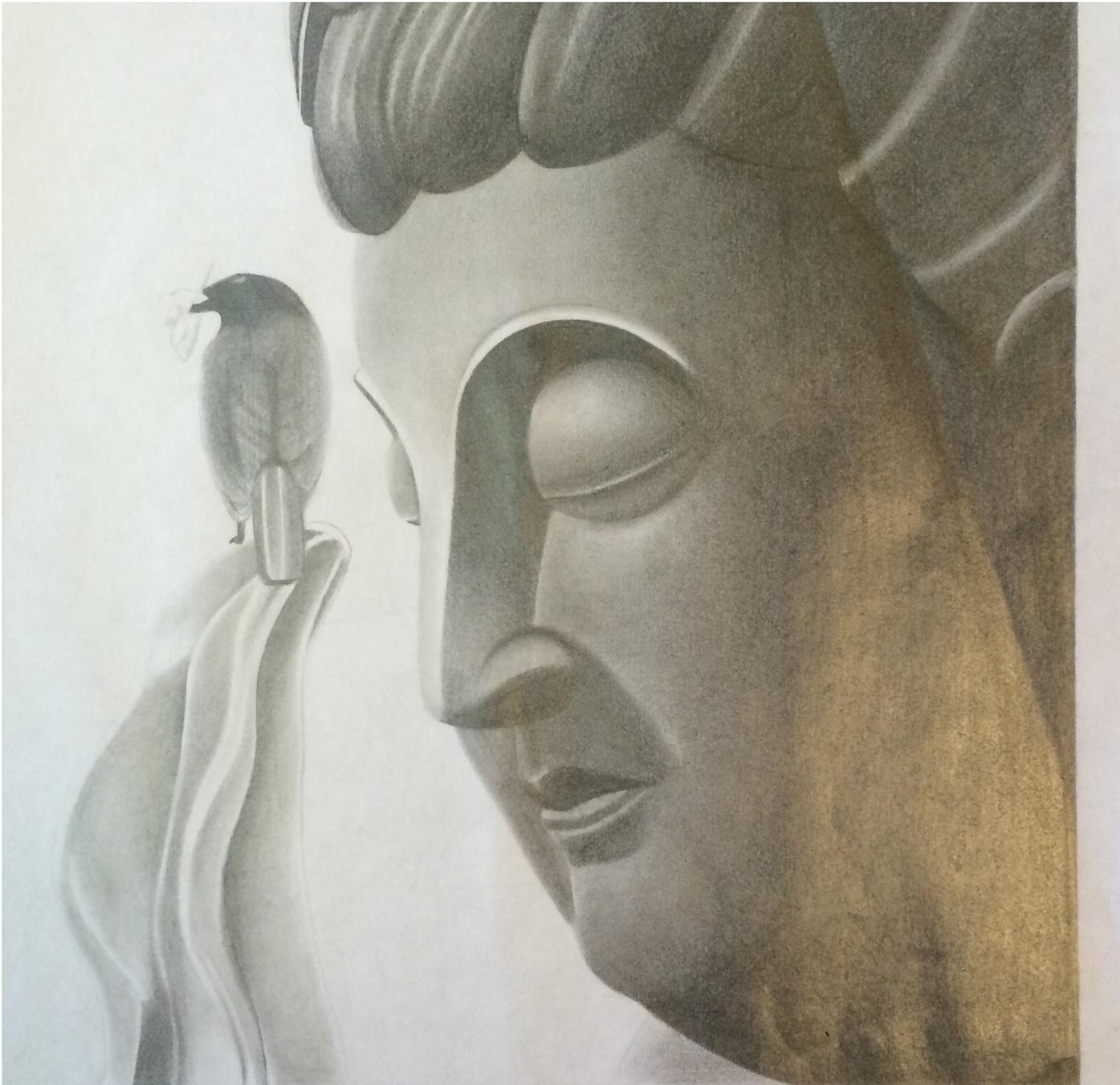


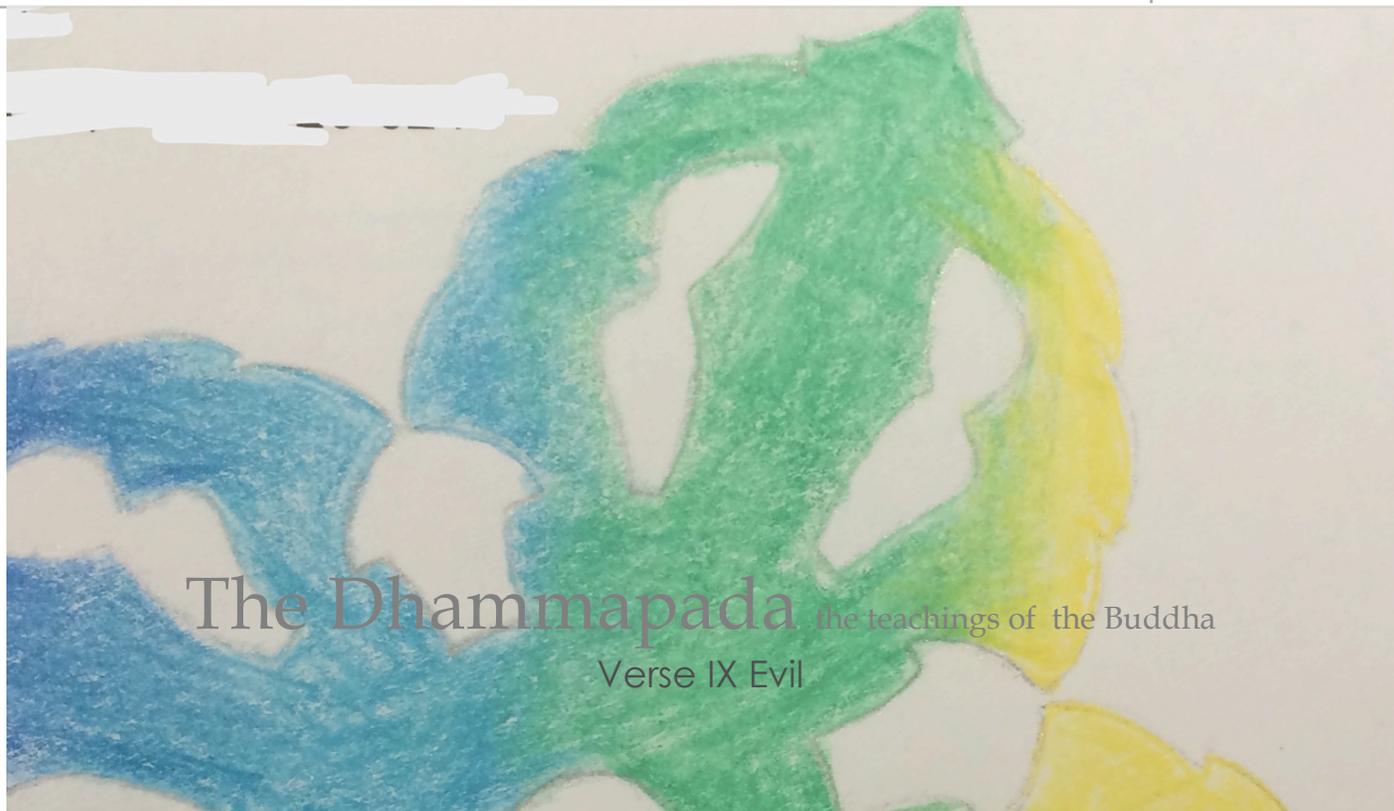


Compassion Works For All

Dharma Friends

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





116. Hasten towards doing what is beautiful. Restrain your mind from evil acts. The mind that is slow to do good can easily find pleasure in evil-doing.

117. If you perform an evil act, then do not repeat it. Avoid finding pleasure in its memory.

The aftermath of evil-doing is painful.

118. Having performed a wholesome act it is good to repeat it. Enjoy the pleasure of its memory. The fruit of goodness is contentment.

119. Even those who perform evil can experience well-being so long as their actions have not yet borne direct fruits. However, when the results of their actions ripen, the painful consequences cannot be avoided.

120. Even those who live wholesome lives can experience suffering so long as their acts have not yet borne direct fruits. However, when the fruits of their actions ripen the joyful consequences cannot be avoided.

121. Do not ignore the effects of evil, saying, "This will come to nothing." Just as by the gradual fall of raindrops the water jar is filled, so in time fools are corrupted by evil-doing.

122. Do not ignore the effect of right action saying, "This will come to nothing." Just as by the gradual fall of raindrop the water jar is filled, so in time the wise become replete with good.

123. As one who is entrusted with precious cargo would remain vigilant and protective avoid evil as if it were poison.

124. A hand without an open wound can carry poison and remain free from harm; likewise, evil has no consequences for those who do not perform it.

125. If you intentionally harm an innocent person, someone who is pure and blameless, the harm will come back to you like fine dust thrown into the wind.

126. Some are reborn as humans; evil-doers are reborn in hell. Doers of good are reborn in bliss and the pure enter the trackless land.

127. There is no place on earth where one can hide from the consequences of evil actions – not in a mountain cave, the ocean nor in the sky.

