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The Dharma-Door of Nonduality

Then, the Licchavi Vimalakirti asked those bodhisattvas, “Good sirs, please explain how the bodhisattvas enter the Dharma-door of nonduality!”

The bodhisattva Dharmavikurvana declared, “Noble sir, production and destruction are two, but what is not produced and does not occur cannot be destroyed. Thus the attainment of the tolerance of the birthlessness of things is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Srigandha declared, “‘I’ and ‘mine’ are two. If there is no presumption of a self, there will be no possessiveness. Thus, the absence of presumption is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Srikuta declared, “‘Defilement’ and ‘purification’ are two. When there is thorough knowledge of defilement, there will be no conceit about purification. The path leading to the complete conquest of all conceit is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Bhadrajyotis declared, “‘Distraction’ and ‘attention’ are two. When there is no distraction, there will be no attention, no mentation, and no mental intensity. Thus, the absence of mental intensity is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Subahu declared, “‘Bodhisattva-spirit’ and ‘disciple-spirit’ are two. When both are seen to resemble an illusory spirit, there is no bodhisattva-spirit, nor any disciple-spirit. Thus, the sameness of natures of spirits is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Animisa declared, “‘Grasping’ and ‘nongrasping’ are two. What is not grasped is not perceived, and what is not perceived is neither presumed nor repudiated. Thus, the inaction and noninvolvement of all things is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Sunetra declared, “‘Uniqueness’ and ‘characterlessness’ are two. Not to presume or construct something is neither to establish its uniqueness nor to establish its characterlessness. To penetrate the equality of these two is to enter nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Tisya declared, “‘Good’ and ‘evil’ are two. Seeking neither good nor evil, the understanding of

the nonduality of the significant and the meaningless is the entrance into nonduality.”

The bodhisattva Simha declared, “‘Sinfulness’ and ‘sinlessness’ are two. By means of the diamond-like wisdom that pierces to the quick, not to be bound or liberated is the entrance into nonduality.”

Now we finally enter the part of the Vimalakirti Sutra, The Dharma Door of Nonduality, considered to be the most important section of the whole of the Vimalakirti Sutra. Here enter thirty-one Bodhisattvas, and each and every one of them has a discovery to share.

Up until this point it has been Vimalakirti and Manjusri, with an occasional appearance by Shariputra, playing the role of a bad person. Now, many Bodhisattvas are coming in rows to see Vimalakirti and each is speaking their own lines. In terms of opera or theatre, we could call this the climax of the play. All of the characters state their own positions.

This word, nonduality, or “not two” is an important point in Buddhism; that we may think that some one thing is two not one, and those two things can at any time become one thing. We live in a world of differences and discrimination and because of that our abilities are realized and expressed. But this fact also causes conflicts, the world’s twisting and sinking also arises here.

The unique flavor of the Orient is found here. One reason for this is that agricultural people all grow their food in one big garden. We all share and help give life to each other, this is the agricultural peoples’ wisdom.

When we cultivate a garden we cannot keep growing only eggplants. Eggplants, cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers leave certain toxins in the soil so they cannot be grown continually. If in the eggplant garden we then plant beans, the toxins after many years will be gone and then again eggplants can be grown. Anyone who has ever grown a garden they will understand this right away.

There is also a most natural way of growing things. If we pull out the weeds and try to just grow rice we need lots of fertilizer and weed-killer. Instead we should know

which plants are the healthy supportive ones that make the ground soft and we plant the rice with them. Then the growing rice and the weeds support each other. It is not about taking away bad things and leaving good things. Too include them all, and also make use of the bad things, this is the way of those who raise a garden, of the agriculturalists. To use them both is the way of the not-two.

Parents are parents and children are children, they are not one and the same. The parent raises the child, the children learn from the parents, the parents also learn from the children and the role of child and parent becomes one. It is the same with a couple together they are one.

In accordance with the natural world we evolve and so we have to protect it and help it, we cannot do it harm or we lose our connection to the natural world. Today's world is like that. Today with everything having been done in a way that humans think is best for themselves, the environment is now being destroyed.

Humans and Buddhas are one and the same, humans and Buddhas are not two separate things. Sentient beings' liberation IS Buddhas' wisdom and with that wisdom deluded beings are awakened, they are not two separated things.

As another example we can consider a mirror that has something come in front of it. The mirror becomes the thing exactly as it is, there is nothing else there. But because there is nothing in the mirror, it reflects whatever comes in front of it exactly as it is. That which reflects and that which is being reflected are one and the same. While the things are relative, that which is reflected and that which is doing the reflecting are existing are one and the same. Here is their value and their not-twoness.

If a child sits in front of the mirror, the mirror becomes a child. If an old person sits in front of a mirror it becomes an old person. A poor person appears and the mirror becomes a poor person. That which comes in front of the mirror and that which the mirror reflects, are the same. And if we are not caught on our own small self-oriented opinions then we also will become whatever comes in front of us.

Even though a mirror is a material thing, if we are in this same state of mind then the world is no longer dualistic and relative. A non-dualistic world can then come into being. An old person sits in front of us and we say, "you must be very lonely, and your body is limited now, that must be so challenging."

All of you have this life in a world of dualistic thoughts and discriminating thinking, but how can we live from that place of great wisdom? How do we enter that

state of mind? I want to ask you this now. This is what Vimalakirti says to the bodhisattvas. Then, the Licchavi Vimalakirti asked those bodhisattvas, "Good sirs, please explain how the bodhisattvas enter the Dharma-door of nonduality!"

"The bodhisattva Dharmavikurvana (Hojizai) declared, "Noble sir, production and destruction are two, but what is not produced and does not occur cannot be destroyed. Thus the attainment of the tolerance of the birthlessness of things is the entrance into nonduality."

Then for the first time all of the bodhisattvas spoke what they realized. First was Hojizai bodhisattva. Vimalakirti borrows the voices of the bodhisattvas in order to teach us the truth of the not-two.

