



Compassion Works For All

Dharma Friends

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

The Dhammapada the teachings of the Buddha

Verse V. The Foolish, commentary by Joy Fox

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.*

We humans are born “foolish.” We are each “marinated” in family superstition and pain, in racial memories, in prenatal memories and childhood trauma. There are billions of information “chips” in our brain over which we had absolutely no control.

Our social training from family, peers, the neighborhood and society involves getting what we want, and avoiding what is unpleasant...of protecting Me and Mine. Many of us fall into one addiction or another just to suppress the futility and hopelessness of this existence.

When we truly begin to take our own mind, our own thoughts, as the textbook evidence of the long and tedious journey for those unaware of Truth, we have begun to take responsibility. We have taken the first step, subtle yet miraculous, towards liberation. Stephen Levine, a popular Vipassana teacher who left the planet this year, used to say, “Meditation is just one insult after another.” In fact, Buddha told us that “The untrained mind is like 10,000 monkeys chattering in the trees.”

Beginning meditators need to know that it can come as quite a shock to first glimpse just how many “monkeys” inside are frolicking, growling, grunting, poking,

squealing, quarreling, grabbing, puffing up, scrunching down, scowling...all within a couple of minutes!

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.* Buddha also told us that those who begin to comprehend his words will find themselves “going against the stream.” I have known and know of many folks whose time in prison has allowed them to develop the monastic-like qualities of going it “alone”. They have been yanked out of the “fast lane” of addiction and preoccupation long enough to observe this land of monkeys within, and to comprehend their own reactivity, pain and greed.

When we begin to comprehend our own foolishness, we can finally ask, “Who, then, is comprehending these thoughts? Who is seeing them?” With this perception, the journey has begun. It never ends, if we’re lucky. Seeing our own ignorance, arrogance, fear and greed with newfound compassion, we can begin to extend compassion to others around us, to stop and take a breath and feel our own pulse, when the heat of judgment starts to boil our blood. Buddha told us, “If it were not possible, I would not ask you to do these things.”

62. *“This is my child, this is my wealth”:* such thoughts are the preoccupations of fools. If we are unable to own even



Dharma, by O.F.C. Holiman



About the Author **Joy Fox** is a

meditation instructor and creator of the Wattle Hollow Retreat Center in Devil's Den, Arkansas. Her root teachers, in the world of meditation, have been: S.M. Goenka, Jack Kornfield, Ruth Dennison, Soen Sa Nim, Mae chee Sansanee, and L.P. Pramote (the latter two are from Joy's twelve winters in Thailand at a Buddhist retreat center). Joy has been developing the Wattle Hollow Retreat Center for over thirty-five years. She has been a fruit picker, homesteader, a world-wide hitch-hiker, baker, grief therapist, bereavement coordinator for Hospice, meditation and yoga teacher, and mud builder. About serving in African last winter she said, *This entire winter has been a study of freedom within bondage*. When asked to write for *Dharma Friends*, Joy said, *Morgan, my dear and wonderful friend who asked me to do the commentary this month for the CWFA newsletter, sent me the Dhammapada verse. Along with it came her comment: "You'll love the verse...it's the foolish!" She's right.*

ourselves, why make such claims? When we begin to see our own conditioned reflexes, we see our own imaginary identities and ego-stories. We keep scraping past the illusions, exploring downward until we see that there actually is no finite and static Me or Mine. Even a few moments of this revelation will change our lives forever. But before long, if you are honest, you will notice that the monkeys are still hanging around...they just took a little nap.

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.

I feel blessed and privileged to count myself among the fools who know themselves. After forty years of meditation, I now delight to see how wrong I can be every day. I may judge someone wrongly, take pride in this or that, speak harshly or impatiently (and have to apologize right away), leap to a conclusion, take offense, or feel greed creeping in through the back door. It's like a cartoon show! The mind works at the speed of light, I see. And yet, none of these are "me." When I've corrected for my conditioning, I can see and feel the light, the power of vibrations, the inevitable goodness and purity within our hearts and eyes. *This is who we truly are.*

64. Like spoons unable to taste the flavour of the soup, are the fools who cannot see truth, even though they live all their lives among the wise. Even in Asia, in cultures which worship the

Buddha, there are Buddhologists, who know all the scriptures, and Buddhaphiles, whose homes are full of sculptures and holy objects. These followers may not have absorbed the actual wisdom of Buddhism into their hearts and minds, however. Of course, the same is true within Christianity and Islam. Those who are ready to taste the actual flavor of forgiveness, beginning with ourselves, are blessed indeed. This is currently happening everywhere.

65. Like the tongue that can appreciate the flavour of the soup, is one who can discern clearly the truth after only a brief association with the wise.

Some of you reading this have suffered sufficiently, and felt immediately ready to release your suffering minds, known as "dukkha". I have met you, and marveled!