128. There is no place on earth beyond the reach of death – not in a mountain cave, the ocean nor in the sky.

No harm(a) karma

By Morgan Holladay

This is a beautiful chapter, rich with instruction on karma and right action. However, if you're like me, this chapter on evil may also be a little difficult for you. When I started on this path (and even up until recently, and maybe for a long time to come), I didn't think that words like 'evil' and 'hell' had any place in Buddhism. *What about love and compassion?*

I recently returned from a month-long solo retreat. Early on in retreat, I was reading from *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche, and there was a passage about hell. Even though I had read through entire chapters about the hell realms and evil actions, something about this particular line triggered me and I had a full-on meltdown. I began sobbing, and my world started shrinking in around me. I could feel all of my go-to habits surfacing - wanting to run away, creating stories about blame or victimization, feeling trapped. I tortured myself in this way, by

entertaining terrifying fantasies of hell and imagining ways that I would back out of all of my commitments. I stayed in this hurt-child state for hours. Literally hours. It wasn't until I managed to get enough cellphone reception to call Anna, our teacher, that I was reminded that "hell" and "evil" are just concepts that we use to describe the indescribable.

So, take a deep breath, and let's walk through each verse on evil remembering that this chapter is concerned with ethical conduct, and is not a prescription for your life or rebirth outcome. All of these words and concepts are just that - concepts - used to nudge us towards a path of benefiting others.

We begin this journey with encouragement to create patterns of beneficial actions. ***"Hasten towards doing what is beautiful...Having performed a wholesome act it is good to repeat it. Enjoy the pleasure of its memory."*** Here we are told to practice the antidote or the

opposite of those harmful actions, and to cherish the memory of what we do. For example, if you give away the piece of cake on your tray that you would normally love to eat, to someone who is having a rough day, you might spend the rest of the day feeling the joy that your generosity brought to someone else. In this way, you recreate the pathways for that generosity and positive behavior over and over. The action of giving your cake away is like arriving at your hiking path, and each time you relive the memory of the joy of giving it's like you're taking another step on the trail.

Giving away a piece of cake is an easy example for all of us to recognize as probably "good." So how do we know what we should and shouldn't be doing when life is more complicated? How can we tell what is "evil" or harmful and what isn't? Buddhist philosophy categorizes virtue

"We want that water to be sweet bodhicitta that nourishes all beings, and to manifest that, we can think, speak and act kindly and lovingly towards everyone around us."

and non-virtue into three areas: body, speech and mind. Harmful actions committed with our body include killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; harmful actions through speech include lying, divisive speech, harsh or harmful speech and idle chatter; and harmful mental actions include jealousy (greed or covetousness), hatred, and ignorance.

Verses 119-122 are a teaching about consequences that happen over a long period of time, often many lifetimes. Trying to imagine that something you do or think today will have an effect in another lifetime is very challenging. Most of us can barely remember the importance of consequences that we think will happen immediately (like when I give that piece of cake away and see the other person smile, the instant consequence of this generosity is a smile), let alone something that happens in future lives!

The thing to remember as you read through these verses, like 121 that says, “***...just as by the gradual fall of raindrops the water jar is filled...***”, is that both our beneficial and harmful actions from past, present and future will ripen at some point. We are the pot and our actions are the rain. Slowly, our pot will fill and the water will overflow. We want that water to be sweet bodhicitta that nourishes all beings, and to manifest that, we can think, speak and act kindly and lovingly towards everyone around us.

Verses 123-24 are further encouragement to avoid the 10 harmful non-virtues listed above: “***A hand without an open wound can carry poison and remain free from harm.***” This verse is a good reminder that we cannot extinguish all harmful actions around us. In other words, we can’t control what others are doing. We live in a world that is full of suffering and when people are hurting, they tend to hurt others. The goal isn’t to find a cave where you are never around harm, it’s to disengage in participating in harm yourself and to greet harm as best you can with an open heart and deep desire to bring all beings to liberation.

Verse 125 says, “***If you intentionally harm an innocent person, someone who is pure and blameless, the harm will come back to you like fine dust thrown into the wind.***” This is our not-so-subtle promise that cause and effect are absolutely certain.

All thoughts and actions create pathways in our brain and consciousness that become etched over time (and lifetimes). When we engage in a thought or action, thousands and millions of etches eventually resemble the Grand Canyon of habit. It’s not that there is some magical person keeping track of all of your thoughts and behaviors and tallying up what will happen to you, it’s that we create our realities through our emotional and behavioral patterns.

