

THE MEETING AT SILVER SPRING

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**"THE MEETING AT SILVER SPRING" SEMINAR HELD AT 'PADMALOKA'
IN JULY/AUGUST 1976**

THOSE PRESENT: Ven Sangharakshita, Sagaramati, Ananda, Padmaraja, Dharmarati, Vessantara.

Peter Cowen, Alan Angel, Mike Chivers, Pat Dunlop, Graham Steven.

Sangharakshita; This is from the "Hundred thousand songs of Milarepa". You probably know about Milarepa the famous Tibetan yogi and poet also who lived about the same time as the Norman Conquest which is quite a long time ago and the meeting at Silver Spring is one chapter of one of the thousand songs though we get a number of songs in fact within the context of the particular episode. So let's start reading this paragraph by paragraph and we'll discuss it as we go along.

Sagaramati; "Obeisance to all Gurus.

One summer, the Great Yogi, Jetsun Milarepa, was meditating at North Shri Ri. When autumn came and the harvest was ready, he went out for alms, but fell asleep in Upper Gog Tang. He dreamed that he saw a green girl with golden hair and shining eyebrows, leading a youth about twenty years old. She said, 'Milarepa, you will have eight petals from the lotus of your heart. This is one of them. Please bless him and bring him up!' She then disappeared."

S: Anything a little odd about this paragraph?- about the incident related?

Peter Cowen; He went out for alms and fell asleep.

S: That's rather odd. Yogis don't usually do that sort of thing especially not yogis like Milarepa. Why do you think he fell asleep?

_____; He was meant to.

S: By whom? The powers that be? (Laughter) Maybe. The falling asleep has some significance. He had the dream so presumably the falling asleep was to do with the dream. It's as though he wanted to dream. Something was ready to come through that couldn't come through perhaps in any other way so he felt sleepy and he fell asleep and he dreamed. Perhaps being a yogi he was rather sensitive to these sort of things. He didn't think look this is a terrible thing here am I, a yogi falling off to sleep. He just let it happen. No doubt by that time after all that meditation he could afford to do that. So 'he dreamed he saw a green girl with olden hair and shining eyebrows leading a youth about twenty years old. She said 'Milarepa you have eight petals from the lotus of your heart. This is one of them. Please bless him and bring him up. She then disappeared.' Alright let's see the next paragraph and then we can talk about what it might mean.

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Peter Cowen; "Upon awaking from his sleep, Milarepa thought over the meaning of his dream. He decided the girl must have been a Dakini and that the 'eight petals' must imply that he would have eight superlative, destined, heart-like disciples. 'Today I shall probably meet a Karma-exhausted disciple, and I will try my best to help him.' With this in mind he climbed the road leading to Bong. When he reached a brook which flowed like silver, he paused for another nap. After a while, a young man riding on a black horse approached and asked, 'Why, dear Yogi, do you sleep here?' Milarepa parried the question by another one: 'My dear patron where are you going?'

'I am going to cross this brook to Din Ri'.

Milarepa then explained, 'Because of my age, I find it very difficult to wade through water. Could you give me a ride?'

The young man replied, 'As I am going to play with some youths over there, I am in a very great hurry and will not be able to take you with me. Besides, it would strain my horse too much, and

he might be hurt.'

After saying this he went on ahead, alone, without even looking back."

S: So let's consider this. Milarepa decided that the girl he had seen in his dream must have been a Dakini. Anyone have any idea what a Dakini is?

_____ A Deva.

S: No.

Sagaramati; You mean literally.

S: In any sense.

Sagaramati; A force of inspiration.

S: Yes. Dakini which is feminine gender comes from the word space. It's the one of space or she of space. The Tibetans very often translate it (Kaguma) which is sometimes translated as skywalker. It's one who traverses space, one who flies through space i.e. one who is free, unlimited and can go in any direction. So it suggests a sort of spiritual force, a force of inspiration and the Dakinis are feminine in form and they very often do suggest the forces of inspiration welling up from unconscious depths. Especially they represent the purer emotional energies. The great Dakinis as they're sometimes called are simply Buddhas in female form like the Sarvabuddhadakini and so on. Then at the other end of the scale as it were any very attractive woman who's got a certain sort of magical quality which is not just straight forward sex-appeal, which is something a bit more than that, is sometimes referred to as a Dakini. So the Dakini as the force of inspiration, the Dakini as the purified emotional energies comes, as it were, midway between these two. That is to say between the Dakini as the force of inspiration, the Dakini as the purified emotional energy comes, as it were, mid way between these two. That is to say between the Dakini with a capital 'D' as the female Buddha form or Buddha in
MSSS III

female form and the unusually attractive woman. But why do you think green.
girl with golden hair and shining eyebrows. What does this suggest to you?

A green
Why green.

Do you think there's any reason for this?

_____ Could this be a connection with Tara?

S: Could be though there's a white Tara as well as a green one, a red Tara too and there's a yellow Tara.

Graham Steven; To do with compassion.

S: Yes but how do you get the association between the colour green and compassion.

_____ Feeling.

S: Feeling.

Freshness.

S; Freshness, yes, nature, restful. It's got all those sort of associations

Padmapani; Isn't green sometimes recognised as the colour of love also?

S: That's in the Islamic tradition. In Buddhism it's definitely red which is the colour of love.

Alan Angel; With green Tara she's the aspect who's stepping down from the lotus.

S: This is true yes. I think the fact that she's green, the girl, suggests something very out of the ordinary, unusual, supernatural, not human and maybe with a touch of nature, freshness, inspiration. And the golden hair. Don't forget that in Tibet everybody's got black hair. Golden hair would be quite unusual, quite extraordinary. Shining eyebrows leading a youth about twenty years old. She said 'Yes the girl must have been a Dakini. The 'eight petals' must imply that he would have eight superlative, destined, heart-like disciples.' What do you think 'heart-like' disciples means?

Alan Angel; In the 'Shepherd's search for mind' the disciple was called a heart-son

S: A heart-like disciple would be one who was very close to the heart of the Guru, who was in fact, in a sense, the heart of the Guru so Milarepa's heart is envisaged as a lotus - a lotus has eight petals. The eight petals are the eight disciples who are very very close to him. Heart-like disciples or heart-sons even. 'So today I shall probably meet a karma-exhausted disciple.' What do you think a 'karma exhausted disciple' is?

~S IV

Peter Cowen; Fed up with the way things are?

S: Not only that. More than that. His karmas are exhausted in the sense that the results of his previous actions, that is possibly previous unskilful actions or unskilful actions committed in previous lives, have been exhausted. He's paid his karmic debt as it were. He's free. There's nothing that is now going to come in the way. Nothing from the past that is going to come in the way. Nothing left over from the past that is going to come in the way if he decides to take up the spiritual life. Have you ever noticed this with people or even in your own case. That even though you've taken a good resolution, even though you've decided to maybe lead a spiritual life, there is something left over from the past, some karma or the results of karmas committed in the past by you which are hindering you now in your more positive creative efforts. Do you ever see this? So you're not karma exhausted but this particular disciple that Milarepa was probably going to meet was or would be a karma exhausted disciple. In other words a very promising disciple, one who is open, who would be receptive and would be able to practice the teaching for whom there would be no obstacle created by unskilful actions committed in the past. 'So today I shall probably meet a karma exhausted disciple and I will try my best to help him. With this in mind he climbed the road leading to Bong. When he reached a brook that flowed like silver he paused for another nap. After a while a young man, riding on a black horse approached and asked, 'Why dear Yogi do you sleep here?' Why do you think Milarepa did fall asleep.

Alan Angel; It doesn't mention that he's woken up in this case so maybe it's another force manifesting in his dream.

S: Yes. Do you think the young man expresses any surprise at seeing a Yogi asleep? He knows he's a yogi but he sees that he's asleep so he says, 'Why dear yogi do you sleep here?' It does suggest a bit of surprise so what has happened? What is the essential thing that has happened?

Vissantara; Milarepa's engaged his interest.

S: Milarepa's engaged his interest. They've got talking. Maybe if he hadn't been sleeping, if he'd been walking along or sitting there quietly meditating the young man wouldn't have taken any notice. 'Of course yogis meditate or they walk along the road collecting alms' but here S a yogi who's asleep, that's odd. He can tell perhaps from his dress and his hair that he's a yogi but he's sleeping. 'But why dear yogi do you sleep here?' Milarepa parried the question by another. 'My dear patron where are you going?' They get into conversation and he says, 'I'm going to cross this brook to Din Ri.' Milarepa then explained, 'Because of my age I find it very difficult to wade through water. Could you give me a ride?' The young man replied, 'As I am going to play with some youths over there, I am in a very great hurry and will not be able to take you with me. Besides it would strain my horse too much, and he might be hurt.' What sort of impression do you get about the young man from this?

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_____, Selfish.

S: A bit selfish. But he's only a young man. He's in a hurry to go and play. Yes, he says 'I'm in a very great hurry and besides it would strain my horse too much'. So he's not unfriendly. He says quite straightforwardly that he doesn't want to do it and after saying this he went on ahead alone without even looking back. He's very very keen to meet his friends.

"Thereupon Milreapa, with sincere concentration, entered the Samadhi of Guru Union." You know about this Guru Union, this Guru Yoga. Have you heard of this before? Do you know what it means? The note here says 'The Samadhi of unifying one's mind with those of the Gurus' which doesn't really tell us very much. There is a definite yoga which is usually considered to come after the Four Foundation Yogas - you know about the Four Foundation Yogas that is to say the Going for Refuge and prostration practice; the developing of the Bodhicitta, the offering of the Mandala and the recitation of the mantra of Vajrasattva and visualisation of the form of Vajrasattva. These are the four Mula Yogas preparatory to Tantric practice. As a sort of appendix to the Mula yogas you have the Guru yoga and this differs somewhat from lineage to lineage but essentially what one does is you imagine your own immediate Guru above your head and there are various visualisations and recitations to be done in that connection and above his head his Guru and above his head~his~right back through the whole line of the Gurus and you further imagine the blessing of the Gurus coming down all through that line finally resting on you and you feel your mind united with theirs or your mind united with your guru's mind just as his mind is united with his guru and his with his right the way up to or back to the Buddha who may not necessarily be the human Buddha Sakyamuni - fact usually not so - either Vajradhara or Amitabha or one of the Ideal as it were, one of the Samboghkaya fonus. So this is the Guru yoga practice.

Padmapani; Does that come after the foundation yogas?

S: Yes. One can do it separately but usually it comes after. 'So thereupon Milarepa with sincere concentration entered the Samadhi of Guru Union' Guru yoga. He practised that particular method and he became, as it were united with his Gurus in that meditative state. "Then holding his breath he walked softly on the water. ~lidin~ smoothly across the stream _to the other bank. He looked back and saw the oun man and the horse were flounderin in midstream makin a bi S lash. In the mearptime the bo had no Milarepa walk past him on the water without sinkin~. Althou~h he had seen it with his own eyes he still could not acce~t it. He muttered to himself. 'What's the matter with me? Am I having an hallucination? ilf noti. this man must have been born to float!

When he reached the other bank he a~~roached Milareoa and observed his feet carefully, discovering that not even his soles were wet: whereuun a deen faith toward the Jetsun arose within the youth. He cried out. 'I did not realise you were an accomplished Lama. I regret very much that I did not allow you to mount mv horse. Please forgive me and accept my apology.'"
MSS VI

S: What is a little bit odd about that? 'I regret very much that I did not allow you to mount my horse.' Milarepa didn't need to mount his horse!

_____ "Saying this he bowed to Milarepa many times. With great sincerity and faith, he asked, 'Lama, from where do you come? To what Order do you belong? Who is your Guru? Where is your temple? What meditation do you practice? Where did you come from this morning? Where will you stay tonight?' In answer the Jetsun sang,"

S: So what further impression do you get about the young man's character?

_____ Very inquisitive.

S: Inquisitive, yes. He's also pretty shrewd. He observes his feet carefully discovering that not even his soles were wet. The faith arises but he's also got a slightly sceptical turn of mind and also, 'although he had seen it with his own eyes he still could not accept it. He muttered to himself, 'What's the matter with me? Am I having an hallucination? So though the faith arises in him very readily and

spontaneously, he's certainly not credulous, he's certainly no fool and of course he is inquisitive. Alright let's read that song straight through.

Ah! My good young friend!

Listen to me young playboy!

Do you know who I am? I am the Yo I Milare pa; Gung Tang is whence I came.

My feet have walked all over Weu and Tsang. While learning the orders and decrees.

From the gracious Guru Ngoml to Lama Rondonla~a.

I have studied with ten Gurus and learned the Tantras five.

The views, and the philosophies of Dharma.

From my teacher Lha~e Nu Chon I learned

The fierce exorcism of the Black and Red Planets. Though he was very expert.

He could never clear my doubts.

Then I heard people say there was a wondrous teacher Dwelling in the South, in the river-circled Valley. He was blessed by the Lords Medripa and Naropa. And had experienced the mother-like essence of Mind. Having mastered the control of his body.

He dwelt alongside the South River.

MSS VII

He whose fame had spread afar

Was the father Guru, Marpa the Translator.

Just to hear his name caused my skin to tingle and my hair to rise.

Despite the hardships of the journey, I made my way to him.

Just by glancing at his face, my heart was changed.

In my life he is the only Guru,

The peerless one, the gracious Lho Draug Wa.

No money or wealth had I to offer him,

So I reduced my body to powder in his service.

From him I learned the profound Hevajra Tantra

And the teachings of Naropa's Skilful Path.

I took the vows and won the Four Initiations of the blessed Dem Chog.

When I realised the essence of Mahamudra, I saw plainly the real nature of the mind; I realised in full the ultimate 'Beyond-all-Playwords'.

In the Four River-Like teachings of the Whispered Succession

I practised the profound doctrine of the Nine Essentials.

Having practiced the art of manipulating the Nadis, Prana and Bindu,

I completely mastered both the Mind and Prana.

I am a yogi who can dwell in the sky; Having united the Four Elements, I have no fear of water.

For your information, My temple is at Shri Ri.

This morning I came from Upper Gog Tang; When I shall go this evening, I am not certain, For mine is the yogi's way of life.

Have you heard what I have sung, My happy boy who seeks nought but pleasure?

S: Let's take a look at that. Milarepa sings, 'Ah My good young friend, listen to me young playboy! Do you know who I am. I am the yogi Milarepa. Gung Tang is whence I came. My feet have trod all over Weu and Tsang,' Two provinces of Tibet, 'while learning the orders and decrees.' What are the orders and decrees? The translation doesn't seem very satisfactory here. Probably the Tantric precepts. The vows and oaths
MSS VIII

as we would say. Usually after a Tantric initiation one takes certain special pledges regarding the practice in respect of keeping it up or making certain offerings on certain days and so on. He probably is referring to those.

'From the gracious Ngomi to Lama Rondonlaga, I have studied with ten Gurus and learned the Tantras five,' I don't know which five tantras are being referred to here, there are many many tantras - many more than five. 'the views and the philosophies

of Dharma. From my teacher Lhaje Nu Chon I learned the fierce exorcism of the Black and Red Planets. Though he was very expert, he could never clear my doubts.'

Do you know what exorcism is? A sort of casting out of demons. In his younger days Milarepa learned various practices of magic, even black magic but they didn't get him very far. 'Though he was very expert he could never clear my doubts. Then I heard people say there was a wondrous teacher dwelling in the South, in the river-circled valley. He was blessed by the lords Naropa and Medripa, and had experienced the motherlike essence of mind.' The mother-like essence of mind. Why is the essence of mind called mother-like?

Alan Angel; Is it like the Prajnaparamita again?

S: Not quite but in a sense yes. In Tibetan Buddhism. In the Vajrayana they often refer to the mother-mind and the son-mind and the meeting of the mother mind and the sonmind as the two becoming one. The mother-mind is the original primaeval mind as it were. The son mind is your sort of phenomenal but enlightened mind which reunites, as it were with its original source. In other words with the mother mind, the mother-like essence of mind. Obviously we have to be rather careful using this sort of phraseology. It isn't going back to mother in the ordinary, psychological sense.

'Having mastered control of his body he dwelt alongside the South river. He whose fame had spread afar was the father Guru, Marpa the translator. Just to hear his name caused my skin to tingle and my hair to rise. Despite the hardships of the journey I made my way to him. Just by glancing at his face, my heart was changed. In my life he is the only Guru, the peerless one, the gracious Lho Draug Wa. No money or wealth had I to offer him, so I reduced my body to powder in his service.' What does that mean - 'reduced my body to powder in his service'. He worked very hard. We read about all that in the Life of Milarepa, 'Tibet's Great Yogi - Milarepa'. 'From him I learned the profound Hevajra tantra and the teachings of Naropa's skilful path.' There is an English translation of the Hevajra tantra but the translation by itself doesn't enlighten us very much. And the teachings of

Naropa's skilful path presumably meaning the six yogas of Naropa. 'I took the vows and won the Four initiations of the blessed Dem Chog.' Dem Chog is a tantric deity. In Sanskrit Sarvvara. Dem Chog means great bliss in Tibetan and in the full tantric initiation there are four initiations. I can just mention the names though it's not possible to go into the details of them but then initiation with the jar, then there is the secret initiation, there's the wisdom initiation and then there's simply the one which is called the fourth. They're also called the initiations of body, speech and mind and the unity of the three. In other words Milarepa was initiated into
MSS IX

the complete practice of the tantric path. This is what it means.

'When I realised the essence of Mahamudra I saw plainly the real nature of the mind; I realised in full the ultimate "Beyond-all-Playwords".' This is very important. The Mahamudra is the highest teaching according to the Kagyupa tradition to which Milarepa belongs and of which he was, in a sense, the founder in Tibet. Mahamudra literally means the great symbol or great attitude. 'When I realised the essence of Mahamudra I saw plainly the real nature of the mind.' This is the basic point of the Mahamudra - to realise the true nature of the mind as beyond subject and object. 'I realised in full the ultimate 'Beyond-all-playwords''. You'll find this expression again and again in Milarepa's songs - 'Beyond-all-Playwords'. What do you think it means by playwords.

Peter Cowen; Words are just playthings. There's no real reality behind them.

S: Yes right. The state of beyond all playwords is the state of transcending words and the use of words in that sort of way. We saw a little bit of this kind of thing in the perfect Wisdom verses.

'In the four river-like teachings of the Whispered Succession I practiced the profound doctrine of the Nine Essentials. Having practiced the art of manipulating the Nadas, Prana and Bindu, I completely mastered both the mind and Prana.' Quite important points there but not very easy to explain, 'I completely mastered both the mind and Prana. Do you know what prana is?

_____, Breath.

S: Breath, but it's got a deeper meaning actually. It's more like energy or vitality on different levels so 'I completely mastered both the mind and Prana.' The tantric teachers very often say that the main difference or at least one of the main differences between the Vajrayana teachings and the Mahayana teachings is that the Vajrayana takes into account the question of transformation of energy. My friend Mr. Chen used to go into this at great length quite frequently. He used to make the point that in the Mahayana even in Mahayana meditation there was as it were only a mental realisation of certain truths. By mental he didn't mean Intellectual - something beyond intellectual but not a realisation as it were with one's whole being, with all one's energies and according to him it was the specific function of the Tantra to involve the energies, even the most basic psycho-physical energies in that total overall realisation. Do you see what I mean? So therefore the Tantra is a path of the realisation of ultimate spiritual truths not only mentally but also in terms of one's energies, that one's energies have to be brought into, aligned with, even incorporated into - even one's bodily energies-into the higher spiritual realisation. So therefore the Tantra works not only on the mind but on the energies, on the Prana.

Alan Angel; Are the four foundation practices specifically in the Tantra, not in the Mahayana?
MSS X

S: One could say they're in between. In a way the going for refuge and prostration practice done within a tantric context in a way recapitulates the Hinayana. The development of the Bodhicitta recapitulates the Mahayana. It's only with the offering of the Mandala also is more Mahayanistic, It's only with the Vajrasattva practice and the Guru yoga. -that you come within the sphere of the Tantra. But even these four practices are introductory to the practice of the Tantra proper.

Alan Angel; I thought that as far as prostrations

S: In a way that is but even -in the Hinayana you get physical prostrations though not in that sort of way, in that sort of ritual and imagined context.- I think this is in a way quite an important point even in general terms that we don't usually realise the extent to which 'our realisations are mental realisations even the realisations in meditation, even-insights. They may be genuine insights but they don't involve the whole being. It is very important to involve the whole being.

Padmapani; When he says he's practised the art of manipulating the Nadis, Prana and Bindus could they be roughly translated as sort of siddhi powers or they do become siddhi powers?

S: No. The Nadis are the nerves. One mustn't imagine the ordinary nervous system here, a sort of network of energies. Prana is of course the basic energy. Bindu has got several meanings. It probably means what we call the cakras. It also means the semen, in other words sexual energy.

Uttara; Would you agree that in the Mahayana there's only a sort of mental realisation?

S: In a sense yes but be careful how you take the word'mental'. It's not just intellectual. Though the Tantra believes in the complete transformation not only of the Mind, not only of the emotions but even of the physical body. I think in a way it doesn't in principle go beyond the original Theravada in a way though it's much more colourful and within a much richer context because even in terms of the eightfold path there is the as it were, bring-ing down of perfect vision to different levels of one's being, different aspects of one's life--so in a sense, in principle it all comes to the same thing but in comparison with or In contrast with the as it were abstractions of the Mahayana or what appear to be the abstractions of the Mahayana as we encounter them say in the Perfect Wisdom teachings, the Tantra is very much concerned with bringing things down to earth, making the realisation more concrete and more practical. So It's not enough to have these sort of sublime spiritual intuitions. They must be embodied in one's whole life, one's entire being. This is what the -Tantra is saying. So perhaps one has also to view the Tantra in relation to not just the mental spiritual realisations of the Mahayana but even in relation to Mahayana scholasticism and as it later did become undoubtedly intellectualism. The Tantra insisted on a much more practical emphasis, a much more total realisation - insisted that all one's energies should be involved, one's even psycho-physical energies.

MSS XI

Sa-g-aramati; It stops that-tendency from ever actually coming in. In a sense.

S: Yes although you do get in a sense very much later a sort of Tantric scholasticism, a scholarly study of the Tantra and classification of the different methods and paths and initiations and all the rest of it - you do get something of that.

Alan Angel; How would that be applicable or is it in practice in our own Movement We do a lot of meditation. What other particular practices that we do embody this sort of thing, involve

S: There's work. Work, communication exercises. There's also the arts. Some people do the prostration practice, chanting also.

Alan Angel; But working for the movement would be

S: Well if one worked in -the right sort of way in the right sort of spirit yes this is also involving energy, perhaps not quite in the Tantric way but energy is involved surely.

PadmaP ; It does vaguely mean that before one can follow the Tantric path you have to be in a way very purified.

S; Oh yes.

Padmapani; You have to be very in a way cleaned out.

S; Yes. Again something Mr. Chen emphasised was that before there can be any approach to the Tantric path there must be three things; there must be purification; multiplication and there isn't an

English word for the third thing... you could say 'voidisation' or 'emptification' or 'making empty'. So purification means just what It says - purification, psycho-physical, emotional, spiritual purification. Getting rid of all unskilful mental states, getting rid of all negative emotions. So first of all purification. Then multiplication. Multiplication means multiplication of merits, not only developing skilful mental states, not only developing positive emotional states but multiplying them, making them more and more. Making them really abundant and then 'emptification' realising that they're potentially empty and void. Sunyata nature. For instance this is what you do with offerings. If you make offerings in the sort of Tantric way, in the Tantric spirit you first of all purify the offering, that is to say you imagine it absolutely perfect, absolutely beautiful. Supposing you're offering a flower. If you're offering the Tantric way you first of all get the very best sort of flower that you can - it's already pretty perfect but then you mentally purify it, you mentally purify all taints all imperfections and you feel it, you imagine it as a perfectly pure flower and then you multiply it mentally, imaginatively not just one flower - I offer tens of flowers, hundreds of flowers, thousands of flowers, millions of flowers like this to the Buddha. This is to increase your stock of merit because, you know it's the intention that counts.

MSS XII

~o you multiply the offerings in this way and thereby you multiply your merits. You are building up your stock of merits, your Punyasamvara and then, in case you're sort of carried away by any feelings of elation in a slightly unskilful way, or even inflation, you reflect it's all Void. Who is offering, what is being offered. You reflect like that. You find (you have a sort of) insight so you make it all void and empty. So these are the sort of precepts of the Tantric offerings. You purify it, you multiply it and you realise it as void.

Padmaraja; Would you multiply it in your imagination or would there be some verse to multiply the offering?

S: Well you could certainly have verses but essentially you do it in your imagination. This is why for instance when if you're doing the Tantric way if you pour a bit of water into water bowls in the morning..you murmur to yourself Om Ah Hum as you do it. ~Mith the Om you are said to purify, with the Ah to multiply and with the Hum to render void. That is the meaning of that.

Sagaramati; () practices are not as it were traditional like you were talking about the Mindfulness of Breathing today and how can become uninteresting in a sense and I remember once you mentioned about.. if you visualise a flower or something to actually interest the mind. But trying to visualise a blue sky maybe (

find flowers in a blue sky~but actually doing that instead of the mindfulness of breathing. How would that go down?

S: I think the difficulty is unless you are relatively concentrated you couldn't really do that. Your mind would wander. You might be initially a bit interested but I think most people's minds would wander after a while. I therefore suggest usually you do that sort of thing after at least the first three stages of the mindfulness of breathing even if you abbreviate them a bit. Say you spend five minutes on each in turn then when you get to the fourth take up the visualisation practice. One could certainly do that. I think it's not very wise to skip the mindfulness of breathing altogether otherwise you just sort of employ the mind with this pretty picture for a few minutes and then you start wandering. There's no concentration.

Sagaramati; I was thinking like sometimes you can have some concentration without your emotions being all that involved and that's where the interest comes in.

S: I think it's very important to get the emotions involved as soon as possible which should of course be the case with the metta bhavana right from the beginning but it does seem that the mindfulness of breathing if one isn't very careful does tend to be a little bit cold or a little bit dry, even a little bit alienated. I think it is quite good if one is into the regular practice of the mindfulness of breathing to go into the visualisation type practice or at least mantra recitation type practice instead of the fourth stage of--the

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mindfulness of breathing.

_____, I was talking to Sagaramati about this. Especially on this retreat I got quite concentrated and then just getting to the fourth stage and finding it still quite concentrated but not really like carrying on, sort of uninterested

S: As though there's nothing much to do.. At that point one can very well take up one of these sort of exercises or practices.

What are the 'Four River-like teachings'? There's a note here on that. The four river-like teachings are probably, - the translator isn't sure -'the teaching of the arising Yoga, the teaching of the Six yogas, the teaching of the advanced perfecting Yoga and the teaching of Mahamudra.' I think we need not go into that at this particular point. Milarepa's just giving a general idea about the sort of life he has been leading, the sort of spiritual practice that he has done. He says~I am a Yogi who can dwell in the sky. Having united the four elements I have no fear of water.' What do you think is meant by 'I am a Yogi who can dwell in the sky?'

_____ Would it be sunyata?

S: Yes th~ sky is usually a symbol of sunyata. In that way the Daka or Dakini is one who moves freely about in the void i.e. Sunyata just as one might move about in empty space without obstruction, without hindrance. So dwelling in the sky symbolises a sort of free, spontaneous life and movement. 'Having united the four elements I have no fear of water.' What do you think that means? How does one unite the four elements?

Alan Angel; He's fully integrated

S: Fully integrated, yes. What about 'I have no fear of water'? Is this to be taken literally? Don't forget he's been walking on the water. Water doesn't bother him. Perhaps we'll -have to leave this point unsettled, whether you do obtain a literal mastery over the elements or whether it is symbolic of the intent. It could be either or both. 'For your information my temple is at Shri Ri. This morning I came from Upper Gog Tw~. Where I shall go this evening I am not certain for mine is the Yogi's way of life.' It's the homeless life or the life without a home as we were seeing yesterday in the Perfect Wisdom text. Then he says, 'Have you heard what I have sung my happy boy who needs nought but pleasure.' In a way he's drawing-a sort of contrast or implying a contrast with his own life devoted to Tantric teachings and to meditation and to the Yogic way of-life and to that of this young man, this boy happy go lucky, good-natured who just is in search of pleasure and a good time. So what is the reaction?

_____, "After hearing this song, an unalterable faith in the Jetsun was established in the young man. His tears fell incessantly. He then handed the reins of his black horse-- to Milarepa and sang:
~SS XIV

" You are the Sage unrecognised, a man of the beyond!

You are the Buddha whom one meets so rarely,

Your instructions are the preaching of Nirmanakaya.

It seems that I have - heard your name before,

But yet I am not sure.

It seems that I may have seen you before, But again, I am not sure.

Whether the obeisance that I made you Was sincere enough, I do not know. If my questions were

improper, my mien irreverent,

I beg your forgiveness, for I did not know you.

This black horse of mine runs-- like the wind. On his neck hangs a wondrous bell; On his back a well-known pe(digree Is a saddle-cloth, most warm and smooth; On it rests a strong wooden saddle. The girth is fashioned of steel from Mon. A dainty knot adorns his reddish crupper; Close to the headstall of reddish-grey His forelock c"ris like a tiger's smile, Shining brightly like a mirrored star.

Whip in hand give your command; Shake the rein,-- he will obey and run. When he sees the flag before him He will win the race!

When you cry, 'Run fast!' he'll gallop at full speed.

To a man of the world, a good horse is his pride. I give you this horse as an offering, Praying that you may keep me from the hell Into which I else would fall."

S: So the young man gives his horse to Milarepa but at the beginning it says, 'After hearing this song, an unalterable faith in the Jetsun was established in the young man. His tears fell incessantly. - Why do you think his tears fell incessantly? What does that mean?

Padmaraja; An upsurge of emotion.

S: Upsurge of emotion-- ~ut what do you think that represented?
MSS XV

Padmaraja; The arising~ of faith.

S: Arising of faith but even more than that a sort of an experiencing of his own true nature or his truer- nature as a result of his contact with Milarepa. A sort of much deeper part of him came to the surface. Though he'd been so far a young playboy, thinking of himself as a young playboy but now he realises that he isn't really like that. The contact with Milarepa has brought out in him something much deeper, something much more fundamental, something much more real. His own true nature or something at least approximatir to it and he realises or begins to realise he's quite a different person from what he thought he was. So this tremendous upheaval, this bursting through into consciousness of something which was unconscious is accompanied by this shedding of tears, 'His tears fell incessantly' Tears don't necessarily express either happiness or sorrow but just a tremendous sort of. . .not only emotional r~lease but tremendo-us release of energy even. 'He then handed the -reins of his black horse to Milarepa and sang: "You~ are the Sage unrecognised, a man of the beyond.' Why unrecognised? Well unrecognised by him but in any other sense as well?

Padmapani; Presumably Milarepa because he was so shabbily dressed didn't have an entourage or didn't wear the sort of costume clothes of the Lama.

S: Or didn't even-have any very obvious charisma. But it's as though he's saying you are the sage unrecognised as if to say well to be a sage is to be unrecognised. A sage is not easy to recognise. 'A man of the beyond.' This sounds almost like something from the Pall texts, a man of the beyond. It's the same kind of phrase, the same kind of idea as it were. He doesn't belong to this world. He belongs to the beyond, to the transcendental, it's adlfferent kind of man, different kind of person, A new man. A real Individual. He's unique, in fact he's the Buddha. 'You are the Buddha whom one meets so rarely. Your instructions are the preaching of Nirmanakaya.' He seems a well instructed young man. He knows the Buddhist technical terms. And then he says, 'It seems that I have heard your name before, but yet I am not sure. It seems that I may have seen you before but again I am not sure.' What do you think this means. Why does he feel in this way? Have you ever experienced anything like that? Do you think it's anything like deja-vu or to some thing more profound than that?

