

This year's Tahoma Record consists of two volumes: the Tahoma Record proper plus the Shinzanshiki—the record of the Abbot Installation Ceremonies—volume. A new era begins with the installation of Harada-roshi as Abbot and Daichi Zenni and Dairin Zenji as Assistant Abbots of Tahoma-san Sogen-ji Zen Monastery. As usual, there were two osesshin in the period covered by this Tahoma Record, one in September 2012¹ following which the Shinzanshiki—Abbot Installation—Ceremonies were held, and the February 2012 osesshin. A great deal of credit is due this volume to May Lee, who carefully and accurately transcribed all the teisho given at both osesshin, as well as various other recordings made at these osesshin.

—密 号

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SEPTEMBER 2011

September 2011 at Tahoma Monastery was full of events. The new office cum Head Monk Quarters was dedicated, providing at last an appropriate home for Dairin Zenji, who had bunked down in various temporary quarters for years: the bare-bones Hermitage, tents, trailers, and who knows where else. And a few weeks later following the Shinzanshiki [Abbot Installation Ceremonies] it became the Assistant Abbot's Quarters. The building is spacious, with a large office/meeting room, the Vice Abbot's room, and a full, handicap-access bathroom. Simple but sufficient, and befitting one of our two new Vice Abbots. Daichi Zenni—affectionately known as Chi-san—lives in her own small house; it was built for her several years ago after she had ived in airless closets each time she came to do her vital translation work with the Sangha, for more than a decade. As well, the roshi's small house was added on to recently, providing him with space for meeting with Sangha and doing his calligraphies, along with a tiny office space—really, a high shelf (he works at his computer standing up)—and a small kitchen and laundry/storage area. Tahoma is slowly manifesting the outward form of a monastery, and with Rin-san [Dairin] now there full time with only periodic short trips to Sogen-ji to continue his own training, the inner form is also manifesting.

More than twenty years ago, Roshi's student at Sogen-ji, Heidi Marcus, moved to Seattle, establishing that One Drop of Sogen's zazen to her small house. From that humble beginning, Tahoma-san Sogen-ji One Drop Monastery has come forth, little by little, year by year, through the dedication of that small Sangha, which has grown as well to hundreds of people all over the United States, Canada, and Mexico—and the whole world. The Shinzanshiki ceremonies are an expression of this growing One Drop Sangha's intention to give themselves wholeheartedly to the deepest practice possible, with the vow to liberate all sentient beings, never ceasing until no suffering being remains. It is the roshi's own expression of this vow and his ceaseless work in manifesting it that is a major source of inspiration to his students, and unwittingly, to all people.

PHOTOS



Roshi arrives from Japan



Greeting Sangha



First stop: Dedicating
the new Office/Head Monk's Quarters



The Tekisui-an sign



Offering incense as E-san
records the event for posterity



The new main gate, as seen from the office



Taking advantage of the normally balmy September weather, many people chose to stay in tents



A new look is prepared for the front of Tending Clouds Hall



A new temple sign greets visitors just before the gate

	day 2	day 3	day 4
Eshun Andrea	Shuho Kiki	MyoO Renate	Gentai Robert
Hojun Sandy	Gentatsu Eric	Johannes Lieber	Fujaku Anthony
Wajun Brenda	Malcolm Beet	Karen Phipps	Yoshin Kyo
day 5	day 6	day 7	
Gentai Robert	Ekan Amy	Christian Frederick	
Ekan Amy	Christian Frederick	Linda Blair	
Shinkai Kurt	Tanzan Jon	Hojun Sandy	
	Chiko Lisa	Sokei Jennifer	

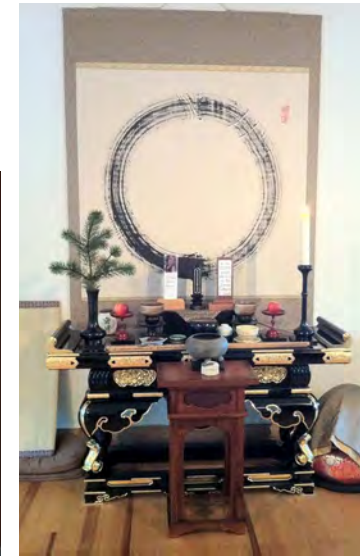
The tenzo list—one of many iterations as sesshin attendance shifted with last-minute cancellations



And as night settles in and the moon rises high in the darkening sky, osesshin begins



Kinhin



the
new
altar



Memorial ihai

Having tea with Roshi
one morning of osesshin
is an opportunity to ask
questions and share a
bowl of whisked green
tea, guaranteed to keep
one's mind sharp the
rest of the day



Yuho doing tea service—as well
as filling in as adjunct translator



The kitchen area



Kitchen action



The han calls people to teisho



Getting ready for teisho



Roshi arrives and does his bows at the altar.



Quietly waiting for Roshi and Chi-san's arrival for teisho



Before the memorial service for those who passed on at Enso House



Calling Sangha to work



The new abbots await the arrival of their guests before the celebratory meal.

The Shinzanshiki [Abbot Installation Ceremonies] is covered in detail in a separate companion volume to this Tahoma Record. However, the celebratory lunch at Freeland Hall that followed the ceremonies was not. Accordingly, these few photographs are included of the event. The sumptuous meal was provided by Tahoma Sangha members, with the delicious food being personally prepared by the food committee members, led by Cynthia Trowbridge.



Left to right: Chief Carl Sampson, Johnny Sampson (behind his grandfather), the three abbots: Daichi, Harada-roshi, Dairin; looking on in the background is Wajun.



Chief Carl Sampson and his grandson, Johnny, offer their prayer chant before the celebratory meal begins, as the abbots and guest priests look on. Kunitomi-san, Sogen-ji neighbor, who helped a great deal with the entire event and personally escorted most of the guest priests from Japan to Tahoma, looks on in the background.

SEPTEMBER OSESSHIN OPENING TALK



From today for the following week we have this 2011 ōsesshin here, as we have had in the past. But this time we have a very special opportunity to have other people celebrating with us [guests arriving early for the installation ceremonies in order to attend this ōsesshin]. We have an installation ceremony, we have many different things that are happening, and people who are coming here from many different places from far away on this occasion to make it an unusual opportunity to be here together.

We have the words from the Buddha: to awaken and then to guide others in realizing this awakening. A person who does this is a truly fulfilled, completed, round person: to experience the same state of mind as the Buddha at his moment of awakening and then from that deep, true, direct experience to guide others and share the state of mind of that experience which will then enable others to realize that same experience. Someone who deeply realizes and experiences the direct truth of the Buddha, and then having truly experienced that, lives in the way of that truth and continues to live in the way of that truth—continually giving life to that state of mind and deepening it—shows us how to live. A person who knows that truth and is living that truth becomes an example, and in their way of being exemplary guides others in how to realize this truth. These are the words that describe a person who is a true Buddhist.

Further, it says that a person who is a true Buddhist is one who not only vows and deepens their own joy of realization but also makes that great joy and deep understanding their life point in sharing it with all other beings. We have the very famous Zen master, Master Unmon Bun'en, who lived at the end of the 700's, the beginning of the 800's; he is also the founder of the Unmon line, which is a line of many great Zen masters. One of his disciples asked him, "What is the essential teaching of all the huge number of words, the great number of sutras that the Buddha taught in his life? What is the most important, essential teaching of that?" To this, Unmon Bun'en responded, "When encountering one, to give the actual truth." This is what is being said by these words: To realize it oneself and then in

each and every encounter, offer that truth to each encounter; this is how one realizes and deeply awakens and then gives that possibility of realizing that truth to every single person. If we see it in this way we can understand how this is the essential truth of all of the teachings, all of the sutras. Every single thing that the Buddha taught in his whole life all can be boiled down to this. If we take every single phrase, every single teaching we ever have recorded that the Buddha has offered—each and every one of them—there's not one that does not express this truth.

If we see the teaching of the Buddha that every single thing is in flux and always changing, if we deeply realize this truth we can see that because everything is always impermanent and in flux, therefore it is this one very moment which is eternal. And when we hear the words of the Buddha's truth that there is nothing with a fixed ego, then we can immediately see the point that there is no such thing as a small "me" even though we are so apt to be holding onto it all the time; there is no such thing that is continually existing as an ego, as an "I." When we hear the teaching of the Buddha of the great extinction of all things that brings true nirvana, then we can see how this is the actuality of each and every existing, living thing.

And this monk—this very sharp, very deeply seeing, catching the true center point, monk—then asked, "Well, if that is the case, then all of these problems and all of these challenges that everyone brought to the Buddha that brought forth these words of wisdom that are in the 5048 sutras with all these countless words—all of those are responses to people's various questions about challenges and things in their daily life that they brought to the Buddha and to which he answered in those sutras—what about before all of those? All of those things that people were asking that needed answers to what about before all those questions and before all those problems, before all those answers were needed? What about then?" This is a very sharp question. We ourselves have to see clearly: What is it? We go to work for five days a week and then we take off for a Saturday and a Sunday. Without all the meaning of our workday business, without all the things we identify ourselves as because of what we do all the time—putting all of that aside, putting down the meaning of what we have to do, putting down all of the things we spend our life doing as long as we have a work life, and then when we become too elderly to do that anymore—what about that? What about that which is not that work we do every day, not the value of ourselves we find in the

many things we do? How about someone who is not the president of a company or doing something which has deep importance and heavy meaning in a daily life? With all of that let go of, then how is it? After all of those things that we have done until we have retired from our meaningful job, after all of those things we do all day long which are so important for so many reasons—with all of those put aside, then what? What is that value, that which is prior to any of our usual idea of what we have to do and why what we do in our lifetime is so important? What about when all of that is put aside? What's left? This is what the monk was asking. How about that?

Taking it one step further, we have a company that produces things. This company is producing things because people need them. And they buy them so the company succeeds. Well, how about it if there's a company that makes things that nobody needs anymore? If the head of the company has a lot of ideas about what to make but nobody is buying those, then what about that? How about that head of a company who has nothing to make because nobody is buying it? Or how about a school teacher who is teaching all of the students because they need to learn a lot of certain things the teacher is responsible for teaching them? How about it if there was nothing the students needed to learn? Then how about that teacher? What would they be teaching? Or if we find someone who is doing flower arranging and the flower arranging is being done for many, many guests who need beautiful flowers arranged for them. How about it if that was in a hut way out in the woods where a guest may come or a guest may not come? Then what kind of flowers would be arranged there? Or making tea, making tea for a lot of people who have come, who have gathered for drinking tea? What if it was out in a hut in the woods where there is tea but no guests? No guests coming, what kind of tea is being made? Here we have this place prior to any of those typical encounters. And the answer which was given here by Master Unmon to the monk's second question is, "The upside down in the encounter."

We have the words of the Four Vows: Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to liberate them: the people we encounter to whom we are offering our energy, sharing our deepening awareness with. But though that is an admirable and appropriate thing to do and we continue with it always, how about those infinite sentient beings that live right within each of us? Those troubled, complicated feelings of greed, of discomfort, dissatisfaction, of attachment—those sentient

beings that are within the mind of each of us—to look at their ongoing existence. Then we see honestly how many beings there are inside each of us, also needing liberating. We can't take our eyes away from that which has to be done for the liberation of those beings within each of us—to see that clearly as well: not only those who are to be helped and given service and offered guidance externally, but we continue honestly and directly seeing those deluded and unclear beings within each of us at all times. For everyone—all of us who have gathered here for this sesshin—to see this very clearly we put aside all of our ongoing, daily, usual, external things and we come here to realize deeply and directly this one truth. From this one truth we are able to see through our delusions, our dissatisfactions, our craving places, our attachments. And because we're able to see through those clouded parts we're able to let go of them and see this place clearly which is the place that unites all beings. From there to know this greatest, deepest peace and the true wisdom that comes forth from that place of holding on to nothing at all. When we can actually experience that deepest truth, then we can truly, coming out from that place, go into the world and bring that to all beings, because someone who is living in that truth, just by being wherever they are is able to bring that sense of being to all the people around them and inspire infinite great energy coming forth from everyone. To take this opportunity to realize that deep truth so that we can return to society and be able to share it with everyone! This is the true meaning of being able to encounter that one truth.

