

# 曹源一滴水

July 1996-Number 35

From **Shodo Harada Roshi, Head Abbot, Sogenji Temple**

*Then the Buddha said to the venerable Purnamaitrayaniputra, "Purna, go to the Licchavi Vimilakirti to inquire about his illness."*

*Purna replied, "Lord, I am indeed reluctant to go to this good man to inquire about his illness. Why? Lord, I remember one day, when I was teaching the Dharma to some young monks in the great forest, the Licchavi Vimilakirti came there and said to me, "Reverend Purna, first concentrate yourself, regard the minds of these young bhikkus, and then teach them the Dharma! Do not put rotten food into a jewelled bowl! First understand the inclinations of these monks, and do not confuse priceless sapphires with glass beads!"*

*Reverend Purna, without examining the spiritual faculties of living beings do not presume upon the one-sidedness of their faculties; do not wound those who are without wounds; do not impose a narrow path upon those who aspire to a great path; do not try to pour the great ocean into the hoof print of an ox; do not try to put Mt. Sumeru into a grain of mustard; do not confuse the brilliance of the sun with the light of a glowworm; and do not expose those who admire the roar of a lion to the howl of a jackal! "Reverend Purna, all those monks were formerly engaged in the Mahayana but have forgotten the spirit of enlightenment. So do not instruct them in the disciple-vehicle. The disciple-vehicle is not ultimately valid, and you disciples are like men blind from birth, in regard to recognition of the degrees of the spiritual faculties of living beings."*

*" At that moment the Licchavi Vimalakirti entered into such a concentration that those monks were caused to remember their various former existences, in which they produced the roots of virtue by serving five hundred Buddhas for the sake of perfect enlightenment. As soon as their own spirits of enlightenment had become clear to them, they bowed at the feet of that good man and pressed their palms together in reverence. He taught them the Dharma, and they all attained the stage of irreversibility from the spirit of unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. It occurred to me*

*then, 'The disciples, who do not know the thoughts or the inclinations of others, are not able to teach the Dharma to anyone. Why? These disciples are not expert in discerning the superiority and inferiority of the spiritual faculties of living beings, and they are not always in a state of concentration like the Tathagata, the Saint, the perfectly accomplished Buddha.'*  
*"Therefore, Lord, I am reluctant to go to that good man to inquire about his health."*

The Buddha is telling Purna to go and visit the ailing Vimilakirti. Purna is one of the top of the Buddha's disciples and was the top disciple at giving teachings. There were two of the same

name but this was the one strongest at teaching and explaining. He was truly mysteriously gifted at words. Purna Sonja asked him to go visit Vimilakirti and he answered that he would do anything else he was asked - but that only this-he would have to refuse to do. This is how he responded. At this point he gives his reason for answering in this way. It was about something that happened a long time ago - but he remembers it, a time when he was teaching some young people who had just shaved their heads for ordination and they were all under the shade of a great tree. They were all brand new disciples of the Buddha and he was giving them a teaching. At this time Vimilakirti had said to him,

*" Reverend Purna! First concentrate yourself, regard the minds of these young bhiksus, and then teach them the Dharma! Do not put rotten food into a jewelled bowl! First understand the inclinations of these monks, and do not confuse priceless sapphires with glass beads!*

*"Reverend Purna,without examining the spiritual faculties of living beings, do not presume upon the one-sidedness of their faculties, do not wound those who are without wounds, do not impose a narrow path upon those who aspire to a great path..."*

As he was teaching, Vimilakirti appeared. He told him that when you teach you should always first quiet your own Mind. Right now - in what state of mind are those young people to whom you are teaching? What are they confused by at this time - what kind of suffering are they going through these days, what kind of experience have they had up until now - you have to very clearly see the state of mind of the people to whom you are speaking. Then you should begin teaching. This is what Viimlakirti said.

When you read the sutras this is often said. When the Buddha would teach he would always precede his speaking by a period of deep samadhi. He would always first enter samadhi and feel deeply the state of mind of the people he was about to teach. Then he would know what way was best to reach the person - to become clearly aware of that and then begin speaking. Vimilakirti spoke to Purna Sonja who was known to be the top disciple at teaching the Dharma and he said to him "You can't push your own opinion at them-you have to see the essence of the other person's mind clearly and according to that you have to teach them. You can't say from your own narrow opinion and point of view that Buddhism is this and the Dharma is like that. You can't just push off what you want to say onto another who is listening - you have to really see well the condition and situation of the other person and from that the Dharma will come forth. This is what Vimilakirti said to him.