"Noble sir, production and destruction are two, but what is not produced and does not occur cannot be destroyed. Thus the attainment of the tolerance of the birthlessness of things is the entrance into nonduality."

In our world we see birth and death as two separate things. Things which are born will, without exception, die. Because there is being born, there is dying and because there is dying, living becomes important. Our world is dualistic in having birth and death. The dharma has originally no birth and no death and that is the true dharma of mind. Our true nature is without birth or death. Master Bankei said, "Humans true nature is like a mirror. When something comes, it shows in the mirror, when it goes it goes from the mirror. Yet, when something comes nothing is born and then when it goes nothing in the mirror is gone." No birth, no death, a mirror is like this. It is the pure mind which goes beyond birth and death, a mind of huge love, working beyond any division between self and other. This is satori as they call it in Buddhism and this Self is one with the Buddha, one with God, it is this Self that is eternal.

In this way the true dharma is unborn and without death. Since it is like a mirror, our true nature shows whatever comes it and when that object goes, it fades. Never increasing, nor dying, nor disappearing, from the origin there is not one single thing. This is the true nature and to directly know this is the dharma. All is embraced, here is one great love, in the not-two and being that love is to live eternally. In this way the first bodhisattva spoke, manifesting his deep enlightenment.

Shiki Masaoka was a famous haiku poet. When he was dying he wrote the poem,

The gourd flowers bloom
but look-here lies
a phlegm-stuffed Buddha!
It was himself who was dying yet he looked at that
objectively.

The gourd flowers bloom
but look-here lies
a phlegm-stuffed Buddha!

The very same person who had written the haiku, that dharma mind beyond birth and death that can look at birth and death and see it as a reflection, this is the state of mind of realization and liberation. We see that self which is influenced by birth and death, but see it from a place that is beyond birth and death. A place that has gone beyond that which is dying, and is being seen by that which is seeing that which is dying. This place is not without the deep feeling of seeing death, of pain, of agony, and this place is also able to see clearly that form of oneself which is dying. He wrote the poem to express it in this other way.

There is an actuality, but do not be pinned down by that actuality. We have the circumstances of a physical body but we also are not drowning in the circumstances of the physical body. We are objectively experiencing from our place of wisdom. We see clearly and precisely, we all have this very high quality state of mind. This is our eternal Self that is beyond birth and death. This has to be said.

We are within the world of birth and death, yet are not caught in the world of birth and death, instead we have left them behind. The Buddha threw away everything in order to realize this state of mind, which is the eternal state of mind.

Yamaoka Tesshu, on his death bed

Tightening my abdomen
against the pain.
The caw of a morning crow.

He saw his dying very clearly and directly, this One Person Who Sees. This is the wisdom of one who has awakened to the Dharma.

Another poem by Saicho Myokonin,

I don't become the Buddha,
The Buddha becomes me.
Namu Amida Butsu
My dying has been taken away by Amida Buddha
I have forgotten death completely,
And the great joy after this.
When I repeat the name of Amida Buddha, I forgot
death. I have had death taken away by Amida
Buddha.
The funeral is over, in the morning when my eyes
awaken, today I am still alive!
I received today as well! Every day is a day which I
have been given!

This is not someone who trained himself then realized that state of mind. He simply forgot himself in playing in the world of Buddha. In this deepest belief it is the same as Zen and this ultimate place of breaking through

is the same when it is realized. It is that which throws away this world, and dives into the true world beyond life and death, there is the eternal truth beyond time and space, beyond life and death. That eternal life energy with its great love, there is no difference between self and other there, and always this comes forth. Here god and love, and buddha and compassion are one. In this place where nothing comes forth at all, this is the world of the not-two. In our daily life we have the constant awareness of the dualism of life and death as being two, but to see how there is also not-two there. We have to see it this way as well. We have to forget the difference between self and other completely or we cannot realize true peace of mind.

For realizing this directly, we do zazen, not getting caught on things and ideas or we fall into dualistic thinking. We go to the root, digging into that place of absolute mu. Then, to not hold on to that place, but to also go into that world of dualism, yet not be caught on that either. To know this wisdom we sit. The buddha when he saw the morning star, saw this mu and from here was born forth the whole universe. This was not a nihilistic mu but a mu that gave birth to all existence and the whole universe. To realize that mu is the source of all awareness and all mind.

“Noble sir, production and destruction are two, but what is not produced and does not occur cannot be destroyed. Thus the attainment of the tolerance of the birthlessness of things is the entrance into nonduality.”

The Buddha realized a newly born awareness. When he saw that morning star, there was no difference, no dualism, no name, no separation. He was shining. He was there in the sky. He saw that directly and his pure state of mind is the same as our source of mind. The mind of a baby is pure before any dualistic views set in and that is the source of our awareness. Where there is no difference between what sees and what is being seen, between self and star, self and others, this place is the true master to which the Buddha awakened. This is prior to any birth of an ego. When we realize this eternal Self, there is only one world and our true nature is love. We love all things, we feel that great love for all things and awakening to this, is awakening to true Buddhism.

Originally Buddhism is to let go of one's small self completely and love all in society. In this way of awakening to our clear nature, we vow that even before I am awakened I will first awaken all others. Let others be awakened first and it is fine if I come afterwards. Let others have that good fortune. This is awakening to our true nature, it is the actual expression of our original mind and the shortest way. If we awaken to this mind of awakening all others first, it is the same as satori itself. As it is written in the sutras, first commit to bring awakening to all others, and this is the awakening of

pure mind for all humankind.

Next we have the second bodhisattva speaking, "The bodhisattva Srigandha declared, ' "I" and "mine" are two. If there is no presumption of a self, there will be no possessiveness. Thus, the absence of presumption is the entrance into nonduality. ' "

He says this because there is ego, there is a body, and because there is a body there is an ego. In order to guard our body we need food and clothing, we need a house to live in and society comes from these needs. Because we have an ego we have an external world, because there is an "I" there is a world and because there is a world there is an "I".

