

VIMALAKIRTI'S DISCOURSE ON EMANCIPATION

(Continued)

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CHAPTER IX

ON ENTERING THE DOCTRINE OF NON-DUALITY

Then Vimalakīrti spoke to all the Bodhisattvas and said: "O sirs, how can a Bodhisattva enter the doctrine of non-duality? I beg of you to explain it according to your way of understanding."

There was in the assembly a Bodhisattva named Dharmēśvara who spoke thus: "O sirs, birth and death make a duality: but things are essentially uncreated, and therefore now they are not to be annihilated. To attain to the acquiescence in the law of no-birth—this is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Śrīgupta Bodhisattva said: "I and Mine make a duality; because there is no I there is no Mine. This is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Animesha Bodhisattva said: "Perceiving and not perceiving make a duality; if there is no perceiving of things they are unobtainable; as they are unobtainable there is neither seizing nor abandoning; there is no working, nor is there any function. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Śrīśīras Bodhisattva said: "Purity and impurity make a duality; if one penetrates into the true nature of impurity, one sees that there is no purity and thus attains to the state of annihilation. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Sunakshatra Bodhisattva said: "Moving and remembering (1) make a duality; if there is no moving, there is no remembering, and if there be no remembering, then there

is no discrimination. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Sunetra Bodhisattva said: “Oneness and nothingness make a duality; if we know oneness that is nothingness, and if we do not get attached to nothingness, we enter into the state of sameness. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Subāhu Bodhisattva said; “The Bodhisattva-mind and the Śrāvaka-mind make a duality; if we understand that the nature of mind is empty like a phantom, there is neither the Bodhisattva-mind nor the Śrāvaka-mind. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Pushya Bodhisattva said: “Good and not-good make a duality; if we entertain no thought of good and not-good, then we attain the realm of unconditionality and have a thorough understanding of truth. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Siṃha Bodhisattva said: “Sin and morality make a duality; when one fully understands that the nature of sin is not different from that of morality and penetrates this characteristic (of the truth) by the diamond-wisdom, he realises that there is neither bondage nor deliverance. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Siṃhamati Bodhisattva said: “Passion and passionlessness make a duality; when one understands that all things are equal, then he cherishes not the ideas of passion and passionlessness, and neither does he attach himself to form nor does he abide in formlessness. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Śuddhamati Bodhisattva said: “The created and the uncreated make a duality; when one is separated from all ideas, then his mind becomes like the sky, and, being in possession of pure wisdom, it is not hindered by anything. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Narāyaṇa Bodhisattva said: “Worldliness and unworld-

liness make a duality; when one comprehends that the nature of this-worldliness is empty, then he attains unworldliness; there is neither coming nor going from one to the other, and there is also neither overflowing nor scattering. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Sādhumati Bodhisattva said: "Samsāra (transmigration) and Nirvāṇa make a duality; but when one understands the nature of Samsāra, then he understands that there is neither Samsāra nor bondage nor liberation nor burning nor extinction. To understand thus is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Pratyaksha Bodhisattva said: "The exhaustible and the inexhaustible make a duality. But whether things are ultimately exhausted or not exhausted, there is really nothing exhausted. As there is really nothing exhausted there is emptiness; and there is thus neither exhaustion nor non-exhaustion in emptiness. To understand thus is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Samantagupta said: "Self and selflessness make a duality. But as self is unobtainable how can selflessness be obtainable? When one understands the true nature of self he no longer cherishes [the idea of] duality. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Vidyuddeva Bodhisattva said: "Knowledge and ignorance make a duality. But the true nature of ignorance is knowledge; knowledge is not obtainable as it is beyond all ideas. In this to remain the same and be free from the thought of duality is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Priyadarśana Bodhisattva said; "Form and emptiness of form make a duality. But form itself is emptiness; and that emptiness is not form extinguished, but the nature of form is in itself emptiness. And the same may be said of the other Skandhas: mind, conception, conformation, and consciousness: for instance; consciousness and the emptiness of consciousness make a duality. But consciousness itself is emptiness; and emptiness is not consciousness extinguished but

