Bearing Witness Using Art:

Reflections of Meditation Practice and the Four Noble Truths

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Abstract

Bearing Witness is one of the three tenets of the Zen Peacemakers Order. In this paper, bearing witness is interfolded with meditation practice, the Four Noble Truths, and art through 1) the writings of authors and artists and Buddhist teachings, 2) survey and interview comments of Buddhist Chaplains, and 3) the Chaplaincy candidate’s demonstration project to use art in bearing witness. This collection of writings, teachings and experiences invites Chaplains to reflect on the interrelationships of meditation practice and bearing witness, of bearing witness and the Four Noble Truths, and how art can be used in the practice of bearing witness; each a different lens for realizing one’s true nature while serving others.
Our practice and our accomplishment are as endless and as boundless as the universe. Shakyamuni Buddha himself says, “The three worlds are nothing but my possession, and all beings are nothing but my children.” Thus, we should take care of everybody and everything else in the same way that we take care of ourselves. This is to further advance in realizing Buddha. To see everything else as part of ourselves is wisdom. And when wisdom is truly realized, then compassion and loving-kindness spontaneously arise as the functioning of that wisdom.

(Maezumi & Glassman, 2002, pg. 143)

**Introduction**

Marian Kolodziej was prisoner number 432 at Auschwitz. An eventual survivor of the camp, he was an 18 year old Polish political, when he was first imprisoned at Auschwitz. I learned about Marian Kolodziej at Bernie Glassman’s *Bearing Witness Retreat* at Auschwitz in 2010, one year after Marian’s death. In fact, Marian Kolodziej is not his given birth name. No one knows what it is. One evening of the retreat, we saw an exhibition of his artwork. On the way there, Eve Marko Roshi spoke about him, a man who actively participated in Bernie’s retreats for many years, and whose art and life is a testimony to one of the most complete accounts that bears witness to life during the Holocaust. She began with an early account of Marian, a time when he drew postcards for the SS, and received extra soup as payment. One day, he heard a man crying, and he shared his soup with him. Some time later, Marian was imprisoned and sentenced to die for making drawings that he wanted to have sent to the allies. The man who was responsible for deciding when a prisoner would die was the same man that he gave soup to. So when another man named Marian Kolodziej died of natural causes, his friend switched the papers, and told him that from that day on, his name was Marian Kolodziej.
For 50 years, Marian never spoke about his Auschwitz experience. After the camps, he went to a university, became a theater scene designer and married a woman named Helena. In 1971 he became ill and was advised by his doctors that he needed to move his arms, hands and fingers in order to recover. So, he got down on the floor and began drawing. He began drawing memories from Auschwitz, and never stopped for almost 20 years. When he did stop, his work was made public. Many of these drawings are what I saw in the exhibition. From his drawings, I saw the suffering and anguish and also the grace of men like Father Kolbe, a light of hope among the prisoners.

Father Kolbe, number 16670, was included in many of Marian’s drawings, often depicted with a lightness, in contrast to the darkness of the gaunt faces and malnourished bodies. Father Kolbe, like Marian, heard a man crying in Cell Block 11 where individuals were detained before execution, their punishment for breaking some rule. Father Kolbe asked to exchange his life with this man. Father Kolbe died of lethal injection two weeks later. However, the exchange of life for life, Marian told, changed something in the camps, as people felt there was hope for humanity. Marian’s drawings bore witness to the suffering and the grace, his and others.

About six months after I experienced his drawings, I found myself struggling to cope with loss and grief, with the suffering in my own personal life and also of those who were affected. After not painting for almost three years, I found myself beginning to paint again. After doing a few paintings, I felt a subtle change, the loss and grief were different, not painful, it felt more subdued and blurred. After being in the studio only a few times, I realized that I was bearing witness to my own life, to my own suffering, like Marian. Whenever I feel emotionally fatigued, distressed, or overly anxious, I go to the studio and I paint. It has become a practice, just like my meditation practice. Coincidently, a few months before I began painting again, I
made a conscious shift in the schedule of my meditation practice. Rather than sit early in the mornings, I began sitting in the late afternoon or evening; when I could “sit with” the day’s emotional demands or sense of busyness.

Based on personal experience that my art practice and my meditation practice bear witness to my life, how do Buddhist Chaplains use art to bear witness in service to others? From these Chaplains, what can we learn that informs the role of the Buddhist Chaplain as an artist? Additionally, how does their meditation practice and awareness of The Four Noble Truths contribute to the quality of bearing witness? How might the interfolding of bearing witness, meditation practice and awareness of the Four Noble Truths be realized in a demonstration project, how does a Chaplain use art to bear witness?

A few highlights from interviews with Buddhist Chaplains interfold the importance of practice, bearing witness and the Four Noble Truths. As Participant 4 says, “I think that the practice of sitting improves my ability to focus and bear witness to my self as I bear witness to others, and the Four Noble Truths helps me understand others and feel compassion as I bear witness.”

Another Buddhist Chaplain, Qi Gong Teacher and Artist (Participant 11) relates art and meditation practice to bearing witness, “I feel that art-making is as process of bearing witness, of letting go of small mind in order to be in harmony with creative energies as they unfold. The product then has a life of its own and is a window into a larger world.”

He continues, “The meditation practice that I do is Qi Gong, Vispassaana meditation and mindfulness sitting meditation. I’ve been a dreamer since I was a child. I’ve been bringing dreams in to the form of wood that informed my artwork. Then in qi gong and tai chi, I really look at that as an art form, where the art medium is chi, rather than wood. It’s the energy,
moving it, having it flow. I really see that on a continuum, with meditation practice as an art form. Qi gong has a bearing witness aspect, and the meditation practice is really the practice of bearing witness. That practice of bearing witness of non-self and allowing this all to arise, is the process of art making itself. It’s learning to get out of the way.”

These two Chaplains introduce us to the interfolding of bearing witness, practice, the Four Noble Truths and art. Section One: Survey and Interview Research presents a summary of the survey research from 25 Buddhist Chaplains. The themes of their written and interview responses are woven throughout all sections.

In Roshi Joan Halifax’s (2009) words, from her book Being with Dying, “The Buddha taught that we should practice helping others while cultivating deep concentration, compassion, and wisdom.” (pg. 4) One way of cultivating concentration, compassion, and wisdom is to serve through the practice of bearing witness. Section Two: Bearing Witness and Art provides an introductory understanding of bearing witness, explores how art bears witness, and examines how Buddhist Chaplains use art in bearing witness.

As an entry point to Section Three, Maezumi Roshi and Bernie Glassman (2002) write, “When you really become one with whatever you do, that is the realization of the Way; yet whether you realize your true nature or not depends on you.” (pg. 8) “To discover true nature requires faith to strengthen practice, faith ‘in the teachings of the Buddha and the ancestral teachers,’ to ‘put ourselves wholeheartedly into practice and practice diligently,’ and to have a ‘strong faith in oneself, in the fact that one’s life is itself nothing but Buddha nature.’” (Maezumi & Glassman, 2002, pg. 8) So, how do Buddhist teachings about the role of meditation practice cultivate the practice of bearing witness and how is it reflected upon by artists? This question is explored in Section Three: Chaplains and Artists Reflect on Practice and Bearing Witness. The
section reviews selected Buddhist teachings about meditation practice that correspond to comments by artists and Buddhist Chaplains who use art in bearing witness.

In the Dalai Lama’s book (1997) *The Four Noble Truths*, he gives us guidance about the value of the Four Noble Truths, and about why it’s important to understand suffering.

The reason why Buddha laid so much emphasis on developing insight into the nature of suffering is because there is an alternative - there is a way out, it is actually possible to free oneself from it. This is why it is so crucial to realize the nature of suffering, because the stronger and deeper your insight into suffering is, the stronger your aspiration to gain freedom from it becomes. (Dalai Lama, 1997, pgs. 38-39)

In *Section Four: Bearing Witness and Art Reflect the Four Noble Truths*, written and interview responses from Buddhist Chaplains are presented to interrelate the many ways and views of how bearing witness and art reflect the Four Noble Truths.

*Section Five: Demonstration Project of Bearing Witness using Art* shares both art work and the individuals’ stories, concluding with a summary about the interfolding of bearing witness, practice, the Four Noble Truths, and art.

*Section Six: Using Art to Bear Witness* summarizes conclusions for the role of the Chaplain.

Using Buddhist teachings about meditation practice and awareness about suffering combined with research about how art can be used to bear witness, the opportunities broaden for Chaplains to serve, and most importantly, to deepen one’s personal relationship to witnessing life through the Buddha’s teachings of The Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering.
Section 1: Survey and Interview Research

In exploring how Buddhist Chaplains use art to bear witness in service to others and how meditation practice and awareness of the Four Noble Truths contribute to the quality of bearing witness, a survey was sent to three groups of Buddhist Chaplains.

A total of 25 respondents completed the Bearing Witness Survey (see Appendix A) that was distributed by email to approximately 235 members representing three Buddhist Chaplaincy groups: two Yahoo! groups (the Buddhist_Chaplaincy group of approximately 225 members and the Buddhist-Chaplains group of four members), and the five cohorts of the Upaya Zen Center’s Chaplaincy program.

Survey Demographics

The demographics of the individuals who participated in this survey indicate that:

- 76% (17) were female and 24% (6) were male
- 28% (7) were between 61-65 years of age, 16% (4) were 46-50, 16% were 66-70, 12% were 41-45, 8% (2) were in 36-40, 8% (2) were in 51-55, and 8% (2) were in 56-60.
- 48% (11) were Chaplains for less than one year, 39% (9) for 2-5 years, and 13% (3) for 6-10 years
- 36% (8) had 11-15 years of practice as a Buddhist, 24% (6) had 21+ years, 20% (5) had 16-20 years, 12% (3) had less than 5 years, with 4% (1) with 6-10 years
- 68% (17) indicated that Mahayana was their primary Buddhist affiliation, 28% (7) indicated Theravada and 20% (5) indicted Vajrayana. Of these respondents, 16% (4) indicated one or more affiliations.
Survey Highlights

24 (96%) out of the 25 indicated that they had practiced “bearing witness” in the way described by the tenet of the Zen Peacemaker Order which states, “I further commit myself to bearing witness by encountering each creation with respect and dignity and allowing myself to be touched by the joys and pain of the universe.” Only one person indicated that they were “not sure.”

24 described a recent experience of bearing witness. In their reflection about their experience, from highest percentages to lowest:

• 28% (7 out of 25) related their experience to only the Fourth Noble Truth (the path to the cessation of suffering)
• 20% (5 out of 25) related it to each of the Four Noble Truths (the truth of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, the path to the cessation of suffering)
• 20% (5 out of 25) related it only to the First Noble Truth
• 16% (4 out of 25) related it only to the Second Noble Truth
• 8% (2 out of 25) related it to both the First and the Second Noble Truths
• 1 person related it to the First and Third Noble Truths
• 1 person related it to the First, Second, and Third Noble Truths
• No one related their experience only to the Third Noble Truth

Keeping in mind that respondents could choose one or more of the Noble Truths to relate to their experience of bearing witness, the Fourth Noble Truth was the most frequently selected (28%). Of note is that no one selected only the Third Noble Truth.
One hundred percent of the respondents indicated that meditation practice contributes to the quality of bearing witness. Every respondent also indicated that their studies, practice and awareness of the Four Noble Truths contributed to the quality of bearing witness.

24 of the 25 participants responded to whether they had used art (painting, photography, sculpture, creative writing, or other) to bear witness to the suffering and/or joy of another:

- 63% (15 out of 24 responses) said “Yes”
- 33% (8 out of 24) said “No”
- 8% (2 out of 24) chose “I’ve thought about it”

The 15 who said “Yes” described their experience of using art to bear witness in the following ways: Narratives, public talks, Japanese calligraphy, Facebook photo album, photography, poetry, written short stories, sculptures, paintings, masks, sand tray work, and website with stories and photos.

