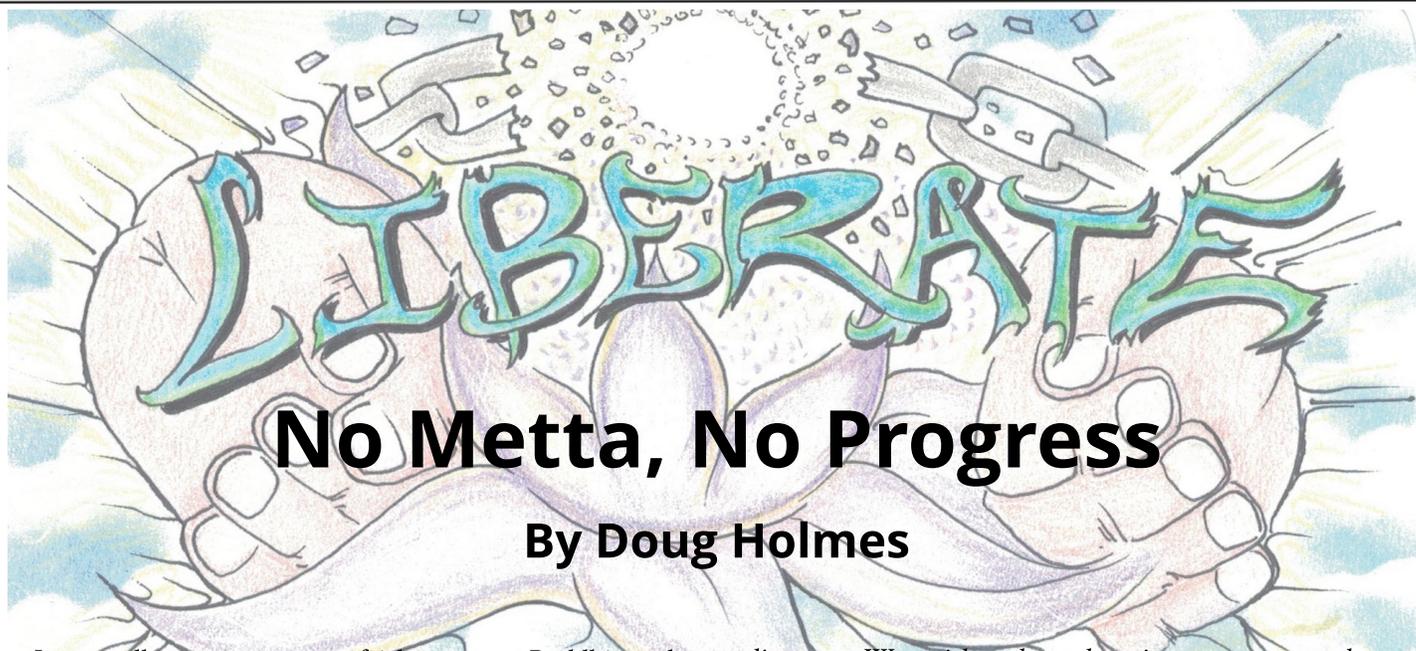


# Dharma Friends

An ecumenical Buddhist publication for people in real and imagined prisons

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## No Metta, No Progress

By Doug Holmes

I was talking to someone fairly new to Buddhism the other day and as so often happens, the subject turned to how to deal with friends, family, and loved ones. I started talking about the four Brahma abodes, the four immeasurables, which are metta, karuna, mudita, and upekkha: goodwill, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. He hadn't heard of them yet. That's not unusual, but it's a shame. They are essential tools for Buddhist living and for walking the path.

The four immeasurables serve two purposes in Buddhism. The first is that they are the way Buddhism provides for us to deal with our fellow human beings. Our work as Buddhists is to recognize our habit of dealing with the world from the ego's point of view and to let go of it. The ego mistakenly wants to use worldly things in an attempt to pacify its fundamental dissatisfactions. It's always looking for tricks and workarounds to bend the current situation to match its own limited vision of how things should be. As we move away from these habits, what internal guidance can we use to replace our usual neediness and game playing? The answer is the four immeasurables.

