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I

Pure Feeling

1

Buddhism is a religion of "Enlightenment" *(satori)* as is shown by the term *Buddha,* which means the *Enlightened One.* When man attains *Bodhi,* i.e. the awakenment from the self-obscured ignorance to the perfection of consciousness, he becomes a Buddha. In other words, Bodhi or Enlightenment is the freedom from the ignorance that darkens our consciousness by limiting it within the boundaries of our personal self, and obstructs our vision of truth. Truth is all-comprehensive. There is no such thing as absolute isolation in existence, and the only way of attaining truth is

through the interpenetrating of our being into all objects. It is dire destruction for us when we envelope our consciousness in a dead shell of our narrow self. This is indeed the killing of the very spirit of our being, which is the sprit of comprehension and permeation. Essentially man is not a slave of himself, or of the world, but he is a *lover.* Our freedom and fulfillment is in perfect comprehension and permeation. By this power of comprehension, this permeation of our being, our hearts are *transferred back* into, and united with the All-pervasive Original Heart, which is the Heart of our hearts.

However, being shut up within the narrow walls of our limited self, we lose our *simplicity* and turn a deaf ear to the *call* welling up from the inmost depths of our heart. We are not quite conscious of our *inherent longing,* for it is hidden under so many layers of pride and self-deception. Just as we are not ordinarily conscious

of the air, so we are apt to overlook the claims of the *heart* demanding our foremost attention. But when we meet happenings incompatible with our selfish desires and baffling human calculations, we are made to pause and reflect on the feebleness of our earthly desires. This is the time when the *heart* asserts itself and forces us to look beyond our narrow self. Here we feel an *unthinkable power* stronger than ourselves, compelling us to choose between the self and the not-self, between ignorance and enlightenment. This Unthinkable Power stronger than ourselves, this persistent *urge* impelling the self to transcend itself, is a *call* to us of the All-feeling Compassionate heart, the Eternal Spirit of Sympathy—who is in his essence the Light and Life of all who is World-conscious. To feel all, to be conscious of everything, is the Spirit. We are immersed in his consciousness body and soul. It is through his consciousness that the sun attracts the earth; it is through his

consciousness that the light waves are being transmitted from planet to planet. Not only in space, but this Light and Life, this All-feeling Being is in our hearts.

He is all-conscious in space, or the world of extension; and he is all-conscious in heart, or the world of intention. He is working in the inmost recesses of our heart as the *innate love*—that *basal, pure, universal-feeling* that interpenetrates all objects, that moves and exists in unbroken continuity with the outer world. Our self has ceaselessly to shed its limits in oblivion and death, and repeatedly sink into this basal *pure feeling*. It must dive boldly into the depths of existence, touch the Fundamental Unity, and follow the eternal rhythm of the World's Heart so as to become *one* with the all.

The enlightened man, with his inner perspective deepened and enlarged, meets the One Eternal Spirit in all objects. He realizes the wholeness of his existence by disclosing the One Living Truth every-

where that makes all realities true. In his mind's eye, it reflects something supernatural. The water does not merely cleanse his limbs, but it purifies his heart, for it touches his spirit. The earth does not merely hold his body, but it gladdens his mind, for its contact is more than a physical contact—it is a living presence of the Glory of Amida[1]—the Eternal Spirit. This is not mere knowledge, as science is, but it is an intuition of the spirit by the spirit. This is where Buddha speaks to Buddha. Amida's revelation is not to be sought after by our own efforts; it comes upon us by itself, of its own accord. Amida is always in us and with us, but by means of our human understanding we posit him outside us, against us, as opposing us, and exercise our intellectual power to the utmost to take hold of him. The revela-

[1] Amida (Amita) in Japanese Buddhism stands for both *Amitabha,* Infinite (*amita*) Light (*abha*) and *Amitayus,* Eternal (amita) Life (*ayus*). See Chapter III and IV.

tion, however, would take place only when this human power has been really exhausted, has given up all its selfishness, when we have come back to our *simplicity*. We can only *feel* him as Heart of our heart and Spirit of our spirit; we can only *feel* him in the love and joy we feel when we give up our self and stand before him face to face.