Of the 25 survey respondents, 20 individuals volunteered for a follow-on 30 minute interview for further comments about their survey choices. Written survey responses and interview comments are woven throughout sections Two, Three, Four and Six (Bearing Witness and Art, Artists Reflect on Buddhist Teachings about the Relevance of Practice, Bearing Witness and the Four Noble Truths, and Using Art to Bear Witness) describing respondents’ examples of using art to bear witness and how their meditation practice and their practice of the Four Noble Truths affects bearing witness using art.
Section Two: Bearing Witness and Art

Bearing witness is a meaningful way to serve as a Chaplain, to realize loving action. Bernie Glassman (1998), co-founder of the Zen Peacemakers Order says,

When we bear witness, when we become the situation — homelessness, poverty, illness, violence, death — the right action arises by itself. We don’t have to worry about what to do. We don’t have to figure out solutions ahead of time. Peacemaking is the functioning of bearing witness. Once we listen with our entire body and mind, loving action arises. (p. 84)

In this section, bearing witness and art is explored through the questions: What does bearing witness mean? How did it originate? How does art bear witness? What can we learn about art to bear witness from the field of art therapy? What about art that bears witness in the field of social action? What is the difference between the artist who bears witness and the art therapist’s client who bears witness?

Roshi Bernie Glassman created the Zen Peacemakers Order for others to experience the oneness of life, appreciating everything as it is. Glassman (1998) says that “The order would also be a training ground and a launching pad for the many people who said they wanted to do something but didn’t know what.” (pg. xiv)

In creating the Zen Peacemakers Order, there are 16 precepts or vows. The first three are the vows of oneness, harmony, and diversity. These three are also referred to as the Three Jewels: to be one with the Buddha, to be one with the Dharma, to be one with the Sangha. The next three vows are called the Three Tenets: unknowing, bearing witness and loving action. The last ten vows are the precepts: to not kill, to not steal, to not be greedy, to not tell lies, to not be
ignorant, to not talk about others’ errors and faults, to not elevate oneself by blaming others, to not be stingy, to not be angry, to not speak ill of oneself and others.

Of the 16 precepts, the Three Tenets of the Zen Peacemaker’s Order are not knowing, bearing witness and loving action. Bernie Glassman (1998) writes that it is possible “to live a life without answers, a life of unknowing – to bear witness in all situations where the right action of making peace, of healing, arises.” (pg. xiv)

The first tenet, the vow to penetrate the unknown, Glassman (1998) says is to “train in unknowing, in unlearning all their previous conditioning and preconceptions about how to make peace.” (pg. 68) It is a human condition to want to cling to the past or to gain the knowledge to take care of the future. “The fewer ideas we have about right or wrong, good or bad, the more natural and spontaneous will be our responses.” (pg. 73)

About bearing witness, the second tenet, Glassman (1998) says that, “we can’t heal ourselves or other people unless we bear witness.” (pg. 76) Bearing witness is when there is no separation; when the identity and ego dissolve. We listen. We are not separate from those who suffer. If we know something, we are not bearing witness. But, when we listen, we spontaneously act. “The important thing is to try to look a little more broadly than just at our own individual suffering. The wider your point of view, the more you bear witness. And out of that bearing witness a healing will arise. Bearing witness brings us into loving action, the goal of which is to reduce suffering.” (pg. 79)

The third vow and tenet is loving action, the vow to heal myself and others. “We don’t have to worry about what to do. We don’t have to figure out solutions ahead of time. Peacemaking is the functioning of bearing witness. Once we listen with our entire body and mind, loving action arises.” (Glassman, pg. 84) Loving action heals us and supports the other. It
is the right action. “Each is simply the best possible response to that situation in that moment.” (Glassman, pg. 84)

Participant 23 volunteers as a Buddhist Chaplain at a skilled nursing facility and hospice in Seattle. Serving 32 inpatients living and dying with the full spectrum of life-altering diseases and conditions, it includes an outpatient adult day program serving 200 people living with HIV and AIDS.

At its heart, my work and practice at this hospital are all about the Three Tenets: Not knowing, Bearing Witness, and Taking Loving, Skillful, Compassionate Action. As I enter each client/patient’s room, I completely empty myself of any preconceived and dualistic notion of being there to help or serve in any way. I empty myself of any gaining idea or expectation about how I think the encounter should go. I have learned from experience that if I’m not able to empty myself, then I will be of no good and no use to the client. People who are near death are amazing judges of character and intent. They can see right through any kind of pretext or bullshit. If I can’t be there in a spirit of Not Knowing, then I am no good to the client. Showing up in Not Knowing allows me to be open to whatever the situation calls for. Being open allows me to Bear Witness to the situation and circumstances, just as they are, whatever they are. For me, the key to Bearing Witness effectively is Not Knowing. I can bear witness by encountering the person with respect and dignity. I am never taken by surprise by the depth of the person’s situation, pain and suffering because I have no preconceived ideas about the encounter. Therefore, I am completely open to whatever is. Not Knowing--being completely open to Bear Witness to whatever is--guides the client and me in igniting the
fuse on the 3rd Tenet. In Not Knowing and Bearing Witness, the appropriate
Compassionate Action naturally arises and becomes evident to both of us.

To further deepen students’ understanding and practice of the vows, Roshi Glassman
created Bearing Witness Retreats, on the streets in New York beginning in 1991, then again at
Auschwitz beginning in 1996. The retreats were shaped by an idea called, “taking the plunge.” It
was an idea that his friend, the Very Reverend James Morton (who at that time was head of the
Cathedral of St. John the Divine), used for sending clergy to live on the streets of Chicago. As a
result, when Roshi Glassman began the Order, “‘plunge’ became our name for those training
programs, like street retreats, when we sent members and candidates into an uncertain and
unpredictable situation. ‘You’ll learn the most from the unknown,’ he said. ‘The things you don’t
expect will come up and they will be your teacher.’” (Glassman, pg. 99)

There at Auschwitz, out of the not-knowing and the bearing witness, love arose – the
Three Tenets were realized. The vows of oneness, harmony, and diversity happened for the
participants. It was then that Roshi Glassman (1998) said that, “It was that first visit to
Auschwitz in 1994 that helped me to appreciate the importance of the Three Tenets, not just for
Zen Buddhists, not just for social activists, but for all people.” (pg. 43)

The training and practice at the Peacemaker Order is to witness. Not to deny, but to
broaden, our vision. Not to teach, but to listen. It’s an ever-deepening, never-ending
practice. And it starts and ends with unknowing. We don’t bear witness to tell other
people what to do with their lives. After many years of study, teaching, and peacemaking,
I realized that I was deluded, that I would always be deluded; that I will never get to a
place where I know, and that, therefore, I will penetrate the unknown and bear witness
forever. And that means bearing witness, letting go, bearing witness, letting go, bearing witness, and letting go. (Glassman, p. 82)

From the *Bearing Witness Survey* and follow-on interviews, Buddhist Chaplains described experiences of bearing witness to a resident of an assisted living facility, to incarcerated youth, to hospice patients, to veterans with PTSD disabilities, to male and female prisoners (including one waiting for the death penalty), to students, to a woman in a remote village in Nepal, to a friend, to grandchildren, to a daughter, and to a mother. As one anonymous survey respondent (2011) wrote, experiences of bearing witness are, “daily, it seems -- living in this world and being alive to it require bearing witness.”

In visiting a resident of an assisted living facility, Participant 10 wrote, “She was not coherent for most of the visit but was aware of others in the room. Bearing Witness to her life and what was present for her now, in this moment, brought a sense of acceptance to the experience.”

Participant 9 works with incarcerated youth. He writes, “Just last week, I sat with a 14-year old boy as he explored the possibility of, for the first time, sharing stories of the abuse he experienced as a young child. With a tightened chest, I could feel an urge to want to change what was happening in the room. I could easily have taken control and set the agenda through the two most common strategies for detention workers during such moments, to try and "rescue" or [to] defer completely. Instead, I released any strategy at all and opened to what was present (through my body and heart/mind). I will not go into the outcome, but I can say that we both have a greater appreciation for the possibilities that can emerge when our interconnectedness is allowed to shine through. Deep gratitude for Bearing Witness!”
Greg Grallo, a hospice chaplain writes, “As both a hospice chaplain and father of a toddler, I am continually reminded of the mystery of life. I have a patient that has made some difficult life choices, yet I am able to be present with him now, rather than his past.”

Participant 11 writes, “Sitting quietly in hospice with a patient very near death and being able to gently tune into the physical and energetic bodies using Reiki, sharing this sacred space and sensing into the presences therein. I know when I’m bearing witness, like when I’m doing Reiki, what is unfolding in that relatedness is identical in a lot of ways to what happens internally when I’m just sitting doing a meditative practice. Doing Reiki is the same as doing sitting meditation. The inside and outside are the same. It’s not me looking at him, the object, it’s one thing, it’s emerging. That’s what I find when there is a profound event, just internal with me, or relational with another person, it’s the same state, a state of non-self. Paradoxically, that is what it is for me, bearing witness is being one with, it’s not looking at something. For instance, in sitting meditation, one of the instructions is to identify with the feeling that arises instead of the object, it’s state of bearing witness. To be with the thought that is arising, the feeling that arising, to witness that state. So, resting in the state consciousness state, it’s absorption. If I am bearing witness to someone who is dying, or doing Reiki, or someone I am in love with, it’s the same state, being as a witness.”

At a VA Hospital, Participant 7 works with veterans who have been given a PTSD disability from the Government for the trauma incurred during war coupled with the effects on their lives after war. She says, “Working with this population requires the practice of bearing witness. To bear witness to the cause and effects of life without judgment is the only way to see through the eyes of respect and inter-connectedness. This population is so guarded, and that guardedness is a severe bi-product of their PTSD. The only way to connect heart to heart is by
me bearing witness. They feel that, and somehow a beautiful inter-dependent co-arising happens right there in that moment. It's as if the true connection couldn't happen any other way with these folks. As for me, it is a gift to see past all the opinions and judgments of how they got this way and to just see things as they are. Something beautiful happens for me, too.”

Participant 19 writes, “I stood with others to stand against the death penalty. I bore witness to others and to my own mind.”

Sitting silently at San Quentin for an execution, Participant 1 says, “It seemed very important to be there. I have always been against the death penalty. I find it barbaric. Because of my Buddhist practice, I’m led to bear witness, to be there without creating enemies or opposing sides. It was a moving experience. I was there with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, to just be quiet. Some sitting, most standing, just standing in silence. There are speeches, people with microphones. We just listen, don’t react, we don’t applaud. It’s just bearing witness. It feels really important, to just get a feel by being there, the enormity, the seriousness of it. But largely, to know that inside, a few yards away, someone’s life is being taken by the state, essentially in my name. I don’t like that at all. Even though it may seem that being there isn’t doing much, it did feel very important to be there. It’s one of the most significant things I’ve done. It touches one, the reality of it. Just being there, makes it so much more real, than being home and hearing about it on the news, faite accompli. Being there, when the warden says, “Mr. So-and-So has died, or died at such and such a time.”

Participant 14 writes about bearing witness, “I think I feel this in the work that I do with prisoners and the women in jail. In bearing witness to their humanity beyond what ever lead to their imprisonment, I can connect on a heart level. They openly share their pain and joy.”
Participant 17 writes about bearing witness to the situation when the president of the college stepped down. She writes, “There is confusion and pain associated with a lack of leadership, fear regarding potential new leadership and resentment from the poor leadership prior. The faculty and staff are a mess. As a member of the group, I too feel an urge to step forward and solve this 'problem,' but because of practice, I witness. I sit and am present to the ‘what is’ of the situation. I am not always silent, but I am bearing witness to the process and those involved, including myself.”

At a university, Participant 13 writes, “I was bearing witness to the distress of a student in my mindfulness class who was very anxious and tearful and describing her pain and distress in front of the rest of the group. I used my practice to bear witness to my own discomfort, and to encourage others in the class to 'hold the space' rather than jumping in with 'fix it' words or actions.”

With CPE students, Participant 20 writes, “Patiently sitting with my students - trying hard not to advise or direct--as they slowly unpack hidden aspects of themselves in group supervision.”

On a Buddhist pilgrimage in Nepal with Roshi Joan Halifax, Participant 5 writes about her experience with a woman in a remote village who was diagnosed by western medicine with "audio hallucinations.” She writes, “I had only a couple of hours in her presence, and we did not share a language, nevertheless, we bonded very closely. I believe that the bond arose from bearing witness. The form this took was remaining close to her physically, listening to her speak (although I could not comprehend the precise meaning of her words), maintaining eye contact, and finally, sharing touch. We went from the duality of our experiences, to a shared/felt sense of comfort and protection by both entering into a field of open hearted attention that allowed deep
perception, beyond language and cultural limits. I believe that this final interpersonal ease and rest is non-duality, that is, the healing we come into through bearing witness.”