Verse 126 gives examples of consequences. As you contemplate this verse, remember the story from my retreat - the purpose of evoking ‘hell’ or blissful realms is not to paralyze us with fear or desire. There’s not some universal scheme to punish us or reward us for our behavior. Everything around us is relative, and there is no eternal heaven or hell. Therefore, read verse 126 as another example, like our cake story, of cause and effect; only this example is on a more comprehensive scale.

Finally, verses 127-8 remind us that death is absolutely certain. No living being can escape death. This Dhammapada teaching recommends that we come to terms with it and allow this certainty to inform our lives. 128 says “***There is no place on earth beyond the reach of death - not in a mountain cave, the ocean nor in the sky***” and that the only thing we carry with us when we die is the energy of our positive and negative actions (karma). So, no guarantees that we will see *instant* results from our behavior, but we have lots of guarantees in this chapter that our thoughts and actions are important in this life and beyond.

As is true in the entire Dhammapada and in other original texts, this chapter is poetic and full of imagery intended to help us understand difficult and indescribable concepts. It helps us figure out how to bridge those concepts into our everyday behavior. It would be really satisfying to eat that piece of cake myself and not give it to the guy next to me having a rough day. However, this chapter on evil reminds us that as we develop the arising of virtuous intention and action, it becomes easier for us to do again and again. Little by little, we can give away more than just our cake. In the meantime, may that piece of cake and all small virtuous acts benefit all beings.

Inside Insight

Prose, poetry and
ponderings

By our readers

William M. Ionia, MI

Thank you so much for sending me your newsletter "Dharma Friends". Although I work in Food Service at the facility I'm incarcerated at, I make time to read and study your newsletter. I'm somewhat more relaxed these days because I think positively about matters and through meditation and prayer, I'm starting to realize that inner-self (positive thoughts) is making a total transformation for me.

Let me give you an example: when I'm dumping trays off onto the trashcan when people hand them to me, I look square at their face with a smile. In turn, a lot of people say "thank you" or say "Take care." Why? Because I'm projecting an aura of humbleness and humility towards others from my inner-being.

Charles Y. Lucasville, OH

.....I am really enjoying the

teachings from the Dhammapada. The commentary is on point and quite helpful.

I've come to the path after many years of pain, heartache and a lot of self-destructive behavior. For years I used drugs as a means of escape and as a way to numb myself from feeling.

That path and way of living brought me to prison 3 times with a 30-year sentence for this commitment (#3). At the start I was living as I did on the streets, using drugs and being destructive and selfish. About 2 years ago I was sent to a level 4 maximum security prison and did a year in solitary.

During this time in solitary I began to do Asana again. Like most of us, I thought Asana was "Yoga", but I began to study and learn about the 8 limbs of Yoga (Ashtanga).

Out of this study I learned what Yoga really meant "Union" (literally Yoke), Union of mind, body and the divine nature of all beings. Through my Sadhana I came to the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

This path and the Dharma have helped me tremendously. I now realize that no drug or sensual stimulus can really make one complete or fix any problem. My whole life I wanted to escape. But there is no escape.

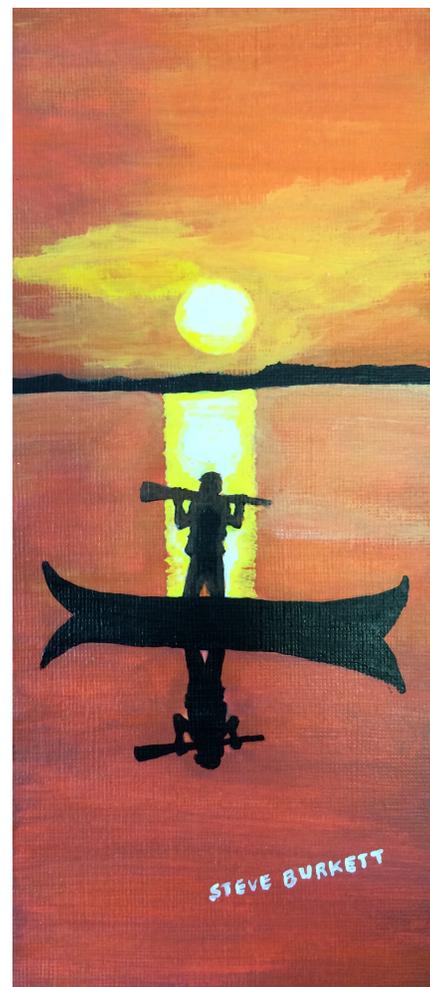
We can only be truly at peace when we gain right understanding of the four truths. I have a long way to go, but I have started the journey.

