



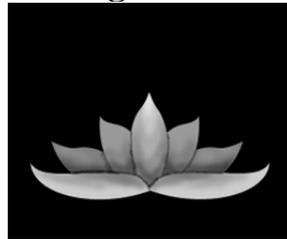
Dharma Friends

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

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Happy New Year

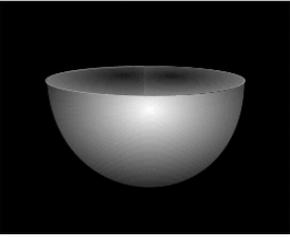
The Dhammapada
The teachings of the Buddha



Verse V: The Fool

60. The night is long for one who cannot sleep. A journey is long for one who is tired. Ignorant existence is long and tedious for those unaware of Truth.
61. Having found no companion who has travelled at least as far as ourselves, it is better to go alone than to accompany those who remain irresolute.
62. "This is my child, this is my wealth": such thoughts are the preoccupations of fools. If we are unable to own even ourselves, why make such claims?
63. The fool who knows he is a fool is at least a little wise; the fool who thinks that he is wise is assuredly a fool.
64. Like spoons unable to taste the flavor of the soup, are the fools who cannot see truth, even though they live all their lives among the wise.
65. Like the tongue that can appreciate the flavor of the soup, is one who can discern clearly the truth after only a brief association with the wise.
66. By heedlessly performing evil, the unwary fools produce their own bitter fruits. They behave like their worst enemy.
67. A deed is not well-done when upon reflection remorse arises: with tears of sorrow one harvests its fruit.
68. A deed is well-done when upon reflection no remorse arises: with joy one harvests its fruits.

69. Fools perceive evil acts to be sweet as honey until they have seen the consequences. When they behold their fruits, fools suffer indeed.
70. Even after months of rigid asceticism, subsisting on a frugal diet, a fool is not to be compared in value to the person who simply sees the truth.
71. Fresh milk does not immediately turn into curd, and evil acts do not immediately show their fruits; however, fools do suffer from the consequences of their foolishness as they would be burned by standing on coals hidden in ashes.
72. Fools are those who use foolishly whatever gifts they have, destroying their accumulated good fortune.
- 73 - 74. The conceit and craving of fools grows as they claim for themselves undue authority, recognition and reward: their falsity affects their longing, they wish to be seen as powerful and discerning.
75. The path that leads to worldly gain and the path that leads to Liberation are different paths. Seeing thus, the renunciate disciple avoids the distraction of worldly gain and success, to dwell in solitude.



Some thoughts about this *Dhammapada* Verse: The Fool

Jack Kornfield told a joke that his teacher, a renowned Buddhist meditation master, had once told to him. *"If you have the ability to rest peacefully in meditation no matter what is going on around you; if you are not ever jealous when your friends make more money or go on fabulous trips; when you are not angry when your partner seems to prefer another; then you are probably a dog."*

It is hard to find equanimity and balance in this human life. We meditate and meditate and think we are making progress and then something happens, like a friend gets that winning lottery ticket, and that throws us all the way back to square one. **The Fool** reminds us that most likely, we are all FOOLS. And it is good to know that and accept that, because we are a bigger fool when we think we have transcended our foolishness. And we are the biggest fool of all when we broadcast to the world that we are beyond *Foolishness*. Then, oops, we are brought down by another blind spot that we had denied to everyone with all of our hubris. Being human, accepting ourselves as FOOLS, will help us walk this path towards **becoming** a conscious wisdom being -someday- with humility and compassion. This path of our life's journey is full of surprises. They leave us teetering on the edge of the cliff again and again, totally destroying any fantasy of what we thought was true about who we are. We are continuously -and helpfully - stripped of all that we thought we knew. Gradually we surrender into a space where we can say *"I Don't Know"* and receive **Knowing**.



The Fool says: *I know and Let me Tell YOU all that I know.* The Fool says: *I know better than you what you should believe for yourself.* The Fool says: *I know the way the world and all who live in it should be.* The Fool says: *I should control money, power, love and sex to have what I want to the exclusion of the needs of others.* The Fool says: *What is mine is mine and what is yours is mine, all that I want is mine, and you are mine too.* The Fool says: *I can control my life and the lives of those important to me.* The Fool says: *I own, I know, I can.* The Fool says: *I am special - and I am the most special of all.*

But, here is the absolute guarantee for all of us fools: every one of these pronouncements by the fool will crash his life into smithereens with little disappointments or great catastrophes. No matter how tightly the fool holds on, his or her life will be shattered when all of these attachments to things, beliefs, and relationships are wrenched away. The Fool on the path who rebels compounds his suffering by holding on until the heavens and earth shake and leave him broken in the dust. The tighter we hold on, the greater the suffering. What a lesson.

