

FEBRUARY PHOTOS



Wet February





The path to sanzen...



Roshi now has a tiny kitchen, a stand-up (he works at his computer standing up) office nook, laundry area, and a larger room in which to do calligraphy and offer tea to guests.



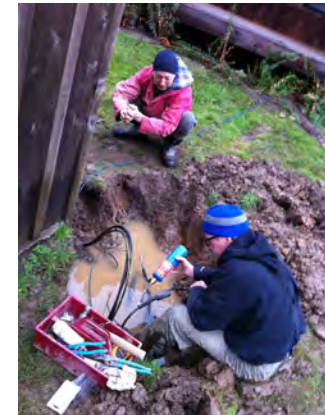
Old Owl Hermitage from a different vantage point



And in the middle of the foggy drizzle the septic system failed. Plumbers and electricians were called, and for several days there was ongoing, day-long troubleshooting. In the meantime, sesshin participants were especially frugal with their water use and the Port-a-Potties saved the day.



After days of searching, digging, and searching again, hours of bailing water, the source of the problem was found. Here the electrician, having repaired the ruptured connection, seals it against incoming moisture. In the photo at the right, Gensho—who put in days of digging and bailing, looks on as the electrician completes the repair.



Port-a-Potty Service



In the meantime, the garden, gathered energy for the spring planting, and slowly the clouds began to depart



Nonetheless, one cautious camper kept that rain protection in place.



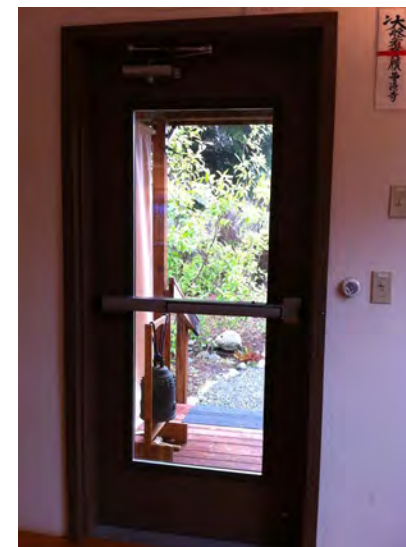
The new office cum Vice Abbot's Quarters viewed from the kitchen deck.



Inside, a real work area, and (below) meeting space. Outside, some new landscaping .



The six paramita plaques—Wisdom, Meditation, Effort, Patience, Virtue, and Generosity—were actually installed in the zendo in time for the September 2011 Installation Ceremonies



The new glass door allowed those in line for sanzen to wait away from the chill wind and driving rain. In the dining hall, the meal service is reversed for the second half of osesshin.

The new altar arrangement with the kelsakus resting in front during zazen when not in active use. Below, a closeup of the altar surface.



A few days after sesshin, however, the altar was set up differently. Tim Jundo Williams, long-time student of Roshi, had suddenly died, and his funeral was held at the monastery. Jundo's ashes are in the package at the right side of the altar, along with the special spoon that will be used to bury them at the base of his memorial tree. The altar detail at right includes a small painting done by Jundo, who was an artist by profession. Below, friends gather at the altar; Jundo's wife, Jane Shotaku Lago, stands at right.



Roshi offers incense at the beginning of the funeral. During the funeral, one by one everyone attending came up to the altar and offered a flower (held by Myosho at the left) and incense in Jundo's memory



Jundo's memorial tree. His ashes were buried around the base of this tree



And buds form on the trees in the garden and the first spring flowers unfold as the natural cycle continues





February 17, 2012
Day 1

Opening Poem

Whose capacities are the highest of the high?
How do we return to the Tathagata Gate
through which our innate power emerges?
Letting go all desire for enlightenment,
all seeking for the Way,
Clearly seeing our Original Nature
is to repay our debt to the ancestors.

The Buddha Way Chapter 8 of the Vimalakirti Sutra. What is the Way of the Buddha, as it is expressed in the fourth line of the four vows that we read everyday? The Buddha's Way. People all have a way they want to use their life. How they vow to live their own particular vow and that vow which connects to all beings, how they decide to use this life. To express this vow, to fulfill this, we have these four vows.

We are seven billion people on this planet right now. We have to cooperate to help each other as our resources begin to dry up and our problems of supporting all humankind become ever more challenging. And in the coming ten years, the number will explode further. There will be huge conflicts for resources and at that time we have to use these very four vows and polish our deepest wisdom for all in society. This will be necessary or extreme disasters will occur among people. We have to see these vows seriously and see what they mean for how we live. This is what Vimalakirti is teaching us—what they mean—in this chapter.

Manjushri is asking Vimalakirti, "What is the way of the bodhisattva?"

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

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

Vimalakirti says it cannot be done by trying to look good in some pre-formatted way. He is not saying to not do good things, but to

not try to look good as you do things, as if you are doing such good things and performing important good deeds. This is how true liberation takes place. It cannot be done in a way which is just to show-off about doing something good.

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

So being told not to try to look good, he further asks how to do this. To which Vimalakirti answers, “Even should he enact the five deadly sins, he feels no malice, violence, or hate.” The Buddha is also teaching in this same way, in the Dhammpada, including a list of those five deadly sins, killing each parent’s, etc,—the blood of the Buddha included. But these are about examples of concepts of trying to do good things, in such a way that would become small and rigid, from a concept of thinking of ourselves and trying to appear as someone who is being a good person—a full-blown ego view this is. We have to let go of that concept and not be deceived by ourselves behaving that way. Rather to offer and give everything by throwing ourselves into society.

In this way Vimalakirti says at the beginning of this chapter that we cannot simply walk a conceptual predetermined path on some kind of already set up rails. We have to let go of even that idea and offer everything to liberating all beings or there will be no liberation. To not have our mind moved around at all and then for the first time we can become one with the Buddha’s Way.

The ancients taught that there is nothing to be disliked or to be not preferred. As Master Rinzai also put it, Not to stop at things that we don’t like and be caught on ideas of preferences and opinions, rather to throw everything into all beings’ liberation into that way of becoming a person in whom there is not a trace of the small self, only a reflection in a mirror, yet a warm caring mind is still present. Without that ego then we can reflect each person and simultaneously function appropriately.

Manjushri has asked Vimalakirti, “What is the Buddha’s Way?” And at this time, Vimalakirti has said that it is to enter the wrong way. Next we have Vimalakirti asking Manjushri,

What is the family of the Tatagatha’s? What are the seeds that must be planted to bring forth that way of living that Path of the Buddha?

Manjushri responds, “This wish for existence.”

We have the poems of the Sixth Patriarch and Jinshu Joza. First we have the poem of Jinshu Joza where he writes on the wall at the place of the Fifth Patriarch, “Our body is the Bodhi tree and our mind is the mirror bright. Carefully we wipe them, hour by hour, and let no dust alight.” Reading this, the Sixth Patriarch-to-be commented, “This is not a poem from the state of mind which has truly broken through. This is still someone who is mid-processed.” And in response to that the Sixth Patriarch-to-be wrote on the same wall next to it, “There is no Bodhi tree, nor stand of a mirror bright. Since all is void, where can the dust alight?”

Only halfway there is expressed in the first poem, the Sixth Patriarch said. He’s seen through it. When Jinshu Joza said conceptually that this body is like a tree, when his poem says our mind is like a clear mirror, he is already bringing in a concept of how something like our body should be when actually, from the origin, we are empty. This idea that we should go around polishing, that is not the deepest of truths.

In the Theravadin, the body is considered to be a vessel of our mistaken behavior such that we would kill and lie and be violent and our mouth, is considered to be an instrument of four ways of mistaken behavior: to lie, to be hypocritical, to speak in a flattering way, or to speak badly about others. These sins of our body and mouth are thought to make us, to lead us, to having to do ascetic training. But Vimalakirti says, “How are we seeds of Buddhas already?”

This is not about only our body, but because we have a body we can offer it to society. Even if we don’t have material offerings with this body we can still offer a kind expression, a smile, a kind word, a kind thought, offer our seat. In all of these ways we can offer this great deep warm feeling we have from our compassionate mind. Down to the last very moment, we can give something which is not material. There are important details for constructing a world, the Buddha land, and these ways of doing it without any material offerings are very important for that. While every mind moment is of course empty, we simultaneously can offer love, not in order to receive love back but from this warm state of mind, to live in a way that would liberate all beings.

Next he says that greed, anger and ignorance are also seeds of becoming Buddha—not a conceptualization way of letting go of these. Rather all of our selves deeply want to survive, deeply want to live, to be alive. To be greedy sounds bad, but we are all greedy to stay alive, right down to our cells. Our anger is also a positive thing when we're angry at the appropriate things that need correction. Because there is love, that is why wisdom is born. Otherwise, it would be no wisdom brought forth. It is even said that love and wisdom are one. It cannot be a small self-centered love, however. It has to be a love that is encompassing all beings. It has to not be something that is appearing in a way that is used in an unskillful way. But even if we do have anger, if it is handled in a skillful way, then this can also be a seed of Buddha.

He continues, “Noble sir, the family of Tathagathas, consists of all basic egoism of ignorance and the thirst for existence of lust, hate and folly, of the four misapprehensions, of the five obscurations.”

In this way he continues telling about the seeds of becoming a Buddha.

There are the four misapprehensions, looking at things upside down while thinking we are seeing things correctly. It is true that everything in this world is transient; there is nothing that will never change. All things are transient no matter how much we long to hold onto them. We have to see this. We cannot ignore the fact that all of this changes, but we do want to hold on to our youth, our health, our possessions. Yet things are always transforming, so we just have to see that we will, without fail, have to let go of all of it. We may think something is perfect, but we have to acknowledge that everything changes. What we have received we will have to give back. That is why we offer everything to all beings. We live in the world which appears to be not pure, but to not settle for that, to not sit down on pleasure, but to always let go of things as they are finished. This is how to live in this way.

These four misapprehensions, to see them clearly and by remembering that everything in this world is like a bubble—it's a fleeting world. “A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream.” To see this in every situation, but also to see how even all of these things are always in change... And we cannot, we cannot, become the seeds of Buddha by trying to hold onto these things and prevent these

changes. Instead, to deeply see how everything is transient and to go beyond the world's transiency, that world where we are aware of its always changing and realize the deepest joy within that no matter what we are doing. To see clearly who is the true master in each of these situations, and in this way, our seeds of Buddha will become Buddha; we'll become true teachers. We get confused thinking that it is a clear, pure world, but knowing that it is not. To bring our fullest wisdom to that is what we have to do and which is the seeds of the Buddha, says Vimalakirti.

We have here remaining the five obscurations: the six media of sense, the seven abodes of consciousness, the eight false paths, the nine causes of irritation, and the paths of ten sins. But it cannot be a small wisdom with which we consider these things. It has to be a great wisdom that vows to liberate all beings from these and not for our own small self.

As it is said, “If we are a good person, then we will naturally purify.” However, as Master Shingon has said, “An evil person is one who must especially bring the purification into actuality to become a Buddha.” In essence, if we think we are a good person, we are confused, thinking that what we are doing is something special and something excellent. To acknowledge our mistakes is what brings us that impulse and that motivation to really consider and access true wisdom. If we think we are already good then there is no strong wisdom and no strong chi and motivation. For this reason, we have to see that we are not some kind of formulated good person, but are needing to deepen and polish this wisdom always.

Finally, he concludes, “In short, Noble sir,”

Manjushri is replying here to Vimalakirti,

“In short, Noble Sir, the sixty-two kinds of convictions, constitute the family of the Tathagathas,” saying that it is basically our desires that is our path for realizing the truth.

To this, Vimalakirti answers by pressing him,

“Manjushri, with what in mind do you say so?”

To this Manjushri has responded, “Noble sir, one who stays in the fixed determination of the vision of the uncreated is not capable of conceiving

the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment. However, one who lives among created things, in the mines of passions, without seeing any truth, is indeed capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment.”

As it was said in the olden days in China, there was a way of looking at living in terms of non-doing that was commonly taught. To not kill, to not steal, to not lie, to not drink, but then even if a farmer is planting a field, he’s going to be killing some insects and going against that. But if our way is to not do, what will happen to shop people who are selling things, where will their motivation to sell things come forth from? We also have this way of becoming completely empty, where there is nothing in the heavens and earth, and no small self. If we dive into that state of mind, not even holding on to an idea of not doing, then we can see this clearly. Doing sesshin whole-heartedly, not from an idea of non-doing, we can throw ourselves away completely. But we have to dive into this and make efforts to let go of ourselves for the sake of all beings. And for this we will need that motivation. In that way, we hold zazen important.

It is not about not doing as in we mustn’t see, we mustn’t hear, we mustn’t taste, we mustn’t smell. It’s not about throwing away all society which that leads to. Rather as it says here,

“Noble sir, flowers like the blue lotus, the red lotus, the white lotus, the water lily, and the moon lily do not grow on the dry ground in the wilderness, but do grow in the swamps and mud banks. Just so, the Buddha-qualities do not grow in living beings certainly destined for the uncreated but do grow in those living beings who are like swamps and mud banks of passions.”

These are famous words of this sutra. The lotus flowers bloom from the mud and the swamps. That is why living in a small self-centered way is not the point. We have to see what all people are suffering, to be among them and be able to know what that experience is that is going on. And only then are we able to be deeply motivated to bring forth that way of liberation.

It may seem that Vimalakirti is speaking contradictorily, telling us these ways of going about working on our wisdom. But it is about how to use these desires and not to be used by them, which is the greatest mistake. We have to polish that wisdom and use and offer those desires for the liberation of all beings. This is Vimalakirti’s

way of saying it. This is the Way of the Mahayana, to bring forth that deeper wisdom, from which comes the ability to liberate all beings.

February 18, 2012
Day 2 Teisho

Vimalakirti is saying that those of many desires become Buddhas:

“Likewise, as seeds do not grow in the sky but do grow in the earth, so the Buddha-qualities do not grow in those determined for the absolute but do grow in those who conceive the spirit of enlightenment.”

Manjushri pursues this, getting him to explain it. But it is also safely said that where a flower has bloomed the flower and seed happen simultaneously because the flower holds the seeds for the further generation. Not only in the case of the situation of Buddhism but also in the case of flowers.

When the Buddha was awakening, he said that when his mind opened he understood that all beings in the whole world simultaneously were awakened. He was astonished because he realized that everyone has always, already, been endowed with an awakened mind.

People have so many different appearances; there are so many different kinds of people in their appearance and their age and their interests, their opinions. We usually judge them on their external superficial features. But we depend on that appearance only because we don't yet know well that awakened mind. So we don't see that appearance as an appearance. This is what the Buddha realized. No one believes that they already see clearly and deeply, with sharp cutting ability. We have this awakened mind from the origin, each and everyone of us but we have a hard time believing it. This is what the Buddha saw, though—that we all have it.

Roshi's good friend is the head of a police department. And everyday when he wakes up, wakes up and he washes his face and then he chants a sutra in front of his very personal, quaint, Guanyin [Kannon] statue. After chanting a sutra to Avalokiteshvara, he then sits zazen in front of her for awhile. He eats his breakfast. But he reads the necessary newspaper for his job only after he leaves the house and has aligned his state of mind.

