

## Moved by the Dharma

The Buddha must be the happiest man in the world when he awakens to the true reality of life. So deep is his joy, it sustains him for 49 days, seven weeks, we are told, meditating in various postures. Anyone who has tried to meditate would know that if we really enjoy our meditation, we feel a profound bliss, which in turn allows us to rise above our body to a sweet bliss of the free heart.

We cannot really know the Buddha's experience of spiritual joy and liberation, unless we are willing to let go of everything we hold dear, at least for the duration of enjoying that blissful freedom of the heart. Poets have sung of such happiness, but as it is only momentary, they invariably fall back into despondency when they fall out of such bliss.

The meditative bliss of the heart as taught by the Buddha is a joy forever. Even the memory of a moment's taste of such a liberated heart is joyful. This is the elusive Muses that the artist, the wonder-worker, tries to invoke for inspiration. To a meditative Buddhist, the Muses are always there inside us, waiting to waken from their slumber with a lovingkind kiss. The tale of sleeping beauty has a deeper meaning that we have missed.

There are many who study Buddhism without ever awakening the Muses within. They take Buddhism to be another professional subject measured to a degree. Such speakers or workers may speak volumes or do big things, but they only make intelligent sounds and gestures without feeling. The question is do we feel what we know? We can have a good idea from the way they react when things do not work out the way they have planned or hoped.

We can never be truly charitable no matter how much we give, except when we give with love; for, then, we give love. Yet, we have no love unless we love ourselves first before are able to truly love others. Love is to celebrate that "I am," and on account of that, "You are." The twain must meet.

Only when we can truly love and see ourselves as we love and see others in the same way, can we experience moral virtue. This is the golden rule. Goodness and compassion is to be kind to others even when they do not deserve them. Indeed, how are we to judge who deserves or not?

To truly know the Dharma is to feel it. Only then we can really see great joy in a wild flower, and a universe in a grain of sand. We cannot really see this joy and vastness out there: we can only feel it in here, in our heart. For, to feel is to live things directly, that is, not to see a self or an other.

There is no more "I am," and as such no more "you are," too. There is just this wordless bliss, lost to even the poets. For it is inexpressible, incommunicable. We can only taste it for ourselves. This taste is lost to those who lose themselves in the "other," call it what you like, even with the highest, most sacred names.

*Moved by the Dharma* by Piya Tan

It is like trying to understand what I have written here only by the words. This is the sort of communication we will have to feel as we read it. Then, to forget what we read, to just feel.

We cannot bring forth blissful music even by merely looking at the best musical score. We need to feel the music deep within, and raise it into our consciousness. We need to tame it to befriend others so they too learn to feel their hidden beauty.

Music may begin as measured sounds, but beauty needs to be liberated from its bars. This beauty is felt in our ear, and freed in our heart. This works just the same for all our other senses. If we do not feel what we sense, we are only animals, some intelligent, some not. To feel what we sense is to fully live.

To feel what we sense is to experience true beauty. We love beautiful things because, like life, beauty is good in itself. Beauty is the promise of timelessness in a world of measures and impermanence.

For a Buddhist who is all heart -- one deep in meditation, one who has been touched by the timeless inner bliss -- beauty and life are one and the same.

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