The Fool on the path who has had some experience with meditation might let go with a sigh and an **Ahh** when he or she sees their attachments. Meditation has taught that fool a reminder of impermanence. He or she remembers how silly they are for even thinking for a moment that the power to hold on was theirs. Each time we are challenged in letting go, we can remember again, "This was never mine in the first place. I was a Fool to think that I had safety and security with any guarantee at all." **Ahhhhh.....just let go.**



A MEDITATION – on The Fool

It is important to spend the early part of our lives developing an identity that serves us well. We want to identify with being successful, developing our skills, and growing a personality that brings us love and healthy relationships with others. We want to gain the ability to make money, have a home, and create security. Without all of these qualities of a 'self', we would have a much harder time surviving in the world. A *good-enough* sense of self allows us to use our best gifts to make money, be secure, value others, and embrace an ethical and just perspective in the world. Later, on a meditative path, we learn how these efforts are an illusion, but we learn many skills that do serve us well. With this balanced self, and given a good amount of luck, one's early life is a stepping stone to the capacity to grow an expanded sense of consciousness as one enters their spiritual journey. This does not mean that one's life needs to be perfect, because for many, it is those extra and sometimes even great challenges that propel one beyond a comfortable life as they become a seeker and wiser being. We know many who have had the challenges of trauma and prison that have used those extraordinary challenges to open to a deep self that might have never been discovered if one had lived a life of ease.

But why is it that we sometimes stay stuck, whether stuck in a life of easy comfort or a life of so much trauma and pain. We may cling to our lazy-boy recliner or to the leaky raft in the great ocean, and we just don't grow/go anywhere? How do we become the **Fool** clinging to these fantasies of security or even our traumatic drama and its emotional payoff instead of allowing life to grow us into the seeker. Little by little, we need to let go of all those driving beliefs that we believe bring security and safety (even the traumas) and realize that it was those beliefs that built us a self that is like a house of sand. Little by little, we need to let go and make that shift to resting in the great mystery that holds us all. If we know that this challenge is unfolding for each of us, we can learn during our meditation times those skills that allow us to begin 'practicing' our letting go. Then, we will have the truly helpful tools needed when challenges ask us to make these conceptual and emotional leaps in 'real life'.

THE MEDITATION

Sit comfortably on your cushion or on your bunk. Keep your back and neck straight. Keep your eyes open. For a little while, scan your body for tension and just let it go. Notice any obsessive thoughts or concerns that seem to be running through your mind. Let them go. Take a few minutes to feel your breath moving in and out of your body. Maybe you feel your abdomen and chest rising and falling or you feel it passing through your nose. Let this focus on your breath be your meditation for a while.

Now - just watch. Watch what is around you in your world and watch what arises within your mind and body. For each new arising, watch, and do not respond. Watch and then let the focus on that arising go. It is not your job to do anything to intervene at all. Let it dissolve into vastness and see the space left where it is no more. Just rest in that space of emptiness and shortly there will be a next arising. Just watch and then let it go.

You may have some thoughts arise where you begin to judge, to hope, to cling, to identify, to push away. You may have some physical or emotional reactions. You may have some compelling invitations from the environment that call you to respond. Just watch. You are no thing, no one. You are just empty space stirring with arisings and fallings away. No one is there to do anything, be anything, or intervene in any way. Just rest in what is. Let it be. Ahhhh....

When your meditation time is up, consider how free you are. Think of all the beings throughout the world struggling with pain and suffering and send them the peace and freedom that you are gaining in increasing increments. Wish that they all become free of suffering. Rest there for as long as you can.



From Your Letters

Dear readers,

1. Please let us know of all address changes as that costs us big \$\$\$ to send newsletters to those long gone..

2. If you are a new subscriber, please put that on an envelope. Also put on the envelope the person you are writing to, if you know, or what you are writing for. For example: NEW SUBSCRIBER. That saves us from reading every letter before passing it on.

3. Many of you have participated in our **Jeff's Kids program** where your letters, written to incarcerated juveniles with words that you wish had been said to you at their age, are then read to the kids by their counselor, Jeff. We know those letters help and thank you all.

4. ASK TIM - Tim gets many letters asking for help with those things that we know you cannot do in prison. Tim works hard for all of you. But here are some things that Tim is not able to do:

1. Tim is not qualified to counsel about personal and/or relationship problems.

2. Money or 'things' will never be given to any writer.

3. Tim receives so many letters that he will probably only be able to answer one letter per inmate every 6-8 weeks.

4. We will not provide addresses of individuals in the free world to anyone.

5. We cannot provide information obtained from Facebook or other social media websites.

6. Dictionary Drop Program - we are out of dictionaries but we will continue to put the word of the month in the newsletter so that you can write with your description and still get your certificate after twelve letters of definitions. If you are playing, please use the dictionary in your library, if possible, because we have exhausted our supply.

OUR DICTIONARY DROP WORD for January is STRIVE

7. ART DONATIONS - if you would like to do art for us as a donation that Dharma Friends can use with your permission for cards and calendars or art exhibits, we would be thrilled. This will help with our finances and it also sends a new and positive message to those who think of prisoners in negative ways. Your talents will open eyes and hearts and keep all those in prisons from being invisible to the world. Please write on the back of your art piece: your name, your institution, and maybe a little about yourself. If you can mail it in a way that it is not folded, that preserves the beauty of your work. Thank you so much.

