



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

The Dhammapada the teachings of the Buddha

Verse VIII The Thousands

100. A single word of truth, which calms the mind, is better to hear than a thousand irrelevant words.

101. A single verse of truth, which calms the mind, is better than a thousand irrelevant verses.

102. Reciting a single verse of truth which calms the mind is better than reciting a hundred meaningless verses.

103. One might defeat alone in battle a thousand, thousand men, but one who gains self-mastery is by far the greater hero.

104—105. Self-mastery is the supreme victory – much more to be valued than winning control over others. It is a victory that no other being whatsoever can distort or take away.

106. To honour, even for a single moment, one who has attained self-mastery, is of greater merit than making countless offerings to those who are unworthy.

107. To honour, even for a single moment, one who has attained self-mastery, is of greater benefit than

habitually performing ceremonies based on a wrong understanding.

108. Even if one should spend an entire year making gestures of offering for the sake of self-gain, all this is not worth one quarter the value of offering veneration to a noble being.

109. For one who always honours and respects those of greater years, there are four blessings: long life, beauty, happiness and strength.

110. A single day lived with conscious intention and virtue is of greater value than a hundred years lived devoid of discipline and right restraint.

111. A single day lived with conscious intention and wisdom is of greater value than a hundred years lived devoid of discipline and manifest wisdom.

112. A single day lived with conscious intention and profound effort is of greater value than a hundred years lived in lazy passivity.

113. A single day lived in awareness of the transient nature of life is of greater value than a hundred years lived unaware of birth and death.

114. A single day lived awake to the undying state is of greater value than a hundred years lived without recognizing deathlessness.

115. A single day lived awake to profound truth is of greater value than a hundred years lived unawakened.

Buddhist holidays

July 27, 2017 – Turning the Wheel of Dharma (Chokhur Duchen), celebrating when the Buddha taught for the first time after enlightenment. Buddha taught on the Four Noble Truths.

November 10, 2017 – Descent from Tushita Heaven (Lha Bab Duchen).

Lhabab Düchen is one of the four Buddhist festivals commemorating four events in the life of the Buddha in the Tibetan tradition.

A Moment of Clarity

Reprinted from Issue 12

By Anna Cox

The message that I get most clearly from this passage is the emphasis on gaining even one minute of clear, conscious awareness of self as a being who lives Buddha-like qualities. We all pass through our days perhaps totally unaware of anything other than the robot-like responses to the stimuli of life. Our thoughts flow along unnoticed. They are a constant presence responding to our environment and continuously creating and re-creating our world out of our conditioned perceptions of reality. We think thoughts of rejection, or revenge, or deprivation, or grandiosity, and the emotions follow right along fueling the fires of justification for the responses that we then express. We populate our world with others who will play out the various roles in our favorite dramas and we create the life circumstances that perpetuate our beliefs about how things are. We do this so habitually and automatically; we are totally unconscious that we are creating our entire world and the 'self' who lives in it. We

live then in this dream-like mirage. Even though it may have moments of bliss, there will never be long lasting bliss or happiness because this entire reality is built upon the ever-crumbling sands of illusion. Thus we have an entire world built upon the desperate constructs of a fragile ego that has the mistaken belief that it can protect our physical self and the fantasy of who we are from death and anni-hilation. Of course, this is impossible and all of those layers of denial and protection are going to fall away in due course and leave us fearful and alone, staring death in the face.

Dharma teaches us to approach this false construct of reality a little bit at a time and to see a reality where ego is merely our servant in this expression of a higher self as it manifests in a human body. Gradually, our view of reality becomes vaster and subtler and we identify more with our Buddha essence than with our body, our emotional responses, our roles in life, or with the description of our self so readily supplied by our ego. Once we can see that we have the option

to see moments or minutes of our life with clarity beyond the view of our ego's delusion, we can understand this Dhammapada verse more deeply.