Metta is the basic Buddhist attitude we take toward our fellow humans and other sentient beings. Metta is usually translated as "loving-kindness", but I prefer Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of "goodwill". We may not really feel or express loving-kindness toward poisonous spiders, but we can certainly feel and express goodwill toward them from a safe

distance. We wish others happiness, peace, and good health, in whatever way is appropriate for them.

Karuna, compassionate action, is how we deal with the world's troubles — we are sensitive to the suffering of others and act to reduce that suffering.

Mudita, sympathetic joy, is how we relate to other's happiness and success. We support and rejoice in people's healthy and happy situations.

Upekkha, equanimity, is the spacious realm in which these actions occur. Equanimity allows us to stay level among the unlevel. It reminds us that goodwill, compassion, and sympathetic joy are not to be treated as objects for clinging. Equanimity infuses the other immeasurables with strength and clarity and allows us to care for everyone, including loved ones, strangers, and our adversaries.

The second purpose of the four immeasurables is to enable progress on the path. While mindfulness clarifies our thinking and samadhi, or concentration, grounds us in the body, metta (goodwill) opens our hearts. These three aren't independent, each requires the other two. In fact, metta practice is the gateway to samadhi for many people. Metta toward ourselves, a basic good intent toward our own well-being, starts to soften the the walls, the hard shells that we've built in our hearts. Walls in the heart create walls in the mind, walls in the body, and walls between ourselves and others. Metta reconnects us to our

own nature, it purifies our citta and brings it into our awareness.

Side note — what is citta you ask? My tradition, the Thai Forest Tradition, teaches that citta is the “subjective sense” of the mind. Citta doesn’t deal in words, pictures, or concepts, it deals in impressions, moods, and intuitions. It isn’t tied to objects in the world like the aggregates. Citta is the part of the mind that can experience enlightenment. Although citta sounds like the soul the way I describe it, it’s not. Citta is not a thing, it is a process. It’s impermanent like everything else, and since it doesn’t deal in objects, it has no concept of itself as a separate entity with a particular name and history. It’s just another phenomena, it doesn’t belong to you, but it can be trained, it can be purified. The four abodes are a key piece of this training.

Back to our topic...

So metta provides the basic attitude, the fundamental stance we take towards ourselves as well as others. The other three immeasurables are equally important for the inner journey and they should be used when we are turned inward just as when we are turned outward.

Sympathetic joy, when directed towards ourselves, leads to the feeling we call gratitude. We are grateful for our blessings, although of course in Buddhism there isn’t any particular entity that one is grateful towards, and blessings are more about the workings of karma, cause and effect, than the dispensations of a deity. That doesn’t stop you from feeling grateful though. Please don’t let it stop you from feeling grateful.

Compassion toward ourselves allows us to understand that our difficulties are not failures, they are simply the expected results of being a conditioned, limited creature. Our troubles and hurts deserve our care and concern, not the denigration and shame we so often feel towards ourselves. Self-compassion allows us to forgive ourselves and extend kindness toward ourselves. We cannot see ourselves clearly or accept ourselves as we are without this self-compassion — which leads to the fourth abode, equanimity.

Equanimity works the same way inwardly and outwardly. It is the ability to peacefully accept whatever we are and whatever is happening both within us and around us. It is the ability to stay centered and mindful when all hell (or all heaven) is breaking loose. Until one accepts oneself completely and without judgement, it’s impossible to completely accept anything or anyone else. Our natural tendency to judge is very useful when making practical decisions, but judgement is not a fundamental feature of the universe. Things are ultimately not good or bad, they simply are.

The four immeasurables are what guides our thinking and behavior when we are not acting from greed, aversion, and delusion. They allow us to deal with the world in a state of “unentangled participation” as Ajahn Amaro would say. I highly recommend them.

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Doug Holmes is a lay practitioner in the Thai Forrester Theravada tradition and served on the board of directors at the Ecumenical Buddhist Society for 6 years. He is a computer programmer and social activist.

# Compassion Works to transform us

By Anna Cox

Begin relaxing as you take deeply softening and releasing breaths. Breathe in, then breathe out and let go. Notice your levels of stress and tension. With each breath, let go of all that tightness. Again and again, just let go. Compassion begins by remembering to treat our bodies gently. We want our bodies to feel comfortable and safe. We want our bodies to find balance and the potential for our healing and healthiness.

