

曹源一滴水

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Vimalakirti Chapter Seven, The Goddess

“Reverend Sariputra, see how these flowers do not stick to the bodies of these great spiritual heroes, the bodhisattvas! This is because they have eliminated constructal thoughts and discriminations.

“For example, evil spirits have power over fearful men but cannot disturb the fearless. Likewise, those intimidated by fear of the world are in the power of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures, which do not disturb those who are free from fear of the passions inherent in the constructive world. Thus, these flowers stick to the bodies of those who have not eliminated their instincts for the passions and do not stick to the bodies of those who have eliminated their instincts. Therefore, the flowers do not stick to the bodies of these bodhisattvas, who have abandoned all instincts.”

When people are afraid of something in their mind they perceive evil spirits, “It is terrifying, Terrifying!” When we think like that, we are fooled by foxes and all other sorts of phenomena. We are moved around, tremble and shake. Thinking that “a ghost is going to appear, I just know that a ghost is going to appear!” when the reeds blown and sway we are sure it is a ghost.

In the stories of the elders, there is a story about a devil named Rasetsu. He transformed himself into a horse and let a samurai ride on his back, but the samurai did not know it was a devil, which had become horse.

The horse said to him “Samurai san, how does this horse ride for you? Is it a good horse? is it a bad horse?” and then the samurai pulled out his sword and said, “Does this sword cut well or does it not cut well? How about it?” Contrarily, he pulled out his sword on the devil. The devil went silent. If the samurai at this time had been silent and had negative thoughts in his mind then he would have been killed. In this way, our delusions drive us.

We are caught on all kinds of things in our mind, all kinds of delusions and confusions. If we were to hold on to all of these things while we drive a car, we would always be driving around causing accidents. In our mind, there must be ongoing clear mind moments.

If we hold on to a fear of death in our mind, if we get caught on the question of life and death, if we get afraid of death and attached to living, attached to not experiencing pain, to not wanting to suffer, to not wanting to die, if we get attached to our bodies and our feelings like this, then our mind gets so confused. If we let go of all of our attachments to birth and death, then no matter what good sounds or good smells or good sights we encounter, what good tastes or good things we feel, we are not moved around by them.

We are not alive to be moved around by our instincts. But because we are moved around, the flowers stick to us. If we look at our daily life, we can see this clearly. If we are caught on others, we lose confidence no matter who we talk to and spend time with, and this is not outside of us, but inside because we do not let go of our desires.

Then the venerable Sariputra said to the goddess, “Goddess, how long have you been in this house?”

The goddess replied, “I have been here as long as the elder has been in liberation.”

Sariputra said, “Then, have you been in this house for quite some time?”

The goddess said, “Has the elder been in liberation for quite some time?”

At that, the elder Sariputra fell silent.

The goddess continued, “Elder, you are ‘foremost of the wise!’ Why do you not speak? Now, when it is your turn, you do not answer the question.”

Sariputra: Since liberation is inexpressible, goddess, I do not know what to say.

Goddess: All the syllables pronounced by the elder have the nature of liberation. Why? Liberation is neither internal nor external, nor can it be apprehended apart from them. Likewise, syllables are neither internal nor external, nor can they be apprehended anywhere else. Therefore, reverend

Sariputra, do not point to liberation by abandoning speech! Why? The holy liberation is the equality of all things!

Sariputra: Goddess, is not liberation the freedom from desire, hatred, and folly?

Goddess: 'Liberation is freedom from desire, hatred, and folly' that is the teaching of the excessively proud.

The heavenly being, the Goddess is then asked, 'How long have you been in this room?' The answer was forthcoming, 'about as long since you've been enlightened.' I have been here as long as you have been enlightened; she was saying that there is no time in enlightenment so I have been here beyond anything like time.

