

Bodhi Day

Happy Bodhi Day! December 8th commemorates the historical day in 596 BC when Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), who later became Buddha, experienced enlightenment under a Bo tree. Bodhi means awakening or enlightenment. The Buddha taught his students to be in the moment, to be fully present here and now. The reason for this teaching is that this moment, right here and now, is the only space where life truly flows.

That's what my photo haiku tries to convey. This photo of my little grandniece utterly blissful in the moment with a mouthful of fresh raspberries is exactly how to live our lives - in the moment. Gratitude and bliss and compassion flow naturally from that state. Peace and wellness,

Just this moment is,
The space to be alive, choose
Opening to Now

Hi Friend,

I don't know if you realize it or not (you probably do) but your statement that "your mind" auto corrects" information for you to suit your world view" is both scientific fact and an expression of one of the quintessential teachings of Buddhism. The whole point of the Buddha telling students "be in the moment, fully present" arises from the realization that looking with just our minds we do not perceive reality directly. Only by going beyond mind can we truly be in the moment.

Aloha Friend,

Hope you are well and had a chance to be with family.

Was reading an article in my Snow Lion catalog and found a term I did not know. Checked my Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism. While looking I happened across an entry titled Flower and Smile. It says "Once Indra, king of the gods, visited a congregation of Buddhists on Vulture Peak (where Sakyamuni Buddha taught the Lotus Sutra) and reverently asked the Buddha to preach the Dharma. The Buddha held out some flowers before the congregation. No one could comprehend what he meant except Maha-kasyapa, who smiled. The Buddha exclaimed "I am the professor of the True Dharma which is Nirvana. I now hand it over to Maha-kasyapa". Maha-kasyapa was the patriarch of the Zen school of Buddhism. This short paragraph touched me deep inside. That which is beyond all concepts must be transmitted directly, wordlessly.

As such I share this photo haiku. May bliss flow over you in warm waves.

Flower and Smile

If "I" is not real

What are we truly?, just a

Flower and a smile

And there "I" am in
This moment, this wheel, turning
Step off, embrace Now

Being Literally in the Moment

In the 4/25/201 issue of The New Yorker, an article entitled The Possibilian is about the work of neurobiologist David Eagleman. He studies the human perception of time. It also talks about how our brains process sensory information and produce our experience of "reality". I've read about this brain processing before and how we filter our perceptions (there is a new book that talks about 'attention blindness'), but reading this article made it much clearer to me. The Buddha directs those on the path to be in the moment. I have thought about this directive as being of a philosophical nature (like 'be mindful'). After reading the article I now think that he also meant "be in the moment" literally - to be fully present in the exact present moment, here and now (this exact now in space and time). Because of our brain processing of sensory inputs to create our picture of reality we are always several milliseconds behind The Moment. I think the Buddha is telling us to go beyond the sensory processing so we can be awake in the moment to the whole of reality (and not just the parts our mental filters show us). It's a going beyond Mind and Self, beyond concepts, to Now. It's made my practice more concrete

Dear Friend,

That and an older white dude came to visit the shrines with a friend. They seemed a little way white bread and haole. But after walking on the path this guy comes up to me and says he enjoyed it. He said it that being on the path made him feel like to needed to breathe a little slower and walk a little slower. To be in the moment. If a guy like this is moved by the creation of a group of Japanese immigrants in 1904 trying to recreate a special piece of home, then I have hope for humanity. That compassion and mindfulness can touch all human hearts and take us to a higher level of being. It's good to have hope.

Happy Birthday Brothers

My heart still hurts a little at your sharing of "sometimes I don't like myself". Well, I like both of you, and I love you and appreciate you exactly as you are. Life's hard enough, so there's just no need to beat oneself up. Sure if there's something you don't like in your life, change it. But Mom and Dad would want you to give yourself the gift only you can give - unconditional self-acceptance and self-love.

As a Buddhist I strive to live loving kindness and compassion. It has come home to me recently that this compassion for all sentient beings has to include oneself. I was putting on some lotion the dermatologist prescribes for me for rosacea (the red veiny lines Dad had on and around his nose). For some reason I paused and looked into the mirror. I realized the person I was looking at had been braving the impact of imperfect skin for decades. I felt compassion for that person in the mirror. I realized I should cut that person a break and be easier on myself. I have felt more peaceful with myself ever since that moment in the mirror.

Take care, be kind and gentle to yourself - both of you. Happy Birthday