Because you think of them as beginners you think you have to tell them this and tell them that-saying that this is the way that training has to be done - that is what you have to do first - but you mustn't think that this is the right way to go about it.

To put it in a different way - that mind which wants to become ordained and follow the path - that is a very pure and clear mind. A simple mind. It is like taking a gold or silver plate - and putting a leftover rice gruel in it. You can't do that. You mustn't put scratches into that truly pure and clear Mind . That mind first has to be seen clearly, that mind which is seeking the truth with a burning passion. The pure and clear Mind is within and to put an old antique on top of that won't do.  
*"...do not confuse priceless sapphires with glass beads"*

Sapphires and corals and agate:coral is white, sapphires are blue and agate is red brown. They are all jewels - a sapphire is a blue and clear jewel. Its color is beautiful and wonderful. You can't treat a sapphire the same way you would treat a glass crystal that can be found anywhere. While the one has an excellent and superior character - one mustn't lay on top of it a low quality teaching.

*"...without examining the spiritual faculties of living beings, do not presume upon the one-sidedness of their faculties..."*

This clear mind which is seeking to realize the truth is that very true source of the mind of all

people in society. People in society are usually thinking of profit and gain and loss and are receiving influences from various things in the world. While being moved and affected by all of these various influences they can't manifest that clear nature but now it has come forth. These young students are manifesting and expressing that most pure and clear mind. Therefore don't push onto them your own explanation and stale understanding, that pure and clear Mind's source has to be known - if you don't know that - then you shouldn't try to push off on them what you do know. First concentrate yourself and know your own true source. Do you know what that true source of the Mind actually is?

You don't know that. What is important here is that true origin of the Mind.  
And what is this true source of mind?

Today constitutional law respects the dignity of the individual. The law respects human rights and we respect the human rights of each other as well. To respect the individual rights of another is the moral way of living in society. Education should also respect the character and individuality of each and every person. This is how we are taught. Those characteristic qualities which we each have and that ego which we each hold is something which we each have individually and there can be no comparisons. It is a matter of course that these are things that cannot be compared and have their own value. Humans, each and every one, are dignified and worthy of respect. There is no question about the dignity of each and every individual, each individual's value has to be realized and experienced by each and every person for themselves. The problem is that ego. That ego has to be recognized. But is it the ego which is complete and dignified? It is in fact truly incomplete and each person knows that for themselves. In each person's mind we know well how incomplete and imperfect our ego is and it is in the knowing of this that we wish to design that perfect and complete ideal. Because we are aware of our cluttered and distracted interior we want to become more pure and clear and make our vow to become that. While being aware of our own limited life span we pray for that life energy which is eternal.

To put it another way - the ego is incomplete - and what does it mean to recognize that incompleteness of the ego? Of course the individual characteristics of each person are very important. Yet while we are each a different and individual person - and this difference is also true as it is - if we held these differences as the whole truth and the absolute, then it would be impossible to live harmoniously in this world. If we each push for those differences and cling to them, it will bring about great problems. The individual differences of each of us is not the Truth.

Here we ask - what then is the true source root of all sentient beings? If we consider what is it that is prior to that ego, ask what is that root, we must look at that which unites all beings and on which all things stand. We have to know this truth which backs the ego, the truth which backs all of those individual differences - we have to know this directly and clearly, or else our understanding will have no meaning, and we will be all the more confused. Behind the ego and behind our individual differences there is a human unchanging truth which is valid for all people without exception. We have to awaken to this truth-to know this which is the most important and dignified quality of all humans - to realize this is most important.