But Shariputra did not get it so he asks further, 'Then, have you been in this house for quite some time?' Meaning, how long have you been here? How many years old is your enlightenment? The goddess replied, 'Has the elder been in liberation for quite some time?' At this Sariputra was silenced. The goddess continued, 'Why does someone as great as you have no answer to this?'

Then he says, 'Enlightenment, you ask about my length of time in enlightenment, but it has no time and yet it has time. It is long yet it is short and it is not long and not short and so I cannot speak.'

The goddess continued, Elder, you are 'foremost of the wise!' Why do you not speak? Now, when it is your turn, you do not answer the question.

Shariputra! You don't need to be silent, isn't speaking your enlightenment? Aren't words your state of mind what is it that cannot be said? Enlightenment is not inside, outside, or in the middle. It is not about proudly saying "I don't know". The outer things will be coming right in to you. Truly, life and death as it is, is the true enlightenment - there is no separation from those. Our mind, which is enlightened, fills the heavens and earth and becoming birth and death includes them and goes beyond them. Our rebirth is this world in each moment, is each place right here, right now. This is enlightenment.

When we meet clear weather we become clear weather.
When we meet rain we become rain
When we meet hail we become hail.
Isn't this the true actuality of enlightenment?

You must not be gravely mistaken about this. It is not that you have to express enlightenment in words, it is a state of mind, not the talking about it or how can we aid the world in liberation. We have to express this to be able to help with that.

When we realize enlightenment everything that exists in this whole world is enlightened. If we see from our delusions then everything in this whole world is deluded. If we look from our enlightened state of mind then mountains are high and rivers flow. Flowers, as they are, are red; it is all the form of the Buddha.

'The rivers flowing stream is the long tongue of the Buddha teaching.'

Next, Shariputra says, Since liberation is inexpressible, goddess, I do not know what to say.

Goddess: All the syllables pronounced by the elder have the nature of liberation. Why? Liberation is neither internal nor external, nor can it be apprehended apart from them. Likewise, syllables are neither internal nor external, nor can they be apprehended anywhere else. Therefore, reverend Sariputra, do not point to liberation by abandoning speech! Why? The holy liberation is the equality of all things!

Sariputra: Goddess, is not liberation the freedom from desire, hatred, and folly?

Goddess: 'Liberation is freedom from desire, hatred, and folly' - that is the teaching of the excessively proud. But those free of pride are taught that the very nature of desire, hatred, and folly is itself liberation.

Sariputra: Excellent! Excellent, goddess! Pray, what have you attained, what have you realized, that you have such eloquence?

Goddess: I have attained nothing, reverend Sariputra. I have no realization therefore, I have such eloquence. Whoever thinks, 'I have attained! I have realized!' is overly proud in the discipline of the well-taught Dharma.

You say that enlightenment is not inside or outside or in the middle, but as to greed anger and ignorance, which being resolved and let go of is true liberation isn't it? In this way the heavenly being kept challenging Shariputra.

Next the heavenly being talked about the Buddha saying we have to get rid of the three poisons, how it is not for us to say it as if saying, 'I have understood better than anyone else' or to be conceited and above others.

In the Lotus Sutra, it says clearly that we cannot act superior to others or as if we know more or are deeper than others. For such 'superior' people the Buddha taught to let go of those three poisons. If there is no conceit and only humility and the thought that one is below everyone else, then even if one has greed, anger and ignorance they will not be indulging in them, instead being exactly as they are. That "exactly as they are" is satori. But if someone thinks they are special and

deep, that is the mind of ignorance, greed and anger.

For someone who is always humble and not high on themselves then being angry, greedy and ignorant is not a problem. This is because their mind is always seeing things as one whole and so they are not deluded.

Sariputra: Excellent! Excellent, goddess! Pray, what have you attained, what have you realized, that you have such eloquence?

Here Shariputra finally bows his head and agrees and asks what the heavenly being did for training and she says

Goddess: I have attained nothing, reverend Sariputra. I have no realization. Therefore, I have such eloquence. Whoever thinks, "I have attained! I have realized!" is overly proud in the discipline of the well-taught Dharma.