He arrives at the police station, the headquarters where he works. And first he goes not to his desk, but to visit each and every one

of the prisoners who are incarcerated where he works. To each prisoner he does greetings. To each one he says hello and good morning, even to those with furious faces who have just been caught and thrown into jail and who don't want to be told anything. Every morning, every single morning, he says hello to each one of them.

And eventually, every single one of them, eventually, answered almost inaudibly, “Morning. Well, good morning.” Sometime he gets busy with a police work and doesn't come. And those same prisoners, who were so timid in their response to him, they asked, “Isn't he coming today?”

After a week or so, he gives them—just puts in their cells—an appropriate magazine. And then, when they are used to reading that and have read it, he finds a book he feels would be right for them and puts that book in their cells. And they read those books in fact and a set of the magazines. They get sent to a different prison and they ask him if it is okay if they take that book that he gave them. He said sure if they want to read it they can have it, or else he'll take it back. They answer that they only read the newspaper, the magazine, once. One time is plenty. But the book he gives them is so good that they would like to read it many times.

These people who have been thrown aside by society, naturally do things to improve themselves when that way of life is made available to them. They come back to human's basic deeper interests. In our mind, even more so if we are a criminal, we somewhere deeply want to improve and cultivate within. We have to realize this place of no self, no other, and no speck of anything. But still while knowing this place of true deep quiet, we cannot lose our passion for the liberation of all beings. In the deep mud is where these men have lived. The flowers begin to grow now, like lotuses growing from the mud—the lotuses, the symbol of Buddhism. It is the same with these men.

“Likewise, as seeds do not grow in the sky but do grow in the earth, so the Buddha-qualities do not grow in those determined for the absolute but do grow in those who conceive the spirit of enlightenment, after having produced a Sumeru-like mountain of egoistic views.”

If we plant seeds in the sky, we've never heard of such thing

growing. Because we are all endowed with this deep wish to cultivate our deep mind and awaken to our illuminated nature we try. What it says here is true. Buddha seeds do not grow in the sky, but do grow on the earth. So the Buddha qualities do not grow in those determined for the absolute, but do grow in those who conceive the spirit of enlightenment after having produced a Sumeru-like mountain of egoistic views. All of our desires produce these seeds.

“Noble sir, through these considerations one can understand that all passions constitute the family of the Tathagatas. For example, noble sir, without going out into the great ocean, it is impossible to find precious, priceless pearls.”

Manjushri then says this in response to what Vimalakirti has just said:

“In the ocean world, we find the pearls and the coral that has been harvested from old, giving the ocean the reputation for being a treasure, a storage place, for infinite jewels and treasures. But if you did not enter the ocean, then these could not be found.”

And the same is true with our deep mind. Without knowing desire, we can't know this passion that leads us to help liberate all beings. And this is the very basis of the way of the Mahayana.

In this way, Manjushri and Vimalakirti continue to exchange. All the top disciples of the Buddha, who had in the past been criticized by Vimalakirti, had refused to even come and visit Vimalakirti when asked by the Buddha to do so. That is why finally, only Manjushri would go, even if he felt that he was not capable of being as wise as the Buddha. He thought he was very insufficient for the job. But as soon as it was known that Manjushri and Vimalakirti were going to meet, that's all it took. All of the 84,000 bodhisattvas, all of the top disciples of the Buddha, all wanted to be onsite when Manjushri and Vimalakirti would be speaking together.

In a small room where every single thing had been put away, put out of the room, Vimalakirti rested. Vimalakirti had gotten rid of everything in that room and it appeared as if when it was measured, the room was as small as if a 45-mat room. But in fact in that very room, because what he was giving his attention, to was the entire universe. And that is why all the 84,000 bodhisattva and the

ten major disciples all fit into this small room. This is also discussed in this Inconceivable Liberation Chapter. And here, the very famous mondo between Vimalakirti and Manjushri takes place with 84,000 bodhisattvas and ten main disciples attending and listening carefully.

Then the elder Dai Kasho applauded the crown prince Manjushri. “Good! Good Manjusri! This is indeed well spoken! This is right! The passions do indeed constitute the family of the Tathagatas. How can such as we, the disciples, conceive the spirit of enlightenment, or become fully enlightened in regard to the qualities of the Buddha?”

Dai Kasho then became, then took the role of the bad guy in the plot. And first he says that it is true that these seeds, when we see them in this way, it is true that we are able to know this great awakening because we have these passions. These passions are, as they are, the seeds of the Tathagatha, the seeds of wisdom, and it is from this compassion that all things come forth. Hearing this, he had been very impressed and deeply moved.

“How can such as we, the disciples, conceive the spirit of enlightenment, or become fully enlightened in regard to the qualities of the Buddha? Only those guilty of the five deadly sins can conceive the spirit of enlightenment and can attain Buddhahood, which is the full accomplishment of the qualities of the Buddha!”

The top arhat is Dai Kasho and he agrees that this body and mind must be offered to the liberation of all beings. We can do this because we know all these desires and so that is why we can be so useful. But that is possible for bodhisattvas only. Only when we have done the worst possible mistakes can we become able to do this. Only those guilty of the five deadly sins can conceive the spirit of enlightenment and can attain Buddhahood, which is the full accomplishment of the qualities of the Buddha.

“Just as, for example, the five desire objects have no impression or effect on those bereft of faculties. Even so, all the qualities of the Buddha have no impression or effect on the disciples, who have abandoned all adherences. Thus, the disciples can never appreciate these qualities, just as those who are blind or deaf cannot hear or see wondrous things that are put in front of them.”

No matter what color a person can see or hear, if they have not

got a deep desire to liberate then they will not be able to know this place of realizing that deep vow to awaken to the mind which is illuminated. To be able to—he is saying this in a backwards way—to be able to have these desires and not be in an already finished with desires Buddha, but be a bodhisattva who is still working on behalf of all beings’ liberation. We need to have these desires to be able to see the place to where we have to head. And by doing that we can get there.

“Therefore, Manjushri, the ordinary individual is grateful to the Tathagatha. But the disciples are not grateful. Why? The ordinary individuals upon learning of the virtues of the Buddha conceive the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment in order to ensure the uninterrupted continuity of the heritage of the three jewels. But the disciples, although they may hear of the qualities, powers and fearlessnesses of the Buddha, until the end of their days, are not capable of conceiving the spirit of unexcelled perfect enlightenment.”

People who know they were mistaken can apologize and decide to begin again, passionately review their behavior and go on; people in the world can also review their behavior and make a new passionate determined vow to do it differently. But for a disciple of the Buddha who has no more attachments or desires, they have nothing to review. And therefore they cannot give rise to this desire to awaken to the illuminated mind.

The Buddha dharma is not for being caught on sitting in stillness, but to be in the world with all people and to open everyone’s deepest mind to the great illuminating truth of the Buddha. Everyone wants their own best fortune possible. But to say, “Don’t see, don’t speak, don’t hear, don’t smell,” is like negating all of the possibilities for realizing this truly illuminated state of mind.

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

Manjushri and Vimalakirti’s talk was about finished. It was generally over and Dai Kasho was soothing the top disciples who weren’t able to bring forth the spirit to awaken to their illuminated mind.

One of the 84,000 bodhisattvas stepped forth and that was Fugen bodhisattva, who addressed Vimalakirti and asked him where his family was. And all of his possessions, where were they? Where is your father? Your mother, where is she? And your children, where are they? And all of your servants? Where are all of the people who cook for you, and your bodyguard and your elephants and your chariots? They are nowhere to be seen. Where are they? The same question was also asked by Manjushri, but Vimalakirti gave no answer at that time. On this occasion he answers with a poem.

Vimalakirti gives a poem telling what the Buddha dharma is and how to walk the Buddha’s Way. This is all about the state of mind of the Buddha, not about the world of things. So how should our mind be, to live in the way he is teaching? We have a body because of karmic affiliation with our parents, from which we have come forth. But once we have a body we also have to take care of this body; from the endless past to the limitless future we have to use this body and this mind.

Once when the Buddha was traveling, he made a pilgrimage. He met Ananda, who then became his disciple, and he was inseparable from him for 25 years. It’s not clear what he was doing the 25 years before that. He was actually a nephew of the Buddha. The Buddha told Ananda that now he had become old like a broken cart which would longer have its spare parts repaired. Ananda knew this well because he was always with the Buddha, and he asked the Buddha, “Well, how should all of us continue then if your cart is about to break down?” as the Buddha was saying he wouldn’t be around for so long anymore. What should they do about that? And how would they deal with it with the problems that they always went to the Buddha with?

To which the Buddha said, and this is said several times in this teachings, “Make your mind your refuge. Do not look outside of yourselves. Make the Buddha’s way your refuge. Do not look to others.” He said these same words in other places. Sometimes, we will become confused and without fail we will get deluded. “So how should we deal with things at this time?” was what was being asked by Ananda to the Buddha. This the Buddha answered: “We have to align our body and align our determination not to live only for ourselves, but to live for the sake of all beings’ deepest liberation.” For that we must live in a good way in this life. This is

what is important: that we not take refuge in anything outside. Only take refuge in that truth that we know and that place within and that truth of the way the Buddha has always taught. This is the way of life of the Buddha dharma.

February 19, 2012
Day 3 Teisho

The Buddha's Way: in Section 8, here, Vimalakirti gives a poem about the walking of the Buddha's Way. Up until now in the sutra it was said that if there is a decided form, that is never the Buddha's Way. If the Buddha is something to be imagined, if Buddha's Way is a land or a way of form to be imagined, then this cannot be the Buddha world. The seeds—Buddha seeds—in a world where we think we're doing good only, that is not the point. People in the world have limitless desires and delusions, and from having these comes their motivations and deeper vows, which are their Buddha seeds; the desires themselves are their Buddha seeds. Here, Vimalakirti poeticizes how to follow the Buddha's Path. Vimalakirti, himself, writes here, in this opera-like text; someone else said this was like an opera and in his poem Vimalakirti puts it operatic-like in a very easy to understand way.

In the Heart Sutra it says to awaken with wisdom, from where the Buddhas were born. Buddhas were born from wisdom and led to the heavens. Each and every one is born with this, our power to realize deep awakening. To awaken to this, this is wisdom and the Buddhas Way. The Buddha awakened in wisdom that we can also then live in it and it would liberate us through doing so. No matter what a challenging situation or environment we may encounter, our wisdom allows us to move through it. By doing this, we deepen the power of our wisdom.

Hannya Haramita—this is wisdom awakened and freed up, where there is no obstacle. Where there is no obstacle we can realize this wisdom freely. If we are insecure and worry about getting fooled it's easy for us to lose our ability to see things clearly. If we repeat and repeat confusion, this is why we can get suddenly challenged. But if we realize that we have this wisdom from within and are liberated by that having of that wisdom, it is different. When we are living in a settled way, that with which we have from birth becomes very clear to us. This is different from having information and receiving knowledge.

A baby's wisdom is prior to any mental understanding or any kind of mental version of dualism. At sixteen months, we for the first time know that there is a "me". And then at twenty-four months

we know that this is dividable into two, a “me” and an “other”. And at thirty-six months, we are one, but with dualism in perceiving things. Everything is perceived and then we begin to judge and to approximate. We don't want to not benefit in any situation. While our original Mind is like this, it is also like a great round mirror Mind, not like some narrow, limited mind. We are a moving life energy. We are existing because of what that is. And that is what we are. This is the base of our whole wisdom, which is our true base of all people. And this is also referred to as prajna wisdom.

**Of the true bodhisattvas,
The mother is the transcendence of wisdom.**

Our physical body is limited. We have eyes and ears, nose and mouth. Our state of mind is zero, where we are caught on nothing at all. We can catch everything in this place when we are zero. Everything is perceived perfectly and directly. It is similar to that clarity of mind prior to those twenty-three months when we see things as a small self. From there we continue, giving birth to many ideas and dualistic perceptions. And then to these we add more and more habits and experiences and awarenesses. But sometimes that gets confused by wisdom from within. When we put aside and lose track of that wisdom, we get caught by preconceived notions.

We have the example of the disciple of Bodhidharma named Niso Eka Daishi. He was a successor to Daruma Daishi [Bodhidharma] and he was a very well-studied philosopher of many subjects. But no matter hard and how much he studied he could not settle his uneasy mind. He could answer many great intellectual questions, but only intellectually. He told Daruma Daishi that he wanted somehow to settle that uneasy, insecure mind.

Bodhidharma told him that, in Buddhism, scholarly knowledge had nothing to do with it, and he told him to put out his insecure, uneasy, mind so that Daruma could take care of it. But while Niso Eka Daishi had studied so much and so hard, he said, “No, I can't do that. I did study a lot, but I can't put out that settled unsettled mind.” And probably with great glaring eyes, Daruma Daishi told him then, his insecure mind was not actual and that was why he could not put it out there. Niso Eka Daishi, who had studied so many things so thoroughly, deeply realized that all of that had been useless. And in

that moment he realized his clear Mind directly.

Of course, there has to be this kind of questioning going on to have this kind of awakening. But prajna wisdom is not something far away and hard to realize. It's not something over there that we have to move some place to get to. It has to be a deep seeing right where we are and that teaches each person but we must realize this awakening for ourselves. It won't work to try to get it from studying about something.

To do just that, we have osesshin to realize it for ourselves. But we can't spend the whole osesshin entertaining thoughts the whole time. To forget the body and forget those thoughts and realize the true mind directly! Zen is said to be our awareness directly encountering itself, but for this we can't be holding onto anything else. We have to throw away everything. Throw away everything! We do zazen and we throw it out and throw it out and throw it out! We let go of it, we let go of it, we let go of it until we become like a vacuum, wide open and spacious inside. This does not work by a mental system way of doing it. We have to let go and let go completely! And that is not done in a way that can be done rationally and mentally. For doing this we can use a mantra, we can use a koan, but nothing is a tool that is absolute. We are so full of habits—those have to be actually let go of and this is what is not so easy. We are here so that we can grab at that opportunity with our serious and definite, determined mind, and this is not something that can be done by a casual half-baked effort. But, if we once touch it directly, we don't have to do it twice.

As the disciple of Hakuin said, as Master Hakuin said to those young ones, “Young ones, do it once and you won't have to do it twice. Everything becomes clear and we can from there see from this place of deep clarity. Of course, there are those like Master Daie Zenji who had fourteen great breakthroughs and countless small ones. But as Vimalakirti has said, “Right here, of the true bodhisattvas, the mother is the transcendence of wisdom, only from here are we all born.”

**Of the true bodhisattvas,
The mother is the transcendence of wisdom,
The father is the skill in liberative technique.**

While we say that it is a character of ours to be zero from birth, only this is useless for being in society. Our awareness may be empty, but for it to work correctly we need liberative techniques. If wisdom is our true base, then the liberative techniques are what use that wisdom and so our wisdom and liberative techniques work together.

