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THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

2

The Bodhisattva Hierarchy



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Cover Symbol:

The symbols on the covers of the issues in this series are from original lino-cuts by Dharmachari Aloka based upon the mudras of the eight principal Bodhisattvas of Mahayana tradition. This issue features the mudra of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, 'The Friendly One', the future Buddha. Maitreya resides in the Tusita heaven whence, when certain conditions have been fulfilled, he will descend to earth for his final rebirth. His right hand is shown here holding a Nagakesara flower, a special symbol associated with the Nagas, legendary serpent deities of the oceans, rivers and lakes, reputed to have been entrusted with the care of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras.

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

7. The Bodhisattva Hierarchy

Part 2

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*Indicates refer to Glossary

Editorial

Imagine living at the time of the Buddha. Just suppose we had come into direct contact with him. What if the Buddha had been our friend? Surely then nothing could have held us back. Stream-Entry would have easily been within reach; Irreversibility too, and Enlightenment would be just around the corner. We would have soaked in the Buddha's words, practised mindfully, and gone would be all struggle, conflict and suffering. But would it? Would we actually have been so receptive? Would we necessarily have even recognized the Buddha? Perhaps he would have been wasted on us.

In the Pali Canon we come across many a disciple who was not immediately receptive to the Buddha. Meghiya, who appears in our first extract, had made up his mind that to go and meditate in a certain enticing mango grove was the best thing he could do for his spiritual development. Despite the Buddha's discouragement Meghiya insisted on going his own way, only to end up regretting it.

A little nearer home, at least in time, we come across Rechungpa, one of the chief disciples of the Yogi Milarepa. In extract number six we find Rechungpa realizing that 'My Guru's words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's'. Prior to this realization Rechungpa's faith in his Guru had almost been lost. His pride and resentment had led him to consider leaving Milarepa.

The good fortune of being close to a highly developed spiritual being is not enough to ensure Enlightenment. sGam.po.pa, another of Milarepa's disciples, writes 'Since at the beginning of our career it is impossible to be in touch with the Buddhas or with Bodhisattvas living on a high level of spirituality, we have to meet with ordinary human beings as spiritual friends.' We must be open and honest as to our position within the spiritual hierarchy. Then we can make the most of any little help that comes our way.

SRIMALA

Seminar Extracts

1 Would the Buddha be Wasted on You?

from 'Meghiya Sutta' (Udana), New Zealand Men's Retreat, Padmaloka, February 1983

Sangharakshita: [The Sutta uses here three terms]: *kalyāṇa mittatā*, [which in Sanskrit is *kalyāṇa mitratā*¹], *kalyāṇa sahāyatā*, and *kalyāṇa sampavankatā*. [They are translated here as], 'lovely intimacy, lovely friendship, lovely comradeship'. Or, as we might say, spiritual intimacy, spiritual friendship, spiritual comradeship. But perhaps one mustn't look for too much of a difference between the meanings of the three terms. They all point to one and the same thing, which we usually call just *kalyāṇa mittatā* or Kalyāṇa Mitratā, spiritual friendship.

Prasannasiddhi: Should this Kalyāṇa Mitratā be taken to mean vertical friendship or horizontal friendship, or should it be taken as meaning any friendship with anyone leading the spiritual life?

S.: It would seem to be used in the broader sense. Though here — in as much as the reference was to the Spiritual Friendship with which the Buddha was providing Meghiya, but which Meghiya was unable to recognize, or the value of which he didn't appreciate -- the reference would seem to be to a Spiritual Friendship of the vertical rather than the horizontal kind. But in what he says the Buddha is not especially stressing that. It would seem he's speaking of spiritual friendship generally, both horizontal and vertical.

Prasannasiddhi: And there's almost Sangha in a way.

S.: Yes! So it's quite pertinent that the Buddha mentions spiritual friendship first. Meghiya had not realized his need for spiritual friendship. He thought that he could go it alone. He thought that he could do it all by himself. Well, there's nothing wrong with doing it all by oneself if one can. But the question that arises is, can one really do it all by oneself in that sort of way? Meghiya thought that he could. But he discovered that in fact he was wrong and that he had been depending on the Buddha's Spiritual Friendship or on the Spiritual Friendship he derived from the Buddha more than he realized. So this, perhaps, is why in his reply the Buddha mentions spiritual friendship as the first of the five things which conduce to the maturity of the heart's release.

Prasannasiddhi: Why do you think that that should be given first? Would you say there was ..?

S.: You mean friendship?

Prasannasiddhi: Yes.

S.: Well, extrinsically, so to speak, it's mentioned first because it's [the point] most relevant to that particular situation.

Murray Wright: What do you mean by 'extrinsically' and 'intrinsically'?

S.: Intrinsic means 'on its own account'. Extrinsic means on account of some other factor, some factor other than itself. So when I say it's first extrinsically, [that refers to the fact that] it happens to be enumerated first because it's particularly relevant to Meghiya's case. Not that it is first in itself, or absolutely the most important under all circumstances, [at least] not necessarily. But it could be. It could be *intrinsically* the most important regardless of the particular circumstances. That is also possible. Certainly we know that it is very important. In view of certain other passages elsewhere in the Pali Canon one might or even could say that spiritual friendship is *intrinsically* the first, because the Buddha does say it's the whole of the Brahma life.² So in a sense it's not just the first [of the things which conduce to the heart's release]. It's all. It's everything.

Gunapala: [The part of the text we are discussing begins,] '*When the heart's release is immature*'. So for anybody whose heart is immature, this is the first thing they need.

S.: Yes, yes. Not just Meghiya.

Prasannasiddhi: That's before even meditation and study and things like that?

S.: Well, I think one has to be a little cautious here. After all, what makes the spiritual friend the spiritual friend? I mean, the spiritual friend is a spiritual friend because he embodies states which are spiritual. This is why Kalyāṇa Mitratā is sometimes translated not as 'spiritual friendship' but as 'friendship with what is spiritual' in the sense of spiritual states of mind. So you associate with spiritual friends who are spiritual friends on account of their spiritual qualities or spiritual states. What you are really associating with when you associate with spiritual friends is a certain quality of mind, a certain kind of attainment, which you can experience for yourself, by yourself — if you are so able — in meditation. That's perhaps not spiritual friendship but it is certainly friendship with the spiritual. One mustn't make too hard and fast a distinction between spiritual friendship in the sense of associating with your spiritual friends on the one hand, and meditating on the other. They're not opposites. They're not mutually exclusive.

Gunapala: It's still an intimacy with the spiritual.

S.: Yes. When you're meditating you're enjoying spiritual friendship then, but it's more difficult — maybe it's less fun. When you're associating with spiritual friends you're enjoying the same sort of mental states that you enjoy, say, when you're meditating, perhaps more easily.

Prasannasiddhi: It strikes me that it would be a lot easier to have strong feelings for your spiritual friends than it would be to have those feelings just sort of sitting there ...

S.: In the case of meditation it all takes place within your own mind which, in a sense, is where ultimately it has to take place. But in the case of spiritual friendship it takes place between two minds, one of which can stimulate the other. Whereas if you're meditating you have to stimulate yourself, which isn't always so easy. But in both cases you're concerned with the development or the experiencing of the same spiritual qualities.

Murray Wright: Do you think that once you'd got your meditation going you would actually experience deeper Kalyāṇa Mitratā [in the sense of association with spiritual states] than you would, say, in association with another person, even if that person was a spiritual friend?

S.: That would depend, because if your association was with the Buddha presumably your experience would be even deeper than it would be if you were just by yourself, however well you were getting on with your meditation. The Buddha is an Enlightened being and perhaps in your meditation you're only experiencing dhyanic states.

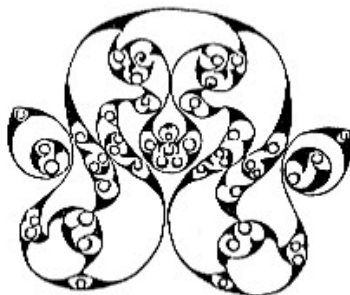
Prasannasiddhi: [You mean] the Buddha has Insight as well as the capacity for [experiencing] dhyana, whereas you in meditation have only got the capacity for dhyana.

Murray Wright: So as a general point then, could you say that it would be more important to associate with a spiritual friend who has attained to some degree of Insight than it would be, necessarily, to go away and meditate?

S.: That would be assuming that you could take advantage of whatever you gained from that spiritual friend. Perhaps you wouldn't be able to take full advantage of it without some experience of meditation.

Murray Wright: Would the criterion for taking advantage of what the spiritual friend has to offer be an entirely subjective thing, that is, to do with your own calm, or would it have something to do with the external situation?

S.: It would depend on your needs and what you were capable of. I mean, how much further you were capable of going at that particular time. It could be that even though a Buddha was around he was wasted on you. You might not even be able to appreciate the fact that he was a Buddha. It's quite clear Meghiya didn't appreciate his good fortune in being the Buddha's personal attendant. He seems to have been quite blind to that. Quite oblivious to that. Even though he'd Gone Forth³ with faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, it doesn't seem to have been a very full or a very deep faith.



2 Friends in the Sangha

from Question and Answer Session, Pre-Ordination Retreat, Tuscany 1981

Sthiramati: You've said that when we Go for Refuge to the Sangha it is specifically to the *Āryasaṅgha*.⁴ Does this therefore by implication exclude the Western Buddhist Order (WBO)?

Sangharakshita: Well, it doesn't necessarily exclude the WBO even then. (*Laughter.*) One mustn't jump to conclusions. Traditionally, yes, when one Goes for Refuge, one Goes for Refuge to the Buddha, the Enlightened human being, one Goes for Refuge to the Dharma in the sense of Transcendental spiritual attainment --- not to the Dharma as formulated — and one Goes for Refuge to the Sangha in the sense of the *Āryasaṅgha*; that is correct. According to the Hinayana the *Āryasaṅgha* would consist of the four pairs of persons, the *Ārya-pudgalas*;⁵ according to the Mahayana, those and of course especially the Bodhisattvas.