_____ Maybe he experienced Milarepa dreaming it.

S: Yes it could be that.

Padma -pani; I get the impression he experiences something very deep inside him which he sees outside as Milarepa. It's inside him so to speak.

S: So 'it seems that I have heard your name before'. When he experiences a deeper level of himself in a way he experiences something which he didn't know was there but again in a way he experiences something which he did know was there. He had this experience before,
MSS XVI

He has known himself before, So inas much as it is Milarepa or contact-with Milarepa that put him in contact with that deeper level in himself, it's also as though he has known Milarepa before as well as knowing that deeper level of himself before. The two seem to go together. Also it's -a sort of encounter outside time. In a way there's no before, no after,' no past, no present, no future' but it's not at all clear to him. 'It seems that I've heard your name before.' 'Name' is very significant. It's not just your name in the ordinary sense. Name signifies nature. Name represents the unique individual. It's as though I've known you before but I'm not sure. It's as though I've seen you before but I'm not sure.' This suggests that Milarepa has made a very profound impression on him, a very profound impact and that that impression, that impact are as it were out of time altogether. This is what one feels, what one experiences when one comes into contact with someone who's out~i~e time. In terms of time it's as though you've known it before but really there s no before. You've always known it. Not always, as it were from the beginning but always in a dimension in which there's no past, no present, no future. You've always known It but not within time. So he seems to have an inkling of that sort of experience. In other words Milarepa's put him into oontact with a very profound level within himself indeed. He's almost sparked off in him a very profound realisation but which is still quite obscure to him, sort of hidden, sort of veiled. A sort of intuition of something outside time. So 'It seems as though I've heard your name before but yet I am not sure. It seems that I may have seen you before but again I'm not sure. In a way he knows he hasn't seen Milarepa before but nonethe less he feels that he has seen him before, he's so familiar. But this from reality is because he's as it were, experiencing Milarepa outside -time or experiencing what Milarepa is outside time. He's incontact-somehow with Milarepa's innate or intrinsic Buddha nature. Then again he says. 'Whether the obeisance that I made to you was sincere enough I do not know~' He's even questioning his own mental state. Am I sincere or am I not sincere. A few minutes---before he could have said so or would have been sure - yes I am sincere- but no he's not sure. He doesn't know from what iLevel he's speaking any more because he's beginning to be in contact-with new levels, deeper levels. So whether he's speaking from those levels or from the old levels he doesn't know. So he can't even be sure whether he's being sincere enough, whether his obeisance is sincere enough or was sincere enough. 'If my questions were improper' He's not even sure about that.... 'or my mien irreverent' My bearing towards you irrevent0I beg for your forgiveness for I did not know you.' It's as though now he does know Milarepa but before he didn't.

'This black horse of mine runs like the wind. On his neck hangs a wondrous bell; On hi's backofwell known pedigree is a saddle cloth, most warm and smooth. On it rests a strong wooden saddle. The girth is fashioned of steel from Mon. A dainty knot adorns his reddish crupper; Close to the headstall of reddish grey his forelock curls like a tiger's smile, shining brightly like a mirrored star.' Here That the young man's a poet comes In a bit. 'This black horse of mine runs like the wind.' What do you notice about this description of the accoutrements of the horse? Anything special about it or unusual about it?

It's a very very fine horse Indeed.
MSS XVII

S: It's a very fine horse indeed yes.

_____ ' It was a very valuable possession.

S: A very valuable possession yes. It's probably the most valuable thing he had. Sagaramati; Would that be the description of the Windhorse?

_____ Black?

S: No I don't think Windhorses a~e blac~ but it could be. There is this Tibetan allegory of the black elephant which gradually changed into a white elephant. The horse is definitely energy. He's a young man. The horse could represent, you could say, his energies, he's handing over, placing at Milarepa's disposal. You could look at it in that sort of way as well as taking it quit~ literally. He's offering his most valuable possession, that seems to be a natural reaction but I'm thinking of something else. What about the description~~of the accoutrements of the horse. What do you notice about that description?)Pause) 'On his back of well known pedigree is a saddle cloth most warm and smooth. On it rests a strong wooden saddle. The girth is fashioned of steel from Mon. A dainty knot adorns his reddish crupper.

Alan Angel; He gets a lot out of not so much the horse but all the things that are on it.

S: Yes he's getting a lot out of all the things.. the horse's trappings but in what sort of way. How and why?

_____, They are material possessions.

S: Yes but not just that there's something a bit more.

Uttara; A certain intimacy.

S: Yes but even more than that.

Sagaramati; It's aesthetic.

S: Yes but I wasn't even thinking of that.

Uttara; There's a sense after talking that you'd (the capacity of) the engine in your sports car.

S: But would you?

Vessantara; There's also this very soft side as well as the very hard description.
MSS XVIII

S: But isn't there a difference. What is the difference between all these things and a sports car?.

Pat Dunlop; In a sense he's describing like () steering wheel and that kind of thing.

S: Yes but what is the one big difference?

Graham Steven; That these are practical things that the horse has and they're practical and yet they're very beautiful things.

S: Yes.

Alan Angel; The horse is living. It's organic.

S: It's living, it's organic but there's another different thing, I thought it would be so obvious. No the difference that seems to strike me and I thought it would have struck all of you. All these things are hand-made things. They're not made in a factory. Everything has been individually made and therefore everything has an individual character and is individually appreciated and cherished as it were. Don't you see that? Do you get that different feeling? This is something which for instance Aldous Huxley points out with regard to Homer. Every time a material object is mentioned it's a well-fashioned wooden bowl, a strongly made bronze cauldron etc., etc. A long smooth well

fashioned sword. In other words it's a different attitude towards the -material things because everything has been made individually by an individual human being, by a craftsman and your whole attitude to the material thing is different. Do you see that? You don't just have it made in a factory, turned out by the thousand or the hundred thousand. Everything is different. You're in the world of handicrafts so therefore what sort of difference does that make to your attitude towards these things?

Alan; They're more precious.

S: They're more precious yes.

_____; You're much more aware.

S: You're much more aware yes. You're much more mindful and much more appreciative. So look how he's appreciating. 'This black horse of mine runs like the wind. On his neck hangs a wondrous bell.' Would you say 'on my car I've got a wondrous mirror?' or anything like that. You wouldn't. Or a wondrous bell. (laughter) 'On his back of well

known pedigree is a saddle cloth.' What could be (More ordinary?) than a saddle cloth but most warm and ~mooth'. He's got a good word even for the saddle cloth because it's been woven by someone. It's a piece of handicraft as it were. 'On it rests a strong wooden saddle.' A good word for the ~&ddle. 'the girth is fashioned of steel from Mo~' He knows
MSS XIX

exactly where the steel has come from. We don't usually know that. 'A dainty knot adorns his reddish crupper.' The knot is dainty. 'Close to the headstall of reddish-grey his forelock curls like a tiger's smile, shining brightly like a mirrored star.' So it's a quite different attitude towards material things. Everything that is of use has been hand made, everything has been individually made, everything is appreciated, everything is individually realised. It sort of stands out clearly. There's no confusion and not only no confusion, there's no vagueness. Everything's very distinctly realised and appreciated and known because things are so few, there are so few things. Every sort of pot that you have, every sort of utensil that you have has got a definite individual character which you know. You're in a very familiar world in a way. This would surely make a difference to your overall attitude, overall mentality. Supposing we lived surrounded only: by home made things, hand-made things, not by anything factory made, not by anything massproduced and we knew the origin of everything and where it came from and where it had been made, how it had been made, we'd have quite a different attitude I think. And life of course would be much simpler because you'd have fewer things.

Sagaramati; Jung used to (unclear.... Y his pots and pans, his knives and forks.

S: Then of course there is the question of the great value of this beautiful horse with all this equipment which he's handing over. He values it so much and prizes it so much, cherishes it so much but such great faith has arisen in his ~fOln~d~~?ja~e~~5 prepared to hand the whole thing over on the spot. Not that he doesn't appreciate its value, he fully appreciates its value but still he's ready to give it.

'Whip in hand give your command; Shake the rein, he will obey and run. When he sees the flag before him he will win the race! When you cry, 'Run fast!' he'll gallop at full speed. To a man of the world a good horse is his pride.' Yes he's not parting with a small thing. He's parting with something that means a lot to him. He's a man of the world, a young man of the world and this horse is his pride and especially that would have been so in Tibet. The horse was the only means of transport. It's his only means of getting around. Possessing a horse like that signified a certain amount of social prestige, a certain amount of position, a certain mobility but he was sacrificing all that.

Alan; Doesn't that indicate that he's giving up being a man of the world then?

S: It signifies that too perhaps yes. 'I give you this fine horse as an offering praying that you may keep me from the hell into which I else would fall.' Why do you think he says that?

Peter Cowen: (He'd been very bad.)

S: But he's a karma-exhausted disciple. He doesn't know it of course. Perhaps he doesn't know he's a karma-exhausted disciple. Perhaps he feels well I could commit any sin, any crime, any minute. I'm in a very precarious position. I could go down. Maybe hell is sort of symbolical. Prevent me from going down. Help me to evolve, help me to grow.
MSS XX

PadmaP It could be that he's had in a sense, like a spiritual experience and anything below that spiritual experience now that he's experienced it in a way is tainted and in that sense thinks the obvious course that anything that's tainted would have connotations of that traditionally ().

S: alright let's go on then.

_____, "Having ended his song, the young man offered Milarepa his horse, but the Jetsun would not accept it, and told him that he had another, even better one, and he sang;

Listen to me, dear patron!

A horse of Prana mind have I:

I adorn him with the silk scarf of Dhyana. His skin is the magic Ensuing Dhyana Stage, His saddle, illuminating Self-Awareness My spurs are the Three Visualisations, His crupper the secret teaching of the Two Gates.

His headstall is the Prana of Vital-force, His forelock curl is Three-pointed Time.

Tranquility within is his adornment, Bodily movement is his rein, And ever-flowing inspiration is his bridle.

He gallops wildly along the Spine's Central Path.

He is a yogi's horse, this steed of mine. By riding him, one escapes Samsara's mud, By following him one reaches the safe land of Bodhi.

My dear patron I have no need of your black horse. Go your way young man and look for pleasure!"

S: So he offers the horse but the Jetsun would not accept it and told him that he had another, even better one and he sang; Listen to me dear patron! A horse of Prana mind have I; Why do you think the Prana mind is a very sort of suitable equivalent for a horse?

_____, Maybe it's dynamic.

S: Yes it's dynamic. It's energy. A horse of mental energy as it were. ' I adorn him with the silk scarf of Dhyana.' Dhyana is of course meditation in the sense of the actual experience of the higher super-conscious states. 'His skin is the magic Ensuing Dhyana stage, Ensuing Dhyana Stage is the sort of after effect which you get from the practice of meditation which carries on even when you're engaged in ordinary activities afterwards. Experience most people are familiar with. this. You get a sort of big Ensuing stage when you go
MSS XXI

back home or go back to the city after a retreat. The whole retreat experience is like Dhyana, the main Dhyana and what you continue to experience even for some weeks afterwards
~1~~~ht~ee~5uing dhyana stage. 'His saddle is illuminating Self Awareness. That do you think

illuminating Self Awareness means here?

Peter Cowen; Mindfulness?

S: No it's something very much more than that. It's that naturally self illuminating awareness In which there's no distinction of subject and object and the realisation-- of which constitutes the aim of the Mahamudra.

'My spurs are the Three Visualisations, ' According to a note this probably means the visualisation of the patron Buddha I.e. one's own chosen Buddha; of the Mandala and of the inner chakras, the energy centres. 'His crupper the secret teaching of the Two Gates.' Yoga with form and yoga without form according to the translator.

'His headstall is the Prana of Vital-force.' This is like the sort of life energy. His forelock curl is Three-pointed Time.' According to the translator threepointed time probably implies the three favourable times for practicing meditation. To me it seems that three-pointed time means past, present and future but I can't be sure of that.

Vessantara; Three favourable times of meditation is very weak after all that

S: 'Tranquility within is his adornment, ~odily movement is his rein, and ever flowing inspiration is his bridle.' Does that seem odd? Ever flowing inspiration is his bridle? What's the function of the bridle?

_____; Holding back.

S: Hold back. Ever flowing inspiration is his bridle. What does this mean?

_____, (unclear -) left and right....

S: It's almost as though he's saying no bridle is necessary. The bridle of no bridle. 'He gallops wildly along the Spine's Central Path.' The so-called median nerve which we're told is not to be identified with any nerve in the physical body. 'He is a yogi's horse, this steed of mine. By riding him one escapes Samsara s mud, By following him one reaches the safe land of Bodhi. My dear patron I have no need of your black horse. Go your way young man and look for pleasure!' What sort of impression do you get about this-horse of Prana mind~from Milarepa's song? What is he saying about his own spiritual life and splritual practice? What is this horse really?

Alan: The Dharma, the vehicle.

S: In terms of the Bodhisattva Ideal it's Virya, It's energy. There's no enlightenment without energy on all levels. Especially this being a Tantric context you'll be thinking in terms
MSS XXII

of the inobilisation of the total psycho-physical energies of the whole being and directing them along the spiritual path. So if one is as it were riding on the steed of these energies or even following in the track of these energies-one doesn't need an external steed- these form one's vehicle. It is these energies which carry one along. So therefore Milarepa says, 'My dear patron I have no need of your black horse. Go your way young man and look for pleasure.' Do you think he really means that 'go and look for pleasure'? He's testing him. Go and look for pleasure if you can. Alright what next?

Sagaramati; This idea of getting the whole of your energies into your spiritual practice, does that mean or imply that there could be energies that if you don't put them in line with your spiritual practice could as it were hold you back in some way?

S: Yes. It does really. Might not even hold you back actively but the fact that there is as it were this dead weight of something in you which is not going along with what you are esentially trying to do. It suggests that you either go along totally or In a sense not at all. The tantra seems very conscious of this.

Sagaramati; I think the idea of meditation is that it's very mental in a way. (you forget you can't have the senses (unclear...)) It's something else that goes. I remember like in a morning meditation I had what was a good meditation but I was very reluctant to stand up and do the walking and chanting. It's almost as if that physical activity I didn't want to do.

S: The tantra says that the physical must become, as it were, transparent to the spiritual. It can reflect it and embody it otherwise there is a sort of sluggish physical energy which has got nothing to do with the spiritual energies so the spiritual energy must take over the physical energy, must incorporate it so that the spiritual energy can express itself through the physical body just as easily as it can as it were on the mental level. Even in the case of ordinary meditation you have ~an experience with the physical body as well as with the mind. There's a sort of ease of body'as some of the Pali texts say. The body seems to participate in the experience not just the mind and this is very much the sort of tantric point of view.

Graham Steven; So when the negative energies come up which seem to be very very strong does one just sit with them and experience

S: It's as though you try to get rid of the negativity without getting rid of the energy. What people usually do is in order to get rid of the negativity they repress the energy which is a source of trouble in another way. So get rid of the negativity by all means but retain the energy and incorporate it as with anger. Anger is energy, sort of raw energy, rather crude energy so don't throw that energy away just throw the negativity with which it has become tinged away but use the energy, keep the energy, take over the energy. Why do you find usually that religious people and good people are such weak people? This is what
MSS XXIII

you do find. They're anaemic people. Very often they're effete people. No life in them, no blood as it were So why is this? Along with their'-() activity they've repressed their energy.

Graham Steven; Can you give any pointers of how to channel this force?

S: Well first one must be aware of what is happening and happily accept one's energies and realise that the energies are to be accepted, the energies are good, the energies are positive. They only just become tinged with negativity. You don't have to throw away the baby with the bathwater as we say, suppress the energies in order to get rid of the negativity with which they are tinged. But haven't you noticed this. The people who do purport to lead a religious life, even a spiritual life, even a Buddhist life, they somewhat become drained of vitality. They become anaemic, bloodless, pallid sort of people with no life, no energy, no zest. It's the wicked people that seem to have all the energy. (Laughter), the bad people. That's why very often they're much more fun to be with. (Laughter). I don't mean if you've got lots of energy you're necessarily bad or wicked, no not by any means. But you get this quite a lot in Blake. He says usually people identify the~good with the reason that restrains energies and evil with the energy that is restrained but according to Blake, at least at that particular time, at the time when he wrote the 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell' that energy in itself is positive and it is the curbing of energy that is negative.

Padmapani; In fact that's one of the tantric precepts isn't it - not to obstruct somebody's energy.

S: Right yes.

Uttara; Doesn't society today structure it in such a way that it must damp down some.... It's almost that you~e got to have negativity with it.

S: Almost yes.

Sagaramati; I think that sometimes it's all of the good things that are damped down and they tend to express themselves as-it were () the more negative emotions.

S: The negative seems often more acceptable than the positive. -

Alan; Do you think chanting would be a way of transforming that. Graham was talking about negativity tainted energies.

S: I think it does help but I think one has to be aware of sort of putting the negativity directly into the chanting. This did happen once or twice last year on one or two of the early study retreats. I noticed this happening or one or two people doing it - two
MSS XXIV

people doing this.

Alan; That would be the difference between putting the negativity in and putting the energy in?

S: It was as though in this particular ease certain people were expressing their negativity not just putting their energy into the chanting so that the negativity was dissolved as it were in the chanting but taking their negativity or their negatively tinged energy and almost on the pretext of putting it into the chanting almost continuing to indulge that negative element. It seemed a bit like that.

Sagaramati; I don't think they were even aware that it was negativity.

S: No I don't think they were until I pointed it out. I described it as a very black energy and that's certainly how it seemed or how it was. It did seem to go with quite a lot of forcing and in a way with a lack of energy in a very true positive sense. A really vital sense. Any way let's go on to the next song or next offering.

_____, "The youth thought, 'Though he does not want my horse, his feet are bare. He must need a pair of shoes!' So thinking he offered his own to Milarepa singing:"

S: He hasn't yet grasped the point that a yogi doesn't really need anything so he goes on making the effort. Let's hear his song.

_____, "Revered Yogi, jewel-like accomplished Saint,

Because there is no attachment in your heart, You wander aimless from place to place. Sometimes you meet dogs with sharp teeth; At others you walk through brambles and defiles; And so your bare feet may be hurt

Walking without shoes is painful; These blue boots shall be your faithful servants. With brass spurs on the heels And silk-embroidered, they are costly; A skilful craftsman made them With the skins of elk, wild yak, and crocodile.

These boots are my mark, the mark of the young man, Which I now offer you.

Pray grant me your compassionate blessing."

S: You notice the same thing with these boots as I pointed out as regards to the horse. Everything is hand-made. It's all a craftsman's job.

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Whereas the yogi obviously doesn't need a horse and he doesn't need shoes as in the ease of his relationship with his own guru, Marpa, he was always sort of urged to make offerings, wouldn't this have been the accepted thing at the time. That you~have to make offerings to gurus.

S: Oh yes this is very much the tantric tradition. He's doing the right thing in making the offerings.

_____ It's not through any feeling that he thinks the-Yogi necessarily needs a pair of shoes. That's just what he's got to offer....

S: But this is what he says. The two seem to go together. He does seem to think that Milarepa needs

them and he's willing to supply that need, he's willing to make that sort of offering. Perhaps it's rather difficult to offer something if you think the person you're offering it to doesn't really need it. Don't you think psychologically?

_____, That's something I always thought was a bit funny about the way that Milarepa was asked to make offerings of things which Marpa quite obviously didn't need. I see the point in as much as Marpa was putting him through all these things but the fact that he actually

S: Perhaps Milarepa did believe that he needed them and he asked Milarepa to offer certain things or do certain things because he needed those things or needed those things done. Milarepa in a sense as a disciple was a quite sort of simple-minded person. Anyway he's offering his boots, 'the mark of the young man'. Anyway what does Milarepa say in reply?

_____; "But the Jetsun would not accept the gift. He told the boy that he had a better pair of boots,singing:

Listen you faithful young man. This land of darkness and blind views Is part of the Three Kingdoms of Samsara.

Full of mud is Craving Meadow, Full of thorns is Jealous Swamp.

Savage and malignant is the furious dog of Hate, Dangerous and steep the hill of Pride.

But I have crossed the Rivers Four

And reached the shore of the Pure Land.

I cut my boots from the hide of the renunciation of Samsara
And with the leather of awakening from transiency and de~usion. I made my boots with the
craftmanship of deep faith in Karma
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With the dye of Non-clinging to the Myriad Forms, And with the thread and rope of Devotion; While
the clasps are the Teachings of the Three Bindings.

These are my boots, the boots of a yogi; I have no desire for yours.

My dear patron, you may now leave for home."

S: Do you remember any verse -in Santideva that reminds you a little bit of this? When Santideva is talking about enemies?

Sagaramati; I know what you mean but

S: Isn't there a passage where he says, In order to protect your feet you could cover the whole earth with leather but it's much simpler just to cover your own two feet. In the same way it would be quite simple to destroy all your enemies but it's much simpler just to practice metta yourself and In that way get rid of all your enemies. So Milarepa is saying much the same thing in a way isn't he. He's covering his own feet as it were rather than trying to change things externally. So what are his boots essentially do you think putting it in a few simple words'?

_____, The Dharma.

S: Hmm it's as though the boots are something that protects him, enables him to go- unscathed. The Dharma broadly speaking one could say. Maybe meditation in particular and insights.

Alan; Also the armour of Sunyata.

S: The armour of sunyata yes. There--is definitely a parallel there. So 'these are my boots, the boots of a Yogi. I--have no desire for yours. Something that insulates, something that protects rather like the fourth dhyana state where you've got the man wrapped in his white sheet which insulates and protects. So these are my boots the boots of a Yogi. I have no des~re for yours, My dear patron you may now leave for home.

_____, Why does he keep calling him a patron?

S: Well this is a lay supporter, it's just a polite term. It's lay buddhist, a kind of supporter not a monk (Dyaka) in sanskrit. Alright let's see what the young man has to say now.

_____ "Then the young man said, "Revered one, though you will not take my boots, I still would like to offer you my reddish-green jacket which is good to sleep in, for I see
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you only have a thin cloth with which to cover your body. You must feel cold all the time. Please accept this jacket!" In pleading with Milarepa to take it, the young man sang,

"Precious and accomplished Guru,

Freed from ego clinging,

You wander with no bourne in mind. Sometimes you climb the summit of a mountain; Sometimes you sleep soundly in a city street. To wear a thin cloth is the same as starving; It mfl~t be still worse unclad to suffer cold.

This is my best tailored jacket Made of reddish-green Mandari cloth. The front is silk, The lining of best quality. It is trimmed with lynx fur. A collar of otter skin matches the hem, The shoulder pads are well embroidered. It is light to wear and grand to see. In it one does not fear a biting wind, For it is a noble's jacket. Please accept it Reverend Father; Pleas~ bless me and grant your grace."

S: So what does Milarepa say?

Alan; "But Milarepa would not take the coat. and re~lied. ' I have a jacket which excels even yours!' Then he sang:

"Listen you eloquent youth

O'er the cities of the Six Realms in Samsara, With fury blows the evil, Karmic wind. Driven by the senses and deprived of freedom, One wanders between life and death, roving in Bardo!

Sometimes one climbs the summit of the mountain In the dream-like state between ~ife and death. Sometimes one sleeps in the street

In th~Bardo city of Samsara.

For my part, I aspire to the Realm of Reality,

And adorn the cloth of pure mind and heart With the emhroidery of immacu~ate discipline.

Mindfulness is the tailor cutting

My clothes into the shape of the Three Yog~
MSS XXVIII

My coat lining is the art Of uniting the Three Key Points. I brighten the shoulder padding

With the Great Light I which shines at the time I of death.

I cut the hem of Bardo Enlightenment To the 'measurement' of pure Magic-Bodies.

This is the coat, the coat of a yogi;

I have no wish for yours, Go then young patron and be cheerful!"

S: So this is quite a powerful song, You know what Bardo means. Bardo is the intermediate state most often the intermediate state between death and rebirth but also this life itself is a Bardo state as Milarepa says, 'in the Bardo city of Samsara' - in between birth and death. 'So for my part, I aspire to the Realm of Reality, and adorn the cloth of pure mind and heart with the embroidery of immaculate discipline.' as though

he says I'm embroidering the cloth of samadhi with the embroidery of sila. 'Mindfulness is the tailor cutting my clothes into the shape of the Three Yogas.' We're not told what those three yogas are. My coat lining is the art of uniting the Three Key Points.' According to the translator these are uniting the mind with the manifestation void, that is rupa as sunyata; the bliss void and with the illuminating void. 'I brighten the shoulder padding with the Great Light which shines at the time I of death. I cut the hem of Bardo Enlightenment', that is to say Enlightenment while in the state of Bardo after death, 'with the measurement' of Pure Magic-Bodies.' If you realise the Clear Light after death in the Bardo, the intermediate state, you become enlightened, you become a Buddha. So becoming a Buddha you experience the Dharmakaya, experiencing the Dharmakaya you experience the Samboghakaya and experiencing the Samboghakaya you experience the Nirmanakaya, the so-called 'magic' body as the translator has rendered it. In other words if you are reborn at all it's not due to karma but out of compassion. 'This is my coat, the coat of a yogi; I have no wish for yours. Go then young patron and be cheerful!

What sort of impression are you getting from this interchange of songs?

Padmapani: Milarepa's refuting the youth's material possessions in the sense of his own spiritual enlightenment so to speak.

S: Yes well In a sense spiritual possessions. What one needs is not these external things. What one needs is internal. So the whole emphasis is shifted. Alright let's go on.

"Said the young man, Revered one, since you will not accept my jacket though your clothes are still too thin please then take this short coat, and he sang in persuasion,

"Precious Guru, supreme being, In the summer, in bright sunshine
MSS XXIX

When the cuckoo's song is heard,

One may go naked and not feel the cold.

Rut in the winter, when the cold moon brightly shines

And the blinding storm rages in the hills, Cotton clothes than silk are thinner,

And the piercing cold stings like an arrow!

Father Jetsun this ordeal Is too much for you. Here is a grey-green woolen coat With maroon fur hemmed And gay in coloured silk of five colours; The cloth Is of fine quality. I now offer it to you. Please accept it and grant me your blessing.'

S: What does Milarepa say now?

" But Milarepa would not take it saying that he had a better coat still and he sang:

"Gracious patron, listen closely to me. With 'blindness as a guide I wandered down perilous paths; Buffeted by Passionate Winds, now hot, now cold, I was drenched in the rain of Retribution-Karma. Worn out by these ordeals, I longed for Freedom City.

With the cloth of Ah Shea Vital Heat Is the lapel of Four Cakras made. My tailor is inner Prana Mind Who warms Tig Le and makes it flow; The merged Bliss Void experience Is the needle used for sewing; The cloth is inborn Vital Heat. Now summer and winter are for me the same!

Though your woolen clothes are pretty,

My cotton shirt is lighter and gives more comfort. Dear patron, I do not want your clothes; You should now go home."

S: So he is saying he's clothed with the Vital-Heat, the Tummo, () and so he doesn't need the short coat. The psychic heat shouldn't of course be taken too literally.
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Or rather it shouldn't be taken only literally. It can be taken literally too. The heat represents in a way the blissful experience and part of the tantric teaching, though again it isn't exclusively tantric really, is that the as it were mental experience of the voidness must be conjoined with the as it were physical or even you can say psychophysical experience of the blissful warmth or heat and that these two must be experienced together. In this way you experience the 'Bliss Void' as it's already been called. One could say that it's also more like the union of insight, transcendental insight, with the experience of supremely positive emotion (throughout) the union of samadhi and prajna. The tantra puts it in even more concrete terms.

Padmapani; On a more sort of mundane level I've got this impression on retreats - I get this experience on retreats - that the concentration and the build up between meditator I get very very hot, one gets very hot at night and very very warm. One feels a sort of a heat...

S: Heat in a quite literal sense. . with concentration you do generate heat which is physical. It is a physical heat which others can feel. You might even feel that they've got a temperature. The only difference is you feel very happy and comfortable with it. So the bliss is the sort of psychic emotional Counterpart of that very pleasurable sensation of heat which you get in the body. (Pause) So the void experience is not just a sort of clear experience but it is also an experience of intense blissfulness. The blissfulness is as it were a transformation almost one could say of bodily sensations and positive emotionality and that is to be conjoined with the as it were purely spiritual, as it were mental experience of the voidness. These two must go together. The bliss experience gives as it were content to the voidness experience. The voidness experience gives as it were clarity to the bliss experience and the tantra emphasises very strongly that these two must go together. At the same time there is the illuminating void.

_____ Like fire coming from ice.

S: Yes it's fire joined with ice. It's like hot ice you could say. There's the clarity of the ice and the heat of the fire.

Sagaramati; When you say then that in the dhyana states the physical as it were sensations die away it's almost put as if they die away to nothing but is that because you don't reflect on it.

S: They don't sort of die away. They lose their turbulent side as it were. The energy is not lost but the turbulence of the energy is lost. It's the bubbly quality that dies away, not that particular intense experience of self. It just becomes more solid, more stable. Not that you no longer experience priti full-stop. The priti is fully transformed into sukhha which means. that whatever energy was there in the priti loses its bubbly

quality. (break in recording) So Milarepa's cloth or covering is the Vital Heat. This

MSS XXXI

experience of as it were blissful warmth not only as a physical sensation but as an emotional experience, 'is the lapel of the Four Chakras made'. There's a reference of course to the ohandali yoga, the Tummo practice of bringing the psychic energy as it were up through the median nerve, through the four psychic centres. 'My tailor is the inner Prana Mind'. That sort of guides the whole process. ' who warms the Tig Le and makes it flow' Tig Le means the Bindu which we've encountered before and also means semen which is not necessarily semen in the literal sense but energy in its grosser form which is gradually sublimate and made more and more refined. 'The merged Bliss-Void experience is the needle used for sewing.' It's as though in your head you have the clear void experience but you bring up all the psycho-physical energies in the form of gradually intensifying bliss and unite them with that clear experience of the void. 'The cloth is Inborn Vital Heat.' The sort of transcendental Vital Heat conterminous with reality that was there from the begi~nning not any artificially produced or created Vital Heat. 'Now summer and winter are for me the same!' Not just that I'm impervious to extremes of climate but I've gone beyond all distinctions because this is the inborn Vital Heat, the transcendental Vital Heat, the innate Vital Heat (Sahajiya) which I've now realised. 'Though your woolen clothes are pretty, my cotton shirt is lighter and gives more comfort. Dear patron I do not want your clothes; You should now go home.'

Alright what does the young man say now?

Padmapani; "The young man replied, "Although you will not accept my coat, you must be wearied by your long practice of meditation. Please be kind enough to accept my turban, which you can trade for some meat to sustain and nourish your body." And he sang:

"Precious Yogi, supreme one,

Disgusted with Samsara you look forward

To liberation from the wheel of life and death.

You meditate at length

And practice your devotions.

Thus you must sometimes feel the cold. My magnificent headgear Is the wonder of India!

Its frame of precious metal was made by a skilled craftsman..

'Tis covered with the skin of crocodile and vulture, And decked with the feathers of lovely birds.

Its price equals the cost of a big Yak. I now offer it to you - the Nirmanakaya Buddha. You can trade it for much meat

For your health and nourishment.

