

曹源一滴水

Number 67

June 2005

From Shodo Harada Roshi, Abbot of Sogenji, Okayama, Japan

Vimalakirti Chapter Seven, The Goddess

“Thereupon, Manjusri, the crown prince, addressed the Licchavi Vimalakirti:

“Good sir, how should a bodhisattva regard all living beings?”

Vimalakirti replied, “Manjusri, a bodhisattva should regard all living beings as a wise man regards the reflection of the moon in water or as magicians regard men created by magic. He should regard them as being like a face in a mirror; like the water of a mirage; like the sound of an echo; like a mass of clouds in the sky; like the previous moment of a ball of foam; like the appearance and disappearance of a bubble of water; like the core of a plantain tree; like a flash of lightning.”

In the recently read chapter “Inconceivable Liberation”, Vimalakirti was asked what truth is and he answered that it is the void. Truth is not some decided, planned thing, that is only a phenomena. All is originally empty and that this is how things actually are and realizing this we will not be deceived by the phenomena. He showed us how to look at it in this way. Now we learn how to live in that way of being. How should we see from this perspective? How we can see ourselves, the world and society clearly and correctly? This is what this chapter teaches us.

Sentient beings, all of the things in the world and society, all sentient beings are essentially Buddhas. This is not just about humans but also cows and horses and all the fish, reptiles, mammals, birds, all living things are sentient beings. Yet if we put it in one certain way, 6.3 billion human beings are who have organized the world, who are in conflict and making human relationships difficult and showing all kinds of facets and faces. In this way we have a way of seeing what these sentient beings are.

Vimalakirti was sick and ailing and the great disciple of the Buddha, Manjusri, went to pay him a visit. Manjusri asked Vimalakirti why he was sick when he was already so deeply enlightened how could he be so

sick? To this Vimalakirti answered that it was not his own sickness but that it was the sickness of all sentient beings, that if they were sick he was sick too. Because everyone is sick, because everyone in society is sick, so I am sick too, There is not one difference between Vimalakirti and the people in society, the people in the world who are deluded are he, himself. Because they suffer, he suffers and he has to suffer. This is what Vimalakirti said, about those infinite number of sufferings that he and the 6.3 billion suffer through together. With 6.3 billion people there are 6.3 billion sufferings. Those 6.3 billion who suffer, Vimalakirti does not take them as a concept but as something which cannot be allowed to exist as separate beings.

This is just like the mother of a child with a very severe sickness and she considers it her own suffering that the child is so sick. She does not sleep all night long but takes care of her child’s pain as if it is her own pain. But if we did that for every suffering person our bodies would not last. One person cannot take care of all of the sickness in the world, that is impossible. “I am sick because everyone is sick”.

So how can we see these people of the world that are suffering? How shall we know them in order for us to be able to make their suffering our own suffering? Vimalakirti how do we see all these suffering people? If we give them all love, that is best but if it becomes attachment then with that love we will be crushing them and ourselves. If love is attachment then it doesn’t work, as great as love is, if it is attached it is no longer pure. So how should we look at sentient beings? What is the true way to see all the people in the world? This is the central point of this chapter.

Manjusri asks Vimalakirti, “The bodhisattvas, how shall they see the beings in the world?”

Vimalakirti then answers that Bodhisattvas who are awakened, who have the eye of wisdom, when they see the people in this world they see them as if a magician

has manifested something called a human, because these are people who are produced magically but have no true substance. Although they have no true substance yet they have eyes that can see.

They are not really existing but they are manifesting here, this is how you have to see them and then you will not be attached. Sentient beings are suffering, but in fact suffering is not real. We perceive these phenomena and we think they are real and this is why we suffer. In fact our body is only a phenomena and is changing in every instant, it is not something absolute. In every ten seconds we lose how many cells, and how many thousands of cells are replaced. In this way our body has no actual existence and thinking it is real we think it is something which never changes. Even a newborn baby grows and becomes an adult and works in society actively because it is always changing and growing, then gets old and dies. We are not a body that does not change, and our way of thinking also changes in accordance with our changing physical body as well. This is how we can see that there is not something unchanging that exists but something that is in flux in every single instant. One phenomena when it manifests we call it a man or a person and in that moment all thoughts are born. Thinking good, thinking bad, each is a phenomena of that moment, and is one expression only. If we think it is unchanging we get very confused and we are always falling into such confusion.