That is the real Going for Refuge; the effective Going for Refuge⁶ is to the symbols or to the embodiments of that. The Buddha isn't present in front of you — so in what sense do you Go for Refuge to him? You have not attained to the higher Transcendental states of consciousness -- so you don't Go for Refuge to the Dharma in that sense. Nor are you in contact, as far as you know, with members of the *Āryasaṅgha* — so your Going for Refuge to the Sangha Refuge is not to them.

So as a member of the WBO your effective Buddha Refuge is to the Buddha of history, the Buddha as presented in the various lives of the Buddha in the Buddhist scriptures. Your effective Dharma Refuge is to the Teaching as formulated. And your effective Sangha Refuge is to the Order: the Sangha as you experience it, as you come into contact with it.

But as I said at the beginning, you need not assume that when you're in contact with members of the WBO you're not in contact with members of the *Āryasaṅgha*. You might be. That is not after all something to be proclaimed or claimed by anybody. In fact as time goes on perhaps one can feel more and more certain that through the WBO one is in contact with the *Āryasaṅgha*.

Sthiramati: If all Order Members were taking one Mitra under their wing, so to speak, — as you have suggested — would an official Kalyāṇa Mitra system be necessary?⁷

S.: I think it would be good to have one nonetheless, because it has its own importance, in the sense that it signalizes that particular relationship not only for the persons concerned but for other people in the Movement. Ceremony has its own significance, its own part to play. So even if every Order Member took one Mitra under his or her wing, I still think a Kalyāṇa Mitra ceremony would be highly desirable.

Sumitra: At the moment it seems there are a certain number of people who have been approved as being able to provide Kalyāṇa Mitratā to any Mitra and those are people you will take Kalyāṇa Mitra ceremonies with.

S.: It's not quite like that. There is a list of certain Order Members who are deemed to be suitable as Kalyāṇa Mitras for virtually anybody who approaches them, but that is not to say other Order Members might not be suitable for a particular Mitra who approaches them. So it is possible for them to be Kalyāṇa Mitras for that particular person and the ceremony will go through accordingly.

That would apply to any Order Member. If it was found that one was getting on so well with a particular Mitra that one was in fact effectively his or her Kalyāṇa Mitra, there can be a ceremony [recognizing that fact].

Ratnaguna: At the moment we have two Order Members as Kalyāṇa Mitras to one Mitra. Can you say why that is?

S.: That is traditional. It goes right back to the beginnings of Buddhism. But apart from that, there are two main reasons. One is that people are often one-sided in temperament and it isn't a bad idea to be in close spiritual contact with two people, two Order Members, who are rather different from each other so that you get a more balanced view of the spiritual life and the spiritual path. One of your Kalyāṇa Mitras may be highly extravert for instance, the other highly introvert. That is highly desirable so that you don't get too one-sided a view.

The other reason is purely practical. One of your Kalyāṇa Mitras may move out of the area or may be incapacitated. If that does happen, at least you've got one whose Mitra in a special sense you definitely are.

Prajnananda: In what sense is it traditional, Bhante?

S.: In the sense that a newly ordained bhikshu always has two teachers: one called the *upajjhāya*, the preceptor; the other called the *dhammacariya*. (There's also a *kammacariya*, but that isn't relevant here.) The preceptor is the very senior monk who presides at the ordination ceremony and who has a sort of overall responsibility, perhaps in a distant sort of way, for the new monk, the other is his actual teacher on a more day-to-day basis, and of course they are supposed to be in regular consultation with each other about the new young monk. Our system is a little different inasmuch as there is no question of one Kalyāṇa Mitra being more senior or more important or fulfilling a different function. They both fulfil the same function.

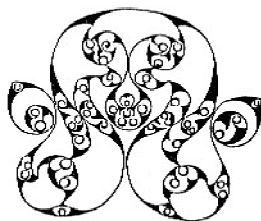
Khemaloka: It may happen that a Mitra has a lot more contact with one of his Kalyāṇa Mitras than the other. Do you think that could be a bad thing?

S.: Obviously it could be, because it could be for the wrong sort of reasons. You might find a particular Kalyāṇa Mitra is a bit more easy-going and allows you to get away with more than the other one does. One would just have to watch that. Of course, it might be for purely circumstantial reasons; it might just happen. But the two Kalyāṇa Mitras do need to keep in close contact with each other about their Mitra and how they are getting on, because one might have a better insight into him or her from a certain point of view. They need to be jointly concerned about their Mitra. Sometimes it's good for all three to meet

together, spend time together, work together.

I have said in the past that it would be better if someone wasn't a Kalyāṇa Mitra until they had been an Order Member for a couple of years, but some people obviously have got more experience dealing with people than others. That needs to be taken into consideration.

One should, as an Order Member, certainly know who the Mitras are around one's Centre and take a close, warm and sympathetic interest in them and do whatever one can for them. Be generally helpful and patient. And also with regular Friends: when you see the same faces week after week, well, they are beginning to show an interest, and you should take an interest in them — just be friendly and open, just communicate.



3 Bonds Beyond

from Questions and Answers, Women's Order Convention, Wood Norton 1985

Question: I've heard that you have made a connection between the teaching on consciousness transference and fidelity — stressing the importance of the continuity of thought and not being bound by the physical, etc. Can you say more about that?

Sangharakshita: I don't remember speaking in that particular way, though I certainly have spoken of fidelity as representing a sort of continuity of consciousness.⁸ After all, what is the real test of fidelity between people, between human beings, between friends? The great test is absence. It is very easy to think of someone when they are present before you; but it is much more difficult if they are not present. An animal, apparently, finds it difficult to 'think' of another animal when it is not actually present -- except perhaps in the case of more advanced animals such as dogs, especially those who have had human masters. But broadly speaking, animals who only have sense-consciousness aren't able to form the idea of another animal that is not actually present to their senses.

A human being *can* do this; because a human being has reflexive consciousness. But sense-consciousness is still present. So fidelity is only possible to the degree that reflexive consciousness is able to predominate over sense-consciousness. Do you see what I am getting at? Supposing you have a friend of whom you are very fond; and supposing that friend has to go away on a journey; you don't forget them. And why is it that you don't forget them? It is because you have reflexive consciousness. You are not limited to sense-consciousness. Even though that person is not actually present before you physically, you can imagine them, you can remember them. You are not limited, not bound, to the present place and time.

So supposing you are bearing that absent person in mind, then you are being faithful to them. In other words, your relationship with them transcends their actual physical presence. The suspension of their physical presence does not interrupt the continuity of the relationship; you have fidelity.

For instance, Vajraketu has written of the friendship between himself and Ruciraketu;⁹ of how he came back after two and a half years in India during which they corresponded very, very little. But rather to Vajraketu's surprise, when he met up with Ruciraketu after two and a half years' absence, during which

only one or two letters had passed between them, he felt in a quite strange sort of way as though their friendship had progressed. This was because that mutual fidelity was there; they were faithful to their friendship. It had gone on developing even though they weren't in physical contact or even exchanging letters to any great extent.

So if one wants to develop as an individual, and not to be limited to the present time and present place, one must develop fidelity, fidelity to other human beings. It mustn't be just a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'. You must deeply cherish your friends. Be mentally faithful to them; and, in the case of a sexual relationship, perhaps physically faithful as well. And that will strengthen your sense of continuity through time and space; it will strengthen your sense of individuality in the true sense.

How I connected this — if I did in fact do so — with transference of consciousness, I am not really sure. But no doubt there is a general connection. Because in the transference of consciousness also — which, one might say, is a higher development of ordinary self-consciousness — you transcend space and you transcend time.

I see fidelity in this sense as very, very important. It represents the fact that you are operating on a level of self-consciousness and not just on a level of sense-consciousness. With some people a fascinating stranger can come along and they forget about everybody else; maybe their friend or boyfriend or girlfriend, or husband or wife, is away for a few weeks and they forget all about them. The fascinating stranger just sweeps them off their feet. It's the impression of the present moment. Sense-consciousness is stronger than self-consciousness. This is really what it means. The image of the absent one is so faint that the present one overpowers it completely, because you are living much more in the senses than in the mind.

So to be faithful, to practise fidelity, really means to live more on the level of the mind than on the level of the senses; more on the level of self-consciousness and less on the level of sense-consciousness. This is why the practice of fidelity is so important: not for any legalistic or moralistic reasons but for psychological and spiritual reasons. There cannot be any development without continuity. And if you are not continuous as an individual, how can there be any continuity of development? How can your relationships develop, your friendships develop, unless you keep them up and they are continuous? Do you see what I am getting at?

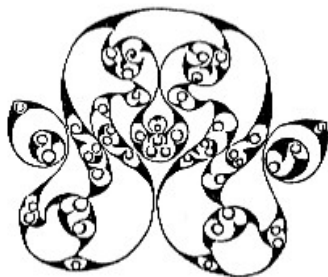
Parami: I had presumed that this was to do with one's links with other Order Members and having fidelity to the Order. I'd tied it up to other remarks you had made about rebirth and re-becoming as a spiritual community.

S.: That's not quite transference of consciousness. But I did talk about something like that on some other occasion when somebody asked: "Supposing you want to be reborn with someone in a future life?" I said the Buddha had already dealt with that — in the case of a husband and wife who had asked the question. He said that if you cultivate the same thoughts, the same words, and the same deeds, obviously you will have a common *karma-vipāka*¹⁰ and you will be reborn together.

So if you want to be reborn as a member of the Order — well, you can't be actually reborn as a member of the Order, but reborn within hailing distance of the Order — you should cultivate those actions of body, speech and mind which are characteristic of an Order Member. It is as simple as that. Because you will be reborn along with those people who have at present the same intellect, the same mental states, the same activities, as you have yourself — the same in quality, not necessarily the same in outward form.

So I think it is highly likely under the law of karma and rebirth that, to the extent that they have been real and genuine Order Members, Order Members will be reborn in contact with one another. I think it is inevitable. It might have happened already; who knows? Some people coming into contact with the Order or the Movement do have the experience that it is really like a homecoming. So, who knows? We can't say. Perhaps some of us have been in contact with one another before and that is why we get on so well at present.