8. And thank you to Chelle for another new idea! A friend of hers asked for a printed quote to put on the bulletin board in his prison. Who else but Chelle would then think, WOW. We can put quotes in **Dharma Friends** that people can put up on their bulletin boards in their barracks and recreation areas. Maybe some of you would like to take on the responsibility for being the **Quote Master** in your area and do this for us each month. Who knows how many lives might be changed by a few simple words. **Would you like to be our Quote Master** and put our Bulletin Board Quotes up on the day room or other available bulletin boards in your prison? Thanks for your help!

Here is our Bulletin Board Quote for January:



family trip to enlightenment

Bulletin Board Quote: His mother had often said, When you choose an action, you choose the consequences of that action. She had emphasized the corollary of this axiom even more vehemently: When you desired a consequence you had damned well better take the action that would create it. -Lois McMaster Bujold, writer (b. 1949)

from Dharma Friends, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Ar. 72217-7708

FOR THOSE OF YOU GETTING YOUR GED: The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in your area is likely running a series of tutoring classes to help you get your GED. In Arkansas, the classes are at 5 AM each Monday and Wednesday morning. They recently started a new series of 39 episodes. Tune your TV to PBS to see if your local PBS station is carrying this series. If not, a note to the local PBS will get you more information. If you have someone at home to check out this link for you, or if someone at home is doing their GED, here is the description of each class and the date they will run.

This link, http://litlink.ket.org/gedlessons_descript.htm, provides a list and description of each episode.

A Quote and a few thoughts from Daniel Risher:

"Listen. Make a way for yourself inside yourself. Stop looking in the way of looking." Jalaluddin Rumi

Meditation and contemplation are mystic methods to getting to a point of reality beyond words. I've noticed that the breath meditation has an effect on dogs and on birds. Three different times the dog ran to the cage I was in right after meditation. And the dogs wouldn't leave. They have to be moved. Birds get closer than normal and act like they are talking to me. Strange. I also picked up a vibration in the breath meditation prior to these reactions. I was also cold. I figured if a monk could dry a blanket on a mountain, I could stay warm. I got the staying warm thing down by breath.

It's only by frustrating our habitual judgments, the partial realities that we have unconsciously determined into existence, that we are forced to loosen our grip and to let go of our misguided way of thinking."- Achan Amaro Bhikku, Small Boat, Great Mountain

From Robert Agnew:

I live by the moment, by the moment I live
All my material possessions to the World I give
I have no more interest in Money nor Gold
I just want to sit from this time till I'm old
To bask in the Dharma, and soak in its teaching
So wonderfully enlightening, it's the Buddha Preaching.
He taught us a Path, a Path of Eight Fold
And Four Truths, so Noble to be told.
Upon hearing them the first time, I knew I was sold.
Within this Illusion, we must realize we suffer
And with our defilements we have the tools to buffer.
We are born with the ability to achieve our goal
And if given the chance, I would take up the Alms Bowl.
I thought nothing good could ever come out of Prison
But since being inside, my Buddha nature has risen.
I get lost sometimes, within my mind,
I used to fear at what I would find
But now I acknowledge the defilements in there
It makes life much easier for me to bear.
So let's all get together, and go sit beneath a tree
To become one with the Universe, with mankind, and with me...

There is no other task but to know your own original face. This is called independence; the spirit is clear and free. If you say there is some particular doctrine or patriarchy, you'll be totally cheated. Just look into your heart; there is a transcendental clarity. Just have no greed and no dependency and you will immediately attain certainty. - Yen-tou

What is Life but an experience by David Brown

What is life but an experience,
An experience of sight
An experience of physical sensations,
An experience of taste
An experience of smell

And an experience of sound,
What is life but an experience of
Joy and sorrow,
And living and dying

When facing the end, generally beautiful scenes appear. According to your mental inclinations, the most impressive are experienced first. If you do not do bad things right now, then there will be no unpleasant scenes when you face death. Even if there are some unpleasant scenes, they too will change into pleasant scenes. - Pai-chang



from Alfred Meade - **For your Christmas Holidays**

From Scott: Dear Dharma Friends,

Language is a very powerful tool – not only to converse but to transfer concepts and ideas. The Buddha once said, “*A single word of truth, which calms the mind is better to hear than a thousand irrelevant words.*” (Dhammapada #100) Some languages, especially those of ancient roots, have words to represent concepts that are extremely difficult to adequately translate into English. So as an English speaker, attempting to gain ancient wisdom from other cultures, it's important to meditate on the unique words used by that culture to develop a deep understanding of that particular concept. To the Northwest of Mongolia is the Republic of Tuva, in the Russian Federation (near the geographical center of Asia). The Tuvans are historically nomadic herders. They have two words that I recently meditated upon that changed my concept of ‘time’ – realistically that’s all that ‘time’ is – a concept. The words were ‘Songgaat’ which means ‘go back/the future’ and ‘Burungaar’ which means ‘go forward/the past’. Hang on... have I made a mistake because that seems backwards? No. The Tuvans believe the past is ahead of them while the future lies behind. Really, if you can shed the Westernized thinking that has been drilled into us, it makes perfect sense. If the future was ahead of us, it would be in plain view but since we can’t see it, it must be behind us.

