

The Year of the 4 Truths

Reflections for 2024

Time is passing by this very moment. We are so very busy doing some “thing” that we do not notice this. It was like yesterday we were only 16 and wondering what 18 or 21 would be like. Now we are well past teen age. We are quite laid back in the evening of our life. Perhaps we may be too busy to notice even this, or simply do not want to know this. We want to be Peter Pan.

The last day of the year and New Year Day serve as reminders that we are alive this very day. This means that time is passing, things are changing. What are the “things” here. The first thing is our conscious BODY: it has changed very much.

As a child I laughed and wept,	time crept.
As a youth I dreamed and talked,	time walked.
As an adult, a woman, a man,	time ran.
As older I daily learned and grew,	time flew.
As family grows, old friends move on,	time gone.

When we look back over the years, we would notice that people are always looking for “something” (they do not know what) or worse, for “some thing” (that is tangible). If we see the patterns of events as we seek that something, all we can see is only the SEEKING that makes our life meaningful and purposeful.

Once we have succeeded in finding something, or think we have, then we seem to lose our purpose in life. Or worse, we feel ENTITLED since we have “found it,” whatever it is. It’s usually money, and if that’s not enough, we buy ourself a TITLE to our name. Yet we’re still naked underneath it all.

We are even taught that Buddhism will entitle us with long life, beauty, happiness and strength (*āyu vaṇṇa sukha bala*). LONG LIFE is when we use our time wisely and wholesomely: otherwise we will only notice our body weakening, changing, behaving oddly, and at the mercy of healers.

BEAUTY is not how we look *to* others; it is how we look *at* others, with a radiant smile, a warm lovingkind (*metta*) heart. HAPPINESS is how easily (*sukha*) we stand with our body and mind, how we walk in joy in every step, how we sit in peace with a clear mind, and how we sleep for a brighter and better day. All our 4 postures are those of lovingkindness: accepting ourself as we really are and embracing others as they are, and yet with bright spaces for each to move and grow.

For 2024, let us be truthful with ourself: only we need to know; only we can know.

- (1) What do I want in life: something, some thing or some happiness?
- (2) Why do I want this: this is true, this is real; I can change.
- (3) What do I do then? Give a little happiness to another; then we have it.
- (4) How do I do this? Start by calling someone by their good name; smile.

The year of the 4 truths by Piya Tan

Have a blessed year 2024—the year of truth: the 4 noble truths.

Take that leap of faith in the Dhamma: it's a leap year!

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