Further, we have the words of the Buddha's sutra, the Yuikyo Gyo, in which he said if we leave our experiences, our perceptions, our various roots of perceptions just as they are without realizing them in the most appropriate way, then we will always make opaque our clear seeing; we won't be able to realize our clearer state of mind. What this means is that all of our senses which are perceiving things externally, to be able to realize those perceptions with perfect clarity, not adding on all kinds of thinking. As Master Rinzai has said, to our first perception to not add on second associations and further thoughts and further thoughts. It's because we don't teach ourselves to practice so that we can just see, hear and perceive exactly as things are but are always adding extra thoughts, always being too influenced by things—the many, many things that are going on externally—we have those stimulations being what affect us. Because we don't really temper that and use our perceptions in a moderate, clear way, that is why we lose track of the true seeing and perceiving. In the same way, for

that to be the source of our clear wisdom we can offer to others. We come here to do the sesshin because we know this clarification and this realization of that truth which is not cluttered with a lot of external perceptions is what is most important. To see this clearly and go into the sesshin with this clarity of what has to be done here. To not be adding on any extra thinking to each moment's clear perception, to have this be what our ôsesshin is about. This is also what is referred to as ongoing clear mind moments. All day long to be in this state of mind; to not be cluttering it, to see things in this kind of clarity. It is for this that we come to do this sesshin: so that we can see and be in our most clarified, deep way.



SEPTEMBER TEISHOS

September 9, 2011
Day 1

Frosty leaves in the front garden, dancing in the wind
Reach the complete teaching, naturally
in accord with the Dharma
We must cut through the boundless obstructive hindrances
and awaken to self-nature—
The true and natural Buddha

Thereupon a certain goddess who lived in that house having heard the teaching of the Dharma of the great heroic bodhisattvas and being delighted, pleased and overjoyed, manifested herself in a material body and showered the great spiritual heroes.

Manjushri goes to visit Vimalakirti in accordance with the Buddha's request. Eighty-four thousand bodhisattvas had turned down the Buddha's request to go but now all of them wanted to see what kind of an encounter this could possibly be between Vimalakirti and Manjushri.

Vimalakirti was in his very small room in a bed all by himself, with nothing else in the room and yet those 84,000 bodhisattvas all fit in that same small room. Vimalakirti said to Manjushri, "Manjushri, you have come to see me but there is no sense of anyone coming. And when you leave there will be no sense of anyone departing. This is very wonderful. This is an excellent way of being." To this Manjushri said, "Of course! Of course I have no ideas of having come or leaving. To pull along such thoughts as having done something, there is no point in that." This is why Manjushri then asked Vimalakirti, "Why are you sick?" Vimalakirti answered that the reason he is sick is because society is sick; he himself has no personal reason for his sickness but his sickness is happening because society is sick.

Continuing, Manjushri asks Vimalakirti how he sees society and in what way should people in the world be seen. Vimalakirti answers, "People of the world have various symptoms of sickness, physical and otherwise, but all of these symptoms are only phenomena. If we think of a person as a sick person—when we get caught on only seeing that part of them which is their sickness—it is like a magician who makes it appear as if a person is their symptoms only. If we see it this way we cannot liberate them. Rather, not to see them in that narrow way of seeing. At night there are those who moan in a

dream, having a terrible bad nightmare. Of course, if we are nearby we have to shake them awake and say, "Hey! This is only a dream! You're only having a bad dream! Wake up!" When they wake up they are so relieved that it was just a dream and now it's over. It's the same for people who are caught on their phenomena, believing that they are real.

Manjushri again asks Vimalakirti, "You say that, but if you look at things like that then will people give rise to compassion for other people's pain if they only consider that pain as something which is mere phenomena?"

"Everyone gets confused by this." Vimalakirti begins his answer, "People, for example, in some religions help others pray for better success at work. They help them pray for a more harmonious household. They help them pray for better health, but will praying for these things and even getting them, truly wake them from this dream? Of course not. They have not at all resolved the bad dream's roots. Just because they get better health, because they get better success at their job, or because they get a more harmonious household, these might only make their ego even stronger. People have to see that it is the ego which is causing the confusion and the bad dream. Otherwise the ego only gets stronger and is never ending. That question of birth and death has to be resolved or the ego's roots just grow deeper. We have to see what truly has to be done and not get caught on seeing it only superficially. " In this way Vimalakirti answers, telling how being confused by phenomena makes it seem that we are sick whereas if we awaken to our ego's hold on us, then of itself, spontaneously, compassion will rise forth infinitely. This is the truth of the Buddha. Human energy, as it is, is compassionate and our clear mind comes forth of its own. All things living—even one small flower—all of them are born right from there. But if we hide under the shade of a big tree, that flower is hidden under the shade of a big tree and we never realize the fullest possible potential. For us naturally to be truly fulfilled in our way of being, that is what has to happen, according to the true teaching of Vimalakirti.

But Manjushri then says, "Nevertheless, people often feel they shouldn't even bother to work on this state of mind since we are going to die anyway. How can we actually resolve this?" This is why people often, even in an earthquake finding themselves in such

great desperation and great terror, could not only feel full of fear but also feel full of great pain that they could not truly help other people suffering around them. People seeing the true resolution of the question of life and death are able to see through this. But if they cannot find this resolution they feel that no matter what happens, no matter who is helped physically, there is no way to help them really resolve this question of life and death. And that leaves great disappointment and sadness.

It is said that the road begins with the first step, but people are also known to have said, "Yes, but the road to the first step is way too long." Before even beginning it, exhausted and having lost faith, that is the frequent state of mind of people who are over fifty. Even making that first step towards liberating our state of mind simply feels impossible. How can we take care of these people? To ask how to resolve this, Manjushri, puts this question to Vimalakirti. Vimalakirti tells him how people have to awaken to the greater power that has given us all birth and entrust in that power.

"But in these severe circumstances how can we entrust?" Manjushri continues. At this Vimalakirti says, "You have to let go of everything. Everything! And completely." Being anxious about little things, the more anxiety you have, the more anxiety is given birth to. So whether you are believing or not believing, to simply let go of all of it, only doing that Mu all the time, keeping that Mu going with every motion, every moment of seeing and hearing. With every moment of sitting and walking and lying down, to give everything we have to that Mu completely, not opening any gaps in between: This is very important. This is how Vimalakirti answers. There is only this possibility—continuing something like that Mu with no gaps. Throwing ourselves away completely. Throwing everything away completely and further and further throwing everything away completely—even throwing away the question of life and death! To do it and continually do it until everything possible is gone, completely gone, all gone—and without ceasing. This is what is called "ongoing clear mind moments."

Seeing that all of our thoughts can be let go of, our fears then can be seen in the context of how they can be let go of. Any idea of what is right and wrong is also let go of, and then something very mysterious occurs: A whole new life appears! We hold onto nothing. When we see that, there is only to bring our awareness to the fact

that all of life energy is born forth from here. In that life energy there is an amazing power. Some say that since the beginning of creation it has been this way; it has continued and gets more and more evolved. These forms we are now have been given life to by all those forms which have been given life up until this time—all of those cells, this clear bright mind! Our existence is not some limited one hundred year old disappointed state of mind. That only happens if you think too much about the desperate things that are going on. Rather we have to see our truth as that which is full of this huge power, this huge energy, and from its greatest source.

Thereupon, a certain goddess who lived in that house, having heard this teaching of the Dharma of the great heroic Bodhisattvas and being delighted, pleased, and overjoyed, manifested herself in a material body and showered the great spiritual heroes, the bodhisattvas and the great disciples with heavenly flowers. When the flowers fell on the bodies of the bodhisattvas, they fell off on the floor. But when they fell on the bodies of the great disciples, they stuck to them and did not fall.

The great disciples shook the flowers and even tried to use their magical powers, but still the flowers would not shake off. Then the goddess said to the venerable Shariputra, "Reverend Shariputra, why do you shake these flowers?" Shariputra replied, "Goddess, these flowers are not proper for religious persons. And so we are trying to shake them off." The goddess said, "Do not say that Reverend Shariputra. Why? These flowers are proper indeed. Why such flowers have neither constructual thought nor discrimination. But the Elder Shariputra has both constructual thought and discrimination."

As it is customary for the women from India even today to offer flowers and chanting to the Buddha, this was done in Vimalakirti's room as described here. But in this situation, when some of the flowers stuck on the disciples who were ordained, they did not like them and tried to shake them off. As they tried to get the goddesses to stop sending down the flowers, the goddesses asked, "Why are you so unhappy with having these flowers sent down to you?" To this Shariputra answered, "These are not natural flowers. This is not appropriate for an ordained person to have flowers pour down to them and have them stick to them." But the goddess said, "That is just your idea of what is appropriate and what is not

appropriate. That is simply something dualistic; this is only your own dualistic view of these flowers and how they should not be sticking to you because you are ordained. No matter what good thing, if you are doing it or receiving it with a dualistic state of mind, it is no longer truly a good thing."

Buddhism especially is against wanting to be thanked for doing something, because then people get caught on ideas of what is good and what is bad. That divides human beings into good people and bad people, and that continues this perception that there is a dualistic thought that is correct. Calling someone a good person, then we are also identifying a someone who is not. In this way, people who are looking at Buddhism can get very confused and in this way we are making them have more delusion rather than taking it away from them.

We get praised and we so easily want to carry that around with us and think about it. Or we get put down and criticized and we can't let go of the bad feeling of thinking that we're someone terrible. We carry these thoughts around and they continue within us and that becomes a very twisted state of mind. Thinking we are great because we are praised or terrible because we are corrected, it is this kind of dualistic ongoing chatter that Vimalakirti is referring to here.

Evil spirits have power over fearful men, but cannot disturb the fearless. Likewise, those intimidated by fear of the world are in the power of forms, sounds, smells, tastes and textures, which do not disturb those who are free from fear of the passions inherent in the constructed world.

If there is, for example, any little thing in our mind, we get very sensitive. We get bothered. We get afraid. If a bamboo leaf even just gently brushes against our neck, we suddenly think that something is trying to get us and we get freaked out by it; we can even have a heart attack. We could easily have an accident if we are driving with a mind that is full of fear and afraid of what might happen next and in that way cause an accident because we are so perturbed in our state of mind.

Thus, these flowers stick to the bodies of those who have not eliminated their instinct for the passions and do not stick to the

bodies of those who have eliminated their instincts. Therefore, the flowers do not stick to the bodies of these Bodhisattvas who have abandoned all of their instincts.

In this way, in the words of the last sutra of the Buddha, the Yuikyo Gyo, the Buddha said if we don't let go of all of the obscurations of our perceptions, then we make our originally clear mind—the source of our awareness—very opaque and unclear. But we have a hard time knowing what is moderate. Going overboard we become addicted; we even go to the degree of having some kind of drug dependency because we start with thinking at the beginning, “Well, I will just have a little,” not knowing how much we are deceiving ourselves. This is why we have to be very attentive to how we are relative to our attachments to things of the senses. When we do things too extremely, if we don't align our perceptions then we easily can lose track of what it is that we are doing and how attached we are to our sense perceptions and what clutter we bring to them. We have to see them all from the point of seeing from the source of them. If we get caught, then it is our ego that comes into the picture. And that is what is going on in the room of Vimalakirti when the flowers are falling down and getting stuck on people.

The Vimalakirti Sutra is in fact written for teaching people about the Path of the Mahayana, for people who are in a small-minded dualistic version of thinking of things for their own benefit or their own satisfaction, their own liberation. The more we try to get our own personal liberation, if it is only for ourselves and our own small-minded satisfaction, then that is a big problem. But if our awakened Mind is realized, then our compassion will rise and we will naturally want to do things for all beings. We can't do it without this point being well seen.

The true bodhisattvas forget themselves completely—even forget that they are a body—and so there is no sense for them of being caught on what is painful or pleasurable and what is desirous; they are not caught on their own personal way of being and so the flowers have nobody to even get stuck on.

As Master Rinzai says, “When we are perceiving something, to not add even a single notion or association onto what we perceive. If we practice this diligently then this is worth more than ten years of doing pilgrimage.” Do not add on any second thoughts or ideas to

what is perceived. Rather, let go of those wisps of thoughts that are always coming through due to attachments. To whatever we see, we don't add on any thinking about it, to whatever we taste, we don't add on any thinking to it, to whatever we hear, we don't add on any thinking to it, but just encounter those sense perceptions directly. Just as Rinzai says, to not get moved around by these wisps of thoughts. For this we do zazen.

And then, of course, although we have thoughts that are coming in and out, we don't get moved around by them. To let go of this is our deepest practice. To let go of that clutter added on and those attachments, to not give those our attention: This is Zen. Letting go of that which wants to gather and stick and clutter. To not let those things hold us back, but rather, like the flowing water that goes down the stream meeting big tree trunks, big boulders, and not being caught by any of them, just keeping flowing and flowing.

September 10, 2011
Day 2

Then the Venerable Shariputra said to the goddess, “Goddess, how long have you been in this house?” “I have been here as long as the elder has been in liberation.”

After the goddesses appeared in Vimalakirti’s room, many flowers fell from the heavens onto the disciples and the bodhisattvas. On the disciples, those flowers stuck to them. But for the bodhisattvas, the flowers did not stick to them. The goddess made the flowers fall. The disciples felt like it was very inappropriate to have these flowers falling and having them get stuck on them and Shariputra protested. But the goddess said, “Why? Why are you protesting?”