We understand that an authentic moment of touching the profound essence of ourself is a moment of breaking

through the delusion and seeing the truth. When we have done that with awareness just one time, we can never again go back to not knowing that we are a vast ocean of wisdom rather than a limited human being isolated as a grain of sand on the beach amongst billions of other grains of sand. The



Cont. pg 3

“Gradually, our view of reality becomes vaster and subtler and we identify more with our Buddha essence than with our body, our emotional responses, our roles in life, or with the description of our self so readily supplied by our ego.”

Clarity cont...

Dhammapada asks us to utter one word of the dharma that brings peace to the mind. It says to be victorious over yourself and not over others. This means to be aware of those thoughts as they arise, to be aware of emotions compelling us to act, and to choose our actions wisely in order to grow in self awareness and to benefit others.

The Dhammapada asks us to pay even a moment's homage to one living in wisdom. We all recognize those who live a life of kindness and truth. To do so, they have accomplished an incredible feat and their motivation has been to help you free yourself from the suffering of your life. To pay homage to them is to affirm to yourself that you would like to emulate them and helpfully humbles ego in the face of such wisdom.

We are encouraged to live in freedom and wisdom for one day rather than to lead a conditioned life of bondage for a hundred years. That one day of awareness of our true Buddha self develops an awareness that will benefit us through all of our lifetimes until we become fully enlightened. The length of our life, the accumulations of our life, the various accolades or even the failures of our life, mean nothing up against this ability to achieve clarity of our true nature even for a short time. Each time we remember that our Buddha self lives always within us and is our teacher until we achieve enlightenment, we grow another step further along a path of living this awareness all of the time. It is this world of pure awareness which we seek.

Untitled Poem
By Thomas L., GA

Tears can't take away
The thoughts of death of
Someone close. For a
moment
One is healed, for a
moment
Thoughts are clear. Then
comes
The moment for one
more
Tear... Ahh, is it good to
Grieve? That is why the
Tears come? For it is
"good
grief"...Eventually we see
A new normal.

I sit & I
breathe. Thoughts?
I do not focus as much on
thoughts
Anymore. What I do is
what I learn
From Friends who are
truly compassionate.

LIFE ITSELF
By cdy, TX

AS I THINK PEACE
I TRY PEACE.
AS I TRY PEACE
I LEARN PEACE.
AS I LEARN PEACE
I SEE PEACE.
AS I SEE PEACE
I FIND PEACE.
AS I FIND PEACE
I KNOW PEACE.
AS I KNOW PEACE
I AM PEACE.
WITH MYSELF
AND ALL THAT IS.
I AM
LIFE ITSELF.

Untitled Poem
By Daniel Q., CA

Love is delicate, fragile
Like butterfly wings, often
Unappreciated 'til gone; a
Tragedy failing to ken
The beauty of the moment!

A meditation

anapanasati | Pali, meaning,
mindfulness of breath

Find a comfortable seated position, either in a chair or on a meditation cushion. Sit up tall and feel your sits bones sinking into the chair or cushion. Begin to feel you are rooted in your hips and floating through the crown of your head.

Your eyes can be open or closed, with a soft gaze and heavy eyelids. Your hands fall in your lap or rest on your thighs. Check in with your body and invite softness to your forehead, jaw, neck, chest, belly, hips and feet. Begin to feel you are relaxed in your body and alert in your mind.

Follow your breath as you inhale and exhale. Notice the qualities of the breath – the temperature of the air, which nostril is doing more work, any smells in the air, dampness or dryness of the air, and so on. Watch the natural rhythm of your breathing as you sink into silence and stillness. Notice as the rhythm of your breathing changes as you sit for longer.

As thoughts arise, which they will, allow the thoughts to float by like clouds on a breezy day. The thoughts will float away, as you gently return to watching the breath. Continue to notice each thought, returning to the breath, again and again. At the end of your meditation, dedicate the benefits of your practice to the wellbeing of all.