Buddhist Chaplains also write about bearing witness to family and friends. Participant 4: “I listened as a Buddhist teacher and friend of mine explained the struggle she is having with her sangha.” Participant 22 writes, “It is most spontaneous and easy to do with my grandchildren, in every day life. And, I have a life long friend who is nearing the end of her life, I feel that the only thing of value that I can do for her is to bear witness. I believe that what we need as humans is to be seen as we are, true without filters, in the fullness and uniqueness of who we are. I believe that when we bear witness, ideally without any duality, then suffering is lessened and so bearing witness is part of the path.” Participant 18 bears witness to her sister who has Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, a disease of the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control voluntary muscle movement. Participant 16 says, “My daughter telling me the story of the tragedy of her friend whose boyfriend suddenly and unexpectedly killed himself.” Participant 8 writes that, “There are lots of different family dramas going on right now. At first people get upset that I don't take sides and feed the drama, but in the end, my bearing witness seems to offer people a larger space in which to perceive the drama and healing can then begin.” Participant 2 writes about her daily telephone conversations with her Mom, “I've learned that I'm most effective in supporting her by just being fully present; feeling her fear or confusion or desperation or happiness without trying to change her mind, or correct her thinking. The joys and pains of the universe are there in different measure every time.”

“Bearing witness is a dangerous business. Once we start it’s hard to stop. A peacemaker’s life often starts with a single encounter, a single witnessing. Soon there’s a second and a third. After a while we can't look away.” (Glassman, pg. 169)
Using Art to Bear Witness

Marian Kolodziej’s art bore witness to the suffering and the grace in the camps at Auschwitz Bierkenau. From the field of art therapy, there are many writings that illustrate bearing witness. “We can witness life passages through art-making in the same way we can witness suffering and special occasions.” (Allen, pg. 79)

“The field of art therapy was formally organized in the late 1960s, at the same time as transpersonal psychology. At its most basic, Farrelly-Hansen (2009) refers to the American Art Therapy’s definition of art therapy as “a human service profession that utilizes art media, images, the creative process and patient/client responses to the created products as reflections of an individual’s development, abilities, personality, interests, concerns, and conflicts.” (pg. 22)

Pat Allen (2005), an art therapist explains the practice of witness, echoing Bernie Glassman’s teachings about bearing witness. “The practice of witness is the state of being present to our images and to each other in compassion, without voicing judgment.” (pg. 61) For Pat, the practice of witness takes the form of “witness writing.” Pat uses witness writing after a client has created a piece of art. “The next practice is that of witness writing about the image. We first recognize the image as fully as we can by becoming still in its presence, becoming aware of our body and breathing. Sitting before the work in a chair and just looking and receiving its message can take several minutes at least. Next, we write in a journal or notebook kept especially for our witness writings in the form of descriptions, observations, intuitive responses, and, especially, dialogue with the image. (Allen, 2005, pgs. 8 - 9) Pat also writes about the role of witnessing in a group. “Witness is also a key element in creating communal space that is safe and allows multiple truths to unfold.” (Allen, 2005, pgs. 65-66)
From the *Bearing Witness Survey* and interviews, Buddhist Chaplains comment about the variety of ways of using art to bear witness.

Participant 23 uses Japanese calligraphy with clients/patients in the HIV/AIDS hospice.

Participant 20 uses narrative life stories for staff and patients at a hospital.

On Halloween, Participant 9 used blank masks to explore with incarcerated youth the ways in which we armor our hearts. He writes, “I sat with ten teenage boys, as we invoked our ‘presentations’ to the world. In the words of the definition itself, I committed ’myself to bearing witness by encountering each creation with respect and dignity and allowing myself to be touched by the joys and pain of the universe.”"

At a college, Participant 17 uses photography in her Science of Happiness class. She writes that, “One of the assignments is to have students go out into the local community with the theme of happiness on their mind and capture what they observe in photos.” Participant 13 uses poetry in her mindfulness classes at a university.

Participant 3 created a website, Greatbigcrazylove.com, to share stories and photos of bearing witness.

Participant 19 uses her own written poetry in “public talks where I share these words or the words of other poets that speak to this soft way to be with the hardness in life.” Participant 2 also uses poetry. “Sharing not my own, but others' poems, is often a way for me to indicate that I've heard, or tried to hear, the story being shared.”

For her family, Participant 21 creates woven gifts for Christmas, weddings, and new members (baby blankets) to her family. She writes, “It is my way of celebrating. I am working on a woven scroll using materials from the fires we had this summer as a way of bearing witness to the suffering, my own and others - particularly the wildlife - that resulted from the fire.”
To honor her sister who has ALS, Participant 18 has an ongoing photo album on Facebook called "Awakening Joy."

Participant 11 bears witness through both writing and sculptures. He writes, “I've written short stories about interactions with people wherein deeper levels of person-hood are revealed through the events in the stories. I've created sculptures for sacred spaces, and in honor of sacred events. I've used the medium of sculpture to investigate, catalyze, and observe my own transformation, to enliven spaces, and to harmonize with energetic qualities of spaces and people.”

In particular, Participant 11 recalls bearing witness to himself, a time when his sculptures were created out of a state of deep meditative state. “I remember this from the first time that I felt my sculpture came alive for me. The first one was when I totally set aside what I consider conventional views about what furniture should be. I'd recently had a near death experience. I made a table that was in the form of a flowing stream. I was pretty young, 31, actually, when I made this table that looked like a river. I actually thought that I was going crazy when I did it. In a way I was. Nobody would understand it. It was the beginning of this incredible vein of work that I was starting. I realized that, at this point, I needed to stop what I thought others wanted and start creating from what was within myself. In the mid-80s when I began doing sculpture, I lost myself in it. I lost my separate identify when I was making it. I got this strong sense that it was using me to make itself. There were a lot of separate pieces in it, I just knew what it needed next, it really built itself, it just came to me, in total absorption, then I went home. When I came back, I was right in the same thing, it was a state of absorption, a deep meditative state that was creating itself through me. Those kinds of experiences really informed and changed my work a
lot. My art became more meditative, everything that I did was clear, no doubt about what to do next, I was in the groove.”

Participant 15 gives a different perspective, of using art objects in a person’s house to look at the suffering and joy of another. “One of the tools that I use is to comment on artistic objects that others might have in their environment. It offers an opportunity to explore a part of their life, not just from a cognitive point of view of their choices and aesthetics. Often there is a story associated with objects that they have. Likewise I can imagine, in a sense, to use art or to visualize somehow, to create a different way of experiencing suffering or joy.”

Bearing witness to her self, Participant 10 writes, “I have painted from my own need and, at times, from the joy of creation. It was always amazing to witness the forms that came out of joy.”

At Upaya Zen Center’s program, Being with Dying, Participant 5 writes about an art activity they did using sand trays. “In pairs, we would bear witness to each other as we told stories from our personal lives and illustrated them in three dimensions, using sand, natural objects and found objects. We then would mirror back to each other what we had seen and heard from each other.”

Suzanne Lovell (2009), art therapist, summarizes how the arts give us a doorway to “the original ground of our being.” She writes, “Spontaneous experiences in the arts, i.e. opening to the imaginable and what wants to express itself through us, bring us home again and again, healing wounds, evoking wonder, teaching us the next step to take in our lives. Again and again it invites us back to experience and bear witness to the original ground of our being. It is mysterious; and mystery invites ‘surrender.’ It invites us to participate in the flow of life itself, to accept both mortality and immortality as the paradoxic blessing of being human.” (Lovell, S.,
2009) (Cited in Farrelly-Hansen, M., 2009, pg. 199) It is this original ground of our being that is related to the pursuit of the true self, a foundational idea in Buddhist teachings. Understanding that art can bear witness to the original ground of our being, of the suffering and the joys, what can we learn from classic Buddhist teachings about the pursuit of the true self through meditation, and also from Buddhist Chaplains about their personal experiences of meditation, bearing witness and art?
Section Three: Chaplains and Artists Reflect on Practice and Bearing Witness

In the book, *On Zen Practice*, Maezumi Roshi and Bernie Glassman (2002) write about becoming one with whatever you do and about discovering true nature. “So, in order to realize Buddha nature, we have to employ the right means in the right way to actually find the gold.” (pg. 7) “Right means is a wholeheartedness, ‘to become one with whatever you do.’ This becoming one is the key.” (Maezumi & Glassman, 2002, pg. 8) Perhaps this is analogous to what Suzanne Lovell wrote about the arts inviting us back again and again, “to experience and bear witness to the original ground of our being.” Becoming one with the original ground of one’s being can be experienced through creating art to bear witness.

Maezumi and Glassman (2002) emphasize that, “Dogen Zenji states that to realize the true self is the major aim of our practice.” (p. 139) To discover this true self is why we practice. Eihei Dogen writes in “Bendowa” from the *Shobogenzo* that, “The Dharma, the subtle Dharma that has been transmitted by all Buddha-Tathagatas, is abundantly inherent in each individual; yet without practice it will not be manifested, and without enlightenment it will not be perceived . . .” (Maezumi & Glassman, 2002, p. 3)

“When Shakyamuni Buddha first realized his true nature – and, in so doing, realized the true nature of all beings – he said that from the beginning, all beings are intrinsically perfect, sharing the virtues and wisdom of the awakened Buddha. But, he said, we remain unaware of this simply because our understanding is topsy – turvey. The Buddha spent the remainder of his life after his awakening enlarging up this statement, and teaching how each of us can realize this truth for ourselves through practice.” (Maezumi and Glassman, 2002, p. 3-4).
Philipppe Coupey, Hakuun Yasutani, and Maezumi Roshi’s commentaries about two classic texts written by Dogen Zenji, the *Fukazazengi* and the *Genjokoan* provide further understanding of the Way, practice (zazen), and true self. Phillipe Coupey (2006) comments on the *Fukazazengi* that Dogen wrote in 1227, while Yasutani and Maezumi comment on the *Genjokoan*, which is a chapter from Dogen Zenji’s *Shobogenzo*, a Zen Buddhist classic written in 1223. With this understanding from Buddhist teachings, it will be more evident to see how creating art can also be considered “a practice” as it relates to pursuing the Way and the realization of one’s true nature, true self, or original self.

Coupey’s (2006) commentary on the *Fukazazengi* first explains, “Fukan means ‘recommended for the people’ – guidelines not just for priests and monks but for lay people as well: zazen is seated meditation: gi is a law, principle, or practice.” (pg. xvii) In the opening sentences of the *Fukazazengi*, Dogen writes, “The Way is fundamentally perfect. It penetrates everything. How could it depend on practice and realization?” Coupey (2006) comments, “What he means is, why is it necessary to add anything at all to what is already there? Why add anything to ourselves or to our egos? Why should we try to increase or decrease anything at all? The Way is everywhere, so why go looking for it?” (p. 3) Further, Coupey (2006) writes, “These first few lines of the *Fukazazengi* are striking and deep. Dogen is saying that the Way is not dependent on the practice of zazen or on the satori of Buddha or any other master.” (Coupey, p. 4) My personal interpretation is that Dogen is saying that the Way is not guaranteed only by zazen, that it is always present in all things, and can occur in many ways, not limited to just zazen.

In *Flowers Fall*, Hakuun Yasutani’s (1996) commentary of the *Genjokoan*, he interprets the meaning of the word *genjokoan*, writing that “Everything is your original self that is perfectly
without lack and is completely fulfilled in itself. Don’t be surprised. That is genjokoan.” (pg. 9)

To sum it up, *genjokoan* means “everything in a person’s life is the living of the Buddha way.” (p. 12). This understanding is based on Yasutani’s (1996) explanation that,

\ldots *genjo* is phenomena. It’s the whole universe. It’s all mental and physical phenomena. However, it is mental phenomena that ought to be emphasized. *Koan* is derived from the word *official document*, and is used to mean the unerring absolute authority of the Buddha-dharma. So then, *genjokoan* means that the subjective realm and the objective realm, the self and all things in the universe, are nothing but the true Buddha-dharma itself. (pg. 7)

In a more concrete way, “*Genjokoan* means what is manifest (*genjo*) is itself absolute reality (*koan*). It means all phenomena are the supreme way. The supreme way is the original self.” (Yasutani, 1996, pg. 8)

Maezumi and Glassman (2002) comment about the opening sentences in the *Genjokoan*, explaining how genjokoan is the “way of everyday life,” “to identify with all phenomena, is enlightenment.” Here are the opening sentences from the commentary:

When all dharmas are Buddhadharma, there are enlightenment and delusion, practice, life and death, buddhas and creatures. When the ten thousand dharmas are without self, there are not delusion, no enlightenment, no buddhas, no creatures no life and no death. The Buddha Way transcends being and on-being; therefore there are life and death, delusion and enlightenment, creatures and buddhas.

