

EMPTINESS and EMOTION

IN THE VIMALAKIRTINIRDESHA

January 21 & 22

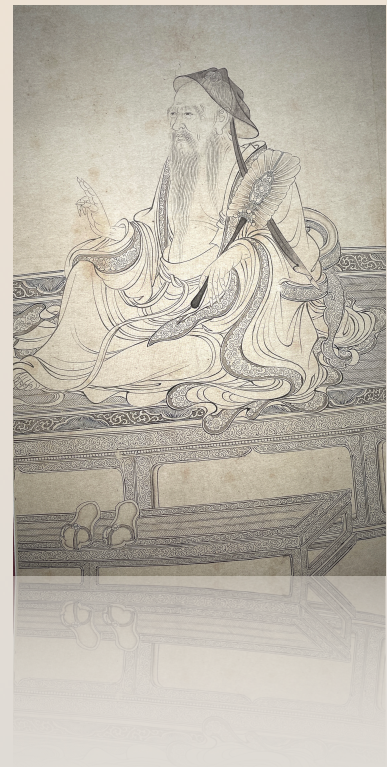
I keep on being amazed by this sutra, and I am not alone.

Étienne Lamotte one of the first translators and commentators of the text, says with wonderment :

The Vimalakirti Sutra is a work of art. The setting is conducted with the skill of a play writer. The dialogue is sparkling, reminiscent of the expositional procedures of Confucius, Mencius or Tchouang-tseu. The most abstruse theories are illustrated by anecdotes in acts. Paradox and irony are handled with a master's hand, as in the famous episode of Sariputra, this Saint of the Saints of the small vehicle, the first disciple of the Buddha for wisdom, whom a malignant goddess covers with flowers from which he cannot escape.

Could the author of this glorification of laicism have been a layperson?

Vimalakirti is essentially, aggressively secular: a "retired gentleman" as it is said in Chinese for an upasaka, a "master of the house"; wise, rich, respected, a banker, a businessman whose affairs do not dirty his hands, a benefactor who, if necessary, haunts bad places to do salvation work, but without any impure contact being able to sully him more than mud sullies the lotus. He solves the old dilemma between activism and quietism, *we could add between relative and ultimate truth.*



There are many ways of understanding emptiness in the Buddhist tradition.

In parallel with the Vimalakirtinirdesha we will follow the views of Nagarjuna (who has none), Candrakirti and Longchenpa.

Relying on the teachings of the Sakyapas and Nigmapas and not on those of the Gelugpa school which are less oriented towards non-conceptual meditation.

Moments of teaching will alternate with moments of meditation and moments of discussion.