For example, think of a person who has a dream and in that dream they are suffering. They suffer as if they have fallen into hell, but even if we were to dive into that dream and save them from that hell it is still all a dream. We cannot really enter their dream however we try. It is not about that, but about waking them up from that dream. "Hey wake up WAKE UP! Boy that was scary-what a scary dream that must have been!" "Wow, I had a horrible dream", they reply. The suffering in this world is just like that dream experience. But the people suffering don't know it is a dream. They think the dream is the reality for their whole life and that is why they suffer. They think the dream is real and so they struggle and suffer but if someone says to them "that is only a phenomena!" and if they can wake up to that then they can see that there was no suffering from the beginning and immediately their suffering is resolved. This is the actuality.

Because of this misapprehension, all of our suffering delusion and confusion happens, we mistakenly think that the dream is real. Today in society the caregivers do so much work and these caregivers are truly trying to liberate people in the world from pain. They take this as their goal in life giving everything to it. But when someone is meeting with death, when they are caring for and supporting a dying person's whole being and body, then the sending off even a single person makes

them feel disheartened and they lose their meaning in life. If we fall into despair after we put everything into the caring for a dying person, thinking that everyone dies no matter what, then while we had this great goal we can lose it.

This pure mind that gave rise to the caregiving, can while caring for the dying person, while offering them love, can find instead that the impulse has turned from love to attachment. The actuality of the dying person, the reality of it, see it as absolute. This is important, make no mistake if we are pulled into it, if we attach to it and get caught on it we will lose track of our own hope. This is a great mistake which we can easily fall into, our intention is honest and pure but that honesty and purity changes into attachment and then to despair. Within that paradigm, beginner caregivers are often filled with despair, insecurity and then burn out.

But, if we say we cannot do it that way, and instead just consider it to be a job, doing it in a cool and aloof way, then our feelings are not able to be expressed at all, nor can our pure state of mind find expression either. "Because it is a job." If we fall into this point of view that we do it because it is our job, then the people who are dying are dying because that is their job. It is not like this though, people who are dying are losing their cells which never come back again, receiving the end of their physical lives, and to see people off at this time and just call it "doing it because it is our job" that will not fulfill it either.

If we turn it into making a living, if we think of it as just that, then that approach will also bring us into despair. This is a place where humans easily make mistakes and it is this place that Vimalakirti is telling us how to see clearly. The bodhisattvas see in this way:

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, a bodhisattva should regard all living beings as a wise man regards the reflection of the moon in water or as magicians regard men created by magic."

As cool and removed as it may seem this is where the important teaching of Vimalakirti lies. In this world, this the world of reality, if we see it as absolute we have erred and we lead others into mistaken views as well. To say that they have no substance at all is not cool and removed, but correct and precise. In the last chapter as well, [reference previous newsletter] it said that everything in this world is phenomena so we must not be deceived and here Vimalakirti tell us that this is true for humans as well. Vimalakirti says, "Manjusri, a bodhisattva should regard all living beings as a wise man regards the reflection of the moon in water or as magicians regard men created by magic." In this way we should see both things and people, even if there are so many people suffering in this world these people are,

just as they are, like the moon reflecting in the water. They have no substance and that which has no substance appears to be suffering. We have to see all the way through to the other side of it.

"He should regard them as being like a face in a mirror; like the water of a mirage; like the sound of an echo;"

In the world there are so many delusions, good and bad, yet just like a mirror's reflection, they are finished in a flash, in an instant. We get caught on them as good and as bad, sad or happy but there is nothing there to be caught by or attached to. These things are just like a desert mirage, like the heat waves that rise in extremely hot weather, they do not exist but they appear to exist. Just like this we should see things and people. Like an echo that responds back to us as we shout, there is no one there but it appears that someone is calling back to us from far deep in the mountains. Even though no one is there and it is only a phenomenon.

