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THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

2

Altruism and
Individualism in the
Spiritual Life



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Cover Symbol:

The symbols on the covers of the issues in this series are from original lino-cuts by Dharmachari Aloka based upon the *mudrās* of the eight principal Bodhisattvas of Mahayana tradition. This issue features the *mudrā* of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, or 'Earth-Womb'. As the embodiment of spiritual optimism Kṣitigarbha enters the hell realms to save tormented beings. His left hand is shown here holding the wish-granting gem. His right hand grasps the ringed staff of the Sarvāstivādin monk.

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

4. Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual Life

Part 2

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* Indicates refer to Glossary

Editorial

What, we might ask, do our parents have to do with the size of the Western Buddhist Order, the 'bi-tendential value of Being', and the gift of rosary bead?

At first glance the extracts in this issue of *Mitrata* might appear to be rather randomly selected. We are still concerned with the first two perfections of the Bodhisattva, *dāna* and *śīla*. As generosity and ethics the subject matter is relatively easy to understand, even to put into practice. But the terms 'altruism' and 'individualism' introduce a more complex consideration, even a conundrum. The conscious motivation behind much of our action can be made up of both self-oriented and other-oriented tendencies. But rather than a harmonious marriage taking place, giving birth to the true Bodhisattva spirit, conflict arises and divorce ensues. Our concern for the needs of others seems to exclude concern for ourselves. We don't want to be selfish but what about *me*? We cannot reconcile altruism with individualism.

But what in the fact is wrong with being selfish? A common criticism of Buddhism is that the Buddha-to-be acted selfishly when he left his home and family in order to seek the Truth. However, it is only from a basis of individual development, which implies taking responsibility for oneself, that one can become wholeheartedly altruistic. When we recognise the 'bi-tendential value of Being', in which concern for others does not exclude a healthy concern for ourselves, then it becomes clearer where our responsibility lies when 'leaving home' – or even 'returning home to visit our parents'. The conditions of the world are hardly conducive to spiritual growth. Sometimes 'a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do'. Sometimes, despite its heart-rending cries and rationalized arguments we have to leave the world. But we come back, giving of our deeper experience, helping to expand the 'ranks' of the Western Buddhist Order, covering the world in rosary beads, offering to all the most precious gift, the Dharma.

SRIMALA

Seminar Extracts

1 The Transcendental Attitude

from *The Endlessly Fascinating Cry (Bodhicaryavatara)*, Mixed Retreat, Abhirati, December 1973

Sangharakshita: The Bodhisattva Ideal is one of the sublimest spiritual ideals that mankind has ever seen. As the literal meaning of the world itself informs us, a Bodhisattva is a being (*sattva*) who has dedicated himself to the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment (*bodhi*) for the sake of the material and spiritual welfare of all living beings, and who is prepared to undergo any hardship, and make any sacrifice, in order to achieve this end. In the more colourful and concrete popular versions of the Ideal he is indeed sometimes represented as postponing his own entry into Nirvana until such time as all other beings in the universe have succeeded in arriving at that ineffable state, wherein all suffering is forever transcended, and Perfect Knowledge – the knowledge of Ultimate Reality – attained. Yet although such formulations have their own value they should not be taken as literally true, and it should not be thought that the Bodhisattva Ideal is literally and altruistic as opposed to an individualistic or selfish ideal, or that the Bodhisattva devotes himself to the spiritual good of others to the actual neglect of his own – that he helps others along the Path which he himself does not follow. What he does, rather, is to adopt an attitude in which the terms ‘self’ and ‘others’ have become meaningless, or rather, in which they have become indistinguishable in the sense of being not ontologically identical but dialectically related, so that in doing good to oneself one does good to others, and in doing good to others one does good to oneself – the one continually passing over into the other in such a way as to suggest a state ‘beyond’ both self and others.

2 The Living Synthesis

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

Mike Shaw: [You were talking about] the Bodhisattva [as being] a living contradiction or a living union of opposites, and on an earlier question and answer session you referred to the idea of dialectical synthesis. This seems to be a thread running through this series of lectures [on *The Bodhisattva Ideal*], and in this lecture you appear to be presenting *dāna* [‘Giving’] and *śīla* [‘Morality’] as a sort of thesis and antithesis. So I was wondering if it is possible to give an intellectual expression to the synthesis of these concepts, or whether the only valid synthesis is the life of a Bodhisattva?

Sangharakshita: Yes, I think that is the real answer, that the Bodhisattva himself is the living synthesis, so to speak, and perhaps you cannot reduce the synthesis to intellectual terms. Looking at it more radically than that, one can say that the bodhisattva represents the synthesis – the living synthesis – of Nirvana and Samsara,¹ but we don’t really have any common conceptual term for Samsara *and* Nirvana, the Conditioned *and* the Unconditioned. You could say there is *śūnyatā*, the Void, but that is more of the nature of Nirvana, even though you do speak of the Voidness of the Samsara or of the Unconditioned. Therefore, it seems as though as long as you think in conceptual terms, you will always have a contradiction. If you try to resolve that contradiction intellectually, or rather, conceptually, that would [in turn] give rise to a concept which will have its own opposite, and hence you will need a further synthesis.

Therefore, the only *real* synthesis is to be found not in concepts at all, but in living experience, which by definition transcends the contradictions inherent in certain pairs of concepts, because it transcends the conceptual or rational level [of thought] altogether. The Bodhisattva himself is the living synthesis of the various contradictions inherent in the Path, as, say, between *dāna* and *śīla* or even the various contradictions apparently inherent in the so-called ‘goal’ – between, say, Wisdom and Compassion, or Samsara and Nirvana. Of course, you mustn’t make the Bodhisattva [into] a concept, otherwise you’ll have ‘Bodhisattva’ as opposed to ‘Arahant’,² and then you’ll need a further concept, or another spiritual ideal, to unite them. But yes, one might say that there is no *final* conceptual synthesis possible for concepts which are contradictory; a final synthesis can only be in the life of the individual for whom those concepts have meaning. Life transcends logic – it’s as simple as that.

Prasannasiddhi: But you can have a sort of refinement of concepts...?

S.: Yes, you can have a refinement of concepts and therefore a refinement of syntheses.

Prasannasiddhi: Wouldn't that be a step towards that silence [which occurs when all opposites have been transcended]?

S.: It could be, but it mustn't be a silence which supervenes upon the exhaustion of concepts; it must be a silence which supervenes upon the sheer richness of the Bodhisattva's life.



3 Rejoicing in Hell

from 'Patience and Strenuousness' (*The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*), Women's Seminar, Padmaloka, June 1980

And in the ('Bodhisattvabhumi'):

I shall rejoice at staying in hell for thousands of aeons if only to save one single being from misery, to say nothing of still longer periods and of still greater miseries. Such is a Bodhisattva's armour of strenuousness.

sGam.po.pa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, trans. H. V. Guenther, Rider, London 1959, Ch. 15, P. 184

Sangharakshita: How literally or seriously can one take this? I think you have to water it down considerably for it to make sense at all. It links up with that we were saying (in this group or another group) – that mind-consciousness can rise superior to sense-consciousness. It is only within such a context or framework that a statement of this sort makes any sense. [We said that], on the strength of your enthusiasm for the vision that you've seen, you can ignore, even be unaware of, not only minor difficulties and discomforts but even pain. But here it is expressed in a very extreme way indeed, a way that completely eclipses imagination. What does it mean to 'rejoice at staying in hell for thousands of aeons if only to save one single being from misery'? it's difficult to put up with a bit of trouble and discomfort just for a few hours for the sake of another person! People find that when they have to nurse the sick or look after children. But, for the Bodhisattva or would-be Bodhisattva, or the spiritually committed individual, your wish to help others is so intense that you don't mind difficulties and discomforts for yourself. It is very important to have this attitude, otherwise you may do things for other people and undergo trouble for them but you may feel some resentment at the same time. You can't really do anything with or for other people without at least a touch of the Bodhisattva Ideal to keep you going.