Contemplating such a concept can reshape your perspective, in this case the concept of time. The power of these two words is incredible because with a single word you capture an entire concept that can help lead you to liberation.

...And a little more from Scott: I’m always meditating on ways that I can help CWFA because **Dharma Friends** has helped guide my wise path through life. If I can contribute in any way, no matter how small, then that will help others in their path. In the vows I took last year, I promised, “May I be a guide for those on the path.” So I offer the following for you to use at will in **Dharma Friends**.

A Meditation Technique from Scott

It is often very difficult to focus on your breath while meditating when you have a blocked nose. So I have applied the following to help clear it before I meditate – and believe it or not, it actually works.

First, rate on a scale of 2-10 how blocked your nose is. #1 being that you can breathe clearly and #10 is completely blocked. Stand upright and firmly pinch the bridge of your nose like you are about to jump into a swimming pool. Now lean forward and touch your toes (without bending your knees if possible) then return to your full upright position. Touch your toes the amount that you rated your blocked nose. Beware not to hold your breath and not to race through it otherwise you will get a head spin. Once you have done the amount you rated, stop pinching the bridge of your nose and inhale through it. You will find that you can now breathe a little clearer. I don’t know the science of it but it helps you breathe a little easier without congestion while you meditate.

A quote sent by Scott

Sitting peacefully on a cushion day and night seeking to attain Buddhahood, rejecting life and death in hopes of realizing enlightenment, is all like a monkey grasping at the moon reflected in the water.- Shoitsu

From Bruce Schuck: Re: Commentary on Suffering

My Friends in Dharma,

Namaste. May your day be wondrous.

I've just finished perusing the August 2012 **Dharma Friends** newsletter (#186). Your lessons upon the 26th discourse of the **Dhammpada**, "**Brahmana Yogga**" (Sermon to One with God") or what we term such, are quite interesting and informative.

I take issue though with your "Thoughts about the Discourse." You contend that through diligent "upaya" (spiritual work or effort we have the capacity to transcend our suffering by doing meditative or spiritual practices." To paraphrase, you contend "prison is upheaval". You go on with, "I will say too that you do have a way to escape suffering, and, in this way, you and all of us have a path to escape (our) prisons.

This is improper teaching.

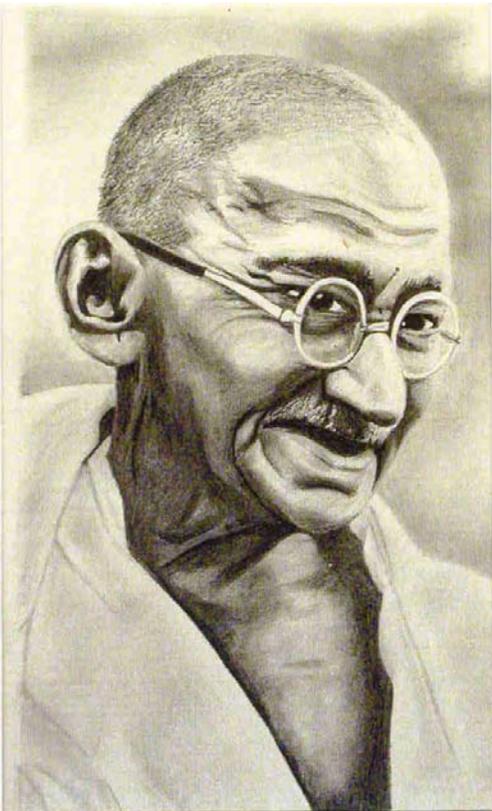
To 'transcend' is to rise above; to 'escape' means to 'avoid, evade' or get away from. Both these terms are dangerous territory for convicts, whether aspirants within a particular religion/tradition or not.

Prison is, to say the least, an uncomfortable affair and some persons of average intelligence and a modicum of common sense would endeavor to avert the experience or draw it to a close in as precipitous a manner as possible, yet the fact remains that we are here and now in this moment. We 'suffer' 'effect' from 'causes' and 'conditions' that arose in our individual experience. We, for all intents and purposes, for better or for worse, are exactly where we are supposed to be at this moment in time, within our journey. We are not 'out of place'! In some ways, this can be quite comforting. In all ways, it cannot be stressed enough.

To 'transcend' or 'escape' this experiential drama in any way only serves to cheat our 'sadhana' (spiritual journey). Suffering brings 'understanding' and 'wisdom'. In Christian, Moslem, and Jewish sects it brings penitent grace and epiphany. Assuaging guilt and affecting a remorse of sinful pride. In Confucianism, it brings us to a conscientious and socially responsible stance. In most Hindi and all Buddhist thought, it personifies and purifies our sentient existence as unwavering 'Truth'. The integral point that all faiths share is the 'understanding' of sufferings' inescapable role in this our life here and now. One must embrace it, meeting it's immanent arising with wisdom equanimity and discrimination of action without fear or aversion. A great leader once proclaimed, " We have nothing to fear but fear itself!" We must live by this, growing to unite with THAT which surrounds us.