2

The spirit of renunciation is the deepest reality of the human heart. Our self can realize itself truly only by giving itself away. In *giving (dana)* is our truest joy and liberation, for it is uniting ourselves to that extent with the Infinite. We grow by losing ourselves, by uniting. Gaining a thing is by its nature partial, it is limited only to a particular want, but giving is complete, it belongs to our wholeness, it springs not from any necessity but

from our affinity with the Infinite, which is the principle of unity and perfection that we have in our inmost heart. Our abiding happiness is not in getting anything, but in giving ourselves up to what is greater than ourselves, to the infinite ideal of perfection.

All our belongings assume a weight by the ceaseless gravitation of our selfish desires; we cannot easily cast them away from us. They seem to belong to our very nature, to stick to us as a second skin, and we bleed as we detach them. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." He who is bent upon accumulating riches is unable, with his ego continually bulging, to pass through the gate of the *spiritual world* which is the world of perfect harmony with the all; he is shut up within the narrow walls of his limited acquisitions. Therefore, if we want to gain freedom and happiness, we must embrace all by giving up the self.

However, when the self is given up, the giver is still there, for the act of giving is only possible when there is one who gives and the other who is given. However further we may go, there always remains the giver that does the act of giving. As long as there is an idea of giving somewhere in one's consciousness, the giving agent will always be left behind as an insoluble residue, and no final giving up of the self will be possible. If one wants to be an absolute giver, one must altogether transcend the dualism of one who gives and the other who is given. When this is accomplished, there takes place the entire shifting of positions, and one who gives is at once one who is given. The absolute *transference* from ME to the NOT ME is at once the *transference (parinamana*: *eko)*[2] from the NOT ME to ME. Here, one has entered the spiritual world—the

[2] See Chapter IV, 3.

Kingdom of Faith. The key to unlock the mysteries of this Kingdom is *love,* for Faith is the highest culmination of love.

In love all the contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. In love are unity and duality not at variance. Love is one and two at the same time. In love, here I am and I am not; I am in thee and thou in me. In love, loss and gain are harmonized. The lover constantly gives himself up to gain himself in love. Indeed, love is what brings together and inseparably connects both the act of abandoning and that of receiving. Therefore, when a man loves, giving becomes a matter of joy to him, for he transcends the dualistic notion of one who gives and the other who is given. He transcends even the idea of giving. He gives and yet he gives not. For him, giving is at once being given.

Love is the perfection of consciousness. We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we

do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment; it is truth; it is the joy that is at the root of all creation. It is the white light of Pure Feeling that emanates from Amida (Amitabha), the Infinite Light. So, to be at home one with this All-feeling Being, who is in the external sky, as well as in our inner heart, we must attain to that summit of consciousness, which is love. It is through the heightening of our consciousness into love, and extending it all over the world, that we can be *transferred back* into the Original Love, that we can attain communion with Amida, the Spirit of Joy *(Sambhoga-kaya)*.

Nirvana (nehan) preached by Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, is nothing else than this highest culmination of love. It is the absolute dying to the self, which is at once the absolute *rebirth* of the self in the Universal Self. It is the *extinction* of the lamp in the

morning light. This is the true awakening or *enlightenment*. One has entered the spiritual world or the Kingdom of Faith. But he who has entered the Kingdom of Faith never sits in idleness in that country, for Faith is motion and rest in one; bondage and liberation are not antagonistic in Faith. He comes back to this world, and does not stop for a moment extending measureless love for all creatures, even as a mother for her only child, whom she protects with her own life. Up above, below, and all around him he extends his love, which is without bounds and obstacles, and which is free from all cruelty and antagonism. While standing, sitting, walking, lying down, even in his dreams, he keeps his mind active in this exercise of universal goodwill.