I am not enlightened and no one has confirmed me. Because I have not been enlightened I can speak like this, if I have some idea that I am enlightened then that is a lie, it is untrue. That is the conceited person.

This is what it says in the Heart Sutra, if we call it satori it is not satori. To understand there is nothing there at all is enlightenment. To understand that there is nothing at all there to understand, this is the true enlightenment. In this way the heavenly beings thoroughly taught Shariputra and freed his caught mind by negating it. The heavenly being clarified the mind and world of not two.

Shariputra, once again done in by this heavenly being, wanted to prove he was the master here and getting desperate, he now asks,

Goddess, do you belong to the disciple-vehicle, to the solitary-vehicle, or to the great vehicle?

Goddess: I belong to the disciple-vehicle when I teach it to those who need it. I belong to the solitary-vehicle when I teach the twelve links of dependent origination to those who need them. Since I never abandon the great compassion, I belong to the great vehicle, as all need that teaching to attain ultimate liberation.

Nevertheless, reverend Sariputra, just as one cannot smell the castor plant in a magnolia wood, but only the magnolia flowers, so, reverend Sariputra, living in this house, which is redolent with the perfume of the virtues of the Buddha-qualities, one does not smell the perfume of the disciples and the solitary sages. Reverend Sariputra, the Sakras, the Brahmas, the Lokapalas, the devas, nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, and mahoragas who live in this house hear the Dharma from the mouth of this holy man and, enticed by the perfume of the virtues of the Buddha-qualities, proceed to conceive the spirit of

enlightenment.

Reverend Sariputra, I have been in this house for twelve years, and I have heard no discourses concerning the disciples and solitary sages but have heard only those concerning the great love, the great compassion, and the inconceivable qualities of the Buddha.

In fact this was a heavenly being who was a Bodhisattva manifesting as a heavenly being, but since it was appearing in a woman's form Shariputra was feeling especially put down, so he asks her; "Which of these vehicles do you seek? What do you hold important?"

The goddess answers, I don't get caught on explanations about that. If the disciple-vehicle is for people who need words, then we need that form and with the other vehicles it is the same. I am not of any of those but use the one appropriate for the person, so it is not about which of these three is better. There are infinite people in this world and all three of these kinds of karmic affiliation are necessary. You may say one of the three is most important but that is only because you hold your own personal awakening important, that is not what it is about. That is not the way to truly see this world. For the Great Vehicle we do not hold one above the other. Just giving everything to what we do and then even if we have desires it is not a problem. We don't have to wait for them all to be gone. Yet, it is not about loving some people specially but to love all people. Then in each moment do what is necessary I am not caught on a particular variety of path said the heavenly being.

The room of Vimalakirti is full of the fragrance of liberating all beings, it pervades and fills this room and this is not for oneself. This fragrance of all beings being liberated is this room's fragrance, and that is not the fragrance of "how have I been liberated" or "what path do I prefer". In this world, in this room of Vimalakirti there are all religions represented, all gods and Buddhas and when one hears Vimalakirti speak, one can experience the merit of all of those and know the Dharma Body and give rise to the mind to awaken all beings. Here we offer everything to the truth.

Reverend Sariputra, I have been in this house for twelve years, and I have heard no discourses concerning the disciples and solitary sages but have heard only those concerning the great love, the great compassion, and the inconceivable qualities of the Buddha.

Reverend Sariputra, eight strange and wonderful things manifest themselves constantly in this house. What are these eight?

A light of golden hue shines here constantly, so bright that it is hard to distinguish day and night; and neither the moon nor the sun shines here distinctly. That is the first wonder of this house.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, whoever enters this house, is no longer troubled by his passions from the moment he is within. That is the second strange and wonderful thing.

