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8. The Family of the Tathāgatas

Then, the crown prince Manjusri said to the Licchavi Vimalakirti, "Noble sir, how does the bodhisattva follow the way to attain the qualities of the Buddha?"

We have reached the halfway point of the Vimalakirti Sutra. We read about the supernatural powers of the Bodhisattvas, and now Manjusri and Vimalakirti are having a debate. Originally, it was referred to variously as "the Buddha's way", "Buddhism", or "the Buddha's Path", all of these but a different way of saying the same thing.

In Buddhism, there is the Truth of the Great Law. Buddhism says, that in any people, in any era, there is a truth that cannot be negated. This Truth is the essence of the Buddha's awakening and is called Buddhism.

"Don't do anything bad, do good things." Teachings such as these, which are doctrinal and moral, are taught in all religions. These are also true of the Buddha Dharma. The way that these Laws of the Buddha Dharma are taught is called Buddhism. Each religion has its own qualities and position and each has its own way of expressing this.

How are these teachings to be taught? This is where the Buddha's Way comes in. Our actualizing and walking of this path is not based on rational ideas and mental explanations. Every day we are confused, wondering and unsure. We use the teachings of the Buddha to guide us in this confusion, and later this Way of the Buddha, is used in all varieties of creative paths. Artists and craftspeople all use this and express it: in the Way of Tea, in the Way of Calligraphy, in the Way of the Sword, in the way of Kyudo (archery), Noh theater, the landscaping of Japanese Gardens, in all of these we find the actualization of Zen manifested. It has been said in the past that Zen is the root of the Path of Calligraphy. Zen is truly the manifestation of the Way of the Buddha, realizing it and living it. This way of living is the Way of Zen. From olden times people have taught this Way of the Buddha exhaustively and in so many different ways. Zen is the actualization of living the Way of the Buddha, that Way of Being. This is the Buddha's Path.

The Vimalakirti Sutra is a sutra of the Mahayana Way,

so what does it consider to be the Way of the Buddha? Let us find out.

Manjusri calls on Vimalakirti and asks, "Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas, those who have great courage, those who have offered their life to all beings and are not only clarifying the truth, but also manifesting it in everything they do, in what state of mind do they do this? What is the truth of the Bodhisattva? How do they realize the Way of the Buddha?" This is what Manjusri asks Vimalakirti, who answers without hesitation.

Vimalakirti replied, "Manjusri, when the bodhisattva follows the wrong way, he follows the way to attain the qualities of the Buddha."

He answers that the Way of the Bodhisattva is a terrible way. People of religion generally are considered to be people who live in an ideal way, imagining the most perfect way of behaving and then living according to those imagined concepts and ideals. There is an idea that the Way of the Buddha is not about living in the world in the same way as most people, with desires and delusions. People usually think that this is not the Buddha's way. They imagine that there is some superior wisdom and a Way of living that regular people cannot live. Separated from their desires and living in detachment in the forest, in the deep mountains where it is quiet and isolated. People imagine that this is how one must live to follow the way of the Buddha.

However, Vimalakirti turns that Way upside down and this is why he says it is a terrible Way! He says that anything that cannot be despised in this world is not the way of the Buddha. This is how he describes it: someone who cannot do a hideous thing will never be able to stand the Way of the Buddha. He says just the opposite of what we expect.

Manjusri continued, "How does the bodhisattva follow the wrong way?"

Vimalakirti replied, "Even should he enact the five deadly sins, he feels no malice, violence, or hate."

Here Manjusri says, "What should a Bodhisattva practice?" and Vimalakirti answers, "If Bodhisattvas practice without knowing that it is practice, to go into the most horrible situations. And what does that mean? It means to go into the horribleness even if we go into hell and the worlds within the hell realms, home of the beings who have committed the five heinous crimes. This is called, "to enter the endless pain with no chance of being reborn out of it, but to endlessly carry that misdoing."

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha also talks about these five heinous crimes and so does Rinzai in the Records of Rinzai. He says that if we do not commit all of those five heinous crimes we cannot be liberated. First is to kill the father, second is to kill the mother, third is to spill the blood of the Buddha, fourth is to kill the Arahats, and fifth is to break the harmony of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. This is how it is written. If we do NOT do this then true liberation is not possible.

The father is the absence of all light, where there is darkness only, no brightness at all in our mind. This place is where we have instinctual mind moments coming up one after another, without having any idea of why they are doing so. From each mind moment, the many thoughts are produced and invented and the base of these is that same dark ignorance. If we do not pierce through this, there is no true liberation, and there can be no liberation for all people. In our mind, this very source of our awareness, this place of no light whatsoever, that profoundest darkness has to be directly experienced.

The mother is attached and greedy love. To know love is very important but it cannot be preferential, such as only loving our own child, or using love for satisfying our own personal desires. This is attached love, and the mother here represents that, and that mother must be killed.

To kill the Arahats is to take this pure mind of ours and to examine whether we have become attached to our own purity and are holding it up while putting down others. This we must cut. This is what it is to kill the Arahats

To spill the blood of the Buddha means to discard the concept that we are special, and to stop any worship of a special object called a "Buddha". This is what makes us defensive and that is not true freedom.

To break the harmony in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha is to see and let go of those various desires that wisp up all the time. We are always giving birth to these, they arise from our attachments and extraneous thoughts. These have to be cut or we will be caught on doing a good thing or, even worse, on doing a bad thing. These things confuse our mind. Our ideas, perceptions, imagination and memory all combined together form what we call our consciousness. These are

the five confections (skandhas) mentioned in the Heart Sutra (form,

feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness).

In our mind is this awareness, this status we consider as ourselves. When we let go of that, we become able to accept everything without being attached to any of it. While being active and aware, to not be stuck on anything at all. To have a memory, but to not be caught and attached to what we remember. This is to crush the harmony of the Dharma, the Sangha and the Buddha. Rinzai Zenji said the same thing about true liberation, that with these five things we have to crush our delusions. Vimalakirti also says that in only this way will we know true freedom.

"Even should he go into the hells, he remains free of all taint of passions. Even should he go into the states of the animals, he remains free of darkness and ignorance. When he goes into the states of the asuras, he remains free of pride, conceit, and arrogance. When he goes into the realm of the lord of death, he accumulates the stores of merit and wisdom. When he goes into the states of motionlessness and immateriality, he does not dissolve therein."

Vimalakirti continues: this means that in all the six realms (deva, asura, human, animal, preta-ghost, hell-being), while Bodhisattvas have no sins, they still go to hell. They are not of animal nature, yet they go to the animal world; they are not caught on the desires of profoundest darkness nor stagnant there, yet they go to that realm. They are not conceited, nor attached, nor eating and eating but never feeling full, yet they enter that realm as well. They are not attached and they do not lose their Seeing-Eye there, they never lose their high-quality state of mind.

In this way, they can dive into any world yet they do not stop and stagnate there. No matter what greed and complain they may have, they are not caught on the three poisons of the instincts of greed, anger and ignorance. If we are caught on these, we have many desires to eat and to indulge, yet while having those, we are not stopped by them. As long as there are misdeeds in this world, then of course, we have to get angry with that, but we are not angry or disturbed in our deepest mind, we just angry to move things along.

Today people claim to love peace yet they demonstrate violently for what they call peace, caught and attached to their idea of peace. This is not true functioning. Instead, while being angry we are not stagnant and stuck on that anger. We have to see our own behaviour clearly and be complaining to ourselves about our own ways of acting, this is a review of our behaviour that is natural and necessary. Yet, we cannot be attached to that either or we will lose the eyes that see how things are in this world. We have to be able to see the world

with eyes that are not seeing from this small view of complaining and grumbling. We have to reflect on the foolishness and idiocy of what goes on in this world, seeing it all clearly, yet not get stuck there, or else we will lose our freedom to that. In this way, Vimalakirti says we must not be confused by even the most terrible things in this world.

“He may follow the ways of desire, yet he stays free of attachment to the enjoyments of desire. He may follow the ways of hatred, yet he feels no anger to any living being.

He may follow the ways of folly, yet he is ever conscious with the wisdom of firm understanding.