In summer and in winter,

I will follow and~pay homage to you!""

S: So what does Milarepa say.

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_____ ; "But Milarepa did not accept this offer either. Instead he sang: "My dear young man,

Do not lose your head!

I follow the Great Naropa's Lineage,

He who has completely mastered the art of cosmic causations.

The master of deep practice; I fear not the element of air within, Nor do I depend on falcon's flesh. I feel gay and joyous in a biting wind.

On the crown of my head Is a jewel splendid as the sun and moon, On which sits my Guru, Marpa the Translator, Adorned with ornaments of human bone.

Me is the Wish Fulfilling Gem, Buddha's Transformation Body. If you see him with the eye of veneration, You will find he is the Buddha Dorje-Chang! He will forever guard you like a son.

This rare turban is my secret adornment.

The sublime Guru on my head is very beautiful. Dear boy, I do not want a turban.

Ride off with cheerful heart!"

S: Placing the Guru on one's head is of course a well known idiom, a well known practice which you do in the Guru Yoga and the devoted disciple is supposed to do this or to feel this all the time. So this is Milarepa's turban and he's got his guru, as it were, sitting on his head. He doesn't need any other turban. This is quite plain and straightforward. Doreje-Chang is Vajradhara, the Buddha Vajradhara who is considered to be the initiator of the whole Kagyupa lineage~ their original guru, their Adi-Guru.

Alan; Is that what the word Adi means?

S; Adi means primaevai, from the beginning though not from the beginning in the sense of from any point in time, not even the first point in or of time but outside time altogether, primaeval, transcendental, without origin. Adi means without origin really

~Peter Cowen: How did~~the idea of these Adi Buddhas arise?

S: There's not so much Adi Buddhas but the idea if you can call it an idea that Buddha in its essence has no beginning, does not arise. It is always there. It

is a dimension if you like beyond time into which you break through and after you've broken through you realise that you've always been there. Because often you've been present
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in that state only in the present. When you realise it you've not only broken through it now but also in the past and in the future as well because there there's no distinction of past present and future and this is why it's called 'Adi' - primaeval in the sense of beyond time altogether, outside time.

Peter: Dorje Chang is one aspect of it?

S: Dorje Chang is one aspect of it. Vajradhara is one aspect of it though for the Kagyupas he is the aspect and Milarepa belongs to that tradition therefore he sees his own Guru as Dorje Chang, Vajradhara, rather than as any other Buddha. Vajradhara means 'he who bears the vajra', he has a vajra standing upright in his palm. Sometimes he bears a vajra and also a bell.

Airight let's go on and have one more exchange before we close.

Padmaraja; "The young man thought, 'This revered Lama ~does not accept anything I have offered him. Perhaps he considers my gifts too small.' And so he untied the string of his neck-jewel, which was a very fine piece of jade, and sang:

"Precious Guru, supreme being, You strive for devotion with no attachment in your heart. To you all material things are but delusions! You have no wish for goods or wealth. A deep faith in you

has risen of itself in me.

'Tis shameful to begrudge one's father's hoardings: People would despise one from their hearts; One might well become a miser-ghost.

Therefore I pray your reverence, Do not refuse this jade. This white translucent six-edged jade gleams brightly like a sparkling light. The supple dear skin, and red poppy, Make the setting yet more graceful. With this jade you never can be poor. I offer it as a neck-ornament.

~Pray grant me your grace And bestow the Buddha's teaching."

S: Tibetans are very fond of ornaments of this kind. So what does.. there's a change in what he says. He says 'pray grant me your grace and bestow the Buddha's teaching.

_____, "The boy then offered the jade to the Jetsun, but Milarepa still would not take it saying, 'I do not need your jade; I have a jewel which is far more precious.

Listen to my song:
MSS XXXIV

"Listen my dear patron.

You with a good father.

In all countries, far and wide,

I the yogi roam~~

In streets, at doors, I beg for food. I am not greedy for good meals, I long not for possessions.

There is no end to human greed. Even with hoarded wealth head-high, One cannot reach contentment. I do not envy you your wealth and goods.

The greatest treasure is contentment; in my heart: The teaching of the Whispered Lineage is my wealth; My devotion to the Dharma is my ornament.

I deck myself with Retaining Mindfulness, The Yogas of the Four Periods are my entertainment; The great and small Mind-Awarenesses are my adorations. I have no need for your neck-jade.

Dear boy, be of good cheer and go your way."

S: 'The greatest treasure is contentment in my heart' There is a verse in the Dhammapada which says exactly the same thing. (Asam tuti paranam ganam) contentment is the greatest wealth. Milarepa's teaching is completely continuous in principle with that of the Buddha. 'The greatest treasure is contentment in my heart'. Again the internal rather than the external.

Alan; The Whispered Lineage he speaks of is that the Kagyupa.?

S: It's the Kagyupa tradition itself yes which goes directly from guru to disciple even being whispered as it were, in the ear of the disciple i.e. taught confidentially or in the context of a very personal exchange one could say or a very personal relationship. (pause) So the greater the number of people to whom one speaks the more general is what one says so the smaller the number of people to whom one speaks the more specific it becomes and in a sense therefore more true. So if you want to speak the truth to its fullest possible extent you can only speak it to one person whereas if you are speaking it say to two you have to sort of direct what you say to what is common in them both. So that misses what is absolutely individual in them both. So what is absolutely individual with you is not making contact with what is absolutely individual in them and that is the condition of successful transmission or communication. So if you're speaking to a hundred people

you are addressing what is common in the hundred which means you're missing what is unique in every one. In fact missing quite a lot. So the greater the number of people that you

Speak to the less you can say. In the tantric tradition it's usually~ said that there must
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be a few disciples to whom you commit certain teachings and only to them that is to say to each one individually. He gets such and such a teaching, he gets such and such

a teaching. You~~re not teaching nece~ssarily any sort of verbalised or conceptualised thing. Of course even if something is said generally the person who hears can apply to himself individually but even that is not quite the same thing as a direct sort of individual to individual communication and it's that which makes the greatest impact. So to hear a whispered truth they're not only being whispered but they're being whispered into the ear of one person at a time. Not though that each different person has the same thing whispered into his ear. It's not quite as mechanical as that. You get the same sort of idea or same sort of feeling in Zen don't you? At least in(the old)Zen.

Anyway I think we'd better stop there as time is virtually up. Any general impressions or comments or queries on what we've done so far today?

_____ everything that the young man seemsto have with him... He seems quite well off. I mean everything is he's got is very well made I mean crocodile skin and things like yak.

S: He's a very well to do young man. Maybe there's a touch of exaggeration as it were by the way of a compound collection. We don't know whether he actually did sing the song exactly at that time. It's difficult to tell at this stage. All these epi~sodes, all these songs are very alive, very real, very vivid. So (maybe) it's that hei4~ening of effect.

_____, What I was thinking was that if he was as () as this makes him out to be maybe his horse and all the stuff like that would be worth an incredible amount to him but stuff like his shoes I'd have thought he'd have more valuable things at home.

S: He might have been a nomad just living in a tent. I know many Tibetans of this sort they wear their fortune as it were.

Peter Cowen; Gypsy women wore diamond rings....

S: Indian women always wear gold. They don't put money in banks, old-fashioned people. They buy gold ornaments for their womenfolk. In time of need they pawn them or sell them. Women are walking banks, as it were. So in primitive society - when I say primitive I mean pre-technological people - they tend to wear their fortune on their back in this sort of way. Everything goes into their personal equipment. But he says with regard to the jade, you can sell it and get food and drink. It's a form of worth. They don't have their money in gold bars and stocks and shares. Your wealth is your hat, your coat, your horse, your bow and arrow. That's your wealth. If you're a noble-man. If you're of course a peasant or a farmer, it's your cattle, its your grain and so on but for a nobleman it's in these sort of things. For instance it's said even in English history, in the rcign of Queen Elizabeth young men used to come up from the country, from their estates wearing their estates on their backs. They'd sold so many thousahds of pounds worth of property
MSS XXXV q0,~

just to get beautiful sati~ doublets with little pearls and jewels all over them to go to court in and be seen by the Queen and perhaps catch her eye. They'd spend money on these sort of things. So much money on a sword or on a golden hilt for the sword or a jewelled feather for their cap. This was quite common in England until fairly recently. This is what the sensible young man about town would do with his money. A good investment to catch the eye of the Queen and be advanced to fame and fortune, power and prosperity. That was the way. She wasn't going to look at a shabbily dressed young man up from the country or wouldn't take any notice of him at all. You'd have to be very strikingly and richly dressed to catch her eye. to make your way. So this is the more sort of,. not very

primitive but more in our case more mediaeval and renaissance attitude. The Tibetans that I've met still very much have this. These are quite ordinary people who have got quite good possessions, good jewellery. They'd never think of wearing anything artificial or faked. It's a real piece of jade or it's a real turquoise or a real cornelian or a real pearl, not anything artificial. Real gold, real silver, good leather, good cloth. They're very sensitive to quality. I noticed this about my Tibetan friends. They used to really go for English wool and cloth. They thought this was the best and they had all their suits made out of English wool and cloth. They really sort of despised anything of Indian manufacture. They were very flimsy and very cheap, very poor. This is the attitude of people who are brought up in a community, in a culture, in a civilisation where everything is hand-made and well-made. There's no shoddy workmanship, no inferior goods, no low quality stuff. It just isn't known. That's a quite modern sort of thing.

Graham Steven; I think Scottish people are very like that. They like their things to be strong, sturdy, well-made.

S: Real fur sporrans and all that. (laughter). Airight let~'s conclude there then.

S: The young man has offered Milarepa all those things beginning with his horse and ending with his neck jewel. Milarepa's refused them all. So what does the young man think?

Sagaramati;~~The young man thought, "Is it because I am too great a sinner that His Reverence will not be gracious to me?" He said to Milarepa, "It is natural for a supreme being like you not to want these illusory possessions. I now offer~you my Three Companions. From~: now on I will never carry a weapon or kill sentient beings. I beg you to grant me the Ordination.. I pray you to protect me with your compassionate grace!" Saying this he untied his carrying pouch and sang:

Oh supreme and compassionate Lama, ~I have always seen an enemy as such, And never lost sight of my foes.
MSS XXXVI

From the right I untie my wooden quiver; From the left I take my ornate bow, And the sharp sword at my waist Which disillusioned all my foes!

With these three things at my side,

I was like a ruthless bandit.

When I appeared before my enemies Their hearts trembled and their bodies quivered. Like frightened yaks they fled away!

Thinking of them and my misdeeds I feel regret and sorrow. Today I offer you my Three Companions. I will observe the precepts strictly And follow you where'er you go."

S: So what is happening? What sort of change is taking place in the young man, in the young -n's attitude?

Graham; He's opening up to Milarepa.

S: He's opening up. He's going a bit further each time. First he simply asked Milrepa to accept things out of compassion. Then he asked him to accept and give him the Dharma. Now he's asking for Ordination. As though each time Milarepa refuses he offers something more.

Peter; What does he mean by, 'protect me with your compassionate grace'?

S: Well what do you think he means?

Peter; Well I know fr~m a Christian sense what grace is. I~ve come across it quite a

bit in (unclear

S: You're really asking what is the Buddhist or the Tibetan Buddhist concept of~grace.

Peter; Yes.

S: You do find this concept or you do find references to this quite a lot in the songs of Milarepa and in the biography ' Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa '. Evans-Wentz trans

lates as 'grace waves'. The Tibetan word is (Chinna?) which is also like blessing. Again what does one mean by blessing? In Pali the word is anubhava. Anu meaning after,

Bhava meaning feeling one could say or being. It's like an echo as it were. You hear, there is a sound and there is the echo of the sound. Somebody is in a certain state

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or feeling, a certain mood and there's an echo or reflection of it in somebody else, that is the anubhava or influence. So it is the traditional Buddhist belief that all those who have reached a high level of spiritual development do emit a spiritual influence. This isn't in a way anything very special or exceptional, it's only the kind of influence that is special or exceptional. All living beings, all human beings emit a sort of influence. They all have a.. there's an aura if you like of a certain kind operating on a certain level of a certain degree of power and influence but the more positive you are, the more emotionally positive,~ the more aware, the more insight forms. The more positive and powerful becomes your, as it were aura or your influence. So it can be, as it were, expected that in the case of the ~Buddhas and Bodhisattvas the influence reaches its highest pitch of intensity. So Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are always sending out this influence, as it were, this anubhava or these 'grace waves'. But people have to open themselves to these. It's not the strict Buddhist belief that these grace waves give you~ protection from material misfortune, no these are purely spiritual. And if you~~re open to them, you're open to that spiritual influence then yes you can assimilate it and you can be , as it were, spiritually helped.

Peter; (unclear) they help you - along the path.

S: Though not protect you from although~sometimes this sort of language is used on the popular level but it is not the strict Buddhist teaching that you can be helped by the Buddha's grace in your material concerns. Only to the extent that if you are open spiritually yes, you're in a more positive frame of mind, psychologically in a more positive frame of mind and therefore that may enable you to do better but not that the Buddha's grace and protection is going to avert disaster or anything like that. This is not the actual Buddhist teaching. Even though Buddhists speaking in a popular way sometimes seem to mean this. To the extent that they do they're not in accordance with the tradition. So the young man might even have been thinking of being~protected in the more ordinary way or perhaps not. Perhaps he didn't really know what he was expecting. Maybe for him the expression was quite ambiguous. Perhaps he wasn't really clear whether he was asking for mundane protection or spiritual protection or some combination of the two. So I beg you to grant me the 'ordination' Presumably ordination as an Upasaka. 'I pray you to protect me with your compassionate grace.' So he sings this song offering his Three Companions. Why do you think the bow and the arrow and the sword are called his Three Companions? Because they're always with him. He never relinquishes them. He keeps them with him all the time. So clearly they mean a great deal to him but these three things, these Three Companions, they are possessions but they're more than possessions. What are they?

Sagaramati; They protect him.

S: Not only protect him. Even more than protect.

Peter; They're threatening.

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S: They're threatening. They threaten others. They're means of committing acts of violence. They're means of breaking the precepts so as it were he's coming on from dana to sila. He was ready to give before but just give which is a great step forward though it's just the first step. He was giving more and more and then he sort of gave away everything but now he's sacrificing or is ready to sacrifice not just things which are precious and which mean a lot to him but he's ready to give up those things which are the means of his breaking the precepts. In other words he is giving up his breaking of the precepts. He is willing to observe the precepts and therefore he's making the request for ordination. He wants to commit himself. He wants to go for refuge and of course the accompaniment of that is the observing of certain precepts. So now as it were the whole thing is beginning to bite. He's beginning to think quite seriously about being a disciple, being a follower of Milarepa. But is Milarepa satisfied? What does Milarepa say. What does Milarepa sing?

Peter ; "But Milarepa was still adamant. He said, "I do not think that you can keep your oath. Nor do I need your Three Companions, because mine are better. Now hearken to my song:

Listen to me dauntless fighter. The Five Hostile Poisons run wild In the land of evil thoughts.

He who does not ~ renounce the 'all-important' combat, Will be imprisoned and lose his chance for freedom! Battles and armies are not for the Yogi.

The world without is my quiver, The Non-clinging Self Illumination within Is my sheath of leopard skin,

My weapon is the sword of Great Wisdom.

The Two-in-One Path is my rope,

My thumb-guard is the merit of meditation.

These are my hidden inner meanings.

Upon the bow-string of Ultimate Unborn Voidness

I set steady the notch of Bodhi-Heart; I shoot ~ the arrow of the Four Infinities At the army of the Five Poisons. There is no doubt I shall win the battle; I will destroy the enemies of desire.

That is my way, the yogi's way of conquering.

I have no interest in your gifts. You patron be of good cheer and go."
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S: So let's look at that. "I do not think that you can keep your oath.' What oath is he referring to?

Alan; That he will observe the precepts.

S ; That he will observe the precepts. 'Vow' probably would have been better. I do not think that you can keep your vow. 'Nor do I need your three companions, because mine are better. Now hearken to my song. 'Listen to me dauntless fighter. The Five Hostile Poisons run wild in the land of evil thoughts'. What are these five hostile poisons? Various lists are given. There's a list given at the end. Let's see what that is. There are several lists as I said. Usually there is craving, anger or let's say hatred, pride or conceit, ignorance and distraction but sometimes jealousy is substituted for distraction. Are you all familiar with the five basic meditations as antidotes to the five poisons? Are you familiar with that? It comes in a lecture. Ah no it's come in Mitrata.

_____ Do you know which meditation is (unclear)...

S: One could regard the mudita bhavana as that. The development of sympathetic joy. That would be the antidote to envy and jealousy. so 'Listen to me dauntless fighter the five hostile poisons run

wild in the land of evil thoughts.' This is a description of our mental state much of the time. It's the five hostile poisons, just like bandits, just like robbers running wild in the land of evil thoughts. 'He who does not renounce the all important'~ combat, will be imprisoned and lose his chance for freedom! Battles and armlesffl~arenot for the Yogi.' Why is'all important in inverted commas?

Vessantara; Because worldly combats aren't all important from a spiritual point of view.

S: What does this suggest or what does this tell us? 'All imporLant' is a very strong term.

_____ Could it suggest that it's the socially accepted norm?

S: It certainly suggests that.

Sagaramati; When you guard your life (it's that).

S: Not only that. It's something which is all important by social custom and convention like for instance not all that many years~~ ago in England or in Europe generally, if you were a gentlemen or a man of honour your word _____ was impugned or your honour was impugned well that meant a duel and you were ready to set your life on that. That was 'all important' to vindicate,your honour. From another point of view how foolish, how ridiculous to risk your life just for a word maybe for a breath. But if you'd said that to those people they would have been very indignant and they would have insisted that no this is an 'all important' matter. So there are quite a lot of things that would be regarded as all important and this is just one example and because they regard these things as all important we lose
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sight of what is really important, truly important. What are the sort of things that people nowadays reinforce by social convention and popular belief - regard as all important? What :-inost people really do regard as all important.

_____, Job,house, car.

S: Job, house, car,pension, security.

Sagaramati; Tea before meditation.

S: Tea before meditation. Work after meditation. (laughter). But how do we come to attach this exaggerated importance to certain things. You can understand this young man regarding combat as all important. The way of life was quite simple, quite primitive. Tibet was a dangerous place, there-were no policemen, there was no army perhaps, no very strong sense of an authority. Every man had to look after himself, protect himse~lf from enemies so, yes, the bow, the arrow and the sword and fighting, these~were very important. You can understand that but what about these other things. No doubt the young man has attached an exaggerated importance to combat. Milarepa makes that clear. You~~ can understand how it arose. It'~s understandable. You can even sympathise with it up to a point but what about these other things? What makes us attach so muoF importance to the wrong things and not to attach importance to things which do really matter. Where have we gone wrong?

_____ Ego satisfying things.

S: Ego satisfying things. Custom seems to be so strong. There's also lack of imagination. You~.can't imagine any other possibility.

_____ So we think they're permanent.

S: Yes

_____ (Proclaiming) religion in the west, religious values.

Graham: They're things that are quite easy to keep on as well. To feed them is a lot easier than to stop them.

_____ unclear) maybe until ten years ago or perhaps a little bit before that there was either a choice of all these things or there's the church and that was it as far as they could see.

S: It's as though one doesn't find much - certainly in this country- much idealism, as it were in any walk of life. It seems very very rare. I think I detect a sort of change even since I've been back in England. It seems to have got steadily worse but T sort of
MSS XXXXI

s~ort of heard the ala~m bells ringing even I was in Kalimpong. I remember one particular incident, I forget which year it was. It must have been several years before I got back to England. It was in the days of Mr. Macmillan. It must have been in the middle fifties? And I happened to hear from a friend in Kalimpong who followed the news that Mr Macmillan and the Conservative party had just won the general election and I heard or I was told that they had won it on the slogan, 'You've never had it so good' and when I heard that~~ I was really horrified and I thought what is happening. What are they coming;~~to. This gross materialistic slogan could win, if it did win, could win an election. That you've never had it so good. A blatant appeal to all that is worst in people, lowest iF people and least idealistic in people, that you've never had it so good. I felt really disgusted, really disappointed. An appeal to selfish greed, complacency, ego satisfaction and so on. Quite a long way from blood, toil, tears and sweat which was what we heard during the war.

Vessantara; We're still suffering a lot now from th~ post-war period where jobs were hard to come by and there was a lot of searching around for security. I know with my parents they used to say whatever~makes you happy is alright by us but for them what mad~e them happy when they were my age was to have a job and everything was on coupons so if they had furniture and a house they were doing well. So it's very hard for them to encounter that - something else making you happy. People so much emulate that kind of. ...

S: It was only austerity. It was called austerity furniture and austerity clothing. It wasn't sort of poverty, it was just austerity. By standards ~in the eastern countries like India it was riches and~abundance.

Peter; Actually the quality by today's standards is much better than

S: Apparently recently they've been having exhibitions of austerity furniture to represent the deSign and the patterns that were so good. You made the best use of the materials at your disposal, most economical~use. Everything was simple, quite well designed though some of you disagree with that of course. So we do get into the habit of regarding as 'all important' what are quite ~rivial matters in a way. But if you think of the things to which great importance is attached to - things of pure convention like the sort of way you dress, whether you wear a tie or~not. Most of you are fairly young and probably don't remember some of these things but when I was your age or a bit younger not to wear a tie

unclear) more than it does nowadays. If you didn't wear a tie you weren't properly dressed.

Peter; They always used to wear hats all the time didn't they.

S: They always used to wear hats. Men never wore coloured shirts.

Short haircuts.

S: And short haircuts.
MSS XXXXII

_____; Putting on the Sunday best.

S: Putting on their Sunday best.. I remember as a small child going out with my parents and meeting friends of my parents with their children and we considered ourselves quite lucky that we were allowed to run about and play on ~ Sundays but they weren't. The other children. They were told you just sit there in your Sunday best, don't spoil your clothes, you've got to sit there. I remember hearing this but luckily not from my own parents who were more sensible. I remember other parents like this.

_____, They'd certainly done that to me.

S: Ah (unclear) and this is just convention. These things are regarded as 'all important'. That your children should look well dressed and clean and well scrubbed and tidy on Sunday but not spoil their Sunday clothes by running about and playing and getting dirty. Being respectable was considered more important. I talked about this, I don't know whether it was on this retreat or last, I'm beginn~ing to forget, in the early days~ of Buddhism in this country some people regarded as all important to make Buddhism respectable which meant making it as middle-class as possible. This was all important. It was the first thing that had to be done to make ~ Buddhism respectable, acceptable to the middle classes on their own terms but really it ceases to be Buddhism then. So for this young man it's the combat that is all important. So Milarepa says, 'He who does not renounce the 'all important' combat, will be imprisoned and lose his chance for freedom!' I think I mentioned in some other connection that one of the tantric yogis deliberately flouted convention, deliberately flouted what other people regarded as really important and even flouted some of the monastic conventions because even the monastic conventions when you get a rather sort of narrow rigid monasticism can be a real hindrance and can become another' sort of social respectability so some of the tantric yogis just found it necessary or felt it necessary to flout all that. It had become 'important' to be a well dressed and well groomed monk and to have studied all the right books in the right monastic universities, done all the right degrees in Buddhist philosophy etc., but they had to rebel against all that because those things had come to be considered all important. So 'Battles and armies are not for the yogi,' If you want to be a yogi. If you want to have anything to do with me. If you want to be a disciple of mine, if you are to follow me then you can have nothing to do with any~ of these sort of things. You have to know what is really all important.

'The world without is my quiver. The non-clinging self-illumination within is my sheath of leopard skin My weapon is the sword of Great Wisdom.' It's a well known piece

of symbolism. The sword that you see in the hand of Manjusri or Manjughosa the Bodhisattva of wisdom. 'The two in one path is my rope, my thumb guard is the merit of meditation. These are my hidden inner meanings.' What is the two in one path?

Peter; Is that the path of means and the path of liberation'?

S: The path of means and the path of wisdom or the path of compassion of the path wisdom. What does it really mean, two in one?

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S: Where does means operate. What is the sphere of operation of means? The s~ilful means.

_____, In the outer world.

S: It's in the outer world and what about the sphere of operation of wisdom? That's as it were not exactly the inner world but the spiritual world, the transcendental world. So if you say that wisdom and means must be combined what are you saying?

_____ Integrate.

S: Integrate. You're saying that you must see the inner world and the outer world as one . You may see Nirvana and Samsara as one. The two in one path is that path of the Mahayana, that path of perfect wisdom which sees the non-duality of sunyata and rupa, rupa and sunyata. It sees in other words the Maha-Sunyata, the great void which realises the great void, lives in the great void so this is

the path of () two in oneness. 'Upon the bow string of ultimate unborn voidness I set steady the notch of Bodhi

Heart; I shoot the arrow of the four infinities at the army of the five poisons. There is no doubt that I shall win the battle; I will destroy the enemies of desire.' So the

bow string is the ultimate unborn voidness, This is what he is aiming at we can say. It's also what helps him to aim. 'I set steady the notch of Bodhi-Heart.' What is Bodhi-Heart?

_____ The Bodhicitta.

S: The Bodhicitta. If you like the will to Enlightenment. No doubt Milarepa's got to parallel the young man's song. It might have been more expressive if he said at the target of ultimate unborn wisdom I aim the arrow of the Bodhi-Heart. It is in fact more like that. If you say upon the bow string of ultimate unborn voidness I set steady the notch of bodhi it's not quite clear what exactly you are doing as it were. Do you see this? In what sense is the ultimate unborn voidness a bow-string? Is there really any sort of parallel?. Is it really throwing any light on the ultimate unborn voidness? You can understand a thing called a target being the aim, the object, the target of the Bodhi-Heart but a bow-string? Maybe Milarepa is just drawing a fanciful parallel without thinking too much about how appropriate it is. Can anyone see any meaning in this ultimate unborn voidness being the bow-string?

Peter; A bow-string is loose and then it's tightened isn't it.

S: Yes well that wouldn't apply to the ultimate unborn voidness.

Sagaramati; Perhaps we're () as it were spring from it.

S: Yes. It could be that. One could say that though again it is also the _____ The object~ is also the goal, the target. Yes one could say that, ~hat the Bodhi heart in a sense is MSS XXXXIV

born from the voidness. 'I shoot the arrow of the four infinities at the army of the five poisons. What are these four infinities?

Vessantara; The Brahma Viharas.

S: The Brahma Viharas. () in Pali. Usually translated illimitables. So why are they called illimitables or infinities?

Peter; Because you generate them out to the whole universe.

S: Yes, without limit to all living beings whatsoever. These are of course friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. So these are thought of as an arrow shot at the army of the five poisons. It's interesting, I don't know how literally we are meant to take this but the four infinities are shot at the army of the five poisons, not just at this poison or that poison but at all of them. So it suggests that the four infinities collectively are the antidote for all five poisons. 'There is no doubt that I shall win the battle; I will destroy the hostile enemies of desire. That is my way, the yogi's way of conquering. I have no interest in your gifts. Young patron be of good cheer and go.' So what in effect is Milarepa saying in this song. What is the gist of the song? He's saying as it were fight the inner battle, not the outer one, fight the spiritual battle, not the mundane one so he's~ trying to transpose the young man from the worldly to the spiritual plane. To make him a fighter, to make him a warrior but in a much higher sense and this is very much in accordance with Buddhist tradition because you may remember that the Buddha said addressing his disciples, 'Monks we are ksatriyas, we are warriors. Why are we warriors. Because we fight for ethics meditation and wisdom.' And then there is the reference to the Maravijjaya, the conquest of Mara. There is this sort of strongly heroic or as someone once said, even knightly side of Buddhism but this is what Milarepa seems to be stressing

here. He's saying it's alright to be a warrior, it's alright to fight but be a spiritual warrior engaged in the spiritual fight which is very much what Blake said, 'Bring me my bow of burning gold, bring me my arrows of desire' etc., Or even a christian hymn, 'Fight the good fight with all your might.' How useful, how relevant do you think is this way of thinking?

_____ The warrior ideal?

S: Yes.

Mike ; It appeals to a certain temperament of a disciple or a follower of the path. It proves it's not a sort of easy thing. It requires effort and skill and courage.

S: Initiative.
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Padmaraja; I look at the spiritual life as an adventure.

S: Has it any dangers do you think? This way of looking at things?

Padmap; I think it seems to arouse in a way quite sort of positive emotions but then you have to put that into action otherwise people just leave the church and go home. In the christian sense they would just leave the church after and then they would just get on with their normal(chores).

S: What might Buddhists do? I was thinking more of any dangers for us because if we sort of use this language of the spiritual combat and the spiritual warrior etc., etc., is there any danger in that for us?

_____ Couldn't it be a bit too ego-reinforcing? People might sort of wander off into delusion.

Vessantara; I think you can either be~~~~rd with other people or you can equally be very hard with yourself.

S: Yes. What do you mean by that exactly? Shouldn't you be hard with yourself?

Vessantara; Yes and no. Not in the sense of forcing yourself beyond a certain point. You have to have~~ a certain compassion towards yourself, you have to have some metta towards yourself. You can get into a thing of driving and forcing in quite and unhealthy way.

S: So you think the danger is that the spiritual warrior may be lacking in metta and karuna towards himself and others though of course Milarepa does say 'I shoot the arrow of the four infinities.' The danger being you may not shoot that particular arrow. Do you think that is a practical danger?

_____; Yes.

S: You do.

_____, The danger in that analogy is that it might be seen as sort of risky, dangerous. The warrior thing. Somebody else is going to nobble you.

S: Well Milarepa says. 'There is no doubt that I shall win the battle.' That sort of battle you cannot but win.

A ; As far as Milarepa's concerned yes. But if you're sort of used to the idea of the warrior then

Graham; It is risky but it's an adventure.
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A : I find it sort of quite inspiring but some people might. ...

S: Do you think there might be people who wouldn't find it inspiring for quite positive reasons and if so what is the complementary ideal that they must find inspiring? If you don't want to be a warrior, if that doesn't appeal to you, well what do you want to be?

_____, A devotee?

S: No, that's not quite the same thing. I mean the spiritual warrior is a sort of metaphor for the spiritual life so what would be a corresponding metaphor.

Peter ; One who calms things down. A healer.

S: Healer yes, yes. But if a warrior is bold, active, courageous, adventurous what is the complementary attitude and what would embody that do you think?

_____; Teacher?

Peter; A feminine receptive idea.

S: Feminine receptive yes or even the child. Child-like. What about being feminine and receptive, being a gopi for instance, does that appeal to anybody? Being a hand maid of the Lord as it were does that appeal to anyone? Be frank! (Laughter).

_____ It depends how you put it! (Laughter)

S: Is that the complementary ideal or is it being a lily of the field toiling not, neither spinning, does etc., etc., does that appeal to you. (laughter) you don't feel like being

obs~~~~red by laughter) you don't feel like being knightly. You just like to wander around or maybe not even wander around just sort of gro~~n~ome littic garden plot. A little sun and rain, just open your little leaves and unfold your petals and gaze up at the face of the sun. Is that what you'd rather be, a spiritual flower in a spiritual garden? rather than one of these spiritual warriors.

You can also be a gardener.

S: A gardener yes indeed. That would be quite complementary to being a warrior. A gardener is not fighting, he's nurturing. He's not engaged in combat, he's engaged in a sort of co-operative process. So these different ideals, these different ways of looking

at things, different ways of looking at the spiritual life obviously appeal to different
Jont

people. You want to be a spiritual warrior or you~want to be a spiritual flower as it were.

