

This as a collection from more that 50 years of the author's favorite writing. At the age of 86, it is most likely his last book.

Nothing Ever Changes And Other Mutations By Dick Dorworth

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NOTHING EVER CHANGES AND OTHER METAPHORS Wick Dorworth

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SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA: A Man for All Seasons

By Dick Dorworth

Somewhere around 2500 years ago Siddhartha Gautama was, according to several versions of the legend, born in Lumbini, India (now part of Nepal) and raised in Kapalavatsu, a place of unknown location which might have been in either India or present day Nepal, during a time of cultural and religious upheaval, and it was prophesied that if he stayed home he would become a great king and if he left he would become a spiritual leader. His father was king Suddhodana and his mother queen Maya who died seven days after his birth. He was raised by his mother's sister Mahapajapati Gotami. Siddhartha means "he who achieves his aim" and Suddhodana isolated his son in the palace in order that his aim would not waver from becoming king. That is, he lived a sheltered life of extreme privilege and luxury.

He married his first cousin Yasodhara when she was 16. They were friends but "...didn't have much desires for marital life." Still, they were members of the mammalian tribe of homo sapiens and eventually but not surprisingly managed to produce a child, a boy named Rahula. The day after Rahula's birth (or perhaps a few subsequent days or years later) Siddhartha escaped his father's palace of protection from life's realities and entered the streets of Lumbini where he soon encountered what Buddhism refers to as the four signs:

An aged man

A sick man

A dead man

An aesthetic

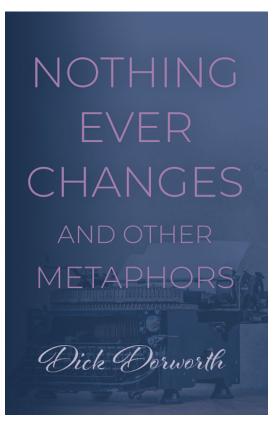
It is worth noting here that Buddhist legend does not mention any aged, sick, dead or aesthetic females. He realized that he too could age, become sick, die and, if he chose, become an aesthetic. He understood

that material wealth or power could not bring either happiness or liberation. He thought that asceticism might be a path of transcending suffering and he left his home and family and began studying with the leading aesthetics of the time, all of them males. He mastered the practice of deep meditation and concentration which brought him temporary peace of mind but not liberation and left him frustrated. Buddha is said to have explained he became a sramana because, "The household life, this place of impurity, is narrow—the samana life is the free open air. It is not easy for a householder to lead the perfected, utterly pure and perfect holy life." His mother and father opposed his decision and "wept with tearful faces" when he decided to leave. In one version of the legend, a milkmaid named Sujata finds him in the woods and mistakes him for a tree spirit because he is so emaciated, and offers him some rice milk. The milk revives him. He quits his asceticism, goes to the nearby village of Bodh Gaya, and seats himself on a bed of grass beneath a Bodhi tree and vows to remain there until he understands the means of living without suffering.

Here is one description (from Britannica) of what occurred under the Bodhi tree: "On the full moon of May, he meditated under a Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, India, vowing not to rise until he attained enlightenment. During this meditation, he resisted the temptations and attacks of Mara, the god of desire, and experienced profound insights into his past lives and the nature of existence. This led to his realization of the Four Noble Truths, which include the truth of suffering, its origin, cessation, and the path leading to its cessation, known as the Eightfold Path. This enlightenment marked him as the Buddha, the awakened one, who had overcome ignorance and extended his knowledge throughout the universe. The Bodhi tree under which he meditated became a significant symbol of his enlightenment and is a major pilgrimage site today. After his enlightenment, Buddha spent 45 years teaching the dharma across northeastern India, gaining followers and establishing monastic orders."

2500 years later followers of Buddha still are still sitting on beds of grass and zafus under many different kinds of trees and within human structures like dharma centers learning to understand and practice the means of living without suffering. But modern Buddhist practitioners have a much deeper and wider understanding of Mother Earth and all its flora and fauna, oceans and rivers, mountains and deserts and its place within the larger universe. That is, they know that home sapiens are not central to its existence and will most likely will not be a part of it sometime between the next ten minutes and a thousand years......or less.

Today (2025) it is common knowledge that all of life, all the flora and fauna, the oceans and lakes and rivers, the deserts and arctic ice caps are connected and affecting each other in every instant. Hubris, ignorance and fear cause much of humanity to deny or purposely overlook those connections. 2500 years ago science did not exist and the scientific method used to help humans understand the world was not in place. It wasn't until 1859 that Charles Darwin published his book "On The Origin Of Species" which LIVESCIENCE terms "...one of the most solid theories in science", but Darwin did not know about genetics or genetic mutation and humanity's chutzpah hog-tied him to the assumption that the Earth's fauna (particularly Homo Sapiens) was evolving into something higher and better rather than simply changing into something different. This cloud-cookoo-land hallucination led to the archetype of the tree of life which grows so high it reaches Shangri-La.



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