

The Spread of Love

Love Is Nurtured

When we are born into this world, we first use all our strength to breathe. Then we give our first cry and begin to breathe in the air. Although we were able to live with the nutrients provided by our mother's blood circulation, we now have to breathe the oxygen in the air on our own.

Next, we drink and receive the nutrients from our mother's breast milk. Or perhaps we drink baby formula or receive the milk from someone else's mother. Most babies seem to receive formula nowadays.

However, since we heard the voices of our mother and father while still in our mother's womb, we as newborns remember them and will look in the direction of our mother's voice. As far as language is concerned, we heard our mother tongue while in the womb, so it is easy to remember, and those babies who often listen to music also grow to like it.

In addition, through the warm words and touch of those who help the baby grow, the baby gradually begins to feel the love of those other than himself, and broadens his scope and range of love from the *love of self* to the *love of others* by feeling love for his parents, family, and others.

The baby's range of love expands even further after this and he begins to feel love for his friends, birthplace, and country. It is because people throughout the world love their country so much that we have what we refer to as *love of country*. And, in events such as the Olympics, people are happy when the athletes from their own country win, and there are those who travel abroad in order to cheer for their countries in person.

A Sinner's Love

However, there have been many instances in the world in which people killed or threatened others *because* they loved them. This is

because that love was not genuine, and it does not mean that “true love” was bad or evil. That is because true love is *God’s love* and *Buddha’s compassion*, and people are already endowed with that genuine love. There are many cases though where that love is not fully expressed as a physical existence. In other words, the real thing is hidden and we call those people whose love is concealed, “sinners,” or “mortals of the unenlightened.” But the real person is “Buddha” and a *child of God*, so when a person dies he/she is prayed to as a Buddha or shrines are built and the person is enshrined.

The need to purify and cleanse ourselves from a false love to a genuine one can be called our biggest challenge in life. Unless we do this, there will always be murderers and hate in this world. The reason so many wars have occurred up until now is that the love of country has not been a real, genuine love. If we continue to hide our love, peace will not last for long, despite the peace treaties being created.

However, each one of us already has true love. That is why we say, “child of God.” There is no way that only some special people are children of God and all others are children of sin. God would never discriminate in that way. God’s love spreads and reaches everyone and permeates the entire universe. What we need to do is to know and recognize that we have the *same love* within us and train ourselves to call forth and express that *true love*.

To do this, it is very important to remove attachments. This is primarily what Shakamuni Buddha taught. It is written in the *Dhammapada*, “Like the flower petals that flutter and fall, leave your attachments.” Even when it comes to the love of one’s country, threats and wars will occur if there is attachment and concern only for one’s own country and its prosperity, territorial and military expansion, and the pursuit of profit only for that country.

When a person gets too attached to material things and social status, he can only think about himself and the things concerning his own country. To be attached to something or someone is to be “stuck” to the other thing or person, so one’s mind loses its natural freedom and that person’s correct love and wisdom are concealed.

Natural Circulation

It has become quite clear that this type of tenacious, clinging nationalism was the root of past world wars. The primary reason for the fighting between the Israelis and Palestinians is the scramble for the Holy Land. When one gets caught up in material things and/or land, this type of conflict arises. However, the land is not God’s but the *phenomenon* that the physical person senses. Moreover, the same can be said about treaties between countries, territories, and territorial waters.

Furthermore, internationalization has steadily progressed and free trade with other countries is flourishing. In these instances, if we begin to think too much about the profits for our own country alone and get too “stuck” on that, it will only end up hurting and inconveniencing our country. This is as written in the “Divine Message of Natural Circulation”:

The concept of self-sufficiency is a narrow-minded concept belonging to one who places himself in separation from others. The self and others are one. Seicho-No-Ie believes in supplying others, being supplied by others, and in being in perpetual circulation. It sees a scene of perpetual circulation of the Ultimate Reality and strives to live this world exactly as depicted in that scene. That is what Seicho-No-Ie does in the actual world.