To be caught on such a thing as a flower falling down and sticking onto you, this is the Path of the person who is training only for themselves in the mountains, training for their own personal liberation. This is not the Path where one is practicing for all the beings in society. To encounter all those people and be in that equality—this is what the teaching of the flowers falling was for. Vimalakirti is saying how it is necessary to see this clearly: “It is your misunderstanding to think that having flowers fall down on you because you’re an ordained person is something which is inappropriate.” (These were not usual goddesses; they were a transformed manifestation of Vimalakirti. It wouldn’t be so interesting for just Vimalakirti to say all these things. Much more interesting is to have goddesses dropping down flowers that get stuck on disciples and not on bodhisattvas. But the one who is teaching this way is Vimalakirti; how all things are equal and to not be attached to any of them is the important expression of this way of teaching.)

The bodhisattvas did not have flowers sticking on them because they lived in society with the same pain and attachments and struggle as everyone in society. To be in this world of conflict and difficulty and live there like everyone yet be unattached to anything that happens, any difficulty, any struggle—within that living in society, being in the world—this is why the flowers don’t stick on the bodhisattvas. And the bodhisattvas would not be bothered if the flowers did stick.

In society, things are always changing. Ever ongoing, they are successively changing. Anything is possible and can happen at any second; this must be lived with in a way where we are not caught on it always changing, but to be strong and not moved around no matter what comes along. This is the way of the Bodhisattvas and it is because they know this state of mind that the flowers did not stick to them.

The goddess continued, “Elder you are foremost of the wise. Why do you not speak? Now, when it is your turn, you do not answer the question.” Shariputra then said, “Since liberation is inexpressible, Goddess, I do not know what to say.” The goddess said, “All the syllables pronounced by the elders have the nature of liberation. Why? Liberation is neither internal nor external. Nor can it be apprehended apart from them. Likewise, syllables are neither internal nor external, nor can they be apprehended anywhere else. Therefore, Reverend Shariputra, do not point at liberation by abandoning speech. Why? The holy liberation is the equality of all things.”

The goddess says that in order to be able to express that liberation we have to put it into words, and she says, “You can’t answer about how long you’ve been liberated and yet you are calling yourself a top disciple.” To this, Shariputra said, “In liberation, there is no need for words and no time, and so these cannot be expressed.” But the goddess disagrees. “You still have to be able to express it. Why can’t you express it? If you cannot it is not the real thing. And if you are so caught on time and space, your mind is not truly free. If your mind is truly free there is no such obstruction as being caught on an idea about time and space. If there is no such thing as time and space there’s no bragging about liberation.” And she says it’s as if you can say that you won’t die if you are liberated.

To be free from that idea of a physical body is fine, but the body does not exist in isolation. It has a physical reality and it also has, with this liberation, a need to do teaching. If we have a body, to use it for awakening and then to go into society with what we have realized and use that body to bring others to liberation. To even one day sooner realize liberation and bring it to all of society, this is what is most important and this the point of our bodies’ existence.

Even if we are awakened, our body has to die. Whether we are having many awakened days or few awakened days, as many of those awakened days as we can get we should use until our

physical body needs to die, so that we can pass this liberation to all beings. We need to speak the words of liberation to others and we need our body for the doing of this. Because we live we are able to spread this awareness of awakening. The words telling of liberation are very important; we can't just be silent. To see the bodhisattvas actually saying these things and working with them—Vimalakirti says clearly here that it has to be in this way, as he speaks through the goddesses. We use this body for liberation, not shying away from that: To have this experience and then get it to all beings through this body, with words.

As Hakuin Zenji has said in his Song of Zazen, "Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be any place else. Realizing the thought of no thought as thought, whether singing or dancing we are the voice of the Dharma." This is not about being caught on what we have realized and therefore thinking that it is something special. We align to that Mind and we realize it. Seeing this we express it, but we are not caught on being awakened because we have had some experience. We are not caught on saying hello and goodbye or doing any of the things we do in our day. We do them with our wholehearted application of ourselves, and within that, everything that we learn and realize we offer to others in this same way. "Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning, we cannot be any place else." Each mind moment is deeply steeped in this very clarity.

The goddess says, "Liberation is freedom from desire, hatred and folly, that is the teaching of the excessively proud. But those free of pride are taught that the very nature of desire, hatred, and folly is itself liberation." Shariputra answers, "Excellent, excellent, Goddess. Pray what have you attained, what have you realized, that you have such eloquence?"

Here Shariputra is saying that it is not about being freed from fear, greed and anger, only, it is right in the middle of having those to not be attached; this is where we find liberation.

If you are awakened you can speak freely in order to bring this awakening to everyone. But this is what Shariputra is still caught on. We have to see what the Buddha has helped us to realize—that it is important for us to not sit down on what we have understood but to always be continuing in our awareness and deepening it. And to not only know that we should not be caught on greed, fear

and anger but to live in a way that we are not caught on them while seeing that within them there is also a way to further liberation. The importance of this is taught here: not to be thinking that only I am awakened and be proud about that but to live from that awakened state in a way that others can learn from it. Here he is saying that if you are still moved around by greed, anger and ignorance then that is not true liberation. If you are still moved around by time, by space, and by acquiring it is not true liberation. The Buddha had said, "Those who are not caught on those attributes are those who are humble. And those who are humble are those who are free of pride and can see that from the very nature of desire, hatred and folly one can realize liberation. This is liberation."

To be able to see this we have to let go of our ideas of being special and let go of our attached feelings to greed, fear, and anger but to see that within those feelings there is also liberation possible. We have to have the honesty to see ourselves clearly in relationship to these. This is where we can tell that what the Buddha has taught is in what the goddesses are telling Shariputra. But Shariputra is still caught on his idea of liberation being something which is more narrow. This awakening has to be not only for a single person, but for awakening all beings. Within that universal experiencing of desire, hatred, and folly, we find that liberation. And finally, finally, Shariputra has agreed:

"Excellent, excellent Goddess! Pray what have you attained, what have you realized that you have such eloquence?"

To be able to speak that truth, that is what is so important, otherwise how can we share it with other people?

"Goddess," Shariputra says, "Pray, what have you attained, what have you realized that you have such eloquence?" The goddess says, "I have attained nothing, Reverend Shariputra. I have no realization, therefore I have such eloquence. Whoever thinks "I have attained, I have realized," is overly proud in the discipline of the Way-taught Dharma, Shariputra." "Goddess, do you belong to the disciple vehicle, to the solitary vehicle or to the great vehicle?"

Shariputra, actually asks the goddess how she has realized this liberation to which she answers, "I have attained nothing, Reverend Shariputra." The goddess says, "I do not think I am awakened like that. That is conceited. I have no need for anyone's confirmation;

that would be even more conceited. The very idea that I am awakened, or that one is awakened, is an obstruction. I have nothing that complex going on.” The goddess is not moved around by what Shariputra is saying in the slightest bit.

Shariputra has asked the goddess, “Do you belong to the disciple vehicle, to the solitary vehicle or to the great vehicle?” And the goddess answers very straightforwardly,

“I belong to the disciple vehicle when I teach it to those who need it. I belong to the solitary vehicle when I teach the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination to those who need them. And since I never abandon the great compassion, I belong to the great vehicle as all need that teaching to attain ultimate liberation.”

Shariputra asked this question, still not realizing that the goddess is a manifestation of Vimalakirti’s wisdom. This is only a question one would ask the goddess assuming that she was unawakened, bringing in these various vehicles. Here, however, she is answering straightforwardly that she is trying to awaken others in accordance to whichever of these vehicles can be best used. She speaks from her core in this answer. She explains how she considers the various vehicles and how the vehicles depend upon the person to be liberated. There is no certain one only that it should be all the time, but it depends on the person and the situation. As usual she refuses to be caught on his question and flattened by any of his requests and shows that she will align according to the situation. In this way, the goddess answers Shariputra.

“Nevertheless, Reverend Shariputra, just as one cannot smell the castor plant in a magnolia wood but only the magnolia flowers, so, Reverend Shariputra, living in this house which is redolent with perfume of the virtue of the buddha qualities, one does not smell the perfume of the disciples and the solitary sages.”

The goddess here gives her answers, saying that the Buddha taught according to each person’s capabilities, and in that way, teaching how everything is never permanent, all is in flux. There is nothing fixed and only if we can see this straightforwardly can we know this state of mind of the Buddha—holding the pain and the insecurity of others and then realizing that which is even more deeply clear, not being caught on one’s impermanent realization, but seeing there is always further to go.

So, why does this anxiety then come when we get older? It is because we are always thinking that we are going to be young forever. And so we live with our unlimited desires, spreading our anger in every direction, unable to contain that greed. We have to stop putting pressure on others and trying to get what we think that we want out of everything and everyone. We can let go of all of those desires and let up on that pressure. There are so many people in this whole world with no food for today. And as we see this suffering, we see how shallow we are when we are only chasing around our impermanence by trying to use our time and energy for getting that which we desire, expressing our fear and expressing our anger.

So what is the purpose? That all people should be able to see that huge, bright, clear, state of mind. We all live our lives every day seeing how our bodies are dying. But we have to not only see that but also know that huge, clear, open, emptiness of the great blue sky, that ancient sky, and become this state of mind as well as the one that knows that we are going to be not always in this physical body.

If that is eternal, if that huge ancient wide open sky is eternal, then isn’t our mind eternal as well? Don’t we just get caught in some idea of a small self? We have to bring ourselves to see clearly how this is only a borrowed body. As the great master Ikkyu said, “This body, which I have been able to use until this day, this month, this year, I now return.”

No matter what we are caught on, to let it go. To see this immense, huge, clear mind which is like that huge blue sky, and realize that we are that hugeness of mind! We do have to develop it and divide it in many small ways to do different things in our daily life, but instead of seeing that as who we are, to make the efforts together for all people to not divide that state of mind into small pieces but to live under that huge sky and realize that as our eternal Mind

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

“I have been here in this house for twelve years,” but this is not

about time. It would not be about years but could be about cycles, could be about weeks or months, but “twelve” just means for many, whether it’s years, cycles or months.

“Shariputra, I don’t remember exactly how long I have been here but I have only ever heard of the great vehicle here, nothing about dividing and enumerating—only to forget yourself and teach for others. There has never once been any talk of dividing it into small parcels of teaching or ways of teaching. Liberation is about all of those ways of teaching at their appropriate moment. We reach people by all of those different ways because they are all expressions of the wisdom of the Buddha. And all of those are expressions of the one great teaching.” In this way the goddess answers.

Shariputra was the most wise of all the disciples and because of that he is made the bad guy in this section. If one has deep wisdom, it is most important of all to not be conceited about having that deep wisdom. Wisdom has no limits. It has to be constantly deepened. It cannot be left unripe and narrow. We have to open our mind to its greatest possible expansiveness for the sake of all people—and for the sake that each and everyone shall realize this huge mind, free of all attachments and obstructions. And then it does not end even with that, but for us all to therein do a huge great mind cleaning and let go of all of our tangled and unnecessarily confused and unrealized places and to see that this hugeness is available for anyone. But if we stay caught on being a small self which is divided and isolated we cannot realize this hugeness of mind. To believe in humans’ truest, deepest, core and to help others realize that and live from that core ourselves, this is the Truth.

We have the Four Immeasurable Ways of true Mind: to live in infinite love, to live in infinite realization, to endlessly support each other in doing this, and to know this place and to help each other realize it and live together—to take care of each other’s insecurity and to be in this mind helping everyone to realize it. To make those efforts ongoingly: This is what is being taught here.

September 8, 2011
Day 3

“Reverend Shariputra, eight strange and wonderful things manifest themselves constantly in this house. What are these eight? A light of golden hue shines here constantly, so bright that it is hard to distinguish day and night; and neither the moon nor the sun shines here distinctly. That is the first wonder of this house.”

The goddess appears in Vimalakirti’s room and does a mondo with Shariputra, who keeps losing to her every single line. Finally, the heavenly being talks about the eight advanced Buddha qualities of Vimalakirti’s room. “In this place, there is a light brighter than gold, always shining,”—a light of wisdom, as Shariputra describes it. Anyone who has an insecure state of mind can find peace here.

Here the roshi speaks from his own experience, for which he apologizes, but he wants to tell about when he was a student and went to Kyoto to do an errand for his father. To do this errand he had to go on a bus to the large headquarters temple, Myoshin-ji, from Kyoto Station. To reach Myoshin-ji it was about an hour’s ride away from the station by bus, a bus full of passengers standing up because the bus was so full, on their way to work, on the way to school. It was a long bus ride and as he rode along, he noticed how everyone looked so heavy because they were in this rush hour going to work and school. All of their faces were dark from their challenging, long and full trip.

But as he looked through the faces, suddenly there was one that was very different. It was very bright. And the person with this bright face was wearing a koromo; he had encountered a priest. That’s who had this bright face. And when the roshi went to get off the bus at the stop where he had to do the errand for his father, he saw the priest get off at the same bus stop. The priest was going to Reiun-in Temple. He could see this because he followed him. And he decided that from there on this person would be the one also whom he would follow in his life.