66. By heedlessly performing evil, the unwary fools produce their own bitter fruits. They behave like their worst enemy. When we begin to watch our mind and body responses closely enough, in self-loving reflection, we wish to offer compassion, as we would wish to receive it. We know when our conditioning has overwhelmed us...and start over, as soon as possible.

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. We don't have to look far to see posturing and foolishness, do we? **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.** I see the two minds within my own conditioning every moment... The one who strives and grunts and judges and manipulates, needs to be gently babysat by the one who Watches and Knows and keeps a loving and gentle watch. Sometimes the "conniving" mind is known as Mara, the temptress. *Even Buddha used to smile and say, "I see you, Mara" right up to his dying day.*

A meditation: Inviting Mara for Coffee

This being human is a guest house.
 Every morning a new arrival.
 A joy, a depression, a meanness,
 Some momentary awareness comes
 as an unexpected visitor.
 Welcome and entertain them all!...
 The dark thought, the shame, the
 malice,
 meet them at the door laughing,
 and invite them in.
 Be grateful for whoever comes,
 because each has been sent
 as a guide from beyond.
 —Rumi



It's tempting to think that we have to push out our negative thoughts when we sit on the cushion for meditation (or any other time). Today, I welcome you to open the door and invite those feelings of fear, hate, anger and jealousy to stay a while. In our meditation, we will fully embrace our inner fool and our inner Mara.

Begin by finding a comfortable position to sit. If you are on a cushion, you want your knees to fall below your hip bones. If you are sitting in a chair, be sure that both feet are on the ground. Shift your weight back and forth on your sits bones until you feel rooted. Your pelvis is tipped forward slightly, so that you feel a gentle curve in your lumbar spine.

Take three deep inhales, each breath moving deep into your belly and lifting the crown of your head higher towards the sky. As you lift, feel the space you create between each vertebrae. On your exhale, fully and completely express the air from your lungs, allowing your shoulder blades to glide down your back, away from your ears.

Notice your face, and allow any tension in your forehead, eyes and jaw to soften. Create space between your top and bottom teeth. Allow your tongue to hang heavy in your mouth, with the tip of your tongue resting on your upper palate. Your eyes can be open or closed. If they are open, allow your gaze to soften, so that whatever object in front of you is out of focus.

Allow your attention to rest on your breath. Gently watch the inhale and exhale as air moves through your nostrils. Rest in the breath for several minutes, allowing your body and mind to find stillness.

As thoughts arise, notice what surfaces. Label your thoughts 'thinking', and return to watching the breath.

Step 1: Recognizing Mara

Continue this practice for several minutes. Notice any patterns that emerge. Do you see a storyline arise? Keep following the breath until you find your hook...that story that plays in your head that just really *bothers* you. When you find it, you can say to yourself, *I see you Mara*.

Watch your breath and watch for Mara. Notice him (or her) and label your findings.

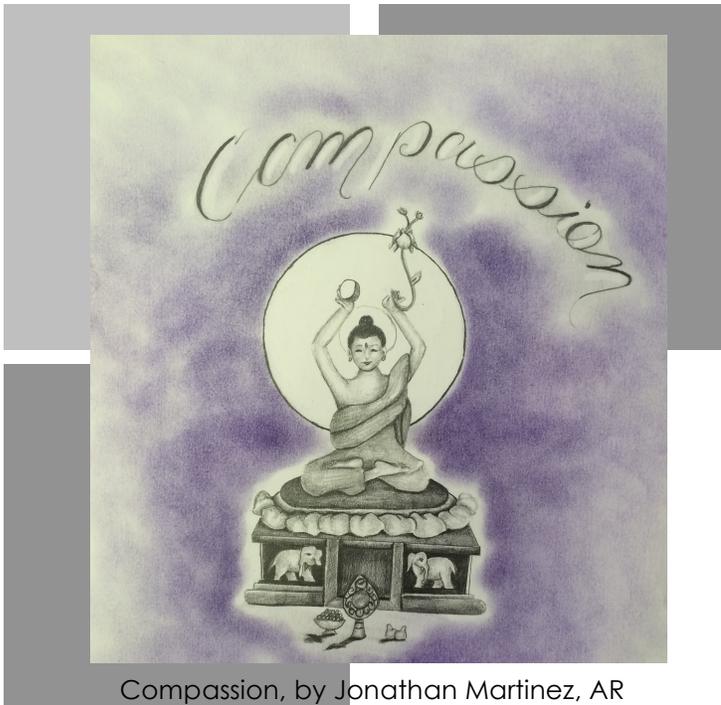
Step 2: Inviting Mara in for Coffee

At this point, you may have seen Mara walking across your awareness a few times. Mara is a stranger who is becoming less strange. Maybe it's time to get to know Mara a little better.