Sometimes it happens that even though you have the same ideals as others you just can't get on with them. It may be that you have come together for the first time in this life and you have yet to make the personal adjustment and develop the personal friendship. So far you have just got the ideals in common and unfortunately they don't always carry you very far. But maybe you get on with *other* Order Members really well; not only do you share the same ideals but you already have a personal contact — established perhaps in previous lives. So you find it easy to get on with one another. And here I am speaking of real getting on, not just of a compatibility of personalities based on common interests and so on. I'm speaking of something deeper than that. Sometimes it does seem as though you are carrying on the thread of previous relationships and friendships.



4 Why?

from '*Meghiya Sutta*' (*Udāna*), New Zealand Men's Retreat, Padmaloka, February 1983

Then again, Meghiya, as regards talk that is serious and suitable for opening up the heart and conduces to downright revulsion, to dispassion, to ending, to calm, to comprehension, to perfect insight, to nibbāna, that is to say, — talk about wanting little, about contentment, about solitude, about avoiding society, about putting forth energy; talk about virtue, concentration of mind and wisdom, talk about release, knowledge and insight of release, — such talk as this the monk gets at pleasure, without pain and without stint. When the heart's release is immature, Meghiya, this is the third thing that conduces to its maturity.

Udāna: Verses of Uplift (Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II) trans. F. L. Woodward, Oxford University Press, London 1948, IV, i, p. 43

Sangharakshita: So [the next thing we come to in the text is] discussion. Discussion is the third thing that conduces to the maturity of the heart which is not yet released. That's quite interesting because usually we get *śīla, samādhi, prajñā*.¹¹ But on this occasion we get a rather different series: we get spiritual friendship, ethics, and now we get discussion, before coming on to meditation. Why do you think this is? Or how is it that '*talk that is serious and suitable*' etc. arises out of the observance of ethics? Some hint of this has in fact already been given, inasmuch as one might start enquiring, why do you behave in this way rather than that?

Gunapala: Maturity has started to move. You're less immature now. Your maturity has started to develop.

S.: Yes. Because, as I've mentioned, you can be drawn to certain people, drawn to a certain spiritual friend. Then you develop a spiritual friendship and because of that spiritual friendship you start behaving like them, simply because you're associating with them. But this is all rather on the group level. In a way you're just imitating. But after a while you want to know, to understand, the reasons for doing certain things. You want to understand the reason for being ethical. Why lead a good life? The fact that your spiritual friends are leading a good life just isn't a sufficient reason. That other people are leading a good life, the group perhaps is leading a good life, isn't sufficient. You want to know, why should I lead a good life? In order to

explain that, one has to bring in the whole philosophy of individual development. One has to speak about the spiritual life itself as something which is lived, consciously and deliberately, by the individual who wishes to develop. One has to explain why one *should* wish to develop, or bring out the fact that in a sense everyone *does* wish to develop. In that way all these other things come in. This is what the Buddha is getting at when he speaks of '*talk that is serious and suitable for opening up the heart and conduces to downright revulsion, (or disentanglement) to dispassion, to ending*' etc. '*talk about wanting little, about contentment, about solitude, about avoiding society*'. This is all talk about the spiritual life and about why one should lead a spiritual life.

Gunapala: These must have been the main topics of discussion in the Buddha's day.

S.: Yes. And it isn't, of course, just talking about them. It's inciting one another actually to practise them.

Gunapala: And, of course, to understand why.

S.: Yes. To understand the rationale of the spiritual life.

Gunapala: Why [one should] avoid society.

S.: Yes. Why live in a men's community? Someone might, for instance, move into a men's community just because his spiritual friends are living there, without understanding what I've called the rationale of it all or the philosophy of it all. But after a while it may dawn [on him to wonder], well, why are we living in this way? It's a good way of life, but why? Why is it good? Why is it better than the way other people are living, or seem to be living? Then gradually you start entering into the principle of the thing. You not only benefit from your particular way of life, [that is], living in a men's community, you also understand *why* you are benefiting. You understand how it works, and how it's good that it should work in that way.

Prasannasiddhi: Could you say that study comes into this?

S.: Yes, one could say that study is included in this area, especially study at the Mitra level. You see, a Mitra has joined, in a sense, the positive group. He's even got his eye on the Spiritual Community perhaps. But he is still asking why. He hasn't thrown in his lot completely. He hasn't Gone for Refuge, though he may be thinking about it, or might even have asked [for Ordination]. He's still asking why, so in his case study — among other things — means lifting him from the level of just conforming because he likes you, to the level of understanding because he realizes what is good for his own development as a human being, because he understands the whole philosophy of individual development.

Prasannasiddhi: So in a way he's still doing the same thing as his spiritual friends, but now he's almost doing them independently.

S.: Yes. He does them at least partly as a result of his own understanding of why it is good to do these things. He's not just doing them because his spiritual friends are doing them. Maybe his actions are exactly the same as before, but now they are more illumined by understanding.

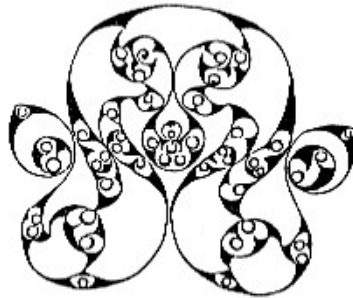
Murray Wright: So a member of the Spiritual Community would carry on acting that way even if he was the only one doing it.

S.: I don't quite see the connection.

Murray Wright: I was just thinking that one of the criteria for someone who has Gone for Refuge or a member of the Spiritual Community is that he would [keep up his spiritual practice] regardless of what others did.

S.: Yes, that is true. Though of course, if he was the only one in the Spiritual Community acting in that way it wouldn't be much of a Spiritual Community! But yes, the fact is that one of the signs that one is ready to Go

for Refuge is that one is prepared to go it alone. If you're entirely dependent on the support of the group, or haven't even given thought to the question of whether you should go it alone, then clearly you're not ready. So one of the functions of study and discussion as regards Mitras is to inculcate an understanding of what I've called the rationale of the spiritual life, so that they understand *why* one does certain things. It's only when they've understood why one does certain things that they can want *as individuals*, or decide as individuals, that they will do those things because of their understanding, rather than doing those things just because those are the things their spiritual friends are doing.



5 Giving Up Study

from 'Advice to Three Fortunate Women' (*The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*, Vol. II), Padmaloka, June 1979

The books and letters which you do not practice — give them up!

Yeshe Tsogyal, *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*, Vol. 11, Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, USA 1978, Canto 103, p. 690

Sangharakshita: What do you think Padmasambhava means by that? Why does he say that?

Dhammamati: [He is telling you] not to clutter your mind with information that you're not going to put to use. There's enough information to put to use anyway.

S.: Because much of one's reading or study is less an introduction to practice than a sort of substitute for practice. You can see people doing this — not so much with the Friends, I am glad to say, but I used to see a lot of it [at one time]. For many people getting more and more into Buddhism meant reading another book, and another, and another, and they never got away from that. They seemed unable to make the transition from study to practice. Study was their practice.

Study, in some ways and rightly approached, can be practice, though it can't be complete practice on its own. In their case it was just reading, just adding to their information about Buddhism, and they seemed never able to break out of that into the actual practice of the Dharma. So if you just go on reading and reading and collecting bits of information about Buddhism it can obscure the fact that you're not really concerned about Buddhism at all. You're just extending your intellectual territory, nothing more than that.

So '*The books and letters which you do not practice — give them up!*' In a sense, you've given them up already because you are not practising, but you don't realize that. You think you are very much into the Dharma, you're very much into the Perfection of Wisdom — or you're very much into *dana*, come to that -- because you're reading about them. But for some people their total life experience, so to speak, is so mentalized, so much identified with their mental understanding, that to think about something for them is equivalent to doing it. They're unable to make the distinction, strange as it may sound. If they've read, say,

about the Bodhisattva Ideal, intellectually understood it, then they are practically Bodhisattvas or at least followers of Mahayana Buddhism. It sounds extraordinary but actually this *is* the attitude of quite a lot of people in the West with regard to Buddhism: they cannot distinguish between a theoretical understanding and a real, so to speak existential, understanding. They think they really do know all about it, in the fullest sense.

Therefore the Guru says, '*The books and letters which you do not practice — give them up!*' It's more like throwing them away because they're just so much rubbish as far as you're concerned. You don't really possess them, so in a sense there's no question of giving them up. You don't possess those teachings at all because you don't really understand what they're saying, so you might as well discard the paper and print which embody them; you've just got so much lumber cluttering up your room or whatever. So you know really only what you practise. Of course, there is a sense in which you can have a sort of knowledge prior to practice, but it must at least be consciously tending in the direction of practice for it to have any value at all.

Sona: You do actually have to have quite a lot of information about Buddhism, in terms of material to reflect upon. There are some formulations at least that you can reflect upon, otherwise you can tend to pull completely away from study and think you don't have to know anything.

S.: I think one can look at it in several ways. One point that Subhuti made in his talk on *Śīla paramita* which was interesting was that when one becomes involved with a New Society — at least with the beginnings of one, the nucleus of one — that New Society is structured in a particular way, in so to speak a more healthy way than the society outside is structured. So when you come within that more positively, more healthily structured New Society, and adapt yourself to its ways, you are influenced in a positive way. In other words, this underlines the importance of positive institutions, using the term in the widest sense. So I think the more positive the institutions under which or within which you live, or the greater the extent to which you live within the New Society — the New Society itself representing an embodied ideal — the less you need to study. But when you are right outside the New Society and have no possible contact with it, where will you get your information or your guidance? The nearest you can get to the New Society is just by reading about it. But if you are living within the New Society, a lot of the things which you would otherwise have had simply to read about you are actually experiencing all the time, because that is the situation within which you are living.

A Voice: So you need to study less?

S.: You still need to study, but again that can be exaggerated. What do you need to study? Do you need to study about meditation? [If you attend] a class and everybody's practising, say, Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana and instruction is regularly given, you don't really need to read about meditation, unless of course you want to go on to something or learn about something which is not yet generally current. Also I think it depends upon your character type. I think people of faith temperament can get along within the positively structured society, the New Society, with the minimum of recourse to study, but the people who are not faith followers but doctrine followers,¹² Dharma followers, seem so to speak mentally more active and need a greater amount of mental satisfaction. They've got more inquiring minds and therefore need to read and study more.