Compassionate Communication

Deep listening

By **Morgan Holladay**

Verse 100 from The Thousands in the Dhammapada says, “a single word of truth, which calms the mind, is better to hear than a thousand irrelevant words.” How will we know if we’re hearing a word of truth?

I think we have a better shot of *hearing truth* if we practice deep or compassionate listening.

Compassionate listening means making a conscious effort to hear the words that another person is saying and understand the complete message that they are expressing. It requires careful attention and presence. It also means being present for another’s suffering without turning away, or trying to fix it.

In order to open ourselves to the possibility of fully hearing what someone is expressing to us, we must also listen *empathetically*. This means understanding another person’s condition from their perspective, and giving them the space to fully explore their own experience without offering advice or solutions immediately.

Empathizing with someone does not mean that you agree with him or her. When you empathize with someone, you acknowledge that they are experiencing a need that you have had at some point in your life, and a need that you will continue to have throughout your life.

There are a number of techniques to use as you practice deep listening.

Small Encouragements

When someone is talking, it helps for him or her to hear cues that say, *I’m still listening*. Sounds such as, “Oh?,” “When?,” and “Really?” are examples of these verbal cues. They are questions, comments, or sounds that do not interfere with the flow of conversation, but do let the person speaking know that you are present and alert. They help build rapport and encourage the speaker to continue talking. Use these small encouragements sparingly, but do use them to keep the speaker engaged.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a summary in your own words of what you were told. This technique demonstrates listening, creates empathy and establishes rapport because it is evident that you have heard and understood the speaker. Usually, paraphrasing begins with the words,

“Are you telling me...” or “Are you saying...” Paraphrasing also clarifies content, highlights issues and promotes give and take between you and the subject. This technique tests our skills as a listener by asking us to engage and demonstrate that we are fully hearing the content.

Mirroring (or Reflecting)

This is the technique of repeating the last word or phrase and putting a question mark after it. This provides very exact responses because you are using the speaker’s own words. Reflecting or mirroring asks for more input without guiding the direction of the subject’s thoughts and elicits information when you do not have enough information to ask a pertinent question.

Open-Ended Questions

The primary use of open-ended questions is to draw out more information, especially when the

speaker is shy or unsure about what they are saying. Asking open-ended questions encourages the person to say more without the listener actually directing the conversation. They are questions that cannot be answered with a single word such as “yes” or “no”.

Open-ended questions usually begin with how, what, when and where. Note that “why” questions are not asked directly. “Why” questions tend to steer the conversation toward blame and shut down communication. “Why” questions also tend to pass judgment.

Effective Pauses

Silence can be very effective on a number of levels. Most people are not comfortable with silence and will fill it with talk. As you learn to be an active listener, you can explore the depth and beauty of silence as a way to give the speaker a chance to collect his or her thoughts and fully express those thoughts to you.

From your letters

Dear CWFA,

First, the poem 12.12.12 about Ledell Lee was well written. And knowing him [Lidell], I believe he would of liked it. And I would like to thank the author from all of us here on the row.

Second, was the article mainly wrote about Jack Jones, but at the end his spiritual advisor spoke about my friend Marcel who was killed the same day as Jack. We did not get to tell Marcel goodbye as they rushed him over to Cummins from our visitation area here. His spiritual advisor was Father Jack Harris. But the article spoke about Marcel having a spiritual awakening. I would like everyone to know Marcel was having a spiritual awakening. It started the day he came back from his clemency hearing. He was at peace for about 2 weeks. And to know he still was up to the time

they killed him really brought me peace.

Brandon L., Grady, Arkansas

...This month’s newsletter has touched me so much, with the Jack Jones and Marcel Williams story. Every time I read that story I’d have to stop because I can sense the emotions behind every word as if I was there witnessing the scenes myself. I read your newsletters over a lot and I love it. I’ve been practicing Buddhism going on two years in September and it has changed my life in so many ways. The teachings of the Buddha are in line with a lot of situations that I have are going through. I’m at peace with myself because of it. Continue to shed light on all beings in and outside of prison.