“He may follow the ways of avarice, yet he gives away all internal and external things without regard even for his own life.

He may follow the ways of immorality, yet, seeing the horror of even the slightest transgressions, he lives by the ascetic practices and austerities.

He may follow the ways of wickedness and anger, yet he remains utterly free of malice and lives by love.

He may follow the ways of laziness, yet his efforts are uninterrupted as he strives in the cultivation of roots of virtue.

He may follow the ways of sensuous distraction, yet; naturally concentrated his contemplation is not dissipated.

He may follow the ways of false wisdom, yet, having reached the transcendence of wisdom, he is expert in all mundane and transcendental sciences.

He may show the ways of sophistry and contention, yet he is always conscious of ultimate meanings and has perfected the use of liberative techniques.

He may show the ways of pride, yet he serves as a bridge and a ladder for all people.

He may show the ways of the passions, yet he is utterly dispassionate and naturally pure.

He may follow the ways of the Mara's, yet he does not really accept their authority in regard to his knowledge of the qualities of the Buddha.

He may follow the ways of the disciples, yet he lets living beings hear the teaching they have not heard before.

He may follow the ways of the solitary sages, yet he is inspired with great compassion in order to develop all living beings.

“He may follow the ways of the poor, yet he holds in his hand a jewel of inexhaustible wealth.

He may follow the ways of cripples, yet he is beautiful and well adorned with the auspicious signs and marks.

He may follow the ways of those of lowly birth, yet, through his accumulation of the stores of merit and wisdom, he is born in the family of the Tathāgatas.

He may follow the ways of the weak, the ugly, and the wretched, yet he is beautiful to look upon, and his body is like that of Narayana.

“He may manifest to living beings the ways of the sick and the unhappy, yet he has entirely conquered and transcended the fear of death.

“He may follow the ways of the rich, yet he is without acquisitiveness and often reflects upon the notion of impermanence.

He may show himself engaged in dancing with harem girls, yet he cleaves to solitude, having crossed the swamp of desire.

“He follows the ways of the dumb and the incoherent, yet, having acquired the power of incantations, he is adorned with a varied eloquence.

“He follows the ways of the heterodox without ever becoming heterodox. He follows the ways of the entire world, yet he reverses all states of existence. He follows the way of liberation without ever abandoning the progress of the world.

“Manjusri, thus does the bodhisattva follow the wrong ways, thereby following the way to the qualities of the Buddha.”

What he is saying, is that if we are caught in some kind of a moralistic or ethical stereotype or preconceived form, then this is not the Way of the Buddha. It is only imitation. We have to go beyond the forms of typical morality, the issue is not whether we do bad things or not. There are many ideal things that are not realistic when living in society. For example, in a great crisis we find many examples of not being able to uphold our ideal way of living. In the actual real world there is evil happening everywhere, and desires are never ending. It is these within the mind that we are addressing. If we say we should run away from these things, this is not the way of the Buddha.

If we say we should run away, then the Way of the Buddha becomes something very narrow and rigid, and binds us to observing it in a restrictive, attached way. It is not something we can try to observe and protect in order to be liberated; if so, it is only about defending our own narrow position and opinion, our own individual egoistic situation and view. This is not what the Buddha Way is about. All sentient beings are from the origin Buddhas. If we say that, then we drink down every bit of evil, we embrace it all. We do not sit around with a face that looks so perfect and ideal. We jump right in, act, and move without one shadow in our mind. Doing this must be part of it, this is what Vimalakirti is saying by seemingly putting it backwards. Without making ourselves big and getting caught in the form, but instead, being the place where the form has completely disappeared. We have to realize it to this point or it is not a true moral or ethic.

“I am so splendid and good. I never do anything bad, I

am so ethical and moral, I only do good things." This is truly being caught and attached to an imagined idea of what is moral and ethical, and living in a narrow and restrictive way. This is being moved around by the situation we find ourselves in. This makes a great distance and gulf between ourselves and society, a separation, a division. People then think that since we are that kind of a person they can never live up to that. There is no value or usefulness to that whatsoever. While living with people in society, people who are all living with desires, to be in there right along with them with our desires; yet at the same time, not being drowned in our desires, but going beyond them. Humans have all kinds of desires, so while also having all of these, we go beyond them. This is the place. This is what Vimalakirti is teaching.

In the world there are people who may be called stingy, but they are not stingy, they are working toward a goal and that is why they are living in that way, there is also this kind of wisdom.

Priest Tetsugen realized this one thousand years ago when Zen had been spread to Japan but all of the teachings had not yet arrived. He himself went to China and Korea and found the woodblocks that were still missing, borrowing them so that this country of Japan could publish a full set of sutras. Doing this he gave rise to his Great Vow and Priest Tetsugen made many tens of thousands of woodblock prints, carving them and having the sutras published by a quality printer. For doing this, he had to make great efforts to raise the money, and just as the funds were gathered, a famine occurred. In Osaka, in Kyoto, everywhere there was a huge lack of food. When Tetsugen saw this, all the money he had gathered for his very important project, every last bit of it he gave to starving refugees and he started over again raising the money from zero. Again, when he had gathered the money to be able to begin his great project, a huge famine and drought occurred, and he gave all of his money to those suffering from that, and then began to gather the money for the third time. Finally, he was able to complete it.

On the first day of gathering the money for the third time, he met a samurai on the Third Avenue bridge of Kyoto. He asked the samurai for some money and explained what he wanted it for, even a single mon, please donate it. The samurai said "No" and Tetsugen insisted, "Please give it to me!", "No!", "Please give it to me!", "NO!", "Please give it to me!", "NO!", and while they were arguing and walking they ended up all the way in Otsu to the East of Kyoto. Finally where the Samurai was going to cross the river at the crossing there, he gave Priest Tetsugen the change from his boat fare. When he received this he knew that he would be able to raise the money needed and he was never again besieged by droughts and famines that needed the money that he raised.

Three times, he raised the money. It was indeed a huge

project of sutra printing and he was actually able to complete it. He was careful with every single penny, as if being greedy, and because of this, his goal could be completed. The sage loves possessions: in order to clear this up we have to do it decisively in one straight line. The sage uses possessions: in order to clear this up we have to do it decisively in one straight line. It may look stingy but when there is a goal and a method implicit there, then there is no mistake. In this same way the Buddha Way is lived.

For some people it may look like a person is a radically misbehaving monk or nun, but in a hidden unseen way they are strictly observing the precepts. This is just the opposite of someone who is being called "splendid, so clear!" by everyone but doing misdeeds where they cannot be seen. Even a little misdeed is not covered up and painted over, instead one's mistakes are really felt in the gut and expressed, and sincerely regretted within.

A schoolteacher may be hitting the student in the schoolroom and still have a kind heart. When we look at people, this one may seem lazy but in the shadows they may be working very hard at their practice, there is also this way of practice.

In the Record of Rinzai is written how when Rinzai was working, Obaku came, and Rinzai stopped what he was doing and rested his chin on the handle of his hoe. He just stood there. His teacher came so he stopped working, usually people would start working as hard as they could when their teacher shows up, but Rinzai was different. He had just been working hard but when his teacher showed up, he stopped suddenly, rested and looked in the other direction. Obaku saw that and asked him if he was tired, saying he looked really out of it. Rinzai said, "I just got here and have not used my hoe at all, why should I be tired?" He had been working hard, what kind of an irrational thing was he saying here? In this, Rinzai's way of being is very well expressed. Once when Rinzai was sitting in the zendo Obaku came in to check the zazen of each person by walking through the zendo. Rinzai pretended to be sitting sleepily, he was bobbing as if he was rowing a boat. Obaku walked by him very slowly and passed him as if he were walking by a vicious tiger. He walked past him and out of the zendo. At that moment the jikijitsu made a face as if he were not sleeping, but Rinzai at the same occasion made it look as if he himself were sleeping. This is the very fascinating place of Zen. This is truly an example of walking the Way of the Buddha.