4 To Go or Not to Go?

from 'The Precious Garland' (*The Precious garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*), Men's Mitra Seminar, Padmaloka, August 1976

*Not heeding advice is not respecting
Counsel from those of similar practice.
Intention to meet with relatives
Is loving attachment to one's kindred.*

The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses, (The Buddhism of Tibet), Nagarjuna and the 7th Dalai Lama, Allen & Unwin, London 1984, v. 424

Sangharakshita: Yes, '*Intention to meet with relatives/Is loving attachment to one's kindred*'. If you keep on thinking of meeting with [your relatives], and going to see them, it's not so much for their good or your own true good, but because you still have that loving attachment.

Hridaya: That's where a lot of people would think of going for advice.

S.: Yes, right.

Hridaya: Perhaps this is why Buddhism talks about the Buddha family.³

S.: Right, yes.

Hridaya: So you seek advice in that family and from those kind of relatives, [rather than from your 'natural' relatives].

Alaya: The '*Intention to meet with relatives*': that's quite a difficult one that, because you do often feel you should go, just for their sake.

S.: But that's all right if you really do feel that, and if it isn't a rationalization. It certainly doesn't mean one should cut off contact with one's relations. The Buddha certainly didn't do that, he went back after his Enlightenment (there's no record that he went before that), and re-established contact, but on a different basis. *Intention to meet with relatives/Is loving attachment to one's kindred*'. When one does think of going to see one's relations, just make quite sure it isn't out of a sort of natural attachment, that you really are going to see them, at least mainly, for their own good. [In other words], so that you can, perhaps, help them to find their way onto the spiritual Path, so you can help them develop. But again, you naturally would like everyone to develop, so why pick on your relations? There are lots of other people you could help. Of course, if you happen to get on well with certain of your relations and there's already quite a positive relationship, well, [by all means] make good use of that. But still one has to be quite careful about this whole question of the loving attachment [to your relations].

Ananda: The way it's put [suggests] that if one has the intention to meet relatives and parents, it's inevitably loving attachment.

S.: But in a way it must be, or at least force of habit. Why should one go, for example, to see one's parents, more than anyone else? What is actually the reason?

Ananda: Presumably for the reason you said, that one has established a basic communication.

S.: Yes, fine, *if* one has established that basic communication. But quite a few of our friends write to me from time to time to say "I went to see my parents/father/brothers, and it was as much as I could do to spend all afternoon there; I was thoroughly bored after two days". This is the usual sort of report that one

gets. But they seem to feel the need to go from time to time, they can't avoid it. Why is that? Why can't you say, "Well, that's finished. There's no point in seeing them again when we're leading such completely different lives and we don't really have anything in common. So what's the point in keeping up the connection?" Why doesn't one say that?

Alaya: I have been back to see my relations, and last time it was just really painful. But I felt it's almost as if it's your duty to visit sometimes.

S.: But is it in fact a duty? Don't take it for granted that it isn't. Do you in fact have a duty?

Uttara: [It could be] a case of you still feeling you owe them something.

S.: Perhaps you do, that is a possibility.

Ananda: I think it's a perfectly natural sense of gratitude.

S.: But is that the feeling with which you usually go, or is it more often than not, a feeling of resentment? Because you can be drawn by resentment as much as by gratitude or attachment. Do you think one has got an objective duty to go back [and see one's parents]? Do you think there is such a thing as a duty to one's parents in the abstract? I know it sounds *very* unfashionable to think that there is.

A Voice: Yes.

S.: Yes, there is that consideration. How I see the whole question is this. One is born of both particular parents, is brought up by them and lives with them over a period of many years. Except in a few unfortunate cases where you were separated from your parents, for one reason or another, you live with them for at least fifteen or sixteen years, sometimes twenty or twenty-five years. This means that at the most impressionable period of your life, for quite a number of years you were very closely connected with those particular people, leaving aside the fact that they are your *parents*. What then is the result of that?

Alaya: You're conditioned by them.

S.: You're conditioned by them. But even more generally than that, there is a definite tie, a definite connection, which you can't break simply by going away. You may be living apart from your parents, but they have put their stamp on you, as it were, and you don't abrogate this quite emotional tie merely by living somewhere else as you get older. Whether you like it or not, there is a very strong emotional bond with the parents.

This emotional bond can either be positive or negative, using those words loosely: a positive bond meaning you like your parents and get on well with them, a negative bond meaning you dislike them and get on with them badly. Let's assume that the bond is negative. This will mean *you* have quite a negative attitude towards your parents, who have played such an important part in your life for such a long time. This [in turn] affects your overall character and attitude to other people, because for many years your parents are the most important people in your life. so supposing your attitude towards them is, on the whole, negative. What does that mean?

Alaya: Your whole attitude ...

S.: Your whole attitude is likely to be negative. You've been affected quite badly. In that case, what must you do?

Alaya: [You must] make positive contact.

S.: You have to try to make it positive, in your own interests. As you try to grow, as you try to develop, from being negative you have to become positive. That may well mean keeping up contact with one's parents. You may be able to make some progress on your own, but sooner or later, if it's at all possible, you must

have it out with your parents and be quite open about it. Ideally you will [in this way] transform your negative attitude and negative relationship with them into something positive.

[Now] supposing [you do have] a positive attitude towards [your parents], in the ordinary sense; there's still a lot of attachment and clinging there, so you've then got to work on that. And what does *that* mean? You can work on it by yourself, but you'll also probably need to keep up some contact with them and try more and more to relate to them not just as your parents, but as other individuals. If they permit that, fine; then there's a completely different relationship possible, and if you can relate to them as individuals there's no reason why you shouldn't go on seeing them, just as you go on seeing other people. If, however, you can't relate to them as individuals, if they don't permit that, then you may have to consider breaking off contact with them altogether, or reducing your contact to a minimum, the minimum you can bear. Do you see what I'm getting at? One's parents do play such an important part in one's life, and your attitude to your parents does modify your whole attitude to such an extent that you can't be indifferent in this matter. You've got to do something about it.

Ajita: Would you say it was the duty of a son or daughter to nurse, say, their mother who is crippled? Is that their responsibility?

S.: I would say no, it would not be your duty. [Of course], if you *wanted* to [nurse her], fair enough, but I do not see that it could be laid upon one as a duty. I think one might then feel terrible resentment, as many sons and more especially perhaps daughters have done, who, having to look after an aged mother or father, deeply resent it. If one does feel that one really cannot do it, that one really does not feel equal to it, I think no blame attaches to one. But at least do what you can; see that some arrangements are made so that your parents are looked after, if not by you then by somebody else, or in some other way. [But] I think it is not the duty of the son or the daughter virtually to live for the parents, no. In a way, it is the duty of the parents to live for the children and not the other way round.

I think there should not be any burden of gratitude or duty placed on the shoulders of the children. If they *feel* like doing things for the parents when they are grown up, fine; but no sense of obligation should be there. Most children who have got a healthy attitude towards their parents *will* do whatever they can for them. But I do not think that anyone should be expected to devote themselves to their parents to such an extent that the living of their own lives is interfered with. That can only breed resentment. The only sort of person who is really capable of that is someone of quite extraordinary spiritual development. I think it is too much to expect of the ordinary, even positive, human being. Maybe they can stand [looking after their parents] for a few weeks, even a few months, but probably not longer than that. If one can't stand it longer than that, one need not feel any guilt; you are not superhuman.