Sona: But in the 'Four Mindfulnesses'¹³ which you mentioned yesterday, being mindful of the formulations of the Dharma, isn't it necessary to know some of the formulations in order to be mindful, which implies a certain amount of study?

S.: Well, very little actually, because you can write down dozens of those formulae just on a few pages, which is what the monks did in the old days (except they didn't write them down, they just heard them and committed them to memory): 'The Seven *Bodhyāṅgas*'¹⁴ and 'The Eightfold Path' and 'The Five Spiritual Faculties'¹⁵ - they just reflected upon *them*.

Sona: But if you ask people if they know these simple formulations, most people don't. I just wonder, if the emphasis is not on study, [whether] people won't even bother to learn very simple formulations.

S.: But then the question also arises, why don't people study? Why are they not interested in study? Is it for positive reasons or is it for negative reasons?

Sona: I get the impression it's more for negative reasons, a reaction against their education.

Dhammamati: Also, for what reason do you study? There seems to be this thing for study just to accumulate knowledge in your mind rather than seeing the words as some form of inspiration.

Sona: But within the context of the 'Four Mindfulnesses' you do actually need to have this information in your mind. It has to be there, and you may not find it very inspiring at first, but you need it there to contemplate.

S.: Yes. But, for instance — this is a question people sometimes ask — to what extent do you need, for the purpose of your own individual development, to know about the history of Buddhism? Do you really need to know exactly, say, when and how Buddhism spread from India to Ceylon or from India to China?

Viramati: You need a basis of Buddhism to communicate to other people, especially if you're involved in Centre activities. You can give your own positive state to someone else but you need something to back it up.

Sona: You don't actually need it for your own individual [development].

S.: Yes, you don't need it so much for your own individual development but you do need it as a background at least to enable you to answer questions raised by other people so as to establish a medium of communication with them. People are often concerned about these things; for instance, about questions like, why did Buddhism die out in India? And in a way that is quite relevant to them because they might think something like: "Buddhism is supposed to be a great spiritual teaching, and here are these people saying that they believe in it and trying to practise it, but what happened in India? It started there and was such a success for hundreds of years and then it died out. Does that mean that it failed? Does it mean that it didn't work? It couldn't even work in India; well, how is it that these people believe that it can work in this country?" This has a practical bearing, and you need to be able to deal with that sort of question, and therefore you need to know quite a lot that has no direct bearing on your own individual development.

But obviously not everybody has the interest and the aptitude to go into these things in such a way as to be able to answer such questions, but I think connected with every Centre you need at least one or two Order Members who can handle questions of this sort.

Sona: Another point that occurred to me is that for your own individual development you may need to be in a Centre and have the stimulation of meeting and communicating with other people, therefore study is in a sense not directly but indirectly necessary or helpful at least for your own individual development.

S.: [That is true] in the case of some people or in the case of some of the people with whom you will be brought into contact, but again you could imagine that there could be, say, an Order Member who knew nothing about the history of Buddhism and who was quite unable to answer any question in that area, but who nevertheless strongly impressed people because, for instance, he was so much into his meditation and radiated positivity and confidence so strongly that that would have an even greater effect; and it is not a bad idea perhaps to have just one or two Order Members connected with every Centre who can function as it were non-intellectually, who can make it clear, maybe for the benefit of people of a certain kind who are coming along to the Centre, that in order to be a Buddhist and to develop you don't need to be 'educated'.

We've got one or two Order Members like that in India. I am thinking of one in particular. He's what the Indians call 'not educated', that is to say he doesn't know English and has a quite humble job, but he's very

much into meditation, quite noticeably so, and would like to leave his job and devote himself almost entirely to meditation and Dharma work. Unfortunately this isn't possible. He does have to work, though he's quite elderly, but he still has a family to support; but when he's on retreats Lokamitra¹⁶ and the others say it is quite obvious that he's more into his meditation than others are. He seems to be able to go more deeply into it more easily, and that has its own effect. He doesn't say very much, he doesn't talk very much with people, but just because he is so much into the meditation, he has a value of his own for others as well as himself.

So it's not a bad idea if there are at least one or two Order Members around who illustrate in a way the entire dispensability of any kind of knowledge about Buddhism in the sort of historical, doctrinal sense, for some people at least. [The Order Member I mentioned] knows the basic teachings, certainly, but I can't imagine him wondering much about the history of Buddhism or why it disappeared from India.

Sona: I get the impression that if one talks about dispensing with study, the whole lot, the baby and the bath water, gets chucked out.

S.: Well, yes. One might ask: why are people happy to hear about the dispensability of study? It's not so much they've got anything against study specifically, it's just that they don't like working, they don't like making an effort; study represents hard work, it's just one particular kind of hard work. So they're quite happy to hear that you can get by and be a good Buddhist without hard work. This is really how they are taking it, which of course isn't very positive.

Sthiramati: Just to think very clearly is quite hard!

S.: Oh yes. It means sorting out *micchādiṭṭhis*.¹⁷ (Skt. *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*). If people don't think naturally, if that is their type, they needn't bother so much about study. But in the case of those who do think and who, because they think, have got a lot of *micchādiṭṭhis*, study is very necessary to get rid of the *micchādiṭṭhis*. Very often it's the people who've got the *micchādiṭṭhis* who say that study in the real sense isn't necessary. It threatens their *micchādiṭṭhis*. That is one of their *micchādiṭṭhis*, that study for persons of their type isn't necessary.

Study in the true sense is the medicine for the sickness of *micchādiṭṭhis*. I don't think you get rid of *micchādiṭṭhis* just with the help of meditation, in the sense of the *samatha*¹⁸ experience. No, I'm certain of this. You just don't.

Sona: You could say that dhyanic experience does help you to learn to stop thinking.

S.: This is true, yes; but when you come out of your dhyana experience your thinking starts up again.

Sona: I thought you said once that it also acts like a sort of shock on the body, that sort of carries on. The more dhyanic experiences you have, you gradually develop a sort of capacity for actually stopping thinking at will.

S.: This is true, but you still have to learn to think correctly when you do start thinking again. The fact that you learn to stop thinking only slows you down, which is helpful but of itself it does not assist you in thinking more correctly and more clearly. That has as it were to be learned separately. There are plenty of people who think clearly and correctly and have no *micchādiṭṭhis* but who don't have much meditative experience, and there are people with lots of meditative experience, including experience of the dhyanas, but with very deeply entrenched *micchādiṭṭhis*. So I think probably the best way — I was going to say the only way but perhaps I should say the best way — of clearing up *micchādiṭṭhis* is through actual personal encounter with people who can see through those *micchādiṭṭhis* and who can help you to see through them. I think if you just read a book, even a book that refutes your *micchādiṭṭhis*, it doesn't have sufficient impact. You can brush it aside so easily. You have actually to come up against someone who can expose your *micchādiṭṭhis*.

Also *micchādiṭṭhis* have so many fine nuances and subtle shades of difference that you may think, say, in reading a book: "This doesn't apply to me. My thinking is a bit more subtle and those particular refutations aren't applicable in my case." But if you were actually arguing it out with somebody who thinks more clearly than you, he can sort of force you back step by step until you've really got your back against the wall and in the end have to give in. This is probably the best way of getting rid of *micchādiṭṭhis*. You don't do it just by immersing yourself in the dhyanas. You don't do it by reading and studying by yourself. I think you do it, I could almost say only, in this particular way.

Sthiramati: A sort of mixture of real thinking and communication.

S.: Also, your *micchādiṭṭhi* may be to a great extent the product of laziness. At an earlier, more impressionable, age you might just have accepted something without really thinking, but it sank deep and so many of your values are now sort of twined around that. You find it very difficult to give up that *micchādiṭṭhi*. But if you are actually confronted by somebody who is demanding reasons for what you think so that you are forced to think, then the inadequacy of your attitude and your beliefs and your philosophies might then be exposed.

6 My Guru's Words are Absolutely True

from 'Rechungpa's Repentance' (*The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*), Men's Seminar, Padmaloka, November 1980

Rechungpa thought, "My Guru's words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's. I will now pray the Dakinis to give me back my books".

The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa, trans. Garma C. C. Chang, Shambhala, Boulder & London 1977, Vol. II, p. 453

Sangharakshita: What does one make of this statement: '*My Guru's words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's*'?

Aryamitra: He is speaking from the same state of being, or no-being, as the Buddha. He is speaking from the same state of mind.

S.: Yes — but is there not a difference between a Buddha and a Guru; and also between what they say? Otherwise there is no difference between the Esoteric Refuge and the Exoteric Refuge.¹⁹ Presumably Rechungpa is relying upon the scriptures for his knowledge of what the Buddha has said. So, in what sense are the Guru's words identical with those of the Buddha?

Kulamitra: They are in harmony.

S.: They are in harmony, yes. But in what sort of way are they in harmony?

A Voice: They point in the same direction.

S.: Yes, but do they point in the same kind of way? I mean, what is the difference between a Buddha and a Guru?

Abhaya: The Buddha said of his Arahant disciples that there was no difference between their spiritual attainment and his. It was only that the Buddha came before them and showed the Way. Is what you are asking related to that?

S.: Yes. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that there is no difference between the Buddha's spiritual attainment and that of Milarepa. Is there still no difference in the way that they speak? If there is a difference, what would it be?

Abhaya: The difference of physical conditioning, environment, language, and things like that.

S.: But to put it more simply — did Śākyamuni Buddha know Rechungpa?

A Voice: No.

S.: In a manner of speaking he did not. Did he therefore, in his teaching, give anything that was specifically addressed to Rechungpa?

A Voice: No.

S.: No, he did not. But did Milarepa give any teaching that was specifically addressed to Rechungpa?

Voices: Yes.

S.: So therefore, as far as Rechungpa is concerned, what is the difference between the Guru's words and the Buddha's words?

Guhyananda: The Guru's words are more specific.

S.: But do words which are more specific necessarily differ [in import] from words which are more general?

Abhaya: There is a better chance that you will actually apply specific words to yourself, if they are directed to you straight from the Guru.

S.: So what is the nature of the difference between the Buddha's words and the words Milarepa directly addresses to Rechungpa?

Simon Chinnery: Rechungpa is experiencing the words of Milarepa directly, and he is able to practise them directly. Whereas, perhaps, the Buddha's teaching was slightly removed.

