclaim the Way which removes all thorns.

276 The Awakened Ones can but point the way; we must make the effort ourselves. Those who reflect wisely and enter the path are freed from the fetters of Mara.

277 “All conditioned things are impermanent”; when we see this with insight we will tire of this life of suffering. This is the Way to purification.

278 “All conditioned things are inherently lacking”; when we see this with insight we will tire of this life of suffering. This is the Way to purification.

279 “All realities are devoid of an abiding self ”; when we see this with insight we will tire of this life of suffering. This is the Way to purification.

280 If, while still young and strong, you procrastinate when you should act, indulging in heedless fantasies, the Way and

its wisdom will never become clear.

281 Be careful in what you say, restrained in what you think, and impeccable in how you act. Purifying these three ways of behavior will take you along the Way of the sages.

282 To contemplate life leads to wisdom; without contemplation wisdom wanes. Recognize how wisdom is cultivated and destroyed, and walk the Way of increase.

283 Clear away the forests of craving but do not attack and destroy the trees. Clear the entire forest of craving and you will see the Way to freedom.

284 So long as sexual attraction has not been cleared away – if even the slightest trace remains, the heart is held in dependence like a suckling calf to a cow.

285 Remove the bonds of affection as one might pluck an autumn flower. Walk the Way that leads to liberation explained by the Awakened One.

286 It is a fool who indulges in dreaming about the most comfortable place to live, saying “here it will be warm, there it will be cool” – unaware of impending death.

287 As a flood could sweep away an entire village, those who are caught up in relationships and possessions will be carried away by death.

288 - 289 As you approach death none of your fond attachments will protect you. See this, then with wise restraint and unwavering effort, hasten to clear your path to liberation.

These verses are offered by The Forrest Sangha on the internet as free to share. We thank them for their kindness.



Some thoughts about this Dhammapada verse: The Path

When the consequences are huge, we are more likely to learn the lessons. For those skiers among you, one of my favorite metaphors for life was learned on the slopes. ***"You go where you look."***

This means, if we are skiing down the mountain, we should consistently look at the bottom which is where we want to end up. Do not look around at the view. Nor should we look towards the trees as we make our fancy zig-zags that take us gracefully back and forth at a slower speed. If we look at the short-term directions or look off into the scenery, we end upside down in the snow bank! Suffering that consequence, next time, we will remember the lesson. Hold that vision on our true goal and we will get there successfully.

It is also good on a ski slope or in life to find a path to take us where we want to go, wherever that might be. Pushing through the dense forest where there is no path often means being lost and caught in the brambles. In life, following a path of teachings and wisdom guidance likely means an easier life. A teaching like THE PATH tells us pitfalls and how to find support to reach our highest goals. If we have a path and a long range vision, we will more likely get to where we are going.

What many of us have a tendency to do, however, is to allow our goals to be those little zig-zags that take us the short distances to immediate gratification. "I want to have money." "I want to be with this woman or guy." "I want this job." We end up in the trees or the snow banks because that is where we are looking, rather than at our journey's end. Even if our short term goals are good and a part of our path, we have to see our highest goal for our life.

Some of you probably did not set out with the goal: "I want to spend my life in prison." But perhaps you did without knowing it. If we start out looking at those goals that are actually on "THE PATH" to prison, without looking at the end of the path to see where we are heading, we still get to where we were eventually going, even if we were wearing blinders along the way. If one said, "I want money for a great car" and that is their goal, then one could get a stable job with a long term future and eventually get that car. They may not yet see their ultimate goal but they are focusing on a path that is of benefit. If one said, "I want money for drugs", even though it too is a short term goal, we quickly think, "Hmm - that drug goal is a symptom of one who is not looking for a long term, secure job and future. If procuring drugs is a goal, then the decision making here is likely to take one away from the long-term goal of financial security and on to the underlying and very likely "I want to spend my life in prison" goal. In fact, we all probably see that the real goal is only to get immediate gratification and there is no life goal here. Of course, anyone watching can follow that path into the future and see prison as the eventual long term vision.

When feeding an addiction is our primary goal, there is usually another goal that may be hidden from us. When one has an addiction, they typically are unable to follow any other life goals, especially an ultimate life goal. An addiction usually becomes the primary focus of one's life and takes precedence over everything else. It becomes the primary path one follows. That is because the addiction is present in our life in order to escape emotional pain. The real goal is to find an escape to suffering even when we very clearly see that there will be other consequences that bring suffering in the long run. The immediate fear of suffering is so great that we run from that no matter what the future might bring. That goal to avoid suffering often takes over one's life and we are zig-zagging across the slopes, slipping down cliffs and into snowdrifts, just trying to stay upright, and hoping that we get to satisfy our addiction. Succumbing to addictions is a desperate search to satisfy immediate addictive goals and to avoid pain. Such a path often leads to prisons, divorce, abandonment by family and friends, illnesses, financial disasters, and a tragic life. Reaching the bottom of the mountain in one piece is a miracle.