I am in this room for 12 years says the goddess. Twelve is not a number but a figure which expresses a very long time, meaning, 'from a long, long time ago'. One day is 12 hours (in old times), and one year is 12 months, so the number 12 means all of something or, the whole of something. All day long, all year long, all of it, this is what it means, I have been here always but my own pain, to be freed from it or from the four sufferings of life, I have never thought about doing training like that. The Buddha forgot about his own pain and taught the Dharma. That is the true teaching!

Next, the heavenly being says to Shariputra, this room already has eight strange and wonderful things, which are manifested here. This little four and one half mat room has a Dharma of eight Dharmas within it. There is always a great golden light in here, morning and night, without stopping. It is brighter than the sun, it is ongoing and this is the number one mystery, rare and very hard to encounter.

The number two mystery is that by merely entering here, you are purified, all of your impurities and delusions gone. This is true, when you go to visit a large minded friend you receive more than you give, a great big state of mind is received.

The next is that the great gods and bodhisattvas all come here to visit and they do not disagree but are all harmoniously meeting and being here.

In this room the six paramitas, charity, observing the precepts, patience and good efforts, samadhi and wisdom, all of those gathered are practicing these and then manifesting this Dharma, always teaching these paramitas.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, this house is never forsaken by Sakra, Brahma, the Lokapalas and the bodhisattvas from all the other Buddha-fields. That is the third strange and wonderful thing.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, this house is never empty of the sounds of the Dharma, the discourse on the six transcendences, and the discourses of the irreversible wheel of the Dharma. That is the fourth strange and wonderful thing.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, in this house one always hears the rhythms, songs, and music of gods and men and from this music constantly resounds the sound of the infinite Dharma of the Buddha. That is the fifth strange and wonderful thing.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, in this house there are always four inexhaustible treasures, replete with all kinds of jewels, which never decrease, although all the poor and wretched may partake to their satisfaction. That is the sixth strange and wonderful thing.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, at the wish of this good man, to this house come the innumerable Tathagathas of the ten directions, such as the Tathagathas Shakyamuni, Amitabha, Aksobhya, Ratnasri, Ratnarcis, Ratnacandra, Ratnavyuha, Dusprasaha, Sarvarthasiddha, Ratnabahula, Simhakirti, Simhasvara, and so forth; and when they come they teach the door of Dharma called the "Secrets of the Tathagathas" and then depart. That is the seventh strange and wonderful thing.

Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, all the splendors of the abodes of the gods and all the splendors of the fields of the Buddhas shine forth in this house. That is the eighth strange and wonderful thing.

The fifth mystery is that this room is truly beyond speaking about it. It is full of the music of heavenly beings; this exquisite air is filling this room. This is the fifth mystery of this room and further in this room, there is a huge storehouse that has infinite treasures in it and they are the treasures of the offering of everything kind towards giving everything to another and thinking of their best. All of the most important things of what people hope for, moving and acting in accordance with another. This infinite functioning is filling this room and in this room, all of the Buddhas manifest. They come here and Vimalakirti says nothing. The Buddhas teach the Dharma, there are only four and one half mats here but the scenery here is that of the Pure Land. This is the last mystery and there are eight all together. Who can say anything about this? Just entering this room you are filled with peace even while in this society, even while the world is so difficult, this room is deeply peaceful and fills us with amazement.

Shariputra was being completely done in by the heavenly being so he had to finally find something to say. But he had nothing left but to ask why was she appearing as a woman? If she was awakened obviously, she should appear as a man!

Sariputra: Goddess, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?

Goddess: Although I have sought my "female state" for these twelve years, I have not yet found it. Reverend Sariputra, if a magician were to incarnate a woman by magic, would you ask her, "What prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?"

Sariputra: No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?

Goddess: Just so, reverend Sariputra, all things do not really exist. Now, would you think, "What prevents one whose nature is that of a magical incarnation from transforming herself out of her female state?"