In the true world, “good things are circulated everywhere.” That is because it is the will of God. Good cars and culture are exported everywhere, and we should respect the arts, whether they be from abroad or from our own country. When we do, culture, traditions, academics, agriculture, and other related things will develop greatly.

Some people may say that we should do away with our fatherland or homeland and have just one “world nation.” But that will not appear in the phenomenal world because the kingdom of God is one and yet also includes many. It is similar to the physical body where the same cells are not simply lined up, flat and smooth. They become the cellular system of the head, stomach, intestines, heart,

hands, feet, and the blood vessels and nerves flow and circulate through them.

It is similar to the blood flowing and circulating naturally through those vessels and doing a wonderful job of providing nourishment to each cell (countries). Here we have many coming together and collectively becoming one. The way of *oneness of the self and others* is the way of the True-Image World (the kingdom of God), which also appears in the physical body as a reflection. It also appears in the world, so it is good that different countries are built with their own respective cultures and civilizations, supplying others and being supplied by others, resulting in a sound federation of countries, each with its own love of country.

All Things on Earth

Additionally, not only humankind lives on earth. There is a great number and variety of birds, animals, and plants that exist as well. It is not just one identical thing but rather many different things. The decrease or extinction of these things affects and harms all living things. Human beings are trying to increase the types of plants and animals.

That is why it is not right that human beings alone prosper. When we take care of other animals and plants and provide them all with an opportunity to prosper and flourish, the world of humanity will also become very abundant and prosperous.

The indiscriminate cutting down and destruction of the forests and woods is especially problematic. If this continues, animals will be left without a place to live, and their numbers will undoubtedly begin to decrease. Having lost their homes, the animals will begin coming out of the woods and into the fields and people's homes and damaging people's crops. As I have mentioned, this is because the natural plants and vegetation have been destroyed by humans. When green plant life in the forests and woods is decreased, the oxygen they create decreases, and the carbon gases that come from the breathing of animals, burning of petroleum, coal and timber increases. The October 2, 2000 issue of the *Sankei* newspaper

wrote about the following warning issued by the renowned physicist Stephen Hawking.

London, October 1st:

According to the October 1st issue of the *Sunday Times*, the wheelchair-ridden British physicist, Stephen Hawking, warned in his recent book that humankind would be totally destroyed within the next 1000 years due to disasters or global warming. He declared that the only way to be saved from this would be for all people to move and live on a different planet.

In his work, Hawking said, "I am worried about the effects of greenhouse gases," and predicted that the Earth's temperature would continue to grow hotter and would eventually end up like Venus, filled with boiling sulfuric acid.

With regard to the question of overpopulation, Dr. Hawking said that unless we move to another planet, humankind faces the danger of extinction.

A Homeland That Will Not Perish

No one living now will still be here in this world in a thousand years. But, although the physical body of a person may die, the *true person*, in other words, the soul of the child-of-God person never dies. Otherwise, life would be meaningless if we were living only to become ashes.

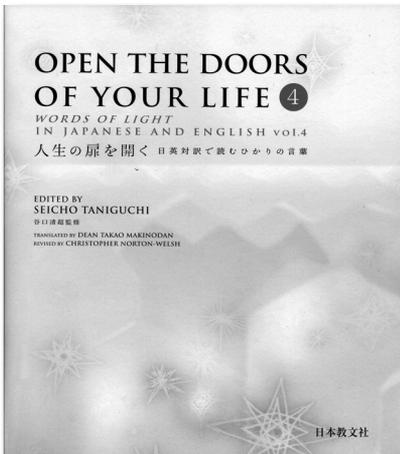
God did not create human beings to become ashes or create the earth to become a "boiling planet" where no creatures live. That is why this physical earth is a temporary phenomenon different from the kingdom of God. And the phenomenal world is the world that we express in the way in which we sense it.