For those in prisons and also for those not in prison who live in such chaos and suffering, it is helpful to examine ourselves, our spiritual and life goals, and to find a path that will allow us to access and to accomplish our highest vision. A vision is how we see that we can become our highest self, offering our greatest gifts, and perhaps realizing our true and sacred awareness of what IS. Even if we have an addiction or other life obstacles, to decide on a PATH allows us to focus on our ultimate purpose. It teaches us discipline and we learn purification practices and healing so that we might transcend our tumbles into the snow banks and trees. This can be done in a prison, in a monastery, in a community anywhere, or helicopter skiing the mountain peaks. We just need to first decide and then to always look at where we are ultimately going. We need to keep the end of our path in mind.

Many of you have searched for, then studied, and practiced the path that is right for you. It may be that you were motivated by ending up in a snowdrift or two and realized the tragic teaching of taking your eyes off of your highest goal, and you found the way that works for you. But everyone must find their own way. We must each find the way that harmonizes with our innate vision and brings out our talents and capacities. No one else can tell us if we are on the right path or not. As you study and read the wisdom tradition you follow or if you are listening in a mindful way to your own heart's path, it is good to reflect every day on the highest results of the path you are on. See yourself actually achieving your highest goals.

Also, examine your short term goals along the way. When our path is full of obstacles, it is good to get clarity about what brought them about. It helps to quiet our greedy or demanding ego. It is good to visit the deep and buried pain. Only with self awareness does that addictive rush to find a release from suffering become easier to handle. We must deal with the

demands of ego and the old pain we carry in order to keep our focus on the ultimate goal. This is hard. Ask: do I merely want ego gratification and to fill immediate needs or do these goals follow my path and take me to wisdom goals like compassion and the ability to express the gift I came to offer to all others in this lifetime? In **Dharma Friends**, we have spent many past issues addressing these tasks. We will keep doing so because it is a life-long process, no matter how far along we are in reaching the more subtle spiritual path that we are following.

These teachings in THE PATH are good reminders of how to stabilize our lives, lessen those compulsive ego goals, and strengthen our focus on our higher goals, our ultimate goals. The teachings in THE PATH are a good beginning in training our focus to see where we are truly going and how to get there. It gives us the highest vision of all that we can attain, and it reminds us of what might take us off the path and into the trees.

Read THE PATH again and make a list of what would be helpful for you to focus on to bring balance and stability to your life. Meditate on your highest goals, your greatest gifts, and what you would like to realize before you leave this life. That is our "bottom of the mountain". Looking at that vision consistently will get us where we are going if we keep it as our focus.



A Meditation on The Path

" It is a fool who indulges in dreaming about the most comfortable place to live, saying "here it will be warm, there it will be cool" – unaware of impending death.

" As a flood could sweep away an entire village, those who are caught up in relationships and possessions will be carried away by death."

Our new favorite meditation: Let it Go!

Most of us are easily 'caught up' in relationships and possessions. We automatically look for what is comfortable and what is not. If that flood that our verse talks about came along right now carrying us to our death, it is likely we would not be prepared. The wisdom tradition that these teachings come from urge us to be mindful and present to all that arises in life. With mindfulness, and by not getting lost in grasping at what we want and pushing away what we don't want, we have the spaciousness to make choices about where we place our focus. Eventually, at the highest level of practice on this path, awareness of the most subtle knowing of All That Is becomes effortless. All of our ego impulses and attachments will have fallen away as we rest in great bliss. We live in a meditative state of watching and being aware. Until we are at that place in our path, we must exert a bit of effort - or lots - to stay present and mindful. We must practice purifying those attachments, even if they have the strength of compelling addictions, so that we do not succumb to them as ever present, short term goals.

This is hard work. It requires many, many hours of meditation to find the balance and equanimity, focus and stability to merely watch what arises and to let it fall away. Only when we can 'let it go' (whatever *it* is) in meditation, can we do this in everyday life. That means, only after putting many hours into meditation where we sit and quiet our mind and desires, can we very successfully *live* this path of not reflexively acting to feed our desires and to reject that which we fear.