Compassion is acceptance of ourselves for who are and what we are in every way. To have compassion and unconditional love for others, we must first open to that same love for ourselves. We cannot love others more than we are capable loving our own self. Breathe gently. Let go of judgment, old hatreds, feeling ashamed, disappointed, unworthy. Let go of all that we have held against our self, for not being who we or others thought we should be. Let it all go. With every out breath, imagine that all those old and dark energies are leaving us. The feelings and thoughts float out of our bodies and dissipate into space. Everything that we have held against us and used to hurt us...let it all go. Each in-breath brings in clean and purifying fresh air. Each out breath washes us free of old pain. Breathe in and out and let it all go.

Now as we breathe in, visualize breathing in love and deep acceptance for who we are...for all that we are. Unconditional acceptance, forgiveness, and love for our self no matter what we have said, done, or are. We breathe in love, knowing that in compassion there are profound lessons and eventually wisdom for all those qualities and events that we once judged. All that

we have held against our self was once likely a way of protecting our self in a harsh world. All that we have held against us was likely a way of surviving until we could feel stronger and validated. All that we have held against us, was what may have given us the skills and strength that contributed to our survival so that we can take new steps. Breathe in love and acceptance. Breathe in compassion and feel your heart open and receive it all. Feel yourself full of love and compassion. Let it in as much as possible. Let it fill your heart and fill your entire body. Rest in compassion for as long as you can.

Now consider compassion for those that you know and love around you who are suffering. Maybe you think of your own children, or your family members, a partner, a friend, perhaps your pets, or someone you know who is longing for love. You might see it as though starving children are lining up in a soup line, desperately hungry for food. See those that you love coming up to you one by one. See yourself filling them with love and compassion in whatever way this appears to you in your visualization. You might breathe compassion into their heart, or you give it to them in a bowl that they drink down. Just see what you see in your mind's eye. Then, as you see compassion entering into those beings that you love, watch and see compassion go to work. See each one who receives your compassion become healthy, happy, and free from suffering. Visualize them being happy for the rest of their lives. Take all the time you like, and in between, send some compassion to you too, so you do not ever get depleted.

Compassion for All – As you continue your meditation, let all those to whom you have been sending compassion, gather around you. Together, all of you see those throughout our world who are suffering. Meditate on all those who are dying somewhere – perhaps alone and in pain. You, and all those around you, send them compassion. Meditate on all those who are in the throes of war right now. You and all your friends and family, send them compassion. See all who are old and lonely. Send them compassion. See all those who are dealing with abuse or violence, addictions, abandonment, mental illness, homelessness, cancer or other painful illnesses - see them all struggling with the great challenges of being a human being on this planet.

You know how it is because you have been there, too. Send them all compassion. Send them healing and hope. Send them love. See each one touched by your kindness. See them respond. See them all free of suffering. And see our planet, too – a dynamic organism resting in space. Send all life forms and even our planet compassion too, so that all might thrive and manifest all their gifts. Rest gently in the clouds of compassion that you have sent forth. Remember who you are here, as this is the self you want to live always. Breathe in compassion to yourself. Breathe out compassion to all those you know and love, and to all those everywhere who are filled and sustained by your kindness. Effortlessly stay in this breathing in and breathing

out. No thought, no need to do anything but to know you are breathing in compassion and breathing out compassion. When you finish your meditation, appreciate that even later, when you might forget what you are doing in breathing in and breathing out compassion, you will still continue to nurture yourself with loving acceptance. You will endlessly offer out love to all who see you, who hear your voice, or even to those who just hear your name.

Say to yourself in the morning, "I LIVE COMPASSION." Think for a moment of what you would like to offer out today. A night, assess your day, and ask yourself "HO DID I LIVE COMPASSION TODAY?"  
You Are Compassion.





## § 27. The Development of Loving-kindness

This was said by the Lord...

"Bhikkhus, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of loving-kindness. The mind-release of loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant.

"Just as the radiance of all the stars does not equal a sixteenth part of the moon's radiance, but the moon's radiance surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of loving-kindness...

"Just as in the last month of the rainy season, in the autumn, when the sky is clear and free of clouds, the sun, on ascending, dispels the darkness of space and shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of

loving-kindness...