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

For everyone there is this true bright light in our mind,. There is this

great light and this will bring us to be able to see through all things; this is possible for all beings.

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

We all want to meet someone who can receive our pressing and difficult qualities. But there are some people who are able to do that without our even knowing them. Before we can even speak our question or express our deep need for an answer to somehow squelch our insecure mind, a person already says something or just by being how they are makes that very question disappear.

At Vimalakirti's house many had gathered, but none of them there were anxious. It was not necessary to understand small-minded opinions; everyone was being there in graced harmony. No one was speaking of benefits, no one was speaking of disadvantages and dislikes or personal interest or personal attitudes. Everyone was being in an atmosphere where there was nothing like that going on; this is the way the Dharma was in the room of Vimalakirti. And if someone should come who has not been taught about various problems, even though they don't know that there are such complex things to think about and look at, they will be lifted—lifted up to know that deepest truth—and be able to begin their Path to realizing it by even one more step. This is the way it was in the house of Vimalakirti.

In this room, the goddess who was there would make it so that you always hear music. The roshi knows of a temple where he would go, when Mumon Roshi was alive, as his attendant. The priest there had a particularly loud voice and he was in charge of things at Hanazono College, especially the financial matters. Mumon Roshi was the head of the same Hanazono College where this man was in charge of the finances. So they would discuss this and the priest would always be speaking so loud in his booming voice. What the roshi remembers about this was that at the end of the meeting Mumon Roshi would say, “I ask your best,” to which this priest would end all of his talking with an agreement. And then there would be silence, and in that silence, the sound of the cicadas. Following this man's huge, noisy and very creative working, loud voice, when it would stop it would be so silent that the sound of the cicadas would sound louder than you ever heard them before,

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

And what were these treasure houses that were found here at Vimalakirti's? They were the treasures of using kind and loving words. Always there would be someone who would be coming there and needing something. They would be responded to first with kind words emphasized. One could always be there and be spoken to in this way. This was one of the greatest treasures of this place.

There are places where people always come and places where people don't come so often. As Omori Sogen Roshi—the famous Omori Sogen Roshi—would say (he had trained with Yamada Mumon Roshi), “There are always people coming to Mumon's place. He's always had a huge stash of things people are always bringing to him. He receives so many things. But why don't they come to my place?” Mumon Roshi would always, always, give whenever anybody came to see him. Even if a student had asked before and Mumon said, “Are you asking me for an allowance again? You just asked me the other day.” Then after saying he shouldn't be relied on so heavily, he would immediately give him more allowance. Eventually, he would give it in any case, and even when there were shady groups asking.

Anybody who saw these people coming in and asking Mumon Roshi for money would say, “What is he doing giving these people money?” They would come to request more favors and more favors and he would always give them what they asked for. He would be as furious as a person “who has triangular eyes” at his monks, but when people would come and ask him for something, he would always laugh and smile and give them whatever they wanted. And even though he was offered a medal of honor from his country, he said, “No, thank you.” He had no use from that. He had already received the medal he needed from the Buddha. He needed nothing more.

“Furthermore, Reverend Shariputra, at the wish of this good man, to this house come the innumerable tathagatas of the ten directions, such as the tathagatas Sakyamuni, Amitabha, Aksobhya, Ratnasri, Ratnarcis, Ratnacandra, Ratnavyuha, Dusprasaha, Sarvarthasiddha, Ratnabahula, Simhakirti, Simhasvara, and so forth; and when they come they teach the door of Dharma called the “Secrets of the Tathagatas” and then depart.

That is the seventh strange and wonderful thing.”

Vimalakirti's room not only held Shakyamuni Buddha and Amitabha, but also all of the others listed there. They would all give their particular secret teachings. And Vimalakirti would simply listen, humbly, and say, “Yes! Yes,” listening to what they said and then sending them away. Everyone was so happy that he had listened to them and allowed them to teach. The advanced disciples were glad to hear all of these various teachings, yet these were never obstructions to what they were doing in their practice, just many different versions of the same teaching. And no one would have any preconceived notions, but listen openly to all of them.

“Furthermore, Reverend Shariputra, all the splendors of the abodes of the gods and all the splendors of the fields of the buddhas shine forth in the houses. That is the eighth strange and wonderful thing.”

All these would not seem so strange today. That is because today we have the internet pouring into us. But even in those days the information from all those different teachings was brought into that one space and shared in an ongoing manner all day. This is how they realized Dharma brilliantly, learning things right in front of their faces where they were brought right to them, and saying at the same time that they were not yet fulfilled in their understanding of the Dharma. One had to ask if there was still a matter of it not being enough, but all of them very humbly knew that even with all of this teaching it was still not sufficiently developed within each of them.

“Reverend Shariputra, these eight things, eight strange and wonderful things are seen in this house. Who then, seeing such inconceivable things, would believe the teaching of the disciples?”

Shariputra then said,” Goddess, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?”

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

Shariputra said, “No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?”

Because it had not yet been seen that the goddess was a manifestation, a version of Vimalakirti, that is why Shariputra would

speak so condescendingly to the goddess. And when it says here, “Although I have sought my “female state” for these twelve years,” these twelve years is just a phrase which means for a long, immeasurable time.

In the same way that Hakuin Zenji wrote, “Realizing the form of no form as form, whether going or returning, we cannot be any place else,” this form of no form is what is being talked about. This is letting go of an idea of a female state—that there is no such thing possibly describable. We don’t eat differently because we are male or female. We eat and do zazen and samu wholeheartedly, and not differently because we are calling ourselves a male or a female. The goddess tells how it is a fact that Vimalakirti never falls into that rather common idea that if a woman is very lucky in her next incarnation, she might be incarnated as a man.

Shariputra then said,” Goddess, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?”

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

Shariputra said, “No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?”

The goddess then said, “Just so, Reverend Shariputra! All things do not really exist. Now, would you think, “What prevents one whose nature is that of a magical incarnation from transforming herself out of her female state?”

Thereupon, the goddess employed her magical power to cause the Elder Shariputra to appear in her form and to cause herself to appear in Shariputra's form. Then the goddess, transformed into Shariputra, said to Shariputra, transformed into a goddess, “Reverend Shariputra, what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?”

And Shariputra, transformed into the goddess, replied, “I no longer appear in the form of a male! My body has changed into the body of a woman! I do not know what to transform!”

The goddess continued, “If the elder could again change out of the

female state, then all women could also change out of their female states. All women appear in the form of women in just the same way as the elder appears in the form of a woman. While they are not women in reality, they appear in the form of women.”

With this in mind, the Buddha said, “In all things, there is neither male nor female.”

Then, the goddess released her magical power and each returned to his ordinary form. She then said to him, “Reverend Shariputra, what have you done with your female form?”

Shariputra answered, “I neither made it nor did I change it.”

The goddess said, “Just so, all things are neither made nor changed, and that they are not made and not changed, that is the teaching of the Buddha.”

This is to show you that things are not male or female. The goddess then gives another way to look at this. Can one really say a man, being male, is better than being female? These are not real, but are appearances. This is an idea of a difference only; it is only something imagined. It does not exist in the absolute. In the spring the flowers bloom, but are these flowers male or female? In the summer, a tree becomes full of leaves. These leaves, are they male or female? In the winter, the branches remain with not anything, no sign of life on them anywhere. Are these branches male or female? All of these things are form. They are not permanent but always in transition. All of these, as the goddess was saying, have no defined existences, male or female.

Then the goddess turned herself into Shariputra and asked the female version of Shariputra, “What are you doing in a female form now?” This was to show that all things are not male or female, that that is only a matter of kimono, of appearances. “You may be deeply awakened but you are still confused about the appearance of male and female,” she says to Shariputra. You have to see all of this differently. While endowed with these forms, we uphold each other from within these forms, but it is the true master which is beyond these forms, which must be realized.

Then, the goddess released her magical power and each returned to his ordinary form. She then said to him, “Reverend Shariputra, what have you done with your female form?”

Shariputra said, “I neither made it nor did I change it.”

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

What Vimalakirti really is trying to say here is that, in fact, there is nothing about being male or female that is beyond appearances. Our truest nature is not male and is not female. And because we know this, we can use that original nature and also that form of being male or female fully without confusion and see how all people, no matter what form, are equal. This is what Vimalakirti wants to say with this.

In the world there are men and women, and this is how all of us function; from that all of the functioning is born. But True nature is not distinguished by being male or female. We are all that truest center, and from that truest center, making use of our male or female nature and also our clear nature, we offer everything to society. We each have to honor and respect each other’s appearance. We have to see that each and every person has a clear human mind, and to be able to see it in the same way that we see that trees and rivers and mountains are truly exactly as they appear. All have a value, their own particular individual value, and all are absolutely equal. Seeing it this way, everything can be truthfully realized.

Today it is truly equal, but 2500 years ago there was still a lot of prejudice and discrimination. It was the Mahayana from that time on that taught to let go of that view that held to discrimination between men and women, and see both as equal, and to let go of any idea that women are only able to be liberated when reborn into a further life in the future as a male. Therefore it was the Mahayana that was able to guide people—all people—to awaken now, and not have some of us have to wait for a future opportunity.

It’s like the Sixth Patriarch said when he was challenged when he arrived at the place of the Fifth Patriarch, where he was called a person from an undeveloped other part of China. The Sixth Patriarch answered so clearly that “In the Buddha nature there is no north or south. In the clear, original Mind there is nothing to be discriminated against.”

Going beyond prejudice, a final stand on how it is, the goddess releases Shariputra from the form of a woman and brings him back to his original form.

September 9, 2011
Day 4

Then the Goddess released her magical power and each returned to his ordinary form. She then said to him, "Reverend Shariputra, what have you done with your female form?"

Shariputra said, "I neither made it nor did I change it."

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

The wisdom of Vimalakirti is an expression of the Mahayana teaching that Buddha nature is what everyone is endowed with. To make this even more clear, this goddess and Shariputra are having a conversation here. This sutra of all the sutras is the most like an opera, with many stories and characters. At this point in this opera it is teaching that there should be no discrimination about whether a person is a male or a female because within the form of things everything is one and equal. But here it is not only talking about it: The goddess, who was representing the female version, turns Shariputra, who represents the male, into a woman and then she becomes Shariputra.

It appears that we have the particular form, being a man or being a woman. These six billion cells which make up a human body, even among themselves they can become an intestine, they can become a stomach. These cells, some of them become our eyes, some of them become our ears. This is how a human being's body is produced.

It is the same in this world: We can't eat only fish all the time, so we don't have only fish salespeople; everyone can't be a person who sells fish. In the olden days, there were all kinds of individual jobs and responsibilities—not only catching the fish, but then getting the fish to the market. Today everything is sold at a convenience store. But there are still many kinds of jobs and positions: We don't just eat fish. We also need spices. We need clothes for the four rotating seasons. And so we have many different kinds of people doing many different kinds of jobs, and we have many material things that are useful. This is the truth of the world of material things, all through it, and this is all true as well in the world of people. .

But even so, if it's a man it's still Buddha nature, if a woman it's still Buddha nature, a child is Buddha nature, an adult is Buddha nature, a sick person is Buddha nature, a healthy person is Buddha nature. A person who is working is Buddha nature, one who is not working is Buddha nature. Everyone is expressing something different, but everyone's source is one and the same.

On the planet we have many different climates all happening at the same time. The weather is always changing in every particular location as well. And if we are missing something, no matter what kind of a character or version of human being we are, we are able to supply it and bring it forth. This is human's way of being; that is our wisdom and that is what is being taught here.

Then the goddess released her magical power and each returned to his ordinary form. She then said to him, "Reverend Shariputra, what have you done with your female form?"

Shariputra said, "I neither made it nor did I change it."

"Just so," says, the goddess, "All things are neither made nor changed, and that they are not made and not changed, this is the teaching of the Buddha."

The goddess shows Shariputra with her supernatural powers how it is to be a woman. And once he's understood this she releases him back to his usual form as Shariputra, teasing him by asking him where has his female form gone. Shariputra responds, "I neither made it nor did I change it."

The body is always changing in every instant; it only looks this particular way in this very second. Before lunch when we are hungry we can become very irritable. But after lunch we are calm and easy, just with the difference of one single meal. We think we are the same person all the time, but we are always changing. We are always without any permanently fixed form. "Realizing the form of no form as form"—this is the way that is said in the teaching of Hakuin Zenji. This no-form way of being, we mentally understand it and yet we then look for a something called a no-form.