the nature of consciousness is in itself emptiness. To understand this is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Aruṇa Bodhisattva said: “[Of the five elements] the transiency of the first four and that of the fifth element ether make a duality. The nature of the first four elements is in itself that of ether element. Because the present is as empty as the past and the future. When the nature of the elements is comprehended, thus then he is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Sumati Bodhisattva said: “Eye and form make a duality. When one comprehends the nature of the eye, then he no longer desires form, nor is he offended, or infatuated with it. This is called annihilation. The same may be said of the twelve Āyatanas: ear and sound, nose and odour, tongue and taste, body and touch, or mind and ideas; that is: mind and ideas make a duality. When one comprehends the nature of the mind, then he no longer desires ideas, nor is he offended or infatuated with it. This is called annihilation. To abide in this comprehension is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Akshayamati Bodhisattva said: “Charity and transference of its merits towards [the acquirement of] omniscience make a duality. Charity is in itself the transferring of merits towards omniscience. The same may be said of the other Parāmitās: discipline, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom. They and the transferring of their merits towards omniscience make a duality. They are in themselves the transferring of merit towards omniscience. To enter thus into the oneness of things is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Gambhīramati Bodhisattva said: “Emptiness, formlessness, and aimlessness make a set of dualities. Emptiness is formlessness, and formlessness is aimlessness. When emptiness, formlessness, and aimlessness are attained, thoughtlessness and mindlessness are realised. To have the three ways of emancipation in each one of them—this is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Śāntendriya Bodhisattva said: “Buddha, the Law, and the Brotherhood make a set of dualities. Buddha is the Law, and the Law is the Brotherhood; this tripple treasure is in nature uncreated like emptiness of space; even so are all things. To behave in accordance with this view is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Cittānāvaraṇa Bodhisattva said: “The body and its annihilation make a duality. The body is in itself its annihilation. And why? When one understands the true nature of the body, then he cherishes no longer the idea that there is the body and there is its annihilation. There is no duality or distinction between the body and its annihilation. Not to be astonished at this, nor to be afraid of it, is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Pradhānakuśala Bodhisattva said: “Body, speech, and mind make a set of dualities. This tripple activity has no character of action in it. The non-activity of the body is the non-activity of speech, and the non-activity of speech is the non-activity of mind. This triple non-activity is the non-activity of all things. When one is in accordance with the wisdom of non-activity is to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Puṇyakshetra Bodhisattva said: “Meritorious deeds, demeritorious deeds, and indifferent deeds—they make a set of dualities. This triplicity of deeds is in itself empty, as they are neither meritorious, nor demeritorious, nor indifferent. He whose mind is not disturbed by these deeds is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Pushpavyūha Bodhisattva said: “From the idea of self there arises the idea of self and not self, which makes a duality. He who understands the true nature of self does not cherish the idea of this duality. When he does not abide in either of this dualism he has no consciousness. When there is no such consciousness one is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality.”

Śrīgarbha Bodhisattva said: "When a man thinks that he has taken hold of something there is a duality in his mind; when he has no such consciousness he has no consciousness of attainment, nor of abandonment. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Candrottama Bodhisattva said: "Darkness and light make a duality. When there is neither darkness nor light, then this duality disappears. And why? When one enters the contemplation of the extinction of sense and thought he sees neither darkness nor light; even so are all things. He who comprehends equality therein he is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Ratnamudrāhastā Bodhisattva said: "To be attached to Nirvāṇa and not to be detached from the world—these make a duality. When he is not attached to Nirvāṇa and renounces not the world, there is no longer duality. And why? If there is bondage then there is deliverance. If there is nothing bound from the beginning, who will seek for deliverance? When there be neither bondage nor deliverance then there is neither attachment nor detachment. This is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Cūḍāmaṇirāja Bodhisattva said: "Righteousness and falsehood make a duality. He who abides in righteousness makes no distinction between righteousness and falsehood. When he is free from this duality he is said to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Tattvarata Bodhisattva said: "Reality and non-reality make a duality. He who sees a reality as it is, does not even see it as distinct from another reality. How much more so with non-reality? And why? Reality cannot be seen by the fleshly eye; it is only seen by the eye of wisdom. And in this eye of wisdom there is nothing seen nor unseen. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

Thus all the Bodhisattva each having expressed his own view, Mañjuśrī was now asked: "What is meant by Bodhi-

sattva's entering into the doctrine of non-duality? Mañjuśrī replied: "According to my view, with regard to all things there is nothing to be said nor to be expressed, nor to be thought about them; they transcend all questioning and answering. This is to enter into the doctrine of non-duality."