Remember that Mara is our story -- our dark thoughts and feelings. Regardless of the story -- a correction officer having a bad day and taking it out on you, someone who stole something from you, a friend or family in the free world who isn't sending you something you need, the TV playing loudly in the background while you're trying to meditate -- invite Mara inside your meditation cave.

When Mara comes into your cave, honor him as your most important guest. We want to be kind to Mara in the same way we would be kind to our mother or closest friend. As you sit with Mara (story), allow the storyline to drop, while sitting with the energy and emotions of whatever Mara brings to you. Sit with the energy until your mind begins to wander again. Take a deep breath and give a bow to Mara.

We use this practice of inviting Mara into our meditation caves, to do as the Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön advises: to "make space for an attitude of honoring things completely and at the same time not making them a big deal." In this way, we aren't pushing away any of our darkest thoughts or most painful memories. We honor them by being fully aware of them, but we don't make them a "big deal" because we let go of the story and simply experience the energetic impact of these stories. Our honored guest, Mara, gives us the gift of healing by showing us our wounds.



Compassion, by Jonathan Martinez, AR

Buddhist vocabulary

Mahayana - Northern Buddhism, "large or greater vehicle or journey"

Skandhas - parts of the self

Sadhana - daily spiritual practice

Trishna (tanha) - thirst, craving, desire

Five Buddha Families - "The buddha families are traditionally displayed as the mandala of the five *tathagatas*, or buddhas. The mandala (from the Sanskrit for "circle") aids meditators in understanding how different aspects of existence operate together in an integrated whole. Each of the buddhas in the mandala embodies one of the five different aspects of enlightenment. However, these manifest themselves not only as enlightened energies but also as neurotic states of mind. The buddha families therefore present us with a complete picture of both the sacred world of enlightened mind and the neurotic world of ego-centered existence. We see that they are indeed the same thing; the path of awakening is what makes the difference." By Irini Rockwell, published in *Lion's Roar*, August 4, 2016

Upcoming 2017 Buddhist Holidays

January 12, 2017 - **Mahayana New Year**

January 28, 2017 - **Chinese New Year**

February 15, 2017 - **Nirvana Day** - Mahayana holiday that celebrates the day it is believed that the Buddha achieved parinirvana (death of his body and final cessation of samsara).

February 26, 2017 - **Losar** - Tibetan New Year

March 12, 2017 - **Magha Puja Day** (Sangha Day) - The second most important Buddhist festival in the Theravada tradition, that honors the sangha, or the community of dharma practitioners



Reclined Buddha envelope art, by Albert Perez, Graterford, PA

Compassionate Communication Column

By Morgan Holladay

There are as many types of communication as there are people. Some forms of communication bring joy and love into our lives, while others bring disharmony and disruption. As we continue the practice of speaking compassionately, we must also notice when our words are violent, foolish, or Mara-like.

Firstly, I'd like to say that I am guilty of dysfunctional communication. Communicating with compassion is a practice that takes work and effort! It is okay if you find yourself falling into an old habit. Compassion is something that we can all come back to, over and over again for the rest of our lives.

All communication, whether it is compassionate, violent or somewhere in between, begins with our thoughts and intentions. Before we say anything to anybody, we have a prefabricated idea that has been playing in our head over and over. As you read about these dysfunctional patterns, realize that they start in your mind, and manifest through your language. To stop using violent communication, we have to start by changing the way we think and the way we talk to ourselves.

Here are some common patterns of language that emerge for people:

Moralistic Judgment

Moralistic judgment is a way of thinking about the world in terms of right or wrong, good or bad. It is sometimes referred to as 'dichotomous thinking', which means thinking about things in pairs. Moralistic thinking traps us in a world of judgment where there is only one right answer (and usually 'I' am right and 'they' are wrong).

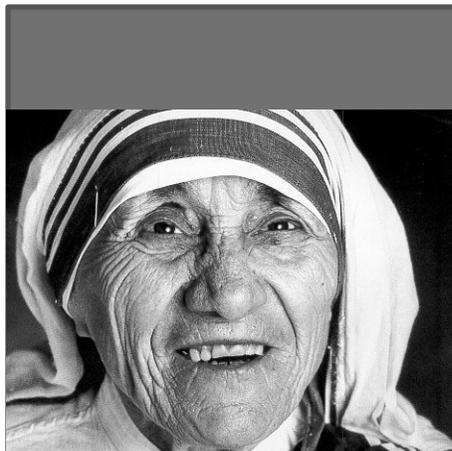
We all have a unique set of values. We develop these values based on our caregivers, our experiences growing up, our friends, family, teachers and culture. While many people have shared values, every individual places greater importance on a particular set of values. This tension between many values creates rich diversity

in our society. It makes life interesting. However, tension between values can also create unrest if we refuse to believe that someone else's values are important and right to them.

Contempt

Contempt is when a person displays disdain, hatred or disgust towards another person. When someone is contemptuous in an interaction, he or she is attempting to belittle the person or cause him or her psychological and emotional pain.