This is the common way of seeing it but ego actually does not exist. Because we think there is a "me" the ego arises and when we realize that from the origin we do not exist, then ego can disappear. "I" and the external world become not-two. This is what bodhisattva Srigandha teaches, and this is also zazen, in the words of the Sixth Patriarch;

"Za of zazen is" To externally be bringing forth no thought to what we perceive", and Zen of zazen is "to be unmoved by anything within."

We have the forms of male and female, the forms of old and young, the forms of scholar and uneducated, the forms of poor or wealthy, forms of good and forms of bad. There are many forms and to separate from these forms and appearances is Zen.

If we think of ourselves as a terrible person and label ourselves in this way, wanting to get rid of ourselves, then we need to see, whether fine or terrible, that we are seeing it in a mirror. We are only something reflected in a mirror. If we are not caught on a form, then we are not moved around and can be objective and be in ongoing samadhi. To always live in samadhi is to not be caught on any form.

The Buddha-nature which is complete truth has no form, no substance, no appearance, and is not moved around by anything no matter what comes or goes. If we get caught on our form we are moved around by failure and success, praise and criticism. If, we go beyond the objective and subjective, then our mind is never upset. Our true and original mind is prior to experience, is pure awareness prior to any defilement, is originally clear and unmoved. We are pure and clear but we see the outside world and all kinds of thoughts rise up and our true mind, which is actually always like flowing clear water, stagnates when we get attached to external things. We need to see the outside world clearly but not be moved around by it. We stay empty minded and this is true Samadhi. We do zazen to learn how to do this.

It is not about putting a lid on the outside world, if we do that we cannot live, but no matter what anyone says to not be moved about, instead know the true depth of our mind. For this we do zazen and

"The bodhisattva Srigandha declared, " 'I' and 'mine' are two. If there is no presumption of a self, there will be no possessiveness. Thus, the absence of presumption is the entrance into nonduality."

"I" and "mine" are present because an "I" exists. If no "I" then duality does not arise and we are in the gate of non-duality. We have to cultivate Samadhi, to be always in samadhi we actualize the way of not -two.

Next, "The bodhisattva Srikuta declared, " 'Defilement' and 'purification' are two. When there is thorough knowledge of defilement, there will be no conceit about purification. The path leading to the complete conquest of all conceit is the entrance into nonduality."

The name of this Bodhisattva means the blink of an eye with a negating word so that the meaning becomes one who does not blink an eye. We connect to the outside world by experiencing with the five senses and the body's feeling. We perceive through the windows of the five senses and directly connect to this world.

To receive this or to not receive this? To receive this is to see with our eyes, and smell with our nose. Then there is to not see or to not hear, these are two: to receive and to not receive.

If we do not receive that is the dharma, if we look but don't receive it, it is the same as if we don't look. We see birds, rivers and mountains, but if we see without noting and being aware of seeing, it is the same as not seeing. If our eyes are seeing but not receiving it is the same as not seeing.

Daruma Daishi in his Ten Profound Precepts speaks of "Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the unattainable Dharma, not having thoughts of gaining is called the Precept of Not Stealing." Daruma Daishi is teaching that even if we do not steal something but we think of it as our own, it is the same as stealing. We think 'this' is mine, this MY house, this is MY money, this is MY work. In so many ways we think I did this! I made this much effort and in that act we bring awareness to a small self. We get attached to things and Daruma Daishi says this is the same thing as stealing.

While 'it' is our own thing if we do not think of it in that way, then that is the same as not being possessive. We care for it and do not think of it as something we possess. This is a healthy state of mind and in this way our world is born. If we are not attached to any thing we perceive and receive, then we do not take it nor throw it away. It is not about saying not to be

possessive, nothing so difficult as that. In this world, we see and we get deluded, we hear and we get deluded and so this world is called the six poisons. But neither is it about saying “don’t see, don’t hear, or else we just get more confused”. To say not to see, not to hear, is delusive, no such struggle is necessary. Rather realize that to receive and to not receive are not- two. This is zazen. This is prajna wisdom.

Our zazen is done and while we work, we don’t think we are working, while doing zazen, we forget our body and forget that we are doing zazen. We chant sutras and forget any idea of chanting or do samu and forget any ideas about doing samu and then we can see clearly and directly. It is not something so difficult as to say that zazen is to not move around at all, but if we sit quietly our mind will not be moved around and we will not be in duality. The world which is just as it is will be seen without deception or misunderstanding.

We always are seeing things from our own personal point of view and so we think we are an “I” which is in the center of everything. So when we see we do not see correctly, we misunderstand and get caught on a mistaken point of view. For example, when we are downtown to we meet someone, and that person doesn’t see us and walks by, we think we have been ignored. But objectively we need not think of it that way. Maybe we were ignored, maybe not ignored. No need to get upset about such a small thing but we are unable to see clearly at that moment.

But we do have this state of mind and have a hard time letting go of attachments and being quiet in mind. It is not about trying to be quiet, rather see things exactly as they are. Red things are red, black things are black, small things are small, big things are big, twisted things are twisted, and straight things are straight. We just see them exactly as they are. This is the world of samadhi, if we realize that then we will receive things as they should be received in each moment.

Just like a mirror reflecting, no matter what comes to it, the mirror does not have preferences but reflects innocently. If there is a dirty or clean thing coming in front of it, it does not change the mirror. When reflected, a big fire does not affect the mirror, nor does ice. When the next scenery comes, the ice and water are gone. In this same way our mind takes clearly what comes without having ideas of liking or not liking, then we can see things clearly. In each situation there is nothing left whatsoever. This is our true mind of not- two, not blinking, we see things without being deceived by phenomena. See each situation and phenomena without seeing and without trying not to see. To leave no traces is the ripened world of zazen. This is satori.

