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Teachings of the Vimalakirti Sutra

The Buddha then said to the merchant's son, Sudatta (Zentoku), "Noble son, go to the Licchavi Vimalakirti to inquire about his illness".

Sudatta replied, "Lord, I am indeed reluctant to go to that good man to inquire about his illness. Why? Lord, I remember one day in my father's house when, in order to celebrate a great sacrifice, I was bestowing gifts upon religious devotees, Brahmans, the poor, the wretched, the unfortunate, beggars, and all the needy. On the seventh and final day of this great sacrifice, the Licchavi Vimalakirti came there and said, 'Merchant's son, you should not celebrate a sacrifice in this way. You should celebrate a Dharma-sacrifice. What is the use of the sacrifice of material things?'

"I then asked him, 'How does one give a Dharma-sacrifice?'

"He replied, 'A Dharma-sacrifice is that which develops living beings without beginning or end, giving gifts to them all simultaneously. What is that? It consists of the great love which is consummated in enlightenment; of the great compassion which is consummated in the concentration of the holy Dharma on the liberation of all living beings; of the great joy which is consummated in the awareness of the supreme happiness of all living beings; and of the great equanimity

which is consummated in concentration through knowledge.

" The Dharma-sacrifice consists of the transcendence of generosity, which is consummated in peacefulness and self-discipline; of the transcendence of morality, which is consummated in the moral development of immoral beings; of the transcendence of tolerance, consummated through the principle of selflessness; of the transcendence of effort, consummated in initiative toward enlightenment; of the transcendence of meditation, consummated in the solitude of body and mind, and of the transcendence of wisdom, consummated in the omniscient gnosis.

" The Dharma-sacrifice consists of heroic strength, consummated in the upholding of the holy Dharma; of the power of life, consummated in means of unification; of the absence of pride, consummated in becoming the slave and the disciple of all living beings; of the gain of body, health and wealth, consummated by the extraction of essence from the essenceless; of mindfulness, consummated by the six remembrances; of positive thought, consummated through the truly enjoyable Dharma; of purity of livelihood, consummated by correct spiritual practice; of the respect of saints, consummated by joyful and faithful service, of soberness of mind, consummated by absence of dislike for ordinary people; of high resolve, consummated by renunciation; of skill in erudition, consummated by religious practice; of retirement in solitary retreats, consummated by understanding things free of passions; of introspective meditation, consummated by attainment

of the Buddha-gnosis; of the stage of the practice of yoga, consummated by the yoga of liberating all living beings from their passions.

“ The Dharma-sacrifice consists of the store of merit which is consummated by the auspicious signs and marks, the ornaments of the Buddha-fields, and all other means of development of living beings; of the store of knowledge which is consummated in the ability to teach the Dharma according to the thoughts and actions of all living beings; of the store of wisdom, which is consummated in the uniform gnosis free of acceptance and rejection in regard to all things; of the store of all roots of virtue, consummated in the abandonment of all passions, obscurations, and unvirtuous things; and of the attainment of all the aids to enlightenment, consummated in the realization of the gnosis of omniscience as well as in accomplishments of all virtue.

“ That, noble son, is the Dharma-sacrifice. The bodhisattva who lives by this Dharma-sacrifice is the best of sacrificers, and, through his extreme sacrifice, is himself worthy of offerings from all people, including the gods.’

“Lord, as soon as the householder had discourses thus, two hundred Brahmans among the crowd of Brahmans present conceived the spirit of unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. And I, full of astonishment, having saluted this good man by touching his feet with my head, took from around my neck a necklace of pearls worth one hundred thousand pieces of gold and offered it to him. But he would not accept it. I then said to him, please accept, good man, out of compassion for me, and give it to whomever you wish.