Behaviors and statements to watch out for that fall under "contempt" include:



"If we have no peace,
it is because we have
forgotten that we
belong to each
other."

— Mother Teresa

personal insults ("you are a bad person"), sarcasm or hostile humor ("that will work because you are sooo good with money), and mockery, commonly with body language (behaviors like rolling eyes, laughing at a person for their mistake, or making fun of someone for their behavior).

Making Comparisons

Comparisons are a form of judgment against yourself or others. Making a comparison between two or more people means that someone wins and someone loses. Comparisons are dysfunctional

because they do not take into account the individual's unique circumstances.

Blaming

Every person is responsible for his or her own thoughts, feelings and actions. However, it can be easy and tempting to attribute responsibility to someone else. This is called blame. When we fault someone else for something that is actually ours, we blame him or her.

Sometimes circumstances are out of our control. However, we always have a choice to think and react to those circumstances in different ways. It may not seem like you have a choice when someone is exerting tremendous power over you. For example, if a stranger tries to start a fight with you, you may believe that your only option is to fight back. But is that really true? Are there other options?

Stonewalling

Stonewalling is a common way for people to exert power, especially if they do not usually hold the power in a relationship. Stonewalling is intentionally ignoring a person or leaving the person without attempting a resolution (or offering a better time to work things out). Someone who is stonewalling often believes that he or she is helping the relationship by avoiding the conflict; however, the behavior leaves the other person feeling alone, isolated, and helpless.

Stonewalling behaviors include leaving a conversation, changing the subject, and one word or emotionless answers.

Defensive Arguing

Defensive behavior is an act in which you essentially stop listening to the other person and start defending your subjective experience. When a person is being defensive, they are not allowing themselves to be open to someone else's experience, emotions or needs. The interaction pattern serves to prove the other person is 'wrong' and their behavior serves as an attempt to avoid or defend from a perceived attack. Defensive behaviors include whining ("it's not fair!"), justifying with "but", excuses, repeating yourself, critiquing someone who is talking to you ("I might not do the dishes but you are the one wasting all our money on clothes").

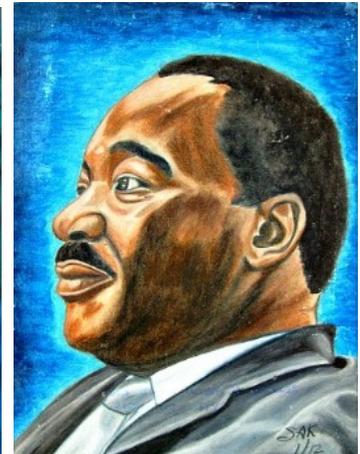
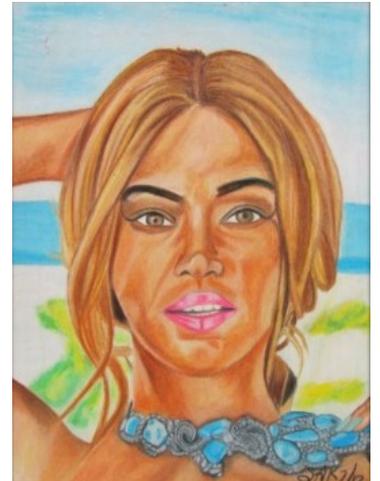
more on **10**

Honoring diversity within our one human family

WHO REALLY KILLED HIM?

By cdye, Rosharon, TX

YOU SAY
SHE KILLED HIM.
NOT BECAUSE
HE'D PUT HIS HANDS UP
OR BECAUSE
HE'D TURNED
AND WALKED AWAY
OR BECAUSE
HIS CAR BROKE DOWN.
SHE KILLED HIM
AFTER
WE'D TRAINED HER
IN LETHAL VIOLENCE
AFTER
WE'D GIVEN HER
A GUN AND BADGE
BOTH LOADED
WITH EXPECTATION
AFTER
WE'D TRAINED HER
TO SEE HIM
NOT
AS A STRANDED MOTORIST
BUT
AS A BLACK MAN
AKA A THREAT.
AFTER
WE'D TRAINED HER
SHE GAVE HIM
A BULLET.
AND HIS FAMILY
A FUNERAL.
WE GAVE EACH OTHER
TIRED STEREOTYPES
AND EMPTY RHETORIC.
WHILE WE KEPT
SKEPTICAL EYES
ON EACH OTHER.
WHEN
WILL WE TALK
HONESTLY
AS ONE HUMANITY
ABOUT
WHO REALLY KILLED HIM?



Art by Lonnie Franks, Arkansas About art, Lonnie says, "when I first started this I couldn't draw a stick man, but I started at it and worked on it because I believed I could do it, and I wanted to change things within me. And my art is a very big part of me expressing these changes. Also I want people to know they can do anything if they work at it. I'm living proof of that."

