

Vesakha Puja - FULL MOON - Monday 4th June 2012

When we appreciate fully  
the benefit of our own pure deeds  
we are filled with joy;  
here and hereafter there is a celebration of joy.

Dhammapada 16

Our initial understanding of the Buddha's teachings might cause us to think we must try to avoid grasping at all times. A more subtle understanding reveals an impurity in that effort: grasping at an ideal that we mustn't grasp. This is not wrong, it is just an initial approach, and if we are practicing well, we will come to see it doesn't lead to freedom from suffering. When we begin to really let go of grasping – including the grasping at our precious ideals – what disappears is not our wholesome aspirations, but our ignorance of the here-and-now reality. We start to appreciate that when joy arises we can go with it, fully. And when sorrow arises we can accept it, fully, and learn something more about life. We learn by observing the effect of our habits of grasping, which is different from merely idealizing about not grasping. And we can trust that the integrity which comes from observing the precepts will take care of us. To the degree we cease ignoring the truth of this moment we feel able to fully give ourselves into this moment.

With Metta,

Bhikkhu Munindo

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The verses used in this fortnightly Reflection are taken from, 'A Dhammapada for Contemplation' (2nd edition), Aruna Publications (2006). For more literal interpretations please view other translations.

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