Padmapani; Don't you feel though that in spiritual life it's a process of one becoming
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activated and then the other? Not necessarily one can be a warrior throughout one's whole spiritual life. I remember you saying a few years ago how you felt that some people, they work for about two or three years very vigorously and then they take a year or two off not doing anything in particular.

S: Well maybe you have to be all at once. I think the warrior ideal, the spiritual warrior ideal is useful, beneficial for those who tend to be a bit slack and slow with energy not aroused and that certainly applies to probably the majority of people being in contact with the Friends over the last so many years. I don't think I'd like to encourage many of them to be spiritual flowers. I think most of us should be encouraged to be spiritual warriors. That would seem to be much more appropriate. There might be a few flowers here and there but on the whole I think a good crop of spiritual warriors is more important.

Padmapani; Are you suggesting like cultivating the opposite, the opposite tendency in people's minds to go towards one or the other. Are you suggesting that

S: In a way yes. For instance if somebody is really very active and a bit aggressive and all that sort of thing then you should encourage him, or her even, to be a spiritual flower, to be a lily of the fields. They're over-active already. They don't need encouraging to be spiritual warriors, they've got to sort of calm down a bit or else the combattiveness has got to be very much internalised. You could put it paradoxically and say they've got to fight their own restlessness. They've got to fight their own aggressiveness or putting that more positively as it were, in terms of the other metaphor, they've just got to sit still a bit more. They've just got to be more quiet, waste time. The spiritual warrior no doubt embodies virya, the spiritual faculty of virya and the opposite or complementary spiritual faculty is samadhi, is meditation, contemplation. This is very much the spiritual flower. It's sort of growing in one place, blooming in one place, quite silent just sending forth your perfume. It suggests a person who is sitting and meditating. They're not inactive. They're intensely active but in a different sort of way.

Alan; I thought the complementary function to virya was ksanti.

S: No. Ksanti doesn't appear in the list of Five Spiritual Faculties.

_____ ; Would you say the flower would be more female?

S: I haven't said that. This might be (). I'm sure you can have male flowers as well as female ones just as you can have female warriors as well as men. Just because you're a man it doesn't mean you've got to think in terms of being a warrior. You can think in terms of being a flower too, a primrose by the river's brim or even a hollyhock or a daisy. (Laughter)

_____ ; (unclear) weed (laughter) A thistle!
~SS XXXXVIII

S: Or an artichoke. (Laughter) Perhaps we've dwelt enough upon that. But anyway Milarepa is encouraging this young warrior not to become a spiritual flower or a flower spiritually speaking but to become a spiritual warrior so let's leave it at that. "This is my way, the yogi's way of conquering. I have no interest in your gifts. Young patron, be of good cheer and go." So what happens, what does the young man say next?

_____, "The young man said, "Revered sir! Though you do not accept my offer of the Three Companions, I just receive your blessing. Please, therefore, accept my belt and knife." And he sang,

You Yogi who are the living Buddha,

Although many know the Dharma,

Few can practice it.

One in hundreds is hard to find Who can give proof of his accomplishment. I would not ask the teaching from another, For though he knew a world of Dharma;

Only from you, the living Buddha, the Father Reba. Your teachings spring from much hard work, And so I dare not ask without paying first,

In the centre~~~of Nepal, an angry river flows, With clouds like pillars standing round. At the lion-head of this raging torrent Was made this sheath with silver ornaments, Slung on my belt with gold and silver cord. When I wear it my whole body brightens! I flow offer you this knife and belt. Later I will ask you for the Teachings."

S: So the young man persists. "Though you do not accept my offer of the Three Companions. I must receive your Blessing." He is becoming quite urgent in his attitude. "Please, therefore, accept my belt

and knife, and he sang, 'You yogi who are the living Buddha, Although many know the Dharma Few can practice it. One in ~hundreds is hard to find.' So what does 'knowing the Dharma' mean in this context?

_____ Intellectual knowledge.

S: Intellectual knowledge so he emphasises this point, 'although many know the Dharma, few can practice it.' It might seem a very elementary point but it's a point that very often isn't made and isn't realised that after all there are many people who know the Dharma, many people who intellectually understand the truth but the actual practice is quite a different thing and very often we don't realise the extent to which we merely understand but don't practice. Because so much is identified with our intellect, with our theoretical understanding that we think, we take it for granted that if we know something in this sort
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of way then we really do know it which is far from being the case. So if we look through all the things that we understand about Buddhism, all the things we know about Buddhism, there's quite a formidable list but if we look at the things that we put into practice the list becomes quite short. Even with regard to quite simple matters. So 'although many know the Dharma few can practice it.' Not only few practice it, few can practice it you notice. To practice it is within the capacity of very very few. 'One in hundreds is hard to find.' It reminds one a bit of what Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, 'amongst a thousand people one perhaps searches for me. He's speaking of the embodiment of reality, and amongst a thousand who search perhaps only one finds me' which means one in a million. So 'one in hundreds is hard to find who can give proof of his accomplishment.' What proof can one give of one's accomplishment or should one think in terms of giving proof. What does one mean by that.

Alan; Could that mean that only one in hundreds has developed and gone far enough along the path to be obvious to other people.

S: One could look at it that way. The English of the translation is a bit ambiguous. One could take it as meaning. One in hundreds is hard to find who can give proof of his accomplishment but what does one mean by proof?

_____ ; Lifestyle.

S: lifestyle. It's not logical proof but even lifestyle is not a proof in the sense that anyone would accept it. You might see someone living a life of great simplicity, self denial and so on and so forth but if you weren't very sympathetic or very much in tune with that person you'd think well he can't be a great yogi, look at him, he's just like a beggar. This is what was said about Milarepa. This is what Milarepa's sister used to say. 'if you are a real yogi you'd have hundreds of disciples, you'd have people making great offerings, you'd have a good temple, you'd be able to help your relations if you're a real yogi.' (Laughter). 'Well look at you, how wretched you are, you haven't even got a blanket to cover yourself with. I have to come and give you a blanket, call yourself a real yogi?' That was his sister's attitude. He might have been thinking that he was giving proof of his accomplishment by leading that sort of life, proof that he really was a yogi but she didn't take it like that, she didn't see it as proof at all, rather the opposite. So there's no objective proof, do you see what I mean? There's no completely convincing proof which will convince anybody. You can't be convinced even by so called proof unless you are in tune to some extent.

Alan; Maybe he could have been referring back to Milarepa's walking on the water.

S: Yes but even that from a Buddhist point of view doesn't prove anything. It doesn't prove that you're enlightened. It only proves that you can walk on water. It proves you've got a certain supernatural power or that you can produce hallucinations in other people. It doesn't prove that you're enlightened even if you've got the thirty-two major
MSS L

eighty four minor marks of a Great man doesn't prove that you're enlightened, doesn't prove that you're a Buddha. You might simply be a wheel turning king. (Laughter). So this is one of the points that the Buddha makes in the Diamond Sutra, that the Buddha is not to be recognised by marks. You can't infer he possesses such and such marks, such and such characteristics therefore he is a Thuddha. No. So in that sense there can be no proof. Not any objective proof which can be appealed to as it were objectively. If there is any proof it can be only in your own sort of intuitive conviction and the young man has already developed faith in Milarepa.

_____ I suppose it's a bit unlikely seeing as it's coming from this young man that.. I can see it as also being he knew enough about yogis.... 'only one in a hundred yogis' and Milarepa has accomplished this.

S: Yes Right. 'For I would not ask the Teaching from another.' He's developed this firm faith in Milarepa. He doesn't think well he seems a good yogi but maybe there are better yogis, maybe I'll find a better teacher, maybe someone who can work even more wonderful miracles, maybe I should go to him, He doesn't think in this way. His faith is firmly settled in Milarepa himself. That sort of wavering between different teachers and different Gurus you find even among the Tibetans. I remember when I was in Kalimpong I got to know Dhardo Rimpoche very well. I've mentioned his name before and he was not only a very good friend of mine but also one of my own teachers and eventually we got on very sort of confidential terms. He used to tell me what he really was thinking about, this, that and the other which he didn't do at first. Not for quite a few years, not till we really got to know each other so one day he told me something like this. He said when I first came to Kalimpong, which I think was in the late forties, he said I was the only incarnate Lama here. There were no other incarnate Lamas. The Tibetans have also got a tremendous respect for incarnate Lamas, the tulkus, the rimpoches. He said when I came to Kalimpong I was the only incarnate Lama so every body came, it was Rimpoche this and Rimpoche that and everybody invited me and every body brought me offerings. I was the wonderful Lama. I was busy morning, noon and night performing ceremonies, performing blessings etc., so this is what he described. Then he said a few years later another Lama comes, another incarnate Lania arrives in Kalimpong and he said as soon as people hear he's coming - oh he's a very great Lama, very good Lama, maybe he's better than~ Dhardo Rimpoche. Maybe we should go to him instead so that all the people who were coming to me and making offerings and were so devoted, they all switched to that Lama as soon as he arrived. Then he said after a year or two two or three more Lamas came so people were running to this one, running to that one. which is the best, which is the greatest, which one has got the most powerful blessing etc., etc.,and by the time we were talking dozens and dozens of Lamas were arriving in Kalimpong as refugees. People were getting quite bewildered. Head Lama of this, head Lama of that (Laughter) chief abbot of this monastery and reincarnation of that Bodhisattva, incarnation of that Buddha, siddha. People hardly knew where they were. (Laughter) and then you hear the Dorje Lama was coming, the female incarnation. There's only one in the whole of Tibet!!(Laughter), they all go rushing off to her to get her blessi
MSS LI

so he was really very amusing in this way. I think I must have mentioned about~ the western Buddhists changing their teachers and all that so he said don't think it's only the West, we Tibetans are just as bad. So there was nothing of that sort in the case of this young man. He'd met Milarepa and his mind was made up, his faith was firmly established in Milarepa. There's another little story in this connection. ~ There were three great Nyingmapa gurus in Kalimpong and they all knew one another quite well, they were all connected, they all belonged to the same sort of tradition so there was a lot of discussion amongst Nyingmapa Buddhists and Tibetan Buddhists generally in Kalimpong who was the greatest among the three or how were they sort of arranged. Who was the most important and the most developed and w~ho was next and who was last. So these three came to hear about this so what happened was one day one of the disciples who was in a sense a disciple of all three, he ventured to enquire very very politely whether there~was in fact any differeno among them and whether one was in fact greater than the other two and some of the Nyingmapa Buddhists had particular favourites, they rather liked this one though they also liked the other two, they liked that one most of all so they would like to think that he was the greatest so this disciple eventually put this sort of question; amongst you three who is the greatest or is there a greatest or all you~~ all on the same level even? So one of the gurus was asked this and he thought a little bit and then he said well I'll tell you how things actually

stand. As a matter of fact amongst we~ three one of us is definitely much more highly developed than the other two but which one it is none of you will ever know. (laughter) That was his answer and they were quite satisfied with that. But why do you think this is. Why is one so anxious or why are sometimes people so anxious to change? We even find this in London. Some of our friends get quite disturbed when some new Lama comes, some new Roshi, some new spiritual attraction I some new guru. It's not very common now among the Friends but It used to ~be quite common among these sort of oriental and Buddhist groups generally but why ~ do you think this is? Why do people do this. Why do they rush off now here,now there?

Vessantara; It's the idea that somebody else can do it all for you so you go to one of those You don't feel all that much difference.

S: It's partly because you're expecting the guru to do it all for you. You've been with a certain guru for a certain length of time, nothing much seems to have happened so you don't think I haven't put enough effort into it you think well maybe I've got the wrong guru, maybe I haven't had a strong enough blessing or I haven't got the right sort of teaching or the teaching that suits me etc., etc. Sometimes of course~ it may be that that is the case, that-that particular guru's teaching if it is of a rather specific type doesn't suit your temperament, that may well be but I think one shouldn't exaggerate that sort of thing but usually it's just another person who may be able to do it all for 'you, as it were, and also there is the attraction of novelty. It's a bit of a change. Maybe it's a bit dull with the old teacher, the same old practices, the same old reminders, same old exhortations, even the same old jokes!(Laughter). You want a bit of a change. You re getting a bit bored, a bit stale so instead of trying to refresh your own spiritual life by further practice you just want to introduce a bit of novelty and ~o off and find another

MSS LII

teacher etc., etc. In this way you can see people, you can meet people who've gone to teacher ~after teacher after teacher. They spend their whole lives doing this. Of course originally, initially you may be well advised to do a bit of shopping around if you feel so inclined but if really your faith/hasons~oert of settled well that's that and this quite clearly is the position of this young man. 'I would not ask the teaching from another even though he knew a world of Dharma. Only from you , the living guru, the Father Repa. Your teachings spring from much hard work and so I dare not ask without paying first.' Don't you think that's rather surprising? Paying? Can you pay for the teaching? What does he mean?

Graham; Would that be to do with the Tantra again?

S: That would be to do with the Tantra one could say but does it mean paying in a literal sense or how does one pay.

Peter; I think you ve said once before in your little book of thoughts and sayings that you should pay for.. perhaps people should be made to pay for initiations because nothing should be given away freely.

S: So why is that? Wouldn't it be good if everything was given away free?

Sagaramati; People wouldn't value it.

S: People wouldn't value it. Is it just that?

Sagaramati; The attitude you have when paying you should be more receptive.

S: Yes right. If you take payment in the most literal sense, money, most people don't find it easy to give money. It's the most easy form of giving, most concrete, tangible, all you've got to do is put your hand in your pocket, take the wretched stuff out and give it!! It is apparently so difficult for some people. Or even take out you cheque book, just sign your name after filling in a suitable amount. But this is very difficult. So if you re not prepared to give how can you expect the teacher to give. You're expecting teachings from him which are the product of much hard work. Your teachings spring from

much hard work. Milarepa has spent years and years, maybe decades meditating. Whatever he says, every single word is a product of his experience and that experience is the result of much hard work, much suffering, much hardship, much privation and you're expecting to get it all for nothing. You're not prepared to do your bit as it were. You're not prepared to be really receptive. So if you're expecting the teacher to give to you you must be willing to give yourself. So it's only when there are these two sort of givings meeting that anything really can be communicated. So this is why the Tantra traditionally insists on a cash payment. This is the more modern form. Originally, this is what I was told, originally the tradition was you gave everything, you offered everything. At the time of Tantric initiation all your property, all your money, all your goods, all your

M55 LIII

possessions, you brought them and offered them to the teacher, to the guru. That was commuted later on to a substantial cash payment. You, as it were transferred all your property into cash, into a big bag of gold maybe and you offered that and then as times went by it became just whatever you were able to give but clearly that represents a sort of watering down but it's quite interesting at the time of Tantric initiation people are told give what you please and you can see there's a real struggle goes on in their minds. Shall they give a hundred rupees or could I get away with fifty? and they're supposed to be asking for a spiritual teaching which is going to transform their whole lives while they are thinking could I get it for fifty or maybe I should make it sixty to be on the safe side. These are the sort of thoughts that pass through people's minds. Not how much can I give but how little can I get it for. This is what happens. So therefore this young man is saying, 'Your teachings spring from much hard work so I dare not ask without paying first.' I have to give everything I've got. I have to show that I'm receptive, that I'm prepared to give before I can expect you to give me something precious. This is what Marpa said to Milarepa. Do you remember that in the 'Life of Milarepa'? I went off to India and had to sweat and struggle there, had to spend much gold getting these precious teachings and you expect to have them just for the asking. It isn't that the teacher isn't willing to give, don't think that, it's not that he isn't willing to give - he'd like to give freely - but he can't give unless the other person is receptive. Unless your pot is turned the right way up and is open how can you pour anything into it. If your pot is upside-down he can't pour anything into it even though he wants to. So your giving, your paying even, represents your receptivity. He's willing to give the instant that you are open and receptive but you must be that.

Graham; It seems a form of fearlessness, total faith.

S: Yes right.

_____ At a Sunday class, beginners class a few weeks ago one of your Noble Eightfold Path lectures was played and there's quite a long bit in it about dana and afterwards even after that there was something like a quid in the dana bowl.

S: Yes. It's quite strange. We used to notice this in the old days even more so. Now things are infinitely better than they were. People are remarkably generous now compared with what they used to be. I wonder why this is. We talked about it quite a lot in, not so much in the old days but when the old days were on the way out, some people were of the opinion that people had developed, especially, some said, young people had developed an attitude of expecting everything to be provided for them and some people said even that with regard to the Centre that some of those who came along were under the impression that there was some very big powerful wealthy organisation behind us which was paying for everything so you just didn't have to bother. Even though we made it clear that funds were needed ~ support was needed, but that didn't seem to register at all.

_____ I think that maybe the attitude that up until some time up until a lot of people

M55 LIV

come along to any sort of spiritual movement they have this idea that a lot of them are fakes and just after your morality and so the very idea of are they being caught by this thing that everybody else is.

_____ I think also there is a certain idealistic feeling that holy people shouldn't want to be bothered with money.

S: That is true. This is idealistic but there is in a way a micchaditthi that money is somehow dirty and evil but the real micchaditthi is people not understanding the conditions under which any spiritual teaching can be given i.e. that it can be given only when the person who says he wants it really is open, is prepared to give, to give himself. They seem to think usually that certain teachings can be placed at your disposal in a very external sort of way just in the form of as it were information and they really have got no idea of what a spiritual transmission or real teaching, real communication of a teaching, amounts to. I think there's also this misunderstanding.

Alan; I've come across myself too this rationalisation that you can't how can you actually give mundane money for something which is beyond all that sort of thing.

S: Well you can't. You don't give it for the teaching. Though this young man does say, 'I dare not ask without paying first.' you aren't literally paying for the teaching, you can't, you're not buying the teaching, the teaching can't be bought but you're giving what you can. You're giving everything that you've got so that the other person will give everything he's got. Not in the sense of making a bargain but those are the conditions or that is the condition of the exchange. If two people are together, if two people come together there can't be any real exchange unless both are open. This applies whether you're on the same level or whether you're on different levels. If you're on the same level there can be no communication between you unless you're both open. If only one is open it's not enough. Communication does not take place and in the same way if you're on different levels exchange is possible between you or a sort of flow or reciprocity is possible between you only if you both are open. You've got to be open on your lower level, he's got to be open on his higher level. By very definition since he is on that higher level he is open, he's just as it were waiting to let it flow forth to you so what have you got to do. You've got to make yourself open on your level. One of the signs, one of the manifestations of your openness is that you give. So the fact that once you've given you get something doesn't mean you've got it because you've paid for it, you've opened yourself to it so the paying is the sign of the openness. You give up your attachment, you give up your greed, you manifest your faith, your confidence. But it's even better to think in terms of paying for the Dharma than not to give at all. You can correct that misunderstanding later on but if you don't ever give you never get started, you never receive anything. If you give and receive under the impression that you are paying for the Dharma or buying the Dharma, never mind, that can be corrected and will be corrected in course of time.

So 'Your teachings spring from much hard work.' He realises that Milarepa's
MSS LV

teachings spring from his personal experience, He sees the results of all the sadhanas that he's done, all the meditation that he's done, not just the product of book knowledge. So 'I dare not ask without paying'. You notice I dare not, what does this suggest? What do you mean by saying I dare not? Well the strong sense of spiritual shame - he'd be ashamed to ask Milarepa to give him something if he wasn't prepared to give to Milarepa. He'd be ashamed of expecting Milarepa to be open when he wasn't prepared to be open himself.

Then he says, 'In the center of Nepal an angry river flows, with clouds like pillars standing round. At the lion-head of this raging torrent was made this sheath with silver ornaments, slung on my belt with gold and silver cord. When I wear it, my whole body brightens! I now offer you this knife and belt. Later, I will ask you for the Teachings.' He's not even asking on the spot now. He's making his offering now but he's going to ask for the teachings later on. So 'The youth then gave his belt and knife to Milarepa.' Let's read on

_____ "The youth then gave his belt and knife to Milarepa. The Jetsun said, 'At times I cannot give you the Teachings and instruction; neither do I want your offerings.

I have a better belt than yours. Listen to my song':

"Listen to me ingenuous young man! From my hut's roof in the snow mountain Flows the quintessence of milk and nectar. Though it is not made of gold or jewels, I cannot pour it into earthenware.

Around this waist of mine, the poor man of strong will,

Is tied to a cotton belt of fanatic devotion!

The absence of pretence and hypocrisy Is the pattern of my belt. Bright wisdom is my knife, Its sheath, the confidence of the Three Measurements.

Faith and diligence in Dharma is my gold and silver cord.

The beauty of the Dharma Is the glory over all.

Lest goddesses punish me,

I have never asked for wealth or money

When teaching in the past,

Nor shall I do now.

Dear boy you may go home; I do not want your gifts."

S: What do you think Milarepa means by the first verse? 'Listen to me ingenious young From my hut's roof in the snow mountain flows the quintessence of milk and nectar. Though it is not made of gold or jewels, I'd not pour it into earthenware.

MSS LVI

Alan; Is that back to the analogy of the pot?

S: Yes it seems to be. The quintessence of milk and nectar presumably is the melting snow dripping from his hut but also it suggests the fruit of his meditation. He's meditating in that hut so it suggests something dripping down as it were, some nectar, something precious from his meditation, i.e. his teachings. 'Though it is not made of gold or jewels' though it is not all that precious, 'I would not pour it into earthen ware' I wouldn't put it onto an ordinary pot. In other words you are the pot. I want to be quite sure you are a valuable precious pot not just an ordinary earthenware pot before I put into you, as it were, my valuable teachings. They may not be all that valuable but at least there's some value in them. They are the products of meditation so I'm testing you as it were. I want to make sure you're not just an ordinary earthenware pot. I want to make sure that you're an unbreakable pot, even a diamond pot before I give you my precious teaching.

'Around this waist of mine the poor man of strong will, is tied to a cotton belt of fanatic devotion!' The cotton belt may well be his meditation band, a band which is worn round the neck and the knees just to keep you in position when you're sitting for hours and hours on end. Fanatic devotion- I don't quite like that phrase. Intense devotion - yes- but we don't think of fanatic devotion as quite Buddhistic. This must be the translator rather than Milarepa. So Milarepa's got a different kind of belt. His belt, his cotton belt, plain and simple belt is the belt of intense devotion. It rather reminds one of the biblical phrase 'girding up one's loins' It means just hitching up your robes and being ready for work. 'The absence of pretence and hypocrisy is the pattern of my belt. Bright wisdom is my knife, its sheath the confidence of the Three Measurements' () I think the three authorities. There's a note about those as you'll see. 'Faith and diligence in Dharma is my gold and silver cord. The beauty of~~harma is the glory over all.' The general meaning, the general sense of this parallel is clear. 'Lest goddesses punish me I have never asked for wealth or money when teaching in the past, nor shall I do so now. Dear boy you may go home; I do not want your gifts.' So what does this mean- 'I have never asked for wealth or money when teaching in the past, nor shall I do so now.' Does it mean that it's wrong for the young man to make offerings?

He wants more than that.

S: Yes he wants more than that but offerings of money are made but does that mean that the teachers

who accept them are wrong? That Milarepa is saying they shouldn't accept?

Peter; No it's just his personal way of going about it perhaps.

S: Maybe, but maybe something more than that?

Alan; He personally never wanted for himself wealth.

MSS LVII

S: But does this mean that people shouldn't make him offerings?

Alan; No they're not mutually exclusive.

S: Yes. Also it's not a question of one thing for another. The young man makes his offerings, yes, out of faith and devotion. Milarepa gives his teaching but Milarepa is not giving his teaching for the sake of the wealth or for the sake of the money. It's quite a subtle point of difference. The young man offers, the young man gives. It means he's open therefore Milarepa can give the teaching but he's not giving the teaching in order to get the wealth, in order to get the money. It's a bit like the communist principle I quoted a few days ago, 'to each according to his need, from each according to his ability. There's no sort of cash nexus as it were. I do this for you therefore you do that for me. I do what you can, you do what you can. I give what I can, you give what you can, there's no question of a bargain struck. Do you see the difference? So maybe Milarepa is speaking from this point of view. That offerings are alright but one doesn't give the teaching for the sake of the offerings. Also of course he's testing the young man still further.

Vessantara; Why does it say, 'Lest goddesses punish me'~

S: Yes. What do you think that means? Who are these goddesses? Perhaps they're the dakinis but why should they punish him if he as it were sells the Dharma for money or for wealth. What do these dakinis represent?

Padmapani; Maybe his... maybe the teachings will be taken away from him by the dakinis, the initiations.

S: One could look at it like that.

Vessantara; If they're his sort of spiritual inspiration.. getting money for it there'd be a tendency to get fat and a bit lazy and somehow

S: He would be going against his own inspiration.

Padmapani; So in that sense he would be losing his teaching.

S: If he was as it were on the level where they could be lost. Apparently he isn't but in a manner of speaking if he could, which is impossible, if he could bring himself to sell the teachings for money then he's be going so much against his own inner inspiration that inspiration would desert him. It's like for instance the case of a writer who might be quite inspired to begin with, quite creative but he starts writing just for money so what will happen? His inspiration will desert him.

Sagaramati; Is that the same with nevadatta? He had the first thought about not searching

the () At that moment his psychic powers began to(drain away).

MSS LVIII

S: Yes, even psychic powers which are a much lower kind of thing yes.

Padmaraja; Could you define inspiration and what you mean by it.

S: Well here it's of course a higher spiritual inspiration coming from his own enlightened mind. He's really saying I couldn't possibly go against that. The essence of one's spiritual inspiration is that it is free, it is spontaneous. If you try to harness it for any practical purpose of a selfish kind or an egoistic kind you deny the very nature of the inspiration itself. You're going against the nature of the inspiration therefore if it could be lost it would be lost. If it couldn't be lost then of course you'd never do that thing anyway but if you could sell the Dharma you'd lose the inspiration. If you could write poetry for money you'd lose the ability to write poetry if you were writing it simply and solely for the sake of money, You just couldn't carry on writing it any more, the springs of inspiration would just dry up because that is not the way that poetry is written.

Sagaramati; Could that be sometimes why people's first attempt is sometimes their best.

S; I think sometimes, not always. You can go on being successful and making the best possible (bargain) once you've written something. you're not writing for money but if that is your predominant motive your inspiration will surely dry up.

Pat; I think writing poetry is a kind of expansive action but money ... (unclear)

S: In other words you mustn't misuse the product of your own creative imagination, your own inspiration. If you do the energy that gave birth to them will desert you. You even find that some spiritual teachers start off in this sort of way - I'm not referring to those who are really enlightened - but they may be quite good people, there's a certain amount of energy, certain amount of inspiration and they start their own group or they found their own ashram, have their own organisation and then they start thinking in terms of making money and their original inspiration deserts them and you can see it happening. It's the same kind of thing. You see it with fashionable painters, fashionable portrait painters and so on.

Padmapani; Could you say that of some of the Tibetan teachers who are over, say in the States that when they were over there in Tibet that thing never occurred, those things never arose but when they come over to the West you're riddled with it in a way.

S: Right yes, they are exposed and some withstand the temptation better than others clearly.

Padmapani; It seems very much like that in a way, some form of temptation on a sort of psychic level. It's a form of temptation.

MSS LIX

Pat; The poems () wrote. The novels, the poems that are most successful that way I was thinking that as long as they gave the money to the Friends then this wouldn't be misusing their creativity. If you continue to be successful and perhaps take ~ certain amount of the money to live on for basic needs and the rest.

S: Possibly but I think if the thought of the money you were getting out of what you were going to write was at all sort of predominant in your mind, even if you were going to use it for what seemed to be a good purpose, I think even that will get in the way.

_____ I was thinking about this the other day. If you get in some sort of dhyanic state you could turn out masterpieces and make a fortune. Once you start thinking about that you start thinking about making a fortune.

S: You mustn't think in terms of using your spiritual achievements not even for a good purpose. They'll use themselves. They'll have their own inherent momentum. We've got this tendency of putting everything to good practical use which very often means a selfish use and that's no good at all.

~; Even in art college they always encourage you take up careers. Your paintings are nice but what are you going to do with them. (They give an objective which reminds me of money).

S : Yes. It's turning what should be a vocation into a profession. I mean this same sort of thing can happen - I was talking about this earlier on today - the same thing can happen when you become a professional taker of courses and classes and groups and it becomes your livelihood and you support your wife and your kids and you have your house and your car out of that. You might have started off very idealistically but the idealism doesn't last long. You can't make these things into a profession. You can't make them into a money making (). But this is very much what happens. I remember when I was over in Holland I talked to one of our Order members, a woman called Vajrayogini, who is a gestalt therapist, takes gestalt therapy groups and courses, and she was telling me that more recently what she has noticed is that people come to her to take teachers training courses, that is to become teachers and group leaders in gestalt therapy without having done any gestalt therapy work on themselves and not really wanting to. They want to just take the teachers course straightaway. Then start taking their own groups and courses. preferably start their own institute, their own organisation and make money. They look at it purely and simply as a profession and presumably one could have some people taking that sort of attitude towards taking meditation classes but if you have that attitude though you may have a certain skill and know how, the real original inspiration if you ever had any will dry up. If you haven't even got that inspiration to start

with just where would you be? It's like the completely untalented person who thinks how wonderful it would be to write a best selling novel and sits down and tries to write one.

They haven't even got any inspiration to lose. (Laughter) The goddesses haven't even
MSS LX

approached him, haven't even breathed on him, haven't even looked at him as yet.

Sagaramati; I feel that the danger in if you were supported by a centre of justifying your support. I was thinking this morning when I do a course that brings in money so therefore I can justify it. I'm being supported.

S: This is because one feels guilty about not working so I think therefore, I mentioned this some time ago, that we should have some people supported who are doing nothing. I mentioned this again on some other retreat that in the East a Buddhist monk is not expected to do anything because he's supported by the public. The mere fact that he is a monk is quite enough. No pressure is put on him to do anything useful, to make himself useful. He may not even meditate. He just lives in a monastery, he eats his one or two meals a day. He wears his robe correctly, shaves his head and that's that. That's all that's expected of him. Of course you could say it encourages laziness. That is also true but it has a very very positive side that the spiritual life is not expected to produce material results necessarily. The spiritual life is an end in itself. It hasn't to justify itself. So it would therefore be good, I think, if we adopted this to some extent and actually supported some Order members who are not taking classes, who are not able to give lectures or didn't wish to, who are not doing very much meditation, certainly not all day and all night and who were just being supported for what they were irrespective of any useful activity that they engaged in and this would make the point quite clearly. In the East people do this quite happily and there are monks in the East who go through their whole lives without giving a single discourse, without writing a single book, without doing anything useful at all. They're just living the life of monks which is quite sufficient. The mere fact that they're not doing all the wicked things that lay-people do (laughter) They haven't got a wife, they haven't got kids. They don't go out to work, they don't do any harm, they don't tell lies. This is considered such a great achievement in itself that everyone is prepared to respect them and support them simply for doing and being that and that in a way is the right attitude.

Alan; That's in a way like creating an ideal a bit above you.

