

November 18, 2021

Dear Visakha and Ken,

Greetings! It has been too long since I last wrote and I felt that I should send a few words before the year ends. I am happy to announce that on December 3rd I will be free and clear of all my probation and parole obligations. After nearly 30 years I will be free to travel and move around the country as I please.

Naturally, there are several things I want to do and see. I intend to take my childhood friend David's ashes to our favorite spot in California by a redwood cove and leave him resting there. I would like to visit my mother in Indiana whom I have not been able to see since 2007. Then I plan to visit friends and supporters who helped me navigate my prison sentence and who were influential in helping me shape my new life and who encouraged me to change my perspective and behavior. These are mostly Buddhist practitioners but a few are former prisoners as well. I just applied for a new passport and hope to visit Munich, Germany - my place of birth - and see a few friends there and in Switzerland. This all depends on affordability and the responsibilities that I have here in Washington State. At least now I can make plans that can come to fruition.

Over the past year I've been taking care of a home for a friend who is incarcerated who also wants to utilize it as a temporary shelter for homeless and prisoners in the reentry process. To date nine men who are either homeless, freshly out of prison, or in an emergency situation stayed at the house and helped with repairs or garden work. I did much of the renovation or organized repairs of the home which is now nearly complete. It was a huge project but very gratifying. Also I have the privilege of working with several agencies and organizations to address homelessness and its causes. Specifically, the impact that prisoners, newly released from prison have on the homeless crises in our country which is largely ignored or misunderstood. I am free to apply for part-time work in this field now and am seeking a part-time position in a job where I can provide input that might be helpful. Fortunately, a couple of people have helped defray related costs and I have my Social Security retirement which sustains me well enough not to worry about my next meal, and housing is currently covered. It is my sustained Buddhist practice that keeps me grounded which is one of the reasons I practice at the Olympia Zen Center and the Nalanda Dharma Center.

In all, I am well and happy to let you know that I very much appreciate the support you've given me over the past many years. Without it, I could very likely be another statistic in a homeless camp or worse. It was one of my goals to successfully transition back into society as a way to demonstrate that all the support I received was not for naught. So thank you for all you've done to help me. I am forever in your debt and honored and privileged to know you.

Thank you for the thoughtful Zen Card and your continued interest!

I hope your day is going well for you and yours

With many bows and with deep gratitude,