Jordan B., Trion, Georgia



The Sacred Mandala

and the personal mandala

By Cheryl Woodard

*This article is from a talk given at the Ecumenical Buddhist Society of Little Rock by Cheryl Woodard, which is based on the book, *Orderly Chaos* by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.*

The ancient Sanskrit word Mandala translates to “association” or “society” in English, according to Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. It is a way of seeing situations in terms of relativity or relationships – i.e. a **map or drawing of how we relate to the world**. We realize that all the colors, gestures, body ornaments, postures, and symbols in Mandala images represent profound teachings about the mind of a realized being. For example, Avalokiteshvara is the embodiment of ultimate compassion and you will see him in both male and female forms. He is standing on a moon disk, the symbol of compassion. He has multiple arms to signify the vast reach of his compassion, and a thousand eyes to represent his capacity for seeing suffering in every form. He is surrounded by Buddhas and protectors showing that he is completely connected to the power and wisdom of the entire Buddhist teachings. The Dalai Lama is considered to be a living version of Avalokiteshvara, who is called Chenrizig in Tibetan.

People study the qualities and teachings about a figure like Avalokiteshvara so that we can try to imagine his sacred, untainted relationship with the world. We try to see the world from his eyes, to relate to the world as if we were him. People literally picture themselves as him, and surround themselves with his Mandala, like a kind of virtual reality exercise. Look at how this image is crowded with little details like clouds, fire, animals, people, flowers, water, and so forth. Every one of these things is there for a purpose. People working with this mandala will try to call

up all these details as vividly as they can in their mind’s eye. And then they go through their day viewing their own life as part of that sacred situation.

This is a very profound practice to do. You usually learn this practice personally, from a Tantra meditation master, and I’m not someone who can teach it to you.

* A personally observable mandala *

In his book, Rinpoche emphasizes our own personal, observable experience – rather than the ideal, sacred one, so that we can work with Mandala principals in our own lives. At one point he says, “Since Mandala is based on our ignorance and confusion, there is no point in discussing it unless we know who we are and what we are.” He uses the Mandala structure to dissect how we create our own suffering because the whole situation will change if we can see what we are doing.

He goes on to say this, “Seeing the basic situation of our own mind is how we wake up, how we practice and how we can relate with the day-to-day Mandala of our lives...The basic situation is that we are involved in a sense of struggle in our lives. We are trying to defeat somebody, or win somebody over, to get rid of an enemy or acknowledge a friend. We are trying either to fight with our environment or to indulge in it...As soon as we wake up in the morning, we find that we are ready to fight the world. Having breakfast is a preparation, like taking a magic potion so that we can fight the world. And after having breakfast, we go out and fight the world. No matter what our particular mentality is, the total picture is one of struggle – fight, gain, and loss. It is not a struggle for something particular or on

behalf of a particular issue or anything like that; rather, there is a total sense of imprisonment. A sense that the world has captured us and we have to live with it, we have to fight the world as though we were behind iron bars. That is the basic ground of our experience.”

This sounds pretty awful, doesn’t it? Maybe you don’t agree that you are at war with your world, but that is kind of the point – we have a habit of ignoring the struggle and the pain of it because we fundamentally hope that being vigilant and tough with ourselves will make us happy in the long run; we’re willing to do whatever it takes in hopes that we will end up safe, healthy, and happy, or to guarantee that the people we love will end up safe, healthy, and happy.

Rinpoche says its like running for president of the United States – a horrible, painful, degrading and expensive process. But people are willing to ignore the pain of the process because they think the end result of being president will be worth it.

So it is putting our heads down and actively ignoring what we are doing in pursuit of happiness and how we are doing it that leads to our suffering.