Thereupon, the goddess employed her magical power to cause the elder Sariputra to appear in her form and to cause herself to appear in his form. Then the goddess, transformed into Sariputra, said to Sariputra, transformed into a goddess, "Reverend Sariputra, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?"

This is especially true of this era in India. There is a girl in Vimalakirti's room and if she was a Buddha why did not she become a man? If she was awakened, that was so matter of course. The heavenly being said that for 12 years I have been a woman's body, so where is there any need to change that? Into what should I transform?

I have been into thinking about what form I am for a long, long time, again the 12. I don't think of myself as a woman. That is your 'caught' thinking. In Buddhism, what is important is being not caught on form and not caught on thinking. It is a mistake if you think I have a decided form, and getting caught on that, that is what you have to separate from. To not be caught on form is satori and the true freedom, isn't it?

We are not a fixed form so why get caught on it? That is emptiness of form and to not get caught on form is satori. This is what Vimalakirti wants to say and has her say for him.

I have never thought I was a woman for a long time so why should I become a man? If even there is a person here who does magic, why would you say stop being a woman - if it is not a woman or a man, why would you say that?

Reverend Sariputra, if a magician were to incarnate a woman by magic, would you ask her, 'What prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?'

Sariputra: No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?

Goddess: Just so, reverend Sariputra, all things do not really exist. Now, would you think, 'What prevents one whose nature is that of a magical incarnation from transforming herself out of her female state?'

In this world all things are without form, there is no fixed form so to be a woman requires no changing. Since Shariputra does not get it, even with this explanation, she changes him into a female heavenly being form.

And Sariputra, transformed into the goddess, replied, "I no longer appear in the form of a male! My body has

changed into the body of a woman! I do not know what to transform!"

The goddess continued, "If the elder could again change out of the female state, then all women could also change out of their female states. All women appear in the form of women in just the same way as the elder appears in the form of a woman. While they are not women in reality, they appear in the form of women. With this in mind, the Buddha said, 'In all things, there is neither male nor female.'"

Then, the goddess released her magical power and each returned to his ordinary form. She then said to him,

"Reverend Sariputra, what have you done with your female form?"

Sariputra: I neither made it nor did I change it.

Goddess: Just so, all things are neither made nor changed, and that they are not made and not changed, that is the teaching of the Buddha.

Why did you turn me into a woman? The heavenly being then said to Shariputra, "why don't you become a man?" Shariputra said, "I did not try to become a woman, and now look what you have done!"

Then the heavenly being said, "You asked me if I should change this form of a woman and I said, as this form I have not thought to be a woman, but all women are not always thinking they are women, we are all Buddhas." It is true that our most true character is not male or female not rich or poor, nor old nor young nor healthy nor sick. Our truest nature has no such rank to it.

As Master Rinzai says, in this five-foot lump of flesh there is a true person of no rank. Our true nature has not form nor substance nor rank. It is equal in each person and if we can see this clearly then there is no eastern person or western person. If there is a division, there can be no peace, for in their basic quality, they are equal and to realize that is to bring peace. While we say people are from the north and the south, there is no north and south in Buddha Nature. This is what Vimalakirti is saying.

Again the heavenly being used her powers and turned him back into a man, asking "That form of a woman, where did it go?" Shariputra said so I was given a woman's form and now I see it cannot be said that it is there, or not there, and the same with this body. It changes in every moment; today and yesterday, I am different.

You became a woman's form and were, and were not a woman. You cannot say it was a borrowed form either, and this is what the Buddha said of all the myriad

things. The river, which is in front of us, we think it is the same river each day but it is not the same water, it changes in every instant. Our eyes see various colors but those colors change in every instant. The sunlight at dawn and noon and twilight is always different and the same is true of all of our perceptions. They are not real and they are not real. We are always seeing the reality in all of these changes and with these, we take photos and manifest human's happiness and truth. These are all borrowed forms but within them, we realize the infinite and that is wisdom and that is truth.

