

Sangha Reflection Poem of the Brahmaviharas

Loving Kindness: Debi Papazian, Marilyn Eversole

Compassion: Sallie Vincent, Kristen Sorenson

Sympathetic Joy: Kristine Maltrud, Ellen Sherron

Equanimity: Gretchen Paradis, Constance Fischer

Reflection: Chris Fortin

Compiled: Shelly Hughes

The Brahmaviharas are like the 4 directions of a compass
Loving kindness like gentle rain falls without discrimination
True friendship overcomes the illusion of separateness
The practice of Metta does not choose sides

Universal, unselfish, all-embracing love
But consider the meat and potatoes... that niceness can perpetuate destructive behavior
Sometimes people need to be told things they don't want to hear

Compassion! Yes! I want that!
True compassion is forged in the fires of pain
Am I willing to go thru the suffering?
Can I do that?
Anger, fear, judgment are invitations to compassion
I get invited to that party everyday
Exercising forgiveness along with courage and the willingness to be intimate with life
This is what gives compassion its power
I need the power
Because this is terrifying
Open up to the uncertainty as the tapestry of life
Commitment to compassion gives meaning to life
Compassion asks for eyes on the path
If pain is inevitable, then with compassion, suffering is optional

No mud no lotus
Metaphor for life

Garbage to fertile soil
Unwanted aspects of life are the raw material necessary for awakening genuine
uncontrived compassion
Using my own shit and awakening something different
Soft, gentle, warm, clarity, relaxed, open, spacious
Zazen as embodied compassion
Feel what it is to be human
Develop compassion for our own wounds
As we get older, new understanding of our wounds
Other's pain and our pain are not separate
Don't make things such a big deal!
Relax, what are you making a big deal of? That is the subtle cruelty of our judgements
Western self-improvement lack project
How can I open up and notice those judgments and preferences and bring forth
soft, gentle...

In the garden with all the creatures, there is real joy
Medicine
If it's about joy, why is it so hard to do it? How do I get there?
Unhappy about the countless people who are doing things that don't seem right to us
Larger belief in life
How can I be a kind and loving grandmother?
How can I let them know that I wish them nothing but happiness?
I notice myself using my Buddhism to judge

Walking across the city, reciting out loud the Brahmaviharas
Being with the things that are hard
A joy that mirrors
Entering into the joy of all beings
Especially those that are different than me, the birds, clouds, sun, forests, ocean
I don't always get there
I came to the far enemy of jealousy through the back door
Fear of being left behind, cascade of painful memories
Like a shadow
They left everybody behind
Including me
Sadness, loss and fear are the expressions of jealousy
I dodged it because I didn't want to own it

To show Mudita is to celebrate happiness in the achievement of others even when we are facing tragedy ourselves
That is huge
I'm grateful that this came about
No matter how difficult it was

Joy with others is good karma making
With good fortune, ring the bell
Rejoicing in virtue is the root of happiness
Bring forward a moment and remember...
Of course, I am wholesome and helpful
And send it out to the whole world
Just pause and look at your life

Judgement needs separation
But to truly be intimate, there is no gap
Uproot the patterns that stifle joy
What if you really knew that allowing yourself to be happy in the most innate and beautiful way actually contributed to the well-being of the whole world?
It's cultivated in the present moment
Make your home in stillness
Radical Zazen
Sit down and do absolutely nothing
Remember all of the blessing that sustain you
Remember the capacity to touch the lives of others with care and love

Equanimity can be joyful especially when things are going badly
It can get a little contentious
It wasn't in her words but in her body
I've never forgotten how she spoke loving kindness
Not in her words but in her being
Do I understand any of the Brahmaviharas?
I don't think I really do
Shouldn't I be better at this by now?
Everybody is a teacher in the tiniest house of time
Equanimity challenge!
Be steady and realize that nothing remains the same
Let go of the illusion of control
Relax into radiant calm

Anger giving way to grief so my compassion can flower
I am learning to let go of my self-absorption and truly connect with what is happening
Here and Now
Open to the CenterPoint of Buddha nature, sometimes
If your mind is not clouded by unnecessary things
This is the best season of your life