Shinran Shonin, when he was still with his teacher Honen Shonin at Kurodani, made a very controversial statement one day while speaking with many other students. Shinran Shonin speaking from his own experience said, "My faith and that of my teacher Honen Shonin are the same." The other disciples then said he shouldn't talk like that. That was shameful. "If yours and the teachers are the same - how could you speak about it like that! How rude!" "No - that's not what I mean - not that I act like him all day - saying that would be disrespectful-or that my wisdom and studying and knowledge are the same. To say that would be rude - but our true faith has to be the same - it must be that way. "

Neither side would retreat. Then they decided that those that think it is the same or different

should sit on opposite sides and each sat on the side they believed in. Those who said it was the same were only Shinran Shonin and the monk from Renshobo in Kumagaya. There were only two sitting on that side. Everyone else sat on the other side. To make this decision clear they saw that they would have to ask their teacher or it couldn't be settled so they asked Honen Shonin to come and settle the disagreement. Which is correct, they asked him. He answered without hesitation.

Honen Shonin said that he had received his faith from Nyorai Buddha and Shinran Shonin 's faith was also received from Nyorai Buddha so it must be the same - if it wasn't the same they couldn't go to the same eastern paradise - this was his decisive statement.

In the Mumonkan it says "To see with the same eyes as the Patriarchs and to hear with the same ears as the Patriarchs." It says the same thing very clearly. The faith of Shinran Shonin, the faith of Honen Shonin, the faith of the Buddha and the faith of each and every one of us is one and the same.

It is a question of whether or not you know this same unchanging quality which the Patriarchs and the Buddha share. This is what truly liberates and what brings true peace. Each person has his own individual qualities. These are their specialties-we each have an ego which will decay and fade away-so that could not be our eternal life-there is only one true faith-that which is eternal as the Buddha Nature, unchanging and never ending. To understand this is very important. The true root of all sentient beings is here - not in the gathered knowledge and opinions of the ego.

That which is the same and unites all beings, not in knowledge and ego but in that unchanging wisdom and life, the mind prior to experience. That mind which is even prior to the baby's marking with heredity before its birth. That true and clear mind free from any clutter or stain, transparent and clear is what Vimilakirti was referring to as the pure mind of these young bhiksus.

In Buddhism this is often referred to as the great round mirror like wisdom. The human mind is like a mirror, huge and open and pure. Without bounds, huge, is this all embracing wisdom of the human mind. Human's mind at birth is this same all embracing wisdom. Whatever comes in front of a mirror is reflected exactly as it is. The mountains are reflected and the ocean is also reflected, the sun, the moon and tens of thousands of stars are all reflected in the mirror - the whole universe can be reflected there. Everywhere the mirror is turned, everything it faces is included in it. This huge space which can be taken in and reflected by the mirror is what is likened to our mind. To realize this is to awaken to the wisdom of the Buddha. The awakening to the true source of all sentient beings is just this. Our egoistic awareness has been added on to us after we are born - originally it didn't exist. We were originally truly like that mirror, untainted and wide open and huge, vast and expansive. This was our mind from birth. This huge spacious mind could embrace the mountains and the ocean and the sun and all the tens thousands of stars - all of this could be embraced therein. This mind which can embrace all things is, just as it is, all things and all worlds. It is the whole universe - just as it is, this is the Mind. In Buddhism it is expressed in "One is, as it is, the All; the All is, as it is, the One." In this way we explain it with words - the world is me and I am the world. If we know the true source of all beings we will of course know this and that this huge spaciousness is our true Mind and the root source of all beings. This is in all humans and to awaken to this is our highest awakening. Another way of putting it is like that mirror which reflects whatever comes in front of it - if it is a man the man is reflected - if it is a woman - the woman is reflected. If an elderly person comes in front of it an elderly person is reflected, if a child comes in front of it a child is reflected. This means that if a sick person comes, we then become one with that sick person - or if a child comes we become one with that child. If a poor person comes we become poor and if a hungry person comes we also become the state of mind of that hungry person. In the mirror the exact same thing is reflected as what comes in front of it-this is because our state of mind and the person who is in