For the way of telling how this is done, we have the Six Paramitas: charity, precepts, patience, good efforts, samadhi and wisdom. To have these Six Paramitas—we can see they are written on the back wall in this room [the zendo at Tahoma Monastery] to the left of the exit, those six plaques are all listing each of them, each one of those paramitas. To reach this far shore of being completely liberated, we have these six liberative techniques. There are four more—wisdom, power, strength, and effort—that make ten, which usually are expressed as these main six. When we are truly able to become our zazen, or whatever we are doing, then a koan becomes usable, and this is what we use koans to polish. There are 1,700 of these.

There are also sutras but they are mentally understood, where for the Six Paramitas we enter them through an intuitive perception entrance. It has to be in that way so that we can be without ego when we enter them. If there is any way that we are adding a small self to the doing of the Paramitas, then that is not their correct way of being used as liberative techniques. For example, the first one, charity. Charity must be done with its three elements of emptiness. No one is doing the giving. There is no one there doing the receiving and there is nothing there being given. This is a sense of the state of mind of deep wisdom, from which these liberative techniques are done.

The second is that of precepts, establishing a mind of fearlessness. Also for upholding all of these we need deep wishes, great efforts and very stable perseverance, ability to be still and unmoved around, and finally wisdom. To see clearly, no matter what situation we are liable to be in, it is these which are the six liberative techniques. This great wisdom is our original base. It widens into these liberative techniques and these are the father; the father is the skill in liberative technique.

**Of the true bodhisattvas,
The mother is the transcendence of wisdom,
The father is the skill in liberative technique;**

The leaders are born of such parents.

All of those who do training and work on this Path in this way can then lead others to realize these things.

**Their wife is the joy in the Dharma,
Love and compassion are their daughters.**

Joy in the Dharma is not joy that turns into melancholy later. There are many kinds of joy in the world but seeking external joys eventually turns into melancholy. At the same time, to bring forth that great joy from our awakened mind, this is the greatest joy. Love and compassion as well are without limits and bring great joy to all. To awaken deeply, this is the greatest joy and nothing else can match it. This is why we trust it.

Here there is using of our human form as a tool, but to realize our truest source is the point. And that joy gives birth to many other people's deep faith.

Love and compassion are their daughters.

Love and wisdom—the ability of Avalokiteshvara to take away pain and simultaneously to offer wisdom to anyone anytime. Seeing society and wanting to offer help is our natural impulse.

**Their wife is the joy in the Dharma,
Love and compassion are their daughters.**

With these, Vimalakirti, makes clear the way of the Buddha. With its clear source of deep awakened Mind, while saying it cannot have a form because the Path of the Buddha is not something which is external. In this way, further, Vimalakirti teaches many aspects of what is the way of the Buddha, including our environment. And other things that we need to realize to live in this way.

February 20, 2012
Day 4 Teisho

Vimalakirti tells us about what is the Buddha's Way and how to live it with this poem. Sutras teach with poems included as one of their ways of expressing the truth. Here he first says how wisdom is the mother, liberative teachings the father. Wife is joy in the Dharma, and compassion and love the daughters: the true sincere Mind, the most important source of everything that is ever created.

**Of the true bodhisattvas,
The mother is the transcendence of wisdom,
The father is the skill in liberative technique;
The Leaders are born of such parents.**

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

In Confucius' Analects there are so many things that are being told to not be done, but Confucius once said he only ever said one thing that one shouldn't do, not so many prohibitions. His disciples were feeling overwhelmed by so many rules of things, but Confucius said he only taught one prohibition. When he said this, his disciple, Soji said, "Yes that's true," and Confucius left the room. And all the other disciples turn to Soji and said, "Did you hear what he said?" and challenged him, to which Soji, answered, "The path of our teacher is only one. What you say and what is in your heart has to be the same. Our heart put into our words is our truth—to be sincere and empathetic. One with no empathy, even if they are sincere, is not truthful. And one who is empathetic but if they are not sincere in that is also not truthful. This is the source and the only real teaching. Everything else that was ever said is to establish this truth."

Buddhism is the same—only the great Mind of the truth. For that all the millions of words of the sutras have been written. To experience this is zazen. To know this truth of the clear Mind with not any speck of our own position! The four seasons, one year's events, the cycling of the sun, the orbit of the stars, all the pain, the whole world—all of that is happening within our mind. And our zazen is what teaches us this. Not something mental, from this our deeply sincere mind is born.

**The Dharma and the truth are their sons;
And their home is deep thought on the meaning of voidness.**

The home is the deep mind of holding onto nothing whatsoever, not even one thing.

**All the passions are their disciples,
Controlled at will.
Their friends are the aids to enlightenment;
Thereby they realize supreme enlightenment.**

All the passions are their disciples: greed, anger, ignorance, the three poisons. We are endowed with these from birth as well. Some are of the mind, some are of the body. The mind holds all of our past experience. Our inherited tendencies, greed, anger, blind movement, are with us from birth. Our cells want to survive instinctually, to stay alive. If we close off our mouth and nose we get very confused because we struggle furiously to stay alive. Our body, is in everyday life, instinctively wanting to stay alive, and that expresses through wanting this and wanting to get that and wanting to have this and wanting to gather that to accumulate things. And this makes us very tired.

Also, we have an instinct to establish our own position at any possibility. And this also makes our mind very tired. One hundred and eight desires is what are usually listed, but it is not such a small number; the number of desires we have is infinite. But the point is to use these desires to improve society, to use our desires to liberate people from their suffering. To use our motivation for that and to be angry on behalf of others' pain, not just be moved around aimlessly by trivial anger. If we use each thought and each deed for society's improvement, this is how the passions become our disciples, and this is the way of the Buddha's Path.

How to align our mind and our body? This is our teacher. The Ten Paramitas are the ways, including the wisdom and liberation techniques of the mother and the father, all of our friends of our Path. We have those Six Paramitas of charity, precepts, patience, good efforts, samadhi and wisdom, along with that of giving kind words which help make relationships go smoothly and well. To all work together in harmony to make the work go well. If someone is

struggling, to become their state of mind and empathize with their difficult situation. To give people great joy. To give people what they need, help for illness, help for not having food, help for their housing, help as friends, but not as something special, just in that natural giving in a harmonious way. These are our friends of the path.

**Their consorts are the means of unification,
Their music is the teaching of the Dharma.**

**“The incantations make their garden,
Which blossoms with the flowers of the factors of enlightenment.**

The Sixth Patriarch was first a collector of firewood. When he was selling firewood, he heard from one of his customer's houses a sutra being chanted. “Abiding nowhere, awakened mind arises.” When he heard this line he was immediately awakened.

In Hakuin Zenji's Exhortations for Rohatsu Sesshin, we read about on the fifth day, Heshiro of Ihara. As Heshiro of Ihara was hurrying home one day he heard in an unusual way, coming forth from a nunnery passed on the way, “For people of slow efforts, to awaken to Nirvana will take three kalpas. For those who want to do it this very moment, it only takes straight forward efforts.” Heshiro heard those words. They affected him so deeply that he immediately became very determined and took that saying, “If this is all I need, straight forward efforts,” and used that and became awakened. In this way,

**Their music is the teaching of the Dharma.
The incantations make their garden,
Which blossoms with the flowers of the factors of enlightenment.**

For example, not only doing susok'kan in the zendo, but to use it all day long. Or the koan of Joshu's Mu, which we continue all day long in every single thing we are doing, no matter where we are and what it is we are doing.

**The incantations make their garden
Which blossoms with the flowers with the factors of enlightenment.**

These factors liberate us from extraneous thinking, which meanwhile purifies our mind simultaneously, and we can then cultivate this clearest mind in everything that we do. Vimalakirti's surroundings were always peaceful. People who came

even near them could feel this and their agitated mind was settled naturally. If we are upset, that upsetness also affects those around us who are close to us, the same being true for a quiet, peaceful person. We feel peaceful around them and our sadnesses are forgotten, our irritability is soothed. Not something in particular, but our difficulties seem to melt away. And when we go where they are, we feel clear and big,

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

The supernatural powers are used by them and the way of the Mahayana. They bring to whomever and whoever comes to them and to all who they encounter. Becoming, gunning them to be able to believe in each and every person's true Buddha nature and becoming disciples and full of this awareness. The clear view of the Mahayana, that Buddha nature is our refuge. And even though it is our daily life, we use those supernatural powers to the benefit of all beings.

This is what is called supernatural powers: that our eyes see what is actually there, that our ears hear what is actually there, that our nose smells what is actually there, and that our mouth can taste what is actually there. When we hear, we hear it as it is, not imagining and adding on other things to what we hear and perceive, and to have these be useful in a natural way.

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

The mind which is used in a correct and appropriate way of living in truth, we speak the true words. We live the true way of living. And we also deepen our true samadhi in the Way of the Eightfold Path of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Right livelihood is to always live without extraneous thoughts and wastefulness, and to use carefully only necessary words and to live in a way, to function in a way that we have a true life that gives joy

and strength to all people. Right effort is to do what we start until it is completely finished, and to live in correct empty mindedness and practice samadhi to do so. This is the eightfold path. Not just walking around thinking extraneous things all the time.

**Their driver is the spirit of enlightenment,
And their path is the eightfold peace.”
“Their ornaments are the auspicious signs,
And the eighty marks;
Their garland is virtuous aspiration,
And their clothing is good conscience and consideration.**

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

**Their bed consists of the four contemplations,
And its spread is the pure livelihood.**

Next, the clothes—not about makeup and earrings and necklaces and dying our hair, however, but about deepening our state of mind and becoming round complete humans. If we live without extraneous thinking, we stay healthy and are constantly unafraid while reviewing our own behavior and not looking down on others. To see people with a deeply compassionate seeing eye, being sure we aren't making too much trouble for other people and making efforts to help others.

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

As an era proceeds, our material treasures may dwindle but our inner treasure, our inner abundance, will be with us always. Our inner treasures have given us infinite interest amounts so that we can share them with all people. To live the truth of what we learn and share it with all others. Vimalakirti is telling us to make efforts for this and then things will infinitely increase and we can share this truth with all beings. This is the Buddha's path.

**Their bed consists of the four contemplations,
And its spread is the pure livelihood,**

**And their awakening consists of gnosis,
Which is constant learning and meditation.**

**Their food is the ambrosia of the teachings,
And their drink is the juice of liberation.**

The four contemplations: This is nothing so complicated, but rather can be boiled down to what the Sixth Patriarch said, which is to give no extra thinking about good and bad to whatever is perceived, and anything that is within, to add no concerns to it. To see things as exactly as they are and not to be moved around by what we experience.

But like sitting on the seat on a train, if that seat is not fastened to the floor we can't see the scenery because we are spending all of our efforts to sit in the seat which is moving around in the train. If we can sit down peacefully and look out the window and see things, then we can let them all pass by. Because we are able to in everyday life see things from an empty clear place, we are not always being attached and moved around by whatever we see. To see clearly and precisely, and then we are able to respond appropriately in a positive way in each situation.

If our zazen is correctly done then our eyes and ears see and hear clearly. But we should also live with only an 80% full stomach and other appetites, as we always think we would like just a little more. But that's the way to leave it. Of course there is no life without any desires, but to feel that we are fine if we have what we desire and fine if we do not have what we desire—to live in this way, then we can see and be clearly.

**And their awakening consists of gnosis,
Which is constant learning and meditation.**

We have so much input and education today with internet, but we have to be able to polish what we learn and input as well—to carefully choose what we learn and what we decide to input and not drag in so many unnecessary bits of information. Then to know what it is we are receiving and to take the essence of it. This is what is important.

So it is not about being like a goat that will eat anything that comes in front of it, even plastic, so that it will eventually have to have an

operation on its stomach to remove the plastic, but to use the learning to bring awakening to others as well. To truly bring this wisdom to all beings. This is the Path of the Buddha.

**Their food is the ambrosia of the teachings,
And their drink is the juice of liberation.**

To not be always greedy for this and that, but to see with a receptive quiet clear mind, and see how to make best use of whatever we have and whatever comes to us. No matter what the situation, to see clearly where we are in each and every situation and circumstance. We always think we want it to be like this or like that. But instead to receive it all just as it is, and resolve to use it in the best possible way—doing it this way is the path to liberation.

When we can receive it in that way, a clear path will always open no matter how difficult the situation. Liberation will always come without fail, but we need this wisdom to be unmoved around no matter what comes; also we use it to deepen our wisdom. We don't want sickness and pain, but there is so much of it, so how do we receive it? How do we treat it? This is why we need a deep inner resource for doing that.

In this way, he, Vimalakirti, is showing us how our way of the Buddha is not a fixed form but a way of being in everyday life and every encounter in every environment. And this is from now in the future poeticizing of this, it's even more about the challenges that we face that we carry in this world with its many, many problems.

Yoka Daishi, the Fourth Patriarch, read the Vimalakirti Sutra and that is what changed his life. And the Chinese politician, Choshu, who was about to write a treatise against Buddhism so that it would be crushed in China, listened to his well-read wife who said how could he write that when he hadn't even read about Buddhism yet. When he read the Vimalakirti Sutra, he did a big turnaround and said this could not only not be crushed, but we needed this more than anything in China, and wrote words to support it. This is about how we can use our most sincere energy and life with this Buddha's Way in everything we do in our daily life.

February 21, 2012
Day 5 Teisho

**Their bath is pure aspiration,
And morality their unguent and perfume.**

Tahoma's waste system is insufficient right now and [the roshi] apologizes that people can't take a shower and get clean. But doing zazen with not one single thought in our minds at all is a much more important kind of shower and this can be felt that way.

Vimalakirti says that purifying the mind is very much like taking a shower. When our mind is ragged and cloudy, zazen is best for clearing that out. We wash our bodies and feel that cleanliness and we wash our clothes, feeling our clothes being once again clean. We also, if the environment is dirty, then we tidy and clean outside. But even when all of these are clean, if we are physically clean and in a clean environment, and we have clothes that are freshly washed, if our mind is still full of cluttering thoughts we cannot be in a truly quiet and settled way.

To keep the mind well aligned keeps the delusions away. For example, we can see clearly what to do for this day when our mind is aligned—then we know when to sleep and when to wake up. We sit in zazen, we eat meals, we do work and it is always is being done at the same time. If we don't eat regularly then our digestive juices get confused and we can get an easily upset stomach. To be regular and keep that alignment is very important.

**Having conquered the enemy passions,
They are invincible heroes."**

Our mind has so many thoughts that it can really be likened to a violent gang or wild ferocious animals. In the Yuikyo Gyo it says that we have five senses, our windows of the world but we have to use them in moderation. Not to see things we don't need to see, not to hear and listen to things we don't need to listen to and hear. Not to smell things we don't need to smell. Not to taste things and eat things we don't need to eat and taste. And not to say things we don't need to say.