“Then, Vimalakirti took the pearls and divided them into two halves. He gave one half of them to the lowliest poor of the city, who had been disdained by those present at the sacrifice. The other half he offered to the Tathagata Duspra-Marici and the Tathagata Dusprasaha. On the head of the Tathagata Dusprasaha, the pearl necklace took the form of a pavilion, decorated with strings of pearls, lovely to behold. Having shown such a miracle, Vimalakirti said, ‘The giver who makes

gifts to the lowliest poor of the city, considering them as worthy of offering as the Tathagata himself, the giver who gives without any discrimination, impartially, with no expectation of reward, and with great love--this giver, I say, totally fulfils the Dharma-sacrifice.

“Then the poor of the city, having seen the miracle and having heard that teaching, conceived the spirit of unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. Therefore, Lord, I am reluctant to go to that good man to inquire about his illness.”

Until this time the Buddha had been asking his main disciples to go please and see Vimalakirti. They all refused. Finally the Buddha asked Zentoku, although he was a layperson, to go see Vimalakirti to visit him because of his sickness. At this time Zentoku was one of the foremost rich sons in Vaisali. He was travelling throughout India helping the poor. Among the people he was a bodhisattva. The Buddha said to him, “Please go see Vimalakirti. He is sick.” In the same way, he said, “I really can’t go to see Vimalakirti.” When the Buddha asked why, he said, “When I think about it was so long ago, so it is very difficult for me. I was at home “ In India people who are wealthy often give offerings to people of society. In hot weather they give water. To someone starving they give a bowl of food. Sometimes they give money. In this way the raise merit and have a great affect on people. It is like welcoming someone over and being hospitable to them. One time in a seven day period Zentoku had many Brahmans, all of the ordained priests, and even people of other religions over. Believers, orphans, widows, poor, people who had lost their children, homeless, elderly, wanderers; all of these were welcomed. People from the fringes of society, as well as the upper crust; all were welcomed. Those in low station in society were present. Servants sat beside governors. For seven whole days they were offered continuous care and rest, food and treats. It had to be someone of tremendous wealth to be able to offer this. Zentoku’s father was a very wealthy man, and a deep believer, and Zentoku was helping with this great offering. At that time, Vimalakirti arrived.

Zentoku’s family was humbly offering when Vimalakirti said to Zentoku, “Offering something is not about offering things and food. Only material gifts are not what will really liberate

someone's mind. It will only liberate their body. Maybe we get full and we feel satisfied, but that is a physical pleasure, it is not a pleasure of our mind. With offering material things we just self-satisfy; if we look at in the worst way that is what we are doing it for. To offer things we often feel special ourselves. If we are receiving, we may feel happy, we may feel blessed or lucky in some way, and we feel somehow that that is the end of it. We can be in an impoverished state of mind, and then that which has been given has no true deep influence to it, it is wasted. Zentoku, you can't give an offering like this. You have to offer your true mind as well. You have to give a Dharma-offering."

Vimalakirti was cautioning Zentoku. In the Diamond Sutra the Buddha says to Subhuti that when bodhisattvas are giving they must not be attached to the form of what they give. That which is giving must be empty. That which is given must be empty. That which is receiving must be empty. If there is any attachment to that which is given or who is giving and receiving, that is not a true offering. True offering is given to liberate all human beings. The bodhisattva must not have any calculated thoughts at all that someone might be happy or feel lucky because they are being given something. If the bodhisattva's mind is one with the true Dharma, naturally one offers only Dharma. But if there is something in our mind caught on a thing, caught on giving something to someone, caught on the person we are giving to, caught on *us* giving something, and we are caught on that thing that we give, then we are like one in the dark who cannot see anything around ourselves, completely stuck in darkness. We are only giving something we feel that we possess to give. We have to cut that attachment to whatever we offer, and be clear that we have no connection. Even our own physical bodies are given only for a short time. So in giving to others we become a huge bright clear mind, and that is the true offering. To offer and give to the world and become bright and clear in mind is our true offering, not to get small and petty about what we give or who we are giving to or that we are "givers." This does not become the true merit of offering. We will only dive into a dark place and there will be no true influence from it. This is how Buddha taught Subhuti about true charity.