Then Mañjuśrī asked Vimalakīrti: "Now each of us has expressed his view; O sir, I wish thou wilt express thy view as to what is meant by Bodhisattva's entering into the doctrine of non-duality." Vimalakīrti remained silent and said not a word.

Then Mañjuśrī praised him saying: "Well done, well done, ultimately not to have any letters or words, this is indeed to enter the doctrine of non-duality."

When this lesson concerning the entering into the doctrine of nonduality was preached to the five thousand Bodhisattvas in the assembly all entered into the doctrine of non-duality and obtained the acquiescence in the uncreated law.

CHAPTER X

BUDDHA GANDHAKŪṬA.

At that time Śariputra thought to himself: "The meal time draws nigh; where should those Bodhisattvas take their meal?" Then Vimalakīrti knowing his thought thus spoke to him: "The Eightfold Liberation is preached by Buddha and thou shouldst receive and practice it; why shouldst thou think of material food when thou desirest to hear the law? But if thou wouldst eat, wait for a space, when I shall be able to obtain such food as thou hast never tasted before."

Then Vimalakīrti having entered into a Samādhi, manifested to the great assembly a country called Sarvagandhasugandha, which is situated in the upper regions beyond the Buddha-countries exceeding in number even the sands of

forty-two Gaṅgā rivers; and there is in that land a Buddha living at present, known as Gandhakūṭa, and the perfume of that land is most excelling even the perfume of men and deities of the worlds of all the Buddhas in all the ten quarters.

There in that land neither the name of Śrāvaka nor of Pratyekabuddha is heard; there is only a great assembly of Bodhisattvas. The Buddha preaches the law to [those Bodhisattva]. Everything in that land is made of perfume. All over the land towers and terraces are built of perfume. People walk on a perfume-ground: All the gardens are of perfume. The savoury perfume of food fills the countless worlds in all the ten quarters. At that time the Buddha [Gandhakūṭa] was seated himself to partake of food with the Bodhisattvas. There were also present many deities each called Gandhavyūha; all of them having cherished the thought of supreme enlightenment, did homage to each one in this great assembly.

Then Vimalakīrti asked the Bodhisattvas: "O sirs, who is able to bring here the food of that Buddha?" All the assembly remained silent through the supernatural power of Mañjuśrī. Vimalakīrti said: "How pitiful, O ye Bodhisattvas! are ye not ashamed of yourselves?" Mañjuśrī said: "'Despise thou not these novices,' which is Buddha's command."

Then Vimalakīrti, without raising himself from his seat, manifested in the presence of the assembly an incarnate Bodhisattva, whose form, splendour, and dignity were magnificent, far surpassing any in the assembly. He then spoke to the Bodhisattva and said: "Go thou there in the quarters on high, beyond the Buddha-countries exceeding even in number the sands of forty-two Gaṅgā rivers, to the country named Sarvagandhasugandha, where a Buddha named Gandhakūṭa now dwells, seated at table to take refreshments together with the Bodhisattvas, and on thy arrival tell him these words of mine saying: 'Vimalakīrti touching thy feet with his bowed head greets thee with all reverence and wishes to inquire

whether thou art assailed with few ailings, few illnesses, and whether thy spirits are in good condition as ever. He prays that thou bestow upon him a portion of thy food if thou canst spare it, that he might perform a religious work in the Sahā world, enabling all those who find pleasure in the inferior law only, to open their eyes to the great religion, thus helping to spread the fame of Tathāgata throughout [the world].’”

Then at that time the incarnate Bodhisattva ascended on high in the presence of the assembly, and every one in the assembly could see him reach the country of Sarvagandhasugandha and greet that Buddha touching the feet with his bowed head and speak thus: “Vimalakīrti touching thy feet with his bowed head greets thee with all reverence and wishes to inquire whether thou art assailed with few ailings, few illnesses, and whether thy spirits are in good condition as ever. He prays thee to bestow upon him some portion of thy food if thou canst spare it, that he might perform a religious work in the Sahā world, enabling all those who find pleasure in the inferior law only, to open their eyes to the great religion, thus helping to spread the fame of Tathāgata throughout [the world].”

The great men in that country having beheld this incarnate Bodhisattva praised him saying that they had never seen the like before, and asked the Buddha: “Whence cometh this superior man? Where is the Sahā world? What does it mean to find pleasure only in the inferior law?”