About these sentences, Maezumi and Glassman say,

Actually, each sentence is saying the same thing from different perspectives. For example, we can say, ‘When all dharmas are Buddhadharma, there is *no* enlightenment,
no delusion, no buddhas, no creatures, no life, and no death.’ Because everything is
Buddhadharma, everything is reality itself, everything is ‘genjokoan, the way of everyday
life.’ Consequently, there is no delusion, no enlightenment, no life, and no death apart
from it. To see this, to identify ourselves with all phenomena, is enlightenment.
(Maezumi & Glassman, 2002, pg. 140)

Through the Genjokoan, these teachers are writing that enlightenment is when we
identify ourselves with all phenomena. This is the original or true self. To realize this self is why
we practice. In fact, Maezumi and Glassman (2002) give us a view of this connection between
enlightenment and practice. “Buddhism views enlightenment from two different perspectives: as
original enlightenment, and as enlightenment achieved through practice. Master Dogen
emphasizes shikantaza and original enlightenment. In other words, he believes that practice and
enlightenment are one. Practice is enlightenment, enlightenment is practice.” (pg. 91)

Art therapist Bernie Marek (2009) writes from his experience of observing his patients
creating art. In his writings, there seems to be a glimpse of how even through art, one might
experience something related to enlightenment. In his writing, he quotes Hayward (1995):
Everything is alive and connected to everything else in a way that is vital to the world’s
existence. We have perceptions and awareness, so that all of this beautiful and powerful
world comes within our experience. Everything works together. It is so ordinary, we
usually don’t think twice about it. But that ordinary world is sacred and magical when we
look again, when we feel it, see it, hear it, open all our senses to its profundity. (p. 3)
(cited in Marek, 2009, pg. 53)

Hayward (1995) continues:
We cannot control or conquer this sacred world, although we spend much of our life trying to do just that. We can connect with it and feel that we, too, are a sacred part of it. When we relax all of our ideas about the world, all of our interpretations, and just let ourselves see and hear it as it is, we connect ourselves directly to it. This experience of direct connection might seem extremely simple, but it is profound. It is a glimpse of the sacred world. (p.3) (Cited in Marek, 2009, pg. 54)

There is a caution about enlightenment where Maezumi and Glassman (2002) use one of Buddha’s analogies.

If you seek after enlightenment, enlightenment will elude you. Yet without seeking after it, you will never realize it. Buddha uses the analogy of the rich person’s son who, having forgotten who he is, starts wandering as a beggar from place to place. After many years spent wandering in this way, trying to discover his identity, he finally arrives at his original home and suddenly remembers his inheritance. When we really discover our true self, our treasure house will open and we will be able to use it at will. (pg. 148)

How can one become aware of the true self? To this, Maezumi and Glassman (2002) suggest,

In a way it seems contradictory, for Dogen Zenji has written that it’s not really a matter of practice or enlightenment. If this is true, then why do we have to practice? But again that goes back to the two aspects of our practice: Speaking from the intrinsic perspective, of course, we say that fundamentally we are all buddhas and there is no need for anything such as practice or enlightenment since that is our true nature anyway. But the problem is that we may only believe that theoretically; we don’t know it firsthand. To become directly aware of it and know it fully is why we practice. (pg. 24)

To realize the true self is why we practice, but it is more than just meditation. Meditation cultivates one’s mental consciousness for applying to other situations in one’s life. This is
highlighted by the *Bearing Witness Survey* and interview comments of Buddhist Chaplains about meditation, bearing witness and using art to bear witness.

Participant 4 says that meditation “helps me to concentrate more, to keep my mind and be aware of my own body and sensing in to her, and being present, instead of mind wandering or thinking. So, the practice of sitting helps me to also sit with her (a friend she bore witness to), because it’s like two of us sitting. I am there in the same way. I’m actively there in the same way that I might sit to meditate. It’s a practice with a more open awareness when you bring another person in to it. But, the ability is developed by concentration practice.”

Participant 22, “Through meditation practice, I experience a more expanded view and a quieter mind and view. I am less in a state of reaction, problem-solving so I can bear witness better and come closer to not being in that state of duality that is part of problem solving, fixing, changing and so forth. It’s the slowing down so that I receive from meditation and the expanded view of my meditation, and the awareness of my open hear that support bearing witness.”

Participant 14 observes, “Mindfulness, shamata practice, creates the strength and stability to hold our minds, so that rather than jumping ahead, I can stay within the space, because I have some resiliency and strength, staying with the breath, staying with the moment, without layering conceptual mind over it. It’s a practice. But, I can have pause to a situation, to experientially develop a trust in that which arises through the bearing witness. There can be some relaxation in to it, and some trust in it.”

Participant 15 said, “What I find is that there are few days that I miss meditation in the morning. On the days that I do, I lack the ability to be present with someone in the way that I am accustomed to. Meditation practice provides a touchstone to come back throughout the day; it helps cultivate spaciousness in my responses and in my ability to be present. So I find that the
meditation practice gives me the opportunity to be fully present with whatever is in front of me, not with my idea of what is in front of me.”

Participant 9 comments about what happens when he doesn’t sit. “I try to sit before work, sometimes an hour. Or I do my nundra practice. I’ve been doing juvenile justice for five years, and have been sitting with the kids. Over the last two years, with regular sitting practice, I notice my ability to be fully embodied in the room has dramatically increased and is correlated to the amount of time I practice. When I miss one day, like last week because of the storm or the holiday, I could feel my body not being present in the room, a felt sense. I notice it enough that my ability to bear witness is subtly affected, it’s not quite as tangible as when I sit every morning.”

Based on bearing witness experiences, Participant 1 says, “A steady practice of meditation has brought me and others to a place of much more equanimity, of not being caught up in the rhetoric, the emotion. It reminds me of being present in San Francisco for the anti-war demonstration, before we went to war in Iraq. I participated with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. What I noticed was that just sitting there quietly, I heard the speeches, the words and the emotions came in and went out. Whereas, if I wasn’t meditating, I think would have been much more inclined to get up in the emotion of the speech, the rah-rah of it. Just being there, just being a silent presence, or a meditative presence, spoke volumes to a lot of people. We were there to oppose the war, but we were not creating more harm, not posing anyone as an enemy, or creating any fiction about we-they. The practice of meditation allows me to develop more qualities like equanimity, peace, and meditating at the time in some ways supports that, or allows me to keep that quality rather than get caught up in the emotion of what is going on.”
Participant 11 says, “Meditation for me is a practice of absorption, which really means, ‘being one with.’ So, if you can be in absorption with the breath, or with the field, where the sense arises, the practice is the practice of non-self. Bearing witness is also a practice of non-self. Bearing witness implies; it can imply another person you are bearing witness to or with, or it can be bearing witness to your own consciousness, it can be the same in either way. With me, the meditative practice is essential. To be able to concentrate and become absorbed, it enables me to totally be absorbed in the condition of that other person. Whereas, without a strong meditative practice, I could not concentrate--I would be constantly distracted by thoughts and feelings; I would not be able to keep the same state of absorption. I was sitting with this dying man who was 95. I don’t think I had a stray thought the whole time, because I was absorbed with what he was absorbed in. It was the same process as when I’m on the cushion. I wasn’t absorbed in my breath. I was absorbed in this other person. For me, that’s what bearing witness in chaplaincy is, the ability to be absorbed with another person.”

Participant 7 comments, “In Zen, just sit. Just breathe. This practice is critical in being present with someone. It’s a cultivated state, a cultivated state of grace, that when practiced enough, stays with you when you are bearing witness. That presiding presence, just being with suffering, just bearing witness, just breathing, just sitting with. For me, meditation, my meditation is a practice in groundedness in being in my body, and all of the cultivated skills that come with that, are required when I am sitting with people. If I am not grounded in that practice, of what I practice in meditating, I am too consumed in their world, in their suffering. I find myself lost, and wanting to fix it fast, because I can’t sit in it. If you are practicing meditation, a practice in being with yourself and with your breath, using right concentration and right mindfulness to do that, it becomes an automatic seat you take when you bear witness.”
“It’s the same thing with art,” Participant 7 says. “When you’re meditating, practicing the Four Noble Truths or the Eightfold Path, you’re creating art within that realm. Just looking at meditation, how multi-dimensional can I experience my breath? The human being breathing breath itself is art. The interconnectedness of everything, interdependent co-arising, this is all art as you watch it dance before you and in you. I believe it is the art we begin to experience through meditation that allows us to find and feel the connection and compassion that we look for. Art, the expression of the path, it’s what gets us there. How creative can we be with the power of our imagination?”

Reflecting the teaching of Maezumi and Glassman about “becoming one with,” Participant 5 wrote, “If you consider bearing witness to being one with, meditation supports the ‘being one with.’ Bearing witness is a powerful way to move beneath the surface of the known, to that which lies beneath. A wonderful form of bearing witness that includes risk taking for all involved. The practice of meditation, I believe, helps to cultivate the great deal of trust and skill necessary to follow this path of revelation wherever it may lead. Even if frightening at times, to explore the depths of spirit and imagination in this way is well worth the risk. When both parties are willing and able, sharing the path of inquiry and discovery with another is profoundly healing. Meditation practice cultivates the courage, the ability to stay, to have equanimity. The courage is required to enter in to the not-knowing for most of us. Along with equanimity is compassion, cultivating and deepening compassion through meditation. Meditation deepens your attention, your ability to attend, breaking down the separation, so compassion is likely to arise more naturally. The side of bearing witness is recognition of self in others with compassion, is strengthened through meditation, learning to attend and being courageous. Meditation cultivates
that ability, the realization, breaking down the separation between self and other, to bring loving kindness to the situation.”

“In my experience, as an artist,” Participant 5 continues, “there’s no time when I am less self-conscious than when I am engaged in making things, when I’m truly engaged, when I’m paying attention, my self becomes very transparent, very porous. So, the healing itself of self and other is that losing of separation that comes from paying attention. I think the making of art is an act of love. It’s a being with, creative interplay, that playful engagement with. Meditation trains the heart-mind body to enter into the field more gracefully, with more ease. Just as anything else, practice eases the transition, makes it more fluid.”

Participant 17 shares that, “My definition of art is not what is classic. I plop art in museums. Photography can be out in the world. Artistic expression doesn’t have to be framed, doesn’t have to be sculpted. It’s about the art of conversation. It’s about the art of relationship. Art is a way of being. The art is the flow of life. It goes back to my analogy, of taking time to settle down, to expand my view. This relationship between, on the one side is that practice brings me a settled perspective and expanded perspective, on the other it is the art of eloquent engagement, through speech, relationship, between me and the other. It’s like an old slinky, art to practice, practice to art, it takes form through the Four Noble Truths.” Takes form through the Four Noble Truths? Or perhaps it is the Four Noble Truths taking form through art? This is the exploration of the next section, the interfolding of the Four Noble Truths and art.
Section Four: Bearing Witness and Art Reflect the Four Noble Truths

Participant 22, a Buddhist Chaplain, interfolds art, bearing witness and the Four Noble Truths. She says:

With true art, I can know my connection to life. It could be in any way. Generally, it is through a feeling of goodness, about the beauty of life. Sometimes, it can take me to another place, and I know my connection to either a positive or negative place. That’s probably why I appreciate art, I know myself as part of the web of life, and in that, of course can more skillfully bear witness. (In relating art to the Four Noble Truths), the first thing that comes to mind is photography. I took many pictures on the pilgrimage to Mustang. Photography is a form of art. And, as I review the images that I took or others took, I recall on a bodily level my connection to the people and the landscape and the teachings and the art there on the trip. In that I felt connected through them, no separation, no duality.

Similarly, the Four Noble Truths are hard to separate. I can see all four of them through my experience in Mustang. There was suffering that we saw, that we witnessed, that we witnessed within our selves, as well as within others and the landscape. I have photos of all of that. There was a path to the end of that, and there was an end to that, there was great joy. I don’t have anything other than the pure truths to refer to.

The Four Noble Truths have helped me in accepting suffering, and knowing that there is freedom, or following acceptance is a freedom, more of a light-heartedness, and that I feel I can bear witness with a lighter heart, particularly bearing witness to suffering with a
lighter heart, than I could have prior to practicing with the Four Noble Truths. There is a quality of acceptance and light heartedness, those qualities are something for me to practice because just by my temperament, I can let things get a little too heavy, and forget that the Four Noble Truths are, ultimately about freedom and joy, and I can get too focused on the suffering.