Uttara: Why is it that in the practice of the Refute Tree⁴ you have your parents sitting on your shoulders?

S.: [It's] not only your parents, in some forms of the practice, on one's shoulders: you have your father at the head of all men on one shoulder, and [on the other] your mother at the head of all women. In other words, it represents the fact that you are not just doing [the practice] for your own sake, but for the benefit of all. You imagine everyone doing it with you, all living beings are bowing down with you: all men, led by your father, all women, led by your mother. In the natural order of things your mother is the most important woman in your life, and your father the most important man. Leaving aside spiritual considerations, [because] you have got the guru and members of the Sangha [in the Refuge Tree], and those are the spiritual relationships. But in the natural order of ordinary human relationships father and mother are the most important, so they head respectively all men and all women.

A Voice: Do you think this [practice] would help in any way in your relationships if you were doing it every day?

S.: I think it would. You may not be able to feel that your parents are doing it with you, but you might feel quite positively and strongly: "I wish my parents [may] also share in the benefits of [this practice]. I wish that it may make me able to communicate better with my parents, so that they may come to understand and sympathize". One can certainly wish and aspire in this way. There is a saying of Gurdjieff, or someone

of that tradition, that a good man must love his parents. You cannot be a good man without loving your parents – ‘loving’ in a truer sense, in an objective sense. If you dislike or hate your parents you cannot be a really good man; there’s some negativity in you which will work its way out in other forms, and show itself in your life generally.

It is very important to have this positive relationship with one’s parents. People waste so much time bothering about positive relationships with the opposite sex and they neglect what is much more important – putting right their relationship with their parents. That does not necessarily mean spending a lot of time with them or talking a lot, but at least sorting things out in one’s own mind and developing a positive attitude towards one’s parents, and resolving anything that is negative. If possible, establish a human and individual relationship with one’s parents whenever one happens to see them.

5 Between Friends

from ‘*Vasala Sutta*’ (*Woven Cadences of the Early Buddhists*), Men’s Order/Mitra Seminar, Glasgow, June 1982

*Who goes to other’s house
And eats of his choice food
Nor honours him in turn:*

Woven Cadences of the Early Buddhists, trans. E. M. Hare, (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. XV,) Oxford University Press, London 1945, Ch. 1, part 7, p. 19, v. 128

Sangharakshita: You really need that little refrain, *Tam jañña ‘vasalo’ iti*, don’t you? ‘The wastrel gladly shares another’s feast, but when his host calls, offers no return.’ Literally it is something like: ‘He who, having gone to another’s family or house, enjoys his good food’ – literally pure food – ‘yet, when he is paid a return visit, does not honour him in return: know him as an outcast.’

In India great importance is attached to hospitality, especially if you are supposed to be friends with someone. Consequently, if you go to see him and he entertains you but you don’t honour him in return when he comes to see you it is considered rather disgraceful. Interestingly enough, the word for ‘honour in return’ is *patipūjeti*, which is from *pūja* in the sense of worship. Indians don’t distinguish as much as we do between honouring and worshipping, or respecting and worshipping. So if, when *he* comes to *your* house, you don’t receive him as an honoured guest, and ...

Darren de Witt (*interrupting*): There’s even an offering implied.

S.: Yes. If you don’t entertain him in turn, then you are an outcast, a *vasala*, a despicable person. This is quite basic and simple, but what does it suggest? What is the broad principle involved here? One could say it is reciprocity. It is a question of friendship. You treat your friend in the same way that he treats you. You don’t fall short. He’s good to you, you’re good to him. He helps you, you help him. He entertains you, you entertain him. Maybe one should not place too much emphasis on his particular situation. It is reciprocity, mutuality, that is being emphasized. That is an essential, integral part of friendship itself.

Darren de Witt: It’s almost like a bond or a contract.

S.: Yes. You have the same feeling towards him as he has towards you. It’s not one-sided. You don’t take advantage of him or of the friendship. You don’t explode the friendship. You give in return – but not [literally] in return. You just have a natural feeling to give, just as he has a natural feeling to give to you. He gives what he can, you give what you can. You don’t keep any record or any sort of account. In ordinary social life, you do. You may hear a husband or wife say, “Well, dear, they’ve invited us twice, we haven’t invited them back. Even if we don’t like it, we’d better invite them. Otherwise what would they think?” Thus you have to keep a tally in ordinary social life – they have invited you so many times, so you invite

them so many times. You went to this aunt last Christmas, so you have to go to the other aunt next Christmas, and so on. But between friends there is no social book-keeping of that sort. There is a free flow of reciprocal good will and friendly treatment. Not that you paid for his cinema ticket last week so he must pay for yours this week. He probably will, but not because of any idea of book-keeping. You don't have to make your accounts balance, they balance anyway, in spirit and intention.

Bernie Tisch: We've got so much into the idea that everyone pays for their own things nowadays. We've got into a bad habit there – everyone pays their own way.

S.: Well, that is good in a way – where, in the absence of close friendship, you have a sense of self-responsibility and self-respect. But in a close friendship, there is no question of each one paying his own way. That sort of distinction is transcended by the fact of the friendship itself. You should not hesitate to accept a hundred pounds from your friend, because if you are friends you share in that way. You shouldn't feel under an obligation, if your friend is willing to give you a hundred pounds, otherwise it means there is no deep friendship between you: you want to preserve a sense of separateness.



6 Open-handed Generosity

from 'The Precious Garland' (*The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*), Men's Mitra Seminar, Padmaloka, August 1976

*Through not giving comes poverty,
Through wrong livelihood, deception,
Through arrogance a bad lineage,
Through jealousy little beauty.*

The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses, (The Buddhism of Tibet), Nagarjuna and the 7th Dalai Lama, Allen & Unwin, London 1984, v. 17

Sangharakshita: 'Through not giving comes poverty'. This is very much a Buddhist belief, that if you give you will get. Do you think this always works in the outside world?

Voices: Yes. No.

S.: Why not?

A Voice: People are not accustomed to giving.

S.: Yes. In the *Jātaka* or Birth Stories (the stories of the Buddha's previous lives), it is said that sometimes he was born with his hands full of jewels because he had practiced *dāna* or giving in his previous lives. Wherever he put his foot gold and silver sprang up from the earth.

Don't you think that this sort of thing does happen sometimes, and that because you are giving a lot something comes back to you?

Ananda: I think in the very long term, yes, but on a purely material, immediate level, very rarely. People suspect giving, they are very suspicious.

S.: Maybe on account of previous experience they can't think of giving as giving. They think it is 'a sprat to catch a mackerel', as they say. They wonder what particular mackerel you are after. They think you are trying to get on with the good side of them, trying to butter them up, or you want something from them.

A Voice: The classic story of the man who was giving out pound notes in the street and nobody would take one. (*Laughter.*)

S.: This has actually happened, hasn't it?

A Voice: Yes.

Ajita: I think sometimes we are actually getting a bit back but we don't realize it. We expect to be overwhelmed with physical wealth and things, even though we are living a simple life.

S.: If you are *really* giving you don't think of getting anything back in return, do you? So if you are not thinking of getting anything back in return neither are you thinking *what* you may get in return. If you have got a preconceived idea of what you ought to get back as a result of your giving then you haven't really been giving. Maybe, as Ajita says, we do get something back, but it is not what we were looking for; although we shouldn't have been looking for something in the first place. If we really were giving you could say we are getting back all the time.

