

## Our true teacher

Who is free, teaches us to be free  
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A good and true teacher is like a good parent. Our parents, out of mutual love, give us birth and life. The love of two is made one—we are that one. But then we only have a human **body**.

The unconditional and continuing love of our parents, of even just one of them, makes us **human**. They hold us, they love us. They hold us for a while, then let go of us: we learn to walk. We would have never learned to walk if they had kept holding on to us. Our parents humanize us: we are grateful for that.

When learning to ride a bicycle, we will fall when we keep looking at the bicycle or the ground below. We have to look ahead, let go of the ground, so to speak. When we just look ahead and keep pedaling, we have the balance. We have learned to cycle.

## True teacher

THE **Buddha** is our only true teacher. He is like a good parent. He arose in this world alone. He saw decay, disease and death, and realize that all whom he loves will die, we will die, and he, too, will die. He is determined to find out why.

He leaves behind all his wealth, all his power, all his loving family, just to discover how he will lose them all anyway, no matter what he does or does not. What is it, then, that the Buddha discovers that frees us from the fear of such losses?

He realizes that we must free ourselves from the very **fear** that we will lose what we have and hold. He realizes that to **love** is not to hold: to love is to **free** those whom we love.

But this freedom is only real and true when we have the **wisdom** to hold it in. Love is natural power; by itself it can create as well as destroy. With wisdom, love is creative in **beauty**, radiant in **truth**.

## Free hold

Like a good parent, the Buddha as teacher, first holds us in his gentle hands in the gaze of his gentle Buddha eyes. We are taught to let go of 5 bad habits: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.

This is like when we are learning to ride a bicycle (remember?). While someone holds our bicycle for us: we keep both our hands on the handlebar, both feet on the pedals, our body upright, looking ahead, and just keep pedalling.

## **Balance**

The precepts seem to hold us down, but they also free us from being blown around by worldly winds. When the winds die down, we learn to be free from our body, not to be attached to it.

When we fall from our bicycle, our body gets hurt, but not our mind. When our mind guides our body, we find good balance and strength to ride our bicycle.

In meditation training, our mind frees itself from the body. When we understand and practise meditation properly, our mind guides and frees our body so that we feel less pain, even no pain, when we fall.

## **Buddha dies, Dhamma lives**

Finally, as a good teacher, the Buddha lets us go completely. He dies and seems to be no more with us, but his teachings, the Dhamma, is always present in the suttas. They work to help us when we direct our mind diligently to understand the suttas and accept the Dhamma.

The Dhamma teaches us to let go even of the Buddha, not to make an idol of him, not to number him like things, not to worship him as God. He is far beyond all this. The supreme worship is our living the Dhamma: see what the Buddha has seen and be free by it.

All this is impermanent. The Buddha does not die for us. He **lived** for us. He died to show that the Dhamma is forever true. It means that we must let go of even our self, what more of others.

## **Alone but not lonely**

We are born alone; we die alone. Even as we live, in our best moments, we must be alone; the greatest things in our life, we must do it all alone by ourself. When we understand this ALONENESS, we understand that it is not loneliness.

Only when we know how to stand **alone**, are we able to stand with others. For, then we know what good is (we treasure our life); what happiness is; what love really is; how truth makes all this worthwhile; and to have the heart that can enjoy all this.

In life, we are truly **alone**, but when we understand this, we are never **lonely**. We live in joy and beauty like the Buddha sitting radiantly alone under the Bodhi tree. Our true teacher, who changed the world, our world, by his **example**, not his views.

R672 Inspiration 405  
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