We may appear to have a mind full of ideas and very noisy, but in our belly there is nothing moved around at all, and so we are centered and easy. Calm and settled, there are some like that and there are also those who are always grumbling and complaining yet still and free within, in deep awakening. There are also some, who may appear to be flattering and insincere, but they may in fact be using an expedient means to express the teaching of the Buddha. There are some who appear to

be so conceited and full of themselves when in fact deep inside they are humble and always in the shadows are making great efforts at practice. There are also people who appear to be so greedy and needing so much when in fact in their heart, they need little and are free from desires. There are also people who are found among evil people but do not live in an evil way, they may live among the people who do the worst things in the world but they do not do the same things those people do. In this way, we may live with the impoverished but we are not impoverished at all. Living like that with people, we follow the Buddha's Way.

An example of one who looked so impoverished but was so well aligned inside was Nakamura Hisako-san. She was born the daughter of a very poor tatami maker, and at the age of four, she had gangrene. Her fingertips were first to rot and fall off. This spread to the rest of her body and she had to have one limb after another amputated, until her arms were removed up to her elbow and her legs were only to her knee. Her father died early and her mother took Hisako to the home of another poor tatami maker. Hisako had no arms so she could not use chopsticks and when she ate straight out of her bowl the step brother and sister would say "Hisako is a cat"; she was made fun of in this way. She learned to eat with a spoon tied to her bandages at her elbows. It was very unusual to be a person with no arms and legs and everyone wanted to have a look so they would come to sneak a peek at her from the rooftop, looking in the windows at her. Sometimes she would just be left home alone all day long. Her father often said that this house does not need such a child. Her mother would go to the other side of the mountains and work for several months at a time, to bring home money and during that time Hisako and her grandmother would continually make the rounds of the temples. Her friends went to school and she wanted to go to school too, but no school would have a student who had no arms and legs and so she would take the old books her brother and sister had thrown away. She would learn to read them by imitating their reading, she had them buy her a pencil and she learned to write by holding it in her mouth. Her friends were learning to sew so she asked her grandmother to teach her, and by holding a needle in her mouth, she practiced sewing. Everyday she sewed cotton beanbags since she did not go to school, and soon she had a whole mountain of beanbags. She wanted to give them to her friends but they said that since she had sewn them with her mouth they were all covered with saliva so they did not want them. At age nine she became unable to see. Her mother was deeply challenged by this child with no arms or legs and now blind, and she thought if I let her live like this she will never be fortunate. She wrapped up Hisako and went with her to the edge of the River and was trying somehow to jump in, and Hisako was pounding her back saying "Mother I do not want to die I do not want to die!" and so she finally could not do it.

Her eyes got better and as she got older she could do amazing things, she could cut out and sew her own kimonos. When her friends learnt to knit, she would have someone buy her knitting needles and she would hold them with her lips and knit too. Her mother was very strict and made her clean her own room and with her very short arm stubs, she took the duster and the broom and cleaned her room. She told her she had to do her own laundry, and with her leg stubs she pounded her laundry. She told her she had to light the fire for her own table heater and with a match in her mouth; she tried to light that heater too. The problem was that when she held the match in her mouth, even if she fastened the match box the table, when she put the match in her mouth it would go out from her blowing on it when she exhaled, and when she inhaled the flame would burn her face. She called out to her mother, "mother just this I cannot do!" "No, it is not that you cannot do it, try it for a month and see." She tried and tried and tried, how many thousands of times did she fail, and then after how many months, she finally became able to light a match, set fire to some wood chips and make the fire for the heater. With her little stubs for hands, she then put the fire into the heater.

At the age of nineteen thanks to the introduction of a kind person, she was put in the circus in Nagoya. The barker called to everyone "come in! Come in! Welcome, We have a Daruma with no legs here! She holds a brush in her mouth and writes letters! She does sewing with no arms! She can knit-come in and see her! She became a part of a sideshow and was taken all over Japan.

After years of suffering and struggling, when Hisako turned thirty-nine, the famous woman, called a saint, Helen Keller, came to Japan. Helen Keller whose eyes could not see, whose ears could not hear and whose tongue could not speak, this was Helen Keller. She was the daughter of a wealthy family and they had spent much money on educating her. She could read books of Braille with her fingertips and had studied in that way. She was born unable to speak but she had learnt to speak and was a great scholar. When Helen Keller came to Japan, she was welcomed at a great reception and at that time Hisako Nakamura was the representative of the association of handicapped and gave the welcoming greetings to Helen Keller. Hisako was so excited and looking forward to that day that she had someone buy her a naked doll and she sewed many-layered kimonos for it out of fabric. When someone said that if this doll were taken to America and undressed, it would be very embarrassing to see that those kimonos had been put on a doll's naked body, Hisako sewed underwear, an underslip and underpants for the doll, exactly as a real person would wear. When she went to the reception, at the table where Helen Keller sat there was a very expensive store bought doll from the best department store. It was in a case complete with a lid and it had the best of all decorations, a gorgeous brocade obi woven in

Kyoto. Hisako had never even had such fine clothing, she couldn't make it like that. The department store doll had on bright clean white tabi but Hisako had never had a pair of white tabi and she had omitted putting tabi on her doll for Helen Keller. She was torn - to give it to her, or not to give it to her, she hesitated, and she finally took it and Hisako who had now been fitted with artificial arms and legs was able to hand the doll she had made to Helen Keller and give the welcoming greetings to her.

Helen Keller who was blind received the doll, and then with her hands she felt the whole body of Hisako.

When she understood that Hisako had no arms, she hugged and hugged Hisako in front of all of the guests present and said, "you are much greater than me. In the world there is a miracle which is you." and she kissed her. Hisako cried as she always did when she was deeply moved, up until that day there had been so many, many long painful months. She had been made into a shameful freak given away to be shown to people, she had been resented and hated and labeled day after day and she had lived through that. At that time, for the very first time, she felt that she was glad that she had lived through it all somehow. Helen Keller who was famous all over the world had told her that she was even greater than she was. She told her she was a miracle, and at that moment the tens of years of suffering melted away, she really felt that she was so glad she had lived.

That day Hisako said, that in Japan today even someone with no arms and no legs can live a life of several tens of years strongly and well. There is nothing that one cannot do. She became a model and source of encouragement for handicapped people all over the world. She became a guiding light for their minds. Hisako who had not ever gone to school wrote beautiful poetry with a thin brush in her mouth she calligraphed beautiful letters on a thin long calligraphy card. She made a beautiful book and traveled all over Japan giving lectures at various women's groups. Nakamura Hisako sensei is how she is referred to today.

Here is one of the poems she wrote:

*Even without arms and without legs
I find peace wrapped in the big sleeves of the Buddha*

And another:

*All of my previous misdeeds
How can I repent them?*

The sadness of having no hands with which to gassho In front of her parents altar she wanted to gassho, to put her palms together but she could not and she cried there. There are many who have two fine hands but do not know to put them together in gassho. Hisako was every day full of grace, gratitude and gassho-ing. It brought me to tears: "with nothing at all, not even

hands or feet, already Buddha."

Here is another poem:

*Everyone's grace,
Thanks to that, there is a today
And I am thankful from the bottom of my heart,
For everything that has ever happened to me
I am very thankful.*

If we are born with all of our limbs complete and we do not have gratitude, then there is nothing more handicapped than that. This is what it means to be endowed with a splendid mind but never awakened to that Mind within. Here is an example of the opposite, to appear so unfortunate but to live with a truly awakened state of Mind. This is the Way of the Buddha and this is what Vimalakirti is saying.

Then, the Licchavi Vimalakirti said to the crown prince Manjusri, "Manjusri, what is the 'family of the Tathāgatas'?"

Manjusri replied, "Noble sir, the family of the Tathāgatas consists of all basic egoism; of ignorance and the thirst for existence; of lust, hate, and folly; of the four misapprehensions, of the five obscurations, of the six media of sense, of the seven abodes of consciousness, of the eight false paths, of the nine causes of irritation, of the paths of ten sins. Such is the family of the Tathāgatas. In short, noble sir, the sixty-two kinds of convictions constitute the family of the Tathāgatas!"