Without 'fear' and with equanimity of purpose suffering becomes only the nuisance allowable to our demeanor. The 'trick' is not to elude, escape or transcend suffering or its occurrence per se, but simply not minding its inevitable circumstance. Thus I have heard and remain in love.

Picture of Gandhi by **Jack Waldrup**



Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment." Mahatma Gandhi

From DD: Dear Anna, may the winds of loving kindness gently touch your every endeavor and bring many blessings to all of you there at **Compassion Works for All**.

I was wondering if I could put together a test bunch of our original drawings of a subject matter of simply beauty, quietness, peace, etc, do you have the ability to put them for sale on your **CWFA** web site or maybe even put together a Buddhist calendar.

AND WE SAY: YES! Please do. This is the birth of our **ART PROJECT**. If you too have drawings to donate to us, we will display them in lovely ways, make cards or calendars, and you all will benefit in that **CWFA** will continue to grow. The world will benefit in learning about the talented beings who are in prisons and you will enter their minds and hearts of support with your beautiful work.

In another letter from D: **CWFA/Dharma Friends** has been the best thing to ever happen in my entire life. Kristopher has been a true blessing for me. My sweet precious mother would have found much happiness in the fact that I have finally found my road to peace. **Compassion Works for All** is a truth beyond simple words. My heartfelt thanks is more sincere than I have ever been in my life. You all are a true blessing.

"Thinking and reflection do more for enlightenment than meditation."The Dalai Lama

From RS: Re:Books. What I would suggest is that you send out a list of organizations that specialize in providing inmates with books like "*The Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project*". All of their books have been donated to them, and you can ask them for specific types of books, and they will send you up to four books every two months. I have heard that there are other organizations, even Buddhist organizations, that do the same thing. So if you could do a little research and provide an updated latest in your newsletter a couple of times a year I think that would be of great help to anyone that is truly trying to better themselves without having to spend a lot of money. While these are the two main things that I wanted to write you.

Another thing that you could do is to ask inmates to donate art work which you could sell over the Internet to raise money for **Dharma Friends**. You would be amazed at the artistic talent there is in prison, and I'm sure you could make a lot of money selling it. Just a thought. *** **From Anna - Again, another push for ART. I think it is a good thing. Thank you all. And, we are trying to make our resource list simpler so we can get these resources to you that you need.**

"The deliberate use of reflective thought or inquiry can reveal a set of unconscious assumptions, habits, and compulsions that we have set in motion. This can be very helpful and can yield great insight. We establish a steady, open mindfulness and then ask: 'What is it that knows this? What is aware of this moment? Who is it that feels pain? Who is it that is having this fantasy? Who is it that is wondering about supper?' At that moment a gap opens up. Milarepa once said something along the lines of, 'When the flow of discursive thinking is broken, the doorway to liberation opens.'

In exactly the same way, when we pose that kind of question, it is like an awl being worked into a knotted tangle of identification and loosening its strands. It breaks the habit, the pattern of discursive thinking. When we ask "who" or "what," for a moment the thinking mind trips over its own feet. It fumbles. In that space, before it can piece together an answer or an identity, there is timeless peace and freedom. Through that peaceful space the innate quality of mind, mind-essence, appears.



From RB: Dear Dharma Friends, I am writing to request your readers kind assistance on a couple of projects I am currently working on. But before I ask, I need to give you a brief overview: I am writing on Universalism, a religion based upon the collected wisdom of the world's religions, but unlike many of today's religions, Universalism is not monotheistic as it follows the duality of the divine, as seen in God and Goddess. To Universalists, like myself, it is a religion that encompasses a way of life. Now that you have a better understanding on Universalism, I can continue on with my requests.

First, I am working on a book called "**A Conversation,**" in which I answer questions concerning Universalism. So I would like your readers to come up with questions that I might use in this project to expand its knowledge base. The second project is called, "**The Universal Book: The Teachings, Tenets and Positions of Universalism.**" In this, I am writing brief position papers on topics that concern a person who is interested in knowing more about Universalism. In this I am requesting topics a person would be interested in knowing more about.

I am hoping to combine the lists your readers provide with those I have collected so that I can produce a work that one can read to gain an understanding of Universalism. If anyone wishes to participate, Please write me at:

Richard Bradshaw

14536879

82911 Beach Access Road

Umatilla OR 97882-9419

I thank you for your kind consideration. Blessings,

The worthies of past ages all sought the truth and did not deceive themselves. They were not like moths throwing themselves into flames, destroying themselves in the process.- Ta-sui



From GF: Dear Dharma Friends,

I'm writing because I've just chosen Buddhism as my religion, but not only that but my way of life. Now, I've been a very negative person in my 29 (on Sept 2nd) short lived years on this earth and I truly understand it's time for a change.

I've been reading your **Dharma Friends** pamphlets for the last two months and I truly appreciate the subjects touched inside of it. I also love the verses from the **Dhammapada**.