Muso Kokushi—whose name meant, "Dream Window" and who was the founder of Tenryu-ji, wrote that he was always traveling—

traveling to Kyoto, traveling to Tokyo, never staying in any fixed place and residing there. Someone asked him what this was like, to abide nowhere. Muso Kokushi said, "No, it wasn't about abiding nowhere." He said he never went anywhere; he was always in his own house, on this planet, just like we don't think that we are going somewhere because we go into the next room in our house. When we go into a bathroom, we go into a living room, we don't think, "Now I have gone somewhere." In the same way, on this planet wherever we are is the place that we are at that time. The planet, all over, is our house. It is not that we have gone some place, nor did we come back from some place. We're always right where we are.

This is true for a child or for a person who is an adult. We become that moment's appropriate state of mind depending on if we are a child or if we are an adult but that doesn't mean that we have gone anywhere. And we can always encounter a person with their similar state of mind: Meeting a child we become like a child, meeting an adult we become like an adult. As Hakuin Zenji has also said in his work, the Song of Zazen, "As with water and ice, there is no ice without water, apart from sentient beings, there are no buddhas." Water in a cup can then be poured out of a cup and into a plate. And the water from the plate can then be poured into a jar. But if we are always holding onto a hardened fixed form of an "I" or a "me, me, me" we cannot fit into anything else. This is the truth of no form, but people are always being caught on the form. This is what the goddess is teaching Shariputra.

When sitting, we do it with the state of mind of becoming that sitting. When walking we become that state of mind of walking and when we are working we become the state of mind of working. It cannot be understood conceptually but only by becoming it completely.

And the goddess answers Shariputra, saying, "Just so. All things are neither made nor changed, and that they are not made and not changed, that is the teaching of the Buddha."

Yes, that is true and not only for humans. It is also true of soft new leaves, which develop into stronger, firm, deeper green leaves. And with the chill, strong wind those leaves change into brilliant colors and dance, swirling, falling to the ground. When the snow comes the branches are bare with no more leaves there. But the leaves do not no longer exist, they have become the flowers, they have become the bark.

Our forms are always changing and that is how it is in the world—that in every instant, everything is changing. In India we have, for example, the Indus River, the Ganges River, and it seems that those are always the same rivers. “This is the Indus River.” But it is never the same river. Each river, all rivers, are always changing. If it was always the same river then the water would become stagnant and rotten.

The scenery of the fall, the scenery of the spring, are clearly telling us that we can now stop being caught on conceptual ideas of what that scenery should look like because it is always changing. Things don’t stay the same. We have a concept of what it means to be old, to be elderly or young. And we also have many, many, freer ways of looking at something.

Our left and right eyes see together in alignment and focus on a singular point, which then has brought our sight to where it has become well evolved and we are capable of perceiving in this abundantly filled world. We can see from being able to perceive in that way how things are always changing, not only in terms of a thing but also of a place, of a moment. We do what is on our mind. We see flowers blooming, we see the petals falling. We then, decide we would like to put this into a poem or share it with someone. While there is nothing absolute, how we receive these things is always changing form as well. It’s only when we can grasp this in our deepest true heart that we are liberated. Not to always think that this moment is how things will always be but instead to see that this is the way it is just in this moment. To be able to really see this completely and totally, we do zazen.

We do not do zazen to have lots of mozo and lots of extra thinking. We are realizing and receiving that awareness which is huge and always in the moment of being true. And if we can see this truly and clearly, then we can make something. If we are not seeing things in this way as changing in every second, then we are making a big mistake.

All people seen just as they are in their perfect mind, no matter how it is they appear, from here comes this place where we can perceive what life is actually for, what our particular purpose is. And then we can see that that singing bird and everything else is also

changing. With this true, deep awareness of that we can guide and show it to others. This is how the Dharma works, always, in each and every instant with everything in transience, with everything different from how it was until now, and different from how it will be from now.

Shariputra then asks, “Goddess, where will you be born when you transmigrate after death?”

The goddess answers, “I will be born where all the magical incarnations of the Tathagata are born.”

Shariputra says, “But the emanated incarnations of the Tathagata do not transmigrate nor are they born.”

The goddess answers, “All things and living beings are just the same; they do not transmigrate nor are they born.”

Next it says that Shariputra says this, but he has not really said something like this. In fact Shariputra wouldn’t say something like that, but he does for the purpose of this story going as it has to go. When the Buddha was born he was already dedicated to working to liberate all beings for all the eighty years he was alive. But we cannot, even hearing this, be deceived by an idea of things being fixed. Rather, to realize that no matter what and who we are, as long as we have any idea of it we have to pull off that kimono and see what is actually there. And anyone with awareness knows, as Master Ikkyu has said, “Well, up until today we’ve borrowed this body. This body is a borrowed thing and now we return it on this day of this year at this time. We return this body which we have been given to use.”

In this always changing world we see how material things are like our body as well and they appear to exist in the way the flowers do in the spring, in the way the maple leaves turning colors exist in the autumn. “I leave no gifts”—this is what Master Ryokan said, “but when I die, I leave all these things to you. These flowers of spring, the cool wind of the summer, the turning leaves of fall, the quiet snow of winter.” Like the Buddha who has been telling us to see, “what is it that is looking at those flowers and those maple leaves?” he never stops telling us this. It has never died and never been born.

There is nothing of truth in the whole world except that truth that everything is always changing and that is the way of nature. Our

mind's truest, deepest wisdom must be seen in this way, clearly, or how can we know this truest deepest amazement?

Next the goddess said to Shariputra, "Just so, Reverend Shariputra, it is impossible that I should attain the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood! Why? Because perfect enlightenment stands upon the impossible. Because it is impossible, no one attains the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood."

Shariputra said, "But the Tathagata has declared: 'The Tathagatas, who are as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, have attained perfect Buddhahood. They are attaining perfect Buddhahood, and will go on attaining perfect Buddhahood.'"

Next Shariputra says this to the goddess: "For what, then, did Buddha leave behind all of those sutras and tell us to awaken even a day sooner? Why are there so many monks, more than the grains of the Ganges' sands? So how could the goddess say that there is no awakening?"

To this the goddess answers, "Reverend Shariputra, the expression 'the buddhas of the past, the present and the future' is a conventional expression made up of a certain number of syllables. The buddhas are neither past nor present nor future. Their enlightenment transcends the three times. But tell me, Elder, have you attained sainthood?"

"Your living energy cannot be given any verbal description." This is the goddess speaking: "You are playing around with words and concepts and your true mind won't be realized by doing that. Who is it that says those words? And who is it that is hearing them?" She continues, "You are grasping after a clear mind you think you have left behind somewhere. Tell me, Elder, have you attained sainthood? If you think you are awakened or if you think you are not awakened, that is all only fooling yourself. There is no such form to be grasped, nor is there anything to be achieved nor to acquire. So there is nothing to say you understand and no attachment to anything; isn't that attaining sainthood?" Even if monks as many as the sands of Ganges should awake, they were still never without that originally clear Mind.

The goddess says, "Reverend Shariputra, that expression, 'the Buddhas of the past, present and future' is a conventional expression made up of a certain number of syllables." Does that mean that there is nothing to do, or should we be staying deluded eternally if we don't realize this? Don't be scared by your own shadow.

Master Bankei Zenji says in his teaching on the Heart Sutra that the human mind is like a mirror. Just because something is reflected in the mirror doesn't mean the mirror gets heavier. Or if something unpleasant is reflected in the mirror it doesn't become damaged. It does not become more pure if something pure is reflected in it nor does it increase because something is reflected there or decrease when the reflection goes away. These are all words from the Heart Sutra. It comes, it's there, it goes. And the mirror is then again empty without a trace. This is the teaching of Bankei Zenji.

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

Since Shariputra is in the room with Vimalakirti, we just had a moment's change of scenery here. Vimalakirti tells him this is not just any old goddess you're talking to here. This is her great play to awaken others. She is always filled with her great vow in every single instant, and in every single direction, every single location, like Kwan Yin, like Kannon Sama, taking any chance with any person and opportunity to liberate others, taking every form in the world possible; she is like Kannon taking all forms. This is her way of even offering us challenges that are difficult, becoming awful, terrifying forms that have to be caught by policemen. But those are all to offer us bad examples as well, giving us wisdom in the reverse way, that way of teaching when we become sick or when we die suddenly, teaching us that it is only this one instant that we can know. A parent dies, a child dies, suddenly dying. We see, we feel as if we have been dropped from heaven into hell in one instance. We experience this and we realize that all of these experiences give us deepening wisdom. All kinds of people, all kinds of experiences. We see that from all of them we are receiving that wisdom and that teaching in so many ways so that we can know these infinite forms of functioning. This is the way that Vimalakirti is teaching us.

September 10, 2011
Day 5

Chapter 8 The Family of the Tathagathas

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

From today, we will begin the following chapter after the one on the goddess; this is called, “The Family of the Tathagathas.” We have, with this chapter and the forthcoming chapter, “The Mystery of the Not-Two,” come to the most essential, the core part of the Vimalakirti Sutra. Vimalakirti was the richest man in all of India even though he never appeared like that; he didn’t go around dressing and looking like a rich person. He would give money generously to creative young people and to needy older people. And to children with no parents he also was giving.

Of course, he had a deep perspective and great wisdom. Whenever one would encounter him he would teach that; one would receive wisdom on all aspects that he would offer. He knew the whole country’s people. He knew the king, he knew the king’s court, he had friends everywhere, and he made everyone wonder why he had gotten sick. Everyone came to visit Vimalakirti and said, “Well, what are you doing? You’re sick?” People of high profile would all come and visit him. He would tell them how we have to be aware of how quickly life passes by and how we never know when it might be over.

Vimalakirti had a fierce and deep seeing eye and would point things out from his sharpness; some people would be very, very uncomfortable with that. . What he was saying, always, was that things of form must always disappear. To have such spiritual sharpness and insight to see such things was very difficult for some people. Many saw him as too sharp to go and visit. But this is how Vimalakirti would teach again and again—how we are things of form and that without fail we will eventually crumble

Our true essence is our wisdom. In our culture, in the philosophy of our culture, in what carries us, we have learned that things are changing so rapidly. But our mind alone is different. That eternal life energy is to see that everything is changing. This kind of spiritual understanding is the reason for the Buddha’s coming into the world

and teaching us all.

While the Buddha told many to go and visit Vimalakirti, nevertheless, everyone so unusually turned down his request because they had heard how they would have their mistakes pointed out to them by Vimalakirti with his strict words. They knew that he was very sharp—one who saw very, very well. Manjusri Bodhisattva alone said that he would go, and that would be a great moment, so when Manjusri Bodhisattva went to encounter Vimalakirti, the 84,000 bodhisattvas all followed right after him.

Vimalakirti told them he was sick because he was concerned about things in society, that he was sick because people in the world are sick, and that from living with that one could see how phenomena are always changing. He used the way that change was manifested by his body in particular, as a way of teaching.

The bodhisattvas—those who have realized the truth deeply and use it to teach—these are normal human beings. This is true of many, many bodhisattvas who came to see Vimalakirti. There were 84,000 that joined in this small room and they all knew that we all have this innate pure clear wisdom within and it is that wisdom from which we have to learn.

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

To be able to use these words of the Buddha Dharma, the Buddha way, we have to look at them and we need to see clearly the basic laws of the universe. These are laws of nature, these laws of the universe, so these must be all followed each day by each person; that’s each person’s work to do. We each have to see that we are not to go against these laws of behavior. No matter what state or part of a country we are in, this is the same anywhere because this is how we can live on a Path which, whether we know it or not, we are all living on all the time.

In order to live on this Path in the way of the Dharma, one of the very first things we have to be able to do is to do good things and not to do bad things. We have to drop our narrow idea of what it is that a self has to do; if we are not thinking about our physical body or what we can do to make it feel even better or about our way of being more healthy, this is best. And it is one thing that we all

are responsible to do. We have to face this way of being possibly unhealthy in daily life by not being too focused on thinking about our physical body. In this way, we can truly clarify what is the best way to be able to keep ourselves healthy. To be able to see that we are not this physical body, but at the same time to take care of it in a wise way, that is in keeping with the law. To truly clarify what we are doing all the time is the way to see if what we are doing is in the way of truth or going against it.

Manjusri continued, “How does the bodhisattva follow the wrong way?”

Manjusri says now how bodhisattvas should live, by asking Vimalakirti how we can in our everyday life live like a bodhisattva. This is what Vimalakirti is being asked here. Manjusri is addressing and speaking about all of those bodhisattvas who work in the world. This is the most important point: that we do whatever we possibly can do to care for those who are suffering. This is difficult, but if we do this it will without fail come to fulfillment if we continue it throughout our whole lifetime. We will realize this huge all-embracing state of mind. For doing this we have to give rise to a great deep vow.