The fourth bodhisattva then comes forth; “The

bodhisattva Bhadradyotis declared, “ ‘Distraction’ and ‘attention’ are two. When there is no distraction, there will be no attention, no mentation, and no mental intensity. Thus, the absence of mental intensity is the entrance into nonduality.” He is the bodhisattva of abundant human quality and realizes it well. In the world, there is the world of material things and in this world there are clean things and dirty things, but a dirty thing is actually just a difference in time. The thing itself, in the moment has no quality of dirty or of pure. Such a comparison is only within human awareness. In the heart sutra it says “without birth, without death, without increase without decrease without defilement and without purity.” In this same way, if we focus on a thing and see its actual present moment without any past or future, there is no way to say it is pure or impure, dirty or clean. We see from the point of view of prajna wisdom. There is no such thing as two things, a dirty one and a clean one, that is only in our awareness.

We offer repentance for our errors, such as in the repentance gatha:

“All my ancient, twisted karma,
From beginningless greed, hate and delusion
Born of body, speech and mind,
I now fully avow”

In Buddhism, we have this way of repenting those things which we have done foolishly in the past. We confess the mistakes and unskillful behaviour and speak out clearly. In doing this, from our past confusion and delusion we again become clear mind. This is the important part of the confession. All religions hold this aspect of offering confession important. It cannot be just a regret for past mistakes or it is not true repentance. We have done these actions because we were deluded and confused so we have to return to the truth which is prior to that delusion and this is true actual confession of the true form.

The third Patriarch after Daruma Daishi was Kanchi Sosan Zenji. This patriarch suffered from bone pain from leprosy. In India it was taught that this human body is made of the four elements. Our hair and teeth and bones are of the earth element, our blood saliva and fluids are from the element of water. Our body’s warmth is from the element of fire and everything in us that is moving is of wind. We are made up of these four elements. These four gather and a human is born and from these four elements also come the one hundred sicknesses. For example, the wind element is sickness when things that should move don’t move such as face paralysis, nerve problems and arthritis or rheumatism.

So when the third patriarch to be, saw the second patriarch, he told him that he was sick with this incurable sickness and asked if it was happening to him due to his sins from a past life, and he asked him to please cure it.

To this the second patriarch said, "If you say you are suffering from sin, then put it out there and I will clear it up."

The third patriarch thought, and could not find any such thing, and could not put it out there even though he looked for it. He said there is nothing there to put out.

To this the second patriarch said, "If you cannot put it out there, then the sin is purified!"

The third patriarch was suddenly enlightened and became his successor and carried on his dharma teaching.

"The bodhisattva Bhadradyotis declared, " 'Distraction' and 'attention' are two. When there is no distraction, there will be no attention, no mentation, and no mental intensity. Thus, the absence of mental intensity is the entrance into nonduality."

There is nothing defiled, nor pure about our awareness and state of mind. There is no way to see it since from the origin, there is no such thing as 'defiled' nor is there 'pure'. The Sixth Patriarch said from the origin there is not one single thing, on what could some defilement alight? There is nothing to be defiled or pure. This is to see the world of nirvana, to see that from the origin there is no thing so there can be no dirty nor clean. This is the gate of not-two.

"The bodhisattva Bhadradyotis declared, " 'Distraction' and 'attention' are two. When there is no distraction, there will be no attention, no mentation, and no mental intensity. Thus, the absence of mental intensity is the entrance into nonduality." The formless repentance comes from here, this is saying our mind first has to be freed of its delusion, the idea of sin and of guilt. We have to let go of these deluded ideas. If we're told of dirt and purity we imagine there a past experience or some such thing as history. We have to clarify this and see the responsibility of our true form. Subjectively we may repent it, but if we really did something harmful to someone else just repenting may not cover it. We have to first admit to and repent for what we actually did and take that purified mind and with awareness of our past acts, we have to make efforts to resolve it. Our internal resolution has to be first made or the active resolution cannot be made.

Buddhism teaches the four infinite virtues which are: benevolence, the desire that one's own life make others happy; compassion, the desire that one's conduct remove others' pain; joy, the enjoyment of sight of those who have obtained happiness; and impartiality, the mind that has abandoned both the idea of revenge for injury inflicted by others and attachment to compensation for one's good deeds]. These four virtues

are the quality of the Buddha-nature.

We suffer from a delusion when we think that if something exists now it will always continue to exist. If we think this world is only for our happiness we will be confused, this is why the Buddha said to see this world as suffering. It is because it is transient that it is like this. But instead we have an upside down view.

If we see the world as suffering, we will not get caught on pleasures and will be able to see that an "I" is also only a temporary perception and has no fixed reality. Because we think it is a real substantial thing we hold on to an upside down view and feel we are more important than someone else.

The world is contradictory. If we think something is dirty then that is true for every thing. Everything is shiny when it is new, and then it gets dirty as it gets older and gets used. This is just like our body. We have eye gook, a snotty nose, our mouths drool and we have many, many impurities in all of our parts. We launder our clothes and bathe our body. It is true of all things in existence that as they get older they get used but that does not mean that used things are dirty and so bad, it is a given that by using things they will get dirty. Thinking that is bad is the confusion. We have the mistaken idea that it is bad that things are transient. But in fact, in this one instant we discover something from each thing and this point is more important than things being non-transient.

Pain is a given and to seek only for pleasure is a mistake. When we train deeply we see the true joy of things, that joy of wisdom beyond the ego. We see the Buddha-nature and its joy of awakened wisdom. In a life without this wisdom we are always misunderstanding others and Buddhism is seen as a very melancholy teaching. If we have the wisdom of seeing things as suffering, then we have the joy and amazement of realizing our Buddha-nature and this fact is very important.

We cannot think that since there is no such thing as an "I" we need no responsibility. Rather, we have the responsibility to take care of all the people and make efforts to build the Buddha Lands. With this knowing and while recognizing the world is impermanent, we still purify and clean and work to make each person's mind clear and bright.

Have this wisdom and then our impermanence and non ego will become a joy as we see that pain and impermanence are something not melancholy. To awaken to Buddha-nature is the greatest joy, without that we are truly unhappy. To be without responsibility because there is no ego is a big mistake. Do not see the world of Buddha-nature and its samadhi and responsibility in an upside down way. "The bodhisattva Bhadradyotis declared, " 'Distraction' and 'attention'

are two. When there is no distraction, there will be no attention, no mentation, and no mental intensity. Thus, the absence of mental intensity is the entrance into nonduality." The wisdom of this bodhisattva is to awaken to the wisdom of mind that is not confused and with that to see the phenomena of this world, to see being and impermanence as not-two.