3

According to history, Shakyamuni attained Enlightenment at Buddhagaya on the Nairanjana River more than twenty-five centuries ago, when he was thirty-five. In the *Saddharma-pundarika Sutra (The Lotus of the True Law),* however, Shakyamuni declares as follows: "In the immeasurably infinite past I attained Bodhi (Enlightenment), and I have been living here for an incalculably long period of time. I am immortal." This declaration comes from the deepest recesses of his nature where he and his audience and all of us essentially move and have their being. This is the Eternal *I am* that speaks through the *I am* that is in me. The finite I am has attained its perfect end by realizing its freedom of harmony in the Infinite *I am:* Here I am and I am not; Thou dwellest in me and I in Thee. This is the realm of true spirituality—Faith—where the eye

with which I see Amida is the same with which Amida sees me. This is the state of absolute freedom where the self permeates into all other selves through union with the Great Self. The finite I am finds its larger self in the whole world, and is filled with an absolute certainty that it is immortal. It must die in its enclosures of self, but it never can die where it is one with the All, for there is its truth, its joy.

However, by the process of knowledge we can never attain the oneness with the Infinite *I* am—the Universal Self. We can only *feel* Him through the immediate intuition of the *loving heart*. Knowledge is partial, because our knowledge is an instrument, it is only a part of us; it can give us information about things which can be divided and analyzed, and whose properties can be classified, part by part. But Amida, the Infinite Being, is perfect and eternal, and knowledge which is partial can never be a knowledge of Him. He

can be known only through *pure feeling* for *pure feeling* is knowledge in its completeness, it is knowing by our whole being. Knowledge sets us apart from the things to be known, but *pure feeling* knows its object by fusion. Such knowledge is immediate and admits no doubt. It is the same as knowing our own selves, only more so. It transcends the dualism of the knower and the object known. When it is said to see something, this something is nothing else than itself.

This selfsame knowledge—*pure feeling*—which is unanalyzable into subject and object, into one who knows and that which is known, is none other than *Prajna (hannya)—the transcendental* spiritual intuition. Prajna is a knowledge that knows and yet knows not, an intuition that does not intuit, a thought that is not thought.

It is *no-thinking-ness (munen)* or *mind-less-ness (mushin)* not in the sense of unconsciousness, but in

the sense that it transcends all traces of discursive or analytical understanding. All thinking involves the distinction of this and that, for thinking means to dichotomize, to divide, to analyze. Prajna or no-thinking-ness or mind-less-ness does not divide, but is *beyond* the self-centered mind *(vijnana)* which is the maker of the interminable complexities of discriminations and divisions. As the *basal pure feeling,* Prajna underlies and encompasses the ordinary, matter-of-fact, object-distinguishing, time-marking consciousness. The whole of the Buddhist teaching revolves about this central idea of *pure feeling* or *no-thinking-ness* or *mind-less-ness,* showing that no spiritual truth could be grasped by ratiocination or demonstration. This is not, however, the denial of understanding or the stoppage of reasoning, but this means to reach the root and foundation of sense and understanding. The ordinary object-distinguishing, time-marking consciousness will lose its way,

if not awakened to and guided by the light of this *basal pure feeling* (Prajna), in the labyrinth of interminable complexities. Prajna's all-illuminating light does not obliterate distinctions, but makes them stand out most clearly in their true, spiritual significance, for the self is now dead and all is seen reflected in the serene mirror of selflessness *(muga)*. Being not one of the effects of our human endeavor, Prajna is the ground of our existence, that is, the *meta (beyond)-physical condition* on which our whole life of conduct and science rests. Prajna is, so to speak, a transparent eyeball which is free from all color and which, for this reason, discerns all colors. The opening of this kind of eye is enlightenment or the revelation of Amitabha, the Infinite Light. This is the luminous vision of the Pure Land *(Sukhavati: Jodo)* of Amida.