The way to look at this great deep vow is that it is like getting on a train for, say, Seattle. We choose the best way, the best vehicle to go on, to get to Seattle. And if we get on that vehicle and we just don't get off of it, then we will for sure get to Seattle. This is the bottom line of the Way the Bodhisattva. Even though it seems impossible what we are deciding and vowing to do, if we get started and just don't stop it will come to fulfillment. If not like that, it is not the Path of the Bodhisattva. Here it is not saying when the bodhisattva follows the wrong way he follows the way to attain the qualities of the Buddha. Following the wrong way does not mean that the bodhisattvas should be doing bad things, but that we should not be stuck on what good we've done or what good we are doing. If we are doing things to look good in society or so that other people should approve of us, that is not the point of the Way of the Bodhisattva. In the Bible it is written that when good works are repeated too much they are no longer good works. And also it says in the Bible that the left hand should not know what the right hand is doing—that we are not doing these things to alleviate the suffering of others in order to be self-congratulated or congratulated by others.

When we do zazen it is not so simple to do it well. We feel tired and sleepy and achy and distracted and scattered. Baso Doitsu was known for doing great zazen. Nangaku Ejo Zenji was building a dojo in the mountains when he heard in the same mountains there was someone of excellent zazen power, sitting; he heard about this fantastic person of zazen and decided he had to go see him, to see this wonderful zazen.

And sure enough, when we got there there was someone doing great, wonderful, excellent-postured zazen. And so, Nangaku Ejo asked him, “For what are you doing this wonderful zazen?” To which, Baso Doitsu answers him, “Obvious, isn't it? To realize satori, to know the Buddha's state of mind.” To this, Nangaku Ejo answered, “Is that so?” And he sat down nearby where Baso Doitsu was doing excellent zazen and he picked up a tile and a stone and he started scraping the tile with the stone. Baso Doitsu said to him, “What are you doing?” Nangaku Ejo said, “Me? I'm making a mirror.” Baso Doitsu said, “You're what? You're making a mirror? Anyone knows you can't make a mirror out of a tile by scraping it with a stone.” “Is that so? Well, that physical body that has to pee and poop and eat and sleep, you think that just sit it down is going to make it into a Buddha?”

“Well then,” said Baso Doitsu, humbled, “Then what should you do if you want to become a Buddha?” To this, Nangaku answered, “Tell me, if you had an ox and you had a cart and you wanted that ox to pull that cart, would you hit the cart or would hit the ox?” And then hearing this for the first time Baso Doitsu understood that it was not his perfectly postured zazen sitting that was going to bring him to the fulfillment of realizing the state of mind of the Buddha. No matter how skillfully he was sitting, it was the first time he had seen it this way, that in everything he did, in any posture, in any moment he had to be continuing the state of mind of zazen. He finally saw this, that just to sit and guard and manipulate a good sitting posture is not the way to awakening, but rather, to sharply cut through everything that is extra in every single moment till we can forget our body and our thinking completely! Doing it that way there will without fail, be a moment when all of it is forgotten completely. But we cannot be moved around by anything whatsoever. This is the way that Vimalakirti was teaching.

Vimalakirti replied, “Manjusri, when the bodhisattva follows the wrong way,

he follows the way to attain the qualities of the Buddha.”

Manjusri continued, “How does the bodhisattva follow the wrong way?”

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

“So what do you mean about following the wrong way?” Vimalakirti responds.

Those five deadly sins mean being sick or being in great pain as well. Ninety-eight percent of people in terrible pain can be helped to some degree by pain relief, but there are also cases where that is not possible, where there is terrible pain that cannot be helped—cancer of the bone marrow or other severe cases do still exist—and this is what is being referred to as one of the five here. To be in that situation but to not feel your body at all. For example, this is possible with deep profound prayer, which is founded on and includes the deepest faith. This is what he is referring to in this point.

“Even should he enact the five deadly sins, killing the father, killing the mother, killing an arhat, harming a Buddha, breaking up the harmony of the Dharma, the Buddha and the Sangha.”

The way these words are to be taken are not literally. To kill an arhat, means to stop the line of flow of true wisdom. Not crushing the Sangha’s harmony—this is written clearly in the Dhammapada and is told clearly of as well as in the Record of Rinzai: We have the story of the disciple of the Buddha whose name was Daibodatta. Early on in his training he was a very sincere disciple, but later he made a deal with the prince of the Madada country to kill his father to get that power and then Daibodatta would kill the Buddha and get the Buddha’s power and goods. And so the son of the king—the prince—got his father arrested and put into jail with a sentence of not being ever fed, so that he would be able to kill him by having him die of starvation in jail. But the queen, his mother, snuck honey on a little bit of flour into the jail in a very clever wise way and so her husband was saved from dying of starvation. But when seeing how this had worked, her son had them both put in jail, the king and the queen. When they were in jail they could only be saved because from their small, small window they could see Vulture Peak from which the Buddha had given his great teachings. Seeing the Vulture Peak they were inspired to everyday spend long hours praying to

the Buddha. And through this prayer, he instructed them to pray the Buddha’s name without ceasing, all the time, so they could forget their bodies completely, which they did. But later, their son had them both killed.

Daibodatta tried many times to kill the Buddha, even to having a crazed wild elephant step on the Buddha’s head, but the Buddha escaped. He also escaped when Daibodatta and others tried to make a large rock fall down a mountain with a great speed so that it would crush the Buddha. But the Buddha stepped aside just in the nick of time. However, on his finger, he did get a cut which bled from this rock. Eventually, Daibodatta fell into hell.

These kinds of things are the five deadly sins. To kill one’s father also refers to, not to literally kill one’s physical father, but to be able to cut through the great darkness of ignorance, to sweep that away, which is what zazen is for. That is to kill the father. To kill the mother is to let go of all of our personal attachments, because a mother is symbolizing that in her attachment to her own children over others’ children.

To kill the ideas on their coming forth, this is what is most important. To kill that attachment to material things that we are so always holding onto, and to be able to free up all of the most terrible states of mind that keep us from being in our endowed Buddha’s state of mind is the point of all of these. To not do these things and to always keep our mind pure is the teaching here. To not be moved around by anything. We can’t; we have to be able to do our zazen not just because, “Well, today I feel like doing a little bit of zazen,” but because we know that no matter what, we have to realize this state of mind. We cannot continue without it. And for doing zazen in this way, in such a deep motivation, Vimalakirti is teaching us here.

September 11, 2011
Day 6 Teisho

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

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

Manjusri continued, “How does the bodhisattva follow the wrong way?”

Vimalakirti replied, “Even should he enact the five deadly sins, he feels no malice, violence, or hate. Even should he go into the hells, he remains free of all taint of passions.”

Manjushri asks Vimalakirti “In what way should a Bodhisattva follow the Buddha’s way?” And in this way Vimalakirti answers: When the bodhisattva follows the wrong way, then he follows the way to attain the qualities of the Buddha.” Manjushri thought he would say that people should be truthful and industrious and honest. But instead he is enlisting these unexpected qualities. Most would imagine a list of well-behaved qualities would be answered, but Vimalakirti is saying that we have to set the root of the truth in very deeply.

Here we have the words of the Lotus Sutra regarding this, “A Buddha appears in the world to open the treasury of truth, to indicate its meaning by causing sentient beings to see into it, and by causing sentient beings to be able to enter it and abide in it, to open each person’s already clearly-seeing eye which is the same as that seeing eye of the Buddha. And if we can awaken it in that way then we can create a harmonious society which accepts everyone equally—a paradise right here.

The usual way of perceiving the Buddha’s Path is this: that we should do some things that make us able to go to paradise. But the teaching is different from that. It is not to try to make a paradise, it is to rather, let go of that ego that makes wherever we are not a paradise, and to not divide the world because of something called a Buddhist Path. The Mahayana and the Theravadan Paths are one and the same at not thinking of things in the way of higher or lower—not giving people some kind of order of high and low in mind, but rather, to do the practice in such a way that it can be done by

everyone. There are many who may have seemed, in any given time, to fail a grade in school, for example, but that is not the point of measurement. Rather it is for everyone to be seen as their Buddha nature, no exceptions.

If we can see the whole picture we won’t get caught on some idea of an appreciation of things or of people only for what they do, which will strengthen their ego. Strengthening the ego is not the point. Increasing the ego is not the point because from the origin there was no ego. It was not the ego that made beings be involved in the survival of the fittest; it was preservation of the species that was the motivation of the various beings. How important it is to let go of our preferences in order for the truth to be kept alive—to really work with the ego in this way! It has to be great, deep efforts to keep that truth alive, or else it will just extinguish the whole species. Only the ego of human beings tries to keep something else also alive.

Amoeba were the first species, then others evolved and from this there was a species crisis where species were affected by a chemical process concerning the oxygen level, where the environmental balance was not so in favor of that existing and that almost everything became extinct. The things that did not become extinct had to struggle for existence and survival. Neanderthal people and other beings of that time came up with the invention of words and other tools to survive this great era’s dilemma. They became able to exist harmoniously and therefore survive. These were Buddhas. More and more the quality of empathy could be experienced, and for the first time a quality of spiritual character came into being.. Through this struggle human evolution came to be able to continue to the place where a state of mind which could realize the wisdom of including all beings into it became possible. This was not just a conceptual idea about all beings being included. It was the wisdom of seeing and realizing this. This was many years ago, following which we have the great sages, the great beings of deepest wisdom—of Socrates and Christ, of Confucius, of the Buddha. And the Buddha’s Path from there was also created. When we see this we see that the world just continuing selfishly would not have been able to survive. To not be afraid of devils and bad qualities, but to see through all this.

There is a story about parents who sent their daughter to study so

that she could find someone of high class to marry. And when they asked when she came back from school what she had learned, she said they told her she should not bother with filial piety, and the parents were very upset. They sent her to school to become a better possible wife and here she was being told not to honor her parents. So they went to the teacher and complained, saying why are you teaching our daughter, in her ethics course, that she should not respect and look highly at her parents? But the teacher said, "I didn't teach her that she shouldn't feel filial piety. What I taught her was she shouldn't be absorbed in whether or not she had filial piety and be conceited about the fact and be self-consciously aware that what she was doing was filial piety, when having those emotions for her parents and ways of taking care of them should be done naturally without an idea of being a child who was filially pious.

"Even should he enact the five deadly sins, he feels no malice, violence, or hate. Even should he go into the hells, he remains free of all taints of passions."

There are places such as prisons where people are put who behave in very negative ways, and there was a priest, named Kitano Gyokai, who wanted to teach people of this state of mind of being free from all taints of passions and so he got himself thrown into prison. There he taught the people who had been put into that prison, the Lotus Sutra. He would always tell the people who were in prison that they were in prison because while having this Buddha nature they had all forgotten about it and so they had all been put into prison so they could learn about it again, and to think of their loved ones and remember them deeply. He went over the whole Lotus Sutra again and again, doing it by every single line. These prisoners would be freed because their term was over, but soon they would end up again in the same prison, but the priest would very patiently cultivate their deeper state of mind.

"Even should he go into the states of the animals, he remains free of darkness and ignorance. When he goes into the states of the asuras, he remains free of pride, and conceit, and arrogance."

This year on March 11 at 2:46 in the afternoon there was a huge earthquake of 9.3 magnitude, and a tidal wave of 38 meters that hit in Japan. Coming to see this, we cannot imagine by only having it enter our eyes on some kind of a flat media material—to see it in

newspapers or to see it in some way that is not three-dimensional. To go visit it himself, which the Roshi did, was to see huge pine trees that are the huge, huge, old pine trees all twisted hideously in the same direction and all laid down flat from the huge power of the water that was 38 meters high. A 7,000-ton ship was found on the third floor of a building! And in that tragedy, 28,000 people were killed. This was a true hell. Those who had no way to protect and provide for themselves were like hungry ghosts. And those who had lost everything, everything, could only wonder, Why am I still here? Yet not one person in this situation was found stealing or looting. People of that area in Japan are known to be bottom-line good and honest people with strong integrity. Those who have some tool shared it, using their wisdom, and from there further wisdom was born in taking care of themselves and others. Not only is it a personal wisdom, but one that brings together what is possible for all people. Vimalakirti is saying that the true mind can be most realized and must be most realized in the most difficult circumstances. And then we can know this truth—the Way of the Buddha's Path—from living it in actualization.

"When he goes into the states of the asuras, he remains free of pride, conceit, and arrogance."

Greed, desire and ignorance are here and no light is there. It is a given that our body longs to live, to stay alive. It is the nature of our being alive that we want to eat food and drink water and stay existing. This is our basic modus operandi, but because of it we can become, if we center on our personal needs, very greedy. Life energy is such that we want to hold on to it tight. We want to be able to eat to prevent ourselves from dying. And so, of course, our body responds that way. When we don't have enough food we get irritable, we get angry, we get egoistically irritated. And we get upset at the people who are nearby us and especially if we are people who have already had a lot we get angry that we don't have the same amount anymore. To bear this kind of situation we get greedy and moved around. Rather, to not get angry in such a situation, to not be moved around by that greediness, to not be in the clutches of and the slave to that situation—this is the way to use this kind of challenge for truly developing our deepest wisdom.