The bodhisattva Animisa declared, " 'Grasping' and 'nongrasping' are two. What is not grasped is not perceived, and what is not perceived is neither presumed nor repudiated. Thus, the inaction and noninvolvement of all things is the entrance into nonduality."

This is how the fifth bodhisattva expresses his enlightenment.

This bodhisattva says we must not be moved around by the outside world, nor by being dualistic within. If we are not moved around outside we are not moved around inside. If we are not moved around then no duality arises and we can be in that state of mind of not-moved-around.

The Buddha described this very meticulously in the Yuikyogyo Sutra (Sutra of the Last Discourse), where he wrote that if we are moved around by things in an outside world it is because of the five roots of our senses. It is as if there are five windows and these five connect us to the external world. To connect to a world means that we know the joy of seeing, the joy of hearing, the joy of knowing fragrances and flavors and feelings. In this way we are connected to the external world and our life energy takes this form.

This would be fine if it worked simply and naturally, but we get attached to it and in accordance with what we see, hear and taste, our mind gets confused and upset and we fabricate thoughts. When lose track of our humanity and objectivity our society does not function right, and humans destroy each other from these deluded perceptions. The five desires the Buddha listed are the desires for sex, food, possessions, fame, and sleep.

If we cannot be the joy of natural being, then we get attached and our life becomes confused. We end up hurting people, killing people, disrespecting them for our own satisfaction and of course from this behaviour, evil happens in the world. People even end up dying from their own mistaken behaviour. Truly, losing our natural joy ends up becoming something which sends us to the hells of hungry hosts and angry demons. We have to align our mind well so that this does not happen. Buddha said to align our five roots, to not let them be however they want to be, or we can lose our life and lose the best possible thing, the teaching of wisdom for liberating all humans.

By grasping we are moved around by things in the external world. We are not just seeing and hearing and smelling and tasting and feeling. As we see, as we hear, as we smell, as we taste, as we feel, these are all tools to be used. There is really nothing that moves our awareness around, but along with this phenomenal world our awareness arises, and that is called a mind-moment. The five senses are moved around by our awareness. Our awareness cannot exist without these five senses because if the windows are closed there is no consciousness. With the windows open we perceive and then we grasp. Because we seek after something we grasp and get moved around by the roots of our senses. Our mind is moved around when the five senses and their roots are touched. So we have to make the effort to align them well.

The buddha said we should be afraid of the mind as if it held poisonous serpent, wild ferocious beasts or a gang of thieves. In one mind-moment we may even lose our life because of these things, these ways our mind acts. That which should be the joy of being alive becomes as confused as if it is these terrifying examples. This same mind as the mind of the Buddha can also perform in this way. If we don't align it, we lose that excellent functioning of mind.

It is about what are we attached to, what we see, what we hear, what we smell, what we taste, our five desires. Our awareness gets caught and we are as if we have fallen into a hole. We lose all of it, our life, and our Buddha-nature. To not be attached to anything, nor be caught with our wild desires moving us around though our five senses, we have to keep well aligned. We have to have that master clearly at hand. "If we are truly the master in every situation, then everywhere we are is the truth." If our master is clear then no confusion can ensue.

Our motivation, which is used by this true master IS our awareness so that has to be the true master that can align our Buddha-nature very well. Buddha-nature does not have a fixed form, moving and not moving, both of these worlds are involved in Buddha-nature. They are both phenomena. But it is not about saying, don't see, don't hear, don't smell, don't taste, don't feel, this is not the point. Nor is it that moving is bad and only being still is good, or we lose all the value of our abilities and movements. Whether moving and not moving, if we get caught, on them that is confusion. We have to see beyond both motion and stillness. What is important here is that we do not get caught on the phenomena of being still or on the phenomena of moving.

As Master Rinzai said, " Don't continue [thoughts] that have already arisen and don't let those that haven't yet arisen be aroused. Just this will be worth far more to you than a ten years' pilgrimage.

In our mind, that which whispers “a hot day is hot”, is a natural mind moment. But we always add on thoughts of wanting, of holding on to something and that is no longer a present mind but a grasping mind. Just stay in this very moment’s mind. But before there is even a necessary mind moment to bring forth, we bring forth unnecessary mind moments. Now! Now! Now! Life is alive but if we add our grasping then we are not pure in mind. We have to have it be just as it is and our deeply, clearly seeing eye can then function. The bodhisattva Animisa declared, “ ‘Grasping’ and ‘nongrasping’ are two. What is not grasped is not perceived, and what is not perceived is neither presumed nor repudiated. Thus, the inaction and noninvolvement of all things is the entrance into nonduality.”

As the Sixth Patriarch has defined it, “Our sect is having no polluted mind moments, no attachment to form or ego, and no attachment to location but to be always flowing and not stagnant.” Simply put, not think about things that do not need thinking about. This is not the same as not thinking anything at all

It is not about not seeing, not hearing, not smelling and not tasting. This will not manifest humans worth and value. Rather, to not add on extra thoughts while doing all of these with all of our senses. Humans are always thinking about so many things that they don’t need to think and then get caught on them.

If we just think what we need to think and then move along then “realizing the thought of no thought whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma.” We speak and are not even aware we are speaking, we laugh and are not even aware we are laughing, we sit and are not even aware we are sitting, we move and are not even aware we are moving.

Zazen is not about getting caught on not- thinking either, but to not think unnecessary things. If our mind is well aligned then, we simply don’t think things we don’t need to think about. This is the healthy way of mind, just perceiving what we meet and our mind not getting caught on anything. Not sticking to anything, always quiet and the objective eye seeing clearly. This is not some material form of an eye of Buddha-nature but to see without being stuck on anything we see. This quiet way of mind is empty-mindedness and this is non dualistic. Our wisdom works from here and our best capabilities are made use of with this wisdom. This is the gate of non-duality.