"like a mass of clouds in the sky;"

One cloud after the next appears in the sky but these clouds are not real and fixed, rather they are constantly changing, coming and going as phenomena do, so we have to not just look at the phenomena of the clouds but know their origin.

"like the previous moment of a ball of foam; like the appearance and disappearance of a bubble of water;"

The foam comes as the water falls, the delusions and confusion of all people should be seen like this, like the bubbles floating along the top of the stream, when the water falls, all kinds of bubbles fall and flow and then, eventually, are gone. But the bubbles do exist they just always burst. These bubbles, a phenomenon made up of water which is not the actual water but one way in which it manifests only. This is why we have to see the water and not be confused by being attached to the bubbles, leaving out the original water

"like the core of a plantain tree;"

A plantain tree has leaves that come off, one after another but there is no reality there. We also are a gathering of the elements of earth, air, and water. In our physical body as well, this collection of elements gets sick and well and has feelings.

"like a flash of lightning;"

Lightning flashes and shines brightly in an instant. From the point of view of this long universe that flash cannot be seen as anything real. Compared to the many billions of years that have shaped this earth, we

cannot look at this tiny life of one hundred years as anything more than a flash of lightning.

Our reality is that everything is empty and void, the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water they are but phenomena, as well as our perceptions. We see and hear and think and feel and remember but, these are all one-instant worlds, they appear in one instant and last one instant. They have no real substance and this is also true of our feelings. We get happy and we get sad, we get angry and love and hate, but these as well, these are also all phenomena of a single instant. Our eyes and the world they see, but these eyes and this world we are seeing are not always staying the same—we see flowers, sky, people and all different things, all the time, and our eyes functioning changes as does the functioning of our ears and nose and mouth and body's feelings and consciousness. The outer world and the inner world become one and manifests and this is all one phenomenon. There is no substance to the phenomena and this is also true of our memory and of our experience. We are always remembering and experiencing but these are also always always changing. This is how the Bodhisattvas see the things and beings in this world. The truly awakened Bodhisattvas in the world see in this way.

They do not see things and people as having substance but see them as the phenomena of an instant which manifests as a form without substance. When we have feelings, we find the true life of a human beyond those feelings and we cannot be attached to those feelings of a single instant. In this way we see correctly and with this way of seeing we do not get confused and upset. Because we are always seeing clearly with eyes that see correctly, our existence can also be seen clearly. Our thoughts and ways of being are always changing, we are happy, we are sad, we are upset, we are miserable, we are joyful, these feelings are always present. For example, sometimes if we are praised we are happy, but if we are ignored or corrected we get angry. Still these are all only phenomena within and if we can see it in this way, then even if we experience a happy phenomenon we are not caught by it, and if we experience a sad phenomenon we are not attached to it. We are not confused by such things nor do we act in violence against others or sometimes even kill them. There is no need for that because if we can see things as phenomena then no matter what the other person says or what a scary way of being they express we will not be confused or astonished at all. Our way of taking-in with clarity is born from here and even though we experience such things as insecurity, anger and fear, we are not attached whatsoever to any of them.

This is the way Vimalakirti talks about correctly seeing self and others with truly seeing eyes. We can see the world correctly, liberate correctly and relate to life cor-

rectly if we can see like this.

Manjusri then asked further, "Noble sir, if a bodhisattva considers all living beings in such a way, how does he generate the great love toward them?"

Manjusri then said that if we think like that, then compassion would not come forth would it? If we think that others are phantasmagoric and phenomena only then humans existence would only be empty and void and if we look at it like this the why do we even need compassion. If it is only something that is going to fade then we don't need to have feelings to help them and liberate them. If we think that human life is just something flowing along like a river never to return, then why would we bother to even care?