If there is no ignoring, there is no suffering. That’s why *simply seeing is how we wake up*. And when we wake up, we discover our own inherent wisdom and compassion. As Rinpoche explains, “we deliberately decide to ignore ourselves, boycotting our own wisdom and enlightenment so that we can get on with our habits of passion, aggression and so forth. We create and inhabit a Mandala by ignoring reality and clinging to our habits instead.

* **Already perfect** *

Buddha's first and most important insight was that we are already perfectly connected with the world, an indivisible part of life. When he himself gave up struggling to control his mind, he saw that we inhabit a vast space filled with infinite potential and freedom, that the world sustains us, no matter what we do, and that we already have perfect awareness and compassion. We don't have to cook up awareness because it happens without effort, in the same way that breathing happens without effort.

We don't have to ASK for air, or DECIDE when and how to breathe it in, and we don't have to EARN the air – it just comes and sustains us naturally. We are not IN CHARGE of breathing. And this is why Buddha taught us to meditate using our breath.

And just like breathing, Awareness is happening all the time, too, automatically, and without our having to do anything. All of the Buddha's teachings about how we create suffering are embedded in the Mandala.

* Using strong emotions to understand wisdom *

There are five Buddhas in a Mandala, including the one at the center, and one at each gate. Each of the five Buddhas has their own color and symbols, and each represents a particular kind of confused emotional state: ignorance, greed, desire, jealousy and anger, as well as a particular kind of wisdom.

The teaching about these five Buddhas is that confusion and wisdom are two sides of the same coin, inseparable from one another. Because Greed and Equanimity are inseparable, you can understand the enlightened energy of equanimity by working directly with the neurotic energy of greed. The stronger and more confused a thought or feeling, the more useful it can be. So we train to make use of all thoughts and emotions coming up, rather than rejecting any of them.

This is an important point: everything that comes up in your awareness has value because you can use it to wake up. So we don't throw anything away.

The central figure and the four gates also represent the five skandas. If you know about the skandas, you will remember that the process begins with ignorance, which is the center (form), then moves to the other skandas: feeling, perception, formation and consciousness.

The bottom line of the Skanda teachings is that time and time again, we use the activity coming up in the space around us to define a false identity that we then have to protect. We do that by co-opting simple experiences into a myth about who and what we are. And then we have to guard against anything new that might contradict that identity. For example, if I'm clinging to a conviction that I'm a generous person, then every selfish thought that enters my mind is a problem. So I have to monitor myself and guard against objectionable thoughts and emotions all the time. And that's how I make a wall between my own

awareness and the space around me.

That guarding and monitoring is the struggle we talked about earlier; the fighting we do with the world. That struggle is not necessary, but we're hooked on it and have a hard time giving it up. Teachers often use the word 'addiction' to describe our attachment to the struggle.

The whole thing is exhausting and pointless. One teacher said it's like pretending that the ocean belongs to you and is under your control. Instead of just watching the activity of the waves, enjoying their energy and power, you have to judge each wave as good or bad, and then try to make each wave behave according to your wishes.

Consider night and day. Nobody complains about night and day, we just accept that we have them both and live with it. That's an example seeing the world without struggle, as it is, appreciating it, and working with it.

So there is a three-step process to creating my Mandala of ignorance: First, I decide that I have an identity and a territory to defend (with a wall), then I put together a comprehensive defense strategy (with guards like correction officers at every gate to screen everything coming towards me), and finally, I forget steps one and two. I pretend the wall is real, not something I made up by myself. And I completely lose touch with the real world. By ignoring my own role in this, I've imprisoned myself in a false reality.

“This is an important point: everything that comes up in your awareness has value because you can use it to wake up. So we don't throw anything away.”

* Resting in natural awareness *

Since ignorance is the main cause of my confusion, simple Awareness is the answer. Nothing more. **All Buddhist practices have the same objective: awareness.** Awareness already exists, is already operating within us. The everyday practice is simply to rest and to cultivate carefree acceptance and openness to all situations without limit.