All around I've chosen Buddhism because I know its teachings and beliefs fit my understanding and my knowledge. I truly think what your organization is doing is an accomplishment within itself, because I know if it can touch or speak to a wicked heart like mine, it can touch anyone.

Keep up the excellent work on putting out the guide to enlightenment and I will continue to greatly benefit from your blessings.

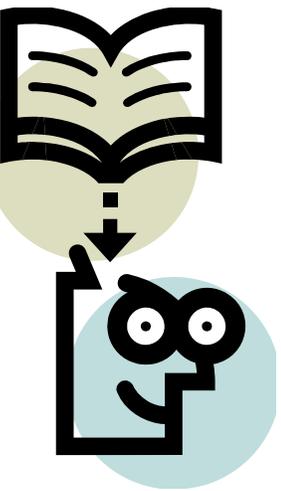
Please place me on the mailing list for your **Dharma Friends** pamphlets. And please keep up the wonderful deeds you're doing for the world. Thank you! Sincerely, A New Friend, G

A man approached the Blessed One and wanted to have all his philosophical questions answered before he would practice. In response, the Buddha said, It is as if a man had been wounded by a poisoned arrow and when attended to by a physician were to say, I will not allow you to remove this arrow until I have learned the caste, the age, the occupation, the birthplace, and the motivation of the person who wounded me. That man would die before having learned all this. In exactly the same way, anyone who should say, I will not follow the teaching of the Blessed One until the Blessed One has explained all the multiform truths of the world-that person would die before the Buddha had explained all this. - from the Majjhima Nikaya

Re-entry Information from S. Zirus

The following may be helpful for those who are about to get out of prison and want to get their life back on track. I got this information from the National CURE newsletter

1. Those wanting to pursue higher education after release, there is a free 64 page book called "**Back to School: A guide to continuing your education after prison.**" You can request a copy by writing to: ED pubs, PO Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304 and requesting item number ED005088P
2. It's hard to get a job with a felony so when you get out call 1-877-USA JOBS (872-5627) for referral services and general info in regards to the "**Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC)**" and the **Federal Bonding Program (FBP)**. WOTC provides employers who hire those with felony convictions a tax-write-off of \$2400. The FBP provides free theft insurance to employers who hires a releasee. See www.bonds4jobs.com. If you let a potential employer know about WOTC and FBP it may encourage them to give you a chance.
3. 2-1-1 is a toll free number to remember and is available 24/7. Dial 211 from a land line phone for help with food, housing, employment, healthcare, counseling and more. Dial 311 if you have a cell phone.



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.. (Remember, CWFA is not able to offer these books)

From K.A.D.: "I've been receiving **Dharma Friends** for five years...the letter from Snake in issue #188 is the first that I really felt the need to respond to. The vitriol he spewed towards people who were convicted of certain crimes saddened me. He is right about one thing: he needs to work on forgiveness for everyone, including himself.

"I would recommend to him Jack Kornfield's great book "**The Art of Forgiveness, Loving Kindness and Peace**". ...I've been where he is now and a good friend passed that book on to me a few years ago and it has made an incredible difference in how I deal with myself, my past and the people around me..."

Subscription information: We have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. We are 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*, please email annacoxar@gmail.com and we will put your name on our email list. If you need a paper copy, and if you are a family member of someone in prison, we will put you on our paper copy list. Send your information to **Compassion Works for All, Dharma Friends subscriptions, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708.**

If anyone would like to make a donation that supports the almost 5,000 thousand paper copies that go out to this in prisons around the country, we are most appreciative of your help.

We 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.

THE LOVE OF A TEACHER: A TRIBUTE TO GARY ALLEN by Z. L. King

BUDDHIST TEACHERS

Extend LOVE, KINDNESS and CONSIDERATION
To their STUDENTS, again and again
Once a STUDENT has been accepted by a TEACHER
TEACHERS will do their best to teach them
By HELPING the STUDENTS to SEE and UNDERSTAND
CLEARLY
ADVICE, LITERATURE and COUNSEL will be SHARED
At times a STERN REBUKE will be given
ALL SKILLFUL METHODS will be used to TEACH
And POINT the WAY towards ENLIGHTENMENT

In DAYS of OLD some STUDENTS were beaten
As a LOVING PARENT will sometimes beat a CHILD
To correct MISDEEDS or ERRORS
MR. GARY ALLEN has been a KIND and LOVING
TEACHER for me
For years and years this NOBLE MAN has TAUGHT and
INSTRUCTED me
Helping me to SEE, UNDERSTAND and PRACTICE
The NOBLE TEACHINGS from BUDDHA
Offer HEALING, KNOWLEDGE and so much more
PEOPLE are able to use the 84,000 DHARMA TEACHINGS
From LORD BUDDHA to advance to ENLIGHTENMENT

Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, during all these waking hours, let him establish mindfulness of good will, which men call the highest state! – Buddha

From A.S.: Dear Dharma Friends, The newsletter is really making a change in my life where I thought I might not ever change. I owe you the world and wish you well. I had a sensational experience last Friday when Lama Norbu came to the prison here to give us a speech. After the event, I wrote what I could remember on paper. It's like an unorganized journal. The content of the following pages really weren't meant for anyone else but myself, however, I thought it would be good to share them, to simply give something to the universe that has given me so much. What becomes of them is no longer my concern. Although the content is quite embarrassing to me, that is exactly what I want to overcome. Embarrassment.