It is even harder if we have old and buried emotional wounds that were never resolved. Such old wounds add enormously to the compelling nature of our desires and fears. With such old wounds, we have deeply embedded physiological and emotional responses. We all learned early how to bury our pain rather than to let it arise in our awareness and cleanse it. This is usually because no one taught us to do that when we were little. If a mom or dad had recognized that we were in fear, and if they had sat with us and reassured us that they would take care of us and encouraged us to talk about fears, we would have learned a great skill. We would not have these wounds today that still affect us so profoundly. Even though the same traumas would have happened, we would have learned to "*let it go*" as we rested safely in the arms of those who supported us and let us talk it out.

It is not too late. That is our meditation now. When those old wounds stir, we let them arise in our awareness, and simply say **Let it Go!** It is likely that any discomfort or strong reaction is the awakening of an old wound. **Let it Go.**

Start by noticing what carries a compelling energy for you. Do not analyze or worry whose fault it is or how to fix it. No matter what it is - no matter how hard it is - practice simply saying - LET IT GO. Breathe and let go - breathe and let go - breathe and let go -breathe and let go - breathe and let go.... breathe and let go....breathe and let go....breathe and let go...



From your Letters:

Holidays for Dharma Friends - January to February 2012

Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday - January 15 and celebrated as a National Holiday on Monday the 16th

Groundhog Day is February 2

Valentine's Day - February 14 - let all beings everywhere be YOUR VALENTINE

Abraham Lincoln's Birthday is February 12 and George Washington's Birthday is

February 22nd and both are celebrated on Presidents' Day, the 20th.

Mardi Gras is the 21st of February

For Christians, Ash Wednesday is the 22nd of February



For Vajrayana Buddhists, Wednesday the 22nd of February is LOSAR the day of the New Year. It is the year of the dragon. The custom is also to spend the day prior to Losar cleaning your house with the thoughts of cleansing your negative karma from the past year.

and a few Dharma Friends reminders -

#1 - We are trying to become a well-oiled machine here and you can help us! It would help Linda a lot if you would briefly put on your envelopes what it is you want. If you are a subscriber who wants to change your address or if you are new and want to be put on the mailing list, say that. Also write on the envelope if you want a book, a dictionary or a Mindful Money book, if you have an Ask Tim question, or if you are including a letter for Jeff's Kids. Then she need not search through the letters for all that information and can send your letter on to the next person to take care of your request. Thank you.

#2 -ASK TIM -If you have a burning question - ASK TIM! Write us with your questions. Tim will tackle almost anything - except how to file your legal paperwork. Questions about life, getting a job, which fork to use at the dinner table, anything you have also wanted to know but did not know who to ask, now try: **ASK TIM!**

#3 -Become a DICTIONARY DROP TEAM PLAYER!

Here are the game plays for our Dictionary Drop!!

If you want a dictionary, there are two plays.

#1-Drop a letter to us at CWFA/DF DICTIONARY DROP and tell us how you will be helped by having a dictionary. We have English and Spanish/English dictionaries. Specify which you want.

#2- AND - get a new teammate! Give us the name of someone you know who would ALSO benefit from having a dictionary. Give us their name, number, and address, and tell us why you want to make this gift. (You might check this out with them first so they won't take it as an insult to their English skills!) You might see if they would also like to receive **Dharma Friends** and mention that to us too. We will send them a dictionary and a note that you have given them this gift - and **Dharma Friends** too.

and then... If you want to play the game... (you can get a dictionary and choose not to play, or if you already have a dictionary, you can use your own...)

#3 - In each **Dharma Friends** issue we will have a word drop - and ask you to research it and send us a note that explains your understanding of it and maybe even what it means to you in your life.

#4 - For those who are on the team and play the game, we will send you a CWFA/Dharma Friends Dictionary Drop Certificate after we receive twelve months' of letters successfully explaining the words we include.

Hooray - Your Team Wins!

#4 - For the women...Kathleen Welton has graciously donated a handful of her latest book, "The Little Book of Gratitude Quotes", a beautiful book full of motivational and encouraging quotes. She requests that these books specifically go to women inmates. If you are a woman and are interested in a having a copy sent to you, please let us know. A limited quantity is available. Please put on the envelope "Quote Book".

#5- Jeff's Kids and your letters: Jeff is our friend who counsels kids in a Juvenile Detention Center. He thought that sharing your thoughts or stories about your journey to prison might benefit kids that are in the same situation that you might have been

in once upon a time. Know how much your letters are all appreciated for your stories, your advice, and for being such a wonderful vehicle to reach broken hearts! The healing that is coming from these letters is extraordinary. **If you would like to write a letter to Jeff's Kids the address is: CWFA, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708 and put JEFF'S KIDS on the envelope. Keep those letters coming. For those who have written to Jeff's Kids, thank you so much!**

#6- If you would like a free copy of Linda's Mindful Money book to learn a great understanding about money and your life - just send a letter to CWFA and put on the envelope - **MINDFUL MONEY BOOK** please. We have a limited supply.