Birds as birds, mosquitoes as mosquitoes, killifish as killifish all create their respective temporary worlds and live there. However, it is sad to think that the wonderful green planet earth that is being expressed in this phenomenal world might disappear and become a hot, burning hell-like planet. It would be unbearably sad for us to see our country disappear from existence or die.

That is why we want to try our best to somehow preserve our green planet forever and express an even more beautiful “kingdom of God” here, make our country great, make it last forever and have it be a paradise on earth. In order to do this, we will work so that we think not only of the safety and prosperity of our own country, but that of other countries, care for all living things on earth, as well as the air and water, and always try to make our love as close to real love, God’s love, Buddha’s compassion as possible. Thus, we would like to continue a “movement of deeds of love” that shares the truth that “human beings are children of God and live eternally” to as many people as possible.

From *Tanoshiku Ikiru Tameni*, “In Order to Live Joyfully,” pp. 42-51

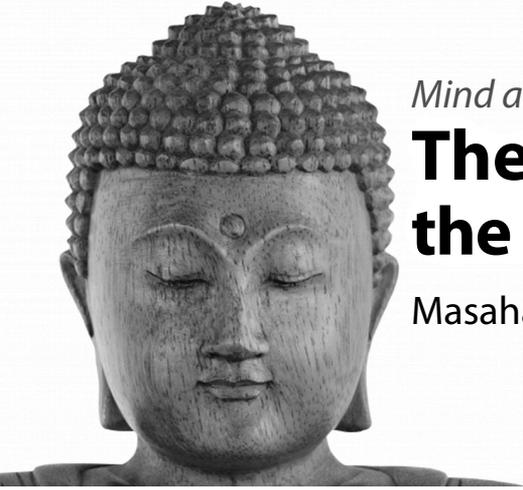
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Mind and Environment

The World the Mind Expresses

Masaharu Taniguchi

Shakamuni Finally Enters the Priesthood

Shakamuni's father grew increasingly concerned, and, trying to comfort him, surrounded him with even more beautiful princesses. The Prince could not see their beauty simply as beauty, but it seemed that he saw deep within that beauty, tragic and ugly strife and heartbreaking misfortune. However, the time finally came for him to enter the priesthood. As if by the supernatural powers of a celestial being, the beautiful entertainers, who had been playing court music, were suddenly strangely overcome with drowsiness and fell into a deep sleep as though they had been given an anesthetic to breathe. How slovenly they looked as they slept. Their complexions that had appeared to be so beautiful, had lost their calmness, their mouths were half-open as those with dementia, and drool was dripping from their open mouths. "This is a human being's true appearance. What appeared to be beautiful was actually false. Under that complexion there are ugly muscles soaked with bright red blood, and underneath those muscles are internal organs, and those organs are filled with excrement too unsightly to even look at. . . ."

Shakamuni made up his mind at last. Taking advantage of the fact that all the guards were asleep, he left the palace. First, he went to some Brahmin teachers, after which he sought the way to overcome the sufferings of birth, old age, disease, and death from Alara Kalama through practicing various penances. One may naturally feel that,

since human beings have killed various living things and eaten them and have tormented other people and other living things in order to live, one must suffer in order to atone for this or there is no other way to purify oneself from karmic suffering. However, none of the sages could show Shakamuni the true path to purifying the soul. He thanked them, left and went on to enter the forests of Uruvilva where he allegedly did not eat at all for six years.

Rather than eating nothing at all, I'm sure he ate only the smallest amount of food, somehow avoiding total starvation. In this way, he was able to live by taking as little as possible from others by trying not to kill any living thing, trying not to take things that belonged to others and living in a way that would least inconvenience others. However, there was no way in which a human being could live without taking from others. If he were to eat vegetables, he would be killing those vegetables and would feel sorry for them. But if he did not eat anything, he would be killing himself, and because he, too, was a living thing, this would also mean that he was committing the sin of destroying life. Shakamuni's suffering was that of not being able to die nor to live. Suffering and starving, Shakamuni survived by eating as little as possible. Despite the fact that he was gaunt and in a miserable condition from having deprived himself of food, Shakamuni could not find the answers, and after six years of ascetic practice and suffering with no way out, he was still unable to find the path to enlightenment. He realized that "austerity was not the answer to enlightenment" and left the forest. There was a river called the Niranjana at the foot of the mountain and Shakamuni stepped into it, and after six years of not having bathed, he cleansed himself of all dirt and grime from his body.

