



Tara and the Lake of Tears

By Manjunaga

There is a moving story in the Buddhist tradition about the birth of the goddess Tara. It is said that Avalokiteshvara the bodhisattva of compassion looked upon all the suffering in the world and as he did tears fell from his eyes. The tears then began to form a lake in which a lotus developed. As the lotus opened, a beautiful woman appeared, the goddess Tara.

Tara is a manifestation of compassion and gentle kindness. Her name can mean 'star' but it is usually understood to mean 'saviouress'. Tara is one of the most popular figures found within the Buddhist tradition.

Reflecting on this story I was reminded how often I am confronted by the huge amount of suffering and pain that exists in the world and it can all seem so overwhelming. In recent years I have found it helpful to hold the perspective that there will always be some suffering in the world and no matter how hard I try, I cannot alleviate it all.

Does this mean that we should then give up? Not at all, but instead come into relationship with our own suffering and that of others in a different way. I am reminded of the saying, *'Think globally, act locally'*. This means that we try to hold a larger perspective of the world and humanity whilst seeing that our small acts of kindness and compassion towards our family, friends and community all have an effect on the world we live in. We can have trust and confidence that, like a small stone dropped into a pond, our acts of kindness and love can ripple out touching the lives of many people and creating a kinder, more loving world in which to live.

"Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you".

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