We care and have compassion because we can see people suffering and cannot stand there watching it and so we want to 'Do Something', whatever we could possibly do, we want to do it-but if you say that everyone in front of us is nothing but phenomena and substance less, then why would compassion come up in our heart? In this way he said that if we look at the world like this there will be no compassion and compassionate people will all disappear.

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, when a bodhisattva considers all living beings in this way, he thinks: 'Just as I have realized the Dharma, so should I teach it to living beings.' Thereby, he generates the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings; the love that is peaceful because free of grasping; the love that is not feverish."

Further Vimalakirti says that the correct way of seeing society is that in this world, it is all a world of delusion and within that we must not be attached to every single thing, but to see with clear and true wisdom and live in that way, he clearly tells us this. The Bodhisattvas are not caught on feelings and thinking that phenomena are something real, instead they see that if we are caught on these we cannot see correctly. This is how we have to look at all beings. This human emotion and attachment, if we see from these, that is the source of all of our delusion.

Vimalakirti has said that in the world, to see all the sentient beings, we must not see them as something real. If we see them as something real we will not see them correctly from clearly seeing eyes. Rather, it is as if a magician has manifested a human who appears to be something really substantial. When we see in this way then we will not be attached to an other person and we will also be able to relate to them in a true way. If not then this is just like seeing phenomena as if they are substantial and like this we cannot see clearly.

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, when a bodhisattva considers all living beings in this way, he thinks: 'Just as

I have realized the Dharma, so should I teach it to living beings.' Thereby, he generates the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings; the love that is peaceful because free of grasping; the love that is not feverish."

Vimalakirti answers that your thinking that there is a you is a mistake, you are also a phenomena, we think we are making efforts but there is no such you as a you who makes efforts. This self with no self we have to see clearly and that we want to save others, because we think that person's suffering is something that is real, their sadness and pain we think it is real and so we are also sad and in pain. If we go along with that we are making them have even more confusion and pain and sadness. Instead we say, 'it Seems to be sad, it Seems to be painful but in fact those are not real but only phenomena'. Consider someone who is having a dream, we cannot join them inside their difficult dream and then try to help them, we have to help them see that their dream is a dream and then go beyond that or else they will be deepening their dream only. We have to instead say, "Wake up! Wake up! That was only a dream!"

"Oh! only a dream! But it was horrible! I am so glad I woke up now! "

And then and only then can it be really resolved. There are many new religions who like to brag about this miracle and that miracle but in Buddhism they do not give attention to such special things. It is not about that, about some special kind of experience but to awaken to what is true and with that, to see from the root. This is the truth and honesty of Zen. In Muso Kokushi's writings of "Dream Conversations" he tells of when he was once asked, "People who do Zen save people and help them in their business and help them improve their health, wouldn't there be of course some kind of help for all of those things there?" and Muso Kokushi said "people seem to be bothered and struggling but that is only because they don't awaken to their true self so it is always as if they are in a dream, but it is only because they don't awaken to the fact that it is all a dream. This is why to liberate them is to bring them to the awareness of it being a dream, that they are only dreaming that they are poor or hurting. If we don't do this then they will be deluded by that dream their whole life! We have to first let go of all attachments to a God who will bring us money. There is not some god or something to be relying on for a whole lifetime when we each have wisdom within, an actual wisdom. We are alive and we are phenomena, but we cannot see clearly because we consider our self as something real and consider things as something real and not as phenomena. We confuse the dream with what is real, and to wake people up from that is true liberation."

This is how he spoke to people.

True religion takes away our ego and gives us our true

wisdom and it turns our mind away from deceit and dishonesty and we then know great appreciation and thankfulness. This is true religion isn't it?

We suffer together with others and we may take away their suffering but this is not true liberation. When we awaken to our true self we see that from the origin there is no suffering. And with that wisdom we can see that we do not need to be miserable and unhappy. There are many many things just like this.