My first impression of Lama Norbu as he walked through the doors was that he is kind of goofy looking; not necessarily the most beautiful (aesthetically speaking) person. During the first five minutes, he was being introduced to us and kept silent. Under his robe garb thing, he wore some denim jeans that were faded and crumpled from use at the knees. He wore uncomfortable looking, black shoes with square points. When Lama Norbu began his talk, he let us know that we were to refer to him as Lama Coo Coo and throughout the speech, and over all, had a jesting demeanor. You could easily tell that he was here to enjoy himself and wanted us to join him, to simply have some fun.

Lama Coo Coo spoke of his life at 11 years old when he lived in a Tibetan monastery and how they liked to escape at night to get into the nearest theater to watch movies. He then told us to put our hands over our hearts and make a wish. "Wish for something that you really want!" he said. I wished to lose my embarrassment and conscientiousness, to be able to stop caring about what people think of me when I am trying to be true to myself. With my hand over my heart, I joined the chanting, "Awwwww, Awwwww," I was very shy to join in the mantra, very self conscious. I was hardly parting my lips and hardly using my vocal chords. I was at the verge of tears, literally, with my own internal complex of worrying about what people may think of me for participating in something

that I truly and honestly wanted to be a part of. As we continued, “Awwwww, Awwwww, . . .” I was much louder as if to shout out my wish to the universe. During the entire visit with Lama Coo Coo, I was holding back my tears, tears of frustration caused by my own complex that prevents me from being true to myself.

I had spent my first five minutes judging what type of person Lama Coo Coo might be. If I were to meet this person on a crowded street, in his red button shirt, blue jeans and black shoes, would I ever have had a second thought about it? I judged the Lama by his physical appearance, guessing as to what type of eating habits and physical training he may undergo. I knew then that what I wanted from Lama Coo Coo was a hug. A simple personal action which goes beyond words or a handshake. I wanted to speak to him but even if he were the most fluent English professor and psychologist (as so myself in this analogy) I would not be able to speak all that is in my heart that needs to be said. Nor would he be able to understand. So I sat and mindfully participated.

We entered into a second mantra exercise and I am too embarrassed to participate fully. I search with my gaze for my teacher's eyes to signal my desperation to be able to participate and my inability to break my own barriers. Lama Coo Coo finds my gaze and turns straight towards me. He opens his mouth more exaggeratedly with the mantra and makes a “come with me” gesture of hands and eyes. I raise my volume until I not only can feel the reverberation of my vocal chords, but can also hear and distinguish my own voice among the others in the room. I think to myself – I hate my voice. I hate myself. I want to die. - yet I kept the volume loud enough to distinguish my own voice. I realized that I am out of tune. I am not in harmony or on the same frequency as the rest of the sangha. I modify the pitch of my mantra until I am in harmony with the rest. I have witnessed, directly experienced that I can not tell whether I am on the same frequency as those around me unless I am loud enough to be heard. This may just have been the first step towards my true self. During the rest of the mantra, I was able to fully vocalize myself with the group.

At the end of the gathering, I didn't have to go to extraordinary lengths to get what I needed. Lama Coo Coo was bombarding the group with hugs by order of proximity. Being my bashful self, I hung back and acted as if I were not desperate for human compassion. The Lama crossed the two steps of distance between us and gave me a hearty hug. All I could say was “thank you” in a hushed but very meaningful way. I am sure that Lama Coo Coo understood more from me than I could willingly let out. I walked very clumsily afterward and, to this moment of writing down the experience, am shaky and still on the verge of tears. I have been touched deeply by Lama Coo Coo and he will forever be a part of me.



Here is a letter that you can send to your loved ones if you wish. Hopefully, this invitation will benefit your important relationships and your families. It might be a drop starting off ripples and changing your family and maybe even dysfunctional communities.

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 Compassion Works for All 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: www.CompassionWorksForAll.org

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FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL



From LC: Perceptions based upon one's own faults and projections, in Buddhism, are called ignorance. It is very destructive, and at the heart of the Dhamma. Furthermore, all that stems from un-truth, is likewise, a lie -even (or maybe especially) when we lied to ourselves.
May we all be free of such destruction and ignorance.

And L.C. offers us this quote:
"We can do no great things, Only small things with great love." -Mother Teresa

Prison mailroom: Please return issues if inmate is no longer in your institution



Dharma Friends

January 2013 #191 copyright 2013,
Compassion Works for All

Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of Dharma Friends



COMPASSION WORKS

Join us for our monthly **Compassion Works** sessions if you are in Arkansas.

The sessions are the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 1 PM and the first Thursday at 6 PM at Fletcher Library.