If we offer from the true mind of a bodhisattva, attached to nothing, resting nowhere; if from that mind the offering is given, then people

can receive it with both eyes open, with the sunshine clarifying everything and shining brightly, and everything is seen clearly. With our eyes are wide open this world is seen with sharp awareness and our mind is not stuck. This is the true way offerings need to be given. The six paramitas taught endurance, patience, Samadhi, keeping our mind quiet, and great radiant wisdom. All lead to non-attachment. That is basic. The Buddha emphasized charity, giving, and offering as a manifestation of Dharma. How shall we relate to society? For the Buddha this was a crucial expression of Dharma. In offering there are varieties, both worldly and Dharma giving. Worldly giving is to give physical or material offerings. No matter how much we offer materially, it will eventually disappear. If we give the truth it will last a whole lifetime and will never be used up.

"The Dharma-sacrifice consists of heroic strength, consummated in the upholding of the holy Dharma." Vimalakirti was teaching Zentoku that he could not only offer things; he had to offer Dharma. Things are not sufficient. They don't build lasting truth. Then Zentoku asked, "So, what do you mean by Dharma offering?" Vimalakirti said, "A Dharma sacrifice is that which develops human beings without beginning or end, giving gifts to them simultaneously. Not only food clothing and material things; things with a form are always a source of attachment. These are things have to be given in order. People who arrive first get them fresh, while people who come late get the last. They cannot be given to all at the same time; they are linear and must be given in order of arrival. Those who come first may get more, while those who come later, as the supply gets less and less, may just get the remainder, the leftovers. In this way inequality comes. But with a Dharma offering, no matter how many thousands or tens of thousands are listening, all at once everyone receives equally and simultaneously. Things of material form are limited, but things offered and received by the spirit of the people are limitless. Physical things will always decay, but the Dharma is inexhaustible. It will never be used up. The essence is without decay; it is ever expanding. Material and physical things will not liberate a person's mind. Money becomes food and clothing, and these are important; however, food, clothing, and money do not liberate our minds."

At Sogenji there was a monk, Tekisui Giboku Zenji, who was from the Tongo area in the deep countryside. The priest Gisan Zenrai Zenji was the head of Okayama's Sogenji Monastery. Tekisui journeyed far to do sanzen with Gisan. He suffered and struggled to get here, finally arriving and joining the other monks. Gisan Zenrai Zenji was very strict. It was life on the line for all of those monks. One was making the bath for the abbot. There were a hundred and twenty monks and the bath job was an all day affair. From early in the morning the bath had to be fired, as it was so huge, and it took all day to bring branches from the woods and water from the well, and to watch and guard the fire and make sure it did not go out. It really took special concentration. Now we just twist open the faucet. Then, water had to be laboriously drawn from the well with a wooden bucket over and over again. How many tens and hundreds of times the water had to be poured into the tub, then boiled, and finally after many hours the bath would be hot.

At this time the monk Tekisui was still named Biboku, and he first called his teacher Gisan Zenrai Zenji, saying, "Please, come into the bath, it is ready." At this Gisan, as the senior priest, came in and told him, "It is too hot!" Biboku had thought it was perfect but there was still wood burning under the bath cauldron, and for the little time it had taken him to get his teacher the water had overheated. Biboku took a bucket with a little water left in it to go get more water, and he dumped out the old water on the flagstones and got fresh water. When he returned he began to pour the new water in, but Gisan stopped him, saying, "What did you do just now?" "I brought water for the bath, but..." Biboku replied. "No, before that! That little bit of water left in the bucket, you threw that away!! Now listen. It may be the slightest bit of water, but why did you throw it away? If you take it outside and put it on a flower, it will become energy for that flower to grow. Take it to the vegetable garden, and it will become the life energy of the vegetables. If you throw that water away, you are wasting it completely. You don't look clearly at things. Your mind is not reaching sufficiently far enough. Even this little speck of water: how can you use that? You have to really see this deeply and clearly. Just because you worked hard does not mean it is good enough. You have to see things clearly and deeply. In the smallest thing there is life energy. You have to see this yourself. To see

that life energy and to make use of it is the Buddha Dharma. It is not for realizing a mind satisfied with itself. Your mind should be able to circulate to every single thing in existence, and if your mind does not extend to that place, how can your mind possibly circulate to the mind of other people?" Gisan reprimanded Biboku.