Here we have the completely opposing differences of Hinayana and the Mahayana. In the Hinayana, it is taught that because we have a body we make misdeeds. So this body is sacrificed and put through pain in order that desires will not arise. In the Mahayana, it is the opposite. Because we have this body we can become a Buddha, the body is our source of becoming a Buddha. The dark ignorance is the seed for becoming a Buddha. Love is the source of delusion in the Hinayana teaching, but in the Mahayana way love is the source of becoming Buddha. If humans cannot love, how can they know the Buddha's compassion? If one cannot understand deep human feelings, how can such a person possibly realize the Buddha Nature? It is taught that the three defilements of greed, anger and ignorance are the worst part of a human; that to want more and more and more and not have what we want, this is what makes us angry. To be so attached to some thing that when we lose it we are grumbling and complaining, this is ignorance. But it is just the opposite. These three poisons are the very source of becoming Buddha. Because we want something we can love someone; we can love society because we have love, and so we can know the Buddha's compassion. Someone who does not know love nor hate, and is cold and lacks feeling cannot know this love of the Buddha. Because we know love, we can become a Buddha.

This is where Hinayana Buddhism and Mahayana are completely opposite. The great ignorance and our thoughts without purpose are the seeds of becoming Buddha. In Hinayana, it is said that love is the source of all delusion but in the Mahayana, it says that Love is the source of our becoming a Buddha. How can a person who cannot love possibly know the compassion of the Buddha? Someone who has no feeling for others could not possibly realize Buddha Nature. This is why Love is the source of becoming Buddha.

What are the four delusions?

The first is that we think that the world will always exist.

The second is that we mistake the world that causes suffering as something that is happy.

Without awakening to the absence of ego we believe that our small self is who we are, this is the third.

The fourth is that we think something that is not pure is pure.

These are four upside-down views or delusions in the Hinayana, but in the Mahayana these are considered to be seeds for becoming Buddha.

In the Hinayana it is said that this world is all transient and temporary, there is nothing eternal in the world at all! All is like a dream or a phantom and fades away, this is how the Hinayana teaches. With this kind of rigid point of view we will not become a Buddha. We have to bring forth those thoughts that will help to awaken and liberate those who are suffering in delusion.

And this is not to say that we should try to run away from the world of suffering. Rather, we have to turn this world of suffering into a place that is joyful. To make things positive and constructive is the Way of the Buddha.

It is not that it is a mistake to say that there is an "I". We have to know the true Master, to know this there must be an "I" or there will not be a Buddha.

Instead of moaning about how everything is impure, we must have the passion to make this world pure and bright.

In this way what the Hinayana calls the four upside down views and tries to avoid are the source of becoming Buddha.

"...of the five obscurations, of the six media of sense, of the seven abodes of consciousness, of the eight false paths, of the nine causes of irritation, of the paths of ten sins: such is the family of the Tathagatas. In short, noble sir, the sixty-two kinds of convictions constitute the family of the Tathagatas!"

There are many various numbers and lists lined up here, but to put it succinctly, desires are the seeds of Buddha. One with no desire and no wishes cannot become Buddha. Someone without greed and desires cannot realize true awakening. Someone who thinks

they are already perfect will have no confusion and have no need to follow a Path, and they will not be able to enter the state of mind of satori. Because we see that we are so off the mark, so full of misdeeds, this is why we do practice.

Vimalakirti: Manjusri, with what in mind do you say so?

Because we are confused, we seek a path and because we are on the path we realize our Buddha nature and this is what Vimalakirti emphasizes. 'But wait, I understand if you say that someone who is free from desires and wishes can become a Buddha but what do you mean when you say that someone who has many desires and wishes becomes a Buddha?' Vimalakirti asks this and Manjusri answers.

Manjusri: "Noble sir, one who stays in the fixed determination of the vision of the uncreated is not capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment. However, one who lives among created things, in the mines of passions, without seeing any truth, is indeed capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment."

One who is looking only for that place of nothing at all will not do anything, they will just stay in that place where everything has been extinguished. Don't kill, don't lie, don't steal, don't get drunk, these are all fine things to observe, but if we work as farmers we end up stepping on insects even if we don't want to. We have to kill pests, we don't want to take life but we have to at times, and if we have to observe this rigidly then we cannot be a farmer. We cannot work as business people if we think that the Buddha Dharma is only to receive alms and follow the way of the Buddha; there is no bigger burden on society than that. We are all pure from the origin, but if we are not constructive and active then what benefit are we for people in society?

Sho i zettai mu- no body, no thoughts, no person, no society; from the origin not one thing at all in the heavens and earth, to sit smack down in the world of Mu. This is an enlightenment that is all about me and only me. For someone who is satisfied with only being enlightened by themselves there will be no way to liberate others. There is no way that the urge to bring awakening to all Beings will come forth from someone who is self satisfied in this way. The deep vow of bringing awakening to all others even if we ourselves are not completely realized is the kind of vow which is true awakening to the Buddha Nature and is a far cry from sitting where there is no self and no other and staying with this absolute mu only. There is no awakening to our true nature if we just sit with that. This will never bring us to become Buddha.

"Noble sir, flowers like the blue lotus, the red lotus, the white lotus, the water lily, and the moon lily do not grow on the dry ground in the wilderness, but do grow in the swamps and mud banks. Just so, the Buddha-qualities do not grow in living beings certainly destined for the uncreated but do grow in those living beings who are like swamps and mud banks of passions. Likewise, as seeds do not grow in the sky but do grow in the earth, so the Buddha-qualities do not grow in those determined for the absolute but do grow in those who conceive the spirit of enlightenment, after having produced a Sumeru-like mountain of egoistic views.

"Noble sir, through these considerations one can understand that all passions constitute the family of the Tathāgatas. For example, noble sir, without going out into the great ocean, it is impossible to find precious, priceless pearls. Likewise, without going into the ocean of passions, it is impossible to obtain the mind of omniscience."

It is like a lotus flower which does not bloom at the top of a high mountain, but blooms in the sludge and the mud in the low areas. Without that it cannot bloom. In this way to just be satisfied with our own personal satori is to be like a flower in the high mountain area, there we find no lotus flowers blooming. To become all muddy right along with all of the rest of the people, to see their actual pain and suffering first hand, this is why we feel the urgency to do something, whatever we can, to help with that pain and suffering somehow. Then that state of mind arises naturally. Satisfied by personal experience only will not bring awakening to all beings and is not the true deepest awakening of our true nature. Without confusion and delusions in ourselves we will not feel the wish to help others with that resolution.

Also we have never heard of planting seeds in midair and seeing them germinate. Those seeds have to be put into dirt and dirty fertilizer has to be added to make them grow, and only then will sprouts come forth. If there is no "I" present there is no impulse to realize awakening. Unlike in Hinayana, there arises an "I the wish to liberate people from an attachment to that I". Because we know about the ego filter and attachment we are motivated to liberate others. Because we think this we do training. Someone who puts up a wall as high as Mt. Sumeru for the first time is able to give rise to true determination to awaken to their true nature and with that the Way of the Buddha is first entered and realized. All of our desires are the seeds for becoming Buddha.

Then, the elder Mahakasyapa applauded the crown prince Manjusri: "Good! Good Manjusri! This is indeed well spoken! This is right!"

Daikasho or Makakasho is the top disciple of the Buddha. He heard the dharma teaching of Manjusri and was deeply impressed thanking him saying how it was

just like that.

It is our senses and the defilements that come with them that are the source of our delusion, we see and are deluded, hear and are deluded, smell and are deluded, taste and are deluded, touch and are deluded. We are always suffering because of our desires. These are all seeds to become Buddha. Those of us who are followers of the Hinayana who cut away all of our desires cannot give rise to the deep vow for awakening all beings.