The Buddha replied and said: “In the lower region beyond the Buddha-countries even equal to the number of the sands of forty-two Gaṅgā rivers there is a world called Sahā; and there dwells a Buddha called Śākyamuni now in the wicked age of five corruptions; he teaches the doctrine for the sake of those who find pleasure in the inferior law only. There is a Bodhisattva called Vimalakīrti, who, abiding in the Inconceivable Emancipation, preaches the law for

the sake of the Bodhisattvas; now he specially sends this incarnate Bodhisattva to us, to praise my name and this land in order to help the Bodhisattvas there to increase virtue and merit. The Bodhisattva asked: "What wonderful virtue is possessed by him who is able to make an incarnate Bodhisattva fearless in virtue and endowed with such supernatural power?" Buddha said: "Great indeed [is his virtue]! He sends the incarnate Bodhisattva to all the ten quarters in order to perform religious work and benefit all beings.

Then Gandhakūṭa Tathāgata having filled up a perfume-bowl with perfume-food gave it to the incarnate Bodhisattva. Then those nine millions of Bodhisattvas shouted together saying: "We would go to the Sahā world in order to do homage to Buddha Śākyamuni, and see those Bodhisattvas led by Vimalakīrti." Buddha said: "Go ye [Bodhisattvas]. Keep back the fragrance of your bodies lest those beings feel attachment [towards you] in their minds. Again you should abandon your real forms lest those who seek to be Bodhisattvas in that land should cherish [the feeling of] self-abasement. Again, you should not be contemptuous of them and thus create a hindrance-thought; and why? All the lands in all the ten quarters are [equal] even as the sky, but only for those beings who find pleasure in the inferior law Buddhas do not manifest their lands of purity."

Then the incarnate Bodhisattva, having received that bowl of food accompanied by those nine millions of Bodhisattvas through the grace of the Buddha and Vimalakīrti, disappeared from that world and in an instant returned to the house of Vimalakīrti. Then forthwith nine millions of lion-thrones magnificent as before were manifested by Vimalakīrti, and all those Bodhisattvas seated themselves thereon.

Then the incarnate Bodhisattva handed Vimalakīrti that bowl filled with perfume-food; the fragrance of the food filled the entire city of Vaiśālī and all the three great Chilocosms. Then Brahmans and wealthy householders of Vaiśālī inha-

ling the fragrance were gratified both in body and in mind and praised saying that they had never inhaled the like before.

At that time Candracchatra, a leader of wealthy householders, followed by eighty-four thousand men, came into the house of Vimalakīrti. Beholding in that chamber the multitude of the Bodhisattvas and lion-thrones, so high and so broad and so magnificent, and being pleased in mind, he seated himself on one side and greeted that great multitude of the Bodhisattvas and great disciples. [Besides], all the gods of earth, the gods of the sky, and the gods of the worlds of Form [and Formlessness], all inhaling the fragrance, came into the house of Vimalakīrti.

Then Vimalakīrti spoke to those great Śrāvakas led by Śariputra and said: "Sirs, eat of the food of Tathāgata which has the flavour of immortality (*amṛta*); it is born of the great compassion [of Tathāgata]. Eat not with a divided mind, or it shall not be digested." There were some Śrāvakas who thought to themselves: "The food is but little, and would it be possible for each one in this great assembly to share it?" The incarnate Bodhisattva said: "Measure not the infinite virtue and wisdom of Tathāgata by the finite virtue and wisdom of the Śrāvaka; though the four great oceans might become dry, yet this bowl of food would never be exhausted. All men [in all the worlds] may eat of it even as much as a quantity equal to Mount Sumeru, and for a period lasting a Kalpa, yet it could never be exhausted. And why? The food spared by one who is infinitely endowed with the virtues of discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge of liberation, could never be exhausted."

Then that bowl of food satiated all the assembly, yet remained as before not in the least impaired in quantity. All those Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas and deities who ate of this food were gratified in body and felt happy just as did those Bodhisattvas of the world called Sarvasukhamāṇḍita; and from

all the pores of their skin an excellent fragrance issued forth which was as that from the trees in the world known as Sarvagandhasugandha.