Life is truly transient, we do not know when it will break so we have to hold it precious, not vaguely compromising or settling for a small mediocre satisfaction. Each and everyone of us has to hold this wisdom and live this transient life with a true and clear wisdom. Offer that awakened wisdom to all people and then this transient life that we are blessed with will be offered to others. All of the people and the whole world is our own life energy. We can see this and we can see that all beings' wisdom is our wisdom.

That wisdom that is born from our own life we teach to others and then society can use this to realize eternal wisdom, this is eternal life. It is not about relying on one person's life but the life of all beings. We can then infinitely liberate throughout limitless eras. Within this transient life there is eternal functioning, and that illuminates our life. Right there is where we find the actual truth.

The Buddha's compassion is truly an all embracing compassion which comes forth spontaneously and it is not about "I am making efforts, I am working so hard". Instead, like the sun that does not think about its own shining, the Buddha's compassion is not about thinking about how much we are doing. It is wisdom that comes forth all of its own. Not thinking how much efforts we make, or what we have to do to make our life have meaning, it is good to be passionate but that may not be true compassion. It is not about having to do something or we cannot even die completely. It is not about that kind of fixated passion but to not care where we die or when, this is true compassion.

And the compassion of the Buddha is always perfectly equal for all beings and all living things. This is the Buddha's compassion, it pierces through all uniting past, present and future. When there is conflict or resistance in our mind, that is not compassion. Our common love is the opposite of hate, but that is not true compassion or love. Rather comes forth naturally and there is no change in either a moment of liking or a moment of hating. The Buddha's compassion is that we are the other and the other is us. And so from the origin there is no thing to love or to be loved by. There is only oneness and there is no division there. Compassion comes forth naturally from within so there is no

confusion. The Buddha's compassion comes forth from where there is no form, from the origin there is not one single thing, from here comes the compassion, and it is eternal.

The Buddha's compassion is from a limitless place like the huge blue sky, immeasurable and without a cloud. The Buddha's love is from love that has used up the flames of attached love. It is not love that aims to bring security and comfort, it is not about "I have done this and I have done that" -there is no such stuckness. The Buddha's compassion is that with which we bring another to awakening.

Today compassion is considered more like being indulgent and spoiling people, like parents in a household with spoiled kids who give them everything they want. The Buddha's compassion is compassion which we all have and that is why we all can understand the Buddha's words when we hear them. The Buddha's compassion is truly huge and wide and abundant and does not get hot and cold and change or lie but is always telling the truth. In this way the Buddha's compassion is huge and magnanimous and boundless in both size and time. It is that huge and that wide.

Knowing the Buddha's compassion we can understand eternal saving and eternal liberation and always give them in society. If everyone is joyful we have no problem with how much we have to work to do something. And no matter how much work we do if we are always holding on to it, then it is not true compassion. We have to first see that we are empty and then we can for the first time know the Buddha's eternal Love and compassion, to realize that which is eternal is to know the Buddha's mind deeply.

Further he asks, for the great Bodhisattva where does he take refuge?

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, when a bodhisattva considers all living beings in this way, he thinks: 'Just as I have realized the Dharma, so should I teach it to living beings.' Thereby, he generates the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings; the love that is peaceful because free of grasping; the love that is not feverish."

He asked Vimalakirti how to look at the beings in the world, about how one can give rise to compassion, he asks him this and then continues, the Bodhisattva who is worried about death and the question of life and death, what should they do? Where should we place our mind? This is what he is bringing to him as his problem.

Our own Mind and where it should be placed is what people do not know today at all. Today there is war and

conflict that is changing people's daily lives severely and the eternal hope that this can change can barely be imagined. Our trust and faith has become so diluted today that, our experience is of finding ourselves in the middle of a huge hurricane with our little tiny life engulfed in huge waves with no way to stop them. We are in society's tidal wave, great winds one after another keep coming and threaten our lives' most settled place. This is each person's struggle today and everyone is insecure and unstable in this way.

The change and flux of the world is going so fast and is so hard to watch, we don't even know what to do. We get so confused about this that people who are weak at heart and fragile commit suicide or become neurotic. Some people think they should just do anything they want since nothing works anyway.

