

THE SPIRIT OF BUDDHA

by **Kido Inoue**

A Priest of the Zen Buddhist Sect & Planning Director, Kyoto Forum

It is widely known that the pursuit of civilization and its development has caused the present critical degradation of our natural environment. Let us ask what aspect of the human mind has craved and created such a consumption-oriented culture, because I believe this is where the ultimate source of the problem lies.

The mind has the tendency to avoid pain or anything undesirable, to look for the easy way to self-fulfillment. It also looks for the satisfaction of its urges while justifying its fixations and the desire for fame, money, and power. The origin of these tendencies is the instinct of self-preservation common to all living creatures. It is the life-force that holds the self as absolute and negates others. The horrible will to fight and compete for survival-the desire for self-realization that strives to preserve the self by denying the existence of others-takes charge. The mind left to work at such a low and primitive level thwarts any noble and beautiful concepts or ideas. This causes us only to pursue our desires since we lack in ethics, social order, and humanity.

As a result, our world is currently facing a multitude of problems. However, if we try to solve them by making stipulations, a never-ending set of conditions will arise and complicate matters too much to arrive at a fundamental cure. We must apply advanced science and technology to solve the objectified phenomena of destruction: however, the problem always starts with each person. In contemplating the future of the earth, there is no hope for a complete solution unless we realize that the basic root of the problem lies within the human mind. This is the constant element from beginning to end. Without speaking of the spirit, one can not speak of culture, politics, society, education, the future or, for that matter, life. Once you have realized the basic nature of your own spirit, it shines through as truth, goodness, beauty, and love. Because your own existence starts with the whole of existence, it works as an all-saving mercy.

This is Mahayana Buddhism's world of enlightenment and salvation. One forgets oneself and is born outside the world of conceptualization. The development of a healthy civilization and the undoing of mankind's mistakes is unattainable without a foundation grounded in a spiritual culture that resolves the individual spirit. The spirit of Buddha will not only dissolve the source of all evil to bring Peace and comfort to human kind, but the compassion to love and cherish nature from the heart will safeguard this beautiful earth forever.

Kido Inoue