For instance, the other day I was reading Schumacher's little book, *Small is Beautiful*.⁵ I forget the economic details but one of the points that he makes is that we don't include within our capital the natural resources. There are certain things that we are provided with by nature for free, but we never return these things and some of them are finite resources which we just carry on using up. We never put that sort of loss, that sort of expenditure, on the debit side of the account; we leave that out altogether. We get water, sunlight, air – we get all these things provided for free, so they are all things we are being given. We never think as if we are being given sunshine, nature, water, light – we never think in that way. We think, "No, no one ever gives me anything". (*Laughter.*) But actually, in a way, we are receiving all the time, maybe not from a person but from the universal process of nature, as it were.

Even when people do things for us we are not always aware that things are being done for us. We still have that feeling, "No-one does anything for me, no-one loves me"; but a lot of things are being done for us by other people much of the time. It's said that the married man sometimes falls into this way of thinking. While his wife is cooking for him, making the bed, doing the shopping – every day, he thinks, "No-one ever does anything for me". (*Laughter.*) He takes it so much for granted.

In the same way, when people come along to the Centre they take it for granted – at least they used to – that there is an Order Member there to run the class and to explain things, and that there is someone there to make the tea. They don't always appreciate or realize that something is being done for them, something is being given to them. We used to come across this a lot in the early days, you might even remember that; it was just beginning to die away when some of you started coming along.

We take so much for granted and then say we're not being given anything, we're not receiving anything. Even when someone does give us something we rarely express any thanks, or maybe we just grunt (*Laughter.*); again we take it for granted. It's like the story of the long suffering wife who has been married about thirty years and has been cooking for her husband and grown up sons with never a word of thanks. Then one day when they lift up the lid of the vegetable dish they find a pair of old boots, and they say, "What's this!", and she replies, "Well you never said anything to make me think you would know the difference". (*Laughter.*) This is sometimes what happens.

Alaya: It does happen in Sukhavati sometimes. Someone asks me to do something and I do it, and then they thank me and I feel strange them thanking me because ...

S.: Yes, there are situations where the relationship is so intimate that thanks are out of place. But I think it's better to err on the side of overstatement than on the side of understatement. It also depends on how they say it. They can say "Thank you Alaya for doing that for me" (Laughter.), or they can just slap you on the back and say "Thanks for doing that" – that's quite different, isn't it? Or they can just give you a look that tells you that they appreciate what you have done.

Some people don't know how to say thank you. They are so unused to it that they will be a bit clumsy or maybe overdo it. It should be a natural, easy thing to do, but a lot of you just can't say "thank you" gracefully. A lot of other people can't receive thanks gracefully.

Hridaya: Do you think that with giving it is a question of openness and flexibility? As you say, all the time we are receiving things, but it falls down when certain things come in and they are held onto. There is not that kind of give and take, that you have say with nature, much more than with man. In the last verse of the Pūja⁶ it says 'the earth and other elements are serviceable in many ways,' do you think that man isn't serviceable in that way because he chooses to hold onto things too much? It would be much more healthy if there was that sort of flow, in that way you are giving and receiving at the same time, because you are open to things, to that flow.

S.: Maybe it is just a question of making oneself more available, as it were. A lot of people say, "I want to help in *this* way, I want to help in *that* way."

A Voice: That's good, available.

S.: A friend of mine used to say, admittedly in a rather different context, "The greatest virtue is availability". If someone is available you could say, "Would you mind making me a cup of tea?" and they would make it. They wouldn't say, "I want to help in *this* way and no other"; they are just available, they don't mind what they do.

Ananda: They don't wake you up at 6 o'clock in the morning and insist on giving you a cup of tea.

Hridaya: They do what is necessary, they do what is right.

S.: Yes, and they are not too concerned about doing their own thing, or too concerned about 'expressing themselves'. The job needs to be done so they are happy to do it, it is as simple as that. This is what I have sometimes been calling recently 'the non-specific human being'. One who has no particular talent that he wants to exercise but who can turn his hand to practically anything that needs to be done and is quite happy to do that. He has got no personal psychological investment, as it were, [in what he is doing]. Do you see what I mean?

Hridaya: You said that a psychologically healthy person feels like giving.

S.: Yes, a psychologically healthy person has got energy, and energy flows outward. It flows in different ways in different people. One person will feel like doing something practical, another may feel like giving money, somebody else may wander off into the garden, maybe *your* garden, pick a flower and give that to you; or they may give you time, attention, affection – all these are different forms of giving. Different people give in different ways, according to their own nature.

Hridaya: I find that when I do feel what I think of as healthy or content then I do feel more open to people or wanting to give. It would be frustrating not to be able to express that. When you sit down and have a good Metta Bhāvāna⁷ and feel an upsurge of positive feeling and then you help someone or smile at someone, it's not giving exactly, it is just a natural expression of that positive feeling.

S.: Yes, it is an extension of that.

Ajita: You said that the state of mind caused by giving is in a sense receiving.

S.: If you give you open channels of communication and the flow can [then] go in either direction. If you give you are able to receive, if you are able to receive you are able to give – so in a way giving is receiving and receiving is giving. If it is a question of interaction or communication with another person I don't think you ever give without at the same time receiving. The more intense, the more true the communication the less it is possible to speak in terms of either giving or receiving; the giving becomes the receiving, the receiving becomes the giving – they are expressions of the same thing. So who is receiving from whom and who is giving to whom – it becomes impossible to say.



7 Could Do Better!

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

Simon Turnbull: Regarding your comment about our attitude to work in the West. I was wondering whether you thought, considering the amount of work which needs to be done in spreading the Dharma, that people in the Movement were working hard enough, or too hard; or how much you thought people were affected by this?

Sangharakshita: I must say, when I used the expression 'work' I wasn't thinking so much of work in the sense of spreading the Dharma, though that certainly is work. I think I even mentioned later on that I was thinking of work in the sense of 'gainful employment'. But since you ask whether I think that people in the Movement are working hard enough for the spreading of the Dharma, I would say certainly not!

I think one of the things that demonstrates that is the fact that the Order itself is growing at such a slow rate. I think that if an Order Member took a genuine interest in the spiritual development of – and developed a real friendship with – a Mitra or a Friend who had been as it were selected, after consideration of his capabilities, his potential, one could almost guarantee that say within two years that Mitra or Friend could be well on the way to ordination if not actually ordained. I think each individual Order Member is capable of giving, at least in theory, in principle, that sort of attention to at least one Mitra or Friend. That means that every two years the Order would double. But it's not doubling. Nothing like that! That would suggest to me that the Order Members we have at present are not working hard enough to spread the Dharma.

I am not thinking here of giving lectures, writing books and articles – which some people are doing – because not everybody can do that. But every single Order Member, by virtue of the fact that he is an Order Member and himself committed to the Three Jewels, can give at least a measure of spiritual friendship to a Mitra to such an extent as to help him to get ready to commit himself [to the Three Jewels] and get ready for ordination.

I should say the fact that this is not being done and therefore that the Order is not doubling every two or three years, or even every three or four years, shows that there's a lot of room for improvement; and that is a very simple example. But I think in other ways too we could redouble our efforts in almost every respect: double and treble our efforts. I think broadly speaking people are still far too lackadaisical, far too self-indulgent, in some ways quite lazy, I would say. Obviously it is a pity that one has to speak in those terms, but I think that is the truth. There are no doubt *some* people within the Order, within the

Movement, even some Mitras, working very, very hard indeed to spread the Dharma. But I am afraid not everybody is doing nearly as much as they could do; and the need is very urgent.