#7 - **Dhammapadas are available for you** - if you do not have a Dhammapada, we have put together our own compilation of verses into a pamphlet for you. Please write to Linda and put Dhammapada on the envelope and we will send one to you. We have a limited supply, but if we run out we will start a waiting list.



Just as the footprints of any creature that walks the earth can be placed in the elephants footprint, which is the largest of all --even so mindful attention is the one quality that ensures ease of mind at all times. Mindful attention causes beneficial thoughts that have not yet arisen to arise. It also causes harmful thoughts that have already arisen to vanish. In the one who is mindful, the good that is to be will be realized. - Anguttara Nikaya



Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream - *our friend Omar dreamed of educating ourselves as much as we can so that we all can become all that we can be..*

Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Trauma

This month we share an article written by a psychotherapist, Marita Pilcher, who is also one of our **Dharma Friends**. She begins by asking - **What is happening when an adult survivor of childhood sexual trauma who is growing and making progress toward healing and integrating the trauma, suddenly hijacks the process by recruiting a familiar yet self-sabotaging/self-harming behavior?**

Frequently, the emotional pain for the survivors of childhood sexual trauma is so deep and familiar that when they try to slip out of it, an overwhelming feeling of fear and unease arises because the feeling of peace is so unfamiliar. They often report that feeling the emotional pain and fear is so great, that any intellectual awareness they may have about the self-sabotaging behavior, is trumped for the benefit (illusion) of feeling even temporary relief. This cycle of progressing and self sabotaging behavior will continue until the individual is able to experience the healing needed to differentiate between the voices of their wisdom (life energy) self and the voices of the wounded child or its extension, a fear driven ego. As helpers, therapist, counselors, and mentors, it is imperative that we recognize that the various self-sabotaging behaviors may indeed have been life saving during a particular phase of the individual's life. Even the most horrific addictions (drugs, alcohol, sex, overeating, under-eating, etc.) may have been protective from pain that they were not yet ready to face. One of the challenges of growing and developing beyond the wounds of childhood sexual trauma is the process of letting go of the clinging too tightly to the well learned self sabotaging behaviors (habits).

Therapy can help survivors of childhood sexual trauma begin to develop a sense of self-worth and truthfully begin to examine their self-harming default behaviors, and begin the process of letting go with awareness of the suffering they cause. In spite of the sadness that their wounded childhood self experienced and may continue to feel, as the sense of self-worth grows, they will begin to view themselves as the strong, talented, and skilled individual's they are in the process of becoming.

As long as the wounded child self is in charge, it isn't possible to stand in one's strength and power as an adult. The wounded child self will have the opportunity to heal only when it experiences feeling acknowledged by and safe in the presence of the adult self. However, more than acknowledgement is needed. The adult self, will have to learn to stand in it's own strength and power, and take charge while embracing, talking to, and listening to the wounded child self as they grow beyond the ego's fears, and learn how to be skillful in surviving in relationships and society. The adult self will first have to be willing to let go of the addiction to carrying around their pain and indulging their traumatized self in order to assimilate the essence, and the gems of wisdom that the pain has taught them. Then they must invite their inner-child to grow up and join them in the present. And this cannot be done alone. A connection to something greater than one's ego is necessary. This can be perceived in many different ways (God, spirit, higher power, etc.). When life's backpack filled with old pain is carried, it carries the greatest power over one's life because it is allowed to drive live. It must be learned that our past is not who we are and, instead, it is the lessons learned from our past gathered together in our present that makes us who we are. It is only when the backpack filled with pain is emptied and only the essence of childhood sexual trauma is carried in the magical pouch of the heart, that an individual can grow their greatest potential. And as this strength grows so will the ability to dive deep and come out on the other side where the light of life dances and true joy can be experienced, lived and

sustained.

Following is a guided imagery that can be helpful for individuals with releasing themselves from their childhood wounding experiences and begin to embrace and accept themselves in the present. This guided imagery can help teach the survivor of childhood sexual trauma to release the consciousness of the remembered pain and suffering from deep within the body, perhaps down to and beyond the cellular level. This is what makes it so effective.