If we are doing things in a way that is not moderate, overdoing it,

then it can become very overwhelming. If we hear the things we don't need to be hearing it can be overwhelming. This, then, can be in a way that is not healthy. As Master Rinzai says it, "To eat enough food to not go hungry. To wear enough clothes to not get sick." Or else we get caught on desiring more and more food and we get caught on keeping up with fashion and spending unnecessary money for something that superficial.

But to overuse these is not the fault of the eyes. To overuse these senses is not the fault of the nose and the mouth. But also we cannot be too tense about how to do all of this in moderation or we start worrying about things we don't need to worry about, such as when we will die. Concerned about when we will die all the time, we get very upset and tense easily.

The Buddha taught us to do everything in the middle way, in moderation. This is written about in the 42 steps of practice written by the Buddha—of how we need to tune the strings of a musical instrument. We need to tune our way of living like the way we tune the strings of a koto, not too tight with too much tension, but not too loose and living in a flaccid way.

**Having conquered the enemy passions,
They are invisible heroes.**

This is not to wipe out every desire, but to not desire what is not necessary. To sustain the middle way is very different if we put that alignment in. We can live in an overall balanced way, but this really takes great bravery and courage to do, and it cannot be done in a way that causes problems for others. We have to live in a way where we can see what is important and best for our own personal wishes, but in a way that nevertheless is not something which is going to make burdens for other people. With a wish to evolve we can make efforts and then we can all polish each other.

**Having subdued the four Maras,
They raise their standard on the field of enlightenment.**

We have the word "to disturb" or "to obstruct" our work on our practice. How do we align that? We can, of course, call it luck if our practice goes well, but this is not a way of looking at things in Buddhism. However, there is an element of luck involved in our

practice. For example, there are the obstacles of having an extreme amount of desires. To balance this we have to align our posture and our breathing and align our exhalation, our inhalation, and to do that, to make the efforts that make us exhale even a little bit longer. This will naturally help those desires that are disturbing us and also help us align our state of mind.

These efforts have to be made in our practice in every situation for us to be able to overcome our greatest obstacles. For example, there is the mara where people think about all kinds of things and are having a very hard time stopping doing that.

Because we have a body we can do practice. Still, there are those who have a very hard time physically even from the beginning. There are those who have from the beginning a very rigid and tight body that is hard to be put into a flexible position, and there are those who are constantly becoming sick. This is a mara that cannot be left alone. We have to work on it with perseverance.

For our posture, for example, to use a chair or to stand or to use a Naikan way for working on our physical situation from the inside out. It is not at all that we cannot practice because we can't sit, not at all. But we have to make efforts to look closely at what is the best way for our situation and guide it well. Our body is a very flexible tool if we train it well. To use that awareness to work with the challenges, not just leave things as they are in a difficult state and full of obstacles.

Next is the mara of thinking things—that mara of things that come to us from the outside. Just when we are about to practice, family problems arise, just as we are about to practice, a great crisis comes forth. This is also a kind of luck, but we have to stand on our determined motivation. We also have the mara of death, where we think how we can't practice because death will come anyway. To align all of these obstacles and work with them.

They raise their standard on the field of enlightenment.

In the olden days in India, the various religions would publicly argue, with the king of the country leading the debates. And then at the end, after bringing in mediation, the religion that won would raise a red flag and the king would get involved and help them settle their

differences.

For one or many to do practice, there is a kind of environment that is best for training. Full of good energy and not full of good energy are two very distinct feelings of places, and both of them are in existence. This is not imagination. To put our body in the place where we can actually do practice in a dojo in the best possible way, this is one of the flags of good training.

They manifest birth voluntarily.

We have the three poisons of anger, greed and ignorance. We can reflect many different things—that mind is like a mirror. To not be pulled around by things we are reflecting and add to them attitudes of greed and anger and ignorance, that is our true most important alignment in our training. For this we have to align well our body and our mind.

Our mind's alignment deeply affects our physical body's way of being. Our mind full of thinking of the past and the present and the future—along with our physical body—will be disturbed if we don't work with it. Our way of doing this is our way of aligning our life and passing along our life to many people.

Our body has a life and a death, but for the mind to not make it so small but to hold our mind in a great wide open way, in huge way, in an expansive way for others. Then we are able to best experience our own state of mind and to also express what we want to in the best way from our state of mind to other people.

To be able to know this wide mind rather than living in this narrow mind—like it says in the words of the Heart Sutra, to not be moved around. Then we can be effective in the world around us. But not to be caught on doing this in a small way, in a trivial way, not to be moved around and moved around by small things and little difficult things that will always be coming along.

Society has come to know this, and just as Vimalakirti says, he is not sick; it's not Vimalakirti who is sick. At the beginning he said it very clearly. But because society is sick he has taken on the sicknesses of society, one by one, to guide people. Young people are the most healthy and it would be great if we could all stay healthy all the time,

but it doesn't work that way. That is why for young people to be familiar with what it is to be sick and know about that so that they can help each other to be aware of how it is not only that life is to be healthy and well, but to be able to see that all of these things are included in being alive.

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

In the section of the Vimalakirti Sutra on Buddha lands we have Sharihotsu asking the Buddha why there is still prejudice, why it's never ending. The Buddha said to him, Where are your eyes looking? There are all kinds of people and no two people have the same body type and yet all people have Buddha nature. But not all people can see it—it depends on each and every person. What is important is knowing when to do what.

We understand that we all have Buddha nature and at the same time each and every one of us has our own individual traits as well. To see this world knowing that, this does not make a person naturally aligned. We each have to make efforts for this. People are forever arguing and fighting over the many, many differences.

People who are blind cannot see, but that does not mean that they don't have conflicts. If we thought there was a world of conflict, then we can also, by seeing that closely, find out that there is indeed at the same time, a world of harmony and kindness. This is why it is said that we have to look at our society through wisdom and what we can do to make this way of being a much more peaceful place. In society, people pass through, never, never even knowing themselves.

**They shine in all the fields of the Buddhas,
Just like the rising sun.**

Some read all about the ways of people and then they try to help them all. This is the construction of the Buddha land. But not just to see this but to actually walk it and offer it to the people who are at the outer edge of society's stratum as well. To feel their struggle deeply and to bring a great love to what they are doing. To be able

to see this and put it into activity is the way of building the Buddha's Way.

**They shine in all the fields of the Buddhas,
Just like the rising sun.**

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

Of course there are many kinds of people and even the ones who may look as if they are somehow wealthy and doing well externally may be the ones who are the most impoverished within; even if some are wealthy by material standards they are very impoverished and sad and melancholy within. We can see their pain if they just peel off one layer.

Today to see that there are some who are very quiet people and people who are excellent in what they are doing and from whom we can learn—and learning from these people as well is an offering to them. To be able to see all the different kinds of people and relate to them in the way that is the most positive and the most effective. Yet another way of following the Buddha's Path.

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

If we open our prajna wisdom, then even if people have no money we can see everyone is empty inside. We change forms but we are all physical bodies made of molecules and atoms, constantly gathering and then separating, constructed in a way of flux. Our life is only a very short period in a long process.

A person who is in the olden days doing farming wrote the words that even if it is going to be terrible floods or disastrous circumstance, they would continue doing that farming. For all they know it would only be only bad weather and there would be no harvest possible, but nevertheless to make the efforts. Or to put a piece of fallen litter on the street into the litter basket—even things like this, big and small, all of those are bringing the way of Buddha

nature into the world to make it a better place for all people.

To see each person's deepest mind is so important, not just their appearances as they travel through the various worlds of the hell realm, the hungry ghosts, the brutes, the demons, the human and the heavenly beings. Everyone is going through many different appearances all the time. But rather than being caught on that, to see through that to how they really are doing. Zazen is not just for our own good fortune, but to objectively and from a bigger picture see clearly all people as they really are. From doing that to find that deep empathy from which we can know the best way to live this Path of the Buddha.

There are so many things that can suddenly occur in this world, natural disasters, wars. We never know when we might encounter something like that. But even within these, when there are things we cannot know ahead of time are going to happen and cannot prevent getting worse, in accordance to each situation to help those who are suffering through it in the best possible way we can. How our own minds might affect the life of someone in that situation to whom we are kind and empathetic, we cannot even know. To help people in this way so that when there are such times occurring we can function with those in great distress in the best possible way. This is also an expression of the Way of the Buddha.

Vimalakirti covers all of these different situations. Looking very precisely and appropriately at how to relate in every situation—in that, which is the best thing to do for that situation—because in the doing of this with such precision and appropriateness, one finds the Buddha's Way. To be ready to be offering efforts always to society in the best possible way, the best preparation for doing this is zazen so that we can constructively give our functioning to everyone in the best way in each situation. Doing this is the Way of the Buddha.

To see this and know how our zazen gives not only activity, but also an opportunity and a chance for all beings to mutually polish each other's best quality of state of mind.

February 22, 2012
Day 6 Teisho

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

This is Vimalakirti's poem on the Buddha's Way. In society the Buddha's Way is not a fixed, decided thing that we're supposed to do, nor is it for proselytizing Buddhism. To teach the Dharma, to teach and praise and honor it, this is not the point. The point is that people in pain and suffering pray for release and peace and this is the Dharma.

From our deep ego attachment we pray for good fortune usually to return this to the truthful guidance, to the awakening of clear wisdom to guide people to an obvious and clear better way where everyone becomes fortunate, just not a single person. In this source of each and every person's pain, we see how the Path is necessary. This is where the Dharma appears. The Path is not something invisible and unavailable, nor is it some kind of magician trick.

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

Many of us have experiences that teach us what life is. We live, we age, we die. Everyone probably knows the farewell to a dying dear relative. And in that we come to understand—at least in our head anyway—birth, sickness, old age, death, and from there we teach that to those younger people. We teach about the sufferings of birth, sickness, old age and death: You'll become wiser. And they see that our material good fortune is like a phantom, like a dream, like a bubble. To not just say this, but to show them the actuality right smack in front of them. "You will get old, too, and this is what it is going to be like." To use an old person's form to show that. Also to know that we will get sick. To show a dying person as well to show how we will die. We will all encounter this at some point, not as a form of Vimalakirti, but as a form of everyone in society; this the form of Vimalakirti and this is the Buddha's Way.

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

At the end of this world there will be great fire burning up everything followed by great water covering what is left of the planet, and after that a great wind where everything will be blown away. These three are Vimalakirti's form as well, and this is also the Buddha's way. We are not eternal in our form, and we have left many toxins for the earth during our time here. Within this we have had crises such as earthquakes, or other natural disasters where whole areas of the planet are destroyed. These disasters happen all over the planet and bring us all wisdom. The earth does not just stay the same and treat us only kindly. The magna boils and various activities take place from that. Destruction and disaster happen. These are also to be known of and bring us wisdom.

Also we cannot think we will always be here in the same capacity. The earthquake in Japan was like this. In retrospect, we see that there had always been great tidal waves in that area where the recent tsunami was. There was even a stone that was placed a hundred years ago, saying at a four kilo mark way from the ocean shore, do not build anything lower than this four kilo mark between here and the ocean because of tidal waves. Don't build close to the ocean. Don't build closer to the ocean than this stone, there are tidal waves. It was written in stone. These were written about a hundred years ago. And yet this recent tidal wave that came had come up four kilos from the shore, 38 meters high. Now there are laws saying that no one may build closer than four kilos to the ocean. But if we had learned from our ancestors who told us this in stone one hundred years ago, we wouldn't have had to go through this terrible disaster in the same way. Now those four kilos of land are being made into parks where people can play but not live. This is also the Buddha's Path.

People mentally understand impermanence, but don't actually believe in it. We continually do ignorant things because of that. Many people seek wisdom and this wisdom is Vimalakirti. How can we do what is best for each and every environment? This is the way of Vimalakirti's teaching us.

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

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

Vimalakirti is beginning to cover more ground here now, saying it cannot be done through only mental understanding but only through the Buddha's Way. We have the reading and studying of the sutras. We have the reading and the studying of the Analects of Confucius. We have the Bible of Christ and we have the Koran. These are all the Buddha's Way because this is not about preconceived notions nor is it necessary to get caught on one religious angle. Not to think we have nothing to learn though or nothing to do. All of those other religions need to be learned and then we can use them all for the liberation of all beings.

This is why we use Vimalakirti's instructions to help this. All of the meeting places where they share something—to use these opportunities. For example, the newer energy sources. This is all about the Buddha's Way. To use a kind and friendly way of going about learning and using these things. It is not enough to just read the sutras, but as well as the Bible and the other books, to see deeply the central point of each and every one of those teachings, and also to use that to liberate all beings.

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

It is not that only the Buddha's Path is correct; rather, to see all paths and give them all life. This is true for all of us. As was said at the beginning, for of the true bodhisattvas the mother is the transcendence of wisdom, the father is the skill of liberative technique; leaders are born of such parents. And not to merely satisfy our own ego adventure in doing this, but to return and align always at the source. Then our preconceived notions and judgment will return to clear true wisdom. It may seem difficult to

return to this source, but if we return to our best open self, we can see and realize this truth. It is infinitely wide. And in this way we are filled with ability to travel well on the Buddha's Path and we will not fall into sideways paths. This way, teaches Vimalakirti.

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

**During the short aeons of maladies,
They become the best holy medicine.**

He's getting more and more expansive here, so the sun and moon are all part of this now. The teaching of Vimalakirti, the Buddha's Path, they become food and drink to alleviate hunger and thirst. To awaken to this wisdom is our zazen. It is not about our small self, but about the truth which is much greater. And we become that.

There is no small self to hold onto. Rather, the whole world is woven in this way where we can see the Buddha's Way through it, not in a small, narrow, only individual way or we cannot function fully. While we are indeed individuals, we must be one with the whole of humankind, not dualistically putting each other down, criticizing, but to look together at what is the source point of all beings. This is the word of the Buddha's Way.

If we do it like that we will not be dualistic. The truth will be clear. And this huge way of this great work will be understood well as not for having our own personal happiness but to be part of a society which is living in a great big way. This is how zazen has to be. In this way it is very central, the piece of the whole world, our day, our deep wisdom, the sun, the mud—all of it included is in deep profound view if we look in this way. This is where the rain is falling, the moon is shining and all of it is the Buddha's Path.

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

**During the short aeons of famine,
They become food and drink.**

**Having first alleviated thirst and hunger,
They teach the Dharma to living beings.**

In this way, Vimalakirti is speaking about how all of the great studies, astronomy, geology, all of that is the Buddha's Way. There has to be medicine; there has to be because there are maladies. Without medicine, the Buddha's way would not be able to continue. From medicine to medical research and understanding, studying to alleviate the whole planet's thirst and hunger in these eras to come. But we are so many people on this same one planet. We have to study about these things as well as we possibly can. And doing that is also the Buddha's Way. But it cannot be done in a small egoistic way. To see it in its hugest version, this is the Buddha dharma, the Buddha's Way.

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

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

Non-stop in every era we have these battles, conflicts and wars, so it is a completely different time now of how these are performed than it was in Vimalakirti's era. Back then it was small countries doing small battles. This is how this is being taken care of everywhere and in every direction. But just crushing and crushing continually is not the best way. We have to build as well as crush. Using internet and other media possibilities we can now use, we can find the majority power to even reform governments. We are in transition.