The next sessions are Tuesday, 1 PM, December 18th and Thursday, January 4th, at 6 PM

Sessions are free, non-denominational and open to everyone.

We will add you to our email reminder list if you want information on times, dates and place, or you can go to www.CompassionWorksForAll.org/ and print out the schedule.

Compassion Works sessions offer a quiet experience of compassion. With a few gentle and guiding prompts, we will let go of the struggle, renew, heal, and send compassion into the world.

Then we head out again to live our question - How can I live compassion for myself and for all beings today?

(We also offer portions on videos and have a Compassion Works printout so that you can have an individual practice or you could start Compassion Works sessions in your locality. You can find these on our www.CompassionWorksForAll.org web site)

Are you in the New York City area?

Our friend Damien Echols is having an art exhibit of his work at the Sacred Gallery, 424 Broadway 2nd Floor Rear (Between Canal and Howard), New York, NY 10013. 212-226-4286. Gallery Hours are Monday - Friday (Noon to 8pm) Gallery is opening weekends from Noon to 8pm though to purchase artwork, you must set up an appointment beforehand. **There will be a reception on January 5th, 8-11 (ticket information below) and then the exhibit will last from January 5th until the 31st.**

Damien Echols - "Moving Forward; Looking Back"



Exhibition Dates: 01.05.13 - 01.31.13

THIS IS A PRIVATE EVENT. A TICKET MUST BE PURCHASED TO GAIN ENTRY TO THE OPENING RECEPTION. Link provided below to purchase tickets.

Sacred Gallery NYC is pleased to announce:

Damien Echols "Moving Forward; Looking Back"

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 5th. 8-11pm

Exhibition Dates January 5th - 31st.

Artist Statement:

These pieces of art are all things I created from my cell on death row, where I spent 18 years for a crime I did not commit. During that time, I had to scavenge for any supplies I got, often bartering for them in the prison underground.

I eventually received ordination in the Rinzai tradition of Japanese Buddhism. This is the same tradition that trained the samurai in ancient Japan. It was this back ground which was the driving force behind much of my artwork. Most of it was the result of me attempting to turn my cell into a shrine, where I would practice meditation from 5 to 7 hours a day.

Most of the pieces I created over the years were either given to friends as gifts of gratitude or destroyed by vindictive prison guards. These pieces are all that remain of my 18 years in Hell.

This collection will showcase a series of drawings, collage works, and a set of craft items Damien made while in prison. Both originals and prints will be available for purchase.

If interested in items for sale, email Kevin@SacredGalleryNYC.com

About Damien Echols

Damien Echols, known as part of the wrongfully imprisoned West Memphis Three. Echols has been well-documented in books, films, songs, and more. And after his release last August after 18 years on

death row, Echols got the chance to document it himself in his just-released memoir, *Life After Death*: a frustrating, honest, and surprisingly joyful account of a life lived under trying circumstances.

Credit DAN SOLOMON

This Exhibition's opening reception will not be open to the public:

Click [HERE](#) to purchase tickets. If you can not click the link, the direct link for tickets is here: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/299071>

A portion of the ticket sales will be donated to: [Dharma Friends Prison Outreach Project](#).

(and a note from Anna - [Dharma Friends Prison Outreach Project](#) is us in our old incarnation when Damien first knew us! Now we are CWFA and we thank him so much for thinking of us and making this donation. Thank you all)



FLETCHER LIBRARY - Introduction to Meditation, another library sponsored lecture in this series of meditation teachings. All are welcome, it is free, it is non-denominational, and it will make your holidays far more relaxing! Tuesday, December 11th at 6 PM

At Compassion Works for All - We have BOOKS FOR SALE:

We now have more of Linda Bessette's [Mindful Money](#) book – order here by emailing Linda. See address below...

and Mara Leveritt's books!

The Boys on the Tracks: Death, Denial, and a Mother's Crusade to Bring Her Son's Killers to Justice and

Devil's Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three. The movie, West of Memphis is now showing.

Email Linda (lbessette33@comcast.net) and she can give you more information about prices, mailing, etc. for all books.

And anna's books –

Just As the Breeze Blows Through Moonlight, and [Dharma Friends](#) and the [Healthy Living](#) pamphlet are available for a free download – but donations are always appreciated! Or you can order a hardcopy book for \$15 plus shipping (\$5) at my email address: anna@aristotle.net

Join us at our website - www.CompassionWorksForAll.com

Check us out and help spread the news by emailing the site to your friends!

Along with informative and inspirational articles –

there are many videos in our video archive to lend a little support in difficult life issues.

You may forward any past Dharma Friends newsletters, or this newsletter, on to anyone who you believe would benefit from them. If someone has sent this Dharma Friends issue to you as a gift and you would like to join us each month, please email anna@aristotle.net for more information about Compassion Works for All, our Dharma Friends newsletter, and our prison outreach program. You may receive Dharma Friends by email for free but donations are always most welcome. If you would prefer a hard copy, the subscription fee is \$30, but unfortunately it is not tax deductible because you receive a paper publication for your donation.



The whole of humanity is one human family. This planet is our only home. - His Holiness the Dalai Lama