Left column: Malcolm X, Emmitt Till and Trayvon Martin, First Lady Michelle Obama. Right column: Muhammad Ali, Beyoncé, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Prisoner Lives Matter
By Bobby B., Cameron, MO

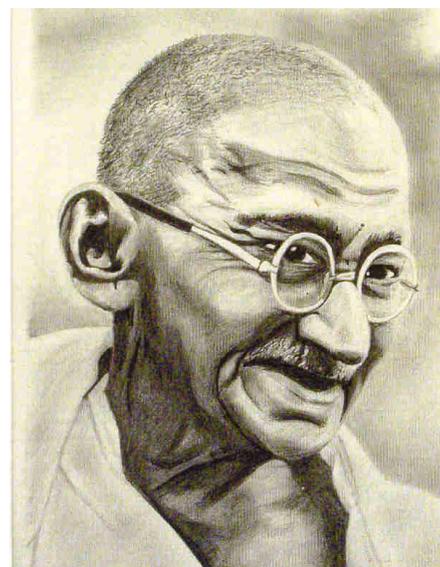
People don't stop being humans when they offend society and commit crime
On the contrary we loose some of our best citizens at the their prime
In fact it is inside their cells that many prisoners rehabilitate themselves
Coming out into society as reformed people having left the older version of their lives behind on prison shelves.

Instead of breaking the fallen down we should pick them back up
Let them drink from the fountain of change till they do away with their hiccup
They did wrong and must be held responsible for their acts
Recidivism is a blight on society and statistics prove these facts.

It's not always the worse of the worse inside of prison
These are our fellow citizens who went astray and lost their vision
A prison number doesn't make them less of a human being
We all just have to guide their sight back to a civilized way of seeing

Drugs is the main cause of their fall
Addicted to chemical substances under the influence of alcohol
Many were at their lowest common denominator when they became criminals
Therefore we must all stand up and mentor choices for the millennials

We can't just lock up our citizens and throw away the key
The ultimate goal is to rehabilitate them so they can contribute to society
The world can't only see incarcerated people through the lens of their past clutter and clatter
Although we must never forget the victims of crime, prisoner lives also matter



Nelson Mandela, by Lonnie Franks | "Indian", by Raylon Attebury | Mahatma Gandhi, by Jack Waldrop

From Jasmin R., Niantic, CT

I just came across your newsletter and was delighted to find this gem of inspiration amongst all of this darkness here. I am new to the teachings of Buddhism and am interested in studying the Dharma, but have very little resources. Anything I can get my hands on is extremely valuable and helpful. I loved "Nirvana" by Rich Bradbury in AR...thank you so much for your newsletter.

From Jesse K., Colorado

November 9th, 2016, a day of mourning for America the Beautiful. For America the Wise, America the Kind, and America the welcoming, as well. In many ways this is a relapse. To fall back to our One-Percenter royalty, celebrity worship, and fear-mongering. Again we learn our mind does not focus well in negatives: "Not Trump" was an ineffective rally cry. The negativity also gave us confidence that what occurred would be unthinkable. That false comfort prevented us from truly striving to "Rock the Vote" again.

Still, if patriotism truly means love of country, and if we love America still, warts and all, if so, what then? Good, let love be your motivator. Henry Ward Beecher said, "Compassion will cure more sins than condemnation." Had that been the rallying cry, I might be writing a different post on the day after Election Day. After the news this morning, some tears, and much meditation, I began reading a book on co-dependency. That's when the relapse metaphor struck me. This book, that is geared to helping people who have chosen to stick it out in a relationship that is at best difficult, and at worst is volatile, well, it spoke to me about where we are now, the ones who stay.

It is not about whether we can trust the powers that be (or will soon be) to take care of us, but can I trust myself to take care of myself with them--i.e. my partner, my nation. Ultimately it must be a collaborative recovery. There can be no more red states versus blue states, no more us versus them; there is only us.

So allow me to close with a most precious passage from my translation of the Dhammapada:

In this world

Hate never yet dispelled hate.

Only love dispels hate.

This is the law,

Ancient and inexhaustible.

You too shall pass away.

*Knowing this, how can you quarrel?**

With that: love; love thyself, love thy neighbor, love Trump, for love trumps all.

*Note - this passage comes from verse I: The Pairs

Soul Utterance, by Brotha Knowledge of Self, Tucker, AR

My Angel is the very *image* of the *ideal* meditations of my *soul...soul*.

Drawn into the inner circle of my *circumference* through "Divine Magnetism", *magnetism*
Engraved in the *scrolls ...scrolls*. Prophesied of *old...old*. OH!- If the "Celestial Beings" could
 Find me *guilty* of "Divine Plagiarism! Plagiarism. Still I'd choose to sit at the "Foot of the Moon";
 Singing "Ptah-Hotep's" *tune,...consumed* by the study of the reflection of the *stars...as they*
Twinkle in the eyes of my *Angel!...my Angel*.