As it says in Christianity, do not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing. In another angle on this, to not show when we are doing something beneficial, to not be doing it from the point of view

that we want to get approval. This is a very important practice in the Buddha's Way. We want someone to think we are special because we are doing something good if we do something for people. If we do something at all and we are doing it from the point of getting praised and approval, then it is not one of the ways of walking the Buddha's Path. Rather, to not care if we are acknowledged or not, or if anyone is even noticing it, or else if we can't see through it in this way it is not the Buddha's Way.

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

Some people always have to save whatever they get, even if it's their used chopsticks from a meal on the airplane—the salt and pepper and chopsticks, tying them up taking them home, never using them. Or if it is a little piece of string or ribbon and wrapping paper, never throwing them out but gathering them in case some day they might be of some use. We may need all of these things at sometime, we never know. And there are positive points to this. There might actually be a time when something like this could be necessary.

Mumon Roshi had a person in his family, 120 years ago, who was named, Yamada Taijun. Yamada Taijun was famous. He was famous for being so very careful that even though he had candles he refused to light them even when the night time came. And then if someone came into his entranceway to visit, he would take out two stones, two flint stones, rub them together and make a tiny spark so the person coming to visit could see that the host was in, and could crawl up into the room where they would talk in the dark. And then when it was time for the guest to go home, he would rub the flint stones together again, so that they would have a small spark to see where they had left their zori.

A sarcastic young person, from the neighborhood, came to see him in the evening time, and when Yamada Taijun went to rub the flint stones together, he said, "No, no, no, don't do that, you'll wear out your stones." And when the young man was finished talking to Yamada Taijun, Yamada Taijun went to scrape the flint stones, and he said, "No, no, no, don't do that you'll wear out your stones. And I already put my zori into my belt, so I don't need the light to find it." And at this, Yamada Taijun got even more annoyed saying, "You put your zori into your belt? Well, that's even worse. You're going to get my tatami

all dirty and I'll wear out my broom sweeping up that."

Okay, so he has this quality which is unusually extreme, but it was at this very same time that the famine of the Tenpo Era happened. Because there was no food and nothing for people to eat and people could not make money or grow the food at that time, this relative of Mumon Roshi's, Yamada Taijun, gave every single penny he had saved from being so careful, fastidious with his use of money, to help people. He had kept it for this time when it was really necessary. And because of this man's great effort and way of being, there is, right in the hometown Mumon Roshi was raised, a building made commemorating Yamada Taijun. In this way, also, we can see our way of practice.

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

We have the koan, "The pure person of training does not go into heaven. The badly behaved bhikkhu does not fall into hell." This is a koan realizing directly the quality of emptiness. Even if a person of training goes against everything ethically, they do not fall into hell. Sometimes there are reasons and circumstances, but if we are not moved around and deluded, we do not fall into hell. Keeping each footstep careful and clear, we don't even show that to others. We can find ourselves in terribly disabling and challenging circumstance but without giving a show, making a show of it, even in those circumstances we keep our practice alive, tenaciously, and are not moved around by the difficult circumstances.

"He may follow the ways of wickedness and anger, yet he remains utterly free of malice and lives by love. He may follow the ways of laziness, yet his efforts are uninterrupted as he strives in the cultivation of roots of virtue."

There are students in any school who have a fast temper, and even knowing this they know they should choose a way to change from this way of being. There are people also who appear to be lazy. We have the story in the Record of Rinzai about Master Obaku, who was doing a check of the zendo by walking by the raised platforms where the monks sit. When he walked by Rinzai, Rinzai appeared to be deeply sleeping as he was doing zazen. And Obaku walked very carefully, tiptoeing past Rinzai, as he kept sleeping, saying nothing. And then when he got to where the head monk was, the head monk was sitting strong and tautly with his eyes wide open. Obaku said

to the head monk, “Stop having so many extraneous thoughts,” to which the head monk told him to be quiet. When Obaku left the zendo, Rinzai followed him and apologized to him for sleeping in the zendo earlier, to which Obaku didn’t answer.

Later, when Obaku was going out to do samu, Rinzai followed him. And as Rinzai was just leaning on his hoe, Obaku picked up the hoe and he said, “Is there anyone who can use this?” To which, Rinzai answered, “I can use that.” And in that way, not because it was difficult for either of them to lift such a hoe, but here they were talking not about the use of physical tools, but about the way of the seeing of and being with the Dharma. In this way, this is considered and transmitted, not through physical and material words and actions, but in these ways of communicating.

Vimalakirti is showing us not to be caught on the conditioned way of seeing our behavior in the usual context or following Precepts in that usual context, but to see that when there are those in pain and those are suffering, to experience that in an empathetic way and not be only caught on protecting and guarding our own small individual way of being. Rather, to use our awareness for the larger picture and for dealing with all people’s suffering and liberation.

September 12, 2011
Day 7 Teisho

Manjusri says to Vimalakirti, “How should bodhisattvas follow the Buddha’s Way so that they can actually realize it?”

Of course, to walk the Buddha’s Way there have been taught fifty-eight basics. At the very first sutra the Buddha brought people’s attention to these, in the Flower Garland Sutra. He spoke clearly of these, but nobody could get it because his wisdom was so huge. The Buddha had been firstly educated, both philosophically and academically, and then he realized that did not really cover it all so he left behind everything and went off to somehow liberate all humankind, this humankind, which is always fighting among itself, living in deep suffering and conflict. He had to resolve this somehow. He ended up by having to do training and leaving behind his lovely wife, his adored son, Rahula, his whole family, his castle, his whole country. To do this for all people, all humankind he ended up going to training. And finally he was able to encounter two hermits, who taught that it was our thinking that is the problem, and clarifying that was the way to human’s truest joy.

But the Buddha saw clearly that that would only go so far. It might provide the solution for our own personal joys, that realization. That might be a good solution for us if it was only to make our own selves happy and satisfied, but there was no motivation then for liberating all beings, and the Buddha’s goal was clearly to liberate all beings. He was already personally blessed with a country, a palace, a family—nothing missing, except that he knew he had to cut away that ego attachment to be able to bring true liberation to all people.

He did the most basic walking to discover what is there before the ego. He did this for six years. Then he came down from that mountain, washed his body, and sat down in the state of mind of no self and no other and no speck of anything. But even if humans negate all desires, if we don’t give life to a new birth, a human regeneration, we’ll be stopped at only negating.

It was on the 8th day of December when he was thirty-five years old, when the Buddha, holding onto nothing at all, with no more ego clutching, became that morning star, clearly became human’s truth and most high quality Path. If we follow that as well, while being still full of greed, anger and ignorance we will learn how to let it go

and realize a new birth. This is where the path is of such great importance. Because we walk it we can know that place prior to being caught on the human rules of society based on ego, that actuality of human's truth as what is real. As Vimalakirti taught us, to be attached to nothing at all.

The Buddha realized deeply and wrote the Kegon Sutra, this Flower Garland Sutra, but since no one understood it—it was too far above them to be able to be used and truly learned from—he wrote the Agon Sutra instead. In this, he put it very simply for anybody to be able to understand, saying to not make our minds murky, to not do bad things and to do do good things, and then to bring our mind into clarity. He taught the Precepts, necessary things people of society, and with those we learn how to live and walk the Path. He was teaching us how to do this was then he further expressed it in other sutras.

How could we use the Path that the Buddha had taught? One of the examples of what was taught is in the Song of Enlightenment, written by the Fourth Patriarch, Yoka Genkaku Zenji. Yoka Genkaku Zenji had not been formally trained, but he had deeply understood. And as he was pilgrimaging he had met Taiyo Gensaku Zenji, who was a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. When they met and they talked it was clear to Taiyo Gensaku Zenji that Yoka Genkaku Zenji had a very deep understanding, and he asked him with whom had he been training. To this, Yoka Genkaku Zenji answered, "I have no formal teacher, but I am learning from studying the Vimalakirti Sutra." When Taiyo Gensaku was told about his not having a teacher, but had heard such deep liberated points of view from him, he told him he should go see the Sixth Patriarch. Taiyo Gensaku went ahead to Sixth Patriarch and told him, so that Yoka Genkaku was able to meet the Sixth Patriarch. And after only one night of spending time together, he became his successor.

The Song of Enlightenment, "Have you not seen the idle person of Tao, who has nothing to learn and nothing to do? Who neither discards wondering thoughts nor seeks the truth? The real nature of ignorance is Buddha nature. The illusory empty body is the Dharma body." Can you understand this? It is not about mentally understanding something, it is about realizing the Buddha's Way, not by only training in some ascetic way. As the Buddha had said himself that the instant he was awakened, "How wondrous, how

wondrous! All beings without exception are endowed with this same great, bright, clear mind, to which I have just awakened! Only because of our attached and extraneous thinking, we are not able to realize this and see it clearly." He realized it was not by ascetic training that he had received this mind that he had always been endowed with it, but had covered it over with attached ideas and ego clutter, seeking his own greatest benefit. Rather, to see, simply see with the eyes, to hear with the ears, to smell with the nose, to taste with the mouth, in this we receive this world exactly as it is and we see that there is no such thing as an ego anywhere; actually, we've only invented it. From the origin, from our birth, there was no such thing that ever existed. It is only a phenomenon. There is no good and bad anything but only this world as it is. We can smell because there is a flower which has a fragrance. We can hear because sounds are. Each sense has its own function. Our mind is never limited and we all have this. With it we can all do infinite functioning. "Who neither discards wondering thoughts, nor seeks the truth..." Not to hold on to a small-minded view of, "You can't do this. You can't do that," but to live in a greater size of mind, more spacious. Of course there are moments of greed, anger, ignorance, but they have no roots. They always, always fade. We have no need to be afraid of that which will fade.

We are living in this world that is always in constant flux. And within that we just think that we are alive as a separate individual. Every minute we are metabolizing and if we do not get caught on those busy activities of mind we will see that we have from the origin a healthy mind. We can always see clearly in one single moment.

One moment is the basic common denominator for all experiences and all perceptions. We hear in one instant and this is our truest nature. But we add on complicated thinking, and with thoughts mixed in, we can't see or hear clearly. It is zazen that straightens this out. In each instant, each instant we perceive clearly, that is zazen, seeing deeply that life energy in each and every moment. The mountain flowers, they are like a brocade, those flowers that have been filling the trees, falling, and landing on the ground to make a full brocade; the river's flowing fully, a brimming streaming of indigo. If we see this, we can see how actually we are stuck on nothing.

In the text we have Vimalakirti offering many many versions of how

to live in society without being pulled around by the many things that can push and pull us. The examples are numberless, but what he is saying here is this: that this mind of this moment has no clutter on it, and to not become that state of mind where that clutter gathers.

Once, [the roshi] was able to have the opportunity to meet a woman named, Nakamura Hisako. She died at seventy-six. While she was born a normal healthy child, at age four she became sick with a disease which meant that her hands and feet eventually became gangrened and so she had to have them all amputated.

She grew up in Takayama in Gifu Prefecture, became sickened at four and soon after, her extremities were amputated and after that her father soon died. Her mother, who had been a seamstress, could not keep their house because she couldn't afford things without the salary of her husband. Because of their great lack of money, they hadn't a house and were allowed to live in someone's garage area. But because Hisako would cry out so loud every night because her sickness hurt so badly, they were asked to leave that place as well. Her mother didn't know what she would possibly be able to do to support herself and her daughter.

And so she decided that together they would commit suicide. They went to the Miyagawa River, a source river in Takayama. But somehow, even though Hisako was very young, she understood what her mother was about to do. She pounded her mother's shoulder and said, "Hisako doesn't want to die! Hisako doesn't want to die! Stop!" And so, because she hadn't so much wanted to die herself but to have her daughter not have to live a life in this desperate terrible situation, she stopped that idea and took them back to town.

Soon after that, there was another karmic opportunity and they had a new home. Her mother had a new husband. There were two other children. These two other children, who were slightly older, bullied Hisako terribly because she couldn't eat with chopsticks because of her hands having been amputated. She was very determined though, and she had her hands bandaged so that she could in her bandaged hand stumps carry chopsticks and eventually eat. But she still couldn't eat like a normal child, so they were say, "Hisako, she eats like an animal, like a cat." And the neighborhood children from

outside would come just to watch her like some freak.

Again, her mother went out to try to make some money by doing seamstress work. And Hisako during that time, would with her bit of time and effort, learn to write kanji by holding a brush with her mouth. And with her bandaged hardened hand stumps, she would hold a needle and practice sewing. When she was practicing sewing, she would make many small fabric toys so that she would give them to the children of the neighborhood, but the children in the area would all say, "Hisako does her sewing holding things with her mouth so they all have drool all over them," and the children would not receive her homemade gifts. Having heard this she worked harder to be able to make gifts that she was sure had no drool on them. And she continued working in every way, making great efforts. Finally, she became the age of a young woman who would be able to find a husband.