S.: In what sense would the Buddha's teaching be removed? After all, do not forget that Rechungpa does say that not only are the Guru's words absolutely true, but that they also do not differ from the Buddha's words. In what sense do they not differ?

Mike Chivers: Isn't it that the Buddha's words have gone, via the Guru and his lineage, through to Rechungpa?

S.: Yes.

Mike Chivers: And so they are both the Buddha's words and the Guru's words.

S.: Yes, but there is a difference too, otherwise the Guru is exactly the same as the Buddha. But in the Vajrayana it is assumed that there is an important difference between the Buddha and the Guru: that is why you need *both* a Guru and a Buddha. What I am getting at is actually quite simple.

Jayadeva: The Buddha's words, as far as Rechungpa was concerned, were words that he had only read in books.

S.: It is not only that.

Kulamitra: The Buddha's words to Rechungpa outline general principles.

S.: Yes, this is the real point. So far as Rechungpa is concerned, the Buddha's words, as they appear in the sutras, lay down general principles. But Milarepa's teachings apply those general teachings and principles to Rechungpa's specific case, against a background of the same spiritual realization that the Buddha himself achieved. So when Rechungpa says *'My Guru's words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's'*, he means *'do not differ'* in the sense that a specific application of a general principle does not differ from the general principle itself. They are identical in *that* sense, but not in the sense of Milarepa saying exactly the same thing as the Buddha, [word for word]. The Buddha, in relation to the Buddhist tradition as a whole, lays down general principles and truths. The Guru, having had in principle the same spiritual experience as the Buddha, gives a much more specific application of what the Buddha has taught, in accordance with the needs of the disciple with whom he is in personal contact. The words of the Buddha and of the Guru have the same import inasmuch as the general principle is contained in the particular application. The Guru's words are identical with the Buddha's words in the same way that the Guru himself is identical with the Buddha. There is no difference between them so far as actual functioning [is concerned]. [It is only that] the Guru's words are more specific; just as the Guru himself, so to speak, is more specific.

Abhaya: I recall you saying that your teaching of the Higher Evolution of the Individual²⁰ is a particular application of general Buddhist principles, contained within the specific context [of evolutionary thought].

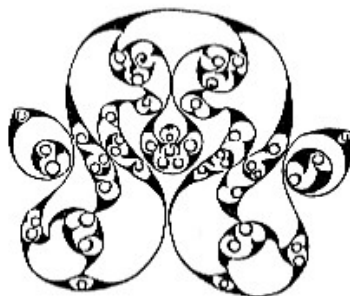
S.: Yes, one could say that. Ideally, the Higher Evolution of the Individual is contained in the Buddha's teaching of the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. But we do not find it there, in that particular form, in the Pali or Sanskrit scriptures. It has to be brought out from them, in accordance with certain people's particular circumstances and interests.

Abhaya: There is another correspondence between the Buddha and the Guru. The Buddha is necessary because he 'clears the undergrowth' from the Path which is already there. And in the present day, though people may have access to Buddhist scriptures and even read a lot of them, they might not actually see the Path. They need an intermediary — the Guru — to clear that Path for them, and show its specific relevance to them as an individual.

S.: That is true, yes. The Path is there, but it may not seem like a Path.

Abhaya: It so often does not to people who only read the scriptures. They can seem rather dry and arid and...

S.: Right. You simply do not see the relevance of it, or how it connects. You think it has nothing to do with you! (*Laughter.*)



from *Dhammapada*, Ch. 14, Pre-Ordination Retreat, Tuscany 1983

That Enlightened One whose victory is irreversible and whose sphere endless, by what track will you lead him astray, the Trackless One?

The *Dhammapada*, trans. Sangharakshita

Sangharakshita: Right at the beginning in the first line there is a quite important concept introduced, a concept which is an integral part of the concept of Buddhahood itself and even of the higher spiritual path itself: that is the concept of Irreversibility, as I've called it. The literal translation is: '*... he whose conquest cannot be conquered*', or '*... he whose conquest cannot be made a non-conquest*', or, as I've put it, '*... he whose victory is irreversible*', who has conquered once and for all.

I take it everyone is familiar with this concept of Irreversibility as regards the spiritual path? You should have covered this when you dealt with the Spiral, with the so-called 'Twelve Positive *Nidānas*'.²¹ It's as though in the mundane there are three levels altogether — or first of all two levels: the level represented by the Round and the level represented by the Spiral. But one also has, in between, a level which one might say is represented by the first seven *nidānas* of that positive series.

So you have as it were three bands, three layers, three strata: the first band or level, where there is action and reaction between factors which are opposites. Then on the second band you have this same process of action and reaction between factors which are complementary, so that the succeeding one augments the effect of the preceding one, but in this band that process is reversible; you can revert from this complementary action and reaction to the purely reactive action and reaction between opposites. But then, on the third level, the process of action and reaction as between complementaries has reached a point where it cannot be reversed. It becomes irreversible.

Thus there are these three levels. On the first level you have operating the law of opposites, so to speak. On the next one you have the law of complementaries acting, but not irreversibly. On the third again the law of complementaries is acting, but it is acting irreversibly.

The crucial point of the spiritual life is passing from what I've called the reversible skilful to the irreversible skilful. One passes there only through Insight and then you enter the Stream.²² So the real object of the spiritual life is to enter the Stream; not even to think in terms of Buddhahood, because Buddhahood represents a further stage on, if you like the culminating stage, relatively speaking, of that irreversible sequence of skilful mental states.

It's not surprising, therefore, that it is said of the Buddha's victory — that is to say his attainment of Enlightenment itself -- that it is Irreversible, that it cannot be undone. There is no outside power which can make the Buddha to be not a Buddha. But this applies not only to the Buddha; it applies to the Arahant, it applies to the Once-Returner, it applies to the Stream-Entrant. *His* victory also cannot be undone. *His* attainment also is Irreversible. But until one has reached that point of Irreversibility, one is in a very precarious position because one can fall back at any time. This is why on the one hand we need a constant effort and on the other we need, all the time, favourable conditions.

It has just now struck me that we could look at the Buddha's last words, that is the famous '*Appamādena sampādeṭṭha*',²³ in those terms. The Buddha says two things: '*Appamādena sampādeṭṭha*' — *sampādeṭṭha*: make an effort. If you want to reach that point of Irreversibility you have to go on making your own individual effort; but also you have to remain aware -- aware that the conditions in which you live are conducive to your making the best effort that you possibly can. One could look at it in this way. Because you can make all the effort you like but if you are in unfavourable conditions, what help is it? You're almost wasting your energy. On the other hand, you can be in the most favourable conditions, but if you are not making an effort what use are those favourable conditions? So you need the two things: the effort, and the favourable conditions. So continue to make that effort and also make sure you have the favourable

conditions. Be mindful of that too.

This is why it is quite important, to come nearer home, that having made one's commitment and having spent three months in Tuscany, one must be really careful that one goes back into as positive a situation as one can, a situation that will enable one to consolidate and extend the commitment that one has made because one hasn't as yet, probably, reached that Point of No Return. So there's always a danger of falling away. You need the most positive situation, the most positive environment, the most helpful environment that you can possibly get. Once you have reached the Point of No Return you are, as it were, safe — not that there is nothing more to do but at least you cannot seriously backslide. Hence Irreversibility is not just a characteristic of the state that the Buddha has attained, it is characteristic of all the stages of the Transcendental Path, that is to say that path which lies on the other side of the Point of No Return, the other side of Stream-Entry. Once you have entered the Stream you really *will* be carried away. You cannot change your mind then!

But over the years one thing that has struck me more and more is the extent to which people depend upon conditions and circumstances and the extent to which the spiritual life is dependent on favourable circumstances. This is one of the things that struck me in the very early days of the FWBO. In those days we had only two retreats a year, an Easter retreat and a summer retreat. These were the two times when people could get away and we used to have anything from twenty-five up to, at the end of this period, eighty people on retreat. They were all mixed retreats and we had people coming and going — a few were there for the whole time, some came for a week, some just came for a weekend. But even in those early days, though the retreats were not intensive by any means, one thing that struck me was the change that took place in people on retreat after just a few days. It is as though you just took them out of the city and put them down in the country first of all, gave them regular meals and a bit of meditation, a bit of Puja, a tape recorded lecture to listen to; and after three or four days they seemed quite different people. They seemed much more happy, much more positive, just [through] these quite simple, basic changes of environment.

This made me think later on that it isn't enough just to urge people to meditate and change their mental state, they also need the co-operation of their environment, otherwise it is very difficult for ordinary human beings [to develop], if not impossible. If you are really heroic, you can change and develop under almost any conditions, but actually, to be quite honest, there are very few heroes of that sort around. Most people are not really capable of that sort of heroism, not to begin with anyway. They need to be protected from unfavourable conditions and circumstances. They need a favourable situation and then they really can grow, really can change. After that, perhaps, they can adopt a more heroic attitude and withstand their environment, but not before. It is such a pity that such a large part of one's energy should have to go into counteracting one's environment.

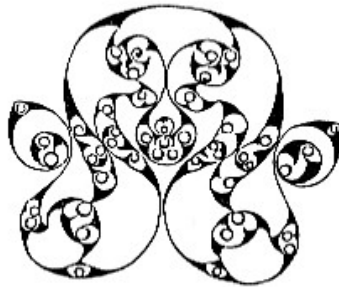
So when one goes back, say, from Il Convento, make sure that one goes back into a positive situation, a strong community or a peaceful place in the country, or maybe a good helpful work situation, whatever it may be; a situation in which you have got Kalyāṇa Mitras around, in which you have got good friends around and so on. Everyone knows no doubt his own individual weaknesses and shortcomings, so one has to take all those into consideration in deciding what sort of situation you are going to go back into. Anyway, as I've said, this first verse introduces the concept of Irreversibility. This is really a key concept in Buddhism, even though lost sight of to some extent.

Padmaraja: You say lost sight of. When and where did that happen?