Next is the bodhisattva Sunetra who declared, “ ‘Uniqueness’ and ‘characterlessness’ are two. Not to presume or construct something is neither to establish its uniqueness nor to establish its characterlessness. To penetrate the equality of these two is to enter non-duality.”

We each have the appearance of being a male or a female, along with various other appearances, such as healthy or sick, but our truest quality is that we are always changing.

Therefore we are not able to say we are only this form or that appearance. We are always changing and above and beyond that we are always existing. As it says in the Heart Sutra, “that which is form is emptiness, that which is emptiness is form”.

Our body has a shape and there are sixty billion cells that make up our body. So many billions of cells and they all came from one original cell and its genes. They all came into being, and then became so many because we need so many kinds of cells to function. But that very first one cell was equal and the same and from it came all of them. The bone cells, the hair cells, the blood cells and skin cells had to appear as different forms or we cannot live. Our cells are always being born and dying so they are empty, our true nature is without a fixed substance.

Or putting it yet a different way, we are not a male or a female, we are not rich or poor, we are not a scholar or uneducated, we are not young or old, the actuality may appear to be that we are a man or a woman and in the world we have a body and are healthy or not healthy. We live in this form and while we are without a fixed absolute form and are actually no thing at all, we do have many borrowed forms with which we live our life. But aside from these borrowed forms there is not something else that we are. Our temporary form is our true form and our phenomenal form is our true form as well.

Because it is a phenomena there is no reason to make it seem like something foolish and insignificant. We respect our transient life, this life that we cannot live twice, which we cannot do over again. We have to live with every last bit of ourselves. This very day that will never come again, so we have to live intensely.

A cicada shell;
it sang itself
utterly away

The cicada will soon not see the scenery any longer, the voice of the cicada, how transient but that cicada expresses its life so fully. It spends seven to ten years in the ground and then finally comes above ground, develops wings and is alive in a new form. Then it dies after only one week. It is not at all complaining about how it is about to die, how all of the last seven years of suffering were so difficult. It does not complain or moan that it is going to die soon, rather it puts every bit of itself into its singing and there is a lot to learn from that earnestness.

A cicada shell;

it sang itself
utterly away

We see that and Basho is also deep and sharp to see that we have to respect this. That is the way he saw and wrote about it. Basho did not write a death poem. He said today's poem is tomorrow's last poem. He wrote this way and did not write any special poem for his dying. Everyday he threw his whole life into it, one poem at a time, and that is where his truth of life is. We can discover it here.

Master Hakuin Zenji said, "Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be anywhere else."

In this full tautness we find the way of living our life. When we are in the zendo our everyday life is to become it all completely in the zendo. In the hondo we have no thoughts of why are we doing sutras or chanting, we simply become it completely. We do the work and become the work completely, not thinking about why are we doing this work anyway? Simply picking the weeds, or cleaning the garden, doing it constantly and silently and this is the life energy of the person of training. This is our base, we eat our meals and we eat with gratitude and joy, our everyday life is that we are alive with our whole being and die with our whole being. As to our true nature we don't mentally think it is without a form. We are each that world which we have been given and living that wholeheartedly is our life energy's function. It is like an actor on stage who does their part with everything they are. They don't just pick the roles they feel like doing. Everyone on the stage has to perform one drama together. Whether we like or dislike parts of it is not the point. For all the parts to become one drama is where the meaning comes in the role. Everyone comes together and makes one drama cooperatively and our life is that way too. We all want to be the star but we do what has to be done and this is the truth of our daily life. We laugh and cry, making all kinds faces and that is that moment's truth. That day, that day: that place, that place, in our life we are full of this truth and this is the world of satori.

The bodhisattva Subahu declared, " 'Bodhisattva-spirit' and 'disciple-spirit' are two. When both are seen to resemble an illusory spirit, there is no bodhisattva-spirit, nor any disciple-spirit. Thus, the sameness of natures of spirits is the entrance into non-duality. "

This bodhisattva is telling us that these two minds are not such that one is for its own good fortune and one is for society's good fortune, they may seem contradictory but if our mind is empty there is only that which comes into our mind and all of it is like a phantom. Then there is neither bodhisattva spirit nor disciple spirit and this non-dual entrance is the answer.

The mind of bodhisattva seems to be the opposite of the mind of the disciple spirit but in the sutras it says that within each of us is the mind of great compassion. Great compassion has both the aspect of taking away pain and also the aspect of giving great compassion. To want to offer liberation of all suffering of all people, we all have this kind of compassion from birth. This is Buddha-nature and to express that compassion is to give rise to our bodhisattva mind. On the buddha's way, to awaken this mind for all humans is most important. Awakening to our mind of bodhisattva is of greatest importance. This means that we let others go first and be realized first. This is the Buddha mind and if we give rise to this state of mind it is as if we are already liberated. If we have our direction planned clearly we will without fail realize it. If we have that vow established it is the same as it being completed. But humans all have their own individual habits so it is not so easy to fulfill. We do zazen and cleanse our habits and become that state of mind prior to what has those habits. We do not work for our own happiness but for all beings and then we manifest that. Our arising bodhisattva mind is no mistake.

We can see zen training easily in the ten oxherding pictures. It divides training into ten stages with pictures and poems. It goes from from

1. The search for the bull,
2. Discovering the footprints
3. Perceiving the bull
4. Catching the bull
5. Taming the bull
6. Riding the bull home
7. The bull transcended
8. Both bull and self transcended
9. Reaching the source
10. In the world

While there is still an idea of satori, or ox, or if there is such a thing as thinking there is a 'me' that is enlightened, it is not yet the real thing. We finally arrive at being one with the truth, we looked for it from so far away and now we forget ourselves and become that truth. This is shown in number 8, this is the ultimate form, a great circle. This is the place of nothing at all, both bull and self transcended. We open our clearly seeing eyes and receive the whole universe in that way of seeing and we do have to experience this.

