

The Water of the Spirit.

Copyright © 1991 Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C.

[The following article first appeared in the November-December 1978 issue (volume IX, numbers 11 & 12) of The Journal of Shasta Abbey. The Scriptural passages quoted in this article are paraphrased from Sthiramati's "Discourse on the Mahâyâna-Dharmadhâtu" on pp. 296-297 in World of the Buddha: A Reader, edited by Lucien Stryk and published by Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books, in 1969. —Ed.]

Nirvana is recognized and known through Bodhicitta; they are one and the same thing. Bodhicitta is the name given to a form of the Dharmakaya as it manifests itself in the human heart and body. That is its perfection, or negatively its liberation from all egocentric impurities, which constitutes the state of Nirvana.

When someone has seen suffering's cause and done something completely about it one has liberated oneself from the impurities, allowing the Bodhicitta to flow freely throughout the body—and mind—and universe. This is called the "blood of the Buddhas." It is that which goes from Ancestor to Ancestor and Patriarch to Patriarch. If you can truly comprehend this place you not only know it by faith, you know it physically, mentally, spiritually. There are many symbols of it, always connected with something liquid because of the flowingness and the changingness of it—rivers, fountains, "a rain of Dharma that comes as nectar down," the sweet tea which is poured over the newborn Buddha, all of these are connected with the Bodhicitta—a means of understanding the raining down of love which is as a sweet nectar. And it is this which one can feel and know as a result of cleansing the impurities in the body, mind and spirit. It is the knowing of this itself and the experiencing of it which constitutes Nirvana. It is a knowable thing. Once you have experienced it you will never forget it; once you have experienced it you will never want any other form of love, for there is nothing that is higher than it, nothing more exquisite, nothing more fulfilling—the Bodhicitta, the certainty of the Eternal Love, the experiencing of the Unborn, the Undying, the Uncreated. If there were not such a thing then life would have no meaning and all we would do is produce and produce and go on producing nonstop, for what? Mass wealth? To create great names? There would be no point. But the Bodhicitta exists—it is the pure blood of the Buddha. And what is the blood of Buddha other than pure love? Therefore, unless you are willing to turn the stream of love, to turn the stream of compassion to turn the stream of trust within, you can never know this and you will forever be as a "hungry ghost."

It is free from compulsive activities; it has no beginning, it has no end; It

cannot be defiled by impurities no matter how impure we may become, it cannot be obscured by egocentric individualistic prejudices no matter how prejudiced we may become; it is incorporeal, it is the very spiritual essence or the blood of Buddhas; it is the source of all virtues earthly as well as transcendental; it is constantly becoming, yet its original purity is never lost. It may be likened unto the ever-shining sunlight which may temporarily be hidden behind the clouds. All the modes of passion and sin arising from egoism may sometimes darken the light of the Bodhicitta, but the Bodhicitta itself forever remains free from these external impurities. It may again be likened unto all-comprehending space which remains eternally identical, whatever happenings and changes may occur in things enveloped therein. When the Bodhicitta manifests itself in a relative world, it appears to be subject to constant becoming, but in reality it transcends all determinations, it is above the reach of birth and death.

It is indeed the Unborn, the Uncreated, the Undying and, no matter what you have done, this exquisite thing flows on unstained. That you do not feel it is because you are too concerned with your external ideas, your external theories and your external opinions, because you have not stayed still enough within just to let it flow—let it flow by, let it flow on. Or, when you've felt it, you've tried to grab it and you've had the bubble break in your hand. Just let it flow on and flow by you, listen to it and enjoy it, feel it and know it.

So long as it remains buried under innumerable sins arising from ignorance and egoism, it is productive of no earthly or heavenly benefit. Like the lotus-flower whose petals are yet unfolded, like the gold that is deeply entombed under the debris of dung and dirt, or like the light of the full moon eclipsed..., the Bodhicitta, when blindfolded by the clouds of passion, avarice, ignorance, and folly, does not reveal its intrinsic spiritual worth.

Yet it remains within the person and is to be found in all beings. This is how to look at one's fellow men and, if you do not look at them in this way, you will never see a Buddha. You will always see a tall man or a thin man or a short man or a sleeping man. You will never feel the beauty of that water flow through you, and there is nothing like that.

Destroy at once with all your might and main all those entanglements; then like the full-bloomed lotus-flower, like genuine gold purified from dirt and dust, like the moon in a cloudless sky, like the sun in its full glory, like mother earth producing all kinds of cereals, like the ocean containing innumerable treasures, the eternal bliss of the Bodhicitta will be upon all sentient beings and will flow through you and in you. All sentient beings are then emancipated from the misery of ignorance and folly, their hearts are filled

with love and sympathy and free from the clinging to things worthless.

However defiled and obscured the Bodhicitta may find itself in profane hearts, it is essentially the same as that in all the Buddhas.

This is one of the most beautiful lines ever written. However defiled by dirt it may become, it is essentially the same Bodhicitta; however murky you make the water, it is essentially the same Water of the Spirit that flows through all Buddhas.