S: Yes. You could say their usefulness consists in that fact but that is only in a manner of speaking. The point is they're not expected to justify their existence, their spiritual life in worldly terms or in terms of worldly usefulness. but this is what the christian clergy are just sort of almost mad to do in this country, to justify themselves by engaging in social works and running boys' clubs and bingo for old ladies. Anything just to make other people feel and maybe themselves that they're useful but the most useful thing that you can do is just to be. I was saying the other day on the other retreat just

think it's taken millions of years of evolution to produce you. Do you need to justify yourself? Millions of years of evolution were working towards producing just you sitting there in your chair and doing nothing. You're the glorious end product of that vast evolutionary process. Do you need to justify yourself? No. I mean the only thing that can really be expected of you is you just rise a little higher in the scale. Think in terms of the higher evolution

MSS LXI

Think in terms of becoming a Buddha but not that you've got to justify your human status

by engaging in some useful occupation. If you wish to, if you spontaneously do that as an expression of what you are that's fine and the majority of the monks in the East they do but there's no obligation made upon them. If they do anything useful, if they give lectures or if they give teachings or if they look after the sick it's because their own inner voice as it were tells them to do this. It's a spontaneous activity Not because they have to justify their position or justify or earn as it were the support that they get from the lay society or lay community.

Mike Chivers; I think you can label this as being the reason why the dana is so low because of this concept that the as you gave you gave () while the western religion, Christianity, well you see the vicar doing this and that and all this sort of thing and your conditionality expects the same of any other religion.

Vessantara? You hold out your can and people say what do you save, what sort of charity are you. They're almost expecting you to say well we help sick children, we provide holidays and so on. You say you teach meditation and they just look blank.

S: Even that is not enough because we teach meditation in a way... it's presented as well we justify our existence by doing something useful, meditation could be justified as doing something useful. If you were to say we're just asking for money so that we can (obscured by laughter) that would be the real answer. We're asking for money so that we don't have to work so that we can do absolutely nothing! (laughter) When you can really say that and get away with it Buddhism will really have come to Britain. (Laughter)

_____ ; I think we almost could because the people who ask these questions don't usually give anything away.

S: You can say all this money will just go to support a beautiful person.

Mike; But the west is very much like that. When they do give they want to know who the charity is and invariably the charity is a big enough organisation to give statistics like your pound will give... ten percent will go to office, five percent will go to... and one percent will actually go to the person so they say if I'm giving my money I want to know if it's going to serve a practical purpose.

S: That's fair enough within the context of ordinary charitable work and social work and all that kind of thing but the point that has to be made clear and understood is that the spiritual life does not have to justify itself in the general terms. This is the real point. It's quite difficult to put across but we should be clear about it our own minds at least. Certainly order members who are being supported shouldn't feel guilty if maybe they take a day off thinking well if I take a day off I'm not being a very good investment. I'm not really earning my ten quid a week or whatever it is. There's no question
MSS LXII

of earning, you're just given it freely. You're not given it for what you do. You're given it, you're given support so that you don't have to bother about getting a job and are free to do what you feel like doing in a sense for the movement and that might mean doing nothing. So you can draw your ten quid a week or whatever with a completely clear conscience doing nothing. That in a sense paradoxically is your contribution. That you're a person who is just around and who is not doing anything. How wonderful it is to have around a few people who are not doing anything so they've got time to have a chat with you. Some of my best friends in the Movement nowadays I just never have time to talk with

them. They're always busy so I have to go more to the fringes of the Movement and talk to people there if I want to talk to somebody. People I've known maybe over the years they just haven't got time to talk any more. So () a few people around who are not doing anything who are just as it were, to coin a phrase, beautiful people. So that they're the models as it were ideally of what it should be like for everybody. This is what it's like in Sukhavati, in Amitabha's Sukhavati, Pure Land. You don't have to work. Your clothes appear spontaneously, food just appears. All you've got to do is just be there, just sit on your lotus, listen to the Dharma. That's the ideal for a Buddhist and whatever you do, in a sense, for the Movement is riot being done out of a sense of guilt or feeling of obligation but just because you want to and it makes you happy. You enjoy taking classes, you enjoy giving lectures, you enjoy writing articles enjoy writing letters, enjoy meditating with others, that's why you do them. But if you just enjoy doing nothing that's equally positive and you're equally entitled to draw your ten quid a week for doing that. It is you who are being supported not the work that you are doing. You who are being supported.

Mike; Should you not bear in mind the thoughts of the people doing the supporting.

S: Well I'm talking within the context of the Order, that is people who are spiritually committed so obviously if they're doing nothing it's a positive doing nothing. If they are a genuinely committed person. If one can't help thinking, if one must think in terms of contributing then think well~nwhat way can I best contribute, by working, by taking a class, by raising money or by just doing nothing. Doing nothing in the sense of I've no specific tasks, no specific responsibilities, I'm just around. I'm available if you want to come and talk. How nice to find an Order member sitting in the Centre who's got nothing to do, who's peaceful in his mind, who's quiet, who's had a nice restful day, who doesn't have to rush off somewhere in the middle of the conversation. That's, you could say in inverted commas, quite 'useful'.

_____ ; Sometimes if you just happen to have a day in the week with not much to do or for some reason you can't do... someone comes in and they have a chat with you. They're always very pleased because someone's there to talk to.

S: flight but be very careful not to think of that as your work even if you do nothing, even if nobody comes in, you're just sitting there and doing nothing that's fully justified
MSS LXIII

I used to say, this was a long time ago, that enlightenment is unemployable. How will you employ a Buddha. Does he have to justify his Buddhahood. No the mere fact that he is a Buddha is enough. So in the same way on a lower level the mere fact that you're a human being is enough. You don't have to justify in any lower terms. You're the end product of creation, you're the crown of the evolutionary process. Christianity's told you that you that you are a miserable grovelling worm.(Laughter) You've got to get over that. ... literally... I remember reading an article some time ago about the hymns of Charles Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and apparently his hymns can't be used in Methodist churches any more, many of them not without serious editing because he has an absolute penchant for referring to members of the human race as we worms' and this appears. In one hymn it says 'and worms aspire to sing thy praise' meaning we aspire so the human race is referred to as worms. So this is the sort of attitude that many of us have grown up with, the sort of influence that we've been exposed to. So sit around in glorious idleness, this is the complementary ideal as it were. Do things yes but do them freely and spontaneously, not out of a sense of obligation, responsibility and paying your way and working for your keep and all that kind of thing. Take freely, give freely.

Sagaramati; I think the reason it arises is because there are so many people who we could support who can't be supported so it's almost like anybody who is supported almost has to be, has to justify it.

S: Yes but maybe you shouldn't do that. Maybe you shouldn't. You shouldn't think who is the most useful person, let's support him. Maybe you should think who is the most beautiful person let's support him regardless of what he's doing or maybe eventually we just have to make a rule that every Order member automatically is supported on ordination whether he does anything or she does anything or not. It would be very good if we were in that position which is the position with regards to bhikkhus and bhikkhunis in the East. As soon as you become ordained you're entitled to public

support. Of course there are lots of people who in a way don't deserve it but on the whole the system works very well. Even supposing someone doesn't deserve it what is the very worst you can say of them they're not leading a particularly active spiritual life but at least they're not doing any harm. You find that with many monks in the East, at least they don't do any harm and that's a great thing nowadays, not to do any harm to anybody else so perhaps without incurring that sort of danger we could just automatically support people on ordination and then it would be up to them. They'd be by definition committed people to decide whether they wanted to express their commitment in terms of doing something or in terms of not doing something or anything. The two possibilities should be open to them and so therefore uphold the ideal that it's the human being who matters. What we're trying to do is produce a certain kind of human being and the activities are only to help towards that end but not that the human being is an end to something else, no the human being is the end. The individual is the end whereas the human being as such is an end, is a means to any end is only a means to his own next stage of development. The human being is the means to an individual, the individual is the means to a Buddha. The sabbath was
MSS LXIV

made for man not man for the sabbath.

Padmapani; What did you mean - I think it was on a very early interview by the BBC at Sakura when you were saying, I don't know if you were referring to Order members but you were saying the Upasaka I think takes what he needs in order to grow. What did you mean?

S: I was probably talking about the monk or the analogue of the monk - I probably had at the back of my mind the verse in the Dhammapada about the bee. The bee flies from flower to flower taking the honey but without injuring or damaging the colour or scent of the flower so the Dhammapada verse says let the wise man, the bhikkhu, move about in the village. You take just what you need but you don't do any damage - I probably had that at the back of my mind. And on the other hand not only do you not do any damage you give what you can but not because of any sense of obligation but because your nature is such. So we should be able to leave it to the conscience, for want of a better word of each individual Order member, what they do and what they don't do. They certainly shouldn't do anything out of a feeling of guilt or obligation because they've been pressed to do it by somebody else. There should be the spontaneous overflow of their own spiritual practice and spiritual life. Of course it isn't always like that. Some times just because you aren't all that developed, you have to push yourself- you have to force yourself a bit and then of course what you do is done as part of your spiritual practice to help you develop. You should do it for that reason if you do it at all, not out of a feeling of guilt or obligation. Where people have got such strong feelings of guilt they're so easy to manipulate. So one has to be very careful that first of all we don't ourselves do anything out of a feeling of guilt and that we don't try to manipulate other people's feelings of guilt in order to get them to do things which appear to be useful, which may be useful.

Padmapani; Would you say that really on a practical level about money and keeping classes and things open it's important for people not to be going out working outside as it were. It seems that that's where a lot of the mind machinery gets caught up some how. I've been working in the Buttery say for two years now and I'm so used to having a pay packet I tend to see things in that way. It's a bit like . . . you work for your money and at the same time on a very obvious level you're doing work not necessarily that you'd like to do. Sometimes you wouldn't like to go in that day but you go in to keep the job and keep the responsibility and from that a whole sort of process can start up.

S: It's a quite useful experience not to have money at all for a while

BREAK IN

RECORDING --FOR~,FIVE PAGES OF THE TEXT

Padmapani; In a way you could say that in fund-raising. If you only had a certain amount if you did get that amount ~n a way it would help you gain confidence.

S: Right yes. If you find well you got ten thousand in two years you think well that was easier than I thought let's try for a hundred thousand even if it does take ten or
MSS LXV

fifteen years but even then you wouldn't think of a hundred million but when you take your Bodhisattva vow it's as though you're vowing to raise a hundred thousand million billion trillion.. etc.,

_____ But surely in the majority of cases at least is one taking a vow for a period of time as opposed to life. You get the added benefit of () confidence in having done it plus the fact that you can't keep ()

S: Whereas if you take a vow for life you might be constantly worried by the thought that you might break it sometime before the end. You can never be sure that you have been able to observe your vow, not til the moment of death. If you make it for three months after three months you say yes I've observed it, T've done what I said I would so there is that excess of confidence. On the other hand I don't want to rule out the vow for life altogether because someone may feel a very very strong compulsion, a very very strong conviction and really want to commit themselves absolutely and one shouldn't come in the way of that. The only thing is that it mustn't be premature. The person must be really doing it and not just thinking that he's doing it. Otherwise if someone makes a vow for life and then he breaks it he may feel very bad indeed and very guilty. But one mustn't rule out altogether~ the possibility of the vow for life or even the Bodhisattva vow in a very extreme form. Some people no doubt can make that. No doubt in ancient India some people could and did but I think for the vast majority of people let's say practising Mahayana Buddhism in this country to think in terms of formulating a vow that's going to cover ages upon ages of time, maybe you're not even sure if you'd survive more than(a day) It would need to be more of a realistic ().

_____, With a Bodhisattva when the Bodhicitta has arisen presumably you could.

S: I don't think even the Bodhicitta is necessarily sort of to be formulated in terms of specific periods of time. It is also one could say a timeless thing. In a way it's got nothing to do with time. Perhaps one could say that is what these vows are trying to say in their own Indian way. It's got nothing to do with time but they do say it in rather a roundabout way. Anyway let's leave Milarepa's trousers and get on with the next verse.

_____ "The youth thought, 'This great man will not accept anything I offer. I had better find out where he lives and where he is going. I will try by all possible means to persuade him to visit my country.' So he said, 'Though you have not accepted anything I have offered you, please Come to my country, also , please tell me where you are going now There must be a destination in your mind, or you would not choose this particular road. Pray do not conceal your intention, but please tell me the truth.'

Milarepa replied, 'Son I have nothing to hide from you. In the harvest I go to Din Ri to beg for alms. When the crops are threshed, I go to Nya Non. In the winter I remain at some remote place where only birds and marmots dwell.' The young man

thought, 'After a few days, I shall invite him to my house to preach for us. I wonder if he will accept. MSS LXVI

"And he sang,

'Peerless Guru, the Transformation Body of Buddha, You said that you are going to Din Ri to beg for alms. But that is a place of the damned, and has no merit. Though vast sky hangs above, The virtue of the people there Is as small as a mustard seed; Their hands are tighter than the barred

doors of the congregation hall! The flour costs more than gold. A hundred pleas for alms are wasted time; Poverty and famine stalk the place.

The land of Nya Non is full of fear, A paradise for bandits and murderers. Lepers are there In crowds, While burial grounds and cemeteries abound. So fearful is that country, one dares Not travel without

a hundred friends, Or take three steps without a guide. That cursed place, Nya Non is of the worst repute.

The Nepalese-Tibetan border is cold and high A land where snow and blizzards rage.

Its people are as dumb as mules! Its rivers flow south to Nepal, Where the lower valleys steam with heat And dangerous rope bridges sway high above the rocks. In Nepal heat and disease endanger life, While people in the South speak a different tongue, And the trees are stiff like corpses. With all my heart, I wish you would not go there, So please postpone your journey.

Although you would not take my gifts, I beg that you will grant my boon And visit my country for a fortnight.'

"Milarepa replied, "On the whole I cannot tolerate arrogant patrons. I am not interested in going to your country. As for Nya Non and Din Ri, I know them better than you. Hearken to my son :"
MSS LXVII

"You arrogant young man with strong desires, Listen to my song with faith.

It is hard to meet an immaculate man of merit, Hard to find a place where men of virtue live. For times have changed.

I am a yogi who thinks and says whate'er he likes, But I have never caused malicious gossip.

Though the flour be very dear in Din Ri, It is not hard for me to get it. Yet I prefer the taste of the Five Nectars, And never gorge myself with tasty morsels.

I am an abandoned yogi, who eats for food The inner Samadhi of Non-discernment. Thus the desire for tasty meals has no appeal. Cheerful and comfortable am I in times of famine.

Though the paths are perilous and dreadful,

My prayer to the Gracious One will never fail me. The Three Precious Ones are my safest shelter and refuge; The goddesses in the Three Places will always be my guides. My inseparable companion is the Bodhi-Mind;

My protectors are the Guards of the Eight Divisions

Since I have no possessions, I have no enemy.

Cheerful and at ease I meet the bandits.

Though Nya Non may be of bad repute,

The people there are candid and ingenuous.

As in days of old, they are straightforward and outspoken Easy going and carefree,

They eat and drink without pretension;

They keep things as they are,

And groves and forests flourish.

As for me, I take no interest In worldly wealth, Nor am I attached to food and drink.

Contented, I care not for loitering and amusement. When, therefore, I meditate, my Samadhi deepens.

This is wh I o to N a Non.
MSS LXVIII

Having mastered the art of Dumo's fire, I have no fear of cold or heat; Cheerful and in comfort I meet the falling snow.

Today I see no reason to delay my journey, But I shall not go to your country; Proud and haughty patrons are distasteful to me.

How can I ingratiate myself with those I do not know? Mount your horse as it is growing late.

My dear contented youth, it is time for you to go. May your health be good and your life long."

S: So Milarepa replies, 'On the whole I cannot tolerate arrogant patrons.' What does he mean by this. Why does he say it? Is he referring to the young man indirectly? If so why?

_____ The young man almost wants (the best for) Milarepa.

Vessantara; The young man's a bit condescending in a way.

S: In a way yes. Perhaps he thinks, well here am I, a young man of noble family inviting the yogi to my house. He ought to be very pleased, he ought to be very grateful. But this is not at all Milarepa's attitude. You get this amongst some lay supporters in the East or at least you get little tinges. A Buddhist monk is usually quite quick to detect any such thing. It's usually the rich man of the village who thinks the monks are very indebted to them and under some obligation to him because he's been quite generous to them, he's helped to rebuild the vihara or he's given them a good feast regularly throughout the year and so on; supplied them with robes and some lay supporters do get a little bit arrogant. You can understand that and sometimes the bhikkhus found it necessary to take them down a peg or two, very gently and quietly but they do it. So maybe Milarepa felt like this about the young man. So he said, 'On the whole I cannot tolerate arrogant patrons. I am not interested in going to your country.

So the young man has painted quite a black picture of these other places and Milarepa sees them quite differently. What do you think this illustrates? He says about the people of Nya Non, 'Though Nya Non may be of bad repute the people are candid and ingenuous. As in days of old, they are straightforward and outspoken. Easy going and carefree, they eat and drink without pretension; they keep things ~s they are, and groves and forests flourish.' Whereas the young man has said, 'The land of Nya Non is full of fear, a paradise for bandits and murderers. Lepers are there in crowds, while burial grounds and cemeteries abound. So fearful is that country, one dares not travel without a hundred friends or take three steps without a guide. That cursed place, Nya Non is of the worst repute.' What does that remind you of? It reminds me of what some of our friends say in London when we propose to go and establish a Centre in Bethnal
MSS LXIX

Green of all places. (Laughter) They say, 'Bethnal Green! You won't be able to survive. People will be very unfriendly and they won't welcome Buddhists etc., etc.' Anyone remember hearing things like that? I certainly have done. But those who live at Sukhavati find Bethnal Green people quite different from that. It's a good illustration

ost%%dint

I think. So what sort is the young man speaking from?

_____, It's a selfish standpoint thinking in terms of people robbing him and attacking him.

S: He's a young nobleman. He's got things that are worth robbing. Maybe he's a bit of an aristocrat, a bit sophisticated by standards of those days. These people are very simple and old-fashioned, plain and unpretentious. A bit rough, a bit rough and ready as we would say. Again maybe like some of

the Bethnal Green people. They've no airs and graces. They're a bit savage in the eyes of the aristocrat, a bit uncultured, a bit uneducated. They're backward, not very progressive. So you can see how it's possible to take two very different views of the same people.

Alan; In a way that's the quality Milarepa's saying that he likes.

S: He's saying that too, yes. He's saying that very definitely, very distinctly.

_____ And also he wants him to go there. He wants him to go to his own country. He wants to put him off.

S: Yes that's true. (pause) So Milarepa says, 'Though the flour be very dear in Din Ri' - he doesn't dispute that - 'it is not hard for me to get it, Yet I prefer the taste of the Five Nectars.' What are these Five Nectars? I think they're blissful experiences during meditation. 'And never gorge myself with tasty morsels.' In the same spirit he says 'I am an abandoned yogi who eats for food the inner Samadhi of non-discrimination. Thus the desire for tasty meals has no appeal. Cheerful and comfortable am I in times of famine. Since I have no possessions, I have no enemy. Cheerful and at ease I meet the bandits.' There's this story in 'the life of Milarepa' that when he was living in his cave one night a robber came to the cave and he was quietly searching around for something to steal, something to take away. So Milarepa heard him and understood it was a robber so he called out, 'I don't think you'll be able to find anything here by night. I've not been able to find anything by day!' (Laughter) Hearing these words the robber could not help laughing and went away. (Laughter) Even robbers have a sense of humour. So this also very much illustrates Milarepa's attitude. 'Cheerful and at ease I meet the bandits.' He's not worried in the least. He's naked. He hasn't even got any clothes to steal. 'Though Nya Non may be of bad repute, the people are candid and ingenuous.' This is his way of looking at them. 'As in days of old they are candid and outspoken.' (Pause) So do you think Milarepa is seriously dismissing him? 'My dear contented youth, it is time for you to go. May your health be good and your life long.'

MSS LXX

What do you think Milarepa's real attitude is?

Padmapani; He's forcing.... in a way by using the way he's manipulating the words here, forcing the youth onto his own position as to where he really does stand in relationship with the master.

S: Alright let's hear what the young man has to say now.

_____ "Upon hearing this song of rejection, the young man was overcome with dejection and disappointment. He said, 'Revered Sir, whatever I have offered you, you would not accept. Whatever instruction I have applied for, you would not grant. I realise that I am too sinful. I now swear that I will not go anywhere, but will kill myself here in your sight.' So saying, he drew his razor sharp knife, and, pressing the point against his heart sang:

Listen to me Revered Yogi,

On this auspicious morning, while riding on my way,

I saw a naked man, I in beside a silver 5 rin

I said 'Is he a mad yogi,

Or just a foolish joker?

Exposing his naked body without shame,

He must be a fool out of his mind!

And so, not faith, but contempt arose within me.

I rejected any thought of your companionship and went on alone.

Of this, you, Revered One, were clearly well aware.

As if wounded badly, I now repent in pain

When you were crossing the blue river To reach the seat of the other shore, I saw you fly over the water Like an eagle in the sky.

Soaring like wind in space, I saw you flying.

Displaying your miraculous powers, I saw you glide over the Tsang River And reach the other shore.

I was bewildered and overjoyed To see such an accomplished being.

Proud and happy I was, conceit arose within me;

I thought that I was a well-gifted person, Who had few hindrances and habit-forming thoughts.
MSS LXXI

I thought that I must be a good vessel for the Dharma;

I thought that I must be a virtuous and destined person,

Who had great merits and pure wishes.

Since the day I was born,

I have never been so happy as today.

In the wealth, property, and comfort that I Offered You have not the slightest interest.

I have never heard of a yogi like you in Tibet; I have never met such a perfect Buddhist, One so marvelous and unusual.

On this auspicious day in my pilgrimage, I made offerings and besought you in all ways! Marvelous and unusual as you are,

You have paid no heed to what I said.

I feel that I am stupid and lack merit;

I am utterly confused and most disheartened. With a feeling of frustration, I have lost my way. I am beginning to believe I have no capacity for Dharma!

What then would be the use and meaning Should one chance to meet a Buddha, If from him one does not receive a discourse?

How can one face, and what can one tell one's countrymen? Rather than return in shame I will end my life before you! All are bound to die in time; 'Tis better for me to die now, To die before such an accomplished saint, When my heart is full of Dharma. Oh, all-compassionate revered Jetsun! After hearing such a sorry tale from this poor lad, With your omniscient mind, you know what should be said."

S: So does one feel any difference between this song and the previous songs?

Padmapani; This is like a statement of his life.

_____ It seems really (abhorrent)....

_____ It's like he's playing a hit of a game (rather than) the real thing.
MSS LXXII

S: So 'Upon hearing this song of rejection the young man was overcome with dejection and

disappointment He said, 'Revered sir, whatever I have offered you you would not accept. Whatever instruction I have applied for, you would not grant. I realise that I am too sinful.' He's said that once before hasn't he? But perhaps then it was more as a matter of form but now he really feels it and really believes it. "I now swear that I will not go anywhere but will kill myself here in your sight. " So saying he drew his razor sharp knife and pressing the point against his heart, sang, "Listen to me revered yogi. On this auspicious morning, while riding on my way, I saw a naked man, lying beside a silver spring. The chapter's called, by the way, 'The meeting at Silver Spring'. So he then recounts his initial reaction. 'I said, 'Is he a mad yogi or just a foolish joker? Exposing his naked body without shame. He must be a fool out of his mind!'. So he confesses that not faith but contempt arose within him and then he was very much impressed by this miracle. Milarepa flying through the air across the river to the other shore. He says, 'I was bewildered and overjoyed to see such an accomplished being. Proud and happy as I was, conceit arose within me; I thought that I was a well gifted person who had few hindrances and habit-forming thoughts. I thought that I must be a good vessel for the Dharma. I thought that I must be a virtuous and destined person who had great merits and pure wishes.' So don't you think that's very significant and very characteristic? Yes there's some genuine spiritual contact. there's even some genuine faith and admiration maybe but proud and happy as I was conceit arose within me'. Sometimes you find people having that sort of experience when they get a good meditation especially if they haven't been meditating long. 'Well maybe I'm going to be a really great Yogi. Maybe it's much more easy for me than for others. Maybe I'm more advanced than others and you start getting very very pleased and happy and satisfied. So 'proud and happy as I was conceit arose within me.' What does that suggest? Proud and happy.

_____ It almost implies as if he's the only one.

S: But I think also the point is that when we are happy that we're liable to be carried away by these sort of feelings of elation that eventually take an egoistic sort of turn. When things are going well. When things are going well you tend to lose your mindfulness. You tend to get carried away. You tend to get a bit inflated. It's then that must be very very careful. This is what the Greeks called 'Hybris' Have you heard about this? Hybris is the sort of pride you get at the height of your success when you forget the decencies of life, you forget your duties. You forget your own limitations above all and you commit the sin of hybris which the Greeks would consider as deadly Sin. It's overweening pride, it's overconfidence. You think you're so good, you think you're so great. You can do anything but you can't. You're only a mortal man, you're not a god. 'So I was bewildered and overjoyed to see such an accomplished being. Proud and happy as I was conceit arose within me. I thought that I was a well gifted person.' He sees very clearly how his own mind has been working. 'I thought I must be a good vessel for the Dharma' etc etc., As if if one hears this great yogi he'll fly through the air and who's met him? me. There must be something really special about me. I must be a potentially very good person,
MSS LXXIII

very great person who must have committed lots of good deeds in previous lives but I'm unaware of it. I must be a very good vessel for the Dharma-that's why I've had this special privilege of coming into contact with this yogi.

Padmaraja; Was that not true?

S: In a sense it was true but he was taking it in this egoistic way. Yes he was a destined heart-disciple, one of eight.

_____, He's got no way of realising it in his present state.

S: Y~s. He regards, if he knew anything about being one of the eight heart-disciples he would look upon it as a sort of position as it were, not as an actual spiritual experience. He couldn't see it as a spiritual experience. It would be a sort of grade or rank amongst Milarepa's disciples.

Padmapani; In a way he became that because he went through the whole process of dissolving his ego in a sense.

S: Well Milarepa put him through it. And then he said, this is very significant, ' Since the day that I was born I have never been so happy as today.' Isn't that rather extraordinary. He's on the point of committing suicide and at the same time he says, ' Since the day that I was born I have never been so happy as today.' Is he referring do you think to his egoistic happiness?

_____ No.

S: No but how can he be happy if he's feeling like committing suicide?

Alan; If Milarepa goes away and doesn't give him the teaching then he's going to lose and not be able to follow up that experience?

S: No I think we can go even further than that. He's very very miserable, he's on the point of committing suicide. At the same time he's never been so happy as today. At least he's met Milarepa. He's got that great faith. Even though Milarepa's not going to give him any teaching. Even though he's rejected him he's not going to be accepted as a disciple; still he has met him and he's got faith in him. So there's this tremendous offering on the one hand and at the same time there's this great happiness. He's never been so happy as he is today although he's on the point of committing suicide. The human mind is such you can feel this contrary emotion at the same time. You can be so miserable, so much in the depths of despair. On the point of committing suicide. At the same time you can be quite almost ecstatically happy and this is his state.

MSSLXJC iV

Padmapani; I~~s rather a contemporary view of breaking through.

S: It's sort of quite existential you could say. 'In the wealth, property and comfort that I offered you have not the slightest interest. I never heard of a yogi like you in Tibet. I never met such a perfect Buddhist, one so marvelous and unusual. On this auspicious day in my pilgrimage I made offerings and besought you in all ways. Marvelous and unusual as you are you have paid no heed to what I have said. I feel that I am most ignorant and pitiful. I have realised that I am stupid and lack merit. I am utterly confused and most disheartened. With a feeling of frustration I have lost my way. I'm beginning to believe I have no capacity for Dharma.' Don't you think that's very significant. 'With a feeling of frustration I have lost my way. I am beginning to believe I have no capacity for Dharma.' What does that mean? It means he's beginning to have a capacity for Dharma. Before it was an egoistic confidence. ' I thought I must be a good vessel for the Dharma. Now I am beginning to believe I have no capacity for the Dharma.' It's that old egoistic confidence that is now waning. That false confidence, pseudo-confidence. (Pause) 'What then would be the use and meaning should one chance to meet a Buddha if from him one does not receive a discourse. How could one face and what could one tell ones countrymen? Rather than return in shame I will end my life before you. All are bound to die in time. 'Tis better for me now to die before such an accomplished saint when my heart is full of Dharma. Oh all compassionate~ revered Jetsun, after hearing such a sorry tale from this poor lad with your omniscient mind you know what should be said.' What's the difference now between this request and the previous ones?

_____, It's the final one.

S: It's the final one. Before he wanted Milarepa to do this or do that or give him this, give him that. Now he's leaving it all to Milarepa. Do you see the difference? You know what to do. I don't have to tell you. I don't have to teach you. 'With your omniscient mind you know what should be said.'

Padmapani; In a way it's really self-surrender to the Guru.

S: It's surrender yes. (Long pause) Airight what is Milarepa's response now. Let's go on to that.

_____ ; "Having hearfl this sincere prayer Milarepa thought, 'He has indeed great earnestness and sincerity. There must be a mutual vow between us. The prophecy given by the goddess in my dream seems to point to him. I must, therefore accept him.' And so he sang:"

S: You notice Milarepa doesn't accept his own dreams jUs~ at their face value. Now he seems to be convinced - 'The prophecy given by the gpddess in my dream seems to point to him. I must therefore accept him.' As it were a quite almost critical attitude towards his own experience. 50 lets hear the song.

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_____ "Listen to me dear young patron!

You have a zealous aspiration for virtuous deeds

You must be a man with litt]e sin or evil Karma.

Since you have intense longing to solicit Dharma from me

Your pride and self-conceit must be small indeed!

Diligent and enthusiastic,

You cannot be lazy.

Since you made generous offerings,

You cannot be close or greedy.

Your intelligence and sympathy are good,

So you have little ignorance or hate.

since you pay respect and homage tc me, You must have been closely associated With Dharma in your previous lives!

On this auspicious morning I, the

vagabond from Gung Tang,

And you the young man from lower Jhal Khrum Met on this blue river bank.

It seems our hopes in bygone lives arranged the meeting; It was our destiny to meet before the Silver Spring. You must be one whose Karma is unstained,

Who has awakened from thc habitual-thought

of the Store-Consciousness.

Young patron, I sing this auspicious song for you. Since you have heard authentic teaching,

Will you now be keen to practice Dharma?

If faith has risen from your heart, If you take no heed of worldly gain, If you really want to follow me, Know that kinsmen are the devil-planned hindrances of Dharma;

Think not of them as real, but quench your craving for them.

Money and dainties are the devil's envoys; Association with them is pernicious. Renounce them and all other things that bind you.

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Delight in pleasures is the devil's rope; think, then, of death to conquer your desires. Young companions are the tempting devil's snare; Knowing they are delusive, watch them carefully.

One's native land is the dungeon of the devil;

Imprisoned therein 'tis hard

To win liberation.

Try then to escape at once; Put all aside and strive for Dharma. Only by instant action can you succeed!

In time your body of illusion will decay.

'Tis better to associate with Dharma now.

The darting bird of mind will fly up anyway;

'Tis better now to wing~y9ur way t9 Heaven!

If you believe and follow what I have said, You will be a worthy vessel for the Dharma. You will be given benediction and instruction; The profound teachings of the Whispered Lineage Will also be imparted.

My son! This is the start of your journey

on the Bodhi Path.

Even I, the Yogi, rejoice at your success.

You too, young man should be glad and joyful!"

The youth was indescribably happy when he heard this song. With great exhilaration he bowed down at the Jetsun's feet, made many obeisances, and circumambulated him many times. Then he made a vow to return and departed."

S: What is this mutual vow? There 5 another reference in the song itself. 'It seems our hopes in bygone lives arranged a meeting.' That they had some connection with previous lives and wanted to meet again in the future and here and now they have done just that.

Padmapani; Does that mean that what we say in this life has an effect on the next life ?