Goddess: Just so, all things are neither made nor changed, and that they are not made and not changed, that is the teaching of the Buddha.

Sariputra: Goddess, where will you be born when you transmigrate after death?

Goddess: I will be born where all the magical incarnations of the Tathagata are born.

Sariputra: But the emanated incarnations of the Tathagata do not transmigrate nor are they born.

Goddess: All things and living beings are just the same; they do not transmigrate nor are they born!

Sariputra: Goddess, how soon will you attain the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood?

Goddess: At such time as you, elder, become endowed once more with the qualities of an ordinary individual, then will I attain the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood.

Sariputra: Goddess, it is impossible that I should become endowed once more with the qualities of an ordinary individual.

Goddess: Just so, reverend Sariputra, it is impossible that I should attain the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood! Why? Because perfect enlightenment stands upon the impossible. Because it is impossible, no one attains the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood.

Sariputra: But the Tathagata has declared: 'The Tathagathas, who are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, have attained perfect Buddhahood, are attaining perfect Buddhahood, and will go on attaining perfect Buddhahood.'

Goddess: Reverend Sariputra, the expression, 'the Buddhas of the past, present and future,' is a conventional expression made up of a certain number of syllables. The Buddhas are neither past, nor present, nor future. Their enlightenment transcends the three times! But tell me, elder, have you attained sainthood?

Sariputra: It is attained, because there is no attainment.

Goddess: Just so, there is perfect enlightenment because there is no attainment of perfect enlightenment.

Then the Licchavi Vimalakirti said to the venerable elder Sariputra, "Reverend Sariputra, this goddess has already served ninety-two million billion Buddhas. She plays with the superknowledges. She has truly succeeded in all her vows. She has gained the tolerance of the birthlessness of things. She has actually attained irreversibility. She can live wherever she wishes on the strength of her vow to develop living beings."

He said to her, 'You have been here a long time where will you be born next?' The Buddha is born wherever there is a need for liberation. There is no here nor there when there is no birth and death. We manifest our form wherever it is necessary. There is no form of living and dying but you cannot see this because you are not yet awakened. But we appear where we need to, that is our true life energy.

'When did you become a Buddha?' If that enlightened 'you' once more becomes an ignorant being at that time I will become a Buddha. The heavenly being has no differentiation between Buddha and ignorant. That having no difference between ignorance and satori, no birth no death, no man no woman is a huge great enso, the world of zero, to manifest that is satori. It is not about being born and dying.

Finally, Shariputra said, "Of course not! No one can say, 'Now I am about to realize satori'" because it is nothing, it cannot be decided, like 'now I will be enlightened.' Shariputra said, 'there is past, present and future.' If you think like this, that is not the world of enlightenment. The heavenly being said, 'You have a small vehicle enlightenment - is that true?'

To realize enlightenment you have to have not-enlightened, to say you are awakened is to not be awakened. For Bodhisattvas there is nothing to realize because there is nothing to be liberated from. To be awakened is to be zero. So to not be realizing anything is to realize zero. This to be awakened. This is what Vimalakirti wanted to say.

'I thought you were a regular woman but you are a true Buddha and a Bodhisattva who liberates beings', this is play, with an all-embracing vow to become every form and liberate all beings. This is why Vimalakirti had her come forth.

Most important is our vow and this is our way of living eternally, humankind again and again manifests form and this is the way we express it. Finally, Vimalakirti says this to Shariputra.

Sogenji 2005 Sesshin Schedule, for information contact sogenji@po.harenet.ne.jp

August

6-20 kosesshin
17-23 kosesshin
28-9/3 kosesshin

November

8-12 kosesshin
15-21 osesshin
25-29 kosesshin

September

7-11 kosesshin
16-20 kosesshin
24-30 osesshin

December

4-10 Rohatsu
15-21 Osesshin
24-28 kosesshin

October

5-11 kosesshin
16-22 osesshin
26-30 kosesshin

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