Looking back, I now see all the

Cont. on pg. 6

Art in this Issue

- pg. 1 "Buddha and Bird" by Corey
- pg. 2 Double Dorje envelope art by Albert Perez, Graterford, PA
- pg. 5 Boat and sunset by Steve Burkett
- pg. 6 "Branch with Bodhi leaf and yin yang" by Scott Arends, CO
- pg. 7 Boat by K. Roberts
- pg. 9 Buddhist Proverb by Frankie Parker, AR
- pg. 10 "Monk" by Gregory Roberts





Bodhisattvas I have met in my life. I was too caught up in delusion to really see. I've also been encountering the Dharma my whole life. It was always knocking. I just wasn't "home" (present) to answer.

But now, I walk this path and I am grateful for it. I am learning to love and serve my fellow beings and I am closer to my family than I have been for a long time.

And yes, I stumble and at times it is difficult to sit, but I remind myself it is a practice.

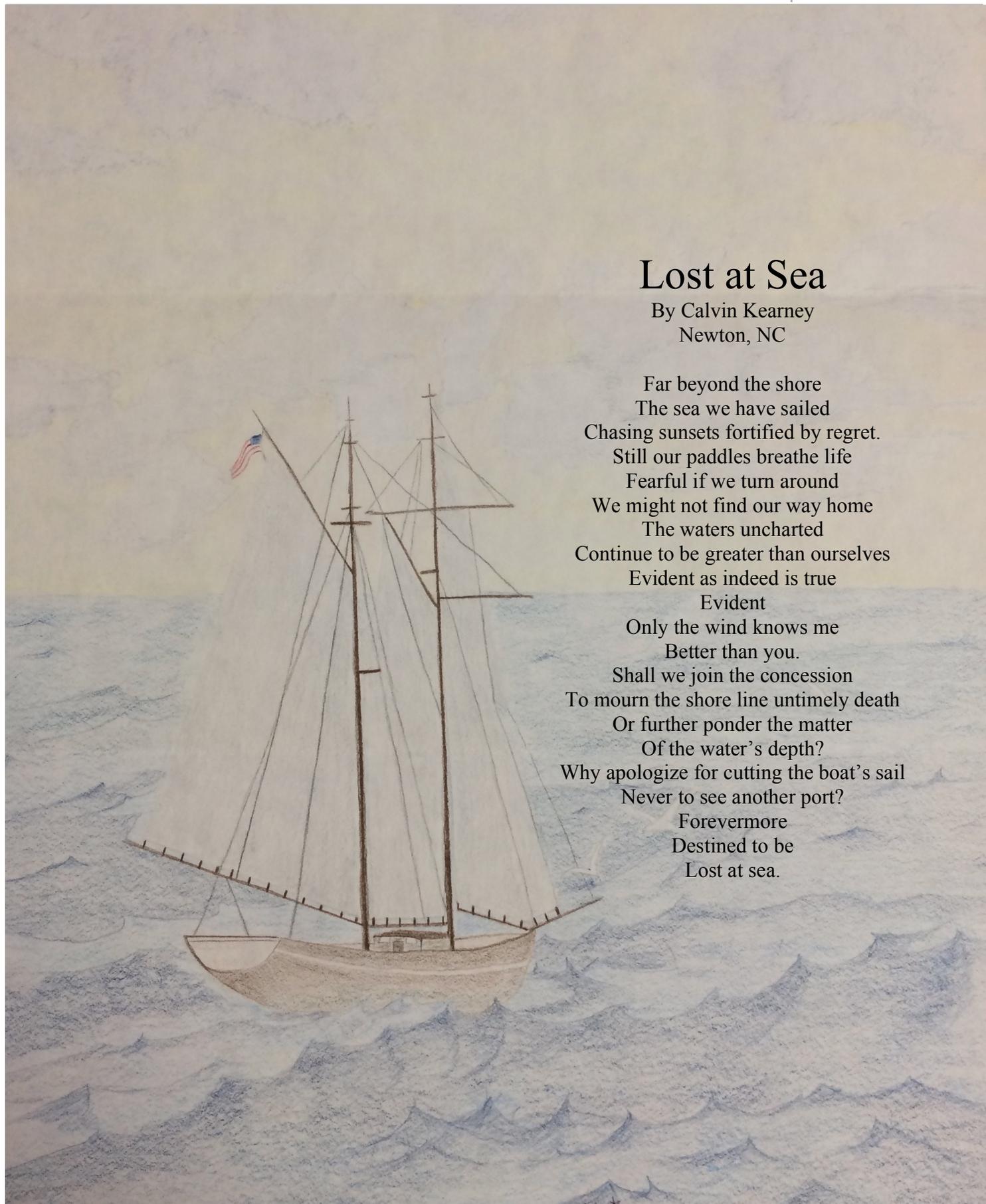
I am honored to walk this path with all of you, and I thank you

for all that you are and all that you do.