First instruct the client about a relaxation tool that would help them achieve some level of safety and relaxation such as deep breathing, and/or progressive relaxation. Once they have achieved a feeling of safety and/or relaxation, they will, in their imagination, go to a place of safety, close the door and begin visualization. In the visualization, she/he will ask their wounded self to come to them. When she/he appears, the client will take them into their arms and in their imagination, hug them and ask how they may be of help. Then the client will imagine healing light (energy) pouring through themselves and their wounded child self with the thought/awareness that she/he is being healed. Following this, in their imagination, they will spend the rest of the day being with their wounded child self. . . talking to them throughout the day and especially while they are getting dressed and ready to face the day and/or a challenging life situation. As they move through the day, they will see their wounded child self as the most/ important person she/he will meet that day. They will keep reminding their wounded child self that the adult self, (name) is there for the sole purpose of keeping them safe and helping them heal.

(Article by Marita T. Pilcher, LCSW, who works part-time as a psychotherapist for Vista Health, where she helps adults with various levels of mental health, learn skills for healthier living.)



Compassion Works for All by Jeighmichael Davis

Compassion keeps us grounded in Faith, hope and love; compassion is a perfect gift from the realm above.

You can't resist it when you feel it so don't be shocked and so appalled; it should never be in question that compassion works for all. Be still and listen close, because compassion is so immense and it speaks a convincing dialogue from the beginning until the end. So rise to the occasion and please embrace this call remaining forever mindful that compassion works for all.

1. Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. ...

The DICTIONARY DROP WORD for February is RESOLUTION

Subscription information: We have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. We are so happy to have a vehicle for those who have little dharma support to feel united with others who identify with their life situation. It is truly important to remember that we are all mirrors of each other. We are all one with each other. And we can recognize that samsara is suffering for us all whether behind the bars of a prison or behind the bars of our own ego structure.

For anyone who is not in prison and who would like to subscribe to ***Dharma Friends***, here is what to do. Sent us an email and you may have your monthly issue free. EMAIL cwfainfo@comcast.net. If you want a paper copy, the fee is \$30 for one year. Mail a check or money order made out to **Compassion Works for All:** and send to **Compassion Works for All, Dharma Friends subscriptions, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708.** This amount covers the subscription for you and a partial subscription for a prisoner. I also want to acknowledge the enormous generosity of many of those in prisons who have sent stamps and letters of support and appreciation. Far more important than anything material are the letters and notes that say that you are benefiting from being part of this sangha of **Dharma Friends**. I think that many feel less alone on their journey because we are connected beyond all time and space to each other.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.

Kristopher says that he is getting many requests for back issues. Some of these are because of mail room errors but some are because we are behind on current addresses. If you change your address, please send a note to LINDA to give us your new address

*and she can send your next issue to your new location. That saves us money and you from having to write for your back issues.
Thanks so much for your help!*

SOME NEW OPTIONS: We are always trying to be mindful of \$\$\$ in order to keep publishing our newsletter, as we are always in search of additional funding. **Here are some ways that you can help us.**

If you are receiving Dharma Friends but do not read it or know someone else who does not read their issues, either donate them to your library, or write and tell us to take you off the Dharma Friends list. Now, some have written and said that others need them more than they do so take their name off. Don't be too generous!!

WE WANT YOU TO KEEP GETTING DHARMA FRIENDS IF IT IS HELPFUL TO YOU!

*Even a strong wind is empty by nature. Even a great wave is just ocean itself. Even thick southern clouds are insubstantial as sky.
Even the dense mind is naturally birthless. - Milarepa, "Drinking The Fountain Stream"*

From Lawrence - Hello Anna,

I just received the Jan 2012 **Dharma Friends** on my computer. Thanks for Thanking all the guys that participated in my new book called **The Eye Of Truth** by Lawrence J. King in the Jan 2012 edition of the Dharma Friends. Awesome, Awesome, Awesome and one more time for good measure, Awesome.

I hope it's not too late to insert into the Jan 2012 Newsletter?

Can you please insert the following 3 names into the Dharma Friends Newsletter because I've noticed that a couple of the participants names are missing / not mentioned in the Dharma Friends Newsletter and I do not want to leave any of the names of the guys who participated because they obviously worked very hard on their contributions to help make this book happen.

Daniel Costa, Shannon Ringer, and it says in the Dharma Friends Newsletter, Kendall K. Snider, but it should read Kendall K. Sander. Thank You so much for mentioning these guys names I am sure they will highly appreciate it. Thank You, L.J.King

A devata said: "One who has sons delights in sons, One with cattle delights in cattle. Acquisitions truly are a man's delight; Without acquisitions one does not delight." The Buddha answered: "One who has sons sorrows over sons. One with cattle sorrows over cattle. Acquisitions truly are a man's sorrows; Without acquisitions one does not sorrow."