There are paintings of the Buddha in temples that show him as an ascetic and it does indeed show him looking very emaciated, with an expression of ascetic misery and wretchedness itself. It was at dawn on December 8th that he came down from the mountain and to the Niranjana River to bathe in its waters. There, a maiden came to offer him a bowl of milk and rice gruel. Until that moment, Shakamuni had thought that eating something like that was a transgression and

evil. Grain had life and eating it would be taking the life of that grain; milk was for the calves of a cow to drink, and taking that would be for a human being to take from a cow. He had suffered, feeling miserable and wretched, worrying that the life of a person was that of killing and plunder. However, at that moment, for some reason, Shakamuni ate that milk gruel without any feelings of suffering or misery in his mind, feeling only, "How grateful I am!"

Transformation

Shakamuni's mind changed suddenly. He saw the beautiful scenery of a different world. What he ate at that moment was what appeared from a material or phenomenal perspective to be milk gruel, but at that moment he did not look at the material thing, but partook of the maiden's *love* that was within that milk gruel. In the period during which he had looked only at the physical, outer appearances of things, everything seemed as though it was attained through killing and plunder. But now, to Shakamuni, there was no killing or plunder. He began to feel, "This is what I have been offered by the Brahmin maiden who wants to help me live. I did not ask her to give me anything but she gave me this milk. I did not ask; I did not grow this grain; I did not make this milk. Ah, but despite this, the great love of the blessings of heaven and earth have come to me in the form of this milk gruel. Ah, how grateful I am!" Once he attained enlightenment, he saw the world that had once appeared to him as a world of killing one another as a world that sustained all living things.

All Living Things Simply Sustain One Another

Though the milk that Shakamuni drank was the milk that the cow made to feed her calf, a cow has more than enough to feed her calf and still have some left over. This is a true fact. It may appear as though the cow is being robbed of its milk by the farmer, but a cow thinks very dearly of the farmer's caress and finds it very comforting and makes more than enough milk for the calf to drink. This is an expression of God's blessings in which *He cannot help but sustain human beings*. This is what Shakamuni realized.

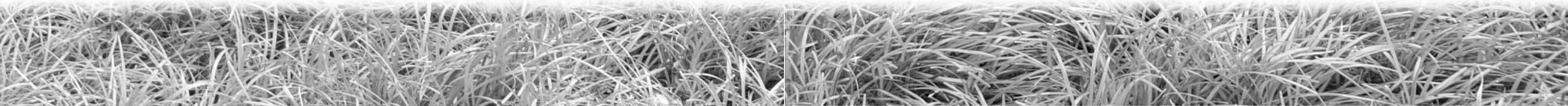
What does a cow eat to survive? It eats grass to survive. Shakamuni simply became grateful for the natural, ordinary things. Until then, he had believed that the cow eating living grass was also a wretched world of killing and eating of the other, and by drinking that milk which was the by-product of that eating and taking from each other, he was also usurping from that killing and eating. However, even though he was looking at the same condition in the world, when his mind changed, what he was seeing also changed.

Shakamuni understood, “The grass that is densely growing in that field is growing there so that it can help sustain us. It is the blessings of God, the blessings of Heaven and earth that cannot help but sustain the cows, the sheep, the calves, the lambs, and moreover human beings, and have come sprouting forth there as grass.” He could see that this is definitely not a world of killing; it is a world of sustaining one another. I am not saying this theoretically. There could be reason given to either side, but it was his mindset that had changed.