At nineteen one would think he could understand this, but his thoroughness was not yet sufficient. He was not yet on his own feet in the training. This is why the teacher cautions him. But from this he could find once again inside himself the vow to not waste a single drop. At seventy-six after a lifetime of taking this caution to heart he gave the poem: "The One Drop of Sogen: the one drop was never used up; it extended throughout the heavens and the earth; limitless, inexhaustible." His state of mind was this when he died. That was what he was taught at Sogenji by his teacher: even one drop of water must not be killed and destroyed. He used that teaching his whole life. All those years he used that teaching but was never able to use it up. Extending throughout the heavens and extending throughout the earth, filling the heavens and earth and having all the universal power in it - this teaching has all the energy of heaven and earth. This teaching has the ability to reach and realize all beings. This is an offering that can be used a whole lifetime and never grow stale, never be untrue. Material offerings are used up and they are gone. We have to replace and replace. It is important to be hospitable and generous with things, but above and beyond that we must offer Dharma.

Vimalakirti taught him this very carefully. Zentoku asked again, "What is this Dharma offering?" Vimalakirti answered, "*For those who are in pain, are suffering and miserable, are confused, hurt, and sad; I will offer my support to them for their whole life. Not for my own satisfaction, but for all the suffering people in this whole world, I will offer everything I am, everything I have, and with that, I will live always. It has to be that way. Then everyone who is so sad and suffering, people who are unhappy and in great pain, I want to give to them a little ease, a little comfort, even to help a little and make it lighter.*" This is the state of mind to raise. This is true Dharma offering. This is compassion.

We work from within and offer wisdom to all beings. According to our efforts and understanding we offer wisdom. Sometimes we

give wisdom to society with our whole body. This is true compassion. Then we are able to decrease even a bit the suffering of others, to bring wisdom and take away pain. We not only live in society but we observe the teachings there. What makes us fortunate? We observe the true teaching and this makes us joyous. Learning Dharma is a Dharma offering. Joy is a Dharma offering. The mind of joy and sadness is our offering. This expression of living, we use it to bring much joy to many people and have that joy expand endlessly. We align with this immeasurably huge function spreading continuously among all beings, constantly giving life to what we believe in, and this brings great joy to many, many people. Vimalakirti taught that this is a Dharma offering.

“The Dharma-sacrifice consists of the transcendence of generosity, which is consummated in peacefulness and self-discipline...” Liberate the mind, which is so attached to things. To save oneself from that, one does the practice of charity and generosity. We let go of the attached, greedy mind, the mind that wants something all the time. In our mind we are always caught on chaotic, impulsive behavior. If we aren't aware it will come out. When moved around by things, we live, move, and speak in an insecure way and give pain and insecurity to people around us. We confuse others. Precepts (rules of conduct) and correct living will help us align our state of mind, breathing, and body, helping us to live in the best way for our health and the health of others. Instead of bringing pain and suffering to others we help them become aligned by being an example of how to do that alignment, and help them find their own alignment, inspiring them to behave in a clear appropriate way as well. Even one person's way of alignment influences other's alignment. This is a Dharma offering.