There are a lot of people of whom one could say – in the words, I think of Brahma to the Buddha, in the Pali scriptures – who are perishing through not hearing the Dharma.⁸ Not materially but certainly psychologically and spiritually. This is one of the things that has struck me especially during the last year or two. As you know quite a few people write to me, but in the course of the last year or two more and more of them have expressed their appreciation of the fact that there is such a thing as the FWBO. Not only expressed appreciation but also said what a profound relief it was to them to come into contact with a movement such as the FWBO. One knows that very often people come into contact with it almost by accident and our publicity is so restricted and so limited that only a very small percentage of those who *might* benefit from contact with the FWBO are even able to hear about it. So we really do need to redouble our efforts. (*Pause.*)

The other evening I was talking about skills, especially media type skills, just because there's the need for us to make ourselves know and to present whatever it is we have to offer.

8 Nothing in it for You

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

Abhaya: This [question] is to do with the tension between altruism and individualism. You go into that [topic] within the lecture, and you mentioned that man is not just an isolated being, but he is also a social animal. My question is: Do you think that, in man, altruism is an inherent natural tendency, which at root is as strong as individualism but from which man has become seriously alienated, or do you think he is just basically beastly and selfish, and therefore he has to educate himself into a totally alien way of altruism?

Sangharakshita: Firstly, one should distinguish between altruism and co-operation. I remember reading many years ago, whilst I was in my teens, a book by a famous anarchist called Peter Kropotkin.⁹ The book was *Mutual Aid*, and as far as I remember was intended as a counterblast to the Darwinian, or 'pseudo-Darwinian', theory of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. He maintained that mutual aid between human beings was necessary to survival, and that it therefore played a [vital] part in the revolutionary process. Human beings would not have been able to survive if there had not been a certain amount of mutual aid among them. Therefore one couldn't think of human beings [and their activity] in terms of unmitigated individualism. Unmitigated individualism would not, in evolutionary terms, be conducive to survival. I don't mean to imply that primitive human groups looked at it in this rational sort of way. But if we accept both the evolutionary hypothesis and Kropotkin's point of view, then it simply means that those groups of humans and proto-humans that didn't engage in mutual aid just didn't survive; and those that did survive were the ones that engaged in mutual aid. I won't say that this tendency to mutual aid or co-operativeness is *inherent* in human nature, because how far back does one have to go for something to be [correctly termed] 'inherent'? But certainly as a tendency, it has been there for a very long time.

But I distinguish between co-operation and altruism, because you can co-operate with other human beings in your own interest, without necessarily having altruistic feelings towards them. Altruism is another matter altogether. Whereas individualism is essentially self-regarding – you are only concerned with your *self*, what pleases you, what suits you, what you need, what you desire, and what is good for *you* – altruism, [by contrast], is concerned with the good of the other person. Mutual aid might have played its part in the survival of the human race, and one might even speak of a tendency or 'instinct' (to use that word very loosely) to mutual aid as being inherent in humanity; but one can't speak of altruism in the same way, in terms of it being inherent in humanity, or part of human nature. Altruism has to be learned.

Of course, [when I say that altruism has to be learned], I'm speaking of psychologically rather than metaphysically. I don't intend to deny that, deep down in human nature, there is a Buddha-nature which is fully endowed with altruism. I'm not speaking in those metaphysical kind of terms at all. But if one leaves

aside all sorts of metaphysical questions, and takes man as one actually finds him, actually living and working and operating, one can say that altruism is very definitely something that needs to be learned. Man may engage in mutual aid out of self-interest – a relatively enlightened self-interest – but altruism is something quite different, which almost goes against the grain of existing human nature. It is therefore something that has to be learned, very often quite painfully.

We could even ask ourselves: How genuinely altruistic are *we*? When we do something for the sake of others, to what extent is it tainted with subtle self-interest? Is it ever possible to be *sure* that we had performed an absolutely altruistic action? It has generally been considered that the most altruistic action you can possibly perform is to give your life for another, because, unless you are obsessed with the idea of fame after death (*Laughter.*) or reward in heaven or something of that sort, there is nothing in it for you! So the most altruistic act that anyone could perform would be to give his life for another person, when he himself has no belief in the survival of the soul after death, and [maintained] a completely cynical attitude towards worldly reputation. (*Laughter.*) *That* is the sort of thing one means by altruism. [But even in self-sacrifice] might not be a hundred per cent altruistic. Only too often our alleged altruism is deeply tainted with more self-interested factors.

Abhaya: How would you relate this to what you were saying the other evening about the possibility of there being an ethical, conscious element in the universe? Would you say that [this universal intelligence] is a sort of self-interest?

S.: I spoke of it as being a sort of balancing or regulating factor. It is individualistic, but *collectively* individualistic. It is the sub-conscious intelligence that is concerned to preserve the whole of life: the whole, in any given case, being perhaps this planet, or even the whole universe. This intelligence is not anything spiritual. It is like the 'intelligence' of your liver or your lungs – something of that order.

Geoff McMahon: Do you think that altruism can be learned without the intervention of the metaphysical?

S.: I think it can, but I doubt whether it can be developed to any great extent, without the intervention of concepts or myths of that higher spiritual, or even Transcendental, order. But I don't know [for sure], because human nature is a very strange thing. I have envisaged the possibility of someone, who had no belief in an afterlife, and no belief in the value of posthumous reputation, sacrificing his life for somebody else, apparently without any sort of metaphysical underpinning. One can certainly *conceive* of such a person, can one not? This hypothetical instance indicates that there is much in human nature that is unformulated. This unformulated element is not a sense, nor even a sort of vague awareness, but (to bring in the metaphysical) [could be better described as] the latent Buddha-nature. In some cases its existence does not have to be present to consciousness, in the form of a concept or a myth, for it to be operative. But the long and short of it is that altruism, as distinct from the capacity to co-operate with other members of the human species for purposes of survival, is something that has to be learned; and this *usually* requires some sort of spiritual or philosophical, metaphysical or Transcendental, underpinning. But, in the case of some individuals at least, this underpinning is not always explicit. Sometimes one does come across certain individuals, who behave in a completely ethical manner, or even a completely spiritual manner, apparently without [them possessing] any explicit ethical beliefs or spiritual principles. The Buddha himself, when he first became known in the West, presented himself as that sort of person, because in those days it was believed that ethics depended upon religion, and religion of course depended upon God. One of his early admirers said of the Buddha – I think it was Rhys Davids – 'None so God-less and none so God-like'. It was a great paradox that someone who didn't believe in God should exhibit so many spiritual qualities and lead such a spiritual life. So, in the same way, it might be possible for somebody without *any* sort of belief, or any sort of philosophy of any kind, to still lead a completely spiritual life out of a sheer instinct for goodness. And, on a lower level, you do find people who don't read their Bible, who are not interested in Buddhism, who don't consider themselves as religious people, and perhaps don't even think about things of that sort; but who, nevertheless, seem to possess a natural innate goodness which manifests in their lives. No doubt they are very fortunate sometimes it is a handicap to them in the long run, because it prevents them from going any further. But nonetheless such people do exist.

Prasannasiddhi: And they don't even have a concept of God?

S.: They don't even have a concept of *no* God, in some cases!



9 The Rarity of Purity

from 'The Precious Garland' (*The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*), Men's Mitra Seminar, Padmaloka, August 1976

*Intention endowed with desire is a wish
To help others motivated by desire.
To be affected with harmful intent
Implies that one wishes to harm others.*

The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses, (The Buddhism of Tibet), Nagajuna and the 7th Dalai Lama, Allen & Unwin, London 1984, v. 427

Sangharakshita: '*Intention endowed with desire is a wish/To help others motivated by desire.*' What does desire suggest here, and desire for what? It suggests that you are getting something out of it which you are not acknowledging, some sort of 'kick': there is something 'in it' for you. You are not doing it just to help others. You get another kind of satisfaction from it; basically an egoistic satisfaction. Maybe you enjoy being known as the one who helps others, or maybe it puts you in a superior position in relation to them and you enjoy being in that superior position. You are the helper; the one everybody looks up to; or the person who hands out good advice...

