

Not by any name

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The Buddha neither fixes language nor is he fixed by language. The simplicity of Pali is deceptive enough for latter-day Buddhist theologians to miss the tree for the wood. So, they build a highway through the forest. The destruction of nature has not stopped since then—except for the neck of wood known as the “early forest.”

The Buddha’s awakening is a direct experience of true reality. It’s like he has heard this most divine music. With his musical genius and skills, he has noted down that music in scores so that we, too, having mastered it, will be able to read and play it. Music is to be played and heard; the Dhamma is to be heard and done.

Since we communicate best in language, the Buddha uses words to free what words hold. His language is like an umbrella for a rainy day. It is only useful when open. The Buddha’s open language is liberating. His language liberates our mind of views that cloud it. Such a clear mind is able to see that which cannot be spoken.

The brahmins tried to seduce and subject society by claiming that from the beginning, the word was with God, that the word was God. Now the word is with the brahmins, which makes them God. They want us to accept the delusion that the word is the thing. It’s like when we say “Unicorn”; hence, it exists! Children’s games are fun, but when we make fun of good sense, we are no better than children.

Even when “I” say “I am,” it is NOT “me.” If it were so, then, I would not have to say it at all. We are merely going by common convention. They are like traffic rules: they keep the traffic safe and we reach where we are going. Even then, it’s not about the road, or traffic lights, or traffic police. For, our journey is how we move and where we are going. We are the journey.

When reading the suttas, the Buddha reminds us that “the word is not the thing.” It’s not even the finger pointing to the moon. No finger, no moon—just words. We must breathe in the life of the texts ourself.

The finger does not point to the moon: only the mind does so. When we say, “Impermanent!”—this is real. Yet, if we stop there to worship the words, even piously chanting them, we see neither truth nor reality—only unicorns. Many of us today are lost in seeking Unicorns, worshipping Them, saying Unicorn words, hoping to go to Unicorn paradise. But Unicorns—even with the big U—do not exist.

The suttas present to us words—words to any eye that smell just as sweet. For, they are best read with eyes closed, minds clear, hearts open. They speak of the true nature of things. They make no grand statements of states. For, the statement is not the state.

Indeed, the suttas free us from statements and from those who make them and who make us make them. They teach us to directly see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel states of reality, so that they are things of truth and beauty. Even when I can proudly pronounce *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcitasamādhī* in a single breath, it still does not exist.

Nothing exists; all is change. This is already saying too much. We just have to close our eye to see more.

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

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