"And just as in the night, at the moment of dawn, the morning star shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of loving-kindness. The mind-release of loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant."

For one who mindfully develops  
Boundless loving-kindness  
Seeing the destruction of clinging,  
The fetters are worn away.

If with an uncorrupted mind  
He pervades just one being  
With loving kindly thoughts,  
He makes some merit thereby.

But a noble one produces  
An abundance of merit  
By having a compassionate mind  
Towards all living beings.

Those royal seers who conquered  
The earth crowded with beings  
Went about performing sacrifices:  
The horse sacrifice, the man sacrifice,  
The water rites, the soma sacrifice,  
And that called "the Unobstructed."

But these do not share even a  
sixteenth part  
Of a well cultivated mind of love,  
Just as the entire starry host  
Is dimmed by the moon's radiance.

One who does not kill  
Nor cause others to kill,  
Who does not conquer  
Nor cause others to conquer,  
Kindly towards all beings —  
He has enmity for none.

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Lord, so I heard.

Used with permission from:  
"Itivuttaka: The Group of Ones" (Iti 24-27), translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 24 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/iti/iti.1.024-027.irel.html>.

Memory springs  
forth,  
But is subdued.  
Like the morning sun  
Subdues the dew.  
The grass weeps not  
Because the dew has  
left  
Its blades. It is  
Liberated by the sun  
If only for a  
moment.

-Matthew S., Texas

## A Prayer for Peace

By Floyd D., Arkansas

I pray for Peace  
This day  
Peace that is strong  
And steadfast and  
Will not fade away  
Peace without and  
Peace within  
Peace for us and  
Peace for them  
Peace for her and  
Peace for him  
Peace for large and  
Peace for small  
Peace for one and  
Peace for all

Peace in every city, nation, and land  
Peace for every child, woman, and man  
Peace where the lion lies down with the  
lamb  
Where swords are beaten into plowshares  
and  
Spears are made into pruning hooks  
Where nations do not rise up against  
nations in war forevermore  
Peace for white, black, brown , yellow and  
red  
Peace for the living and the dead  
Peace in body, mind, and soul  
Peace wherever we go.



Wishing all Dads could love their  
sons as much as this one loves his  
three.

Vivid dreams could never capture,  
Words try but cannot replace.  
Will I ever see my sons again?  
Each perfect smiling face.

-Tristan E., Colorado

## Q & A

### Dear Dharma Friends,

Here at Folsom, from the cell window, I see livestock breed themselves. The farmer here works for the prison. All he do is fatten 'em up to eat em for food. I guess this how nature is? I've seen ants here eat plants because it secretes a juice which ants are greedy for. Is nature ever compassionate or just cruel?? Or is this how nature postta go?

Enoch C., California

### Dear Enoch,

This is an interesting contemplation! I think it's a helpful practice to watch animals. In my experience, watching animals brings me fully into my own deep compassionate nature. Whether in the wild or livestock, animals spend a lot of time sleeping, eating, and avoiding being eaten. When we include humans in this conversation, there is also a layer of complexity because humans use animals for food and sometimes mistreat animals for no reason, like beating a dog that is supposed to be a pet. Therefore, many animals spend tremendous amounts of time in fear, which creates a lot of suffering. That's the bad news. The good news is, we can work with this information and these experiences to arouse the desire to end the suffering of all beings. The next time you see an animal or insect - say, a mosquito in your cell, or a dog, or bird - watch the animal for as long as you can without doing anything. Just watch. Think to yourself, this animal wants to be happy just like me!, and feel a tenderness naturally arise for this animal in front of you (even if it's a mosquito, remember that this mosquito just wants to feed her children, just like any other mother would). Once you feel that tenderness within you, offer the animal or insect this blessing, may all beings have everything they need, or may all beings be safe and free from harm.

### Dear Dharma Friends,

I would like a belief system that does something to counteract

a world that has 1,000,000,000 starving while 1,000,000,000 people are obese. That 40% of the food produced in the U.S. does not end up in the landfill. That actually acknowledges and tries to change the fact we live in a world where every minute, 40 children die of starvation while in that same minute \$15,000,000 are spent on weapons. Where war and violence are celebrated while efforts to instill methods to bring peace and kindness are derided. What can we as individuals and as a Sangha of concerned believers do?