It's probably very difficult to have a completely disinterested wish to help others. That's probably very, very rare. There is almost always something 'in it' for you, even if it is only that you accumulate merit or get to heaven when you die. That all constitutes an impurity of motive, a taint, but it is very, very difficult to wish to help others without that sort of admixture.

But one must not go to extremes and stop doing anything for other people until such time as one's motive is completely pure. You have to do what you can to help others and at the same time work on your own motivation for doing it.

A Voice: Except that at first our own motives will be ...

S.: Yes, but if you do it mindfully that will enable you to purify the motive itself. In the old days people used to say sometimes that they didn't want to Go for Refuge,¹⁰ or didn't want to ask for ordination until they could be sure that their motivation was completely pure. I used to say "In that case you will wait forever." Your motivation will never be completely pure, there is sure to be an admixture of motive, but never mind – if on balance you feel that your motivation is predominantly pure that is enough. The Going for Refuge itself will help to purify your motive for Going for Refuge. As you go on your motive for Going for Refuge will become increasingly pure, increasingly the right motive. Eventually, of course, when your Going for Refuge is completely pure in the fullest possible sense then you will at the same time gain Enlightenment. You will then have Gone for Refuge, not before.



10 The Bi-Tendential Value of Being

from *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, Men's Seminar, Padmaloka, September 1976

Sangharakshita: There are one of two points that I would like to make, connected with this whole question of the psychological and the ethical. I was thinking about this in connection with that phrase of Guenther's – I don't know what Sanskrit or Tibetan term it translates, - what he calls 'bi-tendential value of Being',¹¹ with a capital 'B'. What do you think he means by that?

A Voice: Going two ways?

S.: Yes, that's pretty good.

A Voice: Samsara and Nirvana?

S.: No. It's Being with a capital 'B' ... You have transcended, apparently, the level of conflict.

A Voice: Wisdom and Compassion?

S.: Yes, Wisdom and Compassion. That is, or rather those are, the bi-tendential value of Being; but how exactly do they come in? It is as though the psychological has reference to oneself, the ethical to another – not that the two are completely exclusive: you also come into the picture when there is reference to another. But why is it that we even think and speak in terms of self and other, subject and object? It's because of this basic, original – and so far as ordinary experience goes – irreducible dichotomy of self and other, of subject and object. It is within the framework set up by this dichotomy that the whole of our experience and the whole of our thought takes place. But according to Buddhist philosophy – for what of a better term – and especially according to Mahayana philosophy, there is in what Guenther calls 'Being', in the realm of Ultimate Reality, no subject/object division. It's as though on the level of empirical reality, on the level of ordinary experience, you need a double approach. Reality has bifurcated into subject and object, so you are to approach Reality not only via the subject but via the object. In fact, in a sense, the best way to approach the bi-tendential Reality is via the object rather than via the subject, because to do things via the subject, as it were, is your natural one-sided tendency. Even if you approach what you consider to be Being, it is still just *you* approaching – the approach still takes place within the basic subject/object dichotomy: *you* are still doing something for *yourself*, which is a contradiction in terms. So therefore, the altruistic approach is as necessary as the self-regarding approach. You are sort of making a two-pronged attack on Being. You have, as it were, to gain Being not only for yourself but for others, otherwise 'you' do not gain Being at all, because 'you' cannot. It is only you plus others who can. So when you plus others attain Being, that is the bi-tendential value of Being which has been realized, *prajñā* representing 'your' attainment, and *karuṇā* representing 'their' attainment. If you approach the non-dual Being from the standpoint of subject your experience culminates in *prajñā*. If you approach from the standpoint of other, your experience culminates in *karuṇā*. And these two coalesce: they form one value of Ultimate Reality; hence the bi-tendential value of Being. To put it very simply and practically, it is not enough just to sit there in your meditation feeling all nice and unselfish. You've actually got to go out and act unselfishly, which brings in the ethical, the other orientated dimension. It is that only which will break down the barrier, as it were, between subject and object. This is why Shantideva speaks in terms of the exchange between the self and the other.¹² You have to treat the other as the self – because what is the difference between them?

You quite literally cannot realize Being by yourself: that isn't even a possibility. This is what the Bodhisattva sees when he 'gives up' the idea of individual Nirvana. There is no Nirvana for 'me', as distinct from a Nirvana for 'them'.

Vimalamira: And there's no possibility of doing it alone?

S.: No. No.

Vimalamitra: Or going on your six month solitary retreat and realizing Being?

S.: A solitary retreat can certainly help you in the direction of Being, but not if you think that you are doing it just for the sake of yourself; hence the dedication of merits¹³ at the end of every spiritual act. Now some people might say, "Well, how can you work for others when you don't know what's good for them?" But the same applies to you: how can you work for yourself when you don't know what's good for you? If we think in terms of doing it all for *my* sake, *my* development, *my* spiritual life, etc., we are not really breaking down that basic dichotomy between subject and object, which is all that really stands in our way. We are just sort of refining and refining one side of the dichotomy. So this is, in a way, what the Bodhisattva Ideal is all about. If we are not careful, if we give too much value to what I can the psychological and not enough to the ethical, or the other-regarding, the spiritual life becomes a sort of refined pseudo-spiritual aestheticism in which you are concerned with increasingly more refined experiences just for your own sake. You might even become resentful of other people intervening and interfering with your enjoyment of, or devotion to, these refined experiences.

Padmapani: Where will that eventually lead that person?

S.: To a Nirvana. (*Laughs.*) – If there was such a kind of Nirvana!

Padmapani: So it does lead ...?

S.: No. It doesn't lead anywhere – except to this increasingly refined pseudo-spiritual aestheticism. I think that we have to be really careful about this. This is why the objective, other-regarding aspect of work and activity is so good for people. Even if you don't like doing it particularly, well, never mind! So much the better, in a way. (*Laughter.*)

Sagaramati: Putting that in the context of study, perhaps you should study only, as it were, to help other people to give other people the value of what you have learned.

S.: Yes, one should say that. But yourself *and* others. You know, the Bodhisattva Ideal always has to do with self *and* others. You don't altogether leave yourself out, because you are also a person, a sentient being. So self *and* others. That is how we experience things anyway, so all right; it's honest to speak in these sorts of terms. Whatever you do, do it for the sake of self and others. Hence the dedication of merits at the end of the Pūja:⁷ 'whatever merit accrues from this performance, may it go to the cause of Enlightenment of myself and all sentient beings.'

Padmapani: In the case of working for the Movement, even if you hate it quite a lot, you should sort of carry on ...

S.: Perhaps one should ask, first of all, what it is one is hating.

Vimalamitra: It may be quite simply that you are not really suited to that kind of work.

S.: Well, what does that amount to? What does that mean? Suppose it's, say, sweeping the floor at the Centre, well, what does one mean by saying that "I am not suited to this", or "This isn't suited to me"? Does it mean anything more than, "I don't like doing it"? If you are asked to do an electrician's job and you don't know anything about electricity, and you don't want to blow the place sky-high, well all right, you could say that you are not a suitable person for the job. Fair enough. But if it is some simple, basic, practical thing

that any fool could do, then why does one not want to do it? Does one think one could be doing better things? If you are doing it for the good of others, – and thereby breaking down the barrier between self and others, – what could bring you nearer to Enlightenment more quickly than that? (*Laughter.*)

Assuming of course that one has stated explicitly that one wants to evolve, which means essentially that one wants to overcome the subject/object dichotomy and realize the bi-tendential value of Being (*Laughter.*), and assuming that that was all agreed upon and perfectly clear between all concerned!