front of us becomes matched perfectly in oneness. No place for a small self to be inserted. Nor is there any place for a view of a self and other to be inserted. This huge expansive state embraces the other within it, allows another to be comfortably within it. You become the other in this huge spaciousness and this is the state of mind which humans are endowed with from the origin. Here there are no such small groupings as clans or races or countries. This is the place where that warm love beyond dualism is found springing forth spontaneously. This huge and wide expansiveness, this warm mind is humans true and original nature, and to become aware of this is to awaken to true love. To awaken to that true source root of all sentient beings is to awaken that true love for all beings. This is not a love born from dualistic perception or knowledge or intellectualization. Our wisdom opens and that true great love is born naturally. In the words of Zen there is the expression, that if we have 1000 bodies of water we will also have 1000 moons. If we have no clouds for ten thousand miles we will have ten thousand miles of high sky. If there are one thousand rivers in each of the thousand rivers the moon will be reflected. If there is not a single tatter of a cloud, if the sky is wide open endlessly, this is like our state of mind from the origin. If 1000 people's minds become clear like this wide open sky there are 1000 Buddha-like and God-like minds born. In the same way that the 1000 moons reflected in the 1000 rivers are all the same moon, the transparent mind free of any such thing as an ego or personal characteristic - or any stain of that sort, without any need for that, this is the Buddha Nature. This mind is the same in each person and this is what Honen Shonin meant with the words he spoke when he said that his faith and that of Shinran Shonin were the same. This is how it is written in the Tanni Sho. The ego will decay but the mind which is awakened to the truth will never decay or fade away. For one who has awakened to that truth, even if their physical body dies, this awakened mind will not decay. This truth without death, the awakening to this eternal mind, this is the satori of the true root source of all beings. This is the awakening to the source of humans most dignified quality. This is the true peace of mind, the true faith.

Not holding onto an idea of your own position or standing, the true deep wisdom can be born naturally. To put it a different way, if we don't hold on to any idea of an "I", then that world which comes into our eyes, that world which echoes into our ears, all of these are my world, my life. So if we don't carry around any small world of self, forgetting our selves completely, we can make others joyful and that is what makes us joyful. Always thinking about what will make others happy and what will make others secure, this is the state of mind which will come to be understood naturally. If we don't hold on to a small self then everything we encounter is our selves, there is no sense of separation between self and others, then just as it is the life energy will surge forth. The world of direct perception will be born, this is the world of the wisdom of the Buddha. When we experience this we can know that the world is our true self and that all of humankind is, as it is, our true self. Without any barriers between self and others, without any sense of self and other, in this way the working of the deep mind comes forth naturally, and that deep love comes forth of its own, spontaneously. Not a love forced by someone else, but that which comes out naturally and of its own. This is not just for some special person but for all people equally, the compassion of the Buddha. This kind of wisdom and compassion comes forth spontaneously and we know it as coming from our true mind. It manifests from our true mind which is the true source of all sentient beings. As human beings that source root is the source also of a great true love for all beings. To forget yourself and love others, this is the actual realization of the doing of that. All beings born are vessels for this great love and compassion and we must all know that. Here Vimilakirti says to Purna Sonja, without thinking about that you are telling them things about how they should become enlightened themselves. To just work for your own small enlightenment, this is a small and narrow minded teaching and you mustn't teach them like that, Vimilakirti cautioned him.

*"without examining the spiritual faculties of living beings do not presume upon the oneness of their faculties, do not wound those who are without wounds."*

These new students, these monks who are about to enter the path are without any scratches, only wanting to clarify the truth in one continuous straight line. They are of a clear mind like a beautiful jewel. The Mind of the Buddha and the Mind of God, while being in that Mind, why do

you try to wound their purity with some low level teaching? Saying you have to do it like this or that you better do it like that, to push it on them in that way is not the way to do it, he warned him severely.

*"Do not impose a narrow path on those who aspire to a great path, do not try to pour the great ocean into the hoof print of an ox."*

That great path, the path which embraces all things, to walk on it firmly and with confidence, that is the path of the Bodhisattva. To give one's life and body for all beings and to make a determined commitment to clarify the truth is the way of this path. This vow is that firm and sturdy middle way for all beings. In this there can be no small minded wishes for your own personal good fortune, or wishes for your own personal peace, it is not such a little narrow path. You mustn't teach a small narrow path like that. Like the huge Pacific Ocean, it is expansive and great, not like some narrow ox hoof path, pushing someone into a tiny hole. Like the great sun, which illuminates the whole universe, it is that kind of light, it can't be treated like the light of a lightning bug.