Even someone who is headed for infinite hell for something hideous that they did can become a Buddha, if they become aware of what was done, realize their mistake and say "that was wrong!". This is just like Frankie Parker, but for those of us with no desires, we cannot give rise to a deep vow to enlighten all beings. Even those having desires and delusions and living in society full of challenges, even they can return to the Buddha Dharma if they just say "that was a mistake!". But if we don't make mistakes we cannot understand this. People in the world do something wrong, realize it, and say "that was wrong", review their behaviour and return to the Buddha Dharma. But those of us who have cut all desires completely, even if we hear a very powerful teaching of the Dharma, we cannot give rise to the desire to awaken all beings. Manjusri, it is just as you say, we who are of the Hinayana path, we cannot become Buddhas. In this way Daikasho confirmed himself what Manjusri was teaching.

In this way Manjusri answered Vimalakirti how the Buddha's Way can be followed. Vimalakirti says, Bodhisattvas can enter the Way of the Buddha, the Path of the Heavens and Earth and for that we cannot ask for our own personal happiness.

A monk asked Master Joshu,
"What is the Great way of Joshu?"

Joshu who was working in the garden put his tool down and said. "It is right out there outside the fence."

Then the monk said to him, "I am not asking about that small path, I am asking about Joshu's huge Path"

"Oh, that one. Go out to the front street. There is the road that goes all the way to Choan (the capital).

This is what the monk was told. "The Great Path goes to Choan" These are famous words. In this way it is clearly said that it is not a path for a small self but for all people. It must be a Path that can guide good people and bad people. All people have to be guided there. "Even if the path is stepped on, walked on, it does not get angry." Dogs urinate, cows defecate, all good people and bad people, horses and cows, all go on it. This is the Path. There is something there for people of all kinds, it leaves out no one, this truly Buddha's Way. This is what Vimalakirti is saying when he said to follow the Great Path. Not for one's own pleasure, but for all people; in each moment, we do what has to be done without fear, or else it will not be the True Path and the Buddha's path will not be realized.

Next, it changes, and Vimalakirti asks Manjusri,

“The passions do indeed constitute the family of the Tathāgatas. How can such as we, the disciples, conceive the spirit of enlightenment, or become fully enlightened in regard to the qualities of the Buddha?”

Vimalakirti has said that one has to dive in anywhere and not dislike or be afraid of anything at all, or there is no Buddha's path. Now Vimalakirti asks where is the seed for becoming? Buddha asks Manjusri and Manjusri answers,

“Only those guilty of the five deadly sins can conceive the spirit of enlightenment and can attain Buddhahood, which is the full accomplishment of the qualities of the Buddha!

“Just as, for example, the five desire objects have no impression or effect on those bereft of faculties, even so all the qualities of the Buddha have no impression or effect on the disciples, who have abandoned all adherences.

“Thus, the disciples can never appreciate those qualities.

“Therefore, Manjusri, the ordinary individual is grateful to the Tathāgata, but the disciples are not grateful.

Why? The ordinary individuals, upon learning of the virtues of the Buddha, conceive the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment, in order to insure the uninterrupted continuity of the heritage of the Three Jewels; but the disciples, although they may hear of the qualities, powers, and fearlessnesses of the Buddha until the end of their days, are not capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment.”

In this mind, our mind, are the seeds to become Buddha, “all of the five obscurations, of the six media of sense, of the seven abodes of consciousness, of the eight false paths, of the nine causes of irritation, of the paths of ten sins. Such is the family of the Tathagatas. In short, noble sir, the sixty-two kinds of convictions constitute the family of the Tathagatas!”

Within the desires we find the true seeds, but not in the wish to avoid desires, the desires themselves are the seeds to understand the true state of mind of the Buddha. We cannot dry these up, within these is the true source of giving birth to the Buddha's state of mind.

Thereupon, the bodhisattva Sarvarupasamdarsana, who was present in that assembly, addressed the Licchavi Vimalakirti: “Householder, where are your father and mother, your children, your wife, your servants, your maids, your laborers, and your attendants? Where are your friends, your relatives, and your kinsmen? Where are your servants, your horses, your elephants, your chariots, your bodyguards, and your bearers?”

There is also a Fugen Shikishin among the other Bodhisattvas. He asks Vimalakirti, “You have a wife and a family and have a business and use many people in

your work and make money. Where are your mother, father and family and children? Where are those who are you are using and who is using them? Who are your friends? Who makes your food? Your cars? Your horses and carts, where are they? After he asks Vimalakirti about all of his possessions and people, he asks him where he is putting his body. Is it only in a four and a half mat room? And how is he making everyone else disappear? Everyone else, where are they? Is he playing all by himself? There is not anything else to be seen there in his whole room. Of course living as one single person is a splendid existence and awakening, but there are many people who support that one person. What is that relationship to all of those other people and things?

Vimalakirti responds that the great path has to be walked without fear and in accordance with what must be done in any particular occasion. When something comes up that is necessary, it has to be done, or it is not the path of the true Bodhisattva. In this way Vimalakirti was not talking like a usual person of the world. But the way of the Buddha has to be refuge for all people in the world, so what kind of relationships and essence work in that?

Thus addressed, the Licchavi Vimalakirti spoke the following verses to the bodhisattva Sarvarupasamdarsana:

Of the true bodhisattvas,

The mother is the transcendence of wisdom,

The father is the skill in liberative technique;

The Leaders are born of such parents.

First he talks about the things around him: the mother, and how this is the wisdom of the Prajna Paramita. Prajna is the wisdom and Paramita is the Path. This is the other shore or the center of equilibrium, this is the place of the Bodhisattva. Prajna Paramita, the wisdom of Prajna, is not something we acquire outside; all of the three thousand worlds realize their wisdom from this Prajna Paramita and all of the Buddhas in the three thousand worlds realized great enlightenment from this wisdom. In accordance with this we realize satori. To understand the Prajna Paramita is the Buddha Dharma. Prajna Paramita is not about reading something from a book or hearing it but we have it from birth, this intrinsic wisdom.

It is like a baby who can see with its eyes and hear with its ears without ever having been taught how to do that. They perceive everything outside and this is not itself deluding. It is only when we analyze what we perceive and organize it mentally that we get caught. But this ability too, is something we all have from the origin. The five senses also are given the capability to function from our mind before we were even in existence. Our mind's true source and root have these for manifesting this wisdom. For these we have the Baby's mind which is the Great Path, the wisdom of the Buddha. They have no acquired knowledge, but if their ears

hear a dog, they can hear the dog sound. They can hear the bird chirp even if they don't know it is a bird or a dog: to hear is an inborn capability.

From this place of nothing at all, we feel heat and cold, joy and sadness. And while we say there is nothing there, that essence does manifest. We have the awareness that is able to work in accordance with whatever comes along, yet that awareness comes from nowhere at all. That place where there is nothing whatsoever. It comes forth from that place and this is Prajna Paramita. This is why Prajna Paramita has nothing, but can receive everything and anything, and manifests everything.

Next we have:

"The father is the skill in liberative technique;"

In Buddhism, we talk about the six paramitas: charity, precepts, patience, good efforts, samadhi-wisdom, liberative technique or expedient means. depend upon the power of vow and wisdom then comes in as well.

The expedient means is when we teach in accordance to the other, functioning in accordance with the other. Wisdom is the mother, the expedient means is the father then the wisdom which is the mother holds on to nothing whatsoever. This is the wisdom to open up to everything that is. The expedient means is to take what is received and see it clearly and then to function accordingly, in the way that is most necessary.

We need to think no-thing and simultaneously we have to see the other clearly. We cannot just be nice and just accept someone, we have to accept and see clearly simultaneously, and how do we then function from there? We have to have this activity as well.

The mother, the Prajna wisdom, is the mind of being zero, like a mirror that reflects and receives everything exactly as it is, that which is reflected there has to be an activity; for that we become the mountain and river, the flower and the bird. There has to be a response to those simultaneously and this is where the expedient means has to be clear.

All the various data has to be brought into this, father's function has the genes and the collective unconscious, this is the base of the father. The mother's base is to combine the heredity and on top of that to put what is necessary as personality and character and to cultivate that. Wisdom is the mind of zero, it is also that which receives everything, while expedient means is to add all the data of the past and clarify it. We have to have both of these, not just acceptance and not just action, we have to cultivate the ability to liberate. We have to be able to clarify and reveal this functioning and if we do the mu, the root source where there is nothing held on to whatsoever, if we settle it into that place, there is not one hair which can be inserted. The base of the mirror is being zero, yet at the same time here are the mountains, rivers, all the ten thousand things can be clearly

seen there, if we extend it then we can see how it fills all the dharma seas.