Bodhisattvas who are afraid of death, Bodhisattvas who are scared of dying, Bodhisattvas who are supposed to have given rise to the wish to awaken all beings, if they still feel possessive of things and pulled around by desires, where then do they find refuge? For those who have lost their faith for these Bodhisattvas, what can we offer them to restore their faith.

This was Manjusri's question and Vimalakirti spoke;

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, when a bodhisattva considers all living beings in this way, he thinks: 'Just as I have realized the Dharma, so should I teach it to living beings.' Thereby, he generates the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings; the love that is peaceful because free of grasping; the love that is not feverish."

Life and death, the question of living and dying, the Bodhisattvas who are experiencing this cannot just rely on a Buddha or hold onto the compassion of Buddha or cling to the love of god. What else is there to rely on? Of course religions are always speaking thus: Amida Ny-oria, we are told to believe in his ability to liberate everyone without exception or in Christianity we are told that Jesus allowed himself to be put on the cross, and we respond, "let's believe in that!" But is this religion?

Manjusri then asked further, "Noble sir, if a bodhisattva considers all living beings in such a way, how does he generate the great love toward them?"

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, when a bodhisattva considers all living beings in this way, he thinks: 'Just as I have realized the Dharma, so should I teach it to living beings.' Thereby, he generates the love that is truly a refuge for all living beings; the love that is peaceful because free of grasping; the love that is not feverish."

These virtues, if we want to lean on them what state

of mind is that? How can we take refuge in them, he asks. Vimalakirti replies that giving rise to our vow to liberate all beings, this is the important part of Buddha Dharma. To rely on the Buddha is not about hanging off of the Buddha's compassion and wanting indulgence, rather that state of mind of knowing we have to liberate all beings, that is the Buddha's mind. To rely on the Buddha is to become that state of mind and manifest that deep vow. This is very same mind as the mind of the Buddha. That which is confused and the Buddha that saves us from confusion have to become one and the same, or we cannot be liberated. That confusion and the Buddha which does not acknowledge that confusion, to dive into the oneness of these two. This is the true reliance on the Buddha. Not our old self being caught on those thoughts and attachments, instead throw all of that away and from today to offer everything to society. Today I offer everything to the way of the Buddha to liberate all those suffering in society. This is where we become settled within and our mind goes right home.

In this way Vimalakirti teaches of the place of putting the mind at ease in its settled place, if we are not careful we will get caught on our own instability and insecurity and be moved around by that and think of Buddha as a thing to rely on. To be liberated from our own confusion we see everyone's life and death and see the Buddha's huge life energy as our very own. We don't need to acknowledge our small-minded power but see what a huge mind of the Buddha is within us and offer everything to that. In doing that we see that it is our own energy and power and we can dive into society fearlessly. Right here is the whole stance of the Buddhadharma

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

June		September		December
6-12	osesshin	7-11	kosesshin	4-10 Rohatsu
16-22	kosesshin	16-20	kosesshin	15-21 Osesshin
26-30	kosesshin	24-30	osesshin	24-28 kosesshin
July		October		
4-10	osesshin	5-11	kosesshin	
15-21	kosesshin	16-22	osesshin	
26-30	kosesshin	26-30	kosesshin	
August		November		
6-20	kosesshin	8-12	kosesshin	
17-23	kosesshin	15-21	osesshin	
28-9/3	kosesshin	25-29	kosesshin	

Newsletter Distribution Updates

You can change how you receive this newsletter at www.onedropzendo.org. If you received this newsletter by regular mail and would like to receive it via email, or if you received this newsletter via email and would like a hardcopy sent to you now and/or in the future, please update your information at the website. If you wish assistance or have a question, contact us at info@onedropzendo.org or One Drop Zendo Association, 6499 Wahl rd. Freeland, WA. 98249.



One Drop Zendo Association
6499 Wahl Road,
Freeland, WA.,
U.S.A. 98249

address correction requested