*"All these monks were formerly engaged in the Mahayana but have forgotten the spirit of enlightenment. So do not instruct them in the disciple vehicle. The disciple vehicle is not ultimately valid, and you disciples are like men blind from birth, in regard to recognition of the degrees of spiritual faculties of living beings."*

In fact, these monks in the very old days were those who had awakened their Bodhisattva vow, and then forgot that vow and became attached again to the things of society, forgetting their vow completely. They forgot but their true nature was still seeking the Path of the Mahayana way. Why would you teach them some narrow and rigid way? What would be the point of that? From the way I see it any small, narrow and superficial way of teaching them is like making them blind. While living in a huge expansive world, they won't be able to see anything. Unable to see another's light or another's character, another's efforts will also be invisible to them.

*"At that moment, the Licchavi Vimilakirti entered into such a concentration that those monks were caused to remember their various former existences in which they had produced the roots of virtue by serving five hundred Buddhas for the sake of perfect enlightenment."*

Vimilakirti then entered samadhi silently, and all of them saw their past forms as enlightened beings serving the Buddhas to awaken all beings, offering themselves for the merit of all beings. "I understand."

Shinran Shonin, left behind these famous words, "If we investigate the desires and delusions of those all around Amida we see that this deep vow is to save this one person." these words were spoken by him. Amida Nyorai for a very long time let him play around and then at age 48 he decided to liberate all beings. When he looked carefully he saw that it was to save himself as well that this is how Amida had done it. This is what these words are about. But still, there couldn't be anything this impractical. The Buddha was saving all beings, leaving out not even one - if anyone is left at all he wouldn't become a Buddha and this is what Shinran Shonin was representing as he himself was that one yet unliberated person, This is what we hear at a superficial listening. It sounds like words which are belittling self for the salvation of all beings. It seems as if he is saying that for someone as bad and evil as he is, it must have been a vow of that nature. This great vow which he made at age 48, this was the vow to liberate all beings with no exceptions whatsoever. This was all done to liberate this deeply sinful Shinran Shonin. Very very humbly spoken words, but from experience, if we look at the essence we can see that if we look more deeply we see that these are in fact words of great confidence. Shinran - that one person - is one of no family and no parents, and no other connections to other beings either. In all of the mountains and rivers, in all of that great boundless space, having let go of all of the mountains and rivers and gone beyond all of them, in all of the heavens and earth only this One - this Shinran. Christ was on the cross for me, this One, if not for me there would have been no Christ on the cross. God and Buddha are both here to make efforts for my salvation for this very One, the worth of this one. Amida Nyorai and self, complete in Oneness. Knowing the meaning

and experience of this One, this is the great depth of Shinran's faith.

Here, for the first time that most dignified, unchanging true self has been realized. In this realization the true source of all beings has been clarified. That self that no one else can do anything about. That self for which no one can give any help. That absolute self is what is awakened to. Someone once wrote about this and I read this story about an excellent and very intimate elderly couple. When they were growing old together they had such deep faith in each other and always supported and helped each other's good health. They talked about what they would do if one of them got sick and that the healthy one would take care of the other as much as they possibly could to the very end. The husband told his wife that he would throw away everything in order to take care of her and she said that she would throw away everything to take care of him. The husband became sick with cancer and the woman without any hesitation left behind all her work and affiliations and took care of him wholeheartedly and tirelessly. From morning to night she stayed by him and took care of him, rubbing his back and feeding him herself at mealtimes, she would stay up all night next to him when he couldn't sleep, in this way she put everything into his care giving. Caring for him like this, his wife realized that even in the doing of all of this there was no meaning whatsoever. Her husband's pain and loneliness and suffering, she could cover for those things, the doctor was also there, and the medicine and the treatment, but all of that, no matter how hard she worked, she knew it was all superficial. Concerning her husband's state of mind there wasn't anything she could do - she could not touch that at all. She realized this and became melancholy knowing that she was just roaming around the outside of his mind and not able to pierce to its depths in any way. To have done that much and put that much effort into it and to have it only come to this, she couldn't jump into his deeply suffering mind at all. She realized this directly. His wife said, "No matter how wholeheartedly I make efforts and throw myself into it, it is all a superficial solution only. Now I have realized the problems and depths of the human minds profound corners for the first time. Humans want to give someone this or that, and that can be done - to a certain degree, but it is all superficial and that true mind cannot be touched in its deepest reaches. At that time I realized that all that I could possibly do is to pray. Of course I do everything I can to take care of him, but to continue to pray in one straight line is the only thing that I can do to connect to his deepest mind. For the first time I have realized this."