And *then*, and *then...as* a new *day* begins to bloom...bloom...I'd turn *around* and usher in
 The *sun, sun...Boldly* proclaiming my position before all *mankind*. As the *trumpet* is blown
 And the heavenly *hosts* arrive--waving a warrant for my *arrest...my arrest*. From Divine
Plagiarism...Divine Plagiarism...To Divine theft...Divine

Soul Utterance

...

Objection, your *honor*, your *honor*. The *question* is *not* whether I am *guilty* as much as it is
What, I am allegedly *guilty* of! For *indeed*, in my *defense* one could *easily* plead temporary
Insanity...insanity. But lets be *clear*, lets be *clear*, lets be *clear*, lets be *clear*.

DejaVu's and E(xtra) S(ensory) P(erceptions) are only the personal claims of individual
Recollections, wherein the *soul*, having caught up with the *spirit*, has been provided with
 Grand *glimpses* of a fleeting momentary *pro-jection!*

I herein, thereby *invoke..."*equal *protection"*...

Who then in Heaven *or* on Earth can judge *me?*. . . For if I have *witnessed* within the
 Vast Universal Cosmos of *Self*--a prophetically perfected *union*, based on an unflinching
Friendship and *undying* carefully cultivated love, . . .Then only *she*, of whom I know to be my
Reflection was there.

Therefore, it is only *she*, my Angelic soul-sister, who could serve as a *credible witness*

To that which *my Soul Uttereth*. . .

Soul Utterance

Author's Note: Repetitions are simply echoes

From Daniel R., Tucker, AR

Forms of manifestation (of Buddhist deities)

In Tibetan Buddhism the distinction is possible between an angry or wrathful and peaceful aspect of any deity in the pantheon; thus, for example, Avalokiteshvara (peaceful) and Mahakala (wrathful). As a sadhana, the deities symbolize the peaceful and the aggressive or destructive disposition of the petitioner's consciousness. As modern Tibetan meditation master Chogyam Trungpa stresses "wrath" is not to be understood here as an egoistic emotion, nor "aggressive or destructive" in an evil, negative sense. The energies symbolized by the wrathful deities are as helpful and necessary to the realization of enlightenment as the peaceful ones. **What is destroyed here is the illusions that hinder spiritual development, and what feels itself attacked and terrified is the illusionary ego of the**

practitioner.

The equal recognition in Tibetan Buddhism of wrathful energies and the major role played by wrathful deities depicted in terrifying forms of manifestation have often led, in the West, to the erroneous view that "demon worship" is prevalent in Tibetan Buddhism. Besides the five Buddha families (buddhakula), the Vajrayana also speaks of the "hundred families of the peaceful and wrathful deities" (Tib., zhi khro dam pa rigs brgya). This enumeration of forty-two peaceful and fifty-eight wrathful deities, known particularly from the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo thodol), is part of the Mahayana teachings (Nying mapa) introduced into Tibet by Padmasambhava. These deities are brought together in two mandalas, which represent an expansion of the schema of the five Buddha families. The archetype of the deities manifesting wrathful energies is Chem Chog Heruka (pages 70-71 in the Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen, 1991). There are two types of anger. There is the good kind that helps you fight injustice. Then there is the bad kind that makes you self-destructive.

Knowing exactly what you are dealing with defines the energy of the deity. Interestingly, these are thought to run in families of these deities. In other words, the archetype is in the family tree. The ancients say that when the iron bird flies, the people will return from a red-faced people. Recent DNA testing shows that Cherokee Indians have Russian and Asian ancestry. The Buddhist in the blood. Thus is the nature of the human ancestry...or is it something deeper than that which defines us at our core belief and understanding of the world & our relationship to it?

I'm Tired, By Ryan B., Wrightsville, AR

I'm tired of being locked up, I'm tired of being away,
I'm tired of all the thoughts in my head, yet having nothing to say.

I'm tired of being angry, I'm tired of being sad,

I'm tired of my wife not having her husband, and my kids not
having their dad.

I'm tired of my foolishness, I'm tired of doing what I done before.

I'm tired of being in a place where I don't want to be anymore.

I'm tired of being lonely, I'm tired of all the pain.

I'm tired of doing the same things over, I'm tired of going insane.

I'm tired of being torn, separated, and always gone.

I'm tired of having no one, but myself to blame it on.

