

Work hardly

[Previously published as fb190830 piya]

The secret to hard work is not to try at all. We know we have to work: we just begin, maybe just for a few minutes, maybe for a few hours. We should make no rules of work: we can only love work, be there body and mind, just as we don't have to make rules for love.

The labour of love is self-rewarding, the most natural thing to do. But not all work is created equal. Not all our work can go smoothly like soap and water in a kitchen sink. Before we know it, all the washing is done. The work that we love does.

I enjoy washing dishes and cutlery because this is my way of giving life to my beloved, so that she labours less in the kitchen, and more in Dhamma work, and you will get this reflection.

I also find washing dishes adventurous because it is different from my regular work of translating suttas and writing funnies about funny people that make you smile or ponder over a reality check. Work is labour in the sense we keep delivering each time a new love-child of truth and beauty.

I write best when I am happy. For no apparent reason, I feel so most of the time. Nothing depresses me except people, false ones, foolish ones. They are suffering and do not even know it. I heal myself by writing something beautiful about them, because of them. Even a glow-worm of reflection sharply pricks the darkest pall of the suffering.

True Dhamma is the greatest love affair in this cosmos. The Dhamma only works when we love the one Buddha, the true Dhamma and the noble sangha. Yet, all these 3 jewels are but facets of the one jewel: the true Dhamma. This is the reality that awakens the buddha and arhats.

When we look at this Dhamma in the eye, the Dhamma looks back with a smile. When our worldly eyes meet the Dhamma-eye, the world just stops, momentarily at least. The Dhamma is timeless: we have all the time in the world to work, to write, to sit still, be still, to light up like the sun lighting up earth and the heavens.

When the Dhamma holds our hand, it touches our heart. We cannot plan such moments: we are merely the hand, the voice, of this timelessness from which the buddha arises. Yet, we don't need to be a buddha to taste this sweetness. We only need to stop thinking, stop having views, stop being, stop non-being, stop inventing religion, stop rituals, throw out all doubts, all superstitions.

For us, the unawakened, we have only words to hold the Dhamma. It's like a bowl holding healthy warm soup. It's best drunk warm on a cold day. A kind person may hold the bowl for us, but he cannot drink for us. We don't have to believe in the bowl or the soup: we just drink it mindfully, and smile.

Sometimes, the Dhamma whispers just a word into our ear. If our ears wax with lust, hate or delusion, we burn with fear and madness. We try to flee, to remove any trace of Dhamma. But the Dhamma is all around, within us, without us. The madness is our own thinking. Just stop thinking, the madness stops. It's like after a bad storm: we quietly seek shelter and let it pass. Then, there is peace and freshness.

When we love Dhamma, and Dhamma whispers just a word into our ear, it takes days, maybe years, to write it all down in our language. I started writing Dhamma some half a century ago and have not stopped. There is still more to write: the Dhamma is a never-ending story. Yet, we can stop any time because we know the story: we just love listening to it again and again. We love to tell and retell it to others, to you.

The nature of Dhamma work is such that it profits everyone: it is a joy to write, a joy to read, a joy to stop reading, a joy to wash dishes, a joy to smile at you. But it is still work for our human hands. Anyway, the only one who suffers hardship is the one who labours for the love of Dhamma to write this. You only need to let your eyes freely feast on these signs of life, love, light, liberation.

You see this as a complete whole, a couple of pages, but often we are held up for hours, for days, by a single word. We must wait for the right sound to prime and pitch the joy that is singing in our heart so that we do not miss any note, so that it can be heard and heeded by you.

Above all, we must know when to be silent when we are ourselves uplifted with its joy so that we are beyond the reach of the world. But right now, I am with you: let's look into each other's eyes smilingly, and mix like milk and water, where peace is love's language. This is how Dhamma fills us up and frees us.

I've threaded these words, these spaces, and sprinkled a generous dose of joy into it, a lot of love to taste. It's just words really, until you make sense of them, feel them (just don't think about them).

How you do that is up to you. Read it as a whole, as if you have written it yourself—in that case, you have to read it, feel it, a few more times, as I have. Just wonder at how you can feel joy and peace!

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