S.: It is difficult to give any dates. In the case of the Theravada world it seems to have happened as long ago as seven hundred to eight hundred years ago even. But one must also say, even in the Mahayana world, this idea of Stream-Entry, partly because of the development of the Bodhisattva Ideal, has been rather obscured. No doubt it is good to have the concept of Enlightenment before one but it needs to be brought, I think, much more down to earth, and I think that thinking in terms of Stream-Entry in the broader sense, not in the narrowly Hinayanic sense of Stream-Entry as *opposed* to the Bodhisattva Ideal, helps one to do that.

Anandajyoti: Within the Mahayana tradition, the point of Irreversibility for a Bodhisattva seems a very long way off.²⁴

S.: Yes, indeed. But the practical corollary is that you cannot afford to take risks or to slacken off or have a little rest until you have reached that point of Irreversibility. Because however committed you may be in terms of effective commitment, you can always withdraw from that. What you need is a 'real' commitment, and that comes with Stream-Entry.



8 No-Form Retaining Form

from Men's Study Leaders' Course on the Bodhisattva Ideal, Padmaloka 1986

Ratnaprabha: This is another question on terminology. In the final section of the lecture 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy' you talk about Bodhisattvas of the *Dharmakāya*, but the Bodhisattvas you actually describe seem to be in *Sambhogakāya* form. Is this a real discrepancy?

Sangharakshita: I don't think it is because how can one really distinguish form [i.e. *Sambhogakāya*] and no-form [i.e. *Dharmakāya*]? In their 'inner being' the Bodhisattvas are at one with the *Dharmakāya*, but at the same time they manifest on the *Sambhogakāya* level. For instance the Buddha, during his earthly lifetime, is *Dharmakāya*, *Sambhogakāya* and *Nirmāṇakāya*.²⁵ It is not that the *Dharmakāya* is an alternative *kaya*; but rather that, in the case of the Enlightened individual, it is the 'basic' *kaya*. So Bodhisattvas of the *Dharmakāya* are those beings who have realized the *Dharmakāya* but who, in a manner of speaking, continue to retain their *Sambhogakāya* form. The fact that they have a definite identity as Bodhisattvas means that they belong to the *Sambhogakāya* realm; but the fact that, in manifesting this identity, they do not depart from the *Dharmakāya* realm, means that they are also Bodhisattvas of the *Dharmakāya*.

The difficulty arises if one thinks of the *Sambhogakāya* as something completely distinct from the *Dharmakāya*, as though it were a different level or plane in the literal sense. (This is something which probably requires more thought and explanation, but what I have said is approximately the position.) If, in addition to his *Sambhogakāya* form, a Bodhisattva assumes a *Nirmāṇakāya* form, then he becomes an incarnate Bodhisattva or what the Tibetans call a *Tulku*.²⁶ But if he is a *Tulku* in the full sense he will retain some experience of his *Sambhogakāya* status; and even of his *Dharmakāya* status, should he be a Bodhisattva of that level.

Dharmapriya: At the beginning of the discussion on the Bodhisattvas of the *Dharmakāya*, in which you distinguish between the two kinds of Bodhisattvas of the *Dharmakāya*,²⁷ the one sentence describing the first kind was unclear to me. The sentence, in the verbatim transcript, reads: 'The first kind of Bodhisattvas

of the *Dharmakāya* consist of those who after Enlightenment, after becoming Buddhas, retain their Bodhisattva form, though being in reality Buddhas, so that they can continue working in the world.'

S.: This is putting it in quite exoteric terms. For instance, according to the Tibetan tradition, Avalokitesvara is the *Sambhogakāya* form in which Śākyamuni Buddha continues to work in the world. He has become a Mahayana-type Buddha rather than a Hinayana-type Buddha.

Dharmapriya: I was going to ask, does this refer to the period between the Nirvana and the Parinirvana? Or also after the *Parinirvana*? But I think you have answered that question.

S.: It is not that Avalokitesvara is not present after the Buddha gains Enlightenment. Whatever in the Buddha we term 'Avalokitesvara' is there from the moment of Enlightenment. But, at the time of the *Parinirvana*, the physical body drops off, and apart from the ultimate Enlightenment experience, only the 'Avalokiteśvara element' is left and continues. This is the Mahayana view, putting it very broadly and crudely.

Dharmapriya: Perhaps risking being too mechanistic about it, is it as if, of the 'Three *Kāyas*', the *Nirmāṇakāya* disappears after the *Parinirvana*, but the other *kāyas* are left?

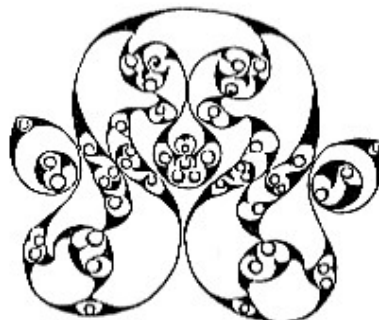
S.: Yes.

Dharmapriya: And is there more than one *Sambhogakāya* [left]?

S.: No, there is supposed to be only the one *Sambhogakāya*, but it has many different aspects, of which Avalokiteśvara is one. One must not separate too literally the aspect from that of which it is an aspect; the *Sambhogakāya* from the *Dharmakāya*. One must not separate the 'Three *Kāyas*' too literally, one from the other.

Dharmapriya: I have a vague memory that at one point you have talked of the *Svabhāvikakāya*, using it, more or less, just as a technical term for the union of the *kāyas*. Does this term have any deeper meaning than that, or any further relevance?

S.: It may well have, but I have not come across it. It seems to me that the idea of the *Svabhāvikakāya* arose when the 'Three *Kāyas*' had become so differentiated that there was felt the need of a fourth *kāya* to unite them again. But I would say that the solution is really to realize that they are not to be literally separated or kept apart. Superimposing a fourth *kāya*, which in course of time became too sharply distinguished from the first three, was no solution.



9 Developing Bodhisattvas

from Questions and Answers on the Bodhisattva Ideal, Pre-Ordination Retreat, Tuscany 1984

Abhaya: 1) No additional Bodhisattva forms have emerged from spiritual practice, as far as I know, since the flourishing of the Mahayana and Vajrayana. Do you think this is because spiritual practice has never reached that peak since?

2) Is it true that other Bodhisattva forms could emerge from, say, our spiritual practice or the practice of the Western Buddhist Order or Buddhism at large?

Sangharakshita: I would say in principle, decidedly, yes. But I must say that your question probably needs a bit of qualification, because the Vajrayana tradition continues down to our own day and it would seem that new Bodhisattva forms, or at least new *dharmapāla*²⁸ forms or *dākinī*²⁹ forms, have emerged comparatively late within that tradition. Usually, of course, they are affiliated with one or another of the existing widely recognized Bodhisattvas, recognized as a special form of him or her.

Also, in Japan, there was an interesting development: indigenous Japanese deities were identified with Bodhisattvas, and the Bodhisattvas were represented with the features of the indigenous divinities, and that led in a sense almost to the emergence of new Bodhisattva forms. For instance, there was Hachiman, an indigenous Japanese divinity apparently having originally some phallic significance, who was absorbed into the Japanese Buddhist pantheon and came to be regarded as a Bodhisattva figure. I am not quite sure what his exact affiliation was. He might, for instance, have been regarded as a form of Avalokitesvara, but that would be simply to give him an official place, an official connection; but really it represents the emergence within Japanese Mahayana Buddhism of a quite distinctive Bodhisattva form, having his origins in the Japanese psyche.

Similarly with the figure of Acalā. Acalā is a *vidyārāja*.³⁰ He is of Indian origin, but in Japan he assumes a very distinctively Japanese form. The form or image being, in a sense, old, you can in this respect or on this level speak of a new Bodhisattva form, a new Bodhisattva image. In Japan he is represented as a strange figure, like a sort of athlete, a boxer-like figure, quite husky with a loincloth and tremendous muscles. One of his characteristic features is a sort of lock hanging down which I think wrestlers or boxers in Japan wore. He has glaring, bulging eyes and he carries a noose or some-thing of that sort. He is accompanied by two small boys whose significance is obscure; they seem to be assistants or servitors. And he is associated with mountains and waterfalls and hermits. Apparently Japanese Buddhists who are devoted to the cult of this Bodhisattva Acalā resort to the mountains and practise austerities there invoking him, and especially they perform austerities under waterfalls. The main point is that his appearance is outwardly quite grim, but inwardly he is supposed to be very, very kind. Thus the Japanese psyche or collective unconscious has produced this very interesting figure.

There is no reason why the West should not produce its own Bodhisattva figures. In a sense, *almost*, the West has produced its Bodhisattva figures, because if you turn to Central Asia and examine some of the archaeological remains of Buddhist sites, you will find that there are images and paintings of Bodhisattvas that have a Persian appearance; they come from the Sassanian period,³¹ I think. They are not Indian, they are not Chinese, they have moved a little further West. This is, of course, not to speak of the Gandharan art,³² where Bodhisattvas have assumed some Western features.

So in principle, yes, it is to be expected that Bodhisattvas will take on different forms in the West, because people will perceive them and experience them differently.

This leads me to a rather important point, to which I have given quite a bit of thought. I think I have spoken about it once or twice. We start off, of course, with the traditional Eastern Buddhist iconography. We are familiar now with the more prominent examples of that iconography; I think practically every Order Member and probably every Mitra and a lot of Friends would be able to identify the figures of Manjuḥṣa, Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, Vajrapāṇi. That is, in a way, quite an achievement. I don't know whether you realize

that, because upon my arrival in England, in 1964, there were very, very few Buddhists who would have been able to identify those Bodhisattva figures. They weren't at all familiar with them, partly because some Buddhists were Theravadins and wouldn't have thought it proper to look in the direction of a Bodhisattva; others, of course, were followers of Zen and regarded themselves as way beyond anything of that sort, they were properly occupied exclusively with the Void. (*Laughter.*) But since the inauguration of the FWBO things have rather changed, at least as regards the FWBO itself. We are now very familiar with these figures and forms, and they have come to mean quite a lot to us. On these Tuscany courses, and on other occasions too, we have talks on the Bodhisattvas, and people are familiar not only with their forms but with their mantras. This is quite an achievement in itself and, probably, being as it were in the midst of it and not realizing what the situation was only a few years ago, you don't quite realize the extent or the significance of that achievement. Because it means that to some extent we begin to be aware of, if not actually to move in, this archetypal world as represented on a very high level by the Bodhisattvas.