From Michael Shane Hale

I'm writing to gain your support of two initiatives that myself and other incarcerated Buddhists are in attempting to implement. We are attempting to practice the Buddhist tenants of non- harming and non- killing by having DOCS is provide a vague and diet to practice our beliefs in this way.

The second initiative involves implementing a 10 day Vipassana meditation retreat. Please see www.prison.dhamma.org for specifics. There are numerous studies that show that meditation is a simple practice that has many positive benefits for practitioners. That retreat is secular and is open to anyone who wants the experience. We're asking for your support in the following ways:

Vegan diet

We need attorneys, doctors, and nutritionists who would be willing to support our request by providing their professional opinions as to what would constitute a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet as well as be willing to support a lawsuit if it becomes necessary. We're also looking for religious leaders who would support our efforts, stating that some, (not all) Buddhists do practice the Buddhist precepts through veganism (i.e.-abstaining from animal product)

Retreat

We are currently undergoing the beginning stages of a dialogue with the administration concerning this program. We would like to have community support be a part of the details being presented. A letter of support from community members, leaders, etc..would help. Thank you for your time. If you have any advice, suggestions or support concerning these two initiatives, please contact me ..
(from Kristopher - if you want to respond to Michael, write to Dharma Friends and we will pass your information on to him)

from Red Bear Drummonds -



Mountain Goats

From David Brown: Dear Kristopher, I am studying Buddhism and I was wondering, can you be a Buddhist and worship the God in Christianity? Please write back and answer this question and if the answer is yes, explain why.

Reply from Kristopher: Dear David, Yes, you can be a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time. To be a Christian, you must believe that Jesus was the son of God and that he died for your sins. Buddha only taught a way of life that would cause you, and those you come in contact with, less pain. A Buddha statue only represents the Buddha in you that wants to “**Do No Harm.**” So, if you think about it, the Noble Eightfold Path and the other Buddhist teachings would give you guidelines to being a better Christian. I do hope that your daily meditations are going well and that you will let me know if you need any help along those lines. May you be abundantly blessed by each breath that you take,

a teaching from Dawn Mountain Buddhist Center

We have been practicing to develop a mind committed to enlightenment out of love for all sentient beings.

This is what Bodhicitta is.

What is conventional Bodhicitta like? What is ultimate Bodhicitta like?

Conventional Bodhi mind includes your promise of Bodhicitta and your practice of it. How are these two different? All students of Buddhism do well to reflect on this question. Your promise is your strong intention to become a fully awakened Buddha so that all living beings can also awaken to their Buddhahood.

Your practice is what brings you to that awakening as you cultivate the six transcending perfections.

This is how you awaken your Buddhahood, through your promise and your practice.

Translated from the Chinese by Ven. JianYing/Rigzin Drolmas

From T. M.:

From National Lifers Association Battered Women's Senate Committee

Please take a moment to read the following you may find out a few things that will shock you. Many of our great states have laws which are deeply prejudiced against women. It is our goal to bring Michigan's laws in line with states that do not prejudice their women and be an example to those states that still do.

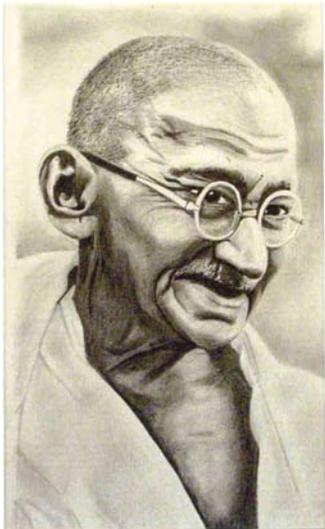
Former Michigan Governor Milliken said a "there are some very sad situations. In almost every case, there are women who were either wrongly convicted, the victims of bad lawyers and or callused judges, or battered women who attacked their tormentors. And a few cases they may have deserved to serve some time, they received punishment out of all proportion to their crimes and are now no danger to anyone. *Michigan radio interview with Jack Lessenberry, November 22nd, 2010*

1. Did you know: Women are routinely found guilty of first degree murder while men are offered a plea bargain of a lesser offense, especially in domestic violence situation.
2. If a woman who has been beaten by her husband for decades and – believing she will die - kills him in self defense, she will most likely be sentence to die in prison?
3. When a batterer "accidentally" kills a woman during a beating he is offered a plea bargain to second degree murder, manslaughter or negligent homicide, with a reduced sentence as low as probation.
4. Expert witnesses on battered women's syndrome are not allowed by Michigan law to testify that the woman is actually suffering from battered woman's syndrome.
5. In most cases, battered women's syndrome is used against the women as a motive by the prosecution or is denied as a defense by the judge.
6. Michigan denies women "due process" or the constitutional right to present a complete defense at trial in domestic violence cases.
7. Other defenses such as temporary insanity, post-traumatic stress disorder, duress, or even self defense are usually denied to women in domestic violence cases.
8. There are numerous women currently sentenced to die in our state prisons for defending themselves against a batterer. Women that have already served anywhere from 10 to 40 years.