Notice the breath moving into you, cooled by the outside air.

Notice the breath moving out of you, warmed by your body.

Notice the breath coming in and moving your belly and ribs.

Notice the breath going out and disappearing into the space in front of you.

Notice the effortless, perfect connection between your living body and the space around you.

Relax and just rest in your present, ongoing awareness.

*** How to practice mandala teachings ***

In terms of how to use Mandala in everyday life, Rinpoche said, “You can simply turn your mind toward the mysteriousness of being in open space and allow for new possibilities.” He always talked about space [the author was a student of Rinpoche’s when he was alive]. He told people to look for the gaps where your world seems to be breaking apart because these are the times when you are most connected to your own wisdom. Awareness and space are linked together. So when you connect with space, you are also connecting with your own awareness. And when you relax with space, you can experience how the walls of your Mandala, naturally dissolve. The dissolving is not something you do; it just happens naturally.

I do this myself, all the time. In a stressful moment, like an airport or a tough situation at work or with my family, I literally look for space, for a glimpse of the clouds or the sky or the horizon as a reminder to relax. And when I relax, I realize that there are more options available than just being stuck and stressed out. I start to think of what I might do to help myself at that moment, even if it’s just stretching or getting a drink of water. And the whole situation shifts for me. I have more energy and I can be more open and generous to the people around me.

You can also connect with your compassion when you feel stressed out. Just like awareness and space, compassion has the power to dissolve your Mandala walls and change your perspective. So in addition to looking for space, I often try to generate compassion for people in the situation with me. And the same result follows – I feel less stuck and have more energy.

Inside Insight

Prose, poetry and ponderings

by **our readers**

I am fairly new at seeking enlightenment from inside my own self, and the things in your letter help me a great deal. I think that all too often, people in prison want to find a way to find who they really are, a way to see the world as it truly is, and a way to live a life of love and kindness that is not directed by ego’s ideals of love but they don’t know where to begin. I was one of those, and fortunately had the support of my mother when I began this journey. She helped to guide me in the right direction, and slowly things have come to me through resource lists I stumble across here and there. Your newsletter was one of the first such outside influences.

I’m not good at meditating yet. I’m not good at being “in the moment”. I know it is there. I was walking the other day, and noticed the dew on the several blades of grass. For an instant it seemed the world stopped around me and there was only beauty. My foot came down, the world came back, and things were back to what they were.

For that instant, I knew peace. That instant lasted for a split second and yet it was a lifetime as well. I am new at this, and an infant as far as the walk on this spiritual journey is concerned. I look forward to the day I can see the world around me as clearly as I did, for a split-second of eternity, the other day without trying. I know without a doubt that it would never happen if it were not for people like you. Thank you for being who you are, thank you for what you do.

**Jason B.
Tennessee Colony, TX**

Who am I? What am I? Where do I belong? I believe it is completely natural to ask these questions. I believe this is what makes us human over anything else you can think of. I believe everyone asks these questions and for the most part find answers for themselves. I’m 41 years old and I’m still searching for answers. It is much easier to say what I am not, who I am

not. But who AM I? What AM I? I don't know. People ask if I'm a Buddhist and I hesitate to say Yes

Because I do not want to offend or disrespect those who are Buddhist. There are many Buddhist concepts that I do believe, but there are many things I do not or cannot believe.

Am I a Buddhist? Again It is easier to look at what I am not. I do not believe in reincarnation, angry demons or hungry ghosts. I do not believe this existence is an illusion while the "afterlife" is the real one. This life we have--short as it is, meaningless or meaningful as it may be, is the real existence and everything else is illusion we've created to help us accept the fact that this life is short, imperfect, and singular.