S: Yes, this is the general belief in karma but more specifically it is a general Buddhist belief that if you aspire to be reborn in a future life, if you still think in terms of future life, in company with another person, then that is possible. One isn't of course

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encouraged to make this sort of vow or resolution out of worldly attachment but sometimes disciples do make vows that they would like to be reborn with the same teacher or the same spiritual companion, the same fellow disciple and continue with them in a future life as well. It's this sort of practice that he's referring to. In India generally husband and wife sometimes make a resolution to be born again as husband and wife in the next life. This isn't encouraged by Buddhism because this is, you could say, an outcome of attachment.

Alan; Didn't the Buddha's wife at the time he paid homage to Dipankara, the girl that gave him the lotuses, that was the condition

S: This is one of the later legends which seems to incorporate these Hindu, or at least Indian sentiment. There's nothing about this in the Pali texts at all of course. But in a way it's a quite interesting conception - this idea of a whole band of people spiritually connected down through the ages life after life. They're spiritually connected, this is the point.

Alan; Something like Hesse's journey to the East.

S: ~xcept that it's a journey that extends over a whole series of lives and not just throughout one life.

Alan; No that was throughout lives too, throughout time.

_____ The reincarnation experience of () set in the Cathar times. The Cathar religion. A whole crowd of people who lived around that time and were on both sides oppressors and oppressed and they have connections right through.

Padmapani; Is it karmically better to be born as a male?

S: This is the traditional Buddhist view, yes. The male has fewer impediments and is more free.

_____ What is the source of that?

S: It's mentioned many times in Pali texts.

_____; Do Buddhist women in the Ea~ accept that?

S: Yes. They feel that they are, by virtue of the fact that they are women they experience or suffer from various handicaps. They don't regard it as sort of cultural conditioning but as inherent in their sort of biological and psychological structure.

_____ They don't seem to be happy to accept that in London.
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S; Well they need to be better instructed in the Dharma. (Laughter) To take it out of that particular context it's accepting where you are and recognising your own limitations whatever they are. A man also has got limitations. He has to accept and recognise those. So recognise your own limitations whatever they are and don't try to say well they're not a limitation or they're not a limitation that I have. It's just something that's imposed on me from outside. That is virtually to say it's other people's fault not mine which is not an attitude which is conducive to progress.. Otherwise one might say, I've got a bad temper what can I do about it. I inherited it from my grandfather, he had a bad temper, that's why I've got one. It's not my fault. It's like say being reborn in a country where the Dharma is not accessible - yes we suffer from a disadvantage and we have to recognise that. We're at a disadvantage compared with those people who are born in a country where the Dharma is accessible and freely available. It's a disadvantage that at present we're living in a country where you can't become a monk in the traditional sense and wander about and be supported by the public - that is a disadvantage. We recognise that. There's no need to say out of a feeling of false national pride that we have just as good opportunities here in all respects as they have in Eastern Buddhist countries. In certain respects we don't and have to recognise that. So it's the same that if the woman suffers certain disadvantages because she's a woman let her recognise that. If a man suffers certain disadvantages because he's a man let him recognise that. It's only when you recognise your limitations that you can do something about them and transcend them. In some societies it's a disadvantage to be born poor. It's alright to say poor and rich are equally good, so they are in a way but it's still a disadvantage to be born poor. You're at a disadvantage if you're poor in a society which values money.

Padmapani; Could one say the same thing about class? That it's a disadvantage to be...

S : From a spiritual point of view one is thinking. From a spiritual point of view it doesn't really matter. If you're born in a low class it keeps you humble and if you're born in a high class OK you're more mobile, you've got more opportunity. Usually the only real advantages and disadvantages are those directly connected with the practice of the Dharma. But all limitations can be transcended but you're more likely to transcend them if you recognise them to begin with.

Padmapani; It seems almost as if one cultivates the opposite. If one is born quite rich in the spiritual sense he's at quite a disadvantage because he's got to get rid of quite a lot. If one was not so rich one's at a greater advantage to give those sort of things up and maybe the conditioning that goes with them.

S: It's sometimes more difficult to give up a little than to give up a lot. It's less spectacular, less dramatic. If you give away a million it's in all the newspapers, it's headline; it's news. If you give away all you've got i.e. two quid (laughter) well you've given everything away but it's not going to make the headlines is it? If you give away a million it'll make the headlines even if you've got ten million that you haven't given

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away. You've only given away a tenth of what you've got. Anyway you notice Milarepa does something here. He's been taking the young man down a peg a two, quite a number of pegs quite ruthlessly almost though with compassion at the back of his mind but in the beginning of this song he says, 'Listen to me dear young patron, you have a zealous aspiration for virtuous deeds. You must be a man with little sin or evil Karma. Since you have intense longing to solicit Dharma from me your pride and conceit must be small indeed!' Why this sudden change? Do you think Milarepa is serious or has he got his tongue in his cheek as he's singing?

I think he's serious.

S: You think he's serious. Why this sudden change then?

Peter ; The young man's changed.

S: The young man's changed yes.

_____, He's really open to him.

S: He's really open to him.

Padmapani; He's ready to receive the teaching.

S: He's ready to receive the teaching yes. Milarepa's harshness has done its work and the young man is really reduced to desperation, he's thinking of committing suicide so Milarepa has certainly reduced his egotism but now he has to encourage him. A bit more of that ruthless treatment and he might even commit suicide or apparently ruthless treatment, he might commit suicide so now Milarepa realises that another sort of approach is needed. An approach which he can quite sincerely make, to appreciate his good qualities. So sometimes you find this and you need this kind of attitude with people. If you're always encouraging and sympathetic they get a bit out of hand. If you're always critical and taking them down a peg or two they get very discouraged so one has to alternate the two approaches. Don't be too encouraging and sympathetic. On the other hand don't be too critical. Do you see this. You find it in your ordinary everyday dealings with them. Don't make things so easy for them that they think things are easy but don't make things so difficult that they get really discouraged and give up.

_____; Would you say when in doubt err on the side of encouragement?

S: Yes especially if there's a possibility of people committing suicide. (laughter) Also consult one's own temperament. Some people are more likely to err on the side of sympathy and encouragement by nature so (correct that) and vice-versa. So Milarepa's been apparently very very harsh but now he's being very very kind. He says, 'Young patron

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I sing this auspicious song for you. Since you have heard authentic teaching will you now be keen to practice Dharma?' No doubt the young man has heard authentic teaching before. He knows a bit about Buddhism but the idea of practising it possibly hasn't occurred to him seriously. Milarepa then gives him some advice. 'If faith has risen from your heart, if you take no heed of worldly gain. If you really want to follow me, know that kinsmen are the devil-planned hindrances of Dharma; Think not of them as real but quench your craving for them.' Don't you think that's rather strong. 'Kinsmen are the devil-planned hindrances of Dharma'. Do you agree with Milarepa or is he overstating his case.

Padmapani; It's almost as if he's trying to cut off the exit for the young man to go back to his old situation.

S: Right. There's also one point here. That is 'Devil' it must be the Tibetan equivalent of Mara but does devil in English have the same sort of connotation, the same sort of feel to it as the word 'Mara' in Pali and Sanskrit. No the devil is diabolical but Mara is just a hindrance, just a nuisance. If you say know that kinsmen are the Mara-planned hindrances of Dharma it sounds a bit different doesn't it. Or if you say money and dainties are Mara's envoys. You're not taking it too seriously. If you use the word devil you're as if it were taking it much too seriously.

Peter; Like that it's got a christian feel to it almost.

S: But it isn't there in buddhism. One's native land is the dungeon of the devil. As we've got quite a few ex-Catholics here what does devil conjure up in your mind. Devil as distinct from Mara.

Peter; The devil is there all the time. He's almost as omnipresent as God is with each individual person. He's constantly tempting you individually. It's not only God who is omnipresent, the devil is omnipresent and he can tempt you individually by various things, various desires. Your desires are the temptations of the devil. As well as your own lower nature it's also the temptation of the devil. If you're tempted it's not you so much as the devil tempting you.

S: There's this absolute principle of evil almost over against God though theologically no such principle is accepted but emotionally this is what it usually amounts to. The ubiquitous devil.

Sagaramati; Even then though in a sense he has a sort of mystical quality. Almost a glint in his eye.

S: Perhaps in folklore but not in serious religious circles.

_____ I think I can feel that now. I couldn't feel it when I was involved
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S: Maybe something of Mara has rubbed off onto the devil. But Mara is a silly, mischievous blundering psychic nuisance (laughter) who is quite quickly and easily seen through even if you're just a little bit aware and mindful and who disappears the instant that he's detected. That's Mara but the devil is something rather different. So know that kinsmen are the Mara-planned hindrances of Dharma. It has got a different feel to it hasn't it? But even so that's quite strong that kinsmen are Mara-planned hindrances of Dharma. Do you think that can be taken at its face-value, as it were, quite literally. Do kinsmen really get in the way of your spiritual progress, your devotion to the Dharma?

_____ You've got to break off all your old family ties etc.

Padmapani; He seems to be talking very much to the young prince in a very personal sense. He's talking about him obviously being a worldly young man. It's his kinsmen, it's the people he deals with in his life.

S: Kinsman means your blood relation. Your kin. And he's a nobleman and the higher you are in the social scale the more important blood and family become. There's that also to consider.

_____; Where it says kinsman it implies great closeness and following the Dharma's just the opposite. It's for the individual.

S: So it's that very much. Because in relatively primitive unorganised society with no very strong central government and administration and police force, people who are kinsmen stick together. They may even have to fight together against outsiders, invaders, bandits or what-ever. So there is a very strong sense of solidarity among those who are kin. You get it in the Highlands even now don't you. So it is really the group mentality. The group loyalty perhaps. I don't think one should think in terms of what we now call the nuclear family, it's not just your wife and kids. It's the whole clan as it were, which is in a way, sometimes at least, a much stronger thing. So therefore the group mentality, the group loyalty. So it's that that is a hindrance to Dharma, to the practice of Dharma. So long as you consider yourself as primarily or even exclusively a member of a particular group and so long as you're principal loyalty is to that group then no practice of the Dharma is possible. You can't think for instance in terms of not fighting for your group because you've got absolute loyalty to the group. If the group is threatened, if the group is attacked you'll fight for it, whether it's your tribe or your nation or your state or whatever. 'Money and dainties are the devil's envoys.' Mara's envoys. 'Association with them is pernicious. Renounce them and all other things that

bind you. Delight in pleasures is Mara's rope. Think then of death to conquer your desires'. Why should you think of death to conquer desires?

_____; You can't take anything with you.

S: You can't take anything with you. you have to leave it behind anyway sooner or later.
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S: 'Your companions are the tempting Mara's snare.' What sort of companions has Milarepa in mind?

Peter; The young men he was going to play with.

S: Yes right. Young men like himself or young men like what he used to be. Certainly not spiritual 'one's native land is Mara's dungeon. Imprisoned therein 'tis hard to win liberation.' What does it mean by being imprisoned within one's native land. Do you take it literally or in some other way?

Peter; I think you do because you get the idea I'm an Englishman or I'm a Scotsman That's what I am.

S: That's what I am, One hundred percent, just that. This identification with a particular nationality. Not necessarily staying within the geographical limits of that particular country.

Alan; Do you think for some people they've got to actually get out of the geographical limits to break through that.

S: I think it would certainly help very much but usually just your own area, your own locality. it's not even your own country because your emotional attachment is much more to a particular locality more than to the county as a whole which may not mean very much to you in fact.

_____, Having the name change, taking say an Indian name is quite an important thing.

S: Yes in a way it's good to have, in a sense. a slightly outlandish name.

_____, The connotations. I was thinking the whole thing seems to be like for instance for me my identity at the moment is like getting a computer card at the same time whereas Scots nationality, my family and the whole works....

S: Education, background, qualifications.

_____ Losing that name perhaps I'd lose the computer card.

_____ Are the sort of names that Buddhists get when ordained different enough from traditional Indian names to have the same effect.

S: Originally in the Buddha's day there was no change in name. It seemed as though you were spiriLually transformed before you even had time to change your name. Everything happened so quickly but in Ceylon for instance they always take9~rdination what we would
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call a Buddhist name and in Thailand too though in a slightly different sort of way. They change it there. But in Thailand some monks retain their lay name after ordination and are simply known as the reverend so and so. In China they're very particular about Dharma name, Japan too and Tibet - they always take Dharma names though lay names are also Dharma names in a way though not invariably.

_____; So the names don't sound so outlandish there.

S: No because they've been Buddhists in a sense, in a manner of speaking, for centuries. If you're a Tibetan when you're born you're called Dorje which means vajra it doesn't seem even particularly Buddhist though the dorje or vajra is an important Buddhist symbol. Just as in this country if someone is called John you don't immediately think of the fourth gospel as soon as you hear his name whereas originally when England was being converted to christianity it might have had some significance of that sort. Perhaps the time will come when we feel that Buddhist names are not necessary and no longer serve their original purpose but at present they do serve a purpose and they are useful so we have them. There was an interesting bit on the radio the other day, I think it was on 'Any Questions', the Dean of St. Pauls who is a New Zealander was on the programme, Gordon Sullivan I think his name is, and a question arose as to how people on the team felt when they were addressed immediately upon acquaintance by other people by their first names, their christian names. So they were talking about this and someone happened to say, addressing the Dean of St Pauls, how do you feel if someone uses your christian name and not your real name. So he said my christian name is my real name. He had quite a good point in a way. Sullivan is not his real name, it's his first name which is his baptismal name, which is his real name and it's thesame with us. Our Buddhist name is our real name, not the Smith or Brown or Jones or Jim or Jack or Harry that's the real name, it's the Buddhist name that is the real name. So we have to insist upon that.

'The darting bird or mind will fly up anyway. 'Tis better now to wirt~ your way to heaven. What is this darting bird or mind that will fly up anyway. It's the consciousness which according to Tibetan teaching, at the time of death passes out through the top of the head. It'll fly up any way so let it go to heaven now as it were. Let it rise up in meditation. 'If you believe and follow what I have said you will be a worthy vessel for the Dharma. You will be given benediction and instruction; The profound teachings of the Whispered Lineage will also be impart~d. My son this is the start of your journey on the Bodhi-Path.'this is the first time he addresses him as my son you notice. He's accepted him as a disciple. This is what it means. 'Even I, the Yogi, rejoice at your success. What does that mean. Why should he say 'even I'. You might have felt well Milarepa most of all but he says even I.

Peter; Perhaps it's like there was so much against him in the beginning that perhaps he needed to say that to perk him up a bit.

S: Or it could be that he's a Yogi, he doesn't rejoice at anything. It's all the same. But even he, though a Yogi, looking at things with an even mind, rejoices at the young man's
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success. 'You too young man should be glad arid joyful! The youth was indescribably happy when he heard this song. With great exhilaration, he bowed down at the Jetsun's feet, made many obeisances and circumambulated him many times. Then he made a vow to return and departed'. Any further questions for today?

Sagaramati; What about the attitude of the young man and the people we get along today. People

aren't as cold-bloodedly determined as that any more. Or could that situation only arise when the Dharma had been established for quite a long time?

S: I don't think it's even a question of the Dharma having been established but, for a very sort of stable healthy, primitive society. We just don't have that sort of society. You might get someone like this in the States, in the western states, from Texas say or somewhere like that. I doubt if you'd meet anyone quite like this young man in this country - the social and cultural conditions are so different.

Padmaraja; You mean with that kind of determination.

S: Not that determination but it's everything. you can certainly meet people with determination, no doubt about that but not as healthy and sort of full-blooded usually as this young man seems to be. Not so naive either. He's a bit naive or he was a bit naive to start with. Very few people you meet nowadays are naive. Especially young men but in the States they are. You can meet them, I met some of them at Yale. you do get young men who've grown up on farms in western states, a very healthy, very unspoilt, very unsophisticated, very simple but very sincere.

One that strikes me immediately is a writer called Ken Kesey who came down from Oregon, I think it was. He's sort of lumberjack stock. His feet hit the ground very hard every time he walks.

S: I met quite a few Tibetans like this young man. I had one student in fact in Kalimpong very much like this in a way. He was a (Kumbar) You know about the (Kumbars) I take it.

They're from Kumi } Eastern Tibet and they're supposed to be quite different from other

Tibetans. They're much less sophisticated than the Lhasa people. Lhasa people regard

them as rather crude and barbaric and stupid and they're very fond of fighting, very warlike people. They still harry the Chinese by the way. They've retired into the mountains and they still descend and carry on a sort of guerilla warfare and are very interested in all that sort of thing and very religious at the same time. There's a story for instance

that I was told, it might have been by this same chap, his name was ()

and he said that in the early days of the chinese invasion when the Kumbars were still fighting the chinese quite out in the open before they retired up into the mountains there was a caravan from a big monastery which was passing through the countryside and it belonged to an incarnate Lama for whom of course the Kumbars have got great respect. The usual custom is that a caravan or anything of that sort belonging to an incarnate Lama is decorated in a certain way and the leading horse is decorated in a certain way. In
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Tibetan caravans the leading horse always has a special decoration, usually a red plume on the forehead and he won't allow any other horse or mule to get ahead of him but the leading horse on an incarnate Lama's caravan has a very special decoration which anyone would be able to recognise. It so happened that in this particular case the leading horse was not wearing his plume to show that it was a caravan belonging to an incarnate Lama. Why? Because the manager of the monastery and the manager of the incarnate Lama thought that would be dangerous in a way because if it's known it's an incarnate Lama's caravan people will know it's very wealthy and a lot of money and goods and it might be attacked so to disguise the caravan as it were the horse wasn't decorated with his usual insignia. So the Kumbars saw this caravan coming so they didn't know it belonged to an incarnate Lama so they attacked it and a number of people were killed and they were looting it. Then they discovered that it belonged to an incarnate Lama. So my friend told me they were very upset and at once they gave back everything that they looted and they found the manager and apologised and asked him to apologise on their behalf to the incarnate Lama and they said well it was your fault after all, you should have let the horse wear the insignia so that we would have known. So we're giving back everything with our apologies. The men that we've killed, we're very sorry that we can't bring them back to life but convey our apologies to the incarnate Lama. That's very much their attitude. So they

are like this. This chap who used to tell me about his life in Kum with his brothers. They were very much a clan of five or six brothers and were always together and he said that they were all merchants and small aristocrats at the same time and their whole manner was very sort of bluff and hearty and he said they were quite well to do and had quite a good income from their trade and they divided all their money into three parts. One third went to the Dharma, this was quite customary; one third went to pleasure; and one third was put into the business and household expenses and so on. This is very typical in Tibet. Pleasure would mean picnics, parties, gambling. One third for Dharma, one third for pleasure, one third for business and household expenses. This is very typical of them and no doubt this would have been the attitude of this sort of young man. I went with three of the brothers to Darjeeling when they saw their first railway train they'd never seen a railway train before and they were absolutely astonished and delighted and they were peering at it. It was only a little tiny mountain train, very very small indeed and they were looking at it and peering underneath the wheels and while they were bending down and peering it gave a great 'toot'. They were alive and talking very eagerly and when it started moving they were so interested and so thrilled and so impressed just like a load of kids just watching this train move off, really excited so

this young man must have been very much this type of person. Until recently you could even meet any number of them in Tibet~in places like Kalimpong. Now I'm afraid after so many

years in India they're much more sophisticated but it's quite interesting to see these very unspoiled, very unsophisticated people. Very full blooded. It's very noticeable that Tibetans especially mule drivers used to walk down the main street in Kalimpong as though they owned the place exactly. Very sort of swaggering, very sort of swashbuckling with their swords and their () sort of taken down from their shoulders and the sleeves knotted round their waists and things like that and their big boots and their cowboy hats

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and people used to get out of their way. I remember once I went to the bank, the bank of all places, you know what banks are like even in India and there was one of these Tibetans stretched out on the floor asleep. (Laughter) No one dared to ask him to get up and go away. That was quite characteristic of them and they loved fighting and they used to like the films There was a cinema in Kalimpong. It was always cowboy films. (laughter) Tibetans really love cowboy films. This is what they really go for more than any other kind. Romantic films were just a lot of silly nonsense but a good cowboy film with lots of shooting and killing, that's what they really liked. So reading these episodes and reading about these sort of people though it is nearly a thousand years ago is very much the Tibetan of, I was going to say today, but the Tibetan of yesterday. Certainly people I've met are very much like this. Like out of the Middle ages, like meeting someone from the reign of William the Conqueror. Full blooded etc, unsophisticated, a bit primitive, direct, quite intelligent at the same time. Quite hardy. Quite fond of simple luxury and pleasure so very good material for the Dharma as it were. A bit different from the anaemic specimens one usually gets along these days until very recently. We must even thank our stars that nowadays we get along young men. When I was at Hampstead it was nearly always old ladies. The average age of my audiences was seventy! (Laughter) I remember the first summer school I went to and there were about a hundred people at the Buddhist Society Summer School and on about the fourth or fifth day one rushed to me rather excited and said, 'Bhante, Shante, what do you think! There's a young person just arrived!' (Laughter) It was a young man of about thirty who seemed very much out of place. Bert Taylor used to be there - he was forty then and was the youngest of the summer school - young Bert Taylor (Laughter) and the older women used to say 'Bert Taylor, he's such a nice boy!' (Laughter) I was the youngest. I was not quite forty then. I was younger than everybody else present. So things have really changed. Anyway let's leave it there until tomorrow.

Airight page 88.

Padmaraja; "Four months later when Milarepa was staying at Manlung Chubar of Drin, the young man came with his nephews to visit him. The uncle offered a piece of immaculate white jade, and the nephew half an ounce of gold, but the Jetsun would not accept the gifts.

At that time the translator Bhari was building a stupa of the Tsudor Namjhol

Buddha at Drin, so Milarepa said to them, 'It is not necessary for me to take your offerings; you may offer them to Bhari, the Translator, and ask him to initiate you. As for the Pith-Instructions I shall give them to you myself.'

Accordingly they went to Bhari, the Translator, and asked him to impart to them the complete initiation of Dem Chog. Whereupon, Bhari bestowed upon them the Outer Teachings of Tsudor Namjhal, the Me Ru Sinha practice for prolonging life, and the teachings of the Buddha of Performance. He also gave them the Inner Teachings of Dem Chog, that is, the Practice of Seven Words, the instructions of the Guru Symbol Goddess, and the meditation practice of the Goddess Kurkulla. After that they accompanied him to Sajya Monastery."
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S: Let's take that so far. 'Four months later when Milarepa was staying at Manlun Chubar of Drin, the young man came with his nephew to visit him. The uncle offered a piece of immaculate white jade and the nephew half an ounce of gold, but the Jetsun would not accept the gifts. At that time the translator Bhari was building a stupa of the Tsudor Namjhal Buddha at Drin.' This Bhari Lotsawa as he's called is a very well known figure in the

Tibetan () of those days. He was a great translator, also a great teacher and Yogi. So Milarepa says, 'It is not necessary for me to take your offerings; you may offer them to Bhari, the translator and ask him to initiate you. As for the Pith-Instructions I shall give them to you myself.' Why do you think Milarepa told the young man to get the, as it were, preliminary initiations from Bhari?

_____ At that time neither of them has reached Milarepa's level so it was practical to be taught by Milarepa.

S: It could be that but it does say, 'As for the Pith-Instructions I shall give them to you myself.' The Pith-Instructions are the most, in a sense, esoteric, instructions. So why do you think the young man was sent to Phari Lotsawa?

It would have meant Milarepa taking some gold and jade.

S: It was a skilful way of getting rid of the gold and jade, yes. (laughter) But he could have got rid of the gold and jade simply by saying go and give them to him and then come back. So why do you think?

Alan; So he could have experience of another teacher.

S: Possibly but since he had Milarepa why was that necessary?

Sagaramati; Could it be as a second opinion?

S: A second opinion of the young man about Milarepa or Bhari Lotsawa's opinion about the young man?

Sagaramati; Bhari's opinion about the young man.

S: No, I don't think it's got anything to do with that, Milarepa knew the young man perfectly well but just sort of think. What does tantric initiation mean. Just think how Milarepa was living. Milarepa was living like a solitary yogi. He was a solitary yogi. He was naked, he had nothing. Now he could have given the young man the Pith-Instruction straightaway presumably but he didn't. He sent him to Bhari Lotsawa to get the initiation into Dem Chog and various other initiations, so why was this? One must understand what these initiations, I won't say are all about, but what they are like, and also remember the young man's character, After all the young man was a nobleman wasn't he, He had quite
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good possessions. He had this wonderful horse and the saddle, the jacket, the trousers, the sword and

~e rest of it. Apparently he came from a quite well to do family. He was quite prosperous and here he is offering a piece of jade and his nephew half an ounce of gold. So one could say that though sincere, though devoted, he was still in a comparative low, as it were sensuous level. Now the Bhari Lotsawa was a great translator, a great teacher, a great yogi also but his lifestyle was quite different from that of Milarepa. As far as we know he had lots and lots of disciples. He dwelt in a monastery or temple. There was a lot going on around him. There were many images, lots of ceremonies, lots of initiations and all of this was very colourful and very inspiring. So it seems to me that Milarepa thought that this young man needs that sort of experience of the Dharma, needs to be with a lot of other disciples, a lot going on, lots of colourful ceremonies, everything very inspiring. What was there with Milarepa? There was nothing. Just Milarepa himself without any clothes on even, and the bare teaching of the highest possible spiritual level. He wasn't ready for that. Milarepa didn't even have a bell with him, not even a dorje with him. He had nothing to make offerings with, no lamps, no images, no shrine. The young man apparently - this is my guess at least - needed all those things and Milarepa knew that he'd find that whole more colourful and rich and devotional side of the Dharma, or level of the Dharma, with the the Bhari Lotsawa so he sent him there. Otherwise if he'd just initiated him into the highest yoga straightaway the young man with his sort of background and temper, this would have seemed rather bleak and dry and not so interesting, not so satisfying. So it seems to me that this is why Milarepa sent him there. So he says 'It is not necessary for me to take your offerings; you may offer them to Bhari, the Translator, and ask him to initiate you. As for the Pith-Instructions,' which are the instructions that really matter, 'I shall give them to you myself. Accordingly they went to Bhari, the Translator and asked~him to impart to them the complete initiation of Dem Chog.' Dem Chog is one of the tantric divinities, Samvara in Sanskrit, Dem Chog in Tibetan means 'great bliss' - he's one of the specifically tantric deities shown in Yab-Yum form at the centre of the Mandala. So the complete initiation of Dem Chog might have taken weeks or even months. There'd be many many ceremonies, many initiations, lots of explanation, everything very colourful, very inspiring, very beautiful. Not only that 'Bhari bestowed upon them the Outer Teachings Os Tsudo Namjhal' I don't know what those are. 'And the Me Ru Singha practice for prolonging life.' There are many practices for prolonging life. 'and the teachings of the Buddha of Performance. He also gave them the Inner Teachings of Dem Chog, that is, the Practice of Seven Words, the instructions of the Guru Symbol Goddess, and the meditation practice of the Goddess Kurukulla.' So they got initiation into these, as it were, more colourful tantric practices which required a context of ritual and ceremony and symbolism and art which a young man of that sort would presumably find very inspiring and uplifting and which would provide a good foundation for his practice This to me seems to be the point of sending the young man to the Bhari Lotsawa. I've seen the way in which some of the Tibetan Lamas function and it is very colourful and very inspiring and there are many hundreds of disciples gathered around and ceremonies going on day and night, the blowing of conch shells and incense burning and golden lamps burning and beautiful images and thankas. maybe it is not the highest level of spiritual practice and experience, Milarepa represents that but it is a very useful, as it were, halfway house.

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Halfway in the sense that you're half way on the spiritual path by the time you get deeply involved with all that. So he had this experience. We're not told how long it lasted. It could have been months. It might even have been a year or two or more.

Padmapani; Could you say that the young man on his initial experience should be like perfect vision in a sense but after he'd gone away and come back to Milarepa four months later he wasn't on that same level as that initial experience and Milarepa gave him the means suitable to like you were saying

S: It could be but even if he retained that original vision and insight, in view of his temperament and background no doubt he still needs this sort of preparation.

Carry on.

"Then the lad returned to Milarepa and lived with him for five years. From the Jetsun, he obtained the teaching of the renowned Six Yogas of Naropa, and the teaching of~the Mahamudra transmitted from the Great Master Medripa. Because he practiced these teachings diligently, Milarepa

also imparted to him all the Pith-Instructions. Formerly the young man had been called Dharma Wonshu; later, Milarepa gave him another

name Repa Shiwa Aui (the Cotton-clad Light of Peace). Before turning to religion, he was a great sensualist; afterwards for the sake of his devotion, he utterly renounced the world. He took an oath before Milarepa that for the rest of his life, he would never wear leather shoes, or more than one piece of cotton clothing, and that he would not return to his native land, or secure provisions for more than two days' consumption. With the greatest diligence he absorbed himself in his devotions and eventually attained good experiences. Milarepa was delighted with his improvement and sang;

S: 'Then the lad returned to Milarepa and lived with him for five years.' See how bluntly this is put. It's not a question of a few weeks or a few months it's five years.

So you notice the difference, You notice the change over. That the great sensualist becomes the great ascetic and he takes these oaths or perhaps we should say, vows, before Milarepa. Remember what he had been like before and look at him now. He's not ever going to wear leather shoes or more than one piece of cotton clothing. He's not going to return to his native land or secure provisions for more than two days' consumption. So quite a transformation. Do you think this is anything very surprising?

Padmapani; Not really.

S: Not really. Why?

Padmapani; In the sense that to be a close disciple of Milarepa you have to be something quite special.

S: But not only that. What I was getting at was that one does of Len find that people who are as it were very wholeheartedly, not to say full-bloodedly into worldly life can do a
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complete turn about and be equally wholeheartedly and as it were full bloodedly into the spiritual life. The great 'sinner' as it were in inverted commas becomes the great saint.

Ananda; It was the same thing with Saint Augustine wasn't it?

S: Yes though one could say he was a different kind of sinner and a different kind of saint. That's quite an interesting comparison in a way since you've mentioned it. Saint Augustine as a young man was also a sensualist but a very tormented and dissatisfied and guilt-ridden one. He did become a saint but also a quite guilt-ridden and tormented saint. Do you notice the difference. The young man enjoyed life. He was very much into these things. He was proud of his horse and his saddle and his jacket and even his trousers and all the rest of it. there is no feeling of guilt in his mind. He thoroughly enjoyed them and then he gave them up and now he's thoroughly into the spiritual life. In the case of Saint Augustine it seems that when he was in worldly life he had reservations about it and when he was in spiritual life he had in a sense reservations about it and there was always this element of sort of strain and torment to say nothing of guilt. Whereas in the case of this young man he was into worldly life wholeheartedly and without any sense of strain or guilt and likewise into spiritual life after that changeover, that turn about had taken place. So healthily human and happy and then healthily superhuman and spiritual.

Sagaramati; It sounds like that... the guilt thing or whatever, it must be something very deep if that transformation into the spiritual life didn't sort of take it with him.

S: It's a spiritual life within the context of christianity. Certain aspects of which, from a Buddhist point of view, would not be regarded as spiritual.. That's why I said a different kind of sinner and a different kind of saint. It's a quite instructive comparison in a way. Perhaps we ought not to compare such a famous person as Saint Augustine with a relatively unknown yogi like Repa Shiwa Aui but perhaps you could compare Saint Augustine with Milarepa. Saint Francis has been compared with

Milarepa and there is some resemblance there but I think in the case of Milarepa and Saint Augustine there's a real contrast. I mean Milarepa also led a rather wicked, in fact very wicked early life but of a quite different kind from Saint Augustine. You don't get that element of torment and guilt though he did realise that he had led a very wicked life and he repented heartily and he suffered but it's as though he really did purge himself completely of that without any residue of guilt and then went completely into the spiritual life whereas Saint Augustine was always having to strive and struggle. He never seems to have reached real peace of mind. From the Buddhist point of view certainly not anything like illumination.

