
The Aspect of Expanding



by Toshio Murakami

All human behavior can be categorized into the three basic actions of "body, language and mind." In the history of mankind the three basic actions have brought forth variegated cultures and civilizations to individually and collectively mold ways of thinking, feeling and doing.

The root of these three basic actions is "mind action," which is the major premise of the entire Buddhist teachings and practices. In one of the ancient sutras of the Dhammapada the words of Shakyamuni Buddha elucidate this point: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts." In the Mahayana sutra of "Flower Adornment" Buddha has said that the "three worlds lie in the mind."

All Buddhist teachings and practices have been founded upon this major premise of "mind actions." The mind, therefore, connotes the ground for ceaselessly expanding and deepening realms of existence brought about by the cultivation of those thoughts, actions, and experiences which lead to the flowering of Enlightenment.

In the view of the teaching of "mind actions," human life is the great opportunity bestowed upon us by the

universal mind of Enlightenment to expand ourselves beyond time and space in spite of the finite and relative realm of the human mind. In addition, this reciprocal process of expansion through the common human experience of thoughts and feelings enables us to begin to be fully aware of the reality of life as it is. Human life, therefore, is an open ground for the thorough investigation and re-enactment of the universal mind of Enlightenment through sincere and deep reflections, which are the necessary consequence of "seeing life as it really is." *Expanding* is the first step toward the ultimate goal of life—Enlightenment.

A man who lived the life of *expanding* through the reflection of the universal mind of Enlightenment elucidates the meaning and practice of *expanding* as follows: "What a joy it is that I place my mind in the soil of the Buddha's Universal Vow and let my thoughts flow into the sea of the Inconceivable Dharma. I deeply acknowledge the Tathagata's Compassion . . ." This statement by Shinran Shonin is a testimony on the "expanded way of life" as an endless beginning of the actual practice of the teachings of Buddha.

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