The state of Michigan is denying women the equal rights being given to men. We are looking for any advice, direction, support, or representation you can give us. We are promoting a bill that could undo these travesties of justice and make sure your mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces, cousins or friends never have to endure the prejudices and injustices that we have endured. In it, we are not asking for anything unreasonable, frivolous or radical but just an equality with other states that protect the rights of their women. We greatly appreciate any support you can give us. Please pass this information on to your fellow citizens. Please contact your representatives, senators and governors and asks them to look into this matter. You can contact our L.A. sponsor at Michigan Women's Justice and Clemency Project, Carol Jacobson, www.UMICH.edu/~clemency

Having enjoyed a sweet delicious taste, And having sometimes tasted what is bitter, do not greedily enjoy the sweet taste, do not feel aversion toward the bitter. When touched by pleasant contact, do not be enthralled, Do not tremble when touched by pain. Look evenly on both the pleasant and painful, Not drawn or repelled by anything. - Buddha, "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha"

From N.D.: Dear Kristopher and all at Dharma Friends, Thank you not only for the welcome packet but also the post card checking up on me and my journey. All too often we are lost in the shuffle behind these walls. It is truly wonderful the compassion that CWFA has. As far as the shipping rules here, the major one is no hard backs. We also have to prove that we paid for it or that it was given to us at no charge from a religious organization. If available, I would greatly appreciate a mala and any literature that would help me to ground myself and stay focused. I used to be extremely violent because I did not know myself. While out of state, in a Virginia prison, I was in the SHU for approaching a C/O in a threatening manner. There I came across a book of Zen quotes and sayings. I found that the proverbs in it opened my eyes to my self-destructive behavior. Since then, I have read all available Buddhist books, and have even purchased a Dharma Drum, which have helped me on my road to peace and enlightenment. I find the Buddha's approach to life to be very helpful and true. I am now a budding plant. Any light or nourishment that will help me grow, I would be very grateful for. Thank you and may blessings follow you all of your days,
(We include this reminder that we have books and malas that we offer to you as we can. Feel free to write and see what we might have.)



drawing of Gandhi by Jack Waldrop

From Michael - Dear Anna! Thank you for your recent letter. It is my practiced to respond to all letters, so here we go. Ha ha. It was my pleasure to write to Jeff's kids. I believe I will include another letter for them along with this.

I understand you can't respond to each letter as you receive them. From what I gather, I imagine all of you are quite busy. I also understand that the kids can't respond to us - that's not why I write. It does not matter if I ever know who or where or why but if anything that I may share of my experience that is just the possibility of helping one child not to have to go through what I have, then I am fulfilling one of my purposes!

If you wish you knew the secret (of finding peace), I bet you already do. When I first realized that I did it was like suddenly having proof that magic is real. The truth is and always has been that god, the creator, the self, exists right in your own heart. It has never been a secret. All the great beings of every face have taught us this down through the ages. It is only our contracted ego that keeps the veil over our eyes!

We are all one!

A month, maybe two ago, one of the guys (sorry I can't remember who) on your staff wrote me and was just checking to see that I was receiving the newsletter as requested. I told him that my primary practice is Kashmir Shaivism. I would love to find any scriptural text, such as Yoga Vavishtha, the Veda's, the Upanishads, Shiva Sutras, or Bhagavad Gita. I also gain a lot out of your newsletter and do try and absorb all teachings along the spiritual path. So anyway, I wondered if it is possible to receive any of these books. I never heard anything back after that. So, just passing the info along again. My love and respect to you all! Michael

When tranquility is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned. When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve? Discernment is developed. And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve? Ignorance is abandoned. - Anguttara Nikaya