I'm tired of all the shame and guilt that comes with all the things
I've done,

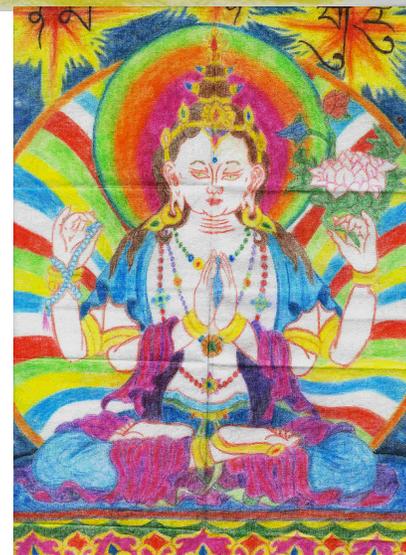
I'm tired of my father not being proud of his son.

I'm tired of all the sins, I'm tired of all the lies.

I'm tired of falling short of Glory in my Father's eyes.

I'm tired of this life, and the way I've been livin'

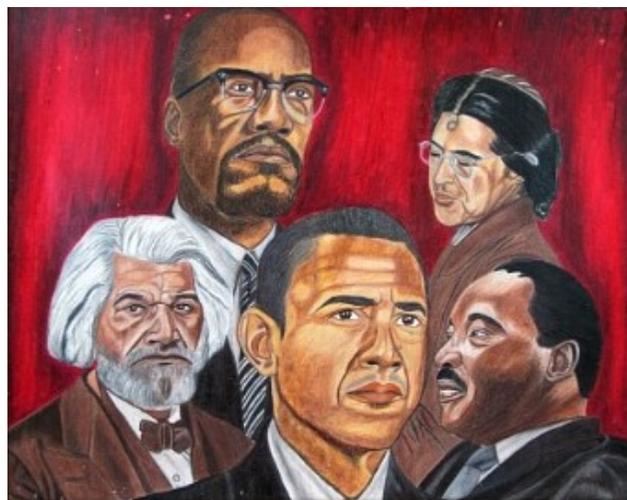
But I don't have to be tired anymore, because I know I've been forgiven.



Top: An image depicted by Shira

Middle: Avalokiteshvara, by Jared Beekman

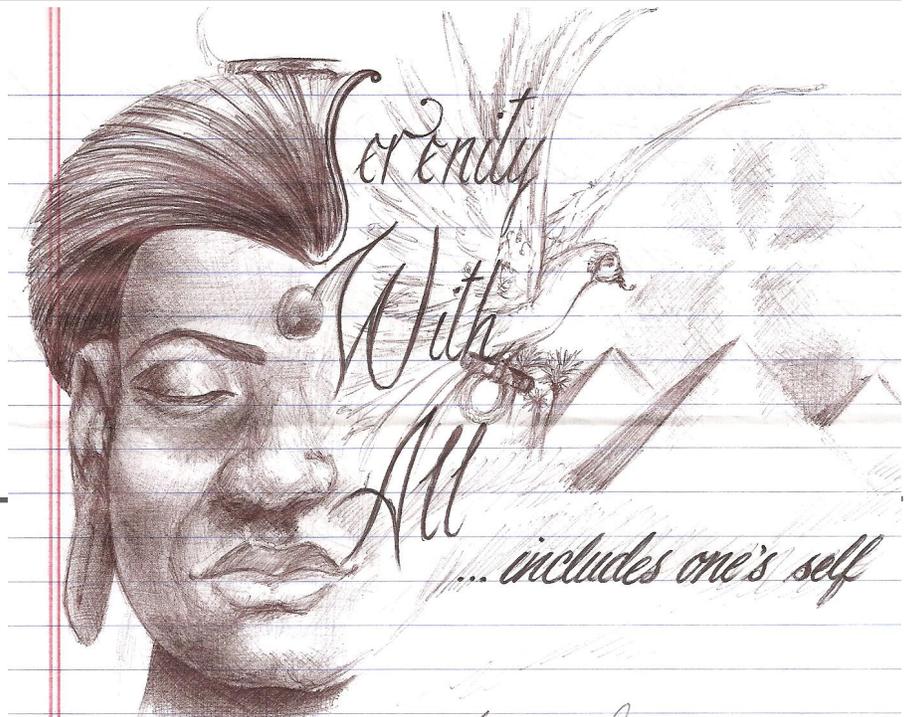
Below: Civil Rights Gallery, by Lonnie Franks



Communication cont...

Noticing when we are using dysfunctional communication is a practice very much like the meditation practice in this issue. Before we can invite Mara in, we have identified what he looks like. If left untouched, our inner pain stirs up violence and dysfunction in our lives. Identifying Mara - identifying dysfunctional communication - is the first step in the healing process that leads us to compassionate living.

Art by Daniel Curtis Moses, Hardwick, GA



From Brandon A., Pontiac Illinois

Well, first I was raised in Houston, TX, on the north side in a place called 5th Ward...I quickly became a kid who fought a lot, got kicked out of schools. I was stealing, robbing, disrespecting my friends and family.

I didn't listen to anybody. By the age of 13, I had been shot up 3 times, been in numerous fights, kicked out of schools. Plus I was sitting in juvenile for killing a kid that I had a fight with.