No matter what pain or suffering, we endure it. The mind of patience is very important. People are intolerant and lack endurance, and push their own way, saying, “Never mind, whatever, who cares”. In this world there are people who are suffering, suffering, suffering, suffering, and they endure that, even when they feel they are in hell, and they may even end up committing suicide, or become violent with people around them, so confused by their difficulties and pain. With this sort of essence we lose our inner clarity and our objective way of seeing things, and confuse and trouble

people around us. We have to know the way of persevering, enduring, and being patient. Even when we feel pain, to be able to quietly be with that pain, and align our state of mind within it. In our difficult life, in all the situations which seem impossible to get through, we stay right in that mind. With crises, terrible events, and wars and challenging circumstances, we are not confused, but we clearly and sharply see the whole essential picture. This is not just forbearing and enduring, but it is seeing everything around us with an open mind. With everyone confused, if only one person is peaceful they shed light on the situation, and by being undistressed by the situation others have a harder time saying selfish things that cause more hurt. When they see one person working hard, others feel they must work harder to maintain their charity. It looks like an impossible situation to move through but when we see another doing it we see we can do it, too. That hopeful state of mind is available to everyone when they see one person being patient and enduring. This is a Dharma sacrifice. Patience is an offering.

At times we are all lazy. We just don't feel like doing it. It is such a bother; that is good enough. We all know this indulgent state of mind, this apathetic state of mind. We often lose to it. What we have to do right now is so important, we cannot take our energy out of it. If we take our energy out of it at the most important time, it all becomes compromised. Especially at this kind of time we really have to work hard, really have to make efforts, and put our great energy into it. This mind set is very important. Then everyone wants to work together. “Let's do one more, let's go further.” Everyone brings their energy into one and we go into the difficult parts of the path together. When climbing a mountain together everyone gets tired and wants to stop. If one person says, “we can't stop here, we can't give up here, this is an important time and we have to keep going, we have to get over this while the light is still here, let's go over the top before it is dark and do it together or the night will come. Let's all do this together, and go through the difficult part when it is still light.” If one person can say that it can motivate others to get through those difficult things together. Sometimes it takes one person to get everyone through something. The mind of great effort is very important. With one person making efforts it inspires everyone else. Everyone feels that energy and purpose and can see the goal. If just one person can receive that energy then

everyone is affected by it. As we continue our mind becomes preoccupied and busy, our work becomes stressful, and the world around us looks busy. The world situation seems challenging and agitated and we become irritated as well. That makes much confusion. We can't see objectively and clearly, and this influences those around us as well.

When this happens we align within and keep our *ki* from being high and unsettled. We remain unexcited. People around us will know that no matter what situation we are in we are always steady, quiet, stable, and secure. Others will see how the mind can be and will be affected by that. They will say, "I want to quiet in my mind, too". This is true generosity, true offering of the Dharma.

If we are not careful we get caught on our own attached way of thinking and we cannot see in an objective, clear way. We see things in an unclear and one-sided way, misunderstanding and confusing others because of that. When our mind is quiet we see to the essence of things, to the clear quality, and see how everything is in flux. This makes us insecure, but nevertheless we know that all things are insecure and no matter how little we want to separate we have to separate all worries and confused states of mind. If we see things very clearly we see everything changes, everything is always in flux, nothing stays the same forever. Everything decays, in the human world everything will dissolve. It is natural that we have to separate; this is the correct way of seeing things. If we get caught one after the next on our own ideas, we want things to center around us and be seen from our own point of view. Me, me, me, I, I, I: we have been piling up those ideas, our own idea of how to think about things, for so many years. We are stuck on a tomorrow, yesterday, today mind, which has no reality to it. Everything is only real in this moment. Even if we think it is bad now it changes, the quality changes. Our essence is always in flux and has no fixed quality of "I" or "me". To see this clearly, deeply, and quietly, is the opening of our wisdom eye. Then we can see another person judging and we can know where they are really coming from. One person's objectivity is something others can believe in and trust. Yes, this is how it can be seen; this kind of deep wisdom is born and serves as a Dharma offering of generosity. All of the six paramitas are clarified and offered to bring others awakening. They allow others to awaken with

deep understanding, joy, and awareness. This is all Dharma offering.