But how do we then guide this new governing so that we cannot make further complex confusion than what was already there. This requires a great wisdom which has the deep essence so that we can let go of our small self and give and offer what is best for all people. Today's way of great hopefulness is here. How can we each use our wisdom to bring this world together? This is what Vimalakirti is pointing to in this, and that each person's wisdom being understood will bring all people together. Everybody's weak places and desires being seen will bring us to understand the needs for

our new energy sources. In this way the economy and the way that all countries are made will be helped by this wisdom to bring it into greater peace. This is the Way of the Buddha and the teaching of Vimalakirti.

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

**They manifest their lives
In all the species of the animal kingdom,
Teaching the Dharma everywhere.
Thus they are called "Leaders."**

Today we can hear information from all over the world and we see how there are living hells—such as in Africa—that are still in existence, where there are so many people that are barely able to stay alive, competing for a very small amount of food like hungry ghosts. There are still places like this in the world today. We need wisdom. We need efforts to gather funds to take help, and these are all the Buddha's Way. We can't stop making those efforts. And we cannot, these cannot be done by just simple individual efforts, but have to be done by all of society. It can't be some way that is vague and unfocused. And this is also the Buddha's Way.

**The hells which are attached
To all the inconceivable buddha-fields.**

Human's five deepest desires, as written in the Yuikyo Gyo sutra, are those desires for sex and food, for having possessions, sleep and fame. In the Theravadan Path we are told to let go of all of these desires, these desires which are always coming forth naturally. But in the Mahayana, it is said to keep them in moderation. To use them, not to try to put an end to them; we can do this if we know how to do them in a moderate way.

For example, if we had no sexual desire we would have no descendants. We need food to stay alive. And some things we also need—as we get older we need them to live in our elderly life. But to keep these things in a moderate and balanced way. As for the desire for sleep, each person must see what is necessary for their health without being extreme in the sleeping, which leads only to

losing our motivation and not being able to recharge our energy. Our need for fame as well, not to put this down, but to say it has to be done in moderation.

As the Sixth Patriarch has said, externally to add no thoughts of good and bad out of the stratum of our mind, to hold no extra concerns within. In our mind it cannot be only a holding onto an idea of nothingness, but to see how to live well and moderately. We will then be able to know how to make use of these desires in a way that we can all live together in the best possible way. All of our life energy is involved in doing this together. To see if we can do this and know it from seeing from that most huge all-embracing mind. This is the Buddha's Way.

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

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

Continuing, Vimalakirti says how we have to see ourselves clearly and honestly. We can't have big gaps when we live in the world—we're not living in the mountains. This not only about the doing of zazen, but about being in every part of our day from when we are feeling uninspired or overwhelmed by big desires. At that time if we become full and taut within, we can stay in our large mind and our objective view.

We may at first not understand why zazen is so important, but here we can see that while inhaling and exhaling, each breath may seem something small, but the end of each breath gives us increasing full tautness, and the breaths are gathering like drops in a filling cup or breath into an expanding balloon. When this gathers into full tautness it can be felt. It is as if this then becomes second nature and we are no longer subject to temptations and loses of motivation in the same way.

**Just as it can be shown that a lotus
Cannot exist in the center of a fire.**

We can then move in the world of desires without getting caught on them all. And not only that but while offering everything, we are society. We are like a lotus in the middle of a fire. We can't even realize this as a possibility merely by thinking about it, but truly this motivation is able to be there. Then the kind of actions and capabilities that we have in our best possible potential are born forth and each and every person then is able to realize their bodhisattva form.

**So they show the ultimate unreality
Of both pleasures and trances.**

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

This is what Vimalakirti really wants to say, that it's not about negating desire but about standing in that way of truth which is our greatest fuel in being in the Buddha's Way. This motivation is not external but inner. It's not about being confused by desires and the world. It is because we have seen clearly that which has to be done, and then we are able to be in the world in a non-confused way because no one is always only pulled around by desires. With efforts we are able to build that best possible environment. This is the Way of the Mahayana, not just for one's self but for all people. This is what is important here. Our best fuel and energy is this for creating beings who are living in their highest potential.

As you can see here, this is a world of socialism of the mind, not socialism of the society. To be awake and aware to the possibility of all beings' best potential being realized, this is what is called awakening to the mind of illumination in every being. With this state of mind, to bring our energy to all in society. This is why people cannot be special or full of feeling their ego. And this is why Vimalakirti says we can't just raise vague plans and some kind of blurry idea about it. It has to be that place where all beings' energy is best used; this is why the Buddha's Way is so important. Zazen as well brings forth this energy. We discover this energy and then we are able to realize it in such a way that all beings can bring it forth.

February 23, 2012
Day 7 Teisho

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

Vimalakirti's deepest vow and functioning are, just as they are, that of Avalokiteshvara. Avalokiteshvara can assume every possible shape and form to bring every situation into becoming wisdom. For a parent, for example, who has lost a child, Avalokiteshvara teaches them how a child may have a very thin karmic connection to a certain birth. And then Avalokiteshvara also teaches the mother to remember the joy of being a mother and how glad she was to be able to have a child, to help turn the losing of a child into a deeper wisdom.

When someone we love dies we become insecure, we become desperate and there is a hard place to turn into wisdom there. But in the ever changing, turbulent world we need this kind of wisdom, especially to go beyond our insecurities. To see and gain this wisdom. To know how to go beyond the deepest suffering. We learn this from these difficult situations.

In the whole universe there is a wisdom coming through everything, living in each and every thing. Also, within us there is infinite wisdom. We are born with infinite wisdom, but if we don't encounter certain circumstances that wisdom is not yet known. When we have to resolve something very difficult our wisdom is born. So we must never ever run away from difficult situations.

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

In the small town, in the large city, to enter among people and even if we receive negative treatment, to not be shamed. If people leave behind their clear objectivity to become full of grudges, this is also the Buddha's Way. To become the leader's brain and "see things from the one thousand year view," as it was said by the Master Taigen Shigen Zenji of Sogen-ji, who left those words. To see things

in the one thousand year view.

How should society be? How should humanity be? Not just dwelling on profit, but to see what humans simply must not do, just must not do, must not leave behind on this planet—to be able to see and act accordingly. This is also the Buddha's Way. The politician's wisdom is also the Buddha's Way. Not only for doing things for political profit, for your own benefit, but to do it for the descendants and to do it in a way that brings forth wisdom. This is also the Buddha's Way.

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

In the world the impoverished increase while politicians may live luxuriously even while not making decisions to help the impoverished. The power, the ambitions of politicians go beyond their material resources. This is because they have no true refuge within. To teach them this joy is also the Buddha's Way and a true basic need, to help them see what making a living is really for and how not to waste things so they can conceive the spirit of enlightenment.

Our greed that is intrinsically without limit—we have to not only stop that kind of greed but also to align it, to learn to serve others and share what we already have. This is also the Buddha's Way.

From great emptiness all things are born forth: the flowers, the moon, the pavilions. Human's deepest mind is found where there is nothing unnecessary needed. Deep satisfaction is in the abundance of mind. Deep wisdom is not an abundance that is moved by outside, external, material things.

At the temple in Kyoto of Ryoan-ji which has a famous rock garden there is a stone in which there is water. On it is writing that says, "To know what is sufficient." To know what is sufficient. This is also a Zen wisdom saying. If our mind is full and deep we don't rely on unnecessary things. This does not mean to be severely enduring all the time but to be moderate and not use things we don't need. For example, in winter to wear enough clothes to stay warm and healthy, and in general to eat the food that we need to stay healthy,

but not to be pulled around by luxurious, expensive clothing and gourmet food. The other day the King of Bhutan came to Japan and said, "The people in Bhutan, their level of life being excellent or bad is measured by their measurement which is determined by their inner satisfaction and inner joy." This is their country's measure of how the people in the country are doing. Maybe this was only for public relations, but it was spoken in a very realistic way. This, too, is also the Way of the Buddha, says Vimalakirti.

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

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

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

There are people who are conceited and proud, thinking only that they have such great power and ability, never caring if they are making problems for others with their assumptions and assuming it is okay to do that. Meanwhile, people around them have to put up with that. Some people are selfish and conceited and may seem impossible to get along with when they have such strong energy. But that will only go on as long as that energy is young. It will not continue and they will have to learn what it is to be without it. This is also the Buddha's Way.

To just rely on your many external sources, this will not last. We have to offer everything we are to all people. This is also the Buddha's Way. Power bases and material things will always, always fade. We always will have to part from people that we love and things that we love and will somehow have to endure that. We can't take things with us when we die. And yet bad things we leave behind us don't leave when we do either. Rather, to offer things to others and be one with all beings in deepest possible empathy.

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

If we are with others who are terribly afraid, we encourage them, help them find their inner courage and take away their fear. Avalokiteshvara is also to take away pain and give strength. And this is also the Buddha's Way. We have to make efforts to let go of various challenges, and for this we have the Six Paramitas—of charity, precepts, patience, using great efforts, deep samadhi, and wisdom. We also have the powers of our five senses, our own supernatural powers that we can use. We have these in this life in order to liberate ourselves. And this is the Buddha's Way.

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

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

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

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

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

Today in the world in many places there are welfare services which are more and more available from the government. People are helped while they are old, when they are sick, helping with their cleaning and their shopping and other everyday needs. Nowadays

the country's politics are taking care of this. In the olden days this was not taken care of in this way. Now this support is considered indispensable. And this is also the Buddha's Way.

In each person's mind it must be abundant and empathetic. We need education for this. This is the Buddha's Way. We all will have to be taken care of at some time, and for that to help cultivate that abundant mind, that empathetic mind, that we can be kind to the caregivers with. This is also the Buddha's Way. To become a person who others can believe in. In this world today, people have trouble truly in believing in each other. To cultivate a mind that others can believe in, this is the Buddha's Way.

**Their practices are infinite;
And their spheres of influence are infinite.**

The Buddha Way is infinite. Deep wisdom is abundant and liberating when it is encountered. In this way this deepest wisdom widens ever infinitely. This is the Buddha's Way. This wisdom has no end and it awakens all people. Here the motivation and vow can be found and this is where each person becomes Vimalakirti, each building infinite width of vow. Even for the buddhas themselves, during a million aeons or even a hundred million aeons it would too hard to express their virtues. But we are all these buddhas and there is no end to the Buddha's Way. Not just praising virtue but living it—then we can see the Buddha's Way and we are able to polish our own wisdom and deepen it while offering this wisdom to everyone in society. So more than ever before we can see that right now we really need the depth of the Buddha's wisdom. This is what the Buddha's Way is. So we know how we must continue these efforts, especially today in the world.

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

But there are some for whom this cannot be seen clearly, they just can't get it yet. But if we continue with perseverance, then good results will open at some time. We have to see clearly that it is necessary to open to all of our capacities and our abilities in order for this to happen. In this way Vimalakirti closes this chapter on the

Buddha's Way.

Chapter 9: The Dharma Door of Non-duality

Vaishali was where Vimalakirti resided. Konzoku Buddha of the heavenly realm had borrowed the form of Vimalakirti to enter society and help people. Vimalakirti helped many people in all areas of society, and one day Vimalakirti became sick. Everyone came to visit Vimalakirti because he had always been spending time with them. The young people would come. He had always spent time with them and they came to see him and he taught them of the importance of life.

The Buddha saw this and told the top disciples of the Buddha, the arhats and the 84,000 bodhisattvas to go and visit Vimalakirti. But the disciples, the arhats, the bodhisattvas had all been rather severely corrected at different times by Vimalakirti for what they were doing. So they really weren't very interested in going to see Vimalakirti, and the Buddha was challenged with no one to go and visit Vimalakirti.

Finally, he had to ask Manjushri, who said that he was not sufficient to go visit Vimalakirti but if the Buddha asked him then he would go and with the help of the Buddha he would go and visit Vimalakirti. And so because there was to be a meeting between Vimalakirti and Manjushri, all the disciples, all the arhats, and all the Bodhisattvas also wanted to see it. They all decided to go with him.

Vimalakirti saw them coming. He cleaned his room and he made room for all of them in his very small room. He just left a bed in which he was resting. Eighty-four thousand bodhisattvas, all the arhats and all the disciples entered. Manjushri arrived and Vimalakirti addressed him, "Manjushri, you arrived with no idea of arriving and you go with no idea of you going." Manjushri had not really put much thought in going to see Vimalakirti. He had just been asked by the Buddha to go and so he had simply entered the room. This is why these were the first greeting words—that Manjushri came with no idea of coming and left with no idea of going.

Manjushri then said to this, "If you come, there is no need to think about coming. If you sit there is no need to think of sitting." In this

way he asked to Vimalakirti, “What is the source of your pain? What kind of sickness do you have? What’s wrong with you?” Vimalakirti answered, “I’m not sick, but society is sick. Everyone is sick so I can’t leave it at that. And now I am appearing sick but there is no such condition. No sick condition in my body. Nor is there any getting better. But the society is suffering and so therefore I am sick.” This is what Vimalakirti answers.

Vimalakirti is lying down and then he and Manjushri exchange various words of wisdom; that is where this next chapter of the Dharma Door of Non-duality starts. That is where this next chapter, which is about their awakening to the Buddha’s wisdom, is brought in. In this there are basic teachings of Buddhism.

Of seven billion people on this planet, we are not all the same and yet we are one. Each and everyone is unique. We live in a world of dualism always—sick and well, good and bad, old and young, man, woman, meeting and separating. Everything in the world of dualism in the world is dualistic. But, while everything is dualistic it can always also become one, and this is the core of this teaching. Me and the world, good and bad, how to make these one? This is the Dharma. In this way Vimalakirti is clarifying it.

Chapter 8 of the Buddha’s Way, which we have just been completing today, is considered the chapter in which Vimalakirti speaks the most because of this long poem. With 84,000 bodhisattvas represented by Manjushri, the various teachings on emptiness are given and with some senior disciples participating here and there in that part of it.

Vimalakirti says to the Bodhisattvas, “If you are bodhisattvas then you must have a deep vow and an awakening. Please make those clear.” Vimalakirti says this to the bodhisattvas and he has them all, just like the great climax of a grand opera, he has them all appearing on stage to tell about their own awakenings. Already an excellent operatic scene, everyone has to tell, not mentally, but the actual experience of their enlightenment.

While we live in a world that is dualistic our needs are not that complex actually. A mirror reflects things as they are: a flower, a bird, a moon, a sun, and all of these things whether it is child or adult, man or woman, sick or well, all of these things when they are

reflected are just reflected exactly as they are. There is no dualism in that, they are just reflected. That’s because there is no ego in a mirror, it’s only all what is reflected. So like a mirror, if we have no ego we become one with that which we are perceiving it at any given moment. We become the struggle and pain, and not as if it is about someone else but from one’s deepest state of mind since we are not residing in dualism. When we are residing in dualism we are so used to residing in dualism that we no longer know to even notice that. Everyone is living to have this dualistic existence noticed, to have someone see them as an ego.