This section provides a commentary of Buddhist Chaplains about bearing witness, art and the Four Noble Truths from the Bearing Witness Survey and interviews.

My realization of using art to bear witness happened after about a six month period that was marked by my personal experience of bearing witness at the Auschwitz-Bierkenau Bearing Witness Retreat, followed by many months of personal study and writing of The Four Noble Truths and a daily meditation practice. Drawing from the experience of surveyed and interviewed Buddhist Chaplains, the importance of the Four Noble Truths is revealed, and viewed through the lens of bearing witness and art.

The Four Noble Truths, the Buddha’s first teaching are 1) the truth of suffering, 2) the truth that there is an origin of suffering, 3) that truth that suffering ceases, and 4) the truth that there is a path to the end of suffering. The Dalai Lama (1997) says, “In fact, if you don’t understand the Four Noble Truths, and if you have not experienced the truth of this teaching personally, it is impossible to practice Buddha Dharma.” (pg. 1)

While the words of the Four Noble Truths appear simple, a personal understanding of the depth and breadth of these teachings takes time, effort, mindfulness and practice.

To experience this truth for oneself, Sumedho (1992) says, “A Noble Truth is a truth to reflect upon, it is not an absolute; it is not The Absolute.” (p. 15) The Four Noble Truths “are a lifetime’s reflection. They require an ongoing attitude of vigilance and they provide the context
for a lifetime of examination.” (p. 13) Sumedho reminds us to realize the value of teachings through one’s personal experience, as it is encouraged in the Kalama Sutta:

- Do not believe anything on mere hearsay.
- Do not believe in traditions merely because they are old and have been handed down for many generations and in many places.
- Do not believe anything on account of rumors or because people talk a great deal about it.
- Do not believe anything because you are shown the written testimony of some ancient sage.
- Do not believe in what you have fancied, thinking that, because it is extraordinary, it must have been inspired by a god or other wonderful being.
- Do not believe anything merely because presumption is in its favor, or because the custom of many years inclines you to take it as true.
- Do not believe anything merely on the authority of your teachers and priests.
- But, whatever, after thorough investigation and reflection, you find to agree with reason and experience, as conducive to the good and benefit of one and all and of the world at large, accept only that as true, and shape your life in accordance with it.
- The same text, said the Buddha, must be applied to his own teachings.
- Do not accept any doctrine from reverence, but first try it as gold is tried by fire.

Realizing the truth of these teachings benefits from reflection, meditation practice, and mindfulness. Someone could easily read about the Four Noble Truths, and understand them conceptually, as ideas. Understanding becomes wisdom when one observes and experiences a personal awareness reflected through the lens of the Noble Truths.
“The reason why Buddha laid so much emphasis on developing insight into the nature of suffering is because there is an alternative - there is a way out, it is actually possible to free oneself from it. This is why it is so crucial to realize the nature of suffering, because the stronger and deeper your insight into suffering is, the stronger your aspiration to gain freedom from it becomes.” (Dalai Lama, 1997, pgs. 38-39)

In Tenzin Gyato’s (1994) book on *The Four Noble Truths*, he says, “As a Buddhist practitioner, understanding the Four Noble Truths is really the main education – if I can use that word – upon which to set up our entire Buddhist practice. In fact the Four Noble Truths encompass all Buddhist teachings.” (p. 149)

The Dalai Lama gives advice about the way the Four Noble Truths are presented. He (1997) says that…

…the order in which the Four Noble Truths are taught has nothing to do with the order in which things arise in reality. Rather, it is related to the way an individual should go about practicing the Buddhist path, and attain realizations based on that practice. (pgs. 36 - 37)

Geshe Tashi Tsering’s (2005), in his book *The Four Noble Truths*, writes about the way the Buddha described each of the Four Noble Truths. “The Buddha describes each of the Noble Truths three times, to distinguish between the different ways of perceiving and experiencing suffering.” (p. 31)

An important aspect of gaining insights into the Four Noble Truths is supported by the individual’s meditation practice and reflection, even though the explicit linkage to meditation is not described until the Fourth Noble Truth.
From interviews about bearing witness, Buddhist Chaplains Participant 1, Participant 11, Participant 5, and Participant 9 each share their personal experience of bearing witness, art, and the Four Noble Truths.

About her experience sitting silently at San Quentin prison, waiting for an execution, Participant 1 comments about the Four Noble Truths:

About the First Noble Truth, “In any execution there is a good deal of suffering. Suffering not only on the part of the perpetrator, but the victim’s family, the perpetrator’s family, those of us who are opposed to the death penalty, even those who are in favor, at a very deep level, there is suffering. It is the suffering that brings people to support the death penalty with an erroneous belief that this will bring closure, or make it okay.

The Second Noble Truth, I suppose the clinging has to do with the erroneous belief that revenge or an eye for an eye is going to help things, somehow assuage the crime that’s been done. I think people hold pretty tightly to that belief, and pretty tightly to the idea that the perpetrator is somehow evil, or deserves what’s happening, that he’s a bad person, it’s their just due. It would be a crime not to do that, to let them somehow get away with it, or not suffer the way the victim suffered.

The Third Noble Truth. Each side assumes that their belief will bring an end to suffering. Of course, my action in bearing witness, or being a silent witness, is a part of that is the idea of alleviating suffering, by bringing attention in a noticeable way that this is not okay. That taking a name of a life in the name of the state does not make it ok. It actually increases the suffering for those involved. So, the silent process, or the silent being there from my perspective is compassion, my way of being a part of ending suffering.
The Eightfold Path. There’s in some way, all of it, right view, right intention. What is our intention, what is the state’s intention? I’ve read that some of the people that participate, the doctor that administers the drug, back away from responsibility by saying, ‘I’m just doing my job. I’ve been ordered to do this. I will carry out the order.’ It doesn’t seem to be ‘right livelihood.’ For me, nobody involved in seeing an execution is following right livelihood, or right action, and very often not right speech. Meditation, concentration, and effort are all involved in some way or other, with all of us.”

Participant 11 who serves in hospice care, shares about death, dying, bearing witness, and the Four Noble Truths:

“With dying, with death, there is always some measure of suffering. That’s definitely the First Noble Truth. The reason for suffering with dying is overwhelming, attachment to the life one has known. Being willing to look in to the face of suffering. To deal with the aversion that naturally arises, whether it is my pain or someone else’s, there is an aversion that arises. To be in touch with the First Noble Truth, I have to recognize that aversion. And recognition that something is arising and still stays present. That’s the first level of bearing witness, to acknowledge that there is suffering present, and to not turn away from it.

The causes (the Second Noble Truth), there needs to be a certain amount of inner clarity to even perceive the causes of another person’s suffering, without getting them mixed up in my own mind, without getting insulted, hurt, to just recognize that the causes are transpersonal, universal, and not about me. If I’m with someone who pushes my buttons, and sets me off, then there is no way to bear witness. If I’m going to look into the causes of suffering, I have to be able to get past my own reactivity to what I am perceiving in the other person. If I can bear witness to myself, to what is going on within my own system while in the presence of someone else who is
sitting in front of me, I can give clear attention to them. Once it was a woman whose husband
was just placed in a mental institution, who was very upset with me. I had to be able to sort that
out, not get lost in my own reactivity, aware that there are causes, there are reasons for her
suffering, which has nothing to do with me.

The way out of suffering (the Third Noble Truth), I think, becomes most clear when I
have a degree of empathy, that I can feel it in my own self. So, what I present as a way out
comes out of my experience in that moment, versus what I might think the other person should
be doing. And it’s not being afraid to empathize with the wife who has been married to the 95-
year-old dying man for forty years and is watching him die, to recognize what’s going on with
her, and what my reactions are, and then to not do that in a way that divorces me from her
feelings, but actually feel what she’s feeling. Bringing myself back in to equanimity, then the
way becomes clear, rather than suggesting what she needs to do to find a way through it.

The Eightfold Path, how would that apply? I think that would apply to a person’s life.
Right view, there has to be a view, a point of view that is not about me. There has to be a point of
view that includes the other person and the universality of what is going on. There would have to
be a right view of what is happening. Right aspiration would be to seek the highest spirit that
could come for this situation, whatever that might be. Right speech, I think that’s pretty clear.”

Participant 5 commented about the Four Noble Truths after reflecting on an exercise in
Upaya’s “Being with Dying” program. Participant 5 describes the exercise as sand tray work
where “... in pairs, we would bear witness to each other as we told stories from our personal
lives as we illustrated them in three dimensions, using sand, natural objects and found objects.
We then would mirror back to each other what we had seen and heard from each other.”
Reflecting on this experience she related the Four Noble Truths, “The suffering of separation, of attachment to story, as something separate. I think that sometimes stories can isolate us. That is suffering (the First Noble Truth). The origin of suffering (the Second Noble Truth). Is when then the process of telling the story touches and explores the origin of suffering. The cessation (the Third Noble Truth) is the loving attention, the ability of the person who is listening to attend closely to the person’s story, joining together in the field of the story. The path (the Fourth Noble Truth) being their ability to attend, to pay attention, to be stable and not know, that’s the path.”

Other Buddhist Chaplains commented on their experience with bearing witness, art and one or more of the Four Noble Truths.

Participant 14 who serves women in prison says, “I think the First Noble Truth is to know that we suffer. So the process of bearing witness is really to explore if that is true. In what ways do I personally suffer? Having an awareness of the three tenets and the various causes of suffering, I can bear witness through observation and curiosity, to really explore the first two truths. In this way, it’s more than just some dogma or something we are supposed to believe blindly, we bear witness to it in our own lives; we experience it and know it on a deep level. It (the Four Noble Truths) is really just bearing witness, experiencing it, touching it, knowing the fabric of it.”

Participant 15 who serves in a hospice comments, “In studying the Four Noble Truths, what it has done for me, has allowed me to not just touch in to personal suffering, but the collective suffering. Likewise, when I practice and study the path leading out of suffering, I really get a visceral sense, as well as an anecdotal sense, it doesn’t lead just me out of suffering, but others as well. Specifically, I’m thinking of bearing witness; it provides me with the
opportunity to touch in to another person’s suffering without getting lost in it. It allows me to keep my ground. Likewise on the cushion, it allows me to touch into my own suffering without getting lost in it.”

Participant 4, a Buddhist Chaplain who, in bearing witness to a friend, explains her struggles reflected this as the First and Second Noble Truths. She comments, “I think that she would characterize her experience as suffering (the First Noble Truth) as I listened, and it seemed to me she was stuck in her way of thinking about it, and that her thinking and her sense of how it should be solved, her attachment to being solved (the Second Noble Truth), was causing her suffering.”

Participant 17, a Buddhist Chaplain who teaches a university class called “The Science of Happiness,” gives students an assignment to “go out into the local community with the theme of happiness on their mind and capture what they observe in photos.” Her observations of what her students see and capture, reflects using art to bear witness and the Third Noble Truth. She comments, "The art is embedded in this in two ways. One is about creating the mindset, pausing, creating the container, having the students contemplate a theme. That is bearing witness, bringing this focus of happiness, to really just get it, feel it, taste it, bring it in to your whole being. My delight is in them having the true experience of seeing how many things that you pass that are joyous. The photo is the finger pointing at the moon. It’s the reminder that when you take a moment, you can alter your view. That’s delightful. Look at that, and seeing young adults taste that lesson.”

Participant 7, a Buddhist Chaplain, comments not only on the relationship between art and the Four Noble Truths, but she concludes with a few questions that frame the purpose of Section Five: Demonstration Project of Bearing Witness using Art. She comments, “I see life as
art. I see each person as a piece of art. I see my own creation through my mind as art. I see perception as art. There’s art in the creation of suffering. There’s art in how you get there. There’s art in how you move away. There’s art in the transformation. There’s art in the path. It’s different for everyone. You can watch that in people by the way they think and what they do, and how they act. That’s their personal play with the art of life, and how they play with the Four Noble Truths, with suffering and the path to freedom. How can I express that to myself more vividly? How can I keep myself entertained with my own art?” To Participant 7’s questions, I would add, “How to serve and bear witness?”
Section Five: Demonstration Project of Bearing Witness using Art

From previous sections, bearing witness, meditation practice, the Four Noble Truths and art were interfolded by the words and ideas of Buddhist teachers, art therapists, and Buddhist Chaplains who completed a survey and were interviewed. Even though many of the Chaplains shared their experience of using art to bear witness, how could I serve as a Chaplain using art? What does it look like, using art to bear witness? This was the purpose of my demonstration project, to develop a practice of bearing witness that uses art, in service to another person(s).