Working in society, gathering merits, offering to society, to those who are confused and in pain, taking care of those who are sick and suffering, but at the same time never having an idea of "taking care of someone," no mind of, "I have done this, I have done that..." Have no caught place at all, just offer that which is born from the need, with joy in that need; this is the joy of voidness. We offer voidness to those in need. We have no thought of those needing help or having worked or done something and we don't think about ourselves as "helping". This is another kind of Dharma offering. In this strict, painful, severe world, we often want to run away from everything. Yet in that painful and difficult situation we live with all people as one. To forget yourself and to live with the other person's suffering, realizing and knowing it directly, losing ourselves and melting into it totally. By knowing the other person we lose the sense of a separated being, that isolated small self. We stop pulling that around and then we can understand another's suffering. We are not sunk in darkness when we relate to their sadness but we see clearly the place beyond form. We know the essence which is not caught on a fixed form. This is also Dharma offering. At the same time we have work to do, we function in daily life, not killing or lying, not being deceptive nor violent, nor confused in mind. Many people live in that state of mind but for us to have a compassionate state of mind for them is our daily life's work. We live in accordance to the compassion springing forth from within our deepest mind, fulfilling it all day long. Always realize that essence of compassion in how we live without being attached to seeing ourselves as a "compassionate person".

If one is Catholic, one goes to the confessional, and in front of the priest one confesses each and every sin. "I did this sin and this bad thing. " Every single thing you have done you repent to the priest and then you receive permission to receive communion at mass. In Buddhism we have the precepts. According to these we repent our behavior to the thousand Buddhas of the past, present, and future, repeating each of the three thousand Buddha's names, repenting and prostrating thousands of times. We repent and repent, cutting away all of our sins, cutting away all of our desires. It takes one whole week. These are ways, forms, of repenting and reviewing our behavior in

order to learn and purify. In the Zendo life there is the practice of hidden virtue. Before we come to practice and during practice we make so many mistakes, we show unskilful behavior, and just doing the practice alongside everyone else will not clean our cluttered mind, will not purify us. So we clean the toilets when no one else is looking. When no one is noticing to do things that no one is doing and which are bothersome for someone. To repair someone's sandal strap, to clean here and there, to pick up after people. To do things for someone having problems who needs help but has not mentioned it. In this way we practice hidden virtue.

This is not a form of practice but rises from our essence and generosity of mind. We are moved to do this. We have to do this. This is not physical repentance but our clear state of mind with which we have to do good things. We may recognize a form or words of confession or repentance, and we may practice this, but this is repentance of behavior beyond form. If it is true repentance then our essence of mind will be deeply involved. It will not just be a ritual. If it is not from our true mind, then no matter how much we formally confess and repent our behavior: decreasing how much we eat, purposefully accepting various punishments, and performing formal confession rituals; we will not be free. What is important is that our state of mind becomes more pure and more clear. When this is the point, zazen as it is that formless repentance. As it says in the Sutras, if we want to do true confessional repentance, then zazen is the best for that.

From the origin, what has given rise to these confused and mistaken acts is that we confuse what is real with what is temporary. Our physical body and our mind moment are not actual. It comes forth with a temporary meeting of cause and effect. There is no actual fixed substance to it. If we could realize this actually and directly we would not commit crimes, we would not hurt and bring pain to other people, we would not speak badly about other people, we would not bring forth negative states of mind about people. Our true nature has no speck of anything special from the origin. Do not understand this only with your head, but become it. From the origin we are completely empty. There is no place for a speck of anything to be there. If we can become this and realize it, then we can reach the source of this and not repeat the same mistakes. We become pure and clear in our

mind. We cut away all the difficult obstructions that have confused us. This deep, profound, endless life energy embraces things with no discrimination. This is the way of liberation, and this is the point of confession. For the first time we can realize true security of mind. Our confession and repentance in our world of form suggests continued pain and misery has no meaning. To understand and become that endless state of mind, to find ourselves embraced in it and to trust it. God and Buddha: we become one with them totally. In the endless, limitless, huge great furnace, we melt with them. To where there is there is no two-ness in mind and body, no division. Mind and body are not divided.