Dear Kristopher, Just received issue # 169 and I read of your accomplishments. I must say that it brought a smile to my face. It's not very often that you hear of anyone staying out and maintaining in such troublesome times! I tell you, it beats my last year and a half! Likewise, you know very well how one is looked down on upon release. You know all too well how the doors can remain shut when people hear "felon" or "prison." You didn't take the easy way out like many of us are so used to doing! There is a strong will in you, a strong desire to remain physically and mentally stable. I'm sure temptation has been there, the thought of giving it all up for a drink or two. So, I just thought that I'd let you know from someone who knows how it is, and can be, to someone who's been there

and overcome the odds so far. For that, you have my support in spirit 24/7, No Matter What. [*From Kristopher, that's exactly what my new NA t-shirt says, "No Matter What." Very cool.*]

Another thing that I wanted to touch on was Anna's thoughts on D.K.'s comments on responsibility. I know the question of "Why me?" often comes up when a child is, or anyone being, a victim of rape or just being a victim period. I've often been asked how I feel on the subject. Depending on how well I know the person, I tend to abstain from answering about Karma. I think Anna's next comments on Karma will be interesting because the worldly view is neither open to such a subject, or if it is, it's misconceived and not expressed in it's true context, that being of our past lives. One thing I do know is that by having faith in Karma, there's no view of victim. However, the caution here is not to blame the victim. Karma is, in a sense, complicated, but answers many of the questions we seek. With Karma, there are times that we will never be able to pin-point what we ourselves create since our Karmic seeds and it's imprints have long passed and go back for so many Kalpas. It's difficult to say what occurs now is due to last year's action. I'm sure in many cases, we can say, "Ah Ha" and sort it all out. But my thought is that if some sort of faith is given toward Karma, then the notion of victim ceases. There are deeper explanations on Karma, however, they're too extensive to relate here. Self-examination is key as Anna mentions! I guess I'm not really qualified to fully explain all of it, but I hold that what happens to me is my own Karma ripening and no one else's. So, to think Anna will discuss this challenging topic in the near future is Great! Sincerely,

Do not think of studying Buddhism in order to gain some advantage as a reward for practicing Buddhism. - Dogen

If you have family or friends who might like to receive Dharma Friends as well, they can just let us know and we will put them on the list and send them issues via email or paper copies for free. It is important for us to keep those in prisons connected to society, and most especially to their families and friends. We greatly value the opportunity to bring a loving community of support to those who are connected to people in prison as they are often made to feel uncomfortable by society. If those you love receive Dharma Friends too, think of the common growth that you would share and the bond that could develop. So, you might suggest Dharma Friends as something your friends and family might like to donate to if they can. Write and ask Linda to put them on our email list or hard copy list. Or they can go to: www.compassionworksforall.org.

Here is a letter that you can send to your family members to encourage them to read Dharma Friends along with you to help them grow with you so that you can stay better connected.



Dear

Here in prison, I receive a monthly newsletter from Compassion Works for All called **Dharma Friends**. It offers support from ancient wisdom with which we explore our spiritual path, no matter what tradition someone follows. We learn meditation teachings, psychological and emotional healing, and we build a community between those in prison and those out in the world through letters.

Compassion Works for All encourages communication and healing of old family patterns and relationship issues with those I have left behind - like you. If we are both reading **Dharma Friends** issues, one way to support such discussions between us is to use the issues as a basis for our discussions. I welcome this opportunity to share such healing and growth talks and letters with you and would like to ask you to go to www.CompassionWorksForAll.org and sign up for the twice monthly emails that will bring you **Dharma Friends** newsletter and also the www.CompassionWorksforAll.org web site updates. There are lots of healing videos on the web site as well, some especially for those with family members and friends who are in prison.

I greatly regret that we are spending this time apart and the challenges that it imposes on our relationship. I also look forward to being able to use all of these traumatic events as a way to grow beyond the issues of our past and find a stronger healing that will benefit not only me and you but all those that we love.

Thank you for considering sharing **Dharma Friends** and this part of my life with me. I hope it helps you as much as it has helped me.

Love,

Compassion Works for All/ Dharma Friends
PO Box 7708
Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708
Webpage: CompassionWorksforAll.org

Permit NO. 160
Non-Profit Organization
US Postage PAID
Little Rock, AR

FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL



When you are thinking about an object, it sometimes occurs that evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with hate and delusion come into your mind. The way to get rid of them is to concentrate on another object that is wholesome and good. Just as a skilled carpenter knocks out a coarse peg with a fine one, so the evil thoughts will disappear. With their departure, the mind will become calm, unified, and concentrated once more. - Majjhima Nikaya



Tucker Maximum Security Unit in Arkansas is participating in the new Paws in Prison Program, where dogs from shelters are paired with folks in prison who train the dogs to be house pets and service dogs.

Our friend Tim is receiving his new dog.

Picture is from the Arkansas Democrat/Gazette