

Nothing Is Worth Clinging To

by Piya Tan

Every week in response to my Dharma message, various individuals would email me telling how happy or inspired they feel. A few see deep connections between my message and their personal difficulties. This reflection is in response to a common response.

Whatever that troubles us or makes us unhappy is mostly the result both past karma and present conditions. Going deeper, we can say that the pains we feel are not really caused by others, but arise through our own ignorance, greed, or hate, or delusion.

We are what we choose to remember. If we choose to remember unhappy things, we will be unhappy, even destructive. If we choose to remember happy things, we will be happy and creative.

Suppose, I have translated all these Suttas and written all these essays, and put them into CDs and online. Although Pali Suttas are not copyrighted, the translations are, and suppose there are those who use these translations, even putting their names to them, so that they get the recognition or profit for it.

Should this stop me from working on the translation? We should never allow negative people or those who take advantage of us to control our moods and life, and do what we do best.

Suppose I am running a small Dharma centre, and some people won't join us because it is a small and simple centre, does it mean I have failed? The point is that those who do join us are really sincere seekers because they do not come for the size, comfort or beauty of buildings.

Or suppose I badly need financial support to do something I deeply believe in, and those whom I have helped, or those who say they would help, or those who can afford it, do not help. Should I be disappointed? The truth is that they have other commitments or that they have not really learned to give. But, then look at those who have been kind and generous to us. They are the ones we should joyfully remember; they are the ones who will benefit from our meditation.

Sometimes we lose something or someone we dearly love. If we hold on to the idea of a "thing" or a "person," then we will be deeply hurt for a long time. We might even turn to religion for the wrong reasons and see it in the wrong light. The point is that we have mentally constructed what or whom we love or hate.

When we lose something that we dearly love, it does NOT mean that we have lost "someone" special, but that we have a great capacity for love. If we do not stop loving, then we will find an even greater love. If we reflect on the good things in our lives, we will notice that they are good because we have let go of a loss or pain, and so we allow something better into your lives.

When something bad happens to us, and we let it go, something very much better will replace it. My point is that what we learn of ourselves, the good that we know, cannot be taken away. It will enrich us in a very great way. With every failure, we are better and wiser.

In the Pacala Sutta (A 7.58), the Buddha tells Moggallana, “Nothing is worth clinging to.” This is found in section 11 (the ending) of which is found here:

<http://earlypalisutta.googlepages.com/anguttaranikaya>
in A 7.58 Pacala Sutta.

If we understand nothing is worth clinging to, and move on with happiness, whatever we do next will be even better. This gives us an inner sense of satisfaction and happiness. And no one can take that away.

We suffer pain when we depend on external things and others for recognition and happiness. Meditation trains us to be happy within ourselves without relying on people and external things. When we are truly happy, we can give more and true happiness to others.

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