To accomplish this purpose, the demonstration project was designed with an email invitation to participate in a 90-minute session of bearing witness to the participant, and in that experience to create an abstract piece of art using house paints on polycarbonate paper, followed by a short questionnaire. The details of the process, the art, and the participants’ survey responses are presented in Appendix C.

The following comments from participants highlight the contribution of developing a practice of using art and bearing witness:

- After the painting I had a feeling of fellowship, as if he’d seen me in an intimate way and I’d participated in that ‘seeing.’
- At first I made lots of judgments about the painting. I thought, “He’s going too fast,” or “This has nothing to do with me.” In a way, that was the point for me. To realize that the “I”, whatever “I” am, is fluid, moves, changes, or even disappears.
- During the painting I felt at peace. (After the painting), I was very calm and a feeling of gratitude came over me.
• I appreciated being listened to. I appreciated the nowness of the experience; the aftermath of the painting itself kept us both transfixed to the present moment. I appreciate the shared experience, the intimacy of a close friend taking the time to listen and honor my story, my gestures, and our connectedness.

• I would say that it is a marvelous opportunity to dance with the unknown in every moment. And that in opening up oneself, you are opening to unfolding Life.

• (When the painting was being done), I wanted to stay with my feelings internally and use the painting to ground the experience for me. I felt this is an expression of this moment in time. Unique…never to happen again.

• Finally, I realized afterward that it was the first time I had really spoken to someone else about my cat, Kabuki’s death and how it affected me. I had, of course, spoken to other friends and family about it to one degree or another, but those conversations were usually limited to the usual platitudes that people use about the loss of a loved one. In this session it was different – I talked more about the whole experience of having Kabuki in my life, not just her death. It was cathartic, and something I really needed to do, although I wasn’t aware of that beforehand.

• I saw myself in the painting half way through. I don’t see myself in the painting upon its completion but my essence is bursting thru the finished product. I wonder if the finished painting is actually a microscopic view of my soul? Interesting thought.

My personal observation from the experience of bearing witness with art is that participants would often begin with a difficult or challenging situation, but through bearing witness the conversation would shift to a “lightness.” When the participant’s energy shifted, was typically the moment I was moved to paint. In that moment, when I was painting, it was as if we
were both creating the painting, even though I was the one who was choosing colors. I say this, because at times, I would hear a voice that would give me direction as far as colors and gestures. The paints are fluid on the paper, moving and flowing as we both wait and watch, absorbed in the changes that were taking place before us. What was always surprising was how the imagery of the painting somehow evoked a feeling that the participant was inspired by, imagery that seemed to give them an insight that resonated, that took them inward.

From this demonstration project, I too witness the interfolding of meditation practice and the Four Noble Truths. Before beginning each session, I would consciously recall the view of the Four Noble Truths, and that the person’s true nature was as present as their expressions of suffering, my intention was to transform suffering through bearing witness, a non-judgmental presence (the Fourth Noble Truth). When I sat with the participant, bearing witness, I just listened and asked questions for further inner exploration of feelings and bodily sensations, without suggesting solutions or trying to move the conversation in a direction. Most often, the participant would begin with a situation of suffering. In some cases, I felt my own compassion well up when I had experienced a similar situation. Listening to them, I was witnessing the truth of suffering (the First Noble Truth). During the listening, I was practicing Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration (the Fourth Noble Truth). As I listened, I remember some participants sharing feelings about grasping or craving for something better, of feeling lost and uncertain; these were observations of the origin of suffering (the Second Noble Truth). Returning to the Fourth Noble Truth, my mindfulness of words and phrases was a practice in Right Speech, and the practice of Right Action was when I sensed it was time to create the painting, and also when to stop painting. By the conclusion of the session, there was cessation of suffering (the Third Noble Truth), as I sensed a shift in their energy and perspective.
Through the experiences with participants, I was very appreciative for realizing an art practice where I could sit with a participant in bearing witness to their life, where I could practice the Four Noble Truths, and where I could practice with another person, regardless of their spiritual affiliation. Just the time together, sitting, and creating art out of the space we shared also became a moment of shared practice. It shifted my feelings about my art from being a solitary experience, to being with another, to being absorbed by all that was in the moment of bearing witness.
Section Six: Using Art to Bear Witness as a Chaplain

In earlier sections, Buddhist teachings and the comments from Buddhist Chaplains interfolded bearing witness, meditation practice, art, and the Four Noble Truths. Participant 11, a Chaplain, highlights his personal journey to be more relational to another person, bringing his abilities to go deeper internally as an artist, as a Qigong teacher, and a meditation practitioner, to being with another person. This is the essence of bearing witness as a Chaplain and, if possible, to use one’s art in a way that serves in the moment with the person or persons in front of you, not in isolation. He says, “For me, all of this stuff, the meditation practice, the qi gong, and the art-making, these practices have been fundamentally relational practices. It’s been too much about me. This is one of the reasons why I’m in this chaplaincy program, particularly with today’s culture. In this culture, if you want to make a living with art, you have to be out for yourself. It’s not primarily or fundamentally about relating to other people. I wanted to engage in life in a way that was relational, that’s why I’m in chaplaincy. Chaplaincy is fundamentally relational. It’s different for me from being a teacher, or being an artist. Chaplaincy requires another person in front of you, that’s why I wanted to get in to it. The chaplaincy is fundamentally relational, using that ability to go deeper internally that I learned as an artist, that sensitivity that I learned in qi gong and using it relationally.”

This “going deeper internally” that Participant 11 mentions, is the effort, the practice, the mindfulness that a Chaplain brings to being with the person(s) in front of them. Through their meditation practice and practice with the Four Noble Truths, the Chaplain enriches the quality of bearing witness, and most importantly, our faith and confidence in the Buddha’s teachings.

This sense of confidence and faith can be heard in the comments of Buddhist Chaplains as they reflect on the interrelationship of the Four Noble Truths on bearing witness.
Participant 9 comments about the interconnections. He says, “Through sitting practice I touch in to all Four Noble Truths. I ride all four in the practice. To me, bearing witness is my sitting practice as well. They are all interconnected for me. It’s easy to weave in how my sitting practice weaves into the Four Noble Truths, as well as bearing witness.”

Participant 5 says, “I think the quality of bearing witness is affected by the fact that there is suffering (the First Noble Truth). Bearing witness calls on courage. It calls on tenderness. The fact that there is suffering calls us to gentleness and tenderness. The Second Noble Truth, that suffering has a cause, it has the effect of focusing. The quality of bearing witness might become more focused. In bearing witness we might be attentive to the form of suffering. If we know there is a cause, we might be more directed in our bearing witness; more attentive to what the cause of suffering might be, discerning what the cause might be. The Third Noble Truth, the cessation of suffering. I guess that what comes to mind right now is faith, a sense of confidence in the practice that being with, being one with another, in Buddhism we put our faith in the practice. The third truth is the faith piece that we put our confidence in the practice. Again, I have a hard time separating out the cessation from the path. Maybe the Third Noble Truth is a statement of faith. You put your confidence in it, the Third Noble Truth, which leads to the Fourth Noble Truth, the path to the cessation of suffering. When you have put your confidence in it, you have realized the path, the Fourth Noble Truth, the realization of oneness, of bearing witness.”

Participant 7 echoes this sense of confidence, “Because you know the truth of the Four Noble Truths, you know that there is freedom from suffering, you know it is possible, you know the path. In knowing that path, in sitting with the person, sitting with their suffering, it allows you to just sit. If I didn’t practice the Four Noble Truths in my own life, I wouldn’t be able to sit.
with it. It allows for the compassion. You understand that this being in front of you is suffering in the situations that they have attachment to, aversion to, pain through, you know deep inside the freedom that can arise from it, and you become as a bodhisattva, you can see witness the Four Noble Truths. But you can only see what you, yourself have realized. It’s seeing beyond the veil of what that mind believes about itself. You see behind that because of the experience with the Four Noble Truths. It’s kind of a simultaneous thing. You’re sitting with what is, and you are being in the suffering that exists. But, you simultaneously see the bigger picture of what is happening because of your own experience. It’s the experience that keeps it returning. Knowing that freedom exists allows you to sit with another.”

Participant 4 mirrors how the Four Noble Truths allow one to see the suffering with compassion. “I think that bearing witness arises out of the practices of the Noble Eightfold Path. It would involve right listening and speaking, knowing the time for it. The mindset of having them, of having the Four Noble Truths, is a way to understand what you’re seeing in the suffering and with what you’re seeing, not mistake it for your own. So that I can sit with someone and I can be compassionate and recognize that the suffering in the moment, the immediate moment, is not my suffering, but it is universal.”

Participant 22 comments about the freedom that comes from the Four Noble Truths. She says, “The Four Noble Truths have helped me in accepting suffering, and knowing that there is freedom, or following acceptance is a freedom, more of a light-heartedness, and that I feel I can bear witness with a lighter heart, particularly bearing witness to suffering with a lighter heart than I could have prior to practicing with the Four Noble Truths.”

Through personal practice with bearing witness, meditation, and the Four Noble Truths, even using art, these Buddhist Chaplains are actualizing the teaching of Maezumi Roshi and
Berni Glassman (2002). “So, in order to realize Buddha nature, we have to employ the right means in the right way to actually find the gold.” (pg. 7) “Right means is a wholeheartedness, ‘to become one with whatever you do.’ This becoming one is the key.” (pg. 8)

Bearing witness with art in all its varieties, and with the Demonstration Project, reflects the opportunity for the Chaplain to bear witness, ‘to be one with whatever you do.’ As Bernie Marek (2009) writes, “When we embrace our moment to moment experience without being so attached to it, the separation between ourselves and our experience vanishes, and we are more able to simply be who we are and what we are doing.” (pg. 73)

As a Chaplain, in the moment to moment of being and serving we become peacemakers.

Making peace, alleviating suffering, sharing joy is moment by moment, day by day, as weeks and months go by. Making peace, making things whole, is an endless task. There are many definitions of a peacemaker. One of these that I like most is that a peacemaker, knowing that the well needs water, climbs the mountain to reach the snow, gets a spoonful of snow, comes down, drops it in the well, and goes back up the mountain. She knows that the task is endless but she does as much of it as she can, day after day after day. (Glassman, 1998, pg. 42)
References


Appendix A: Bearing Witness Survey

The purpose of this survey is to explore observations of Buddhist Chaplains about how meditation practices and practice of the Four Noble Truths informs the experience of bearing witness.

1. In your experience as a Buddhist Chaplain, have you found that you practice "bearing witness," in the way described by the Zen Peacemaker tenet? The second tenet of the Zen Peacemakers Order describes bearing witness as: I further commit myself to bearing witness by encountering each creation with respect and dignity and allowing myself to be touched by the joys and pain of the universe.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Sure

2. If yes, please describe a recent experience of bearing witness.

3. Would you say that your meditation practice contributes to the quality of bearing witness?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Sure

4. Would you say that your studies, practice and awareness of the Four Noble Truths contribute to the quality of bearing witness?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Sure

5. Take a moment to reflect on the bearing witness experience you described above, which of the Four Noble Truths do you feel it is related to?
   - The First Noble Truth: the truth of suffering
   - The Second Noble Truth: the origin of suffering
   - The Third Noble Truth: the cessation of suffering
   - The Fourth Noble Truth: the path to the cessation of suffering

6. Have you used art (painting, photography, sculpture, creative writing, or other) to bear witness to the suffering and/or joy of another?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Sure

7. If yes, please briefly describe how you've used art to bear witness.

8. What other thoughts and questions came to you during this survey that you would like to share?
9. May I contact you for a short telephone interview about your survey responses in the next six weeks?
   - Yes
   - No, thank you

10. What is your name and phone number?

11. How long have you been a Buddhist Chaplain (estimated years)?
   - < 1 year
   - 2-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21+ years

12. What is your primary Buddhist affiliation?
   - Theravada
   - Mahayana
   - Vajrayana
   - Other (please specify)

13. How long have you been practicing as a Buddhist?
   - < 5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21+ years

14. How long have you been associated with a Buddhist sangha?
   - < 5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21+ years

15. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

16. What is your age?
   - 21-25 years
   - 26-30 years
   - 31-35 years
   - 36-40 years
   - 41-45 years
   - 46-50 years
- 51-55 years
- 56-60 years
- 61-65 years
- 66-70 years
- 71-75 years
- 76+ years
Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. You described your experience of bearing witness as (participant’s survey response). You felt it was most related to (indicate which Noble Truth they selected). Can you explain a little more about your choice?