So how do we live in a world of peace when this is how things are? We have to be able to see that we are not dualistic and to see that this place where we are always thinking that dualism is how we have to perceive is not real. This is a radical, revolutionary way of changing the mind. We have to be able to see this. If we can forget ourselves completely and see like this, as Master Dogen has taught: “To study the way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.”

Our zazen is the base of being able to do this and is the Buddha’s Way. We follow it. We let go of our small self, and simultaneously see what great abundance and depth of mind that brings. We see a flower and we become that flower. We hear a bird, we become that bird. We see the moon, we become the moon. We see the sun, we become the sun. No more separation between everything and who we are. All of that is let go of.

The Buddha saw the morning star and he directly, at that moment, let go of the dualistic mind and realized that star was who he is. Kyogen heard the sound of a tile hitting the bamboo and at the moment let go of any dualism and became that sound completely. This touched them in the most profound, purified state of mind with this experience. We are all endowed with the same state of mind, and this is what is the mysterious part of the Dharma Door of Non-duality.

In Zen it says, “Heaven and Earth and I are one root. All the things and I are from one mind.” This is like a teacher finding themselves and their students. A teacher who wants to deeply

help the most difficult students. An artist finding themselves in a single flower wants to paint it, wants to poeticize it. There we find our deepest mind. For a business person who gives everything, compassionately takes care of their work place. A scholar who passionately investigates. This is our true Way. Also for a caregiver, they find themselves in the dying person. Here, an abundance state of mind is being found, and this is the very mysterious way of the not-two. This is also the mind of God, the mind of Buddha. That clear, empathetic mind is what God is and what Buddha is. And here is where they can find that place of that mystery of the not-two.

Closing Poem:

Lecturing and explaining, the nature of nonduality is clear:
Nothing to practice, nothing to realize—
 everything's right under your feet!
Open your eyes and Original Nature is clear and bright—
A single sprig blossoming on an early plum,
 fresh, the colors of spring!

OPENING POEM FOR TEISHOS ON
THE BUDDHA WAY CHAPTER OF THE VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA

二〇二二年二月
多法摩大接心
維摩經佛道品開講
誰是人中上上根
何歸本力如來門
發心求道渾擲去
見性分明報祖恩
右 古錐叟
成風

Whose capacities are the highest of the high?
How do we return to the Tathagata Gate
through which our innate power emerges?
Letting go all desire for enlightenment,
all seeking for the Way,
Clearly seeing our Original Nature
is to repay our debt to the ancestors.

POEMS

CLOSING POEM FOR THE LECTURES ON
THE BUDDHA WAY CHAPTER OF THE VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA,

二〇一二年二月
多法摩大接心
維摩經佛道品講了
講去說來不二圓
無修無証脚跟全
孤明歷々好開眼
早梅一蘂春色鮮
右 古錐叟
成風

Lecturing and explaining, the nature of
nonduality is clear:

Nothing to practice, nothing to realize—
Everything's right under your feet!

Open your eyes and Original Nature
is clear and bright—

A single sprig blossoming on an early plum,
fresh, the colors of spring!

FEBRUARY 2012
TAHOMA-SAN SÖGEN-JI FUNERAL SERVICE FOR JUNDO KOJI

二〇一二年二月二十三日
多法摩山曹源寺純道居士葬儀香語
生涯純道結勝緣
資性溫順風格圓
五十八年如夢早
堪悲堪惜憶連綿
別々
誰道水流元入海
方知月落不離天
喝 古錐叟

An entire life on the Pure Way,
fostering beneficial connections.

Warm in personality, balanced in character:
fifty-eight years, fast as a dream!

Thoughts of sorrow and regret follow
one upon another...

Water flows, returning to its source in the sea.
But remember:
Though the moon goes down
it never leaves the sky.

MEXICO SESSHIN
OPENING POEM FOR LECTURES ON THE FOUR VOWS
Following the sesshin at Tahoma Monastery, Roshi &
Chi-san flew to Mexico to give sesshin at One Drop Zendo
México

二〇一二年二月
墨国接心
四弘誓願文開講
衆生無辺願心堅
默坐端然道行專
須打破不尽妄執
要明万民本来眞
右 古錐叟
成風

However numberless sentient beings may be,
our vow to liberate them is firm.

Steady and painstaking in our silent sitting,
we focus on practicing the Way.

We must sever our limitless
deluded attachments

And reveal the innate truth in all people!

MEXICO SESSHIN
CLOSING POEM FOR LECTURES ON THE FOUR VOWS

二〇一二年二月
墨国接心
四弘誓願文講了
正法盛魔障亦繁
暗雲映影作讎冤
不会向上出身路
各揚自灯看脚痕
右 古錐叟
成風

The true Dharma flourishes,
but prospering also are obstructive forces;

Dark clouds throw shadows
causing feelings of frustration.

If you don't know what the Way to enlightenment,

Raise your own lamp
and see what's right under your feet!

FLORIDA EVENTS

Harada-roshi and Chi-san went to Florida in October 2011 to give two calligraphy demonstrations at the invitation of the Morikami Museum, as well as Dharma talks at the Southern Palm Zen Center and at Florida Atlantic University. Also during that visit Barbara and Linda Bland, mother and daughter students of Roshi's, received the Precepts and rakus, becoming Jusen—Spring of Eternally Living in Truth, and Jikishin—Living in a Simple Mind that Goes in One Straight Line of Truth.

Barbara and Linda Bland's Jukai Ceremony
October 23, 2011

From now we will have the Lay Ordination Precepts Receiving Ceremony for Barbara Daishi and Linda Daishi, having done zazen for a long time to be able to from that and a deep karmic affiliation with the Dharma to come to this point in their practice today.

The receiving of these Precepts began at the time of the Buddha; he gave teachings of how we can live our daily life in such a way that it is the following of the Way of the Buddha. For us to be able to live in this way and give realization to the awareness that we are lived through by an eternal truth and to live our daily life in a way that opens that and expresses that and realizes that is to become that gate of the awareness that while we are a physical human being, this physical body is a tool. This body is not something eternal. And yet within each of us there is an eternal life and whether we awaken to that or do not awaken to that it is nevertheless something with which we, each and everyone of us, are endowed with. However, to awaken to that eternal life within each of us allows us to live a life that is more expressive of the Way of the teaching of the Buddha. For realizing this, we have the Precepts.

The Precepts allow us to know how to live in the way of the eternal truth of the Buddha nature with which we are each endowed. For realizing the direction of these Precepts we first have a preparatory practice. Additionally, this preparatory practice would be doing prostrations to the thousand Buddhas of the past, the thousand Buddhas of the present, the thousand Buddhas of the future, in order to clarify our state of mind. Along with the prostrations there is the deepening. Barbara Daishi and Linda Daishi have done the practice of zazen a long time.

We have our deep and thorough repentance, which is a review of our behavior, and that is the preparatory work of getting ready for a Precepts Ceremony. There are many kinds of repentance practices that have form. Then there is the repentance practice which is beyond form and that is the deepening of our zazen and sitting in a place without form. This is the essence of our zazen practice that allows us to prepare for the Precepts Ceremony. We have many kinds of practices where we have repentance in such a way that we express it with a form, but this deep practice where we go beyond

the form in our meditation is the most clarifying practice to know how to live in the way of the Precepts and that has been being done up until today.

We have now the words on the paper you have for together reciting the gatha of repentance. Please, everyone read these words together.

[the Repentance Gatha is now recited]

Having completed our statement of repentance and given that life through our meditation practice, to have just realized that clarity there is still needed a meaning and a point to what we are going to do with that clarity which is expressed in the Four Vows. To realize that clarity is first necessary and then to say for what we have realized it, which is not a matter of only for our own small self satisfaction of being clear. The point of realizing this clarity is to be able to offer it to the liberating of it ending of suffering of all sentient beings. So, next, we say together the four vows.

Sentient beings are numberless,
I vow to liberate them.
Desires are inexhaustible,
I vow to put an end to them.
The Dharmas are boundless.
I vow to become master them,
The Buddha's way is unsurpassable,
I vow to become it.

Having declared our repentance for the complex karma of the past and our decision to live in a different way by following the Way of the Four Vows we realize that it is not so simple as just making a declaration that there is a need to be ready for the many obstacles and difficulties that come in life in order to be able to get through those and stay with our path. For this we take refuge: we take refuge in the universal Buddha, we take refuge in the universal Dharma, we take refuge in the universal Sangha, and this is not a Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of form, rather this universal Buddha, that about which Master Rinzai has said, in one mind moment of purified, clarified mind, we are that moment, the universal Buddha. We become that state of mind of clarity and in that moment that state of mind, living through us, is Buddha.

With that clarified state of mind, we then make use of the tools of our senses. With that clarified state of mind we see through our eyes, with that clarified state of mind we hear through our ears, with that clarified state of mind we smell through our nose, taste through our mouth, touch through our senses, and in that state of mind, that which is seen and that which is seeing becomes one and the same. In our clarified state of mind, when we hear, that which is doing the hearing and that which is being heard is one becoming. In our clarified state of mind, when we smell, taste and touch, that which is being experienced and that which is doing the experiencing are realized in the same objective and subjective moment. And then that is the true universal Dharma.

And that clarified state of mind then using our clarified senses, we become connected to all things in existence in oneness and we realize how there is no separation between self and other. And in that way we live in harmony with this ongoing becoming of oneness with all existence and that is called awakening to the universal Sangha. Together we will now chant this gatha on taking refuge and having deep faith and trust in this way of being.

[the refuge gatha is recited]

Having declared our deep repentance and establish the direction with which we will live in this clarified mind, we have stated our deep faith and trust in that which will enable us to get through all the different obstacles that do arise. Now, we come to the part where we say clearly how we will hold our inner state of mind. For this, we have the Three Pure Precepts that say clearly that we will not be moved around by attachment and mistaken ideas, how we will not regret any amount of energy required to do what is positive and necessary and appropriate and that we will give everything we are to bringing liberation to all beings. The Three Pure Precepts, please chant them together.

[the Three Pure Precepts are now recited]

Next we have the Ten Precepts, also referred to as the One Mind Precepts of Bodhidharma; these Precepts enable us to be guided in how we live in oneness with society as we observe and realize this purified state of mind in everything that we do. To be able to live in

that way and be at one with society at the same time, we have the aid of these Ten Precepts.

[the Ten Precepts are recited]

Of course to only speak these words is not the point. To live in this clarified subtle state of mind is the only way to complete this process. To say the words that we have said together today is to know what we have to do to live in this way, which is then undeluded and clear. But to do that we have to make the efforts to ongoingly be in this clarified state of mind. So to make this statement of our passion and our determination to do this we got the final part of the ceremony.

Thank you everyone for gathering here today together to support them in their receiving of the Precepts. It's a very great honor that everyone came and that everyone would please continue to help them in realizing what they have promised today.

The name for Barbara from now on will be Jusen, which is the spring of eternally living in truth. The spring, the water spring, that the water coming forth from the spring, the spring of living always in eternal truth. Jusen.

The name for Linda from now on will be Jiki Shin which means living in a simple mind that goes in one straight line of truth.

The words on the rakusu for Jusen Daishi, that "Today nothing will happen." And for Jiki Shin Daishi, "There is no darkness in the truth."

Thank you to everyone from your very busy lives to come here today and honor and celebrate with Jusen Daishi and Jiki Shin Daishi in their receiving of the precepts. Today we are so honored to have people of many different manifestations of the Buddha's way gathered here together to have this opportunity to be together in a place where we can honor this occasion speaks to the great variety and breadth of the karmic affiliations of Jusen Daishi and Jiki Shin Daishi and is a great honor to have gathered here together for this occasion.

It is often said, "Return to the Buddha," which means the Buddha is so basic and it is from that teaching of the Buddha that has then

come forth in so many varieties of manifestations that people are touched and able to realize what the Buddha has experienced and has taught us. To be able to have the huge breadth of wisdom to be expressed in so many different ways in order to touch so many people and lead them to the truth is the teaching of the Buddha. Also it is the nature of the entire universe to be huge and round and all inclusive; this is the Way of the Buddha, to be so huge that it can embrace many different ways of being manifested so that many different kinds of people are able to be given the karmic affiliation to the teaching of the Buddha. In the same way that the universe is huge and all embracing, nothing is missing and nothing is left out in this great roundness, everything is included.

Today this world is so complex and so swirling in insecurity. We have long, long-time existing powerful governments that are falling in an instant, and while that may be the opening for a new freedom, there are still many things lingering in there from our long time ego attachment and complex self-centered ways of seeing things that even if the power has been lifted and there is a new freedom we are still working with a world that is limited by its egoistic position on things. And what can we do about that? How can we as people gathered here today, practicing the Way of the Buddha, give that complex and insecure life our best? It is for us to see clearly with our clarified state of mind and also to be forgiving. Of course it is very important to see clearly with our clearly seeing Buddha's eye, but while seeing things and correcting what's mistaken, we must also know and give life to the mind of forgiveness, to be able to see with this wide-open state of mind that sees everything in its oneness and equality clearly. Only if we give life to this wisdom of the mind which sees things in a forgiving and all-embracing way, we'd be able to make best use of our practice to bring peace and security into this world that is so shaky and unsettled. For this [the roshi] asks of everyone whom he knows who is gathered here with that mind priority in their life, to give life to that mind of forgiveness to help this complicated, challenged world today.

Thank you so much, [the roshi] really hopes that we can take this blessing and this day of blessing and bring it into our lives, with the excellence of the occasion to bring its resonation and reverberation into our daily life and to be able to bring in some way a furthering of world peace into being.

"Ordinary Mind is Buddha"

Talk given by Shodo Harada Roshi at the Universalist Unitarian Church, sponsored by Southern Palm Zen Center.

October 24, 2011

Introduction

We are very happy to welcome Shodo Harada Roshi to Florida. Shodo Harada Roshi is the Abbot of Sogen-ji monastery in Okayama, Japan. He's been recently installed as the Abbot on Whidbey Island near Seattle, Washington, at Tahoma One Drop Zen Monastery. He has been teaching Zen students and training Zen teachers from 30 different countries all over the world for more than 40 years. He is esteemed as one of the world's most famous calligraphers and we don't need a statue of Buddha because he is a living Buddha and sitting right here before us. We are very honored to have him here to give us this wonderful lecture. And we are also welcoming Chisan, his translator, who is also the Co-Abbot at Tahoma One Drop Zen Monastery. And Dairin, who is also the Co-Abbot at One Drop Zen Monastery. Thank you so much for coming tonight.

Harada Roshi's Talk

Thank you everyone for coming tonight. [The roshi] has heard that many people who are attending here this evening are people who practice zazen. So, he wanted to speak a little more specifically about doing zazen tonight.