4

In the *Larger Sukhavati-vyuha Sutra ('The Embellishment of the Pure Land)*, Shakyamuni preaches to Ananda, one of his disciples, concerning the magnificence of the Pure Land *(Sukhavati),* Amida's World of Bliss, where He reigns since He attained Buddhahood ten *kalpas*[3] ago:

[4]"Now, O Ananda, that world called Sukhavati (Pure Land) belonging to that Buddha Amitabha is prosperous, rich, good to live in, fertile, lovely, and filled with many gods and men . . . O Ananda, that world Sukhavati is fragrant with several sweet-smelling scents, rich in manifold flowers and fruits, adorned with gem trees, and frequented by tribes of manifold

[3] 1 kalpa = 432,000,000 years

[4] From F. Max Müller's English translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. XLIX. (My citations are slightly changed.) See Chapter IV, 1.

sweet-voiced birds, which have been made by that Buddha Amitabha on purpose . . .

"There are lotus flowers there, half *yojana*[5] in circumference. There are others, one yojana in circumference; and others, two, three, four, or five yojanas in circumference; nay, there are some as much as ten yojanas in circumference. And from each gem-lotus there proceed thirty-six hundred thousand *kotis*[6] of rays of light. And from each ray of light there proceed thirty-six hundred thousand kotis of Buddhas, with bodies of golden color, who go and teach the Law of Truth (Dharma) to beings in the immeasurable and innumerable worlds in the eastern quarter. Thus also in the southern, western, and northern quarters, above and below, in the cardinal and intermediate points, they go

[5] 1 yojana = 9 miles.
[6] 1 koti = 10 millions.

their way to the immeasurable and innumerable worlds and teach the Law to beings in the whole world . . .

"In that world Sukhavati, O Ananda, there flow different kinds of rivers; there are great rivers there, one yojana in breadth; there are rivers up to twenty, thirty, forty, fifty yojanas in breadth, and up to twelve yojanas in depth. All these rivers are delightful, carrying water of different sweet odor, carrying bunches of flowers adorned with various gems, resounding with sweet voices. And, O Ananda, there proceeds from an instrument which consists of hundred thousand kotis of parts, which embodies heavenly music and is played by clever people, the same delightful sound which proceeds from those great rivers, the sound which is deep, unknown, incomprehensible, clear, pleasant to the ear, touching the heart, beloved, sweet, delightful, never tiring, never disagreeable, pleasant to hear . . .

"And again, O Ananda, the borders of those great rivers on both sides are filled with jewel trees of various scents, from which bunches of flowers, leaves, and branches of all kinds hang down. And if the beings who are on the borders of those rivers, wish to enjoy sport full of heavenly delights, the water rises to the ankle only after they have stepped into the rivers, if they wish it to be so; or if they wish it, the water rises to their knees, to their hips, to their sides, and to their ears. And heavenly pleasures arise. Again if the beings then wish the water to be cold, it is cold; if they wish it to be hot, it is hot; if they wish it to be hot and cold, it is hot and cold, according to their pleasure . . .

"And, O Ananda, there is nowhere in that Sukhavati world any sound of sin, obstacle, misfortune, distress, and destruction; there is nowhere any sound of pain, even the sound of perceiving what is neither pain nor pleasure is not there, O Ananda, how much

less the sound of pain. For that reason, O Ananda, that world is called Sukhavati (Pure Land of Bliss), shortly, but not in full. For, O Ananda, the whole kalpa would come to an end, while the different causes of the pleasure of the world Sukhavati are being praised, and even then the end of those causes of happiness could not be reached . . .

"And again, O Ananda, in that world Sukhavati, beings do not take food consisting of gross materials of gravy or molasses; but whatever food they desire, such food they perceive, as if it were taken, and become delightful in body and mind. Yet they need not put it into their mouth.