All of our mistaken behavior is cleared away. This endless mind of true Samadhi is the actuality, the real repentance. "*Shona shina oki shozen gyo mina kona uchini kisuru nari.....*" In the Zazen Wasan Hakuin Zenji tells us powerfully that Samadhi has deep truth, and if we go from that essence, we know that all the various practices: offering to society, fasting, physical practices; all are based in Samadhi. This one *nen* of Samadhi is the truth. This religious and moral excellence, and also the deepest profound places of the arts and crafts, is this truth. When the master Noh dancer dances he forgets his form completely. When people are singing and chanting, they forget their bodies, their throats, their Sutras. When someone plays the piano they forget their fingers, body, their piano, and they play their music. An actor goes beyond their age and becomes the age of the person they are performing. In society, creators and inventors throw themselves into it completely and become absorbed in that work totally. From that comes forth the truth, which is the work of God; the genius and brilliance that comes when one can do this work completely. All who walk spiritual paths, all artists, all crafts people, know this subtle flavor of blessed works. Seeing martial arts, flower arranging, archery, religion; all of these are the same; all of them come forth from deep Samadhi, total absorption. From this it sounds as if only Zen is good and that we are advertising Zen, saying one has to do zazen. But we are not making a proud statement that only our sect is worth anything. That would be far from the essence of Zen. People of old said the flow of the mind is Zen, and the mind is the body of Zen.

While functioning we don't think of functioning; we let go of our form of working,

not remembering what we have done and how much. All giving is empty. Our small self is forgotten. We observe true wisdom, teaching well to those who are just beginning to understand, expressing with expedient means the great teaching. We clarify first ourselves, our generosity. First we have a generous heart beyond form. We offer cool eyes. It is said our eyes speak as much as our mouth. To not have strong and severe eyes but soft eyes, and give a positive feeling from that. This costs nothing at all. It is only a state of mind. Second we use kind words. "Oh thank you for your hard work. You really worked hard; keep going!" We speak to each other like that. Our everyday life becomes much brighter when we live like this. Third is to have a face that is soft and full of joy. When people see that face they feel happy. To offer a face that gives hope to others. It is a great gift to offer this. Fourth is a warm mind. Those not warm in mind, no matter what material thing they give, offer no true gift to society. To bring a warm mind creates a warm society. We work with our whole body, going to the most inconvenient places, or offering to carry another's heavy burden. When people come from far away we give them a place to stay, and kindness they will not forget for their entire life. Also to give up our seat to someone who is tired, "Wouldn't you like to sit down here?" is an offering. This is not the form of a seat but giving a place which allows a mind a moment of rest. It is as if we had given them a place to sit down within themselves. We bring them some security, stability, warmth, and understanding. Even without money or things we can give in this way. Kind loving words bring joy to another, and bring them a feeling of worthiness and real satisfaction. Giving these is Dharma offering. Offerings of mind are most important.

Vimalakirti continues: We bring respect to every person we encounter. We are not to be conceited or high on ourselves, but we have let go until our state of mind is always that of holding our palms together with all beings. We realize and see their clarity of mind. Our body and mind and life position are important, but we have to let go and be clear that we will die, the possessions that we gather will leave us, and we never know when we will have to let go of all of them. This body will die. We realize that eternal body of truth, the true possessions, and make those our treasures, and hold them most important. We have a body but we know it is empty, and not our Dharma body. Not caught on our fixed form and appearance, we

know the truth that we are always changing, always flowing, always empty, always reborn. When we know clearly that what appears, as fixed substance is nothing real, we know the Dharma body. We live in a form but it is not permanent, and we work and give of ourselves completely to what is needed for harmony. Then we know that which never decays. What cannot be destroyed is our true treasure. This never fades. This is the life we can see and bring to many people.