He began to feel harmony. He had thought that the grass and the cow were in conflict, but he realized that this wasn't the case at all; they were sustaining each other. He understood the obvious and ordinary fact that the feces of the cow that is produced when it defecates after having eaten the grass then becomes the fertilizer that helps to sustain the grass. When the cow breathes and exhales carbon gases, the grass, through assimilation, absorbs the carbon from the gases and reduces it and returns it to the cow as oxygen. Shakamuni likely did not understand these biological processes, but he instinctively understood that they were sustaining each other. Is it painful for grass to be eaten by a cow? It is not. And vegetables do not feel pain when human beings eat them. Because humans consume them, vegetables, which have no feet with which to walk, can broaden the territory in which they live throughout the various parts of the

world. The reason beautiful fruit grows on trees is because they want the animals to eat them, and as if saying, “I am delicious, so please eat me,” the fruit becomes bright red and brilliant yellow and wears other different adornment so it can draw even more attention to itself and make it easy for the animals to see them. However, if the time is such that it cannot leave any seeds because the seeds are not yet mature, it becomes bitter or covers itself with burrs, and turns the same color as the leaves on the tree so it cannot be found, but when it is ready and wants to be eaten, it turns a beautiful color so it can be seen. If animals don't eat the fruit, the plant would, on the contrary, be annoyed. In those instances, the fruit has no choice but to rot and fall to the ground. The seeds are exposed, and many seeds become layered at the roots of the tree. They become so dense that they cannot grow and mature even if they were to grow, so, although they are at the base of the parent tree, they barely get any sunlight or evening dew and cannot grow and mature into healthy trees. It is because animals eat the ripened fruit that its seeds do not collect in just one place but are spread evenly throughout the land. If a persimmon grows ripe naturally, rots and drops its seeds in the same place, though it may want to grow and increase, the persimmon tree would probably not be able to do so. Because trees do not have legs and feet, animals play the part of those legs and feet and carry those seeds. In return, the animal eats some of the seeds, some of the flesh of the fruit around the seeds and both the animal and the plant are able to live.

When we understand this, the world that we once thought was one of eating and killing one another becomes the opposite. It becomes a world of helping one another drink milk, and a world of carrying and transporting each other. We understand that it is a world of sustaining each other, a world that helps one compensate for what the other is lacking. When we attain enlightenment, the



world becomes a grateful place where every single thing in heaven and earth is sustaining one another. One awakens to the fact that every single thing is an expression of Buddha's life, Buddha's compassion, an expression of God's life and His love. It is because God's life and Buddha's life are being manifested that all things love and sustain one another. The world that was once thought to be a world of killing was a wonderful world filled with the infinite life, love and wisdom of God, of Buddha. In the life that seemed to be hateful of and fighting each other, what appeared to be the enemy was the grindstone with which we are to polish ourselves and the manifestation of the Buddha's compassion and God's love to help us gradually expand our divine nature. This is a world in which each and every thing, all living things that love one another, and even those people and things that appear as though they hate each other, are sustaining one another. It is a world in which everyone loves one another. It is a world in which everything and everyone melds with one another.

This is what Shakamuni came to understand. When this happened, though it was exactly the same in form, the world before Shakamuni changed completely. At the same time, as he gazed at the morning star in the dawn of December 8th, Shakamuni was enlightened and understood that, "both the sentient and non-sentient can achieve the path to enlightenment. The mountains, rivers, grasses, trees, and territories are all manifestations of Buddha." In other words, sentient—all living things—and non-sentient—every single thing—is now Buddha. He realized that the mountains, rivers, and trees are all manifestations of the Buddha and that they are all sustaining and revering each other. He realized that he had been mistaken to think that what he saw was a manifestation of hell. This is the vertical truth to which Shakamuni was enlightened.

From *Seimei no Jisso*, "Truth of Life," Volume 39, pp. 34-42