Dogen Zenji was the founder of Soto Zen in Japan. And he gave in his great work, the Shobogenzo, the words of practice that: "To study the way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other. To do zazen, to practice the Path, is not about studying and becoming sharp at what's being said in the sutras, or some kind of philosophy. It is not about becoming a person who does excellent zazen with great finesse. To realize the Way of the Buddha is to see clearly one's self. Even if we look for some high ideal or some very esoteric or abstruse doctrine, Dogen is saying to learn yourself is what is most important to realize the Path. To try to follow some mental idea to an understanding, you will only go further and further away from it.

The symbol of Buddhism is the lotus. The lotus grows up from the

mud. It is not a fragile flower that grows in the very thin air of the high mountains. This was also written about by Vimalakirti in his sutra. If everyone holds onto an idea of a serene and quiet mind only, it's very easy to turn it into something conceptual and very difficult to realize this in the daily life when everything is hustling and bustling. Because the gaps become so big we would become unable to continue to manifesting it.

As long as we are alive in this body, we are confused and deluded. We have our senses and our conceptions and their roots. We have eyes, which see all of the scenery around us, our ears to hear the voices of the pain of the people in the world. We smell so many things, we taste different things. We are always receiving input, stimulation, ongoingly. If we had no stimulation to senses whatsoever, we might be able to stay quiet. But it is not about shutting all of these things out. It is about even if we are hearing a compliment, we don't get moved around by that. Nor if someone criticizes us, do we get moved in that way either. In encountering the world, we have encountered pleasant things and unpleasant things. We want to continue those things that are pleasant and we want to stop those things which are unpleasant and these are all various dusts which clutter our being able to perceive clearly with our senses.

If we should see a flower, that flower has no intention to get us confused. We hear a bird song. We hear a raindrop dripping. We see all delicious food, yet these are all external things with no intention to confuse us and yet we still get confused in our state of mind about these various things which we perceive. So after all, the ego in each of us keeps that self-centered mind attached to what we love and hate and we are not able to see beyond that.

So why then, did we start being so egoistic? As it says in the Bible, unless you become the mind of a child, you cannot enter heaven. At sixteen months, we have something we are without at birth, and that is our self-conscious awareness. We can receive confirmation from the world around us and we are able to experience that information, but until we are twenty-three months old, we don't take that information in as something which is good or is bad. At twenty-three months we are more self-consciously aware and we are discerning between good and bad from a place of small self referential-ness. In the becoming of a human being, we want to hold onto what is

good and to our own personal benefit. And eventually more and more the idea of ourself as a limited small self becomes harden and fixed.

From there we are full of curiosity as well, though, and with that our state of mind becomes such that we want to know and find out about things in ever greater increasing way. If we look up at the sky, we wonder what is that thing called a sky? What are these things called animals? What are bodies really made of? We discover about everything more and more and we come to know more from this curiosity. In this way we have all kinds of various ways of learning things. We have motivation to put our learning to work, and then we learn even more and more and this is a wonderful thing because we are able to have great information inputted, which is excellent for our natural abilities to develop. From there comes culture and cultivating of relationships and all kinds of cultural refinement and manifestation are able to come forth from these steps in our process.

In every area, in every era, our mind becomes fuller and fuller, more fully deepened; abundant cultivations in all of the various cultures around the world are ripened, but it's not always in a good direction. Human beings wish for power and for fame and for material abundance as well brings us into this, and that we have to see clearly.

For a long time, we had people who have had to live in a toxic environment and are driven in negative ways by the power system—and are then able to see the relinquishing of that power and to become more and more able to take over the decision making about how things are done. In this way today, the toxic situations are being noticed and taken care of and all things are continuing to work for various changes. Yet still we each still have this attachment to ego, so even if the power structure crumbles, as individuals we are still caught on an idea that we are isolated individuals and small selves. And this is something which is expressed in a larger way and in a smaller way in the way of the individual. If we look at today's situations we can see this very clearly and we can see these things usually in their external way of being and being created and manifesting. But how rare is it that we look within to the internal way this is affecting us and how we are affecting it. Gathering strength to topple some of the toxic powers

and yet those who are still left are in conflict because of their own small-minded ego interests. And the groups that are coming forth following the toxic powers going away from power are still unable to realize how to continue harmoniously.

In this way today, we don't know what situation we will fall into with the next instant. We make efforts to be living in a way that we will be able to be clear and live in a positive way. So in what way can we be taught and guided so we can give birth to wisdom so we will not be taking things in a negative way? Here we have again the words of Master Dogen: "To study the way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self to be enlightened by all things." Six point nine billion people, how can they all bring this state of mind into manifestation? If we are truly wanting to support each other to live in a world of truth peacefully, how can we do this? For this we have to become large enough and have enough breadth in our state of mind to be able to see, down to the last person, what it is actually like to be living in their shoes, to be having a life like they are having. To make oneself as small as less part of it and make others huge and a greater part of it, to realize how to do this, to make this work, we have zazen.

Our zazen is not for closing us down to everything, but for those in pain to soothe it and to see oneself clearly, this is what zazen is for. For this reason, for zazen, there are many different definitions of how to go about it. One, for example, is to align the body, align the breathing, align the mind. But all of these, every single instruction about zazen, is for learning how to forget oneself completely.

From morning until night, in everything we are doing we keep bringing ourselves the attention on an "I", an "I", an "I", a "me", a "me", a "me"; how can we not stay and get stuck in this stratum of always doing this self referral and instead to be able to creatively see the place where we are able to not be caught on that, to be able to get more huge so that we are not constantly turning to that small minded focus?

People here who do zazen know well about putting their whole focus right into one point in front of them and with that to realize this place where we without even recognizing it become that state of mind where we are no longer giving attention to this idea of a "my", "me" and "mine."

Even if this one flower here, this blossom, even if we just stare at this one blossom for five or ten minutes, we already would become less noisy and distracted in our state of mind. Let alone if we would take that awareness and with it give our attention to nothing but one thing for many hours. Some people would really see this state of mind where they are not clinging to a small self. This way of doing it, people here know about this state of mind and that following the breath is a very good way for focusing very intensely in one straight of line; in one straight line to be able to follow that breath to a place where we reduce that noisy-mindedness we carry around so often.

In our tanden as well—the tanden is an area located behind our lower abdomen within—to keep our focus there. Do not let go of that focus no matter what activity we are engaged in and we will see that our state of mind, our quality of awareness will become different. To be able to not put our mind on anything else, we keep it on one thing only.

A mantra is also used frequently. Whatever works is fine but we have to remember that any of these things are only an aid to it. What is important is to really let go of one's self by using these aids. And that has to be done at the very least by keeping it going for twenty-four hours straight to be able to realize that place which we can come to know when we can let go of all of that attention to the thinking for twenty-four hours.

Each person has a difference in their ability to concentrate at a certain strength and intensity. This varies. Someone who has really strong at concentration can reach the state of mind of letting go of their sense of small self even in one hour. But we have to be able to experience this, this place where we lose track of ourself completely, to be able to know this state of mind. People already know well from their own experience that if we concentrate with strength and intensity, we are as if sucked into that which we are concentrating on. We become the floor, we become the flower; our activity of mind is able to do this. Of course it takes people different amounts of time and energy to enter that state of mind, but it is a natural ability of our mind to be able to do that, of becoming one with what we are concentrating on.

It was Dogen Zenji who said that even listening to a raindrop, when we see with our ears and we listen with our eyes, then we can

become that sound of the raindrop falling down from the corners of the eaves, listening and sitting and seeing to where it is we who are actually the drop falling, where there is the whole universe which is the drop falling from the eaves. Again and again we realize this experience, and then doing it twenty-four hours a day we know this place where we are totally at one with it. And realizing this again and again, we experience a precious moment when we do not think about anything whatsoever. From that moment of not having anything within we experience a great energy that comes forth to be able to reinvigorate all things. We find that we are then enlightened by all things.

“To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barrier between self and other.” I have to have been able to see this and become able to let go of a small self and without any thinking about it, become that state of mind of being one with the society to be able to realize this truth, to realize the very pain and suffering of all the people because it becomes my own personal pain and suffering as I become all of them. Then there is no way that I can sit still. The Buddha who taught this, and Dogen who was saying this, this is not a Buddha who was alive 2,500 years ago: When we become this same state of mind we can see things in the same way from this same experience.

True artists, when they are painting a flower, for example, find themselves in that flower they are painting. Artists are very clearly writing about this, about when they paint. And this is true about anything anybody does. If we dive into it—diving into soccer, diving into rugby, diving into baseball, the score isn't the point; it's about the joy of completely doing it with every part of ourselves. It is not about the winning or losing, it's about the joy. But to become this, people worked very hard to realize this. This is the best possible use of our ability, and that joy is what brings us to be able to go beyond only the expression of that ability. To be able to know our own quality and potential, like a teacher of children who sees a child improving and when a teacher sees one of their children improving, it increases the teacher's motivation as well. Society, when we find that we have an affect on things, and our vow is being realized, then it makes us naturally want to do more and more. But we have to be clarified down to the very root, from the beginning, to be able to see how to go about this. If it is only superficially done conceptually

then it will not work and we will not be able to have that same motivation continue.

Zazen per se is not the point. Rather, the point is to forget ourselves completely. And to every day to do that kind of zazen, which won't work if we only doing it superficially and without true intensity. If we are going to do it, to do it until we clarify our mind completely and not stop until we realize that point. From there human's true peace is able to come forth and in this [the roshi] deeply believes.

[The roshi] has come to the end of the time he was thinking of speaking for so he would like to open it now to anyone who might have some questions they would like him to answer. Thank you very much.

Questions and Answers

Q: We all saw when Japan had their triple—I don't want to call it a treasure, but that just comes out of my mouth and we saw the example of their coming together. In that culture that is their practice. In this Western culture, certainly in this country, the self is exalted. Everywhere I go my name is on everything, the deed to my house, my car, my license. How do you take this out in this culture where it is not supported, where you're wanting to go forth and become one with people that don't want to become one with you?

A: It's not possible for such a huge thing to happen in one era. But there have to be people to begin it. At this moment we look like a very bad example, not only in this country but in the whole world. We get rid of one toxic government and it is replaced by a different toxic bunch of people having egoistic arguments. And if that goes then we get another, yet another group of people who cannot agree and live harmoniously. This is like the ongoing bad example of what happens to human beings' state of mind.

However, it has to be begun to be changed from the inside out. Look around you and how many people are here? These people are coming because they know what you are talking about and these are the people asking the same question; what can we do about this? This is not working. But for them, for us to understand that because we each have the responsibility to work inwardly on our state of mind to make a difference in this direction. That is how it'll change—by not giving up because we're still few in number but

instead to take precious notice of those who are working on that and support and share those energies.

Q: What is the barrier between the self and others? What is the barrier?

A: There is no barrier. It's just what human beings do to invent things that don't exist. It's because we human beings inventing things that don't exist that we make these things that look like barriers. We just have to realize that they are not there—that's how we get rid of them. What it requires to resolve this is deep wisdom.

What's important for letting go of these invented invisible things is wisdom. But wisdom is not so easy. We're all endowed with it, however; there are words in Chinese for example that say that human being's wisdom becoming accessible as such upon our life's needs are all in place. When we don't have a solid base for our livelihood, for example, it's not so easy for us to get to our wisdom. So for that reason people to be able to, 6.9 billion people, how many of them, not only in America or in Southeast Asia, how many African people don't have even enough food for a day or water? If that is the case then still to expect for our globe to have people with wisdom is very unlikely. So we really need to work in the direction of helping all beings realize this wisdom with which they are naturally endowed, which is not easy to do when you don't even have what you need for your livelihood.

Q: I was appreciating what you were saying about zazen, that we can't do it superficially, that there has to be intensity to it. I was stuck on that word, intensity. Where does it come from and how do you get it?

A: Our engine is wisdom. And that which gives life to that wisdom is knowing about society, becoming one with it. To see what is happening in society and make this tool, this weapon of our helping, to make what is happening in society become as it might in a positive way, we look at what is going on. The nature of our wisdom is that seeing that we can't leave it as it is. Where it's hard by seeing the pain and suffering, how people are, to do something about it—that is the source of our intensity.

There is a saying which goes that, "If we stumble and fall, in order to stand again, we put our hand on the ground, push against the ground and help ourselves stand up." The second part of that

saying is, “If human beings are caught on ego and because of that become confused which makes them in conflict with each other, then it is by using our wisdom as you would a hand to the ground, that we are all endowed with from birth, that we can go beyond that. This is what is so important: We have these excellent tools such as Facebook and Twitter and the internet and to realize these are tools for helping us make use of our wisdom that we have among all of us. They are not for self-centered satisfaction, but by taking our innate wisdom and making use of what we have available to see clearly the problems in the world. And by seeing them and using the tools at hand, to bring a conclusion or a solution for things; not only to use tools for what is enjoyable for us, but for what it can be used for as an aid to this wisdom because every human being is born from the origin with a deep love for all beings. When that deep love for all beings expresses through our innate wisdom, using the tools that are at hand in an era, that is how we can use that wisdom to repair what we have done negatively due to our ego attachment.

Q: It says, “ordinary mind is Buddha mind.” Ordinary mind is wisdom and delusion. I see a conflict there. There is a conflict, both cannot exist together. So how can ordinary mind be wisdom.

A: It’s just a matter of not using it well.

In accordance with our true nature, our original Mind, and our Buddha nature, if we are living in accordance with living as it leads us to live, then we would be able to see and to live in a way of clarity and wisdom. However, we pile on up and gather many kinds of small self-oriented ways of thinking about things, opinions, and ways of looking at things and when we put that on top of our clear-from-the-origin nature, then we get into a place of confusion and do things that are not in accordance with our clear mind. When we can let go of those things, when we see that’s what we are doing and free up our clarity of being and seeing, then we are in our everyday mind acting in the way of wisdom. When we are cluttered with the things that are from our small self and we’re fooling ourselves thinking that’s wisdom, then we’re going to be living in a way of delusion.

Thank you everyone for today.

“Every Step is the Dojo”

Talk given by Shodo Harada Roshi, sponsored by the Philosophy Department at Florida Atlantic University
October 25, 2011

Professor Richard Shusterman’s Introduction

Good morning. I’m Richard Shusterman, the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar in the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy. And I am very honored and pleased to introduce our speaker today. It’s been a nice quiet beginning to this presentation. I wish all our audiences here were as peaceful and silent as you all have been waiting, and I’m not going to make a long introduction. The philosophy department is very happy to sponsor this event, and I’d like to introduce Roshi Shodo Harada. He’s a master, a Zen master, in the Rinzai tradition. When I studied in Japan—Zen—I studied not far from his monastery. He has a long illustrious career, but one thing that I learned from my Zen studies is that what’s important is now, this moment. So I won’t take any more time describing his past or our possible futures. Let’s be in the present and let’s welcome Roshi.

Harada Roshi’s Talk

Roshi was really wondering who was going to come here for so early as 9 o’clock in the morning. He’s happy to see somebody. He gets up at 2 o’clock every morning so for him it wasn’t really so early, but usually he gives teachings in the afternoon or evening so he was really curious who would be showing up at this hour of the day. At 9 o’clock in the morning, who’d be coming. Thank you all for coming so early in the morning.