I do not believe we should deny our emotions. I've been told/read that happiness does not last and therefore is not real. That when it is gone we are so obsessed with finding things to make us happy that we don't experience being happy. Happiness is fleeting, yes. But being taught to deny yourself happiness because it does not last, I feel is wrong. We should experience the joy and happiness of life while it lasts, but be mindful that it is temporary--in fact that is what makes something worth valuing: that it is temporary.

When it is gone we should not spend all our time and effort searching for more, but be okay without since eventually it will come again. No rainstorm lasts forever, just as no sunny day does.

Similarly we should not cling to wealth or possessions--or even people--because nothing lasts. Everything can be lost or taken from you but knowledge.

I am not a vegetarian. It is natural for humans to be omnivorous. People speak of being "one" with nature, but more often than not, set themselves apart from it by claiming to be more "Evolved." Is the sheep more evolved than the lion because it eats grass? Of course not. People believe we shouldn't kill living creatures. But then they usually only mean the cute ones. No one bats an eyelash over killing mosquitoes or bacteria. No one considers eating vegetables as killing a living thing.

I am not a vegetarian but neither do I support hunting/fishing as a sport or the display of dead animals as trophies. I am ever mindful, and more importantly, respectful of where my food comes from and the sacrifices made by living creatures, both plant and animal, so that I can live.

I believe that it is our duty as humans to care for and respect our planet and its inhabitants. I believe it is always possible to settle disputes--even/especially international ones, without violence. I believe this must be taught as early as possible to all children, but it CAN be taught. I believe in acceptance of all, no matter gender, age, ability, race or

sexual orientation/identity. I believe it is the job of a nation's government to not only protect its people, but to care for them in any/all circumstance. Further, as humans it is our job to protect and care for each other at all times; not just those who we like, or those who look like us.

It seems to me that these are all things every religion claims to preach. Yet history is full of wars fought because your religion is different from mine. Your skin color is different than mine. Laws are passed to prevent you from marrying whom you may because I think it is wrong.

And yet I still ask: Who am I? I am friendly, compassionate, intelligent. But I am also worried, confused, alone. Who am I?

I welcome any and all comments.

James Lala
Waupun, WI

I'm very blessed to be receiving the Dharma teachings! I want to write and tell you that I'm giving you my word that I will be faithful as your newest Sangha member and I do wish to be able to write you of my journey on the Path. All of you are great people! It is because of you that I desire on my own will to do my best to walk away from violence and even ignorant talk. There are countless books to read "Tis or That"? However, sitting with correct posture and breathing for a few minutes brings positive energy for everyone, especially when one gives of the positive energy received.

I thought of the incident from 4/24/16 when I was told I had killed someone? The person did live and I'm dealing with how to avoid ignorance, how not to be violent at 46 years old while in prison. Most important is how to be courageous 24/7 without physical altercations.

Morgan is a teacher to me and all that you write I allow to soak up in my whole being and remember. "Don't judge me by my past, I don't live there anymore." Remember me as you all see the smiles and feel the goodness of positivity.

From hard work that shows
True love and sincere compassion
"The Way" can be a journey that
Has more than earthly riches.
Sunlight will be seen ad felt
Even on a rainy day, So as to
Give the sentient beings the
True meaning of Who,
What, How and Why! I was there
In their way in my past. Smiling
Is the easiest and Love is True.

R. Thomas L.
Reidsville, GA



A Compassion Works
Hall

Sh. Kumar

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?

Please note:

Morgan and Judith will be out of the office the entire month of August. You are WELCOME to write to us, but we will be slow to respond until we catch up in September. Please be patient with us!