We think of the Buddha, the Sangha, the Dharma, the precepts, society, of the grace and the many blessing and gifts from heaven and earth, and then we will not be walking in mistaken ways. Of course to remember our blessings are not outside but something within each of us. There are three treasures: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. These are not external things. To see the Dharma is to see oneself. To see oneself is to see the Dharma. Above everything, the Buddha Dharma is the great Law. It is the truth of our inner world, our basic mind. It is what every single person is endowed with from the origin. One awakened to this is called a Buddha. To realize and clarify this to the ultimate point in society one is called a Sangha member. We remember this awakened essence beyond every doubt and we remember that the mind of the Buddha is our true mind. We bow to that clear mind and our mind, body, and mouth become one. Even during work we remember this spacious mind. As do zazen everywhere, remembering the teachings, walking and standing in Samadhi, we remember the Dharma. We believe in our true nature within, and this is possible everywhere. We must not leave this behind and get confused and upset. Until we die we remember the Dharma. We bow to Shakyamuni and honor our inner mind. That awakened state of mind is our Buddha mind. We should have no doubt about our pure nature. All day long we should be in the true Dharma. Don't leave your koan in the dojo. Bring it into everyday life with you. A true teacher helps us not forget. Remember the Sangha by living in that clear pure harmonious mind always. We hold the truth as our most important priority and live with people who share that value. We hold our life with that group important, and harmony with that group is above anything else. Then our life will be aligned. To remember the Buddha is to always be in a clear emotional state. To remember the Dharma is to live in clear wisdom. To remember the Sangha is to live

with clear aligned will. We throw ourselves into the three and become one, and so become one with society and live our daily lives without being upset and confused.

We do not turn our backs on society but we join society and know the huge blessings we have received in order to live. We receive so many things from all beings to live and when we know that deep faith and deep trust we are aligned with truth.

Vimalakirti says, "What we see, say, and hear should all be aligned, and we offer this way of living to all. We live with high resolve, and we should live with people in a blended way, not acting impulsively; even if we have a particular way of looking at life, to basically blend with everyone around us. We move in harmony with other people. In this way we build harmony and respect with all people. To be open, simple, and uncluttered is a Dharma offering, and without this we cannot give. We can be close and joyful and not make our minds difficult places of evil with others, but be a positive place. Do not argue with others but remain serene in a calming environment. To do this, sit quietly. This gives all people in society help with letting go of their attachments, of their likes and dislikes. From within we walk this path and give others guidance in doing this. We become a good face and form to assist this world in becoming a Buddha land.

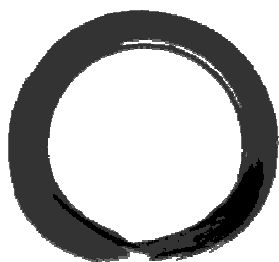
To know the Dharma as an essential thing we deeply train on our inner path, and act in alignment with the wisdom and offer this to others. See other's states of mind deeply and offer them Dharma and wisdom accordingly. All the ten thousand things are not created nor dismantled, and we must know our deep

wisdom relating to them. We cut away things that are not positive and gather things that are positive. When we do this we are able to gather all merit and wisdom, and this is the way of becoming Buddha for all beings. Offering is about a wide mind of wisdom. Then the material things are alive. In this way Vimalakirti patiently taught everyone about raising the Bodhisattva Mind. It was this pearl necklace beyond value that everyone bowed to. This necklace, which Zentoku gave to him Vimalakirti, had divided in two and shared with the poorest of the poor and created the pavilion of light, which shone on everyone. If we only give to high-powered people this has no value, but to give our minds to everyone equally is the true mind of the Bodhisattva vow. All people are equal. The poorest people of the city gathered and saw the miracle of the pavilion of light, and all were enlightened. Some were so sick they wanted to die that day, but when they saw this sight they were purified. The purity of the three is the giving, the giver, and the given. In this brightness we let go of all our opinions. We know the place where our clean human nature surges through and we can see how much we have been living in our own small ideas of how we are. There is no giver, no giving, and no given. We give what is of value to all beings, this great huge mind beyond divisions. This is the wisdom of all beings. The values of the Buddha are not about manners and convention or narrow education. It is a radical and revolutionary way of seeing things born from the Buddha's great wise awakening. This is what will help bring about the inner liberation and the greatest joy there is.

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