

Dear sangha friends,

The beauty of spring has blossomed



The dharma says that actually every moment blossoms fully and completely if we are awake to it . . . that every moment beckons us to awaken . . . sometimes with a gentle wisp of a spring breeze . . . sometimes with a shattering moment of personal loss . . . sometimes with a totally unexpected moment of sublime ecstatic bliss . . . sometimes with just a moment of seamless dawning of remembrance of what you have always known . . . The Buddha once stood in front of his followers to deliver a teaching . . . He said nothing . . . then he held up a single flower . . . several of his disciples tried to figure out what it meant . . . the crowd pondered how to interpret the flower . . . but one of his followers, Mahakasyapa, silently gazed at the flower and broke into a broad smile . . . Then the Buddha said, “I possess the true Dharma eye, the marvelous mind of Nirvana, the true form of the formless, the subtle dharma gate that does not rest on words or letters but is a special transmission outside of the scriptures . . . This I entrust to Mahakasyapa” . . . Thus, Mahakasyapa became the first dharma heir to the Buddha . . . the first fully enlightened student of the Buddha . . .



Enjoy the fullness of this day.

Coming Soon:

Jade Peace Buddha: The abbess of the Linh Son Temple in Worcester is sponsoring the exhibition of the Jade Buddha for Universal Peace from May 22nd – June 5th. Worcester is one of only seven U.S. locations scheduled to date. Several thousand people will probably attend this event, and opportunities to be of service are available.

Geshe Pema Dorjee: Geshe Pema Dorjee will be giving a weekend teaching on the practices of the Bodhisattvas the weekend beginning on Friday, June 11th. Details to follow.

Tonight, we will watch a teaching DVD from either Pema Chodron or Ken Wilber & Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche.

*We have been slowly exploring chapter 9 of **The Way of the Bodhisattva**. This is the culmination of the text, usually entitled **Wisdom**. The chapter is on Emptiness, the experience of enlightenment, the relationship between the Absolute and the relative, emptiness and form, the essence of Mind. Any intellectual or rational explanation or description, no matter how truthful, even if it is based on direct realization, is not and cannot convey that which it attempts to describe. Emptiness is not a concept, it is not something, some thing, nor can it be compared to anything, any thing. Yet it can be realized directly.*

So why say anything about it? Because it is Great Awakening beyond samsara; Beyond samsara, yet always present; Beyond all suffering, yet always awake. It sees through the dream of imagined reality. The great awakened ones say something because they are moved by great love and compassion for ALL Beings that are dreaming of separateness and suffering and death.

*I have included more commentary on this chapter by His Holiness the Dalai Lama from his book, **For the Benefit of All Beings**:*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama: “Why do we need to realize emptiness? We do not wish to suffer, and we know that the root of suffering is the untamed mind. Because the mind perceives and understands things mistakenly, negative emotions arise and the mind is never at peace. This is why we suffer. To avoid this, we must develop the unmistaken mind, the intelligence that perceives the true nature of phenomena. Mistaken perception arises because we fail to see things as they are.”

His Holiness asserts that the realization of emptiness ends our suffering. When we see things as they really are, we realize that our perception of the conditions that we reacted to and the reaction of suffering itself were both due to mistaken perception. Our limited relative vantage point of the conditions and our mistaken identity of who we are with the tugs of shenpa and the arising of the kleshas, result in suffering and our personal version of samsara.

HHDL: “Much of what we perceive we perceive in a mistaken way, seeing things not as they truly are. This is how we become deluded. To avoid this, we should not accept our perceptions just as we experience them. It is very important to analyze and investigate whether we are seeing things as they truly are. We should ask ourselves what our perceptions are masking. If we do this, an understanding of the two truths will arise in our minds.”

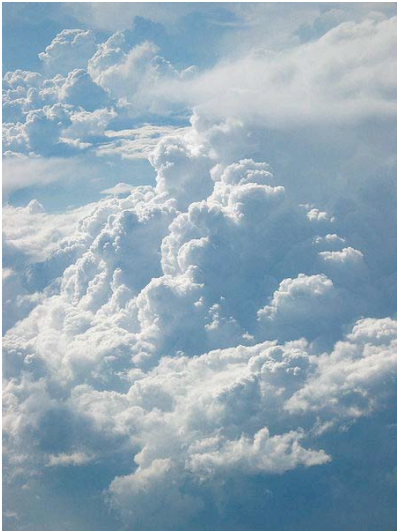
If we realize that we only have a partial and deluded view, that we are only seeing a very small piece of the picture and its relationship to our sense of being a separate “self”, it might dawn on us that there is the way things actually are and our deluded perception of

the way things are. This realization that what we have taken our limited perception and the deluded story about it that we have created as the absolute truth, might lead us to momentarily drop all our stories and directly realize emptiness.

Our relative vantage point might still be relatively true as well. True in the sense that is true from our relative perception. We are being truthful when say that from our vantage point it appears a certain way.

HHDL: “All we perceive – mountains, houses, and so on – affect us in one way or another. We need to investigate their real nature. Our perceptions, and the positive and negative aspects that we attribute to them, constitute relative truth. Relative truth is what we find when we experience the multiplicity of phenomena in a relative way, without going any further in analyzing their nature. The findings of the analysis by the conventional mind constitute relative truth.”

“If, according to absolute truth, things have no existence, why do we speak of relative truth as *truth*? Because it is true for the perceiver. It is true for the mind clouded by ignorance, which believes in the reality of its perceptions. As the *Entrance in the Middle Way* says, that which is altered and obscured by ignorance and is perceived as real is called relative truth.”



Clouds arise in our relative perception and we believe they are the total reality of the sky until one day we awaken to the enlightened dawn and we realize that clouds arise in the sky and float on by but we will never mistake them for the boundless sky of the Awakened Mind.

With a deep bow to ALL,

Jeff

