

NOBLE BAMBOO

(From The Book of Songs of Waley)

Note:

This touchy Story or allegory of NOBLE BAMBOO is very rich in ideas and applications. It can be applied also to Jesus' life and work. Jesus Christ is truly the noble Bamboo – cut, cleaved and sacrificed for the good of the world.

It can be helpful for chats, sermons, talks, catechism, moral instruction classes, recollections, retreats and other events.

It lends itself to tackle a large number of themes and topics, such as

- Christ person and work. He died that we may live.
- Self-surrender to God's will.
- God knows best what to do with us.
- God expects us to say "yes when he demands something from us -however hard it may be – yet, He will never force us.
- Our Lady taught us the way:"*Let it be done unto me according your word.*"
- And Jesus even, more. "*Not my will, but your will be done! Not what I want but what you want.*"
- It's by dying to self that we can be of service to God and to the World.
- We have to be willing to sacrifice- if need be - all we are and all we have for the service of God and our brothers and sisters
- Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will not bare fruit....
- After a painful Good Friday, there is a Glorious Easter Sunday.
- No pain, no gain
- Renunciation is painful but it gives a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment
- Things, even life itself, given to God and others are not lost but gained for eternity.
- Whatever gifts God has given us are not given to us in absolute property but on trust, not to be squandered, but to be used according his wish.

The Story

Once upon a time, in the heart of the Western Kingdom, lay a beautiful garden. And there, in the cool of the day the Master of the garden used to walk.

Of all the denizens of the garden, the most beautiful and most beloved was a gracious and noble Bamboo Tree. Year and year, Bamboo grew yet more noble and gracious, conscious of his master's love and watchful delight, but modest and gentle with all.

And often when wind came to revel in the garden, Bamboo would cast aside his grave stateliness to dance and play right merrily, tossing and swaying and leaping and bowing in joyous abandon, leading the great dance of the Garden which most delighted the Master's heart.

Now, upon time, the Master himself drew near to contemplate his Bamboo with the eyes of the curious expectancy. And Bamboo, in a passion of adoration, bowed his great head to the ground in loving greeting.

The Master Spoke: "Bamboo, Bamboo, I would use you." Bamboo flung his head to the sky in utter delight. The day of days had come, the day for which he had been made, the day to which he had been growing hour by hour, this day in which he would find his completion and his destiny.

His voice came low: "Master, I am ready. Use me as you wish. The Master's voice was grave: "I need to take you, and cut you down!"

A trembling of great horror shook Bamboo. "Cut me down? Me? When you, Master, made me the most beautiful in your entire garden? To cut me down? Ah, not that! Use me for joy, oh! Master, But cut not me down:"

The voice of the Master was graver still: Beloved Bamboo, if I do not cut you down, I cannot use you:"

The garden grew still. Wind held his breath; Bamboo slowly bent his proud and glorious head. There came a whisper. With a voice, full of pain

"Master, if you cannot use me but cutting me down, then, do your will and cut me down" The Master said: "Bamboo, beloved Bamboo, I would cut your leaves and your branches also."

Bamboo pleaded: "Master, Master, spare me. Cut me down and lay my beauty in the dust, but do not take away from me my leaves and my branches also!"

The master whispered: "**Bamboo, alas! If I cut not them away, I cannot use you!"**

The sun hid his face. A listening butterfly glided fearfully away. And Bamboo shivered in terrible expectancy, and then whispering low, said: "Master, cut away!"

With a crying voice the Master added: "Bamboo, beloved Bamboo, I would yet cleave you in two halves and cut out your heart: for, if I cut you not, I cannot use you!"

Then, was Bamboo bowed to the ground and softly whispered: "**Master, Master, then cut and cleave: I'm yours:"**

So did the Master of the Garden take Bamboo and cut him down and hack off his branches and strip off his leaves, and cleave him in two and cut his heart.

And lifting him gently carried him to where there was a spring of fresh, sparkling water in the midst of his dry fields. Then, putting one end of the Broken Bamboo in the spring and the other end, into the water channel in his field, the Master laid down gently his beloved Bamboo.

And the spring sang welcome and the clear sparkling waters raced joyously down of channel of Bamboo's torn body into the waiting thirsty fields.

Then the rice was planted and the days went by and the shoots grew and the harvest came and hungry mouths had their fill.

And the master was happy and the people rejoiced.

In that day, Bamboo, once so glorious in his stately beauty, was yet more glorious in his brokenness and humility. In his beauty he was life abundant, but in his brokenness he became a channel of abundant life to his Master's world.

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