### Dear Floyd,

Thank you for sharing your deep concerns about the incredible amounts of human suffering that we inflict on ourselves and others. There is a path in Buddhism, and this path can be found in all religious traditions, that brings inner and outer transformation into attention. The path is called Engaged Buddhism, although the concept of engaging dharma practice in the world around us is "just Buddhism," according to Thich Nhat Hanh. Because of your interest in social justice issues, I would recommend including in your study material that specifically addresses these concerns. I recommend "The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist Approach to Transforming Ourselves and the world" by Donald Rothberg. However, we always have to remind ourselves that there is nothing to do and nothing to fix (turning to the heart sutra for this insight). We're bound to suffer from hunger and obesity and war and violence until we awaken to the nature of reality. That doesn't mean that



we turn away from others' suffering; it just means we approach our social justice work knowing that we aren't really going to fix the world. As far as the sangha, or community of practitioners becoming engaged, why don't you start where you are? What is happening in your community that you can address with generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom (the six paramitas)? Best of luck on this very important path.

### Dear Kristopher,

I went to board last week and they found me suitable for parole! I've felt every range of emotion since then and today I've settled on kind of a calm anxiety, if that makes sense. I have a waiting period of between 60 and 120 days before the decision becomes final and it's extremely unlikely to be reversed. I had the same commissioner as last time and this time he had a lot of good things to say and was very encouraging. I've been on an emotional roller coaster ever since. I'm grateful for this waiting period to collect myself and get things in order before this next chapter. I've spent my entire adult life in prison. 19 years now and I'm going to need all the help I can get staying focused.

I'm writing today to say thank you for supporting me through this. I wrote to Dharma Friends after my first hearing because I knew I needed to strengthen my practice and you wrote back. You've been nothing but accepting and supportive ever since. I can't tell you how comforting that's been for me. You usually don't write much and there's no need to; actions speak louder than words. Our interactions have been solution-focused and knowing that you were there to help me work through things and the encouragement was very motivating. Thank you, my friend.

I look forward to keeping in contact and hopefully someday be able to help someone the way you've helped me. In the meantime, you take care of yourself and know that you are appreciated.

Sincerely, your friend,  
Raymond

### Hey there Raymond,

Thank you so very much for this NEWSWORTHY LETTER!!! Such wonderful things are happening in your life. I remember how very afraid I was to go beyond the walls, even thought of going flat. I did, however, find a place to parole to and then just jumped in a leap of faith. I, too, knew that I would need a lot of help and support. I highly suggest getting that support through your local meditation center, church, mosque, or any place where you find spirituality. I also went to a whole bunch of 12-step meetings, saw a therapist and took my medication. But on top of that, I was able to give you some aid as you put one foot in front of the other. That's how I've been able to stay sober almost twenty years - by helping the brothers and sisters who write to us. It's been a privilege to help you along your way.

## From your letters...

On this journey called LIFE, the struggle is constant. An ongoing flow of ideas, thoughts, emotions, goals, achievements, failures, faults, regrets, and resentment. Performing the balancing act of our well-being keeps us in tune with everything around us. The World and its inhabitants, as inimical as it may seem, is only the sole reflection of what our contribution has been thus far. Facing the unpredictable daily activity of our Life's agenda is inevitable.

However, being accountable for our intentions poses great responsibility, and so our actions should be one initiated with LOVE.

So as we continue on our paths, let us not be the spark that ignites the fuse to the dynamite. Let us be the LIGHT that illuminates, extinguishes, and prevents the implosion.

-Joseph G., Texas

## STAND

by Keith M., Arkansas

A baby cries, all alone, nobody home,  
My start, the predictable part,  
Is that fair?

Cartoon kids painted on a white van,  
Squeaky shoes shuffle up the drive,  
Caseworker, wrinkled face, not my race,  
A different place.

Nose pressed against the window pane,  
No one coming, only rain, hope fades,  
Comes the pain.

No one asked to be born,  
And had no say in our parents to be,  
Rich or poor, loved or not,  
Like it or not,  
What you get is what you got.