It fills this world to every furthest corner, and reflects and functions and manifests, in this way it settles into place with no shadow and when it manifests it manifests as whatever is necessary. This is the basic truth.

In society, in order to be one who guides people we have to have both these characters of mother and father. And if we have this truth, without confusing it, it works and we have the activity of the Bodhisattva.

*Their wife is the joy in the Dharma,
Love and compassion are their daughters,
The Dharma and the truth are their sons;
And their home is deep thought on the meaning of
voidness.*

*All the passions are their disciples,
Controlled at will.*

The joy in the Dharma! When we receive the Dharma, we know this great joy when we understand and when we awaken to the truth we also know this great Joy. This great joy is truly greater than any possession or happiness. We cling to material things and want fame because we do not have this huge awakening. But if we have an awakened mind that is the base of our joy and we know that there is no greater joy than to realize the dharma as our life's purpose.

When our mind truly awakens then we know we are not this name or this body only; our mind is not man nor a woman, not young nor old- but if a dog barks we can hear it, and we hear a bird and it is not the name or body that it has, but what is prior to the mind and the body so we do not begin or end. This state of mind's true basis is one with the transforming world but never being confused by that whatsoever we transform in accordance with this whole universe. We are this huge great mind and we know that joy and if we once awaken then we fall in love at first sight with the true form of our Buddha nature and can never get enough of it. This is what Ikkyu Zenji poetized, this awakening of our mind is number one for all of us.

To know this joy free of any sadness, and to have this joy of compassion of being at one with the universe. To know the compassion that holds nothing as a personal compassion, not about loving a thing, a person, or all human kind. To see everything in this whole world as our very own truth so as we love ourselves we love everything else. This is our true compassion

This is because we are at one with the whole world and universe.

The mind of integrity is our son, and we let go of profit and loss and then we feel how this is able to be our whole mind manifesting and then we see that every suffering and pain, if we make the efforts to fix it, is our son, and the compassion is our daughter and the integ-

rity of sincere mind is our son.

We are empty of anything in mind, to live in that, is to live in our true house, we see here that the father is expedient means and the mother is the dharma joy, the wife is the dharma joy and the daughter is compassion and the son is sincere straight mind and that is the family of Vimalakirti.

The disciples are those freed from any desires; to not be any of the one hundred desires that tire our mind; and while still alive we have no more seeds of desires. If they are gone we are no longer alive. Our eyes see and our ears hear and our perceptions work, and so of course the desires make us so uncomfortable we cannot stand still. We want to give someone this and someone else that and of course our mind gets upset. We have to work for society. To work for society as long as we have a body and awareness, to use these desires and not try to run away from them, instead to work for society. Human progress and liberation are born forth here.

Vimalakirti says that his own family is lined up in this way and now he tells the Bodhisattvas what kind of way of life he leads and tells them what is important in how he lives.

*Their friends are the aids to enlightenment;
Thereby they realize supreme enlightenment.*

There are thirty seven aids to enlightenment in Buddhism, with a footnote of ethics. The thirty seven Bodhisattva aids to enlightenment are:

four meditations,
four true actions,
four advanced states of mind,
five functions, and their roots,
five powers,
seven awakenings,
eight fold path of right practice,
this is all together thirty seven.

In this way we use the aids to enlightenment as our teacher and we live in society. Never ceasing for even a day, we hold our way of being in our mind as the most important of everything. We live in accordance with this and we can realize a great satori. This is the Way, along with the Six Paramitas, plus our vow's power and vow's passion, this all makes eight paramitas that lead us to satori. These are our friends of the path, is what Vimalakirti is saying.

Our teacher is our way of living within society. We live with these four: love, charity, doing what is beneficial for others, and being empathetic with others. These four are what is most important for the Bodhisattva. Charity is to live to give liberation or to give material offerings, love is to be kind towards all beings, and then we can enter the True Path. To do things that are benefi-

cial for others, and move empathetically with them, it is in this way that we have to become one with the other person's state of mind.

In the Heian Period lived Shiko Shonin. He got himself put into jail on purpose to help the other people in jail. When he was incarcerated he would always read the Lotus Sutra in a loud voice and when his term was finished he would commit another crime in order to get back into jail so he could again chant the Lotus Sutra in a loud voice to all the prisoners. This is that kind of teaching for people who have a difficult time realizing liberation. To use what we have at hand as tools for liberation, this Mind is very important. We have to harmonize all human relationships.

*Their companions, ever with them,
Are the six transcendences.
Their consorts are the means of unification,
Their music is the teaching of the Dharma.*

Sutras are our music and we chant every day to get rid of what we are stagnant about and vow for all people's happiness as well, to bring those who listen to clarity by listening.

*The incantations make their garden,
Which blossoms with the flowers of the factors of enlightenment,
With trees of the great wealth of the Dharma,
And fruits of the gnosis of liberation.*

Next is our garden, this is always being cleaned with our concentration and remembering deeply. Here we find the Buddha tree, and the garden of memory and music flower there, we all have this garden inside. In this garden is the flower of satori and from this we realize the wisdom to save us all from suffering

*Their pool consists of the eight liberations,
Filled with the water of concentration,
Covered with the lotuses of the seven impurities -
Who bathes therein becomes immaculate.*

Next, since in India it is hot along with music and the garden, it is very important that samadhi, the water of satori, is also flowing there. There are seven merits of lotuses in that lake in the garden and everyone who washes there, also washes their mind.

*Their bearers are the six super knowledge's,
Their vehicle is the unexcelled Mahayana,
Their driver is the spirit of enlightenment,
And their path is the eightfold peace.*

The supernatural powers are able to bring all the finest cars out to drive on the excellent roads of the world. This is a great vehicle, rather not a great-but a splendid

vehicle. In the mind of truly great people they have the feeling to give everyone a ride in their car, not just doing it with a small mind worrying that the car might break. This offering of our not so fine car is the Bodhisattva.

The eightfold path consists of:

Correct living; that car has to have an aligned mind to drive it, the eightfold path of liberation has to be the correct way to live.

Correct seeing; shoken, true seeing, to see life and the world with clear eyes, next to live in this world and see it as it is, not through mental ideas,

Correct speaking; third is to not lie, to not be hypocritical or speak unnecessarily.

Correct care of life; fourth is to not kill.

Not stealing; to not steal, to observe the precepts.

Five is to live correctly by not deluding others and to work in clear paths.

Sixth is to make correct efforts and not be lazy.

Seven is to have a mind that is stable and not moved around.

Eight is to be empty minded like a baby constantly keeping the basic rules of training and knowing who to be in our mind.

This way of living, these eight ways, be able to enjoy them greatly. It is not about how much decoration we put on, but to be beautiful from our character polished from within and to have a health body, to not do things that make us feel ashamed with or without others. Instead, be a deep mind that sees our mistakes directly. Our truest jewel is the jewel of mind and these jewels increase, to do training in such a way that it is not ours, but others', this is true merit, and to live like this is the way of life of Vimalakirti.

*Their ornaments are the auspicious signs,
And the eighty marks;
Their garland is virtuous aspiration,
And their clothing is good conscience and consideration.*

*Their wealth is the holy Dharma,
And their business is its teaching,
Their great income is pure practice,
And it is dedicated to the supreme enlightenment.*

*Their bed consists of the four contemplations,
And its spread is the pure livelihood,
And their awakening consists of gnosis,
Which is constant learning and meditation.*

Next Vimalakirti tells us that Samadhi has four levels. It is the samadhi of zazen in which every day we find the most clear refuge. In zazen, we make this base solid and through that our every day mind becomes stable and firm. This zazen being well established allows us to

have a peaceful state of mind and in our mind we have no dust, or greed, or anger, or grumbling. This state of mind is the most safe and peaceful state of mind and this is zazen. From here the true correct way of living comes forth.