All paths and religions use this circle where all is one, I am one with god, am one with everything from the origin the brighter virtue we all are endowed with is returned to in this, or the bright mirror like mind we have, to awaken to it, in this way this circle is showing the truth of all religions.

But that beautiful mind like a mirror, if we open our deeply seeing eye then the world right in front of us,

the high mountain, and low water and red flower and green willow and the birds voice, we can receive these all as “everyplace is the land of lotuses”, we realize this directly.

If we see all of the ten oxherding pictures then we see that in zen training if we only complete through number eight we would be only fulfilling for our own satisfaction. It would be all about satisfying our ego. These eight stages are also part of truth but if we sit down at this point, can this be the real goal of Buddhism? The buddha’s practicing finishing with personal satisfaction, is that really okay? Where there is no satori, no confusion, no awakened, nor ignorant? We have to realize this aspect, also, and then proceed to number ten where we go into the marketplace. Only then is the true goal of Buddhism realized. I believe only there is the true meaning and worth of our zazen. This is where it manifests and the mahayana is only manifested there. Otherwise, zen is turning its back on the world and we are only satisfying ourselves.

First to awaken to our clear Buddha-nature, and then to offer it to all beings in the world, by deepening our zazen wisdom and then wherever we are if we continue those efforts we can know this wisdom and we can know that we are always at one with society and this is the gate of not-two. Making efforts we realize that we have this wisdom and it has been with us ongoing from the origin. We can deepen that state of mind to know this the true religion and truth of all religion’s teaching.

In this way if we vow for our own good fortune, we do realize this vow as but one aspect and then that mind is not left at that, but is raised as the bodhisattva mind, from within ourselves that mind of compassion then urges us to awaken all beings. This is the entrance to the gate of the non-duality. We don’t need to do something first, we are born with it.

The bodhisattva Tisya declared, “ ‘Good’ and ‘evil’ are two. Seeking neither good nor evil, the understanding of the nonduality of the significant and the meaningless is the entrance into nonduality.”

This eighth bodhisattva is the one who speaks about good and bad not being two. We often see ourselves having a mind moving between ideas of a good mind versus a bad mind. We are always battling within between those two. We may either look at this as a horrible world, thinking that it is better for this terrible world to disappear completely. We also have a mind that says, “let’s work hard, we have to make efforts and improve this world with our deep faith and strong vow.” We are always battling inside like this so if we take the good side we make a good statement and if we choose the bad we fall into the bad conditions. If we do something good but then think how good a thing we did, then we have only chosen the good side and that

does not get rid of the dualism. We have to not have any remaining idea about whether we do good or bad. We have to get rid of all ideas of both good and bad.

This then, does not mean that people can just do anything they want to do, that is a big mistake. Because we do not know our basic, clear mind but only know a dualistic mind. If we think that if we don’t think about good and bad we will do terrible things, it is because we look at the world through a dualistic view. We have to know the true original clear mind and then we know that even if we are told to do some thing wrong we cannot. That is our true nature. Even if we are not told to do good things we will naturally do good things, that is human nature.

Everyone is headed in the right direction and wants to evolve, this is true for all existence, we cannot misunderstand this, but we get confused and think of ourselves as a self which is separated from others and society and go a personal way and get separated from what is the evolving best for everyone.

When the young man who became the Sixth Patriarch was only 24 he was enlightened while training with the Fifth Patriarch, Goso Gunin Zenji. When the Sixth Patriarch was selling firewood he heard chanting at the home of a rich customer. “Abiding in no place, awakened mind arises.”

This mind which is not caught anywhere, he realized directly when heard that one sentence. He then went to the monastery of the Fifth Patriarch and realized the marrow of this truth with him, and was deeply enlightened.

But the Sixth Patriarch, Eno, was from the south of China. People from the south were thought of as barbarians. Because of this the Fifth Patriarch told him to go back to the south as soon as possible, to hurry south, because people of the north were very proud. If people found out he was the one who had received the transmission of the Dharma, those of the north would want to kill him and the dharma line would be cut. His teacher told him to go home and wait for the right time to express the truth of the dharma.

He went quickly to the south and seven hundred people from the monastery all chased after him when they heard that he had received the lineage transmitted from Daruma Daishi. They chased after him to get back the robe and bowls of Daruma Daishi.

‘Among them there was a monk named Enmyo. He was a general of the fourth rank in lay life. His manner was rough and his temper hot. Of all the pursuers, he was the most vigilant in search of me. When he was about to overtake me, I threw the robe and begging bowl on a rock, saying,

"This robe is nothing but a symbol. What is the use of taking it away by force?"

I then hid myself. When he got to the rock, he tried to pick them up, but found he could not. Then he shouted out,

"I come for the dharma, not for the robe."

Whereupon I came out from my hiding place and squatted on the rock. He made obeisance and said,

"Teach me, please."

"Since the object of your coming is the dharma," said I, "refrain from thinking of anything. I will then teach you."

When he had done this for a considerable time, I said,

"When you are thinking of neither good nor evil, at that particular moment, Venerable Sir, what is your original face?"

As soon as he heard this he at once became enlightened. But he further asked,

"Are there any other secret teachings?"

"What I can tell you is not secret," I replied. "If you turn your light inwardly, you will find what is esoteric within you."

"In spite of my staying at the mountain of the Fifth Patriarch," said he, "I did not realise my true nature. Now thanks to your guidance, I know it as a water-drinker knows how hot or how cold the water is. You are now my teacher." '

There was one disciple, a major general originally, Enmyo was his name, he was very strong and soon came to the place where he found the Sixth Patriarch, that was at Daiyurei.

Eno knew he could not escape and he put the bowls and robe on a stone where they were obvious and he hid in some weeds. When Enmyo found these he knew that this was what he had chased after and tried to lift them up, when the Sixth Patriarch said, these are the truth, you cannot lift them by force. If you try by force, they will not move. Enmyo tried and tried but they would not move, they would not budge, he was in great terror and sweating all over and then he said to Eno that he did not come there for those things, he wanted to open his mind to the true dharma. He said it was for that he had practiced long years. Since the Sixth Patriarch had received the transmission of this truth, he asked him to please first save him.