Padmaraja; I guess if one is a sensualist you're looking for some kind of beauty or pleasure outside. Is it not just a question of realising that it's not out there, that it's inside and just progressing from there.

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S: I don't know how seriously we should take this word sensualist which the translator uses. It seems to be a bit like his use of the word 'Devil'. It doesn't seem quite to fit. Sensualist seems to have a connotation of moral condemnation which is absent from Buddhism. He was just worldly, he was devoted to things of the world, things of the senses. But in view of this great change from sensuality to asceticism the period that he spent, the experience that he had with the Bhari Lotsawa seems very significant. It's as

if the spiritual riches, the colourfulness of the tantra, the aesthetic appeal, the ritual, the ceremony enabled him to make that transition. (Break in recording)

It's as though the aesthetic appeal and I don't want to stress that too much because the tantra is much more than aesthetic appeal, but it's as though the aesthetic appeal which is at least one aspect of tantric practice and sadhana was able to absorb his sensuality as it were. Do you see what I'm getting at and to purify, to refine it and that was a necessary intermediate stage for him. It was an intermediate stage on a very very high level indeed. An intermediate stage for him. I think if one gets a sort of parallel to that on a much lower level when in between the worldly life, to use that term and the purely spiritual life you have the experience of the arts, the experience of the arts is able to take up your relatively gross, relatively unrefined emotions and feelings and refine them somewhat and then lead them in the purely spiritual direction. So in this way beauty becomes in a sense a halfway house between reality and unreality. A sort of intermediary. Halfway house is not a very good expression but an intermediary. This is why if you remember Plato's Symposium he refers to 'eros' as a

dimon) neither man nor god but a demigod linking the two, linking as it were heaven and earth. You can't go from earth to heaven directly. You have to go through the intermediary as it were, through the (dimon). You can't become a god directly from being a man. You have to become a demigod first, a (dimon). So it's as though art is able to accomplish and the higher spiritual emotions are able to accomplish this process of transformation of the comparatively crude and unrefined human nature so that it is then ready for the higher spiritual aspect. So it seems as though the experience of the more colourful and attractive tantric ceremonies and rituals and initiations, practices and no doubt lots of visualisations, perform this sort of service in the case of this young man. I think, therefore, that in the early stages of spiritual life it's a mistake to try to exclude the more colourful and aesthetic and appealing and beautiful elements. There must be something for the senses and the lower mind and the lower emotions to latch on to. Otherwise they'll just go back to their old worldly objects. Do you see what I'm getting at? So this is why it's very important that the spiritual life presents itself to the beginner as something attractive and appealing and inspiring and beautiful. He shouldn't see it in terms of purely just renunciation or in terms of bleakness and harshness and asceticism. That will come later as it did in the case of this young man. In his case it very much came later.

Dharmarati; It struck me there that (we think) that objects were the things that gave the pleasure but really it's () energy. So you can move that energy where you want it. It doesn't have to stay
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S: No right. Though you can't do it by force of will. You can't just say well let my energy go there or let it stay here; you have to lead it, you have to coax it almost and this is where beauty and the arts come in. They're very good at coaxing emotions. This is why so-called religious art is very helpful. It leads your emotions and your feelings and energies quite naturally and gently in an upward direction.

Padmapani; I found that very much in the stained glass work I was doing. I find that I have to leave it, I can't do very much work on it each day. It gets all a bit too much.

S: So 'With the greatest diligence he absorbed himself in his devotions and eventually attained good experiences. Milarepa was delighted with his improvement and sang:"

"I bow down to all Gurus, Great is the blessing From the compassionate Gurus of the Practice Lineage; Great and powerful are the Key-Instructions

Of Marpa and Mila!

You, Shiwa Aui, are industrious and hard-working. Through the grace of the Dakinis you have attained good understanding.

Dear son, if you want to consummate your meditation, Restrain yourself from bigotry and empty talk; Think not of the noble glories of the past;

Stay in the valley to which no men come; Keep from bad companions and yourself examine; Yearn not to become a Guru;

Be humble and practice diligently; Never hope quickly to attain Enlightenment, But meditate until you die.

Forgetting words and studies,

Practice the Key-Instructions.

~wouldbenefitourself,

Renounce talk and words;

Concentrate on your devotions."

Shiwa Aui replied, 'You have just said that he who learns a great deal without actual practice is liable to go astray. Please elaborate this a little.'

S: This is quite interesting. What strikes you about Milarepa's advice - this second paragraph?

Sagaramati; It's very very practical.

S: Very very practical. Could you say a bit more about that. Does it seem specifically

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tantric?

Peter; No not really.

S: No it doesn't does it. What does it seem in a way?

Sagaramati; More like the Hinayana.

S: Almost like the Hinayana, straightforwardly Buddhist. How does it compare for instance with the paragraph in which all these wonderful initiations are described?

Sagaramati; It's quite a comedown in a sense.

S; In a sense it's quite a comedown, in a sense. But do you think it is really a comedown?

Alan; It's getting to the bare bones of it.

S: Getting to the bare bones of it yes. The initiations that he got were very high tantric initiations but at the same time it's as though these initiations just represent almost the more external just colourful side of Buddhism. This is certainly the impression that you get when you're in actual contact with Tibetan Buddhism. No doubt the initiations and so on have got a very profound meaning but for the majority of people they're mostly just sort of colourful and inspiring ceremonies which certainly give them a great lift and increase their faith and devotion but they're not incompatible with still a quite worldly life and not any very great spiritual commitment. But here as someone said, we really get down to the bones of Buddhism as it were, the sort of really firm and solid frame work. So this sort of instruction could well have been given by a Theravada Guru not to say by a Mahayana Guru.

So I Dear son if you want to consummate your meditation, restrain your self from bigotry and empty talk;' Why especially bigotry and empty talk. Bigotry doesn't seem a very exacting translation of whatever the Tibetan might have been. What do you think bigotry means here?

Ananda; Conditioned states of mind.

S: More than that I think.

Peter; Fixed views.

S: Fixed views, yes, fixed views. If we take this english word literally it doesn't only suggest fixed views in the sense of a very rigid attitude but the expression of that, the giving expression to very fixed views, even siding with certain fixed views, supporting them vigorously; and empty talk. So why do you think these two are mentioned as apparently
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obstacles to consummating meditation, bigotry and empty talk? Take empty talk first. Why should that be an obstacle, that seems fairly obvious.

Peter; Lack of mindfulness.

S: Lack of mindfulness, waste of time and waste of energy. But what about bigotry. What does bigotry suggest?

_____ - Ego.

S: Ego yes.

Dharmarati; Not being truthful.

S: Perhaps not deliberately untruthful. Thinking that one is speaking the truth. It suggests a certain narrowness, a certain limitation, a certain blindness. So restrain yourself from bigotry and empty talk. 'Think not of the noble glories of the past.' What do you think that means? Why is Milarepa saying that?

_____ Don't hold onto anything.

_____ It's experiences which he (

S: Yes he comes after all from a noble family. So he's got to forget all about that. His ancestors might have been very distinguished, very powerful but he's got to leave all that behind. 'Stay in the valley to which no men come. Keep from bad companions and yourself examine.' Socrates used to

say an unexamined life is not worth living. So examine yourself. 'Yearn not to become a Guru.' Why is he warning him against this?

_____ That's egoistic as well.

S: That's egoistic as well, 'But be humble and practice diligently. Never hope quickly to attain Enlightenment.' That sounds rather strange doesn't it. Why do you think he says this? Never hope quickly to attain Enlightenment. Surely that's what you should do, hope to get enlightenment as quickly as possible.

He should concern himself with where he is rather than looking at somewhere ahead presumably.

S: Yes he does go on to say, 'But meditate until you die.' Because sometimes it happens that if you're too much concerned with the end product or what seems to be the end product of what you are doing you lose your interest in the actual process itself, in the means itself and eventually you realise that the end result is not something separate from the process. For instance if you are writing a book or if you are painting a picture, you've
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just got to get the thing finished and have the finished product. How will that affect your creative process?

_____, (They'll be no creative process at all)

S: Probably won't be any creative process at all yes. Because you have to be immersed in and devoted to the creative process, as it were, for its own sake. So in the same way you've got to be so immersed in meditation, so devoted to meditation, that in a sense, you're not bothered about gaining enlightenment, you just want to meditate. You know in a way that meditation leads to enlightenment but in a sense again you've forgotten all about enlightenment, you're just meditating or you're just into the spiritual life. You're not bothered about gaining Buddhahood. You find the process itself so satisfying that you just don't mind being in it indefinitely. You're in no hurry in a sense to get to enlightenment. It's such fun getting there. There's a bit of a parallel to this in our recent experience with Sukhavati. You know that Sukhavati was to have been completed by October. Anyway it's now been put forward to the Spring but I suggested when I was down there recently that one didn't think very much or so much in terms of finishing it by a certain date or finishing it at all but regard it more as a continuing process. I pointed out that even after we'd finished everything and done every thing and had our opening ceremony and dedication, that wouldn't be the end. There'd be still even on the building so many things to do; further improvements, further beautifications. Why sort of draw a deadline and say it's going to be done by that particular date. So I suggested that people got more into the actual process and bothered less about actually finishing it. As though they were there just to work, just to enjoy the experience of being there and doing all those things. In a sense of course one knows it is going to be finished relatively speaking after a while but one need not think about it too much, certainly not have it in one's mind, filling one's mind for the whole time - when are we going to get finished? When are we going to get it done?- One should identify oneself with and immerse oneself in the actual process very much more. So the same apparently with meditation, with the spiritual life as a whole. Don't think too much about enlightenment, think more about the spiritual life. Don't think too much about being a Buddha, just think about being a Bodhisattva. Don't think too much about being a Guru, don't think about it at all maybe, just be happy being a disciple. Don't be too eager to become an Upasaka, be quite happy being a mitra, at least until your inherent momentum simply carries you forward without being able to do anything about it at all. Enjoy the present process. Until one fine day you wake up and you find that you're there.

'Forgetting words and studies, practice the Key-Instructions.' What do the Key-Instructions seem to mean then? There was a note on that earlier on. Earlier on there are the key points. There's no note on them, But clearly it means a very specific and direct type of instruction. Instructions which stress important points and are directed to the disciple individually. Words and studies being something more general.

'If you would benefit yourself renounce talk and words; Concentrate on your devotion.' You notice no talk about benefitting all sentient beings. 'If you would
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benefit yourself renounce talk and words.' Why do you think that is? There's this reference to benefitting oneself.

_____, If you benefit yourself it might '(be easier to benefit other people)

S : Yes really in the long run. At least you'll be able to if you want to. 'Shiwa Aui replied, 'You have just said that he who learns a great deal without actual practice is liable to go astray. Please elaborate this a little.' Milarepa hadn't actually said that but he certainly implied it so why do you think that is? Why is it that he who learns a great deal without actual practice is liable to go astray?

Ananda; It becomes a purely intellectual thing.

S: It becomes a purely intellectual thing. So it becomes very important to have one 5 practice keeping pace with one's theoretical understanding and nowadays this just doesn't happen at all. If you practice even a hundredth part of what you read and understood you're doing pretty well. Think of all those books on Zen that people read and all those books on the Mahayana, all those books on the tantra but how much is ever practised. What's practised is absolutely infinitesimal which it's certainly not in accordance with tradition, I think we often don't realise this. How much we theoretically know or understand at least and how little we practice or put into practice what we know or what we understand. Supposing we had to forget all about the Buddhism that we've read about in books and we had to write an account of Buddhism basing ourselves entirely in our own personal experience How much do you think we'd be able to write? There'd be a little bit about some precept, a little bit about one or two kinds of meditation but not really very much more than that. Maybe a bit about puja and our experience of it, a bit about retreats, our experience of spiritual fellowship. You wouldn't be able to write very much about the void would we or about perfect wisdom. We couldn't give very detailed descriptions of all those Buddhas and Bodhisattvas because we probably wouldn't have ever seen them. Or even if we have to write anything about the Buddha himself - Sakyamuni - we have certainly never seen him. It's all from hearsay, admittedly the hearsay of tradition but not our personal experience. Even simple things like hatred never ceases by hatred, hatred ceases only by love - well have we actually experienced that, have we ever actually put into practice and found that it did work? Even something as elementary as that. What about the precepts, what about the first precept. How far does our practice of that go? Panatipata. A quite simple elementary thing. Probably one might find if one was honest, if one had a fine nibbed fountain pen you could probably get your account of Buddhism from your personal experience on the proverbial postage stamp especially one of these nice big pictorial issues that they've been putting out lately. It'd be quite easy and room for your signature too at the bottom, So this perhaps reinforces something that I've been saying of late, that is more and more of less and less. Milarepa seems to believe in this. More and more of less and less. This is what he's giving Repa Shiwa Aul in this admonition, in this song. More and more of less and less, Do you understand what I mean by this? I don't think you
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all do. What do you understand by it Sagaramati?

Sagaramati; You give more time and your energies on one thing as it were. In the case of a book you get rid of forty-nine books and keep the fiftieth.

S: Concentrate more and more on those things which are of basic importance although very simple and expressible in a few words.

Mike ; I made this resolution to myself about two months ago. I got caught up in this thing and I thought let's just get back to the Eightfold Path and look at the basics of that.

Ananda; And you get more and more out of it every time.

Mike; You've only read it as a sort of intermediary stage and think there's something on after that. So you weren't really giving it your full attention. You're just seeing it as part of the key for the next thing and then you see how the whole structure is so shaky that do you go on any further and wobble and crash or do you go back to what you've read before and start making a firm foundation for the rest of the Buddhist philosophy to build upon.

S: This is what I call back to the beginning. Because usually people's tendency is to want to go onto something more advanced and they like to go into bookshops and hear well this is a book about something very esoteric, very advanced. It's never been taught before outside a very small band of disciples. Once they hear that they think this is just the thing for me. So why do you think this is. Why do people do this?

Peter; So they think they're very special.

S: Well everybody is special but is it in that sort of way?

Padmapani; That's reminded me of the lecture you gave - they want to grab for the experience.

S: They want to grab for the experience. There is that aspect too - very much so -

It's inquisitive. () is a purely intellectual thing.

Mike; They can't believe that they're not that developed.

S: They're equal to what they understand intellectually they think. If they've understood it intellectually they think that they've mastered it. This brings me back to another quotation from Coleridge that made in the course of one of those lectures I gave in the Buddhist Society, the first one I think. 'You can't reverence what you understand.' If you understand it you've mastered it. But if you think you've mastered it how
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can you reverence it. You reverence that which you've not mastered, to which you ought to look up, to which you do not understand. So it is worthy () purely conceptual or what I call intellectual. You've understood it. You've understood Sunyata, you've understood what the Buddha is, you've understood the Mahamudra, you've understood the Vajrayana, you've understood what tantric symbolism is, you've understood the meaning of the sexual symbolism. How can you reverence any of those things because you think you've mastered them and you think you've mastered them because you think you've understood them. So there's no reverence. If there's no reverence for them and actually they do represent something infinitely further on than you are you can't possibly make any real experiential approach to them. Also it is a sort of basic egotism, the egotism of the intellectual who thinks he's qualified but you get this even among Tibetans. If word goes round that a great Lama has come with some very special, very secret initiations, very very advanced then people go flocking. But someone comes along and proposes to give a discourse on five precepts well who will go and listen to that, they've heard it all before. They know it only too well but are they practising it, that's another matter. It occurred to me the other day, even if you go into the five precepts you can get so much out of them. We usually pass on rather rapidly. You can go into them in much more detail even than I went into them in that lecture which was published in Mitrata some time ago. I was thinking especially about the first precept. What does the first precept really mean? Has anybody ever thought that or wondered, what does it really mean? Is it enough to say that it means don't take life or, in the simplest, don't kill. This is the simplest translation that you get in elementary little books about Buddhism. The precept of not killing, the precept of not stealing. As regards the third one I remember when I went to the Chiswick Vihara, the Sinhalese Vihara at Chiswick some years ago they had all these written up on a board, the third one was not to indulge in wicked love.(laughter) There's no explanation of what wicked love was. Just taking even the first two what does one mean by Panatipata. Literally it means the precept to abstain from violence to breathing beings. In other words living beings. What are the implications of this. What does it really mean expressing it in the most general, the most fundamental terms?

_____ Respect for all living beings.

S: Respect for all living beings.

Peter; Friendliness.

S: Friendliness.

Padmaraja; Leading a harmless life.

S: Leading a harmless life.

Alan; ~limination of one's hate.
MSS LXXXXIX

S: Elimination of one's hate.

Padmapani; Mindfulness.

S: Mindfulness; but more specifically. These are all sort of associated things. It means in a way you shouldn't hinder, you shouldn't trspass upon the individuality of another. This is what it is really getting at. What is that breathing thing? That breathing thing, that living thing is essentially a growing thing, a developing thing. That is the raison d'etre of its whole existence, that it should grow. Not only live but grow and develop, evolve. It isn't just a question of not harming and not hurting. It is not hindering that process of devolopment, not getting in the way of the development of another person but if you possibly can assisting them and helping that process of development; not getting in the way of the development of another person but, if you possibly can assisting and helping that process of development. That is really what the first precept is all about. Not that you just mustn't kill somebody. That's a very crude and very primitive sort of application of it. But you should not get in the way of the development of another individual or potential individual. As Blake says you should not hinder another. If you hinder another you are committing two faults, two sins even; First you are hindering the other and then you are not doing your own duty which is to grow or develop yourself.

_____ Isn't it just that you shouldn't hinder another persons energy.

S: You shouldn't hinder another person's energy. If that energy is a positive and growing energy.

_____ What does hinder mean literally?

S: Hinder means to obstruct, to get in the way of.

Padmaraja; Is that how that precept is interpreted in the East?

S: No. But this is what it clearly means. Why does it come first? One can go deeper and deeper into it.

Ananda ; Because every body will be criss-crossing all the time.

Sagaramati; It allows a space.

S: It allows a space. Don't hinder others. Don't get in the way of others. Don't get in their hair, as it were. Lawrence says the greatest thing the parents could do with regard to the child was to let it alone. He says the first principle of bringing up a child is to let it alone, the second principle is to let it alone and so on (laughter) Barring simple things like stopping it falling into the fire etc., etc., let it alone. You
MSS C

can only do harm.

Sagaramati; The thing about don't hinder someone's development is that it almost implies that you know what's good for that other person. I think that with most people the best thing is just to keep out of the way.

S: You don't know, You're so quick with your good advice and suggestions and pressure even but do you really know what is good for that person? Do you really know what constitutes development for him or for her? Usually you don't. You've got only the vaguest idea about your own development not to speak of anyone else's (laughter). What is the next step for oneself and very often one doesn't know that. Again not to speak of other people. So this is in a way the first principle of ethical come spiritual living. Don't get in the way of other people especially when they're growing and developing. Just stand clear. Leave it to them. Let them grow. Let them develop. So abstaining from killing comes in - if you kill them how can they grow?! (laughter). So that's obviously implied. But just not to kill them, merely to leave them alive and constantly interfere with them, what good is that? To constantly check or thwart their growth. What good is that. It's not enough that you've left them alive, that you haven't killed them or even haven't hurt them or wounded them, Even that isn't enough. You mustn't get in their way at all. Leave them free to develop.

Ananda; You're encouraging the intuitive process.

S: Certainly share your experience with another if that seems called for but don't try to advise or don't try to pressure anyone into doing anything. So see what you can get out of the first precept. This is what the first precept really means. What about the second one. Not taking the not given. This doesn't just mean stealing. What does it mean? Not taking the not given or taking only the given, what does that mean? Taking only the given.

Ananda; Don't try and take another person's energy.

S: Yes. What does that precept involve or imply. What are some of its associations?

Graham; Faith.

S: In what way does it involve faith?

Graham; That you're giving your self up in a way. With the food on the retreat I decided to only take what was given because before that I was feeling quite heavy and upset stomach and stuff like that and since that decision I have felt better within myself.

S: In what way does that involve faith?

MSS CI

Graham; Just in circumstance; taking whatever comes along and making the most of it.

~ It involves surely faith that you would be given. You don't have to take, that you

will receive. This is another sort of association as it were. You have faith that you

will receive. Sometimes that faith will be disappointed~ People may forget to give you. But with that general attitude of letting things come to you. Not feeling any need to grab. If you've got a need to grab what is that really? That's really neurotic isn't it. So this not taking the not given suggests an attitude of not grabbing which also suggests an attitude of relative Psychological security. An attitude of faith and trust. Letting things come to you. Letting things happen in a positive way. Not just a negative lazy sort of way but in a positive way. Not trying to make things happen. Not trying to manipulate them. Not trying to arrange things for yourself on an egoistic sort of basis.

Sagaramati; Maybe part of the trouble is when you talk about these things in this way they give a very sort of passive feeling to them. You don't go out and grab something.

very active. You're sitting there like a zombie.

S: How could one give it more of a positive connotation?

Sagaramati; Could we say it's a (working on yourself)?

S: More than that even. The positive counterpart is generosity. Not only do you not take the not given but you give. You have a positive giving attitude yourself. So in a way not taking the not given involves not grabbing and also on the other hand not expecting to have to pay or to buy or to bargain but letting things come to you and letting things go from you. Do you see what I mean and this again brings us back to, 'from each according to his ability to each according to his need.' In the ideal society this is how things would be. You give whatever you have to give, you take or are given by society at large whatever you need. Also of course this not taking the not given raises quite fundamental economic and political questions, you might ask why shouldn't I take something from somebody else when he's got no right to have it. Supposing he's got it only because he's taken it from somebody else. Maybe he's taken it from me, in a sense. What would one say to that?

Alan; That's just perpetuating the process of that negative feeling for the object.

S: So what should one do. Should one allow the rich for instance to remain in possession of their ill gotten gains?

Alan; That's better than trying to take it off them.

S: Is there any other way of getting it off them? (Laughter)

Marry the daughter!

MSS CII

S: Marry the daughter. Marry the son!! But there is another way sometimes. Have you ever heard of (Bhave) () was an associate and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and he had his famous (Bhudan) programme. Have you heard of that? Some friends of mine in India were quite closely connected with this. I heard quite a bit about it from them even though I never actually met () himself. (Bru) is land and Dana is giving, it's the land giving programme or voluntary donation of land programme. In India one of the great social and economic and even political problems is that of the landless labourer and there are quite a few people in India who have got far more land than they really need. So () got the idea that land had to be got from the big wealthy land-owners and distributed among the landless peasants. Landless labourers, they weren't even peasants but he, being a Gandhian, was a complete believer in non-violence. So what he did was this. He went to the villagers, he went to the big land owners and he had meetings and he said look, how many children have you got? So they'd say maybe five sons. Alright what are you going to do with your land? Well obviously when I die it will be divided among my five sons. So then he said suppose you had six sons what would happen? Well obviously it would be divided among six and the other five get a bit less than they would have done. So () used to say please consider me as the sixth. -Please take me as your son and let me have that share. Many of the landowners were very very touched by this sort of appeal and they gave him. He got several million acres in the end and he distributed the land that he got in this way among the landless labourers - he used to give I think about eight acres to a family which is quite good by Indian standards and then he tried to organise whole villages of these people who had been given land in this way and eventually he even got some landlords to donate whole villages and houses and fields and everything. I don't know how it's going on now. He wasn't able to do as much as he had hoped. He wanted hundreds of millions of acres but he did get quite a few million and so to some extent he did succeed. So this is a possible sort of alternative which means the individual approach, the direct, as it were, moral appeal. Some people said that some of the landowners gave because he was a well known person. Others because they were afraid of the communists and thought it was just throwing a sock as it were to the landless labourers and could afford to give away a bit. But no doubt quite a few of the landowners were genuinely touched by his whole approach, his whole attitude and were in a way converted. Some gave more than what he asked for. There is also that to consider. So this is an example of a positive and non-violent ethical and spiritual way of doing things. I don't even know if he's still alive. He must be quite an old man. So this is a good example of inducing the rich to part with what may well appear to be their ill gotten

gains without actually breaking the second precept but indirectly doing good to a lot of other people. So one can go into the precepts in this way quite deeply, not just passing over them - first we get don't kill, that's obvious I'm not going to kill anything. Second precept, don't steal, I've never stole in my life, maybe a fountain pen when I was a kid and that five quid I never returned I suppose that was theft, you might think but a part from that no. -But it's not nearly enough just to take it in that very simplistic way sort of way. The precepts mean very much more than that. So back to the beginning, more and more of less and less. That's what I sometimes say, that
MSS CIII

if you take the Sevenfold PuAa seriously plus the Going for Refuge plus the ten Upasa~a precepts and your two or three methods of meditation, mindfulness of breathing, metta bhavana, maybe a visualisation exercise or two. If you have an idea about the Eightfold Path and try and put it into practice that's all that you really need. You don't really need very much more than that. Maybe the odd rosary or one or two little pictures. A few books, one or two anthologies of sayings of the Buddha or something of ~at sort. Maybe even a few tapes. That's all that you really need in the way of intellectual equipment. You can certainly get by with that from the prac~ls~ai~~ptu0a1~l~ of view. If you want to give lectures and explain to others maybe you need a bit more than that but it's surprising how little you can get by with even in the case of intellectuals. It's no use trying to beat them at their own game. you just have to convince them by your basic honesty and sincerity. Your purpose and approach. If they see you even trying to practice one precept they'll be impressed, much more so than if you can discourse learnedly in all the schools of Buddhist philosophy. It reminds me again of a little incident about Sukhavati. Some one who used to be running the kitchen used to go to local shops and one of the chaps behind the counter in one of these shops said, 'I don't know anything about this Buddhism but you always look so happy it seems to be doing you good anyway.' So even if you just have got this sort of impression, even if you just produce this sort of impression that's much better. At least the message gets across that Buddhism makes you happy. People working being happy. People round and about get the message as it were that they're living happily, their heart must be in it; they're working for the sake of something really good, something worthwhile. Milarepa seems very much to exemplify this attitude of back to the beginning-more and more of less and less. So the young man no doubt has satisfied his semi-spiritual longings for beautiful ceremonies and impressive rituals and music and lights and colour and all the rest of it, which is very good and very necessary maybe for a long time to come but beyond which there is an even higher stage as represented by Milarepa himself, to which Milarepa is bringing this young man.

Do you think there are some people who right from the beginning don't need anything rich and colourful at all?

Peter; There must be types like that.

S: Do you think it is a type? Or do you think there is some sort of (poverty or) imperfection in their development or their temperament?

Sagaramati; People I have known like that seem to be emotionally a bit dead.

S: The Quakers are supposed to be like that and those that I've met are very worthy people full of good works but they do seem a bit dry and even a bit dead. There are puritanical people who just don't like any colourful religious buildings - a whitewashed barn is enough for them so they say.

Padmapani; This seems to apply to simple folk or peasants; people who have not come into contact with the world in a sort of general broader sense. When I was the West Coast of
MSS CIV

Ireland I stayed at Farmer's cottage and his wife hadn't been out of the county and lived a very simple life, very contented and positive.

_____ ' They don't need the same amount of stimulation in the country.

S: They've got nature. I used to notice this, to feel this when I was in Kalimpong the effect of the

colourfulness of the scenery. The air was very very clear, in Tibet it's even clearer so the colour of natural objects stood out really really vividly. The blue sky was really blue the clouds were really white and then you've got the snow peaks -

at sunrise they'd be so many different colours, even like gold sometimes and all the flowers seemed to stand out~supernatural brilliance just like a Pre- Raphaelite painting.

The whole landscape was like that, everything bright and jewel-like and this is very, as it were, stimulating and perhaps if you live in the midst of those sort of surroundings you don't need so much in the way of colourful ritual. Maybe it's in these colder, mistier, more overcast, dark northern countries that we need things of that sort.

Peter; And yet with the Tibetans they have all this and still have all this rich stuff.

S: The Tibetan landscape although colourful is also bleak. Sometimes it's just blue sky and brown rock. Nothing except that. No trees, no flowers.

Padmapani; Maybe the city dwellers need to cultivate the opposite in a sense.

S: It does seem to me as though the Tantric ritual and all that represents the aesthetic and that does seem very much to be a sort of transforming agent for one's lover more worldly, more sense-oriented emotions. If you can get them from the sense objects up onto objects of beauty, whether natural beauty or artistic beauty then it's much easier to get them, as it were, even further up onto purely spiritual things. Keats says a thing of beauty is a joy forever so if you see something beautiful and you feel an intense joy, this is~very uplifting sort of feeling. It's different from desire. In a way it's a purer feeling.

Padmaraja; Sometimes they can be mixed because you see something that's very beautiful and this other thing comes into play which makes you want to possess that thing.

S: Yes but then you have to clearly distinguish and as it were encourage oneself to contemplate the beautiful object and enjoy the beauty of the object without wanting to make it your very own.

Sagaramati; Going back to the second precept. It also seems to imply thanksgiving and rejoicing. That is there. We do take things like that very much for granted.

S: That's because we don't live as it were from day to day. We don't discover things anew everyday. It's the same old sun, the same old moon, the same old world, the same old
MSS CV

people but actually it isn't that. We should look with a fresh and new mind and see every thing as it were for the first time, experience everything, as it were for the first time. And feel the corresponding sort of joy and gratitude and delight.

Padmapani; Do you think that's because the basic necessities of life are provided for whereas in bygone times you had to really work or even fight for your living or to live.

S: I think that's on a different level. I was just thinking of an ancient Indian definition of the beautiful which I quoted in something that'll be published quite soon. In English it goes like - the beautiful is that which from moment to moment is always new. In other words you never get tired of it. It never seems old. It's always new, it's always fresh at every successive moment. Not even successive moment not even in a way aware of time. It's timeless because every moment is the same moment or rather every moment is completely unique. It's not connected with the previous moment or with the succeeding moment. The beautiful is that which from moment to moment is forever new. You never tire of looking at it, never tire of seeing it. you find it constantly stimulating but not more and more, no. That would imply succession and addition as it were. But from moment to moment it is always new. You find that in your relationships with people too. If you can as it were see them more objectively in the contemplative sense and appreciate them for what they are and delight in them for

what they are you don't get tired of them You don't get bored with them.

Anyway Shiwa Aui asks Milarepa to elaborate what he has said about he who learns a great deal without practice is liable to go astray. So what does Milarepa answer.

Peter; "Milarepa answered, 'By that I mean there is a danger of clinging to the worldly affairs of this life without completely renouncing them. Another danger is that this person is liable to miss the key-point of the practice. In the teaching of Marpa's line, we do not have such errors or dangers, for we never pay attention to words and talk. What we emphasize it the actual practice. Hearken to my 'Song of Dangers and Fallacies.'

Obeisance to the Holy Gurus.

Listen to those high-flown words, and pompous talk; Look at those charlatans, madly engaged in fervent argument.

In talk they seem intent to frighten you;

In sleep they slumber, pompous men;

They walk like haughty Mongols.

Dangers and obstacles encompass them.

The Three Kingdoms and Six Realms are jeopardised By desires forever leading sentient beings into danger.

MSS CVI

There are seven dangers you should watch: Falling into your blissful Hinayans peace; Using your Buddhist knowledge to get food; Inflatin ourself with pride of priesthood; Falling into Yogic madness;

Indulging in empty speeches;

Falling into the trap of nothingness.