But there is a point, even a reservation, to be made here: that in a sense the forms or the figures that we are familiar with don't in the least look like the Bodhisattvas concerned, the Bodhisattvas whose names they bear. And sooner or later we have to start thinking in those terms. In other words, what we [have to do] is try to work our way from the traditional *appearance* of a Bodhisattva in the traditional iconography, to what that Bodhisattva represents. We have, say, the beautiful golden colour of Manjughōṣa, we have his uplifted sword and so on, but actually what has that to do with Manjughōṣa as a spiritual principle, or even, if you like, as a spiritual being or spiritual entity? What is the actual connection? Can you take it that literally Manjughōṣa does look like that? Well, in a sense, yes, but again, certainly, in a sense, no. So what one has to do after a time is to forget all about the traditional iconography. One has in a sense to put all that aside and ask oneself: "What is Manjughōṣa? What does this term Manjughōṣa really represent? What is the reality behind this term Manjughōṣa?" And you have to try to get some feeling for that, as quite distinct from any particular traditional Manjughōṣa form. You have to get a definite feeling for what I can only call the Manjughōṣa principle — not principle in the sense of something abstract which is not a person — but some inner feeling for, some inner sense of that Manjughōṣa principle, and then you have to ask yourself what would that principle look like if it assumed human form? And you have to try to see that, and that will give you, as it were, a much truer — I was going to say insight into but it is more like vision of, what, in a manner of speaking, Manjughōṣa actually looks like. The traditional iconography is very definitely only a stepping stone, but it is an indispensable stepping stone to us to begin with. But after a while we have to look at things, we have to proceed in the way that I have outlined.

Abhaya: How would you do that?

S.: Well, that is what I have just, in a sense, explained. You put aside the traditional iconography, you forget all about that.

Abhaya: And you just try to feel it, feel ..?

S.: First of all — to take the example of Manjughōṣa — [you say:] what does Manjughōṣa represent? Well, Manjughōṣa is Wisdom, that's essentially what Manjughōṣa is, so you try to get a feeling for, a sense of, an experience of, Wisdom. Just Wisdom. Then you *imagine* — I am using the word imagine now in its, how shall I say?, non-pejorative sense, in the sense of the Imaginal Faculty.³³ And you try to see, as it were, that principle that you are intuiting taking on a concrete human form, an ideal form. So that you are building up or creating the form out of your experience or realization of the principle; not trying to arrive at it by simply visualizing the form as represented in traditional iconography, which may be many, many removes from somebody's actual experience. The artist may have represented Manjughōṣa according to tradition, but he may not have had any feeling for the Manjughōṣa principle, so to speak, at all. And the artist whose painting he copied may not have had any feeling, and so on. You may have to go back fifteen or twenty generations before you come to someone who had actual feeling, or who actually *saw* Manjughōṣa in some way, on a visionary level.

So a time will therefore come when you need to try to *create* or to perceive Mañjuśrī or Manjughōṣa independently, with your own Imaginal Faculty. And you surely should be able to. It is rather like actually

going to meet someone as distinct from looking at his photograph — and not even photograph, because you might have photographs of photographs of photographs, or paintings of paintings of paintings, so that may have carried you quite a long way from the original person and what they actually looked like. But if you go and see them for yourself, that is something rather different. That is what you have to do: to begin with, you have to know who to recognize, so the photograph or the painting does give you a very rough idea of what the person looks like, but when you put aside the photograph or the painting and go and find him and look at him, you have a better idea. It's somewhat like that.

Padmavajra: You say, after a time?

S.: With some years. At least, if you practised regularly, I would say, just off the cuff, at least four or five years.

Padmavajra: Do you think in a visualization you could actually try and do that as you came to visualize the Bodhisattva in the practice? Instead of trying to visualize according to the iconography you just try to feel that principle?

S.: You can do it at that particular time. Instead of having recourse to the traditional text and its iconography you can just try to see, try and conjure for yourself; but it actually isn't as simple as that. It is much more likely to come about if you stay with that principle, for want of a better term, all the time, and if you are in a sense working on it all the time. I think by the time you reach that stage it isn't possible to 'do it' as an exercise. You are concerned with something quite different, with a matter of experience: something into which you not only have to feel yourself but into which you are feeling yourself all the time.

Padmavajra: So when you say all the time, to take the example of Manjughosa, you would be trying to feel, or be in contact with, the Wisdom principle, in every ..?

S.: Yes, one can say that, but I don't want you to take it too literally or rigidly as a sort of practice or exercise. In a way it is something you get into naturally. It is something you are *concerned* with, not something you *do* because it is time to do it; it's something you can't help doing, something that is not really in your mind but on your mind, in a quite positive sense. So that you can't help thinking about it or trying to get into it.

Phil Shann: Would everybody's Manjughosa be different or would they be contacting something universal?

S.: It would be universal and it would be different. How different we don't as yet know as regards any possible Western iconography; we would have to wait and see.

Phil Shann: So you suspect that the Western Manjughosa would be very different from ..?

S.: Perhaps one shouldn't anticipate. Perhaps that is the last thing that one should do. As I have said, put aside the traditional iconography when you reach that point, put aside any presuppositions or speculations of what it might be like or could be like or should be like. Because you are wanting actually to see something, as it were, or at least to perceive something with what I have called the Imaginal Faculty, perceive something on a higher level. So you want that faculty to be purged of any sort of conditioning coming from any lower level. So close your art books and so on.

Some of the illustrations I was giving from Western art, from the Italian Renaissance, are quite relevant. One does see different artists perceiving things, in a manner of speaking, in a different way — perhaps not quite at a visionary level but certainly there was some exercise of their imagination.

Vessantara: Would you necessarily feel the need to visualize a form different from the traditional one?

S.: You wouldn't be thinking of the traditional image, so you wouldn't be thinking of reproducing that, nor would you be avoiding it; you wouldn't be thinking about it at all.

Vessantara: So you'd just be starting from scratch?

S.: Yes.

Vessantara: Just concentrating on the principle, and if the traditional form ..?

S.: Yes. It might so happen that you saw a form exactly the same as the *thang-ka*³⁴ that has been in your possession for the last ten years, or it might be a subtle modification, or it might be something very different. One could only wait and see.

I know there are people within the Movement, people within the Order, who have had visionary experiences, in some cases amounting to visions of Bodhisattva-like figures. So I think the seed is already there.

But it is quite important that one does recognize the limitations, at the same time as one recognizes the usefulness, of the traditional iconography. It is important that one realizes that that simply provides one with a stepping stone, and that a point will come when you have, in a manner of speaking, to lay that aside. Because as you yourself experience, as you yourself know that particular form, it belongs to the *kāmaloka*. It may in a sense be, or it may have been, a reflection, or a reflection of a reflection of a reflection of a reflection, of something archetypal, belonging to a higher level. But even then it's only a reflection and you want to see the original, so to speak, directly, and that is what you have to do eventually.

It could be, of course, that in the course of your practice you come to find that you do have a sort of experience of, let's say, the Bodhisattva principle, within the context of your actual traditional, reproduced, visualized form. And you may experience the Bodhisattva principle informing that form. You may well then also find that the fact that that principle informs that form means that the features, so to speak, of that form, are subtly modified, so that the same thing happens in the long run.

Pete Dobson: So that it could end up with no form?

S.: Well, yes. In later Vajrayana practice the form does merge into no-form, but then again at a still later stage the form emerges from the no-form, and the form that emerges from the no-form is the *real* form, not a superinduced form, not a conventional form. In technical language, this is the *jñāna-sattva* as distinct from the *samaya-sattva*,³⁵ the awareness-being as distinct from the conventional being, let's say. But then of course after that happens one has to practise in such a way as to realize the non-difference of those two. You mustn't have a one-sidedly abstract or one-sidedly concrete view of things. One has to see *form* as the absolute expression of the principle, so to speak, and the principle as the essence of the form, and the two as in fact inseparable. Just like the wave in the ocean and the ocean in the wave. No ocean without waves and no waves without ocean.

Padmavajra: Are you equating the principle, then, with the *jñāna-sattva* and the traditional form with the *samaya-sattva*? Because you equated those two.

S.: Yes, I am equating the traditional iconic [form] as actually visualized with the *samaya-sattva*. That is in fact what it is. And what I have been talking about, in terms of seeing the Bodhisattva for yourself, is the *jñāna-sattva*, one might say; or at least it corresponds, perhaps at a lower level, to the *jñāna-sattva*.

Glossary

Bodhicitta (Skt.): *bodhi* is 'Enlightenment'; *citta* is 'mind', 'consciousness', 'thought', 'heart'.

The word 'bodhicitta' is very difficult to translate; even in the original Sanskrit, it is a very inadequate term in that it refers to something which, being of a Transcendental nature, is beyond conceptual formulation. It has often been rendered as the 'thought of Enlightenment', although this is precisely what the Bodhicitta is not, for it is not a thought about Enlightenment at all, but a 'reflection' or 'irruption' of Transcendental Reality within the individual human psyche which manifests as a spontaneous, continuous and deeply felt urge to work towards *anuttara samyaksambodhi* -- 'complete and perfect Enlightenment' or 'Enlightenment for the sake of all beings'. The Venerable Sangharakshita has rendered the term 'bodhicitta', provisionally, as the 'Will to Enlightenment' to emphasize the dynamic, conative aspect of the Bodhicitta itself. Other translations abound, such as 'Enlightened attitude', 'mind of Enlightenment', 'Bodhi heart', 'mind for Enlightened knowledge' and many more. It is not always easy, when reading translations of Mahayana sutras, to realize that certain terms used are in fact renderings of 'bodhicitta'.

Within the Mahayana, the arising of the Bodhicitta (the *bodhicitta-utpāda*) is seen as of the utmost importance and of the greatest possible good fortune. It is with the arising of the Bodhicitta that the Bodhisattva career proper begins and the good fortune of the arising of the Bodhicitta is compared to that of a blind man finding a priceless jewel in a dunghill at night. The Bodhicitta can be said to arise from the great tension resulting from the simultaneous cultivation of two apparently contradictory spiritual impulses — the desire to liberate all living beings and the desire to realize for oneself the truth that in Reality no beings exist.