2. On the survey, I asked: Would you say that your meditation practice contributes to the quality of bearing witness? You said, (survey response). Could you say more about how the quality of bearing witness is interfolded with your meditation practice?

3. On the survey, I asked: Would you say that your studies, practice and awareness of the Four Noble Truths contributes to the quality of bearing witness? You said, (survey response). Could you say more about how the quality of bearing witness is interfolded with your practice and awareness of each or any of the Four Noble Truths?

4. If applicable, on the survey, you described how you’ve used art to bear witness, could you say more about how your art reflects bearing witness?

5. Which of the Four Noble Truths do you feel it is related to?
   - The First Noble Truth: the truth of suffering
   - The Second Noble Truth: the origin of suffering
   - The Third Noble Truth: the cessation of suffering
   - The Fourth Noble Truth: the path to the cessation of suffering

6. Please describe how your meditation practice affects using art to bear witness?

7. Please describe how your awareness of the Four Noble Truths affects using art to bear witness?
Appendix C: Demonstration Project Survey Responses and Art

Email Invitation

The following email was sent out to approximately 100 personal friends and acquaintances. Recipients were also encouraged to email it to anyone else they felt that it would be of value and interest to. From this email, approximately individuals elected to participate. Interestingly, of these two of the ten individuals were from referrals by individuals who first participated, then took the initiative to contact someone they thought who would be interested to participate.

I would greatly appreciate your participation to complete a project and a thesis for my studies as a Buddhist Chaplain with the Upaya Zen Center and Institute.

My project is about using art to reflect Buddhist teachings and my personal Buddhist practices. You can help me by simply spending some time with me. Our shared time together will allow me to practice being with you and your life, and from this, I will create a small abstract painting right there when we are together.

The painting only takes about 15 minutes (see attached example), then we will talk briefly about it. My only request is that you complete write short essay answers to a few simple questions about the experience. After the painting dries, within a day, I will send it to you in the mail. There isn’t any charge for the time or the painting; there is my gratitude for your participation. You may also forward this invite to anyone else who you feel may benefit from such an opportunity.

Here’s some additional information about how it will work:
• Please email or call me to schedule an appointment.
• During the appointment, I will have some very simple questions to start with, like, “What’s happening in your life right now? Is there anything special or challenging?”
• I will create the painting in front of you using house paint and acrylics mixed with water. The size of the painting is about 12" x 18".
• After we talk about the painting, I’ll give you a sheet of paper with a few questions for you to describe what you experienced (the process, insights about what you shared, ideas, etc.). You can complete the questions either at the end of the session, or respond to me by email within a week.
• When the painting is dried, I’ll send it to you in a cardboard envelope.

Everything that is discussed during our time together is strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. I will be asking for your permission to use selected written comments to weave in to my thesis before my thesis is shared with anyone else. When you submit your comments, you can indicate how you would prefer to have your name documented (first and last name, first name and last name initial, first name initial and last name, first and last name initial, or simply anonymously). In mid-October to mid-December I will send you a final copy, so you can see how your comments and the art
was used. Protecting your privacy is of utmost importance to me and I would never use any personal information that you are not comfortable with being made public.

If you’re interested, here’s more information about how to schedule an appointment:

- **WHEN?** Weekdays after 4pm, or on the weekends from June to August. I prefer earlier in the summer rather than later.
- **HOW LONG?** A minimum of an hour and a half. Up to an hour for the conversation and painting, then up to 30 minutes for talking about it and letting you write your comments, if you want to at that time.
- **WHERE?** My house, 3819 38th Avenue South, Seattle. It can also be arranged for at your or any other place, if at another location provided there is a private area with a moderate sized table where the painting could take place, and where the painting is allowed to dry naturally for at least a day.
- **ALLERGIES?** I use water-based house paints in very small quantities that is pretty odorless. So, if you are sensitive, I would not advise your participation.

If you would like, you’re welcome to share this invitation with someone else who might benefit. Please make sure they let me know you referred them.

**Post-Session Questionnaire**

After completing the art in the participant’s scheduled session, and a brief exchange of what they experienced, each person completed a short survey. Their responses to the following questions are presented in the remainder of this section:

- What did you share in your conversation?
- What did you feel, think, or sense DURING the painting?
- What did you feel, think, or sense AFTER the painting?
- What else would you like to say?
- What would you say to someone you feel could benefit from this type of experience?

**Art and Questionnaire Responses from Each Session**

Session #1 with C.B. on 7/17/11

My personal summary: During my time with C.B., she expressed that she wanted to have access to her authenticity, and that there are aspects of her personal life that she’s walking through right now, to have something flow in her life.

Questionnaire responses:

1. What did you share in your conversation? The prevalent theme was touching in to the grief I am feeling around my decision and desire to divorce. I am deeply sad about the loss of my relationship with Donald, my marriage, my home, and lifestyle. I am also deeply saddened over the loss of the dream of what this marriage and life together would be.
2. What did you feel, think, or sense during the painting? I related my current state with the images that unfolded. When Mark dropped the blue ink onto the paper, it looked very much like the heart organ. The color blue as the color for my heart felt very right. As the paint continued to spread, it changed into a transparent leaf, reminding me that everything changes. I felt safe watching the painting unfold, trusting there was something larger at work than either Mark or I could see, but were aware of.

3. What did you feel, think, or sense after the painting. Complete. Seen. Heard. Felt. I felt complete. I also felt seen, heard, and felt by Mark.

4. The session had a therapeutic effect for me. The questions Mark asked helped me to see a little deeper into myself. Mark's curiosity allowed my curiosity to come out more. I was curious to see where the conversation would take us. I had a very high degree of trust in the process and in Mark. I'm looking forward to receiving my painting so I can sit with it. My sense is I will continue to garner information that is important to me from the painting.

5. I would encourage anyone who is curious about their life to do this process with Mark. I know information comes to us in a multitude of ways, and this is a really interesting way to access it.

Session #2 with R.M. on 7/17/11

My personal summary: Having just completed her last chemo treatment for ovarian cancer a few weeks earlier, R.M. expressed how she was ready to begin a new chapter, one that is always informed and in dialogue with a “source” in her life. She explained her clarity about moving to Salt Lake City to be closer to her children and their families there.

Questionnaire responses:

I’m entering a new phase in my life, looking at the last part—not the last chapter, but the last portion. My challenge is to be willing to age gracefully and gratefully. I also am paying close attention to the creative process. Where do ideas come from, how does one become inspired, how does creativity happen? It feels like walking a tight rope between being open and creative while at the same time practical and down to earth.
During the painting process, I was impressed with the ease with which Mark chose the colors and placement on the canvas. I liked the fiery colors he put in the center and hoped it was representative of my state of being. I want to be like that.

After the painting I had a feeling of fellowship with Mark, as if he’d seen me in an intimate way and I’d participated in that ‘seeing.’ I was taken with the beauty of the piece—how it kept evolving as if it had a mind/life of its own. The work is beautiful. The process amazing. I would share with others that the process felt safe, collaborative, and very satisfying. At no time was I afraid to speak, to share what I was thinking.

Session #3 with L. W. on 7/20/11

My personal summary: L.W. expressed his feelings about the mortality of his mother and father’s lives. The conversation moved to being reminiscent of his feelings to be more playful in his life.

Questionnaire responses:

I shared that my relationships are important to me, especially family. I am concerned about my father and mother. My father has said he isn’t sure if he will be around next year. My sense of my parents is that they most fear being the one left behind rather than dying. I have had a sense of being in a dark mood that lasted a couple of weeks but recently went away.

Initially I was skeptical that anything would happen in the process because I was fairly frazzled coming here. I noticed a tendency to intellectualize the experience or go into memories. Either way, I did not feel present when that happened. At first I made lost of judgments about the
painting. I thought, “Mark’s going to fast,” or “This has nothing to do with me.” In a way, that was the point for me. To realize that the “I”, whatever “I” am, is fluid, moves, changes or even disappears.

After the painting, I saw my body in the image and the playful energy I experienced years ago while kayaking on the river. I had an insight that the hardness I felt around my chest, throat was an attempt at control. But, the hardness became fixed, I no longer had any choice, therefore I had no control and it was all imagined anyway. I have been writing poems about again and I gave poems to my mother and father last month. I have no idea that the poems are attempts to express deep love for my parents that perhaps are blocked by this …. Around my heart and throat. I am my own …, my own keeper. I am also the path to my own freedom or at best the clue about what needs to happen or would like to happen next.

I would tell people there is no right way to begin or prepare. There are only beginnings.

Session #4 with J.L. on 7/20/11

My personal summary: Even though this was the very first time I met J.L., he shared some very personal traumatic life events that he had not shared with anyone. I felt like he was protecting himself, wanting to be more expressive with his feelings. He has a big heart, wanting to help others.

Questionnaire response:

1. What did you share in your conversation? I spoke about being in Seattle for 11 years and that I came from the outside Philadelphia, PA and that I am not close to my family. I worked at Group Health. I brought up about how I am creating my next season of life and what was going on in my life at this time.
2. What did you feel, think, or sense DURING the painting? During the painting I felt at peace. My body relaxed and I was just fascinated by his movement and the colors he was choosing. My mind was totally focused on what he was doing and where he was placing the paint. I was looking forward to see what he would do next.

3. What did you feel, think, or sense AFTER the painting? I was very calm and feeling of gratitude came over me. I appreciated the questions of what I thought I saw in the painting. He wanted to know what I saw and I liked that. I felt he valued my vision of the painting.

4. What else would you like to say? This experience proved to me again that people and things show up in my life for a reason. That I attribute to the marker I chose for the painting. All week the word surrender has kept showing up. The marker I chose dealt with letting go. Me laugh and at peace.

5. What would you say to someone about this type of experience? It was very eye opening and I was very grateful to be a part of the process.

Session #5 with A. T. on 7/21/11

My personal summary: During my time with A.T, I felt like she was revisiting much of her past. Most of what A.T. shared about exploring the past, current, or future, was expressed with the same emotional energy. She very energetic and informative.

Questionnaire responses:

What was shared…

On the descent, and proud of it (while honoring those before)

A roaming story, across generations, about those who came before me. My great-grandfather came west to Colorado before the civil war. Great obligations back home, 5 maiden sisters to support lifelong. He honored this obligation. Tried to make it big, first a suttler--trader in the forts--then a trusted negotiator for the Arapahoe-Cheyenne (somehow I’m sure he had children on his long visits up into Wyoming territory. Who are my lost cousins?). Then a big-deal miner of silver and gold, then a pauper who lost it all during the 1890’s, borrowing money, the story goes, from his good friend and employee, a Welsh “carriage driver.” (A pauper living in a big rented house, that is, with his daughter. All were anxious about how their financial failure would be interpreted by their very stratified world)

This man, AE Reynolds, called “Red Beard” by the Arapahoe, worked like hell and honored his obligations all around. Which mainly meant accumulating enough wealth so that those around him and those generations who followed would have more freedom. Let’s not forget, enough money meant freedom. (Maybe still does, just not more than enough.)
If you visit the Reynolds family gravesite in Denver, you will find a whole community of people with whom the family shared their lives. Going there in my 20’s I thought, “who’s this person? Who’s that? Brother Bill (a close family friend, and gay I later learned), Uncle Dave (a black lifelong servant, my brother’s namesake), Teddy, Malvina, and many more. All perhaps with no other place to be accepted in their final sleep.

My grandmother Anna (a Christian Scientist at the end but that too was a big secret til a year ago), very smart and subtle, left a message for the future, perhaps hoping that next generations would better understand that though in life divided by race/sexual preference/socio-economics, all those they shared their lives with were unified and equal in death. The message, for those who take the time to look, is loud and clear and very, very radical (in an unspoken way) for the time. Lifelong commitments and affections transcended. They live on.

Then my father, who knew great poverty, the depression. Again 5 sisters, his father dead. He devoted his life to make sure his children didn’t know the toughness of life without enough, a prison really. He worked like hell too and reaped the consequences of stress-related ill health at the end.

So, great stories, honorable stories, the up and up. Those who devoted their lives to “making it.” The great American dream (well, except for the fact that in both cases there was suffering and disappointment.)

They followed the trajectory of the paradigm governing their time and place. Growth, bigger, better, hard work, opportunity, success.

I am the beneficiary (and the victim) of their dreams. I have had so much freedom in my life, predicated on their hard work.

And now, I find myself in my third third of life.. 0-30 was complete identity and immersion in place, CO, and family. 30-60 was Seattle, making my own path, severing in certain regards from place and family in order to have an identity of my own making.

