

## Buddhism Inc

In the past, wherever Buddhism gains the patronage of the powerful, especially the king or the emperor, it took a life of its own, or took its own life, as some might say. Buddhism, patronized by the powerful, was defined by the powerful. There was only one Buddhist voice: the voice of the powerful.

Today, real danger comes from the corporatization of Buddhism, of Buddhism Inc. Buddhist corporations are on the rise. Inspired young people renounce the world, aspiring to taste the true Dharma, and to bring others closer to the true Dharma. But when they finish their training and return home, they find it dominated by Buddhist corporations. They have no voice except that of the corporations; they have no lives, except to live for the corporations.

The Buddha apparently foresees such developments, and he has provided us with a not-so-secret weapon against the corporations, that is, **meditation**. When we meditate on the true nature of our bodies, we see them for what they are: consciousness patched up with the four elements, a love-gift from our parents, sustained by food, but subject to the inclemencies of our surroundings, and is, above all, impermanent. With this understanding, we free our bodies from being corporatized; for, our bodies are really seen for what they are in true light.

This body-based mindfulness frees our mind from our physical being, whence thoughts proliferate, forming and feeding our self-created worlds. Having given up this fabricated world of the physical senses, we venture into the realm of feelings, of directly knowing pleasure and joy for what they really are—and yes, they are truly beautiful, but impermanent all the same. Knowing this, no corporation, no matter how large or powerful or rich could seduce us away from our dawning self-knowing.

As we begin to see how these precious feelings are mind-made, it is easier for us to let them go. It is like we have held a beautiful flower long enough in our hands to enjoy it. We then let the flower go, and stand away to look at it from a distance, and see a sky of flowers. This is our mind that has brought us these joyful flowers in the first place.

As we dwell intimately with our minds, beyond pain and pleasure, beyond good and evil, in the stillness of inner space, we see what eyes can never see, nor ears hear, nor the nose smell, nor the tongue taste, nor body feel, nor the mind think. We are the very thing of beauty that poets and maestros try to sing about, that artists painfully try to print on canvas, that visionaries can only dream about. *We are* that beauty, we *are* that truth, so that we can really say beauty is truth, truth beauty.

Buddhism incorporated can be so attractive when we have no real families, no true friends to turn to, in an increasingly crowding and rushing world. A corporation can delude us into believing our life's questions have been answered, that we have taken control of our lives. The painful reality is that the most sinister and insidious of corporations is a religious one, sliding on a belly of funds: we are only one of its tiny moving legs.

The magical antidote here is the cultivation of lovingkindness. We need to firstly accept ourselves just as we are, fully forgiving ourselves whatever commissions and omissions that we

can remember: they are just memories, the dead that refuse to be buried. We need to leave them buried. Then we go on to accept others just as they are: what we are doing is to free our images of hate, pain and mismeasurements of others. Just as we are happy, let others be happy, too.

We go on building up this lovingkindness, like the sun that always rises and shines brightly on everyone and everything. As our minds and bodies heal themselves, we begin to glow spiritually, inspiring lovingkindness in others, and we begin to make more and more true-hearted friends. For, friends are not found, they are made, and the best way to make friends is through lovingkindness, opening the doors of our hearts to others.

The corporation is a heartless money-machine: Buddhism is commodified, thingified. It needs a heart to free itself from itself. It cannot see, as it has no eyes: it needs the Dharma-eye to truly see. Only through clear inner stillness, it can truly see. Only through lovingkindness it will begin to feel. As long as we truly see and truly feel, we cannot be corporatized. Buddhism is not a commodity, not a thing: our acts, words and minds are Buddhism; we are Buddhism.

Revisioning Buddhism 21

[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teachings]

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Recommended reading: *The Three Roots Inc* (SD 31.12).