The Bodhicitta is twofold: the relative (*samvṛtti*) and the Absolute (*parāmatha*) Bodhicitta. The relative Bodhicitta has itself two aspects: the *bodhipraṇidhicitta*, or 'aspiring' Bodhicitta, and the *bodhiprasthānacitta* or 'establishment' Bodhicitta. The *praṇidhāna* or *praṇidhi* is the heartfelt declaration of the aspiration for Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. The *prasthāna* is the actual practice undertaken. The *bodhipraṇidhicitta* may be marked by the formal taking of the *praṇidhāna*, in the form of a solemn Vow or Vows, whilst the *bodhiprasthānacitta* is characterized by the performing of specific spiritual practices such as the 'Six *Pāramitās*', (or Perfections).

In later developments of the Bodhisattva doctrine, several preliminary practices were recommended as a preparation for the arising of the Bodhicitta, forming a sort of office for the novice Bodhisattva. It could loosely be said — though any suggestion of inevitability or strict causal relation should be avoided — that on the basis of the thorough, sincere and prolonged observance of these preliminaries, the relative Bodhicitta arises. It is by virtue of this arising of the relative Bodhicitta that the Bodhisattva enters the first of the 'Ten *Bhūmis*', the ten stages of the Bodhisattva's career. The relative Bodhicitta continues to develop in the course of his progression through the remaining nine stages. In the sense that one can speak of the relative Bodhicitta 'arising' in the individual, it manifests in time and space.

The Absolute Bodhicitta, however, being synonymous with the Transcendental, is outside the time process altogether and cannot in any sense be said to arise. sGam.po.pa writes of the Absolute Bodhicitta that it is '*Śūnyatā* endowed with the essence of Compassion, radiant, unshakable and impossible to formulate by concepts or speech'.

It has to be remembered that the Bodhicitta is a Mahayana conceptualization of the arising of the Transcendental within the individual and is not shared by the Hinayana schools. Although a certain correspondence between the respective teachings can be argued, it is not possible to make a satisfactory point-by-point correlation between Mahayana doctrines relating to the Bodhicitta and Hinayana doctrines concerning the arising of Insight.

See Sangharakshita, 'The Three Jewels', Windhorse Publications, Ch. 16; Sangharakshita, 'A Survey of Buddhism', Windhorse Publications; sGam.po.pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, trans. H. V. Guenther,

Shambhala, Boulder & London 1986; Mitratās in this series, especially numbers 58 & 59, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart - Parts 1 & 2'.

Notes

¹ See *Mitratā* 67 in this series, 'On the Threshold of Enlightenment - Part 2,' Glossary.

² See Samyutta Nikaya (*The Book of Kindred Sayings*) II, 2, trans. F. L. Woodward, Pali Text Society, London 1930. Also quoted in *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, trans. F. L. Woodward, The Buddhist Society, London/New York 1973, pp. 138-9.

³ See Sangharakshita, 'Going for Refuge', Windhorse Publications; Sangharakshita, 'The Threefold Refuge', Windhorse Publications; Sangharakshita, 'Going for Refuge' available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/kfn5f6x>

⁴ The *Āryasaṅgha* or 'Sangha of the Noble or Worthy' is the Spiritual Community at its very highest level, consisting of all those who have passed the Point of No Return — i.e. all those in whom Transcendental Insight has become the dominant force.

⁵ See *Mitratā* 68 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy - Part 1', Note 20.

⁶ For the levels of Going for Refuge see Sangharakshita, 'Going for Refuge' available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/kfn5f6x> and Sangharakshita, 'Levels of Going for Refuge', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/ntap8pw>

⁷ In the FWBO, a Mitra who wants deeper regular contact with members of the Order and has asked for ordination, can ask two Order Members to be his or her Kalyāṇa Mitras.

⁸ See Sangharakshita, 'Fidelity', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/ouc6ft>

⁹ See 'A Friendship', *FWBO Newsletter* 66, Windhorse, London 1985, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰ Karma is 'action', here in the sense of a person's willed or voluntary action; *vipāka* is 'fruit', or 'result'. *Karma-vipāka* is therefore the effect or consequence of one's actions, both skilful and unskilful, in the form of pleasant or painful experience.

¹¹ *Śīla, samādhi, prajñā* is one formulation of the Middle Way, the fourth Noble Truth, in terms of the progressive stages of Ethics (*śīla*), Meditation (*samādhi*) and Wisdom (*prajñā*). For a detailed account, see Sangharakshita, 'A Survey of Buddhism', Windhorse Publications.

¹² See *Mitratā* 62 in this series, 'Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual Life - Part 1', Glossary.

¹³ Their usual designation is 'The Four Foundations of Mindfulness' as expounded by the Buddha in the *Satipatthana Sutta*, no. 22, of the Digha Nikāya of the Pali Canon. They are: 1. mindfulness of the body and its movements; 2. mindfulness of feelings, whether pleasant, painful or neutral; 3. mindfulness of consciousness; 4. mindfulness of mental objects, sometimes translated as mindfulness of the formulations of the Dharma, as referred to in the text. See *The Foundations of Mindfulness* trans. Nyanasatta Thera, The Wheel Publication no. 19, Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka 1968; Sangharakshita, 'Living with Awareness', Windhorse Publications; Analayo, 'Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization', Windhorse Publications.

¹⁴ See *Mitratā* 64 in this series, 'Masculinity' & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 1', Note 24.

¹⁵ The 'Five Spiritual Faculties' are Faith and Wisdom, Energy and Meditation, and Mindfulness. The first two pairs must be kept in balance by the exercise of Mindfulness. See Sangharakshita, 'A Guide to the Buddhist Path', Windhorse Publications.

¹⁶ The 'Five Spiritual Faculties' are Faith and Wisdom, Energy and Meditation, and Mindfulness. The first two pairs must be kept in balance by the exercise of Mindfulness. See Sangharakshita, 'A Guide to the Buddhist Path', Windhorse Publications.

¹⁷ See *Mitratā* 63 in this series, 'Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Glossary.

¹⁸ See *Mitratā* 62 in this series, 'Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual Life - Part 1', Glossary.

¹⁹ The distinction between Esoteric and Exoteric Refuge is one made in Vajrayana Buddhism. The Exoteric Refuges are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, recognized in common with the Hinayana and the Mahayana. The Exoteric Refuges, peculiar to the Vajrayana, are the Guru (corresponding to the Buddha), the *Yidam* or Protector (corresponding to the Dharma) and the *Dākinī* (corresponding to the Sangha).

For more on *yidam* see *Mitratā* 59 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart - Part 2', Note 7; for more on *dākinī*, see *Mitratā* 65 in this series, "Masculinity" & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Note 7.

²⁰ For an explanation of this teaching see Sangharakshita, 'Aspects of the Higher Evolution of the Individual', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/pzethfu>

²¹ See *Mitratā* 66 in this series, 'On the Threshold of Enlightenment - Part 1', Glossary.

²² See *Mitratā* 57 in this series, 'The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal - Part 2', Glossary.

²³ See *Mahā-parinibbāna Suttanta* in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II, trans. T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, Pali Text Society, London 1959, p. 173, or Sister Vajira and Francis Story, 'Last Days of the Buddha', Buddhist Publication Society or available on Access to Insight <http://tinyurl.com/4qzmnb>

²⁴ See *Mitratā* 68 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy - Part 1'.

²⁵ See *Mitratā* 58 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart - Part 1', Glossary.

²⁶ See *Mitratā* 59 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart - Part 2', Glossary.

²⁷ See *Mitratā* 68 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy - Part 1'.

²⁸ The *dharmapāla*, literally 'guardian or protector of the Dharma', is a species of Tantric deity. *Dharmapālas* are usually depicted in wrathful form, with fierce facial expression, powerfully built body and wielding some kind of implement or implements for the warding off of demons. In symbolic representations of the mandala (*Mitratā* 68 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy - Part 1', Glossary), a *dharmapāla* figure is often seen standing at the gate of the mandala at each of the cardinal points, preventing evil influences entering the mandala. The *dharmapāla* figures sometimes found in the precincts of Buddhist temples in the East perform a similar function.

²⁹ See *Mitratā* 65 in this series, 'Masculinity" & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Note 7.

³⁰ The *vidyārāja*, literally 'King (*rāja*) of Wisdom or Knowledge (*vidyā*)', is another species of Tantric deity, partly peaceful and partly wrathful in appearance; the *vidyārājas* also function as protectors of the Dharma.

³¹ The Sassanian Dynasty ruled Persia from 226 - 641 C.E.

³² Gandharan art is the school or style of Buddhist sculpture which flourished in the second century C.E. It is named after the province of Gandhara which was in the north of what is now Pakistan. The style is sometimes called 'Graeco-Buddhist' because the influence of classical Greek sculptural forms is very

marked; some of the Buddha images of the period are similar, in facial expression and style of drapery, to Hellenistic models.

³³ The term 'the Imaginal', with a capital 'I', was used by a French writer Henri Corbin to denote the imagination seen as the superior visionary faculty akin to Blake's treatment of the Imagination in his prophetic books. One of his essays on the subject, 'Towards a Chart of the Imaginal', the prelude to the second edition of *Corps Spirituelle et Terre Celeste de l'Iran Mazdeen à l'Iran Shi'ite* appears in the periodical *Temenos* (no. 1), ed. Kathleen Raine, Philip Sherard, etc., London 1981. Sangharakshita uses the term to indicate such a visionary faculty within the individual, which comes into operation when reason and emotion are integrated; the Imaginal transcends yet at the same time includes them both. See also *Mitratā* 39, Dharmachari Sthiramati, *Imagination: The Faculty Divine*, Windhorse, London 1982.

³⁴ See *Mitratā* 60 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Vow - Part 1', Glossary.

³⁵ *Samaya-sattva* and *jñāna-sattva* are terms applied specifically to the form of a particular Buddha or Bodhisattva visualized in Vajrayana meditation practices (See *Mitratā* 57 in this series, 'The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal - Part 2', Glossary). The distinction between them is the visual equivalent of the distinction between words used as mere rational explanation and words inducing, so to speak, direct Insight into the Truth.