At almost 60, I envision myself at a certain kind of apex. Beautiful family, my choice of work—not because I had to make money but because it was meaningful, home tied to nature up in the tree tops with birds and light’s reflection on water below waking me to my days. 2/3. But where do you go from an apex? Hmmm. Sitting atop all this fossil-fueled freedom of choice, living like a queen.
2. What I felt:

Can 7 billion people live like kings and queens? I am haunted by those left on the underside of this short-sighted explosion of growing markets, technology, and wealth. A mixture of guilt, confidence, release, vulnerability.

These other generations thought that financial success could fortify against the natural cycles, sometimes brutal. But more brutal is a bubble of unsustainable growth in any biological population. When it reaches its sustainable limits, it crashes.

Last week I bid farewell to a truckload of possessions that I had lived side by side with. A mix: wedding presents from the 1800’s, two platters given to my great grandfather from 2 grateful maiden ladies, old letters, and a whole lot of crap I’ll never miss (why did I cart it around all these years?). In 2 weeks, I will leave my lovely home among trees and water. I will sell my car. I will move away from the west, so much a part of my identity.

I’m shrinking!! Not only in my old lady height, but in everything: space/stuff/energy. We will rent a much smaller apartment now. Intentionally, I wish to shrink us by 1/3 over this move. I’m on the descent. Wow.

I feel loyalty, wanting to honor those before, especially my father, who in a sense devoted his life to me.

I feel vulnerability: were these guys right? What happens when I let go of the protection of these protective elements like a lovely owned home, an established community, a financial nestegg? Freeee faaaall….

And I feel great newfound freedom. Because I know it’s right to let go of that which is more, much more than I (as only one of 7 billion souls) need to live. Yearn for more balance with nature and those who have so much less.

3. What I feel afterwards:

So, the mix of emotions is very powerful.

All in all, it feels pretty darn good. Everything aligned: my age, my environmental and moral imperative, the paradigm we all must change because fossil-fuel powered growth is not sustainable and not ethical, now that we are face to face with its costs.

So, I’m coasting down, not bad at all this de-growth, this descent. So far, that is.

How to make it a graceful descent, not only for me but for the other part of the 7 billion not to mention the rest of the planet’s fauna, flora, and beauty? No guarantees, but my image is skiing down a lightly powdered slope. Less effort now of not only me but all those other generations. I
know they would understand because just like me, they were rooted in the west and in the patterns of nature.

Going with the flow of what’s right, what’s natural and finally once again being in synchrony with the world that sustains us. Feels very good.

4. I like how Mark evoked the story through gestures and movements I was making. He asked about my hand movements, kind of a water wave motion with my hands as I described my descent: both hands sliding upwards then tilting down, woosh. Fun, not scary. I like how Mark listened not only with his ears but with his eyes and helped me embody the story.

The painting was fascinating because after it was done, it kept painting itself, transforming by force of gravity and fluid mechanics. It softened over time, some things subsuming and being replaced by another effect completely, some things remained. Kind of like the story itself. What to keep and what to leave behind on our great descent.

5. I appreciated being listened to. I appreciated the nowness of the experience, the aftermath of the painting itself kept us both transfixed to the present moment. I appreciate the shared experience, the intimacy of a close friend taking the time to listen and honor my story, my gestures, and our connectedness.

Session #6 with K.S. on 7/23/11

My personal summary: During my session with K.S., I understood that she was spending quite a bit of time with herself, lots of freedom, and wondering if she sensed the gifts that she gives her relationships (mostly about her children) even though she also with her mother, her ex-husband, too.

1. What did you share in your conversation? What moved through me to share was arriving in Seattle 21 years ago, having children, becoming a stay-at-home mom, divorcing, raising the kids alone, and now living alone and how sweet that is to me. Sometime curious about being in relationship, but then letting the question go.

2. What did you feel, think, or sense DURING the painting? Curiosity at with the way the colors chosen: sometimes it was “Oh, yes!” and sometimes it was “I never would have chosen that myself!” I had a
good laugh watching my projections: “Oh, that’s me to a T,” and “Oh, I don’t know if that’s me or not me.” Laughed about “Who is ME!” I so appreciate the opportunity to watch the artist and to watch the painting move and change.

3. What did you feel, think, or sense AFTER the painting? I felt like I was sitting with a third entity in the room, not a person, not a spirit, but definitely a third something.

4. What else would you like to say? I feel so gifted by the interviewer’s attentive presence and witnessing. I am so grateful for this opportunity to step out “24/7 Life” and into what I would call “Real Life.”

5. What would you say to someone about this type of experience? I would say that it is a marvelous opportunity to dance with the unknown in every moment. And that in opening up oneself, you are opening to unfolding Life.

Session #7 with D.D. on 7/27/11

Questionnaire responses:

1. What did you share in your conversation? New thoughts and feelings relating to a concern I have around stomach cancer. My dad died at 65 from lung cancer, he was diagnosed right around his birthday when he turned 63. I’m afraid I’ll follow in his footsteps. We discussed the location of the fear, its weight and how it feels in my body. Mark supported me in locating the fear. He questioned into my spiritual beliefs around death and asked me to locate those feelings, identify their weight and how it felt in my body. With his guidance I moved the energy through my body; both expanding the pathway and moving it in opposite directions. I had a number of strong body sensations…light headedness and nausea. We spoke at the end of our conversation about my interpretation of the feelings and what meaning I attached to them. I experienced the fear in my throat, the lightheadedness and being light in my third eye. I expanded the breathing to circle from third eye to stomach. Reversed directions. Very powerful. When all was said and done, I felt little difference between two possible scenarios…a diagnosis of cancer on the one hand and a clear diagnosis on the other. I could move with both; I did not feel happy and relief for one outcome and upset over another. They both felt a bit sad and a certain giddiness and lightness as well.

2. What did you feel, think, or sense DURING the painting? I wanted to stay with my feelings internally and use the painting to ground the experience for me. I felt this is an expression of this moment in time. Unique…never to happen again.

3. What did you feel, think, or sense AFTER the painting? Gratitude for the experience and for Mark’s expression of the moment.

4. What else would you like to say? I got tremendous value from the experience. One I’ll use as a starting point for a personal exploration of life and death.
5. What would you say to someone about this type of experience? I discovered new insights and felt very nurtured and supported.

Session #8 with J.M. on 8/7/11

1.) What did you share in your conversation? I shared my 19-year relationship with my cat, Kabuki, and how her recent death affected me. We also spoke about my experience with death in general, and my particular outlook on it.

2.) What did you feel, think, or sense DURING the painting? My very first reaction was surprise when Mark selected my favorite color to begin with. We had never discussed it, and it was a color he hadn’t used much of previously. As the painting progressed, I was fascinated by the process itself; the organic movement of the paint on the canvas; the way the colors blended and bled together.

After a while I began to see a shape taking form, which reminded me of my childhood. Specifically, it looked like an old cherry tree that was in my parents’ back yard when I was growing up. I remembered the joy I got from climbing it as a kid, and also being sad when we had to cut it down because it was no longer safe to climb. It had been killed off from the inside by carpenter ants or termites, and it was no longer structurally sound.

At one point, Mark added a bit of white to the “tree” part of the painting, and the way it mixed and blended initially reminded me of the color pattern of Kabuki’s coat, which was another unexpected surprise.

The REAL surprise, though, came when I had to decide the correct orientation of the painting. I was prepared to pick one specific view (the one that reminded me of the cherry tree), until Mark suggested that I look at it from all sides. When I came around to look at it from his perspective, I saw a COMPLETELY different image, one that reminded me of a scenic portal I had designed and built for a production of “Into the Woods” years ago. It was an unexpected sight, and MUCH clearer to me than even the tree image. I chose it as the “correct” orientation for the painting because it incorporated the imagery of the cherry tree I had seen earlier, but it also encompassed a sense of who I am professionally. My work is a vital part of my being, and it is something from which I derive a great deal of joy and satisfaction.
3.) What did you feel, think, or sense AFTER the painting? After the painting was completed, I felt joy and nostalgia about the cherry tree memory. It was something that I hadn’t thought about in years, and it honestly felt like I had visited an old friend. There was a bit of sadness there too, but only peripherally.

I also thought about my friendship with Mark. We have been friends for a few years now, and while I’ve seen many of his paintings, this was the first time I’d actually seen him create one. It was fascinating to watch him work, and to see his process unfold before my eyes. I found it beautiful.

Finally, I realized afterward that it was the first time I had really spoken to someone else about Kabuki’s death and how it affected me. I had, of course, spoken to other friends and family about it to one degree or another, but those conversations were usually limited to the usual platitudes that people use about the loss of a loved one. With Mark it was different – I talked more about the whole experience of having Kabuki in my life, not just her death. It was cathartic, and something I really needed to do, although I wasn’t aware of that beforehand.

4.) What else would you like to say? I guess the best way to sum up what I’d like to say is simply to say, “Thank you.” I didn’t know what to expect going into the project, and to be honest I didn’t think I was going to get much out of it beyond spending a couple of hours talking with a friend. Boy, was I ever wrong!

5.) What would you say to someone about this type of experience? I would tell them to take advantage of the opportunity to experience it, if it arose. I’m a pretty self-confident person and I pride myself on my independence. Going in I thought I was merely helping a friend with a project he had undertaken. To my surprise, I came out of it with a profound sense of relief and peace regarding Kabuki, a new level of respect and gratitude for Mark as an artist and a friend, and an excellent reminder to always keep an open mind.

Session #9 with J.E. on 8/9/11

My personal summary: J.E. was moving back and forth between either standing still or trying to resolve a feeling of mediocrity. Yet, he had a curiosity and an interest in learning to just be by himself, to just be present to his own life, and that it’s ok.

Questionnaire responses:

1. What did you share in your conversation? I shared that I am always on the move forward thinking that is what I need to do to become more connected with my soul. I am generally frustrated that I don’t more often feel and sense my soul and that leads to a feeling of mediocrity. I shared that my goal is to hear God say “well done good and faithful servant.”
2. What did you feel, think, or sense DURING the painting? I was very curious about what was happening and why. I wanted the painting to stop about 1/2 way through because I saw myself and wanted to continue to see myself in the colors. I was disappointed when Mark continued to paint; I disappeared. But then the result of the painting was just as interesting and revealing; just in a different way.

3. What did you feel, think, or sense AFTER the painting? Upon reflection, the journey represented by the painting’s evolution was of significant interest. I found myself reflecting on how standing still is not the same as mediocrity and in fact standing still is the right thing to do sometimes. Moving forward and progress are not synonymous.

4. What else would you like to say? I saw myself in the painting 1/2 way through. I don’t see myself in the painting upon its completion but my essence is bursting thru the finished product. I wonder if the finished painting is actually a microscopic view of my soul? Interesting thought.

5. What would you say to someone about this type of experience? This type of experience is of great value as long as you are willing to genuinely and honestly allow self-awareness. Self-awareness is both stimulating and frightening. I want more.
The Four Noble Truths are a lifetime’s reflection. It is not just a matter of realising the Four Noble Truths, the three aspects, and twelve stages and becoming an arahant on one retreat and then going onto something advanced. The Four Noble Truths are not easy like that. They require an ongoing attitude of vigilance and they provide the context for a lifetime of examination. This Noble Truth must be penetrated by fully understanding suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light that arose in me about things not heard before. The Buddha first taught the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The specifics are: Firstly, avoid speaking lies, slander, harsh words, and indulging in frivolous chatter (gossips, idle talk etc.) And when, monks, in these four noble truths my due knowledge and insight with its three sections and twelve divisions was well purified, then monks, in the world with its gods, Mara, Brahma, its beings with ascetics, priests, gods, and men, I had attained the highest complete enlightenment. This I recognized. I have been to many countries witnessing Buddhism and mindful practices. I continue to learn and follow a life that incorporates the Five Precepts and Zazen. This site is a great place for me to share elements of life that I come across in books, film and certainly on the Internet. These four truths are best understood, not as beliefs, but as categories of experience. They offer an alternative to the ordinary way we categorize what we can know and describe, in terms of me/not me, and being/not being. These ordinary categories create trouble, for the attempt to maintain full being for one’s sense of “me” is a stressful effort doomed to failure, in that all of the components of that “me” are inconstant, stressful, and thus not worthy of identifying as “me” or “mine.” It then builds on this understanding by discussing the role of the four noble truths in the course of the practice, and then analyzing in detail each of the truths, together with the duty appropriate to each. Further related readings can be found in the book, The Wings to Awakening.