I wanted to comment on Mr. James Lala's writing from "Inside Insight" (July-Aug), starting on page 8 "Who Am I?". In the second paragraph he begins with "Am I a Buddhist" He said he doesn't believe in many Buddhist concepts. Concepts are only thought fabrications. And reincarnation, well, this is not something to merely believe; it is something to observe from direct experience (the Buddha told us this is where his teaching comes from). Watch a plant die, it turns back into soil. Water becomes a

cloud. Our cells are constantly dividing. This is all reincarnation.

Angry demons, I've seen many and I've been one before. Watch an angry person on a tirade, blind with rage, seeing red. Hungry ghosts? Have you ever seen a crack addict or a meth addict "chasing" that high for days on end never satiated from what they crave? Or a person so consumed with something all other people and things don't exist or matter. These are real live hungry ghosts and angry demons. Traits that all humans



Lost at Sea

By Calvin Kearney
Newton, NC

Far beyond the shore
The sea we have sailed
Chasing sunsets fortified by regret.
Still our paddles breathe life
Fearful if we turn around
We might not find our way home
The waters uncharted
Continue to be greater than ourselves
Evident as indeed is true
Evident
Only the wind knows me
Better than you.
Shall we join the concession
To mourn the shore line untimely death
Or further ponder the matter
Of the water's depth?
Why apologize for cutting the boat's sail
Never to see another port?
Forevermore
Destined to be
Lost at sea.

exhibit when infected with *kleshas**.

I do agree all food is life. We consume and most of us on the path honor this. That is why we practice mindfulness in all we do. Through our practice all things become sacred because we are intertwined with everything.

*Kleshas – obstacles

**Christopher V.
Baraga, MI**

Meditation is the key that allowed me to start to change, learn to grow, and it has helped me to cope with the problems and daily worries I go through; and also it helps me control my anger!

Your letter from Ernest B. was very enlightening, and he is correct when he says that most men in prison don't have the self-discipline needed to change, nor the ability to transform into a more wholesome, productive, and compassionate individual. I have struggled with this also, but what changed for me were (very) nice people I correspond with, but also the "willingness" to want to change for the better. So if I'm released on parole, I can be a productive member of society again.

**Ruben R.
Olney Springs, CO
"A Box"**

As I sit here in this box made of stone & steel, I hear & watch others outside this box. I begin to realize that it is not the physical box that imprisons us, but it is the box we imprison ourselves within that makes us true prisoners.

**Thomas L.
Reidsville, GA**

Hey,[I have a question] ? pg. 3 anapanasati/Pali/mindfulness of breath... I really am telling you, sincerely from my heart that this month's newsletter having that piece was what I needed to read. For at times I will lay, I will even walk, but when I want to feel the flow I sit and I needed to know was I correct?

Ms. Tendron [Ani Tendron] wrote well in the first newsletter I received of Dharma Friends, and I see the positive energy is felt from all of us.

Response from CWFA: In our last issue of Dharma Friends, the meditation instruction was *anapanasati*, a wonderfully simple instruction in which we follow the inhale and exhale. When we talk about 'meditation' we usually mean a formal practice in which we try to hold continuous awareness of the object of our focus. For example, a walking meditation focuses on the movement of walking; a deity meditation focuses on visualizing a particular deity. In this case, if the object of focus is to "feel the flow" of the breath, then *anapanasati* is the perfect technique. It sounds like Thomas has the right idea.

**David N.
Cañon City, CO**

This letter is in response to comments written by James L. in Issue 220.

James, I wish to praise your elegantly put letter. It had a lot of wisdom in it. I now wish to use it to confirm the illusion of the world. Your argument, your very ability to

argue, the fact that you may indeed view things differently shows the illusion.

The illusion exists because we create it within our minds. The world I see and experience is different than the world you see and experience. What then is reality? Is it my view or yours? Or is it the view of one out of seven billion other people? The reason the illusion exists is because we lack an overall view to determine reality. This limited point of view separates the buddhas from the rest of us. All we see is delusion bred in a limited mind out of limited concepts. It is also biased towards ourselves. So what is reality? The world that we see does not exist except for us. Without me, my world does not exist. How can I say my reality is anyone's but my own? Do you see the nature of illusion?

It is worse than this. It isn't even my own point of view. It is a conglomeration of view points instilled on me, inculcated since my infancy.

This is merely the subjective level of illusion, I could expound endlessly, however a few words can do the work of many if properly expressed.

Let us move on to the illusion of the objective world. That illusion is being proven by science.