Art on page 10 by Cody Garner

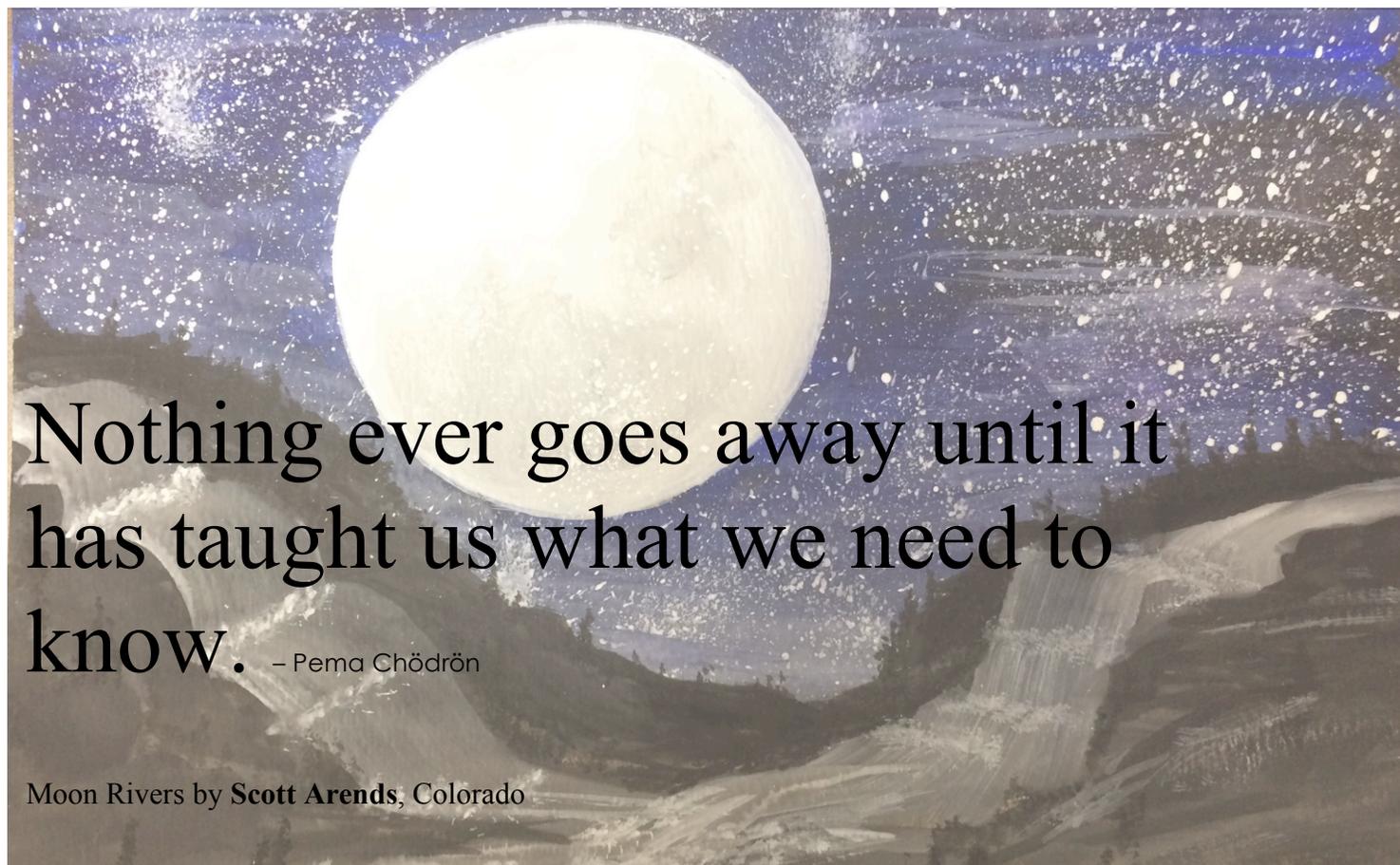
Subscription information for *Dharma Friends* newsletter

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



Nothing ever goes away until it
has taught us what we need to
know. – Pema Chödrön

Moon Rivers by **Scott Arends**, Colorado

Compassion Works for All

PO Box 7708

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www.compassionworksforall.org

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