Thus, ignorance is the cause of fallacies and dangers.

The teaching of the Whispered Lineage is the Dakini's breath.

Never doubt this truth, but~~if you do, Remember that this doubt occurred Through the Devil's influence.

Shiwa Aui, how can you ever go astray

Since you are near me, the great Cotton-clad One?

Lay down your doubts and meditate.

He who relies on the true Teachings will never go astray.

Think not my son, of meaningless word-knowledge

But concentrate on your devotions. Then you will soon attain the great Accomplishment."

S: 'Listen to those high flown words and pompous talk. Look at those charlatans madly engaged in fervent argument.' What sort of people do you think Milarepa is thinking of?

Peter; Scholastic type monks.

S: Scholastic type monks engaged in disputation. In the later days of Buddhism in India public debate and disputation became very very popular and there was and even is now in Tibet a tradition of that sort of thing. The Kagyupas are completely against it. The Nyingmapas too ~e quite against it. The Gelugpas rather go in for it though in a rather sort of sombre sort of way, I must say. So therefore Milarepa says, 'Listen to those high-flown words and pompous talk. Look at those charlatans madly engaged in fervent argument.' Do you think it's wrong ever to argue or what is argument? Why does argument differ from discussion.

Mike; Argument is throwing statements at one another and not exchanging anything constructive.
MSS CVII

S: It's not exchanging, not communicating. It's adopting a fixed position and defending that. So even if one has a very definite view, even experience, even insight you mustn't adopt it as a fixed position and fight from it. You mustn't even fight for the right view not to speak of the wrong one. It isn't in a way a fixed thing that you can fight for anyway. You just have to be open to the other person, discuss. If there is anything of truth in you which you've experienced, which you've realised, which you have insight into, it will come across in and through the openness of discussion and communication. Not by your defending it and asserting it and trying to thrust it on the other person and try to conquer and convince him in that sort of way.

Sagaramati; I find I'm quite prone to this. I love arguments.

S: Well maybe it's this Calvinistic Scot in you. A touch of the old John Locke's. But what is this. Is it a temperament? Could it be a type of person who loves argument.

Volatile people.

S: Is it a combative nature? Is it an expression of a certain aggressiveness.

Mike; It depends what the argument's about.

S: It also depends how it's conducted. Perhaps it can look like an argument but really be a discussion in some cases. Sometimes it can look like a discussion if it's very politely conducted in a very gentlemanly way but really be an argument.

Padmapani; But Sagaramati seems to be implying that he loves arguments not just one particular argument. He loves arguing.

Sagaramati; Controversy.

Polemics.

S: Controversy, polemics

_____, If you agree all the time it can be a dead conversation.

S: If you adopt a non-argumentative sort of attitude it doesn't mean you agree all the time. It's more likely you're sharing your point of view rather than trying to enforce it.

Padmapani; Maybe you see complacency in people and want to shake it up.

Sagaramati; That's true.
MSS CVIII

S: One does see complacency in people. The question is which is the best way of shaking them out of it. There's an Indian story in this connection. A lad from the city was walking through the fields,

the rice fields. You know how rice fields are constructed you have to flood rice fields so they're usually a foot deep in water with very narrow paths in between like little causeways. So he was walking through the- rice fields along one of these causeways and he came to a spot where there was a calf which was in the way and he couldn't pass. So he tried to push the calf quite strongly but the calf wouldn't budge. It would push back. He pushed again but still the calf wouldn't budge. So while he was engaged in this pushing a girl came from a nearby hut and she said, you seem to be quite an educated man coming from the city but you don't seem to have much in the way of common sense. So she put her finger into the mouth of the calf and gently drew it away and of course the calf followed. In that way she got him off the causeway. Do you see the difference. It's a bit like that. Sometimes you can influence people more not by pushing but in a sense by just drawing them- your way by gentle means. Not always but sometimes you can. It's not only a question of what the actual form of what you say is but the spirit behind it. If you've got a very clear orderly mind you may put your point in the form almost of an argument, a logical sequence but if there isn't an ego pushing that it is not really an argument. On the other hand as I said you may be talking very loosely and vaguely but you may not necessarily be discussing and communicating. There may be an ego in the midst of all that. So you can't say that because someone puts his points clearly and even forcibly that he's necessarily arguing. Usually you can pick up, if you listen carefully, whether there's an ego pushing behind all that. His point of view just because it is his or whether it is in fact a well laid out argument without any such force

behind it. But in your ~~~O~~~mafyo~l~ you are pushing them.

Sagaramati; I definitely think there's two.

S: Yes sometimes you do or %sometimes the other.

Mike; But what do you do when somebody tanked up with this ego throws a particular statement at you which is not, in your opinion true. Do you sublimate and say yes yes or do you try to state your point of view.

S: I think you have to try and establish communication with that person by one means or another. That is the basic and you may have to drop

Mike; So you're meant to walk away from it and then come back

S: No you may have to start some other topic on perhaps something more general.

Sagaramati; You need to establish communication.

S: Anyway Madly engaged in fervent argument. In talk they seem intent to frighten you.
MSS CIX

What sort of people is he describing? How do they behave? Very Overbearing, very forceful as though they want to frighten you. 'In sleep they slumber, pompous men;' What does this mean?

Padmapani; Like hot air.

S: Is he saying that in all that they do they are metaphorically speaking in a state of sleep. Perhaps he's saying that. It isn't altogether clear. It surely doesn't refer to ordinary sleep. But they are asleep and making all this noise, all this fuss. They're arguing so fervently, so madly but they're asleep all the time. They're unaware. They're unconscious. They don't know what they are doing really. They think that they're engaged in discussing the Dharma but no such thing. They don't really know what they're doing. It's just a conflict of wills. It's an egoistic contest. It's for the sake of fame or glory or victory or something of that ilk. Nothing to do with the Dharma and they don't

know it. They're not aware of it. They're in a state of sleep. 'They walk like haughty

Mongols.' Clearly the Mongols had a reputation for pride and arrogance. They stride and strut.

'Dangers and obstacles encompass them.' Spiritual dangers, spiritual obstacles. 'The three kingdoms and six realms are jeopardised by desires forever leading sentient beings into danger.' What are these three kingdoms and six realms?

Alan; Is that the past, the present and the future?

S: No the three kingdoms are the kamaloka, rupaloka and arupaloka, the three planes of mundane existence. The world of sensuous desire, the world of pure form and the formless world. The six realms are the gods, asuras, pretas and so on. The three kingdoms and the six realms i.e. the whole of sentient existence the whole of conditioned existence are jeopardised by desires forever leading sentient beings into danger. The desire in this case is the desire for this fervent argument. This unmindful pseudo-Dharma discussion and dispute.

'There are seven dangers you should watch; Falling into a blissful Hinayana peace.' What is meant by that? It's a one-sided state of pseudo-emancipation which you imagine is just emancipation for you. This is identified in the Mahayana with the Hinayana ideal. Sometimes it's called Hinayana Nirvana though the true followers of the Hinayana certainly never got into any such state. So just take it as a state which represents a limited spiritual attainment where there is still a vestige of selfishness but in a pseudo-spiritual form of salvation for me, emancipation for me, never mind what happens to other people. So long as ego, even a subtle ego, even a pseudo-spiritual ego exists there can't be any true enlightenment. This is one danger - pseudo spiritual individualism. 'Using your Buddhist knowledge to get food.' What's Milarepa talking about here. Using the Dharma as a means of livelihood. He's talking about professionalism. This is a violation of the principle of from each according to his ability to each according to his need. So in the case of the monk in a Buddhist country, he takes or rather he's given what he needs by the lay community in the way of food and clothing. He gives what he can according to his own inner feeling in the way of teaching or he doesn't give. But there's
MSS CX

no impression of exchange. You give me so much of food and clothing and I will give you so much in the way of teaching. It isn't made the basis of a profession or a means of livelihood or a career. It's freely given when it is given. Do you see the difference?

Sagaramati; I feel that's something to do with the whole (). Especially when it comes to charging for a course and things like that. You almost feel that you're doing it the money 5 not for you but you're doing it for the money.

S: Maybe it's a good idea if the people concerned with the teaching have absolutely nothing to do with the organising and the financing side of it. That they're completely oblivious of that and don't know anything about it so the two are just not connected in their minds in any way.

Sagaramati; Treasurers shouldn't give courses.

S: Yes. 'Inflating yourself with pride of priesthood.' What's he talking about here. Is priesthood quite the right word. What's he really referring to in the Tibetan Buddhist context?

Peter; Lamahood.

S: Lamahood. He's referring to the technical ordination. There's no priesthood in the strict sense of Buddhism but in all Buddhist countries you have people who've received, as it were, monastic ordination and who consider themselves as being on a higher level than others, as in a sense in a way they are, but then it becomes a matter of sort of pride and satisfaction and they regard themselves as spiritually superior simply by virtue of a kind of ecclesiastical ceremony. That is the great danger.. You find quite a bit of this I'm afraid in the Theravada countries. Milarepa is dead against that. It's doubtful whether Milarepa ever received even a novice monk's ordination, he certainly didn't receive the Bhikkus ordination and the Kagyupas and the Nyingmapas generally don't bother about monastic ordination although they lead often very ascetic lives. There's no question of ecclesiastical position. There is this question regarding ordination which is basically a going for refuge, as an achievement of

a certain position among other Buddhists which entitles you automatically to a lot of respect etc., etc.

'Falling into yogic madness.' What do you think that is?

Padmapani; Like a sort of trance.

S: Being spaced out. (laughter) Being wild and reckless in the name of unconventionality perhaps. A reactive kind of unconventionality. It could also refer to having your energies in a state of imbalance as a result of your yoga and meditation practices. A state of sort of p~ychic disturbance, a state of disequilibrium of energies.

_____, How do you mean - a disequilibrium.
MSS CXI

S: There are all sorts of psycho-physical energies within oneself which get stirred, which get aroused by various meditation practices especially those connected with breath control and so on and may even, as they say, heat the brain. You may strain yourself, you may overdo it and get out of balance. I've known people like that in England. I told the story in my memoirs of the boy yogi. He was a case to some extent of yogic madness. He'd been forced by his father, who himself was a frustrated would-be yogi.

'Indulging in empty speeches;' What do you think he means by that?

What sort of empty speeches?

_____ Talking for the sake of talking.

S: Talking for the sake of talking maybe even speeches about Buddhism which are not based on one's own experience. 'Falling into the trap of nothingness. This means thinking of Sunyata in a one-sided sort of way as a state of nothingness. A nihilistic view of Sunyata, a nihilistic view of Nirvana as a state of mere cessation of the conditioned and nothing beyond that.

'Thus ignorance is the cause of fallacies and dangers.

The teaching of the Whispered Lineage is the Dakini's breath.' Why is that? What does he mean by the Dakini's breath. What is the Dakini's breath? What or who is the Dakini?

Intimations of the unconscious.

S: Intimations of the unconscious but in the modern psychological sense of unconscious or something more than that?

_____, You said before it was inspiration.

S: It's inspiration. Dakini comes from a word meaning space. It's the space one, the lady of space if you like. So what is this space. It's the openness of reality itself. The Dakini is regarded or represented as flying about in space. It's all these sort of untrammelled energies, inspirational energies which move about freely in the open space as it were of reality. The dakinis are usually represented as young maidens, rather voluptuous young maidens actually. So what is the Dakini's breath? She's a dakini already so what does the breath represent? It's like saying the inspiration of inspiration itself. It's more like that. So the teaching of the whispered lineage is the Dakini's breath. The teaching lineage is pure inspiration - this is what he's saying. It doesn't come from books. It doesn't come from intellectual understanding. It comes as it were straight out of the open space of reality itself where the Dakinis, the forces of inspiration are moving about untrammelled. The teaching of the Whispered Lineage comes from there. It doesn't come just from books. It doesn't come just from thinking. It's from one's own experience. The inspiration of inspiration as it were. This is a fundamental point of the Kagyupa school. In fact the Kagyupa is based on this and represents this. That the spiritual

inspiration is above all things necessary. It's not enough to take your stand on
MSS CXII

books or accepted teachings or tradition. Outward rights or ceremonies or conventional religious life, conventional ordination, conventional monasticism, robes monasteries, tantric ceremonies. No. There must be that pure inspiration come from the experience of reality itself. This is the only real basis for a spiritual tradition or a school of practice. This is what he is saying. 'The teaching of the Whispered lineage is the Dakini's breath.' So if that Dakini's breath is not there everything else becomes useless; everything else becomes just a shell, becomes almost just a hypocrisy so if you haven't got the Dakini's breath you haven't got anything. That is the inspiration of inspiration.

The essence of inspiration which doesn't come from the Freudian unconscious or even from the Jungian unconscious but it comes from reality itself and the enlightened mind.

'Never doubt this truth but if you do remember that this doubt occurred through the devil's influence.' Through Mara's influence. So why does Milarepa say never doubt this truth. Why does he say this to the young man?

Alan; Don't lose sight of your vision

S: Don't lose sight of your vision. He's saying the teaching of the Whispered Lineage is the Dakini's breath. Never doubt this truth.

Peter; It's quite easy to just use words in your mind all the time and think you understand about these things and rationalise all these things.

S: I think it's more than that because Milarepa himself belongs to this whispered lineage so if he loses faith in the fact that the whispered lineage has its source in purely spiritual inspirations then in a way he'll lose his faith in Milarepa. He'll lose his faith in his own practice and so on. If he was ever to think well the teaching of the Kagyupa school, what Milarepa's telling me is just out of a book and is just a product of thinking he'll lose his faith. So Milarepa reminds him this teaching that I'm giving you it doesn't come from just books and thinking. This is inspiration, this is the breath of the Dakinis. It is based on experience. It comes from reality as it were - have this faith - otherwise you won't be able to make any real progress in your practice.

'Shiwa Aui how can you ever go astray since you are near me, the great Cotton-clad one. Lay down your doubts and meditate. He who relies on the true teachings will never go astray. Think not my son of meaningless word knowledge but concentrate on your devotions then you will soon attain the great Accomplishment.' Let's carry on then.

Dharmarati; "Thereupon Shiwa Aui abandoned his search for word knowledge and concentrated on his devotions with never a thought for clothing and food.'

S: So we are told Shiwa Aui abandoned his search for word knowledge. We weren't told
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before that he'd gone in search of word-knowledge but perhaps he had, perhaps he'd been a bit misled and wanted to be a Buddhist scholar, a scholar in Buddhism, knowing the texts thoroughly even disputing and debating but after hearing Milarepa's song he gave up his search for word knowledge and concentrated on his devotions with never a thought for clothing and food.

Dharmarati; "One day a friend called on Shiwa Aui. Seeing his body emaciated from lack of food and clothing, the friend misunderstood, and feeling pity for him said, 'Dharma Wonshu, you were a gay spark from a rich family. But now you look old and poor with no clothes or food. How sad! How sad!' Shiwa Aui sang in reply:

Oh My Father Guru, the Jetsun, the real Buddha, The Field-of-Offering for my parents!

Brothers, sisters and all relatives give rise to Samsara:

But I have now renounced them.

The Jetsun is my sole companion and comrade in the Dharma. Alone he is my source for the Buddha's Teaching; With him, the real Buddha, I remain in solitude.

A group of three or four leads but to empty talk, To avoid which I stay in solitude.

Books and commentaries bring one nought but pride,

But the authentic Buddha gives the one-sentence Pith-Instruction.

I thus renounce all books and commentaries,

Relying on the clear-cut Pith-Instruction.

The hermit-temple is a place near Buddha

Wherein I practice virtuous deeds and gather merits.

The more one has, the more one craves.

So I forsake my home and renounce my native land.

The country with no boundary posts is the place near Buddha Wherein the faithful one can practice virtuous deeds.

Associates and servants cause more anxiety and craving,

So I renounce them for all time.

A deep faith arose within the-" man after he had listened to this song of his former friend, whereupon he offered him many good things. Milarepa was very much pleased by this incident.

S: 'Oh My Father Guru, the Jetsun, the real Buddha, the Field-of-Offering for my parents!' What is this field of offering? Do you know the idea behind this expression? A field is what you sow the seed in. When you sow the seed you get the results so the holy persons are
MSS CXIV

supposed to be fields in which you sow the seed of the offering which produces Punya or merit. The holier the person the richer the field, the more productive the field. So Milarepa is the field of offering for his - the disciple's - parents. Why is that? It's as though they've given their son to Milarepa. They've made the offering of their son. So since they've made this very valuable offering to Milarepa, he being such a holy person, it will be productive of great merit to them in the future. So therefore he sings, 'Oh my Father Guru', the Jetsun, the real Buddha. The field-of-offering for my parents. Brothers and sisters and all relatives give rise to Samsara; But I have now renounced them. The Jetsun is my sole companion and comrade in the Dharma. Alone, he is my source for the Buddha's teaching; With him, the real Buddha, I remain in solitude. A group of three or four leads to empty talk, to avoid which I stay in solitude. Books and commentaries bring one nought but pride, but the authentic Buddha gives the one-sentence Pith-Instruction. I thus renounce all books and commentaries, relying on the clearcut Pith-Instruction.' So what is this clear-cut Pith-Instruction or this one-sentence Pith-Instruction. What sort of instruction is he referring to? What sort of communication is he referring to?

_____ It's inspirational.

S: It's inspirational. Not only inspirational, it's very intensely inspirational or very intensely personal.

It's just between two people. It's one to one. It's not one to five or one to ten or one to a hundred or one to a thousand. It's one to one. So when it's one to one it means it can be aimed directly at the concrete situation in which that other person finds himself. It can be directly relevant to his particular situation, his particular need. If you speak even to two you have to speak as it were to what they have in common. you can't speak to each one individually. So if you say something to two people it's not quite exactly applicable to either of them but more or less applicable to both. The more people you speak to therefore the less you can say in terms of addressing the individual. So if you want really to speak to the individual you have to speak to one individual, one other individual and then of course you don't need to say very much. One sentence may do because it comes from one person to another person. In this case from the enlightened teacher to the unenlightened disciple. So Milarepa can give the disciple exactly the instruction he needs. No words need be wasted; one sentence is enough, one precept is enough as it were. Other factors being equal the greater the number of people the lower the intensity or the lower the level of the communication. Milarepa refers to that or rather the disciple refers to that - 'A group of three or four leads but to empty talk to avoid which I stay in solitude.' It need not even be empty talk. It may even be talk about the Dharma but again other factors being equal there is a lowering of the level of communication if it's three or four rather than simply two.

'The hermit temple is a place near Buddha wherein I practice virtuous deeds and gather merits.' Presumably Buddha here refers to Milarepa himself.

'The more one has the more one craves so I forsake my home and renounce my native land. The country with no boundary-posts is the place near Buddha
MSS CXV

wherein the faithful one can practice virtuous deeds.' What is this country with no boundary posts? The translation here doesn't seem to be very elegant, a bit clumsy.

Alan; Sunyata.

S: No.

Peter; To give up any idea of patriotism.

S: Yes it's a place near a frontier. Why should you avoid a frontier if you're going to engage in meditation?

_____ War.

S: War. There are usually disputes. This is why traditionally according to the vinaya the Bhikku was not supposed to live near a frontier if he could avoid it and not to engage in meditation near a frontier because you might very easily be disturbed. It seems to be a reference to this. 'The country with no boundary-posts is the place near Buddha wherein the faithful one can practice virtuous deeds. Associates and servants cause more anxiety and craving. So I renounce them for all time.

A deep faith arose within the man after he had listened to this song of his former friend, whereupon he offered him many good things. Milarepa was very much pleased by this incident.' Here again there's a characteristic emphasis of the Kagyupas not a lot of study, not a lot of discussion, not a lot of ritual, nothing highly organised just as it were the two people staying together; the enlightened teacher and the faithful disciple and this very simple but direct communication between them.

Let's read the concluding part of this chapter.

Padmapani; "From that time on Shiwa Aui served Milarepa until the day of his Guru's entering into Nirvana. During the course of his life, he learned the complete teachings from Milarepa and thus was kept from going astray in his meditation experience and understanding.

The nephew known as the foolish and powerful Sang Jye Jhab, did not act as a good Repa. He

held a small temple near the edge of Nya Non. The Jetsun was slightly displeased with him.

After the Nirvana of Milarepa, Shiwa Aui went to the cave of Man Chu in the Goh Valley of Padru to practice meditation. Eventually he attained the Perfect Enlightenment and merits of the Path. He achieved the Accomplishment-of-Freedom-from-obstacles and so was able to pass through the rocks of the cave and mount to the Pure Land of Goddesses in his lifetime.

Tills is the sLory of Milarepa meeting his disciple, the CottonClad Shiwa Aui at Silver Spring."
MSS CXVI

S: So what's the overall impression you get from this meeting at Silver Spring and its consequences? This meeting between Milarepa and this young nobleman who became an ascetic and a yogi.

_____ ; It seems to be a kind of ideal. The best possible way you could become involved in the spiritual life.

S: It is sort of almost archetypal. You start off with very normal very healthy, no problems. The young nobleman's got his family; he's got his house, parents, wife. He's got everything that money could buy in those days. He's quite healthy, he's quite happy. He's riding off on his horse to go and sport with his friends and he meets this yogi. This strange naked shameless figure lying by the roadside. At first he's not at all attracted but then faith arises, he's really put through it by Milarepa, brought almost to the point of desperation, the point of suicide, and then gradually taken out of it taught and trained. Eventually he spends a lot of time with Milarepa just the two of them together and then eventually he gains enlightenment.

It seems very straightforward.

S: Yes. There must have been many ups and downs of course during those five years that we are not told very much about. Perhaps it wasn't quite so straightforward but the main outlines are very clear, very straightforward aren't they.

Mike; Whatever happened to the other young disciples he'd meet because earlier it said Milarepa would have eight petals from your heart. this is one of them.

S: Well there are other stories in the Songs of Milarepa~about some of the others and there were~many others not only the eight. I'm not sure if there are stories about all the eight but certainly some of them.

Mike- I think it illustrates that once you have faith in your teacher, your guru, once you've got over the doubts and seen the qualities in him. Trying to give him material things this chap couldn't relate to him on that level and got very very upset, almost

suicidal. Then the faith came and he had tremendous faith in him and this faithfulness to his teacher led him to the final state. So I think it highlights that faithfulness in one's teacher and what they can achieve.

S: Also it highlights the as it were impotence of the bargaining attitude. Perhaps he thought well if I make these offerings to Milarepa then I shall get such and such in the way of teaching. There was certainly devotion there when he made the offerings but no doubt there was some trace of egotism as Milarepa himself pointed out later on and also this sort of bargaining attitude. I as a sort of lay supporter give this to the yogi and he as the yogi will in a sense almost be bound to give such and such to me in exchange. So
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that had to be broken down. So Milarepa presumably rejected all his offerings one after the other because he saw that he was still trying to bargain, still trying to buy in a sense, trying to possess and he had to be brought to this point of complete in a sense, impotence, realising that nothing that he had

to offer was acceptable because there was some imperfection in the motivation. That Milarepa couldn't be bought. He had to give himself to Milarepa in order to get him as it were but he couldn't even adopt that attitude because he just had to give himself and leave it to Milarepa what he did next. That's why he said tell me whatever you think best or even don't tell me anything at all. You know best what to say he says in the end. He couldn't buy Milarepa even in these subtle sort of ways so he had to give in, He had to surrender and it was then that the faith came up which wasn't based on any sort of exchange, any sort of bargain struck. In other words he tried to take the Dharma. He was trying to take the not-given. Do you see that? He was almost trying to grab. Milarepa saw that. It was his ego, his will that was trying to grab, that had to be broken down and made to realise his impotence in that sort of situation. That Milarepa did and only when his will had been broken down and he realises his complete spiritual impotence and even started doubting whether he had any inclination for the Dharma at all. Only then faith arose and he was able to start moving onto the upward path.

Mike; It's sort of clearing out the old values until there's absolutely nothing there and almost feeling hopeless at that thought and thinking that's it and then slowly with encouragement from Milarepa attaining the right values.

S: After that of course Milarepa encouraged him very strongly. But sometimes you do find that in other situations too, you try very hard to get something, you are trying really to take it, to grab it and after many many attempts you just have to give in, to give up. You just have to accept defeat, recognise your own impotence and then maybe something will happen. Maybe not objectively but something within you. It's also like maybe you meet someone who is very fond of argument and you also are very fond of argument but he is better than you (laughter). So what happens then. You try very very hard argument after argument but in the end you have to accept it which is very good for you. You realise your complete intellectual impotence, at least as regards argument. It's like the koan, you're given a koan in Zen by your guru and you turn it over in your mind, the sound of one hand clapping. How do you get the big fat goose out of the bottle which is a bottle with a very narrow neck without breaking the bottle and without injuring the goose. How do you do it? And you think and think and think and think and have to work it out. Find the reason, find ways, maybe for years but in the end your reasoning mind, your rational mind just gives up, really gives up. Not that it's at a loss for the moment for another argument but it completely gives up and that is the moment of breakthrough. You actually experience the sheer impotence of the thinking mind. You have a flash of insight. It's the same sort of thing. The ego has to exhaust itself against some impenetrable object and that can be some other person as in the case of Milarepa, or it can be a problem in the case of the koan, or a sort of real life situation.

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Or you come up against a situation in which you can't do anything at all. You can only give in. This is very good for your egoistic will. It may mean being defeated in argument or not getting something that you wanted or not getting the girl that you can't possibly live without, all those sort of things. You really do come up against it. Not passing the examination that you'd set your heart on passing. But the whole thing is done much more radically of course when you come up against someone like Milarepa because that's another person, not just an impersonal, as it were, koan, a situation in which you're involved with other unenlightened people but someone who knows exactly what he's doing and can see you're unenlightened will right down to the roots, as it were" He's determined, as it were, to uproot even the last fibre of it. He's not going to give you any loophole at all. He's going to bring you right down to rock-bottom, down to complete despair, as it were, and thoughts of suicide and only after that is he going to give even a single word of encouragement. This is what Milarepa did with this young man. Very very thorough treatment indeed, very very radical. He just didn't leave him with a leg to stand on. Not even a hair to stand on and of course it worked. The young man became thoroughly purged. So that's what Milarepa did to one of his heart disciples. That's how you become a heart disciple as it were. It's rather interesting what happens to the other one, the nephew. That the uncle should have done so well in spiritual terms and the nephew. How do you think he ended up? What was he doing in this small temple? 'He held a small temple near the edge of Nya Non.' What do you think he was doing there? How did he live?

_____, It sounds like he was living off dana.

S: Living off the dana. Performing ceremonies, weddings and after-death ceremonies and naming babies, blessing the crops, probably got a wife in the end and became a married yogi with children; a little garden. He might even have had lots of disciples but Milarepa was still slightly displeased. He might have been very famous even, much more famous than his uncle, who knows? Or at least better known. Still Milarepa was slightly displeased. You notice slightly. What does that suggest? He wasn't all that affected within himself.

Any further impressions or general points? Any sort of general impression of this particular chapter as compared with the other texts we've been studying? Any sort of contrast?

Graham; It's much more down to earth.

S: Down to earth.

Padmapani; It seems to put one in the situation of actually being there.

S: Yes it's very alive. It's very vivid even from a literary point of view isn't it.
MSS CXIX

_____, Maybe it's the translation.

S: The translation is not all that good but even so so much comes through. The English is sometimes quite wooden and not quite apt. Some of the Buddhistic terms aren't always very well rendered but it doesn't seem to matter very much. A great deal comes through.

Padmaraja; Is this to do with the difference between the Indian and the Tibetan temperament?

S: I think it very much is. A lot of the Tibetan literature seems very heartfelt. Very very human at the same time very very spiritual. In Tibetan Buddhism the two seem not to exclude each other. There's no diminution of the human. You don't have to achieve the spiritual by as it were cutting down on the human. It's like the human flowers into or is coaxed into, or even beaten into the spiritual but the human is not negated at least not crushed not culled. Fully human and fully spiritual at the same time.

Padmaraja; That element does seem to be missing from the Indian texts, the human element. It's very hard to relate to it because of that.

S: In the Tibetan texts there seems to be an abundance of human feeling. Feeling even ordinary human feeling is very much in evidence. You notice this in the life of Milarepa, People weep quite freely. They express their emotions quite freely, quite openly. There's nothing blocked, nothing repressed as it were. If they get angry they really get angry. If they're upset they really weep. If they're happy they really rejoice. Again it's all very full blooded. There's nothing anaemic, nothing pallid. They go into the spiritual life in the same wholehearted down-to-earth way that they go into worldly life. Religion is very useful as I said the other day quoting Tibetan. Very solid substantial sort of thing. It's just like earth or gold or even manure. It's very useful. It's very tangible. Nothing airy fairy about it but at the same time there's this very pure spiritual note which is struck.

Padmaraja; You do get that feeling with the earlier Indian works though.

S: You do. You get it with the Sutta Nipata and the Udana but the later texts whether Pali or Sanskrit you don't seem to get it-so much.

Mike; I was getting a bit bored with the young man's gifts. Three or four would have done me. Perhaps you do need to labour the point.

S: Perhaps the young man laboured it a bit, Maybe he did sing all those songs and try to make all those offerings ending up with a pair of trousers.

Padmapani; Presumably if you were under that sort of pressure, in a sense, you're not going to commit suicide easily. Four stanzas and that's it!!
MSS CXX

S: He went through everything that he had to give. We might have a modern parallel, the young man offers his motor car. He couldn't offer his sister in marriage but maybe he can offer you his old girlfriend or something like that.

_____ His address book.

S: His address book. All his new suits or his new gold wristwatch.

Alan; It even seems quite a contrast to me to Gampopa's text.

S: That is very true. Gampopa being the disciple of Milarepa. You encounter there a much more systematic and systematising mind. A more scholarly mind, almost a more scholastic mind. You don't feel quite so strongly the breath of the dakini do you. Maybe it is there blowing gently in the background but it's not blowing very strongly. So that's a very good thing maybe to remember, maybe it's a sort of motto - don't forget the breath of the dakinis. 'The teaching of the whispered lineage is the dakini's breath' You could say the Dharma itself is the dakini's breath. It's the Buddha's breath. It's something inspirational. If it doesn't inspire you it isn't the Dharma, not for you anyway. Perhaps it'll inspire you at a later date - a particular thing that doesn't inspire you now but so far as you're concerned if it doesn't inspire you it isn't the Dharma. Inspiration is really very very necessary isn't it? If there's no inspiration in the spiritual life you don't get very far. You might lead a very good life but if you're not inspired you really don't get very far.

Dharmarati : I get the feeling of space~and hills.

S: Yes. There are references to rocks, to mountains, to the snows, to the blue sky.

Padmapani; Do you think in a way the obvious has been overlooked in that sense. That probably in that context it was very important to remember that out in nature, the elements, that things are a bit more raw. In a way more primal. In a very obvious way most worldly things and culture things are just forgotten about.

S: Yes. I used to feel this quite strongly in Kalimpong. Kalimpong was quite a recent town. There were no old buildings in it, no old houses, no ancient monuments, nothing of that sort. Everything was very recent so you felt that, you felt the presence and the importance of nature much more. Nature being what it was there especially. You feel this in the States at least so I'm told, no ancient history. So you go back just a few hundred years and wham there's nature where in this country you have to go back many hundred, even a few thousand years before you get back to more primeval nature that is only nature just nature and nothing of man, nothing of civilisation.

Alright let's leave it there then.

THE MEETING AT SILVER SPRING ENO OF SEMINAR