Then Vimalakīrti asked the Bodhisattvas from Sarvagandhasugandha: "How does the Tathāgata Gandhakūṭa preach the law?" They replied: "The Tathāgata in our country preaches without words; he enables all beings to attain the virtue of discipline only by means of perfume. The Bodhisattvas, each sitting under a lofty tree, inhale the excellent perfume and enter Samādhi called the mine of virtues. Those who enter this Samādhi are endowed with all the virtues of Bodhisattva."

Then the Bodhisattva asked Vimalakīrti: "In what manner does the world-honoured Śākyamuni preach the law here?" Vimalakīrti replied: "Beings of this world are very self-willed and difficult to teach. Therefore, Buddha preaches to them in severe words in order to subdue them: the unhappy regions such as hell, the animal world, and the world of hungry spirits are the regions for the ignorant; Evil deed is the result of evil deed; evil speech is the result of evil speech, evil thought is the result of evil thought; murder is the result of murder; robbery is the result of robbery; adultery is the result of adultery; lying is the result of lying; duplicity is the result of duplicity; abusing is the result of abusing; idle word is the result of idle word; covetousness is the result of covetousness; anger is the result of anger; misconception is the result of misconception; avarice is the result of avarice; the breach of precepts is the result of breach of precepts; quick temper is the result of quick temper; slothfulness is the result of slothfulness; distraction of mind is the result of distraction of mind; ignorance is the result of ignorance; so with initiation into disciplinary life, living disciplinary life, violation of disciplinary life, what ought to be done, what ought not to be done, the obstacles, absence of the obstacles, guiltiness, purity or impurity, passion or

passionlessness, right or wrong, the created or the uncreated, the world or Nirvāṇa.—with these divers doctrines he subdues the minds of all beings and conquers them; because they are as difficult to subdue as those of monkeys. Just as severe pain which penetrates even to the bone is to be inflicted upon an elephant or a horse in order to bring it to complete subjection as it is so obstinate and difficult to subdue, even so severe words must be spoken to discipline those beings who are obstinate and difficult to subdue.”

Those Bodhisattvas having heard these words praised him saying: “ We have never heard the like before; Śākyamuni, the world-honoured one, concealing his infinite power of independence which is never restricted, and manifesting only those things desired by the poor delivers them [from suffering], and also these Bodhisattvas of this world who are never wearied and always ready to condescend to become poor, are born in this land of Buddha cherishing infinite great compassion.”

Vimalakīrti said; “ It is even as you say that the Bodhisattvas of this world are firm in their great compassion towards all beings; and the happiness which is bestowed on all beings by them throughout their lives, is of greater worth than all the deeds wrought in your land during hundreds of thousands of Kalpas. And why? In the Saha world there are ten kinds of goodness which are never found in other lands of purity. What are they? (1) To treat the poor with charity, (2) to treat the trespassers with pure discipline, (3) to treat the angry with patience, (4) to treat the indolent with diligence, (5) to treat the distracted with meditation, (6) to treat the ignorant with wisdom, (7) to save those who are in the eight difficulties by the law which removes them, (8) to save those who find pleasure in the Hīnayāna by the law of the Mahāyāna, (9) to save those who are destitute of virtue by a stock of merit, and (10) ever to perfect all beings with the Fourfold Acceptance,—these are ten kinds of [goodness].”

Then those Bodhisattvas said: "How many laws ought to be practised by a Bodhisattva in this world in order to be perfect in deeds and to be reborn in the pure land?" Vimalakīrti said: "A Bodhisattva who would be perfect in deeds and be born in the pure land must practise the eightfold law in this world. What is the eightfold law? (1) To bestow happiness on all beings without expecting reward, to endure all suffering for the sake of all beings, and to bestow on them all the stock of merit one has achieved; (2) to bring his mind down to the minds of those beings ever in perfect humiliation; (3) to regard Bodhisattvas as if they were Buddhas themselves; (4) not to cherish doubt in his mind when listening to a scripture which he never heard before; (5) not to contradict Śrāvakas; (6) not to be jealous of the honour given to them, not to be arrogant over the benefit enjoyed by oneself and thereby subdue one's own mind; (7) ever to reflect upon his faults and never talk about others' shortcomings; and (8) ever to seek a stock of merit with intent mind,—this is called the eightfold law."

When Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī spoke these words, one hundred thousand deities in the great assembly all cherished the thought of supreme enlightenment, and ten thousand Bodhisattvas attained to acquiescence in the eternal law.