When he said this, the Sixth Patriarch answered him, "If you are truly here for the dharma then throw away everything. The dharma is where you have thrown away everything, without any idea of how you are so famous or great, of how long you have been practicing, those are all made up things. Throw them all away and if you judge me as being barbarian because I am from the south those also are all thoughts that prevent the dharma from entering. Just as you were when you were

born and empty minded, a clear mind, become that and then I can teach you the dharma.

Here Enmyo was probably deepening his mind for a moment. Enmyo was then liberated in his mind from all of what he had been attached to, face and his feeling all changed and Eno saw that and he said to him,

"Before any idea of good or bad is brought up, what is your original face even before you were born?"

"Before any idea of good or bad, with no judging whatsoever, how is your essence at that moment?"

At that moment he must have ripened in his karma but everything he had been attached to fell away, sweat poured from every pore and with tears of joy prostrated and said,

"Thank you so much, since now I see very well, now I know what the mind of truth is, thank you for your truly deep words, but is there any other profound thing which there is to learn?"

Having been asked this, the Sixth Patriarch said that "there is no secret here. What I told you is just what a human mind is, if you have really returned to the true mind, then if there is a secret it is in you. There is not one word which can be said, not even that there is no mind that is not a secret at all."

Hearing this then for the first time Enmyo realized what the true mind is without any conditions or characteristics. I trained for so long with Goso Gunin and never could realize this true mind, but now with you, it is as if drinking clear water for the first time I could see what the true face is, please make me your disciple."

The Sixth Patriarch said, "No, you say that you just now realized it but that is because of your long years of training with Goso Gunin and that just has ripened. You are the Fifth Patriarch's disciple. Return to him and help him and polish that state of mind and continue your training.

The bodhisattva Simha declared, " 'Sinfulness' and 'sinlessness' are two. By means of the diamond-like wisdom that pierces to the quick, not to be bound or liberated is the entrance into nonduality."

Crime and merit appear to be completely opposite but if we see only the form which is manifested and decide from that then we see only from good or bad points of view. We have to see the original form that prior to this. For example the criminals, of course what they do is bad, murdering and stealing, these cannot be allowed in the society, but in war, these are behaviours which are approved of and this is confusing for everyone. If

a war happens then many crimes are approved, even murdering people is praised. If we then make a society where it is a good thing to kill people, this confuses our true mind. Also in society criminals are never ending because our attachments, and desires and deluded ways are allowed and permitted and so more and more crimes are committed.

When Daruma Daishi came for the first time to China and finally the Emperor Wu, Wu asked him, "I have made so many temple and copied sutras and ordained so many monks, made so many temples- big ones and cultivated many, many monks, what will the merit of that?"

Daruma Daishi said "no merit".

This was a very plain, an obvious thing. It is fine to gather merit but if we get caught on our own gathering of merit then our original mind gets bound down and tied up.

We get caught on an idea of how we have done something good and we decorate ourselves with that and this is a big mistake. Of course it may seem that we have merit, but if we are proud of that, it becomes the opposite of merit.

There are many kinds of crime in the world and we cannot think of them as merely phenomena. In each case the society's insecurity and dark impoverished mind are being revealed and we have to see this clearly. The same criminal has a mind like that but all crimes are not the same, and cannot be approved of by us, the same as in war, but if the criminals are looked at in a dualistic way and point of view this is also a great big mistake. We have to see the most original mind.

"Myoe no Shonin from Togano was taking a walk and looked at the small purple violet at the bottom of the fence post and made a gassho to it and his tears fell. His disciple asked him what he was crying to and what he was crying for, what are you praying to? He answered," this deep purple violet- who has put it here to bloom? Who dyed it this beautiful color? Who gave it this exquisite form? Why is it blooming here? There is something in this flower that human's wisdom cannot even begin to touch. How can one possibly not pray to this amazing flower?"

Enyo Shonin picked up a scrap of paper that had fallen on the floor in the hallway, a small piece of paper and he said, "this, is the mind of the Buddha."

Ekoin no Gyoko Shoin, an ancient monk of Edo was praying to a beggar at the headquarter temple, saying, "They are truly honest and good, if they had a bad mind they could not be a beggar and let everyone insult and put them down, so they are all good people. How

can we not gassho to them?"

Kitano Gempo Zenji had been requested to give a talk in a prison, and he could only gassho and pray to them, saying, "You are all Buddhas but because of your bad karma you have to struggle so hard in here". He became speechless and cried and cried. All the prisoners were stunned and so thankful for this wonderful teaching that they were so deeply impressed they just stood there crying to.

This is not about the stage of prisoners or beggars or flowers, but about the mind of the person who sees like this. No matter what flower it is that is being seen, it is its absolute worth that is being seen, even if it is a beggar it is not about putting him down, but beyond mental understanding to see that person's true value. That Buddha-nature. We are all missing the mind that can see that today, and can only see the good and bad in the world.

This is what the bodhisattva here is saying. Of course wars and crimes are bad but why do they happen? It is because people do not know their true mind and great spaciousness within. If we can see this then we can see that they have never lost this and even the beggar is the same mind as that of the buddha.

This world is always being divided into good and bad, to see this from our undivided, not-two state of mind prior to crimes and war, to realize this clarity, this mind is what is being written here.

Sogenji 2007 Sesshin Schedule, for information contact sogenji@po.harenet.ne.jp

January
6-10 kosesshin
15-21 osesshin
24-28 kosesshin

April
4-10 kosesshin
16-22 osesshin
25-29 kosesshin

July
4-10 osesshin
15-21 kosesshin
26-30 kosesshin

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

February
1-4 kosesshin
7-13 osesshin
18-24 kosesshin

May
4-10 kosesshin
16-22 osesshin
26-6/1 kosesshin

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

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

March
1-7 kosesshin
12-18 osesshin
23-29 kosesshin

June
6-12 osesshin
16-22 kosesshin
26-30 kosesshin

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

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

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