

## True individual

Truth and beauty are the pillars of spiritual friendship, the appreciative joy and love between and amongst true individuals, and the mentorship of a meditation guide for one on the inner journey. Spiritual friendship is the quest for *truth*, an understanding of true reality and also a full taste of it.<sup>1</sup> Such an experience is a celebration of true *beauty*, the peak of feeling.<sup>2</sup>

Although we might accidentally bump into the face of truth in a moment of excruciating darkness, or by chance run into the arms of beauty in a fleeting rapturous break, these liberating moments are soon forgotten, drowned in the clutter of our daily grind, or they merely twinkle like a distant star in the night skies of our memories. The point is that we need to cultivate our minds in wise attention so that it is prepared for the dawn of truth and beauty.

The first step towards becoming a true individual is the ability and willingness to renounce *our body*, that is, to unplug, to silence, at least momentarily, the ringing phones that are our eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, so that we can fully focus only on the mind, our interminably busy memory factory and construction site of private realities.

This mind has been the source of discontent and trouble ever since we learned to think. It is not that thinking is bad, but like a sharp knife, it can cut us painfully if we do not use it properly. Yet wisely used, it becomes a flaming sword of wisdom, a super-laser, that cuts down all thoughts.

When we have internally levelled off all our thoughts, we feel a deep sense of relief and satisfaction, as if a huge burden has been lifted from us. We feel like Sisyphus of Greek mythology freed of his samsaric rock-pushing, sitting at leisure on the hilltop, surveying the heavens.<sup>3</sup> We feel ecstatic because we have thoroughly sloughed off all that otherness, what is not us, not ours, pushed upon us by others, accreted upon us through our physical senses. We are finally free from what others think, say or do that affect us; we are free from having to measure ourselves against others—at least momentarily—but this moment feels like eternity and is well worth it.

What are we left with when we have renounced all our thoughts? We are free from *knowing* (as we understand it). We are free from the knowing that is dependent on *thoughts*, which are in turn dependent on *words*. But, the word is not the thing; the name is not the thing named<sup>4</sup>—in fact, there is really no thing and nothing to name.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> On spiritual friendship, see SD 34.1: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/34.1-Spiritual-friendship-a-textual-study-piya.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> On feeling, see *Vedanā* = SD 17.3: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/17.3-Khandha-2-Vedana-piya.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> On the myth of *Sisyphus*, see *Yodh'ājīva S* (S 42.3) = SD 23.3 Intro: <https://sites.google.com/site/earlypalisutta/23.3YodhajivaSuttas42.3piya.pdf?attredirects=0>

<sup>4</sup> See *Mahā Sudassana Sutta* (D 17) @ SD 36.12 (6.3).

<sup>5</sup> Further, see *Saṅkhāra* = SD 17.6: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/36.12-Maha-Sudassana-S-d17-piya.pdf>

*True Individual* by Piya Tan

We seem to simply need to name names, and all that we can know are but words, words, words, and names, names, names. But our spellings are often different or unclear, and so we often disagree and wrangle.

Once the forest of thoughts is cleared, we are left with the spreading shady tree of feeling. We now truly know what joy is, what pain is, what boredom is. We are able to rise above them on account of the joy of mirror-like equanimity, the wordless bliss, now that all our tasks are done and nothing more to do. We feel spacious as the heavens, and still as space itself. We have returned to our true home, as it were.

When, from this senseless respite, we return to the world of the senses, we at first find it to be an insane noisy clutter, but we quickly attune ourselves to be in harmony with everything, accepting them unconditionally. For, that is the way things are at the sensible level. We are *in* the world, but no more *of* the world. We are healthy amongst the sick; we are untroubled amongst the troubled<sup>6</sup>—we are in a better position to help others.

Piya Tan ©2011

Source: Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17) @ SD 36.12 (6.6.2.4): <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/36.12-Maha-Sudassana-S-d17-piya.pdf>

---

<sup>6</sup> Dh 29; A 6.10.5/3:286 f) = SD 15.3: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/15.3-Agataphala-Mahanama-S-a6.10-piya.pdf>