To skip ahead a little, I am now 34 years old and sitting in a prison on a Natural Life sentence. I had many chances to make something of myself, but I now sit in an Illinois prison for life. Since I have been here, I ran across a resource packet that had a bunch of addresses to places where I could receive free books. And who doesn't love free stuff, right? :-). So, just on a whim I wrote a Buddhist place to get a free book, and they sent me the most powerful book that I have ever read. It's called "Angulim'ala: Transforming Life," by G.K. Ananda Kumarasiri. For those not familiar with this story, I'll give a brief review of it.

The story starts in ancient India around the middle of the 6th century B.C.E. A baby was born to the general chaplain in the court of King Pasenad, of the kingdom of Kosala. The baby boy was named Ahimsaka, which means Harmless One. When the boy's father went to the royal Astrologer to ask about his son's future, the royal astrologer told the father that his son would become a notorious bandit when he grows up. As the son grew up, his father tried everything in his power to curb this prediction. But his son was the nicest, most intelligent, kindhearted kid he had ever known.

As his son grew up the father sent his son to study under one of India's foremost gurus at the time. While he was there studying, because of jealousy, anger, etc., he was sent out from his guru. And he became Angulimala, which means the one who wears a necklace of angulis (fingers). He was a ruthless bandit who killed people and cut off the little finger and hung them on a necklace around his neck. He even almost killed his own mother for her finger. But ran into Buddha instead. He chased after the Buddha, but it seemed that no matter how fast he ran, he couldn't catch the Buddha. He started to call to the Buddha to stop. The Buddha stopped, turned around and said, "I have stopped; it is you who haven't stopped."

To cut this story a little short, Angulimala became a disciple of Buddha and attained Anatmanhood [enlightenment]. He broke the cycle of birth and death.

What got me about this story is that it related to so many of us. We are born into suffering, and our parents try their hardest to raise us to be good people. We start out well, but because of our greed, anger, jealousy, etc....we go down the wrong path. But Angulimala shows that no matter what we have done, it is possible to change. It's never too late, no matter what you have done.

I recommend this book to anybody. To those who would like to read this book, you can write to Dallas Buddhist Association for it. It might change your life, too.

Dallas Buddhist Association | 515 Apollo Rd. | Richardson, TX 75081 | Offers audio and videotapes, books, and pictures of Buddha. Teachings offered in English or Chinese. Write for a catalog and provide specific regulations for receiving items.

A Letter you can send to your loved ones

Dear

Here in prison, I receive a bimonthly 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 emails that will bring you *Dharma Friends* newsletter and other news about prison issues. There are lots of healing videos on the website 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,

If you write to us, here are a few thoughts:

We greatly appreciate your art donations! If you would like to send art to us for calendars, art exhibits, cards, or to be displayed in *Dharma Friends*, we will cherish it. Know that you are giving us permission to use your art, and we cannot return it. There is great benefit for us, and you are contributing to letting the world know the talent and sensitive beings who live behind bars. We want to help make you visible to society! **Please write your name, title of the art, and address on the back of your art piece.**

ASK TIM - Tim answers letters asking for help with those things that we know

you cannot do in prison. Tim looks up resources, but there are a few things he cannot do: Tim is not qualified to counsel about personal and/or relationship problems. Money or 'things' will never be given to any writer. We will not provide addresses of individuals in the free world to anyone. We cannot provide information obtained from Facebook or other social media websites.

Become the **Quote Master** for your unit! We offer a quote in each *Dharma Friends* to post on your bulletin board in your barrack. Who knows who might be inspired?

(optional) Homework

Send us your reflections about inviting Mara in for coffee. Whether it's a poem, drawing, or creative short story, we want to hear about your experience sitting with your challenges and honoring your temptress without making it a big deal.

You can also dedicate your reflection to someone who may need it, including someone you may have harmed in the past.

Subscription information for *Dharma Friends* newsletter

We are encouraging people to sign up for this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons and jails. Please write to us at:

Compassion Works for All, attn.: Dharma Friends Subscriptions, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR 72217-7708 to join our mailing list. 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 life 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 mholladay@compassionarkansas.org.

*** Please let us know if your address changes ***

Include your old and new address



“When I was in Vietnam, so many of our villages were being bombed. Along with my monastic brothers and sisters, I had to decide what to do. Should we continue to practice in our monasteries, or should we leave the meditation halls in order to help the people who were suffering under the bombs? After careful reflection, we decided to do both—to go out and help people and to do so in mindfulness. We called it engaged Buddhism. Mindfulness must be engaged. Once there is seeing, there must be acting... We must be aware of the real problems of the world. Then, with mindfulness, we will know what to do and what not to do to be of help.”

-Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*

Compassion Works for All

PO Box 7708

Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708

www.compassionworksforall.org

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