This paper you hold in front of you is solid, yes? You can hold it, manipulate it, rip it, fold it etc...IT is solid. No, it seems solid. Actually, the solidity of the world is illusion. Everything is composed of molecules,

composed of, in turn, atoms which are composed, not of “matter” but energy. All of these constituents are always on the move, zipping, zooming. There is always space between them. We merely lack the ability to see this space with the naked eye. 99% of matter is space. Yet, the paper is solid.

It is all vibration. It is all the vibration of consciousness.

Physicists are proving that on the smallest level of existence nothing exists. Nothing...exists. Until thought is placed upon it. On the sub-atomic level, things become unobservable, immeasurable until the observer conceives a shape, form, and size; illusion.

The observer, YOU, must conceive existence. If this is true on the constituent level, how can it be different on the aggregate level?

The illusion? There is nothing except energy until thought gives it form. Wow...wow...

The trick to mastering the world? Changing the limited consciousness so that it no longer sees what it has been told to see and instead sees what is there. Or what could be. This is how Jesus revived the dead and Buddha healed the sick. This is how people can walk on water and through walls. They choose the illusion. This is what is meant by rising above the world. This is what faith is. Knowing it exists as YOU see it. All the way back to the subjective real, Wow...

So'ham (Sanskrit meaning, “I am universe”)

Daniel R. Tucker, AR

Alternate Reality: Illusion

Around 6:00 am I awoke from a dream that seemed to be far more than a dream. I had wandered into

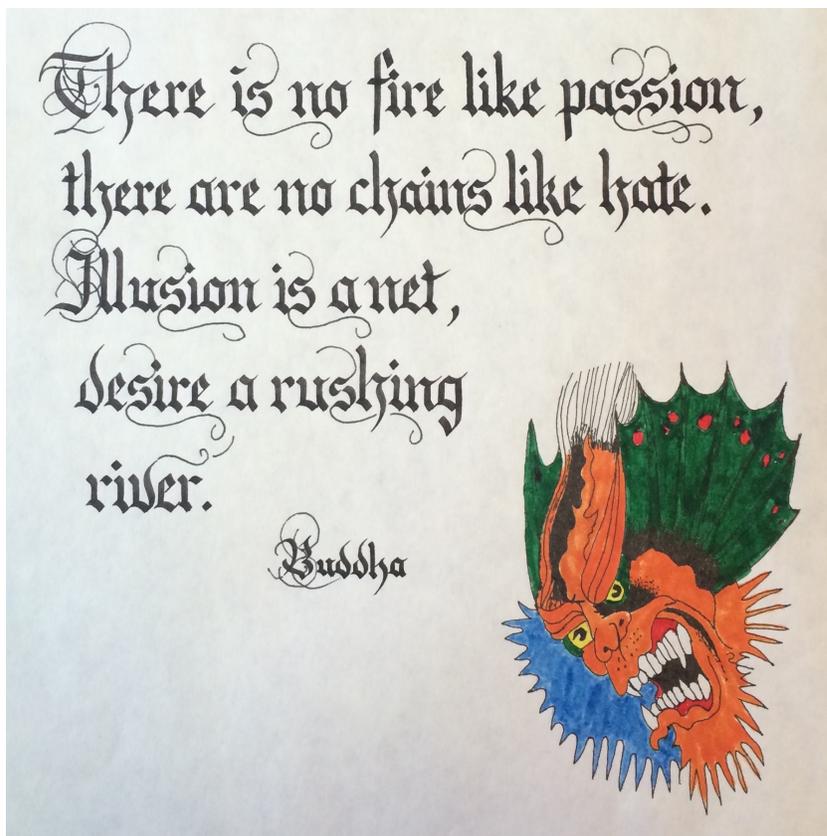
dream.

The way you enter Samsara is the way you leave. I was told to go to a certain place in this old school. It was a place where there were lockers and kids seemed to be lost in their own reality and the deeper I get in this place it was like the place transformed into another world before my eyes and then I saw it for what it was - a trap.

The more you breathe into this illusion the harder it is to escape its grasp. The more we feed the thing, the harder it is to break free from the thing. Everything turns on the imagination. If you enter it in a distorted mindset it is harder to find your way out.

There is a right way to enter and a wrong way to enter this realm of the imagination.