"And if after they are satisfied, they wish different kinds of perfumes, then with these very heavenly kinds of perfumes the whole Buddha Country is scented. And whosoever wishes to perceive there such per-

fume, every perfume of every scent of the Gandharvaraja does always reach his nose . . .

"And again, O Ananda, in that Buddha Country whatever beings have been born, and are being born, and will be born, are always constant in Absolute Truth, till they have reached Nirvana. And why is that? Because there is no room or mention there of the other two divisions, such as beings not constant or constant in false-hood . . .

"And again, O Ananda, in the ten quarters, and in each of them, in all the Buddha countries equal in number to the sand of the River Ganga, the blessed Buddhas equal in number to the sand of the Ganga glorify the Name[7] of the blessed Amitabha; they preach his Fame, they proclaim his Glory, they extol his Virtue. And why? Because all beings who

[7] See Chapter IV, 2.

hear the Names of the blessed Amitabha, and having heard it, raise their thought with joyful longing, even for once only, will not turn away again from the Highest Perfect Knowledge (Enlightenment) . . ."

The mythological representation of spiritual truth is an essential element in the organism of Shakyamuni's Teaching. When we read Buddhist Sutras, myth bursts in upon our ordinary consciousness with a revelation of something new and strange, and the narrow, matter-of-fact, workaday experience is suddenly flooded and transfused by the inrush of a vast experience, as from another world. The visions of the mythopoeic imagination are received by the self of ordinary consciousness with a strange surmise of the existence, in another world, of Another Self which, while it reveals itself in these visions, has a deep secret which it will not disclose.

Mythological expression represents natural products of that world of time-space-transcending *pure feeling* which encompasses the field of ordinary, matter-of-fact, time-space-consciousness in our minds. Shakyamuni appeals to that *major* and *basal* part of man's nature which is not articulate and logical, but *feels* and *wills* and *acts*—to that part which cannot explain what a thing is, or how it happens, but *feels* spontaneously that the thing is good or bad, and expresses itself, not scientifically in theoretic judgments, but practically in value-judgments—or rather value-feelings. In appealing, through the recital of dreams, to that major part of us which feels *values,* which wills and acts, Shakyamuni indeed goes down to the bedrock of human nature. At that depth man is more at one with Universal Nature—more in her secret, as it were—than he is at the level of his 'higher'

faculties, where he lives in a conceptual world of his own making which he is always endeavoring to think.

After all, however high man may rise as *thinker,* it is only of *values* that he genuinely thinks; and the ground of all values—the Value of Life—was already apprehended before the dawn of thinking, and is still apprehended independently of thinking. Why is life *worth* living? Why is it *good* to be here? The problem is not propounded to thought and thought cannot solve it. Thought can *feel* that it has been propounded and solved elsewhere, but cannot genuinely think it. It is propounded to the inmost depth of our nature, and is ever silently being understood and solved by that basal part of our self. And the most trustworthy, or least misleading report of what the problem is, and what its solution is, reaches consciousness through *feeling*. *Feeling* stands nearer than thought does to that *basal self*

which is, indeed, at once the living problem of the Universe and its living solution.

Shakyamuni appeals from the world of the senses and the scientific understanding, which is too much with us, to this deep-lying part of human nature. The responses are not given in articulate language which the scientific understanding can interpret; they come as dreams, and must be received as dreams, without thought of doctrinal interpretation. Their ultimate meaning is the *feeling* which fills us in beholding them, and when we wake from them, we see our daily concerns and all things temporal with purged eyes.

The effect which Shakyamuni produces by myth in his discourses is produced, in various degrees, by Nature herself without the aid of literary or other art. The sense of majesty and sublimity which comes over us when we look into the depths of the starry sky, the sense of our own short time passing, with which we see

the cherry flowers bloom again, these, and many like them, are natural experiences which closely resemble the effect produced in the hearer's mind by Shakyamuni's discourses. When these natural moods are experienced, we *feel* the Unthinkable Timeless Being that was, and is, and ever shall be, overshadowing us; and familiar things—the stars, and the cherry blooms—become suddenly strange and wonderful for our eyes are opened to see that they declare His presence. It is such moods of feeling in his hearer that Shakyamuni induces, satisfies, and regulates by Myth which sets forth the Timeless Being, the Universe, and Ideals in vision.