Takayama is a very, very cold town up in the Japanese Alps and because Hisako was going to have to someday take care of herself, her mother was very, very severe with her. Hisako wanted her mother to light the kotatsu heater, but her mother said Nope, she had to do it herself. This is a very difficult job, even with someone with hands. To do this required lighting a match with her mouth, and making a fire of small kindling, which would then light a kind of artificial charcoal. Again and again, she tried to light the match with her mouth, but again and again her breath would blow out the match's flame.

Her mother refused to do her daughter's laundry. She told her she had to learn to do it herself; there were no such things as washing machines in those days. There wasn't even a sink and a faucet. She had to go to the pump and pump up her own water with her hand stumps and with her shoulders, getting it into the bucket and being able to wash the laundry. It wasn't such a convenient era at that time. She would also clean her own room. And finally, at age sixteen, when her mother and her grandparents had died, there was only her brother and her sister left. If she lived with them they would be looked at as bad marriage possibilities because they had a sister who was so handicapped. People would be afraid if they married into that household, the babies would become handicapped as well. So Hisako knew that she had to somehow leave that household for the sake of her brother and sister.

A man came by and said to her, "How long are you going to stay there and cause trouble for that household?" To this, Hisako said, "I don't want to be here causing trouble for this household, but I have no choice." So the man said to her, "Will you join my circus?" She had always wanted to avoid that, if at all possible, but after she thought about it awhile, she knew that she had no choice and she went into his circus and was billed as a handicapped Daruma girl who could be looked at like a freak: someone who could sew and could clean.

She traveled with the circus from the north of Japan to the south of Japan, and when everyone else was enjoying their free time, she would save every single penny and buy books, studying in every moment possible. Learning to write poetry, learning to write calligraphy with a brush in her mouth. In every moment of her free time, she was studying.

And when the show was on in one town, a young man came up and asked her, didn't she want to learn real calligraphy? She had been doing it in her very own freestyle. And she said of course she did, and so a famous calligrapher, Otsuki Geisho, who was nearby in Nagoya, took her on as a student, at any time welcomed her to spend time with him and taught her calligraphy. [The roshi] has one of her scrolls on which it's written, "Mu ichi motsu"—"One Piece of Emptiness." It is signed by Hisako, seventy-two years old. She became very famous for her calligraphy.

Helen Keller came to Japan twice and they wanted someone—who would be the best person, they were thinking—for Helen Keller to spend time with. And so, of course, they thought of Hisako. By now, she was a famous speaker and educator. From her many lessons of life, she would speak to different groups in Japan. Helen Keller was also giving talks and Hisako was chosen to be her companion to spend time with her while she was in Japan.

With her sewing, she made a doll. "What could I make as a gift for Helen Keller?" she thought. She made a doll, sewing all of its clothes, making tabi for the doll, tabi that Hisako herself had never been able to wear because she had no feet. She took her homemade doll and was about to walk on stage to present it to Helen Keller and she saw that there was a big beautiful Japanese doll that had been given by the department store and she was holding her very sad looking

homemade doll. But as she was struggling with the idea of whether to give the doll or not, the people said hurry up to get on the stage. She was wearing artificial legs and hands by then. Helen Keller hugged Hisako and felt her arms and legs and told her in fact that it was not she, Helen Keller, who was the miracle person, it was Hisako. She was so thrilled that all she could think about was how thankful she was that at that age of four there had been no suicide possible. And the two of them shared the time when Helen Keller came twice to Japan; both of those visits she spent them with Hisako.

Hisako wrote many many poems. "No hands, no feet, this body is embraced in the Buddha's long sleeves so comfortably." Or another poem that she wrote, "In what life, in what moment's sins, did I do something that I have to be paying for it now? Trying to gassho, I have no hands." Wanting to gassho on the day of memorial for her mother. Wanting to gassho, on the day of the memorial for her father. But she could not gassho with no hands to raise.

However, even though her body was not able to do that kind of praying, she was shown about in a special television show by NHK, the national broadcasting system of Japan. And in this television show, about her life and about her struggle and about her deep state of mind she spoke saying, "In this world, everything is thanks to everyone. My mother, who seemed like a demon, it was thanks to her that I was able to stay alive and be here. This, that I can even live today and survive today, was because of her strictness. That circus master who seemed so terrible—but only because of what I learned from when I was in the circus am I able to be in the state of mind that I am in today. Every single thing we are and have is thanks to everyone, everywhere."

Mumon Roshi met with Hisako several times and they would write letters to each other. Everybody else's letters Mumon Roshi would give to his attendant or someone to take out and mail for him. But only her letters he would always, always handle himself. And when addressing her he would address her as a very rare person.

One time [the roshi] was attending Mumon Roshi as his attendant, and she came to visit; he was the one preparing the food and he asked how he should prepare? What kind of dishes and utensils? He was told just do it in the usual way. He couldn't imagine how this was going to be possible. He was wondering how she could

possibly eat this meal and these usual dishes and he put them out as he was asked: regular rice bowl and soup bowl. Watching it was like a magic show. She would hold her rice bowl in the crook of her elbow and with her chopsticks held in her stump's bandages, she would eat from the elbow completely naturally and normally. It was like you couldn't believe this was a possibility and yet it was being done as if it was how it has been done everyday. [The roshi's] eyes were popping out. It was as if he was seeing into a different dimension. It truly is as Vimalakirti says, "It's not about form, it's about mind; we cannot be fooled about this. It's about how deep, about how huge this mind is."

No matter what difficult challenge a bodhisattva finds himself confronted by, to not move away from that is the way of the bodhisattva. Nothing to dislike, no matter what it is. If we're asked to do it or it comes to us, say, "I can do that." Make our mind up, with firm determination. When our mind becomes set in one direction, there is nothing that we cannot accomplish. To decide to do it, no matter what, and then to realize that this is the one way to accomplish it. And to walk in that way is this Path.

There is a song, a poem, from old times, "I want this. I want that. There are only things I want all over the place. Looking up are all things I want. Every place I look there are just more things I want, but looking down, this means that all the things I want, so many things, my ideals, the things I want is ongoing, never stopping. But looking down when I am watching my own footsteps, then there is no place for there to be anything I want."

Closing poem for Teisho on the Vimalakirti Sutra

Persons of the way, free of doubt as a fool.
Within these tattered robes, we possess the priceless jewel.
With this jewel, we offer the teachings to all beings,
And continue our practice of clear mind.



With this we come to the conclusion of our ōsesshin for the month of September of 2011. For everyone to have come here from so far away, gathered and entered this mountain, putting away every single connection to an external life, and to be here for this one week of ongoing, continued practice, this is truly a matter of great cultivation of Dharma, and everyone put their total efforts into doing it wholeheartedly. Everyone has thrown their efforts into it completely, and because of that, people here, some know this fresh, crisp, clear feeling that can bring. To be able to have this chance to give everything in this way!

We have the poem by Goso Hoen Zenji in which he asks the question, We have the ox going by the window. The ox goes by the window, and as the ox goes by the window, first we can see its horns go by. As his horns go by, that means that his ego and his ego filter, that ego filter being stuck on it, is going by. Then the head of the ox goes by. The head of the ox—that which is thinking about mental ideas and explanations and various mental ways of looking at the question of What is the Buddha? What is the Dharma? That goes by. Then we have that body—that place where we have all of our many physical desires, being sleepy, being hungry, needing many different physical things, all those physical desires that also become our attached desires—the body has gone by. No more are we troubled by those. Then we have those ideas of what is good and what is bad and right and wrong and all those dualistic perceptions—that's the feet. The feet have gone by. To have the ideas of It's adorable, or ugly, or we want it or we don't want it—that all goes by with the feet. But what about the tail?

Goso Hoen is asking us, asking all of us, have in our experience of this week been able to let go of many of the things that are being said here about going by the window? But this tail is left. What is this tail that's left? This is what Goso Hoen is saying, This tail is left. What is he talking about? Goso Hoen Zenji is saying, So if it is so that those horns went by—those horns of ego, that head of thinking about things mentally, that body of the ox—all of the various desires and physical needs, the feet of it—something being pretty or ugly or wanting it or

not wanting it—even if all of those have gone by, had they really gone by? But even if they have really gone by, what about that tail?

This is what Goso Hoen is saying: So if it is so that those mental ideas of enduring and ego and those explanations of what is going on and our physical needs, if all of that has gone by... You can say, Well, I've really got rid of all that! This is a splendid state of mind! Goso Hoen is saying, What is THAT? What IS that that is seeing that as a splendid state of mind? What IS that tail?

And it is also said, even if we have had a state of mind that has been satisfying ourselves, this is no different from the arhat of the Theravada who is only interested in realizing liberation for one's own small self-satisfaction. When we realize letting go of all of these parts of the ox we have to be able to let go to its most furthest point where it can be for the liberation of all beings. This is the point of our training. This is the point that Goso Hoen Zenji is bringing to our attention.

And because it is not such an easy thing to understand what it is that Master Goso Hoen is trying to point out, Mumon [in the Mumonkan] writes a hint to say about this tail: After all, what IS this tail? It's not so easy to see but if all of those other parts of the ox have gone through and we still have this tail not gone through, what is he talking about? What he's talking about is that even though we have let go of all of those attached places in our zazen, in our perceptions and in our ways of seeing, if we still have ideas and things being held onto we cannot yet become that purified Life energy itself. This is what that tail is. When all of those things have dropped away, that which is left is that purified, clarified, Life energy—this is the tail. And this is the part that we need to realize and to continue realizing to be able to make use of what we have experienced. To have let go of those things and then just sit down on having let go of them is not the point. The point is how can we put that which we have realized in letting go of them to use, and work in our daily life? This is what is most important—to see that this is how we can make use of what we have done here, what we have let go of here. To keep this central matter of this purified Life energy at hand and not return to this cluttered, un-clarified state of being is the homework and the point of what Goso Hoen Zenji is pointing out to us. For the roshi to offer this to all of us, all of us who have given our passionate efforts and firm determination to realizing this one week with everything we have, he offers this question and this point: taking this Life energy into what we do every day, to be

able to keep that clarification and that realization of that Life energy directly alive in everything we do.

He would like to add that although some people are leaving and some people are continuing to give their caring efforts to what's taking place here, please don't get into the head of "Oh boy, it's all over!" and start tossing your energy away. Do not scatter and make it wasted, but continue the efforts that have been done for this whole week.



DEDICATION OF TEKISUI-AN
Office & Vice Abbot's Quarters

二〇一一年九月五日
滴翠庵落慶香語

多法摩山禪道場
佛心覺了十方香
守護山門滴翠庵
把定要津結勝緣
露 古錐叟

The Zen dōjō of Tahoma-san
When the Buddha Mind is realized
The fragrance imbues
the ten directions
Tekisui-an protects the mountain gate,
Guarding the entryway and widening
fortuitous connections.

POEMS

OSESSHIN TEISHO OPENING POEM

[Although Roshi has dated this poem September 6th, it was offered at the beginning of teisho on September 9th, Day 1 of the osesshin.]

庭前霜葉舞任風
如法自然說圓通
須打破無量結習
要明自性天真佛
成風 古錐叟

二〇一一年九月六日
維摩經觀衆生品開講香語

Frosty leaves in the front garden,
dancing in the wind
Teach the complete teaching,
naturally in accord with the
Dharma
We must cut through the boundless
obstructive hindrances
and awaken to self-nature—
The true and natural Buddha

SEPTEMBER 11TH MEMORIAL POEM

Each year a sutra is chanted for those who died in the attacks on September 11, 2001, and Roshi offers a poem.

六道輪廻幾苦辛
定知冥界暗雲深
如今恭猷曹源水
一喝萬靈醒佛心
喝 古錐叟

二〇一一年九月十一日
テロ被災物故者慰靈供養

The Autumn wind sweeps away
the anguish of nine years.
While Buddha-nature is eternal joy,
we cannot laugh;
the tears are still streaming down.
When the fragrance of Clear Mind
finds infinite paths
Through the world,
the spirits are soothed.

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO PASSED ON AT ENSO HOUSE

The number of guests who have passed on in the peaceful environment of the hospice grows, and each year all are remembered with photographs and chanting.

二〇一一年九月十二日
円相ハウス慰霊祭香語
日々新焉日々新
應知浮世古來今
不生不滅誰能悟
自覺覺他維佛身
喝 古錐叟

Day by day the mornings dawn afresh,
Yet ever is it the same transient world...
Who can awaken to that which does not
rise and pass away?
Awakening self, awakening others—
in THIS lies the true Buddha's body!

OSESSHIN CLOSING POEM

二〇一一年九月十二日
維摩經觀衆生品講了香語
道人不疑恰如愚
披褐私藏無価珠
無価珠應宣布去
只當行正念工夫
成風 古錐叟

Persons of the Way,
free of doubt as a fool,
Within these tattered robes
we possess the priceless jewel!
With this jewel we offer the teachings
to all beings
And continue our practice of Clear Mind.