Pity is cheap. Lord knows you had it bad,  
Life is sad,  
Let it claim all you might've had,  
The world will understand,  
You're just a man.

Or you can refuse to bow down,  
Ask more for yourself, claim your crown,  
No one remembers another refusing to rise,  
But victory is won by he who tries.

# Poetry

## The ABCs of Buddhism according to Bobby B.'s understanding

by Bobby B., Florida

Awakening to reality & the end of suffering is the "Goal"

Breathe in - Breathe out, notice both mindfully  
Consequences for actions are inevitable; good or bad =  
Karma

Don't take anyone's word, come try it for yourself  
Experience life NOW, yesterday's gone, and tomorrow  
doesn't exist yet

Four Noble Truths are the foundation

Generosity - give more than you plan to

Hold on to your mind, let go of your desires

Ignorance is lack of understanding

Just sit and meditate - don't think, don't grasp

Keep yourself from pleasurable excesses

Love yourself first, compassion for others will follow

Moderation is the key - control yourself

Never kill, lie or steal; always strike a fair deal

Open your eyes and see things as they truly are

Practice diligently - follow the "Middle Path"

Quit unskillful thoughts, speech and actions, live skillfully

Reform sincerely, correct your mistakes

Sever all selfishness, practice generosity

Take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma & the Sangha

Understand the impermanence of all phenomena

Vicissitudes (changes) are inevitable

Wisdom is following the Noble Eightfold Path to awakening

X out hatred with love

You alone are your only savior

Zero attachments = zero disappointments

## My Greatest Escape

By Robert B., Florida

Neither time nor distance or razor wire  
Can deny me my stroll through the ages.  
Where U can experience extraordinary lives  
Hidden in volumes of pages.

Excitement I feel at the start of each book  
Is aroused by the words on its cover.  
I know I'm in store for pleasures galore,  
Like the embrace of a newly found love.

I've peeked into lives of heroes and villains  
As they've struggled through turbulent eras.  
I've witnessed the joy of successful triumphs  
And the dread of some blood curdling terrors.

I've stood at the apex of snow shrouded alps,  
Flew to Stonehenge to wonder at its mystery.  
I've lingered in London for changing of guards,  
And Berlin to watch Hitler stain history.

The vistas I've seen are memorable indeed,  
But the treasure that gives them their glory  
Are the people that lived in the far distant past,  
Having a chance to retell their story.

I've met kings, pharaohs, druids and priests,  
Discussed martyrdom with fanatics and saints,  
Browsed through museums that featured old masters,  
Who dazzled the art world with paints.

I've swum with leviathans in dark and murky depths,  
Sought prey through the keen eyes of eagles.

I've nibbled sweet grass with kudzu and gnu  
And tracked felons through noses of beagles.

I've wandered through forests 'neath green mossy boughs,  
Startling creatures both mythical and real.  
Been awed by the power of nuclear bombs,  
And seared by the bite of cold steel.

There exist many borders I'm not able to cross  
But through books my soul has been freed.  
I've opportunities too numerous to name  
But thank God that I learned how to read.

Well, once again the hour is late,  
I must part with my latest new friends.  
I'm at the point now where my journey is over  
When I read the last words:  
"The End!"



## The Metaphorical Oracle

by John B., Texas

While spiraling distant through Spirit Dimensions  
I met a Metaphorical Oracle.  
This Seer secreted the secrets to seeking  
And shifted my enlightenment paradigm.

He began:  
"If you listen you will grow profoundly. . .  
Did you know,  
The Truth of life cannot be known directly?  
Did you know,  
The world you see is only allegory?  
Your tumbleweeded consciousness is fickle;  
Reducing life to literals misleads.  
The intellect adores its own reflections,  
And Truthful understanding pride impedes.

The Universe's running, funny joke. . .  
As if five senses grasp infinity;  
As if your realm were all reality;  
As if your observation's clarity;  
As if mathematic papers prove a thing.

The err of man, so arrogant and vain.  
You do not get the Great Anomaly,  
That life's a mere Mirage Analogy;  
Through microscopes and telescopes you see  
Conflicting comprehension fantasy.

Why is it, do you think. . .  
Placebos CURE as well as medicine?  
And SOLID matter's mostly EMPTY space?  
And light is BOTH a particle AND wave?  
And Newton's laws and quantum physics CLASH?