[The roshi] said he agrees with the introduction. Things of the past are not what are important; that we can be here, in speaking and you listening, doesn’t need a lot of other things added to it. [The roshi] said it’s his responsibility to talk about Zen. So today he is going to talk about Zen.

In the 7th century there lived the Sixth Patriarch of the lineage which began with Daruma Daishi [Bodhidharma], who came from India to China. This sixth ancestor, or patriarch, gave us a definition of

Zen which was that “Zen is the flow of the mind and the mind is the substance of Zen.” There is no one who is without a mind and it being the case the mind is what Zen is, then there is no one here who is not connected to Zen.

We have in our physical bodies six billion cells. We can hear [the roshi] talking so we know we have ears. We can see the things around us so we see him standing there. We know we have eyes. We smell things that are in the room and we feel tired here or hot or cold, so we are feeling we have a body, but the thing called mind, “Where is it?” If somebody tells you to put out your mind, that’s a problematic question. We can stick out our tongue. We can hold out our hand, but if someone says put your mind out there, that’s a challenge. If we were told to put out our mind we wouldn’t know what to do. Nevertheless, we still suffer. We have power challenges. We have emotional challenges. We have difficult things we go through. And that is all part of our mind, but where is that?

In the olden days there was a Zen master named Master Geitan. And he was talking about the following: about how once there was a man named Keichu. Keichu was the inventor of the wheel. Today most people who came here came by means of some kind of vehicle, probably. But this is now talking about the time before the birth of Christ in B.C. Under the Emperor Wu in China, this man named Keichu invented the wheel. It is said that Keichu made maybe one hundred wheels in his whole life. Every time he made a wheel, he would then take it apart again and from what he had learned from making the last wheel, he would then invent a new kind of wheel. Today at different workshops they often use a wheelbarrow, something that only has one wheel, a kind of cart where this is only one wheel and then that is pushed; that is the kind of wheel and cart that Keichu was making.

Following that, carts were built that were pulled by ox. And then following that carts were built that were pulled by horses and they could even have warrior carts. So in this way, the evolution of the use of wheels and carts grew to the time of Confucius, who said that a wheel must be round for it to run right. And following that time there was a shaft between two wheels and those two wheels would be held together by that shaft. And because in order for the wheel to run smoothly there had to be a space between that shaft and the center part of the wheel, this later became a place where

there would be inserted bearings so that the wheel could move even more smoothly. Because there is slight space between the shaft and the wheel, the slightest space is very important because it allows a cart to carry heavy things.

And then there was research done so that instead of just being boards that were in place of the spokes of the wheels, they made the spokes out of thinner pieces so that the wheel became lighter and would be less pressure on the shaft and it would turn better. So here we have Keichu way back then and he was always making a wheel and then taking it apart and making another wheel. Master Geitan, referring to this, asked his students, “What was it that Keichu was doing?” As a hint, when Master Geitan asked his people listening to his teaching, “What was Keichu doing taking that wheel apart and then remaking it?” he said, “I’ll give you a hint.” He took his long staff and he drew a circle in the air and he said, “But, if you get caught on this, that’s not it either,” and he walked out of the room.

Later, Laotzu came in China and said, “We can take a lot of clay and make the form of a jar. And maybe we can build a jar out of a lump of clay that is very beautiful. But if we don’t take the clay out of the middle of that so that it is a jar which has a shape but also has space inside the space of the jar, then there is no use to it. We build a house, if it doesn’t have a door in it and a window in it and space inside the rooms, then there is no way to use this house. So we have a house but if we don’t have a window then we can’t see outside of it. If we don’t have a door we can’t go in and out of it. And if there is no space inside of this house then there is no way people can live well and effectively in the rooms.

If we take this and we put this with the former part of the story about Keichu and the wheel, we can see that when we have something where all this comes together, we can study something that has a form that we can see in appearance of substance of something that can be measured, but that which is not able to be perceived in a way which can be measured, how do we study that?

Further, Laotzu said, “We have a cart. And with this cart we have the carriage, we have the shaft, we have the wheels. Nowadays we have an engine, but actually, we can say this is a wheel, this is a shaft, but where is a thing called a cart? We call it a cart, but where is there such a thing as a part which one can call a cart? Only with

a gathering of many parts, is there the functioning of something which is called a cart.

As for our body with its six billion cells, we are originally created from the karmic connection between our mother and father. Then this is given birth with all of the data that comes from that karmic connection of our parents. At that time when we are becoming the form that we eventually become we are not yet sixty billion cells yet but we are a form of a physical body. We are the parts: our senses, our limbs and then a shape comes into being. However, while we may have names for all the parts of that shape, a liver, a big intestine, a small intestine, all the parts have names, where is there a thing called this human being?

Originally, one self is what this all comes forth from but then in accordance with the physical needs of this body's development, this one self becomes specifically brain cells or it becomes the cells of the skins of the bottoms of our feet, or it becomes the cells of our organs. And all of these cells help each other to come together to form this what? We have our parts and they all have names. We call something a liver. We call something a big intestine. But this is a part. Where is this actual thing called a body or a person? Are we material or are we mind? If we look at it from the point of view of our form, we are only made of this material stuff.

From a material point of view, we are forming up through sixteen months after birth. We are still this collection of parts. From sixteen months to twenty three months our awareness comes into being of ourselves as a self. There is an individual self there. When that is formed and becomes active, then we start thinking in terms of our preferences of what we like and what we dislike, what we prefer and what we don't prefer. At this time, our self-conscious awareness comes into being and also our curiosity, to be able to know more about all kinds of things. And from that curiosity comes a motivation from which we are interested in studying about all kinds of scholastic things, to know more and more about everything. This curiosity, this wanting to know, when we look up it turns into astronomy, we look down at the earth it turns into geology. We look around, it turns into botany, zoology. Things to do with medicine, psychology, philosophy, sociology, it endlessly unfolds the many things which our curiosity brings into being from us wanting to know. We take this into a positive good direction and then it becomes the

culture of a certain area, a certain era and from there it evolves even further.

But that is not the whole picture. From this point also, while our motivation and our curiosity may evolve, our ego also gets its own fixed opinions, its attachments, and from there comes conflict—even wanting to hurt another who gets in the way of our benefit and our motivation and makes very complex and challenging emotional things occur. This is today's human's destruction. It is because of this we have destruction of households, destruction of religions, the destruction of human relationships. This is what is causing that. We exist therefore as material substance, but we are also a mind, and this is an essence that we all can see very clearly. The combination of those when we get very angry in our emotions, in our mind, then our body can get bright red because we are so angry. We get really scared about something and we go white or we go blue. We get insecure, we feel lots of pressure and suddenly our objective and clear way of saying disappears.

So how should we be? Keichu was always, again and again, reinventing that wheel. And while this wheel per se which he invented had no name, it was merely a collection of parts, still what are we but a collection of parts as well? And if we say that what Keichu was doing was not making and reinventing a thing, since it was also only a collection of parts—if we go to that extent, saying that there was no thing there, then that is going too far. For this reason, Master Geitan drew a circle in the air with his stick and said, "And don't get caught on this either."

Keichu was not just trying to explain there being nothing called a cart there. It wasn't so limited to some explanation or mental process. From these wheels, we have trains, we have cars, we have all kinds of things that have come into being that are useful and are functional. This is for human movement, a great improvement. Getting from one place to another, with this improvement comes convenience. For our law of being in our best possible way it is very effective to use our abilities to do what we do effectively. And so we can continue building roads for example. Today this even goes to the point of NASA and its satellites. In this way, a functioning in a huge way opens, but it all started with that way of Keichu, rebuilding and rebuilding that wheel. And now is also a law of being that brings us to bringing our ability and motivation ever into allowing us

to make things that are more and more effective.

For Keichu this was all expressed in the making of that wheel again and again. But for we human beings, what does that suggest for us?

The Buddha, who lived 2500 years ago, gave up every single thing in his whole life to be able to experience the deepest truth of all mankind, all humankind. The Buddha was a prince. He had been named to be next in line to the throne of the king. And for him, nevertheless, even though he had this great fortune, an excellent life waiting for him, he also had a commitment which he had made to himself to realize what was the truest and greatest best fortune for human beings. Having realized that every single person dies, in that way that we are all equal and no one escapes that. And in seeing that, to be committed to realizing therefore in what way could be lived best. As long as we are alive, every single one of us wants to live in peace and in harmony. This is our deepest truth, that we wish to be able to do that for every single person. We all will die. But until that time to be able to live that kind of life is everyone's deepest deepest commitment and wish.

Everything in existence is in flux. The fact that we are born into form means that we will lose that form. Knowing that, that being the given, what is it that we want to leave for those who come after us?

We are all as individuals, and maybe feeling that we don't feel any great need to make such efforts for those who come after us. But is that truly our deepest sense of how things are? Can we actually slide away from our responsibility in that way?

Here we have to see what is the best thing for humankind's future, for the health of our planet, for the most positive way of being for the whole universe. We have to develop the wisdom with which we are endowed from birth and not only develop that wisdom for our own personal self satisfaction, but for all beings including the being of the planet and the universe, or they will not continue. In the same way that Keichu's infinite developing continued of that wheel, in the same way that the Buddha had the deepest faith in humankind which is why he gave up everything to realize what it was about, what we are about, we have to realize the same deep trust with which we are all endowed. This is our Buddha nature, and from that

Buddha nature, to believe deeply in this same way and realize what we can do.

If we look deeply within, we see that there is a within, within each of us and we clearly see what we are there. We will not have any longer a need to use such discrimination, which is about size, about color, about resentment or hate, about what we want, what we don't want, what we can profit from, what we will lose from. All of that will become known to be only something superficial because we will realize that there is an actuality of what is called Buddha nature, that which connects each and everyone of us. And if we experience this Buddha nature directly, then true faith, deep trust and motivation come forth of there own.

Right now, everyone is listening to [the roshi] talk, is hearing him talk: What is it that which is hearing, that which is listening? It has no form, but nevertheless it is that which is alive and listening here that connects all beings. And if you can, when you can experience that, this faith and deep motivation are born. If you can't, it is only because we are stuck on some idea of ourselves as being a small limited existence.

To realize this truth directly we do zazen—to let go, not even to get rid of but to let go for even a moment of this attachment to our ego. When we can do that, then we completely revitalize the way that we use and perceive through all of our five senses. Even for a one temporary moment, to experience this state of mind when we are not holding on to anything whatsoever. And experiencing this one moment alone reinvigorates everything that we do and gives a possibility for our deepest ability. To manifest, to be able to realize this, is what we have doing zazen for.

And if each and everyone would realize this truest depth of mind, and not only for this body's lifetime between its birth and death, but for those who come after us, like a candle lighting a next candle before its flame flickers and is extinguished, it is bringing light to the next candle as well, this awareness of our truest nature will then be able to continue. Or else all the light will die. If it lives and we continue it, and keep it continuing then we can bring this deep faith into possibility for all those who come after.

Please in each and every person to know there is a great huge all

embracing mind within, and that this is the place from which all things are created.

[The roshi] said he's gone overtime in his speaking and he's sorry. The roshi said that he is really praying deeply that everyone will come to know this deep truth and have faith in it in what we are within. Thank you.

Professor Richard Shusterman's Closing

Thank you very much for coming. I'd like to thank Daichi Zenni for an exemplary translation that communicated not only the ideas and words, but the spirit of Roshi's presentation. This is the end of the formal aspect of the program. But perhaps if some of you have questions you could come up and ask either Daichi Zenni or Roshi.

Question and Answers

Q: My question concerns what we call, I don't know, some people call it evil or you know like horrible dictators and people who torture. Is that something in their karma that they are born genetically, programmed to do evil?

A: The Buddha said that nobody is born bad and what that means is that there is nobody who is that way because they were born that way. But at the same time there are karmic effects on people that bring them into becoming that way of behaving from their karma as you were saying. But there is nobody who's completely and only that way. Even if we think of them as evil and their way of being in general, somebody like that may be a great father. Someone like that may have a very, very loving other place that nobody is seeing—the place we are seeing in them is that place where that karma is expressing so we kind of label them as that. The Buddha is saying that there is nobody who is only evil, that that's not what a person is.

Q: I have a question about meditation practice. I sometimes find in my own practice that it actually increases my anxiety when I am sitting and I find that, you know, I just want to know if this normal, if that goes away in time.

A: It happens when we are, when all of us are piling up many different things inside of us all the time and so when we are finally

settled that comes bubbling up. And it's like if you are carrying around a cup of water and as you are carrying it around, inside the cup is unsettled, so when you put the cup down, the cup's down but the water is still bumping around inside it. It's like that. We can sit our bodies down but the things that we're always gathering and holding on to and piling up inside don't necessarily settle because of bodies do. And that is common for sure, I can tell you it's very common.

But in zazen, why a zazen version of meditation is that one would not bring into focus all of those things that are going on inside, rather there is a focal point that by staying with that focal point, we don't give attention to all of those things that are coming up all the time. We give attention to one focal point and by doing that we don't give energy or juice to the other things. We keep our attention on the focal point and after a while, without giving attention to those things they quiet themselves.

Its like a mother who has a very noisy child who really wants something and is determined to get it. A mother of wisdom doesn't try to make the child stop wanting what it is desiring. Instead, a mother with wisdom quickly changes this child's focus of attention so it forgets what it wanted and turns it quickly into a different direction to something and the child then it forgets what it was crying over not getting. The same way for zazen, we have a focal point which we stay with so that whatever it is that is making us anxious so that it is so turbulent, we don't give it attention and we keep focusing on a single point instead.

Q: I was just wondering, spiritual capacities and Zen capacities that just seem that we were talking about we all have. How do we fit these sorts of things into our lives, our physical lives, which seem to be, to have limitation. Of course we have to sleep, we die and just stuff like that. The infinite sort of capacity of our mind and our spiritual depth that we were talking about, how to fit that into our lives with the physical limitations we have. Is that just all basically just being present in now, is that really how, or and also are these ideas of physical limitations is that maybe a misconception.

A: For starters let's put science aside. We are not going to discuss this in a scientific manner. We have a physical body that is limited by birth and death, but our being is not limited by birth and death. We talk about the universe, but even this planet, the universe, which is from billions of years ago formed, will at some point be no longer

here. It is a matter of it also being one of phenomena made out of material. But while the whatever-it-is that makes up the universe is existing now and will at some point not be existing, the space in which the universe is existing doesn't go any place. And we come to know that we are not separate from that space in which that universe is existing. So the planets, the galaxies, the universe will all be gone in the form that we know it as now because anything that is phenomena is that molecules, all the material particles come together to make these forms and then they go away from those forms. In that way our physical being of being born and dying is involved in the same process. But we realize that there is something in us in the same way which is not involved in that process which is related to that space from which the universe comes and goes. To directly perceive that is what is important and to know that place, and then we can see clearly how that seeming contradiction of being limited and not limited comes together.



This volume and its companion volume, Shinzanshiki,
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Harada Taigen Shodo-roshi
and Daichi-zenni