

ACCEPTING THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE



WHAT IS TRUTH?

[Poem by Prince Shiki
 (668-716, 7th son
 of Emperor Tenji)]

"Atop the stones of a waterfall, / A bracken has sprouted fiddleheads-- / Spring has come."
 He has found fresh fiddlehead sprouts at the side of a waterfall flowing vigorously between the rocks.
 Perfectly conveys the feeling of excitement when spring is in the air.

[However, today]

we have difficulty admiring nature, with clear eyes of people in *Manyoshi* times and joyfully, gratefully accepting things as they really are.
 Poems like these show us the cloudiness and inadequacy of our own minds.

[Shakyamuni says]

"For me, upholding the truth is like mowing a field of grass."
 For Shakyamuni, upholding the truth is the same as the mowing done by a farmhand who cultivates a field.

[Truth is]

"the true Dharma"
 We can interpret "upholding the truth" as living in accordance with the Dharma.

[In a Buddhist dictionary]

"How things really are" & "things just as they are."
 From this perspective, upholding the truth means seeing how things really are--without adding subjective likes & dislikes-- & accepting things just as they are.
 Therefore, I surmise that Shakyamuni must also have been working to cut down the obstructive weeds of delusion before they spread across the field of his mind.

THERE IS NO PLANT WITH THE NAME "WEED"

[However, delusion can also]

become the driving force for progress & improvement. As stated by the teaching, "Delusions are inseparable from awakening," we could say that delusion & awakening are ultimately one & the same.
 If humans are endowed with the power to awaken to the true Dharma precisely because they possess great delusions,
 then delusions must be a blessing that sustains & nurtures us. Perhaps no one is more likely to have a major change of heart than someone with great delusions.

[The reason Shakyamuni]

used the expression "mowing the grass" is that if we cut down the weeds of delusion that spread across our minds before they become too tall
 and continue to plow them into the soil of our minds,
 we can use them to nourish the wisdom to broaden our minds
 and make the fields of our minds even richer and more flexible.

[Botanist Tomitaro Makino]

"There is no plant in this world with the name 'weed.' Every species of plant has a proper name."
 And in a similar vein, all delusions that are compared to the weeds of the mind
 also have meaning & value. It is up to us to determine whether we let our delusions end as mere delusions, or whether they lead to spiritual growth.

[2024New Year's Day earthquake in Japan]

We think of earthquakes as nothing other than disasters,
 but in the light of the history of planet Earth, they are just one form of natural phenomena that continues to unfold up to the present day.
 We could even say that by facing this fact, just as it is, we are participating in an important process that connects natural disasters to human wisdom.
 Of course, when we see the harsh conditions endured by people affected by disaster, we cannot accept that reality without becoming emotional:
 we cannot help but mourn those who have passed away & feel compassion for those whose lives have become difficult.

YOUR TAKEAWAY

In the process of facing the truth, accepting it, and suffering as we work through conflicting emotions, we cultivate the wisdom to lead better lives and the mind of compassion that shows consideration for others. This is called our lifelong, diligent practice of the Buddha Way.