So many beliefs are proclaiming the Truth  
Yet contradict each other in the end.  
The problem's your misunderstanding of proof  
Is closing down your thinking to defend.

Be careful of concrete conclusions in query  
That metamorphosize as narrow-mindedness.  
Be open when learning, life's Grander than theory;  
And mass-debating really causes blindness.

The Truth is alive and expanding out still,  
But life's illusion isn't literal.  
It's seeking, not finding, defining your will;  
Awaken your mind before your funeral."

This Oracle confronted me complete.  
A worldly certainty is only fraud.  
When opening our spirit we can meet  
The Oracle of Truth and Wisdom.

# Resource

Dharma Seed Outreach Project  
PO Box 1494  
Greefield, MA 01302  
[www.dharmaseed.org](http://www.dharmaseed.org)

Dharma Seed offers free CDs and tapes by Western Buddhist teachers about meditation & Buddhist teachings.



## Art in the Issue

- pg 1 - "Liberate" by Joseph G., Texas
- pg 3 "Three Buddhas of Musicos" by Scott A., Colorado
- pg 4 "City with Trees" by Scott A., Colorado
- pg 5 "Imagine" , by Steven S.
- pg 5 ""Figures in Moonlight", artist unknown
- pg 6 Mary C., Arkansas
- pg 9 Untitled, by Anthony B., California
- pg 10 (top) Envelope art, by Dylan M., Tennessee
- pg 10 (below) Envelope art, by Tyler M.

## A letter you can send 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](http://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,

Arkansas-based artist and social advocate E. Wheeler is collaborating with us for a portrait series that will be displayed in central Arkansas, to bring awareness to issues of incarceration and the tremendous capacity for human transformation. This portrait series will begin a conversation about hyperincarceration, healing and compassion in local communities. Specifically we want to highlight the warmth and depth that we at Compassion Works for All see daily – through your art, poetry, and prose, we know that you're doing the hard work and we want others to see this as well.

How to be involved:

- Send us at least one good quality photo of yourself. We know that getting a photo of you can be tricky. You CAN ask family to mail or email photos of you. We CANNOT reach out to your family. They can email at: [morgan@compassionarkansas.org](mailto:morgan@compassionarkansas.org)
- Send a story, poem or other written medium that describes you and healing/transformation stories you want to share with others

**Optionally:**

- Include with your photo a self-portrait that we can display along with E. Wheeler's portrait

For those who participate and are selected:

- You will receive a copy of your portrait, signed by the artist
  - We will publish the series in our Dharma Friends newsletter for all to enjoy
- We want to honor you and maintain your privacy at the same time. We will only use your first name and state in which you live to the public. If you wish to have your privacy more strictly concealed tell us! If you write to us.

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?

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

For anyone who is not in prison and who would like to subscribe to *Dharma Friends*, please email [morgan@compassionarkansas.org](mailto:morgan@compassionarkansas.org).

**Please let us know if your address changes**  
**Include your old and new address**

Do you find deeper spiritual practice through volunteering or helping others? Do you engage in social justice work or loving kindness towards others because you feel inspired by your spiritual practice? Share your stories, experiences, poetry and art about how you bridge your meditation practice and the suffering world.

Shame and guilt are part of the punitive prison narrative, but these complex emotions are embedded in many aspects of our culture - from school, to prison, to sexual and gender experiences. How have you worked with these emotions? Share your stories, experiences, poetry, and art about how you cope and relate to

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A HUMAN BEING IS PART OF A WHOLE, CALLED BY US THE 'UNIVERSE,' A PART LIMITED IN TIME AND SPACE. HE EXPERIENCES HIMSELF, HIS THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS, AS SOMETHING SEPARATED FROM THE REST - A KIND OF PRISON FOR US, RESTRICTING US TO OUR PERSONAL DESIRES AND TO AFFECTION FOR A FEW PERSONS NEAREST US. OUR TASK MUST BE TO FREE OURSELVES FROM THIS PRISON BY WIDENING OUR CIRCLE OF COMPASSION TO EMBRACE ALL LIVING CREATURES AND THE WHOLE OF NATURE IN ITS BEAUTY.

**Albert Einstein**