I think there is something to be said, for instance, for having to do things within the context of family life. I know such a statement can be twisted! I know I'm going to be quoted out of context, but never mind! I'm doing to take that risk! (*Laughter.*) Leaving aside rationalizations, sometimes it is said that the person who has domestic responsibilities, and so on, has to think about others in a way that perhaps those who *don't* have those sort of responsibilities don't have to. Well true. There is a hard grain of truth in this. Do you see what I mean? It's alright to give up such responsibilities, you know, when you are an ethical being, fully capable of fulfilling them, – and willing to fulfil them, – but just refusing to consider the taking on of any responsibility – not just of this kind, but of any kind whatsoever – in the interest of your so-called spiritual development, seems to smack – if one isn't careful – of the 'psychological', in the narrow sense that I have been talking about. So I think it isn't a bad thing for somebody involved in the spiritual life to take on a definite concrete responsibility, with a centre, for instance, or a community, or a particular project. I think it would be quite dangerous for the average person to be left sort of floating, without any kind of responsibility at all. There are people who can get on, say, with painting – by themselves. Well that's fine, because in most cases, within the Movement, the painting too is for the sake of others – especially in the case of those who are producing *thang-kas*¹⁴ and so on, to help others with their visualization practice.¹⁵ In such a case you may need to work alone, even live and work alone, but provided you have the interest of others in mind, provided you are aware of some responsibility towards them, then you don't necessarily have to live in a community or work in a centre. Do you see what I'm getting at?

11 Concepts Negated

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

Simon Turnbull: You've said that Stream Entry¹⁶ should be the aim of every Order Member, while the arising of the Bodhicitta is something which as a spiritual community¹⁷ we might manage to get a glimpse at. I was wondering if you would explain the apparent disparity.

Sangharakshita: One can have, say, as an Order Member, the arising of the Bodhicitta as one's aim inasmuch as one is a member of the spiritual community and shares *its* aim. There is a difficulty in talking about these things because, if one looks at the history of the development of Buddhism, one sees a process going on of what may be described as solidification. A certain concept, which began by expressing a spiritual experience, comes to be solidified; and, therefore, inasmuch as it has been solidified and as it were identified with its solidified form, there has to be a sort of negation of it or protest against it. But what actually is protesting is what that concept, now solidified, originally was as an experience. So you have the rather strange situation that, at bottom, the negation is affirming the very same thing that the solidified concept, as I have called it, affirmed originally. Thus there is only a negation on the surface, from a historical point of view.

One gets this [situation] with the whole question of Stream-Entry in relation to the arising of the Bodhicitta, because if one thinks in terms of the solidified concept being negated by the protest, then the arising of the Bodhicitta is something subsequent, and superior, to Stream-Entry; because after all Stream-Entry belongs to the path of the Arahant,² and the arising of the Bodhicitta belongs to the path of the Bodhisattva. But in fact, spiritually speaking, that is not really so. It is so only within the historical perspective. Within a purely spiritual perspective, as I have tried to point out, what was originally spoken of as Stream-Entry is, more or less, the arising of the Bodhicitta. In fact, as I have said, the Bodhicitta represents simply the more positive and *other*-affirming aspect of Stream-Entry itself. So there is only a discrepancy between the two when one

looks at things from the point of view of historical development and takes that as representing some actual difference of spiritual realities and spiritual experiences.

Vessantara: When you've talked in the past about Stream-Entry being something which is realistic for everyone to aim for, and the arising of the Bodhicitta being something which at best a spiritual community might get a glimpse of, does that mean that you were using 'Stream-Entry' in a sort of solidified sense? Otherwise surely they would be equally near, or equally distant.

S.: Well, the fact is that the expression 'the arising of the Bodhicitta' cannot be completely divorced from the historical circumstances in which it was developed. It has around it all the associations of the Mahayana; and the Mahayana, perhaps, brought out the universalist, even the cosmic, implications of Buddhism much more fully than the original Buddhism itself did. So when one is thinking more in those terms, it seems more appropriate to use the expression Bodhicitta rather than the expression Stream-Entry, even though in a sense the two are interchangeable. But, even though they are interchangeable, they present themselves, partly because of their historical associations, under a difference of aspect; and it is because of that difference of aspect that I tend to speak of the Bodhicitta rather than Stream-Entry, in the way that you described.

Vessantara: Would you say that the denotations of both are the same but that the connotations are different?

S.: One could put it in that way, because in a way the denotation of Stream-Entry is more as it were individual, not to say individualistic; though at the same time it cannot be [so in the literal sense], because it represents a liberation from the sense of ego. In the same way the Bodhicitta, one might say, is less egotistic because it has reference to other living beings – because it consists in the Will, as I have called it, to Enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. But really there is only, as you have said, that difference of connotation, and not really one of denotation at all. Perhaps we could say, as I think I said in that lecture on Going for Refuge,¹⁸ that all these different terms – and these are only two of the terms that we have, after all – pertain to and revolve around one spiritual experience and express different aspects of it; and, for historical reasons rather than strictly spiritual or doctrinal reasons, one particular term seems to refer to one aspect of that process or experience better than a certain other term.

Vessantara: So would the attainment of that experience, whatever you called it, be a realistic goal for a spiritually committed person to aim for in this life?

S.: Yes, this is what I am saying – that every Order Member should aim at Stream-Entry, and should also be aware that Stream-Entry has this other-regarding aspect which we usually speak of in terms of the arising of the Bodhicitta. And just as there is no 'you', the Bodhicitta represents the fact that you are going to work for the salvation, so to speak, of all sentient beings – but that there are no sentient beings (*Laughter.*)

So one operates in both instances with the concept of self and others. In the case of Stream-Entry one is operating with the concept of self and negating that; in the case of the Bodhicitta one is operating more with the concept of others, and negating that. But, between them, both concepts are negated, or at least one realizes their relativity.



12 The Natural Thing to Do

from 'The Diamond Sutra' (*Buddhist Wisdom Books*), Pre-Ordination Retreat, Tuscany 1982

Moreover, Subhuti, a Bodhisattva who gives a gift should not be supported by a thing, nor should he be supported anywhere. When he gives gifts he should not be supported by sight-objects, not by sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or mind-objects. For, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva, the great being, should give gifts in such a way that he is not supported by the notion of a sign. And why? Because the heap of merit of that Bodhi-being who unsupported gives a gift, is not easy to measure. What do you think, Subhuti, is the extent of space in the East easy to measure? – Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. – The Lord asked: In like manner, it is easy to measure the extent of space in the South, West or North, downwards, upwards, in the intermediate directions, in all the ten directions all round? – Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. – The Lord said: Even so the heap of merit of that Bodhi-being who unsupported gives a gift is not easy to measure. That is why, Subhuti, those who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle, should give gifts without being supported by the notion of a sign.

Buddhist Wisdom Books, trans. E. Conze, Allen & Unwin, London 1958, pp. 27-28

Sangharakshita: Bringing things down to a very practical, common-sense, level, if one was trying to be a Bodhisattva, trying to practice the *dāna-pāramitā* – as distinct from just giving *dāna* – how should one do it? How should one give a gift in such a way that one is not ‘supported by the notion of a sign’? Is it enough to speak, as Conze does, in terms of unselfishness, or disinterestedness? Or is something more than that required? Is it as though, to be *dāna-pāramitā*, giving has to be an expression of your innermost nature, not something that you self-consciously do.