*Their food is the ambrosia of the teachings,
And their drink is the juice of liberation.
Their bath is pure aspiration,
And morality their unguent and perfume.*

We live according to the best way - to not overeat to the point where we get stuffed, to not eat more than we need, when we are too full we have unneeded thoughts and get sleepy, so to eat at the right time and the right amount and always have the stomach somewhat empty; to live in accordance with these best ways of living. We hear the Buddha's teaching and know that joy and the way of Dharma and the wisdom of the Dharma. In India it is in a custom that we do not have an alarm clock instead we awaken to peaceful music and do our zazen. When coming out of samadhi we have our mind work in its best possible way. We are not always doing zazen, when our mind is in a balanced stable way we need to take that mind and work with its clarity in society. This way of Mind is taking refuge in satori.

*Having conquered the enemy passions,
They are invincible heroes.
Having subdued the four Mara's,
They raise their standard on the field of enlightenment.*

*They manifest birth voluntarily,
Yet they are not born, nor do they originate.
They shine in all the fields of the Buddhas,
Just like the rising sun.*

*Though they worship Buddhas by the millions,
With every conceivable offering,
They never dwell upon the least difference
Between the Buddhas and themselves.*

*They journey through all Buddha-fields
In order to bring benefit to living beings,
Yet they see those fields as just like empty space,
Free of any conceptual notions of "living beings."*

*The fearless bodhisattvas can manifest,
All in a single instant,
The forms, sounds, and manners of behavior
Of all living beings.*

*Although they recognize the deeds of Mara's,
They can get along even with these Mara's
For even such activities may be manifested
By those perfected in liberative technique.*

*They play with illusory manifestations
In order to develop living beings,
Showing themselves to be old or sick,
And even manifesting their own deaths.*

*They demonstrate the burning of the earth
In the consuming flames of the world's end,
In order to demonstrate impermanence
To living beings with the notion of permanence.*

*Invited by hundreds of thousands of living beings,
All in the same country,
They partake of offerings at the homes of all,
And dedicate all for the sake of enlightenment.*

*They excel in all esoteric sciences,
And in the many different crafts,
And they bring forth the happiness
Of all living beings.*

*By devoting themselves as monks
To all the strange sects of the world,
They develop all those beings
Who have attached themselves to dogmatic views.*

*They may become suns or moons,
Indras, Brahmas, or lords of creatures,
They may become fire or water
Or earth or wind.*

*During the short aeons of maladies,
They become the best holy medicine;
They make beings well and happy,
And bring about their liberation.*

*During the short aeons of famine,
They become food and drink.
Having first alleviated thirst and hunger,
They teach the Dharma to living beings.*

*During the short aeons of swords,
They meditate on love,
Introducing to nonviolence
Hundreds of millions of living beings.*

*In the middle of great battles
They remain impartial to both sides;
For bodhisattvas of great strength
Delight in reconciliation of conflict.*

*In order to help the living beings,
They voluntarily descend into
The hells, which are attached
To all the inconceivable Buddha-fields.*

*They manifest their lives
In all the species of the animal kingdom,
Teaching the Dharma everywhere.*

Thus they are called "Leaders."

*They display sensual enjoyment to the worldlings,
And trances to the meditative.
They completely conquer the Mara's,
And allow them no chance to prevail.*

The heavenly feast, that is our food, the nirvana food where there are no flames of greed, flames of anger, nor flames of ignorance. This is Nirvana and if we realize this we do not have wishes for this and that, we have a peaceful mind and that is the heavenly nectar and feast.

Liberation is to be free from pain and suffering, and there are many within birth, sickness, old age and death. These are our life, our age, our sickness, our death. To leave the one we love, to have to be with one we dislike, to seek and never receive, to have a body and thereby suffer- because of these events we are always suffering. In each person the suffering is different, but to be able to separate from that is the liberation, that is our salt and soy sauce. Even if we do not have money we are not caught on that, and if we have no education we are not caught on that either, if we are called ugly we are not caught on that, nor are we caught by our negative points, we do not get caught, we drink it all down like delicious juice.

India is a hot country, so everyone goes into the rivers to cool off. To receive the sufferings and pains of life is like entering into a shower. To put on perfume and lipstick and decorate ourselves is like wearing the precepts. Desires -we have those, the Buddha called these thieves, ferocious wild animals, and poisonous snakes. The merits which we gather help us let go of those desires and then we have the courage to raise the Deep Desire to liberate all beings, no one else can give us that courage. In this way we have the obstructive devils that are desires; body greed; sickness and death; and interrupting others' good practices. In these four the desires and obstructions from the outside are easier to avoid than desires from the inside. Now, see through these clearly, those obstructions that are physical such as our fear of death; see that these are empty along with our body; and see too that death is a temporary matter.

In our mind we must see clearly that our training is in our mind and not something or somewhere outside of it. If we are not obstructed by these devils and if we are empty-minded, then we cannot be attacked. And this is why zazen is so important.

Muso Kokushi left these words in his Dream Conversations:

"If we let go of our love of good words, our love of bad things that is our protection. If we are letting go of both good things and bad things, this is the Buddha Ocean, and we even have to let go of the Buddha Ocean, this is the way to our true training."

If there is nothing in our mind whatsoever, that is the Buddha Ocean, but then to not even become attached on that Buddha Ocean, this is the true person of training. To not get caught on these evils, and raise the red flag (raised when the true teaching wins over the teaching of the external paths).

If one awakens to the truth, the place where we can actually experience that 'from the origin there is not one single thing where a speck of clutter could possibly land.' If we realize this directly then, at each and every point in our life we can see what people with attachment need and we can use all possible ways to actualize the way of the Bodhisattva. Not caught on it having to be this way or that way, not caught on any particular religious way, the ethics, the various scholastic versions, we can use all of these freely. The doctrine, wisdom, we use it all. To this truth-seeing-eye Bodhisattva not even one person should be meeting suffering, we cannot leave them out. To save them all from all suffering is the way of the Bodhisattva. Ultimately it is about not holding on to anything in our mind whatsoever. At the moment that those who are attached are drowning we have to use all possible techniques and ways and tools to guide them to the truth.

Sometimes the warmth of the sun is what we have to become to one who is suffering in the cold. In the winter the Siberian people live in minus 59 degree weather and in this freezing weather so many died. The heat of the sun shining on the frozen earth to warm it, how many will be deeply impressed and helped! To do training that warm sun sometimes has to be a strong ray showing strong, sharp rays. It has to show that face too, and that face is one of the faces of the Bodhisattva.

This natural environment how can we protect it with this strong sun which evaporates all the moisture - all of the living beings can be harmed by that. This is also the bodhisattva's form as the rain coming and quenching the thirst of everything in this hot heat, in a dry arid place we cannot do farming, then rain comes and things can grow and this is the Bodhisattva way. Sometimes the rains become great floods and destroy things and this is also the way of the Bodhisattva. This one sun, we sometime pray for it and also we suffer in the sunlight, we are saved by the rain and with great floods we lose many lives.

We resent all of these and are and confused, and, without falling into it, we see Nature and realize it cannot be seen by putting the self at the center of it, with our wisdom we have to give this Nature life.

For our own satisfaction we have made poisons that cause widespread destruction such as the ozone layer, or dioxins. For our own desires humankind has made these and now receives the suffering of that choice and this is the Bodhisattvas teaching as well. We cannot run after our desire, we cannot be in a hurry to 'solve it'. What is now dumped on this earth, this long-standing earth is not going to be resolved quickly. And, we have

to see how this world has not been destroyed and this is all the wisdom of the Bodhisattva.

We have five main desires: for food, sex, sleep, things, and fame.

In our minds, we all feel shame around all these things. They are hard to let go of. So in Hinayana they disparage them, but in Mahayana these desires are not treated differently. Instead, the obstruction for people is getting caught on desire. We have to see how to use these desires, not just negating them. These desires and their deep use is our mind's essence.