This *pure feeling*, which is experienced as solemn intuition of the overshadowing presence of the Unthinkable Timeless Being, appears in our ordinary object-distinguishing, time-marking consciousness, but does not originate in it. It is to be traced to the

influence on consciousness of the persistence in us of that primeval condition from which we are sprung (Nirvana), when Life was still as sound asleep as Death, and there was no Time yet. It is natural, therefore, that we should fall for a while, now and then, from our waking, time-marking life, into the *timeless* slumber of this primeval life of *selflessness;* for the principle solely operative in that primeval life is indeed the fundamental principle of our nature, being that basal part of our self which, made from the first, and still silently in timeless slumber, makes the assumption on which our whole rational life of conduct and science rests—the assumption that life is *worth* living, that it is *good* to be here.

Man's anticipation of death would oppress his life with insupportable melancholy, were it not that his conscious life feels down with its roots into that *innermost* center of his nature which, without sense of past or future or self, silently holds on to life, in the *implicit*

faith that it is worth living—that there is a Cosmos in which it is good to live. As it is, there is still room enough for melancholy in his hours of ease and leisure. If comfort comes to him in such hours, it is not from his thinking out some solution of his melancholy, but from putting his thought, and sinking alone into the timeless slumber of that fundamental part of his self. When he wakes into daily life again, it is with the elementary faith of this basal part of his self, newly confirmed in his heart; and he is ready, in the strength of it, in fearlessness, to defy all that seems to give it the lie in the world of sense and understanding. Sometimes, and more often, this immovable faith does not merely transfigure, but dispels the very melancholy which overclouds him at the thought of death, and fills his heart with *sweet hope* of personal immortality.

To sum up, *pure feeling* is at once the solemn *intuitions* of the Unthinkable Timeless Being overshad-

owing us and the *faith* that life is good. In the first phase, *pure feeling* appears as an abnormal experience of our conscious life, as a well-marked ecstatic state; in its other phase as the faith that life is good, *pure feeling* may be said to be a normal experience of our conscious life: it is not an experience occasionally cropping up alongside of other experiences, but a feeling which accompanies all the experiences of our conscious life—that *sweet hope,* in the strength of which we take the trouble to seek after the particular achievements which make up the waking life of conduct and science. Such feeling, though normal, is rightly called *transcendental,* because it is not one of the effects, but the *condition* of our entering upon and persevering in the course of endeavor which makes experience.

In the wide-awake life of conduct and science, understanding, left to itself, claims to be the measure of truth; sense, to be the criterion of good and bad.

Pure feeling, welling up from another part of the self, whispers to understanding and sense that they are leaving out something. What? Nothing less than the *unthinkable* plan of the Universe. And what is that unthinkable plan? The other part of the self indeed comprehends it in silence *as it is,* but can explain it to the understanding only in the symbolical language of imagination—in vision.

It is in *pure feeling,* manifested normally as faith in the Value of Life, and ecstatically as intuition of the Unthinkable Timeless Being, and not in thought proceeding by way of speculative construction, that consciousness comes nearest to the object of metaphysics: Ultimate Reality, because, without that faith in the Value of Life, thought could not stir. It is in *pure feeling* that consciousness is aware of The Good, or the Universe as a place in which it is *good* to be. *Pure feeling* is thus the beginning of metaphysics, for metaphysics

cannot make a start without assuming The Good; but it is also the end of metaphysics, for speculative thought does not really carry us farther than the *feeling*, which inspired it from the first, has already brought us: we end as we began, with the feeling that it is good to be here.

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