Understanding this, is understanding the way. To understand the thing is to be delivered from the thing. Both Liberation and Illusion begins in imagination...in creative visualization, you enter into the imagination with clarity and purpose...The more you breathe into it the more you blow it up...When it comes to samsara's illusion we are all prisoners of our own device. Understanding is deliverance.



this old school library and inside it in the twilight of the evening I heard an old woman singing this almost enchanting gospel. It seemed time stopped. I saw others and my imagination slipped into another world in which somehow it was all explained to me in those songs of deliverance and freedom. What was I experiencing and why? Within the verses was the secret of life - the way we get caught in the illusions of the world and how to snap out of the illusions. Thus, a lifetime of study unfolded in a

Let's practice no harm(a) karma

If you are accustomed to doing so, begin your meditation by taking refuge and setting the intention of this meditation to benefit all beings.

Find a comfortable seated position. You can sit in a chair or on a cushion. Lengthen your spine, open your heart, and soften your face, neck, shoulders and your entire body. Take at least three long, deep breaths to cleanse any stale air and invite new oxygen to your brain. Return to your natural breath and take several minutes to sink into the rhythm of your breathing.

As you settle, begin to think of some of the harmful actions you've committed in your life. Take a few seconds to recall whatever arises – big or small – and begin to notice the arising of regret. Imagine that a cleansing, white liquid begins to pour down from the top of your head, through your body. As it moves through your body, this purifying liquid washes away the traces of past negative action. This past harmful action leaves your body through your feet as ink, blood, smoke, scary insects and animals, lava, and so on. As it exits your body, imagine it is transformed into benefit for others.

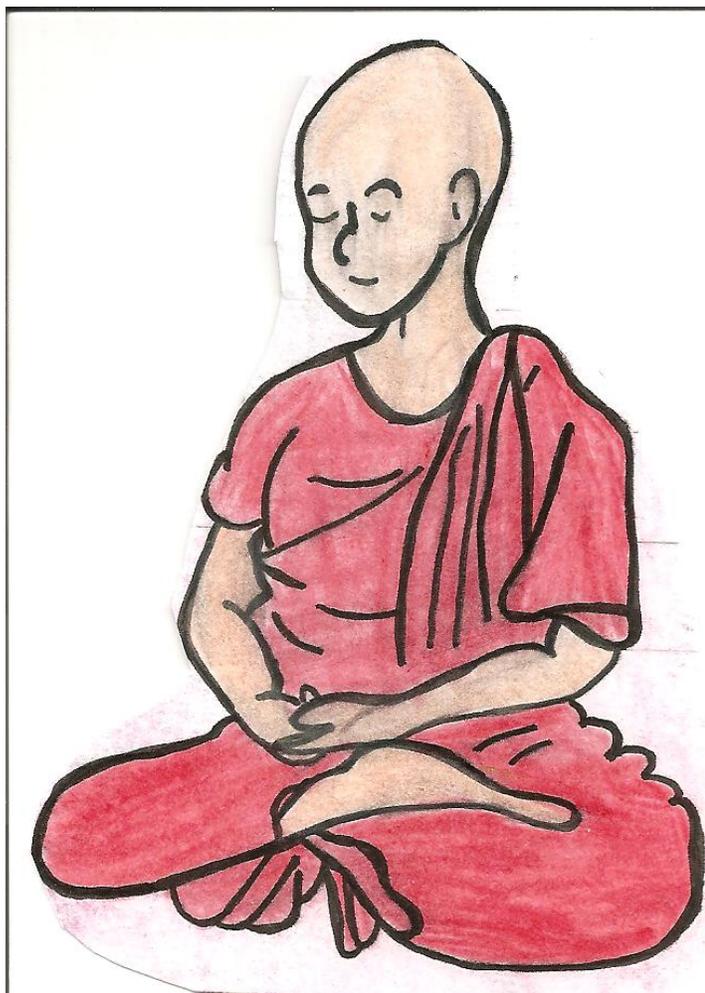
Stay with this visualization, imagining all of the seeds of hurt, pain, anger, grief, loss, trauma, and violence gently being washed out of your body and consciousness, being transformed into substances that others need on their path.

As you come to an end, make a commitment to never cause harm again. Feel the intensity of your desire to bring healing and benefit to yourself and all beings. Complete your meditation by dedicating the merit of your practice to the liberation of all beings.

Prayer at the end of practice:

Long-life prayer for Anna Cox

Concrete and steel are your pure land. You, precious teacher, embodiment of the three jewels, plant the seeds of enlightenment in all of us. May your life be long and may the dharma take root under your wisdom gaze.



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 dynamics 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 newsletter 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 our past challenges and find a stronger healing that will benefit not only me and you, but all those who 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?

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



"All wrong-doing arises because of mind. If mind is transformed can wrong-doing remain?"

-Gautama Buddha

Compassion Works for All

PO Box 7708

Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708

www.compassionworksforall.org

FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LITTLE ROCK, AR
PERMIT #160



[Recipient]

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4