If sexual energy is all gotten rid of there are no people left in the world, and if there is no desire for food, this is like suicide. To have no things and no money, we can do it for society and not for our personal wants. And that enemy of sleepiness, that too. If we see that fame isn't necessary, instead if people bring it to us, then it is like Albert Schweitzer who did not need the Nobel prize for himself. But, if with it, it can bring more productive activity and we can use it for others then the fame is helpful and useful when it's not for oneself. But this is so subtle, we can very easily drown in these five desires increase our confusion and lose track of our Bodhisattva Vow

The Sixth Patriarch has said that we should add on no notions of bad or good to our perceptions and we should not hold on to any of our concerns within, that this is zazen.

To awaken to our true nature is our most important goal of life, to see the Buddha within is our most important asset, to see that zazen is our greatest possession, and to not forget god and Buddha; all this is the truth of the Bodhisattva. But, if we let go of our focus we get caught on those things so easily.

*Just as it can be shown that a lotus
Cannot exist in the center of a fire,
So they show the ultimate unreality
Of both pleasures and trances.*

*They intentionally become courtesans
In order to win men over,
And, having caught them with the hook of desire,
They establish them in the Buddha-gnosis.*

*In order to help living beings,
They always become chieftains,
Captains, priests, and ministers,
Or even prime ministers.*

To be a lotus blooming in the fire. In actuality, a lotus blooms only in muddy water, not clear water. Go into this muddy world to be the lotus that blooms in this desire-filling body, bloom a flower there. To have it bloom in the air is even more rare!

The poet Masaoka Shiki wrote:

*" the gourd flower blooms
the phlegm does not quit
Is this the Buddha?"*

He had tuberculosis and was struggling with that, the phlegm was rattling in his throat and he knew if he did not get it out he would die and while struggling like that with everything he had ,yelling for oxygen and the nurse and screaming "I cannot see any more." He was at the end of his life, in a panicky place, and while this was real he simultaneously looked very clearly at that, yet from one step higher. He saw and gave this poem. This is the lotus blooming in the fire, to go beyond this dying-you, to see it clearly, and from there to write a poem. This birth of the true self is beyond life and death. To be dying yet forgetting we are dying, this is the lotus blooming in the fire.

*For the sake of the poor,
They become inexhaustible treasures,
Causing those to whom they give their gifts
To conceive the spirit of enlightenment.*

*They become invincible champions,
For the sake of the proud and the vain,
And, having conquered all their pride,
They start them on the quest for enlightenment.*

*They always stand at the head
Of those terrified with fright,
And, having bestowed fearlessness upon them,
They develop them toward enlightenment.*

*They become great holy men,
With the super-knowledge's and pure continence,
And thus induce living beings to the morality
Of tolerance, gentleness, and discipline.*

*Here in the world, they fearlessly behold
Those who are masters to be served,
And they become their servants or slaves,
Or serve as their disciples.*

*Well trained in liberative technique,
They demonstrate all activities,
Whichever possibly may be a means
To make beings delight in the Dharma.*

*Their practices are infinite;
And their spheres of influence are infinite;
Having perfected an infinite wisdom,
They liberate an infinity of living beings.*

At Sogenji there is a nearby temple called Kokuseiji. Hanayama Daiki was the kancho at Nanzenji and opened great enlightened eyes. As well he built a temple in Korea and took care of it and many people were cared for by him, and when the war was over he came

back to Japan. He stopped at an island on the way and he looked over at Japan with many others who were crossing, at that time. The boat capsized and many almost died in great suffering as they all struggled to get back on it. Lifeboats were picking up those who were floating and Daikisan got onboard, but there were more people than boats, and so many were drowning. One person called out to him to pull him into the boat, but if he helped him into the boat all of the others would drown. Daiki said he would get off in order to put that person on and so Daiki got out of the boat and that other person was saved. Daiki floated for a while but then he sank into the water. He could have been saved himself if that was what was most important for him, but in order to save another person he put his life into the ocean and let go of it.

How Daiki would be glorified if he were here today, but fame and glory were not as great in that moment as liberating that other person. This was his own true way of saving all beings and society. He probably died in great satisfaction.

*Even for the Buddhas themselves,
During a million aeons,
Or even a hundred million aeons,
It would be hard to express all their virtues.*

It sounds like old-fashioned morals, but it is truly that way of not making our ego most precious. It is embarrassing and it will eventually be gone, but our own characteristics are not who we are. They are different in each person that is not the one eternal life, that is what we have to realize and see that clearly and then we can become an eternal true person. We are to do this, and we have many aids to awaken to this and manifest the Truth.

Humans do many kinds of work and there are some who to work selling their bodies. But that does not mean that this person necessarily thinks that is a good job. Instead, they can be damaged all the way in to their mind. What has to be done to help them is to see their state of mind, to guide them, and heighten their character. This is also the work of the Bodhisattva. In Shinshu near Lake Suwako there is the Onsenji Temple. There was a priest named Ganryoku who one day he went to the Headquarters Temple of Myoshinji on business and on his way home he went to Otsu. There is no place quite like that now, back then they used to strongly draw people in, they'd pull in guests and give them pillow play. He passed through that seductive town not knowing anything about it and he was called to by the women who all called for him to stop and join them. Now, he thought it was so kind that even though it was still light out, he went in and they kept bringing tea and food and sake. Then they told him that he had to buy a girl, but he could not imagine what that meant, to buy a girl? So he asked and he

was told that when he put out the money she would do anything he wanted her to do, and he said, "What?"

Then, "Since I am staying over. Here, I will buy all of them." All of the whole group came to his room and he said to them all, "I paid and bought you all so you have to do what I tell you to do."

He took a calligraphy of Jizo Bodhisattva out of his luggage and then, he put that up in the tokonoma and took out incense and lit that, saying. "Everyone, please come over here and recite 'namu enmei jizo gangyoku bosatsu ganno bosatsu.' They all did prostrations and bowed. Usually, they would play the shamisen and sing and here they were being told to pray to the Buddha.

At the beginning they laughed as they saw his passion. They started to do the same thing and as they did, they did it over and over, they became more serious and involved in doing it. For more than an hour they all did prostrations and then the priest said fine I am finished now, everyone go downstairs and go to bed !

The next morning when the priest left the house, they all were so sorry to see him go! They had been taught to fold their hands and pray to the Buddha for the first time in their whole lives. This thankfulness! There had never been anything like that given them their whole lives. They all saw him off to the very edge of the town. It was truly this way. If our mind is pure, then from that day the whole world becomes the Pure Land, the willow's green branches are the very form of Kwan Yin and sound of the pine wind is the teaching of the Buddha. If we awaken to the True Nature, then just as we are is the Pure Land. This is what is every day's fine life, the Buddha's Way in living this every day life.

"This very place is the land of lotuses this very body is the body of the Buddha."

When we are clear in our mind then this very place is the Pure Land, and if we can realize this we have nothing more to seek and this is the world of the Bodhisattva.

*Except for some inferior living beings,
Without any intelligence at all,
Is there anyone with any discernment
Who, having heard this teaching,
Would not wish for the supreme enlightenment?*

In this way Vimalakirtis' dharma teaching continues freely and eternally. Vimalakirti looking at people's suffering directly, without taking his eye off it. While pulling along very painful karma, we still have to continue to live. Vimalakirti sees as deep as he possibly can to see this whole picture not in a conceptual 'way of the Bodhisattva'.

Consider those who live at the very bottom level of society. In what way can we bring them the truth and liberate them. To go to those stratum, not guarding our own world; but to teach that truth, there is the way of the Bodhisattva.

June 2006, #110
To liberate others even before being liberated our-

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

June	17-23 Kosesshin	November
5-11 Osesshin	28-3 Sept Kosesshin	7-11 Kosesshin
16-22 Kosesshin		15-21 Osesshin
26-1 July Kosesshin	September	25-29 Kosesshin
	8-12 Kosesshin	December
July	17-20 Kosesshin	4-11 Rohatsu
4-10 Osesshin	24-30 Osesshin	15-21 Osesshin
15-21 Kosesshin		24-28 Kosesshin
26-30 Kosesshin		
	October	
August	5-11 Kosesshin	
6-10 Kosesshin	17-23 Osesshin	
	26-30 Kosesshin	

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