We think we would like to be helped by others, but there are things which we can only do for ourselves. These are the matters of the deepest corners of our own mind. As Shinran Shonin said, it was all for this One. This One person - that which no one can do anything for or about, to realize that is where there is enlightenment. That awakening to that One being. This is the truth of the Buddha and the Patriarchs, that dignified and unchanging One. This is what we are allowed to realize. This One is that which has the supreme enlightenment. This One is the One that gives the sun its radiance and energy and gives the moon its illumination. It brings the hundreds of flowers into bloom and the farmer's efforts into brilliant fulfillment. For those who make clothes, it makes their labor shine; the trolley and bus and car, they all shine when this One rides in them. For this One all humankind makes efforts. If we understand the value of that One, we know why the Buddha said that there is only One in these heavens and earth. Those words of the Buddha were said for all beings, for each and every One, who is the most important in all of the heavens and earth. From his own experience this was coming forth, this knowing that each and every human is splendid and becomes a Buddha and is of a value which is not the slightest bit different from the Buddha. This is what Buddhism is teaching us.

*"As soon as their own spirits of enlightenment had become clear to them, they bowed to the feet of that good man and pressed their palms together in reverence. He taught them the Dharma, and they all attained the stage of irreversibility from the spirit of unexcelled, perfect enlightenment."*

At that time they came to, as if waking from a dream and prostrated at the feet of Vimilakirti.  
*"The disciples, who do not know the thoughts or the inclinations of others are not able to teach*

*the Dharma to anyone. Why? These disciples are not expert in discerning the superiority or inferiority of the spiritual faculties of living beings, and they are not always in a state of concentration like the Tathagatha, the Saint, the perfectly accomplished Buddha."*

Then Vimilakirti. said to the young Bhiksus in a Dharma teaching, that they should not lessen the intensity of their vow and always should strengthen their deep vow, and congratulated them. Telling me not to teach a narrow teaching without looking at a person's capabilities, that mistake was pointed out and I learned it well and thoroughly.

This was the occasion that makes me not want to go and visit him. This is what the disciple who was the most expert at teaching and explaining said to the Buddha. This was Purna Sonja speaking, the disciple who was above and beyond everyone at the teaching and speaking of the Dharma. Purna Sonja also refused to go.

#### Sesshin Schedule at Sogenji

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#### August:

Kosesshin, 4-10  
Kosesshin, 17-21  
Kosesshin, 26-30

#### September:

Kosesshin, 4-10  
Kosesshin, 15-19  
Osesshin, 24-Oct 1

#### October:

Kosesshin, 5-11  
Osesshin, 16-22  
Kosesshin, 26-30

#### November:

Osesshin, 12-18  
Kosesshin, 23-29

#### December:

Rohatsu, \*\*4-10  
Osesshin, 14-20  
Kosesshin, 24-28

#### Current members at Sogenji

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Doitsu Zenji - JAPAN  
Doyu Zenji - USA  
Dokyo Zenji - USA  
Shonen Zenni - USA  
Sozui Zenni - GERMANY  
Doho Koji - SPAIN  
Domyo Koji - FRANCE  
Shoe Daishi - GERMANY  
Dosho Koji - ENGLAND  
Shosei Daishi - AUSTRALIA  
Doshin Koji - USA  
Jyl Daishi - USA  
Elian Koji - FRANCE  
Ensaï Koji - AUSTRALIA  
Jon Stackley - USA  
John Bach - DENMARK  
Leo Kozeki - FRANCE  
Sogen Horiuchi - JAPAN  
Daichi Daishi - USA

We are making an e-mail directory. If anyone would like to add their e-mail address and receive the e-mail addresses of others who are on the newsletter list, please e-mail your address to Sven Guenzel at [Sven\\_Guenzel@magicvillage.de](mailto:Sven_Guenzel@magicvillage.de).

The Sogenji e-mail address is:  
[PXQ00753@niftyserve.or.jp](mailto:PXQ00753@niftyserve.or.jp)

We would like to take this opportunity to once more thank everyone for their outstanding support for the purchase of the land for the One Drop Zendo Monastery near Seattle. The construction preparation will begin in August and the ground breaking and land blessing ceremony will be held on September 14th after the Roshi does sesshin at Cloud Mountain.