Shantiprabha: So that if you performed some action and somebody came back to you and said: “What you did was really good!”, you would be surprised?

S.: Yes. Because you weren’t thinking in those terms; you were just being yourself. It’s as though someone was to come up to you after lunch and say: “Thank you for passing the salt.” You don’t think in terms of practicing the *dāna-pāramitā*. It is [just] the natural thing to do. In the case of a real Bodhisattva, if someone were to come up to him and say: “Thank you for sacrificing your life and limbs,” he would be really surprised that they bothered to mention it. He wouldn’t really feel it like that. He would feel he just did what was needed.

This brings it down from the very lofty Indian attitude; virtue mustn’t be too self-conscious, too deliberate. Don’t emphasize it too much. You don’t have to call the whole world to witness when you give a half-penny. I’m afraid some people do this; you find it amongst Hindus, amongst Buddhists unfortunately, and amongst Christians – ‘philanthropy’ and ‘charity’. In one of the Gospels, Jesus himself says: ‘When you give alms, give privately. Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing.’¹⁹

So, If you want to start being a Bodhisattva, if you want to embark on this Bodhisattva path, this is what you’ve got to do: practice *dāna*, but practice *dāna-pāramitā*, give without ‘being supported by the notion of a sign’, give disinterestedly, give naturally, give spontaneously, give freely. If you are mean, grasping, selfish, and so on, you cannot even think in terms of being a Bodhisattva. Only a naturally generous-hearted person can even think in terms of being a Bodhisattva.

Subhuti: Could you make clear the connection between not ‘being supported by the notion of a sign’ and giving in a natural, free, spontaneous and disinterested way?

S.: Well, a ‘notion of a sign’ is a sort of mixed idea. It is as though there is a sort of double barrier: the barrier of beings themselves and the barrier of the signs indicating the presence of beings in that narrow limited sense. First of all, there are ‘things’, and then there are ‘thoughts about things’ and the words corresponding to those thoughts. So it’s as though the signs represent the second barrier and the beings as such represent the first. They are barriers in the sense that they stand between you and Reality; it is not only your perception of things which stands between you and Reality, but the words which you attach to

your perception of things. They also form another sort of subtle barrier standing between you and Reality. You only mistake 'things' for Reality, you mistake words for things.

Vessantara: Your mistaking things for Reality isn't simply because you have got confused by language?

S.: It can be [so] sometimes. Even apart from language you have a perception of things, but that can certainly be strengthened, be reinforced, by the language, which anyway embodies that kind of perception, that kind of confusion. It is not that if there was no language you would perceive things as they are; you would still perceive things, and things are not realities. But one does not only perceive things, one also uses words in relation to things and that reinforces one's view of those things, those beings, as representing realities – though, of course, originally it was that kind of perception that gave rise to that kind of language, maybe not individually but with people in general.

A Voice: Is it also that one sees *dāna-pāramitā* itself, the actual giving as such, as something fixed, certain: "This is the *dāna-pāramitā* practice"?

S.: Yes, one could look at it in this way. It ties up perhaps with the third fetter,²⁰ the *śīlavrata-parāmarśa*. You go through the motions: "If you do this, if you do that, that's *dāna*. This is what *dāna* is supposed to be; this is the sign that you are practicing *dāna*." It doesn't then really become something free, spontaneous, natural and even creative. You have a certain fixed idea about *dāna* and you proceed to act in accordance with *that*.

There is also the question of the amount of merit being related to the extent to which the Bodhisattva does not give 'supported by a thing', or 'the notion of a sign'. How is one to bring this down to a common-sense level? Well, the more you function disinterestedly, the more you give disinterestedly, the more positive becomes your emotional state. It seems to be as simple as that on this level.

Subhuti: '... who gives a gift should not be supported by a thing,' – that seems relatively straightforward – 'nor should he be supported anywhere' – what is being said in addition here?

S.: 'When he gives gifts, he should not be supported by sight-objects, nor by sounds,' [etc.]; in other words, he should not be supported in any particular way, in respect of any particular sense organ, even the mind.

Shantiprabha: To become unsupported must be quite a gradual process. Although you can acknowledge that everything around you supports and determines the way you see yourself, you can't actually just say: "Well I'm not going to be determined by this". You have to start with quite small things.

S.: This is obviously connected with the whole question of the Path of Vision and the Path of Transformation.²¹ You have a glimpse of the truth, no more than a glimpse to begin with, and then only gradually do you bring your whole being, the rest of your being, into alignment with that vision, that insight, that perception.

Shantiprabha: I was thinking that you could look for very small things in your life which actually do still determine you. You could look at those quite clearly and start trying to break down those perceptions.

S.: Can you give concrete example – thinking of it in relation to *dāna*?

A Voice: Presents – Christmas presents and birthday presents and so on.

S.: Yes. You give Christmas presents just because it is Christmas and other people are giving, are observing Christmas. It is in the air; advertisers are encouraging you, every shop is begging you, to buy something to give as a Christmas present. If you just go along with that, it isn't exactly *dāna-pāramitā*. One could well break that little habit and try to develop the more positive or skilful habit of giving one's presents in connection with Wesak²² perhaps. (Pause.)

A Voice: It seems important that when we give we actually feel generous, or feel metta.

S.: That is important, but I think we mustn't forget the needs of the person to whom we are giving. What is most important is that we should get what he needs, not that we should feel good giving it. I think that if one gives, one need not bother too much about the feeling. So, yes, there must be some genuine [urge] to give, but you should be careful that you don't attach too much importance to it. Some people wait; they won't and they don't want to give until they really feel an absolutely uncontrollable urge to! Meanwhile the wretched person they were thinking of giving to might be dying of starvation or freezing with cold or whatever. In a sense, who cares how you feel? The important thing is that the deed should be done, the gift should be given. One mustn't be too unduly subjective in one's approach. A doctor might get up one morning in a really grumpy mood and not feel like helping humanity at all. But does that mean he should not go into his surgery, not attend to his patients? (*Pause.*)

One thing this whole chapter seems to be getting at is that, in a sense, there shouldn't be a separate, specifically religious, life, labelled as such. One of the criticisms the Egyptians had of the Greeks was that they had gymnasia. Do you remember why they thought it a weakness?

Subhuti: It meant that in the course of your everyday life you were not getting sufficient exercise.

S.: Exactly. So you had to set aside a separate establishment where, in an entirely artificial manner, you had to go and take exercise because you were living in a basically unhealthy, unbalanced way. This was the Egyptian view. So one could say in the same way there should not be a separate religious life, separate from the rest of your life. There shouldn't be specifically religious acts. Your whole life should be a religious act; your whole life should be an embodiment of skilfulness. Giving shouldn't be a highly self-conscious way you act on special occasions; it should be something quite natural to you which you are doing all the time without thinking about it, just as the flower blooms without thinking about it – not that you are unconscious or unaware as a flower is, but you aren't too self-conscious about it. You are not practicing a *pāramitā*, you are just doing what seems perfectly natural, simple and straightforward. If someone hasn't got any money and you have, you give them some; it is no great deal. *Of course* you share it. You don't think in terms of yourself being a great Bodhisattva practicing a great virtue or *Pāramitā*. It is because we have got ourselves into such a profoundly irreligious state, such an unskilful state, that we have to think in terms of 'religion' and 'being skilful'.

This is very much the attitude of Lao Tzu in the *Tao Te Ching*²³. Morality was only introduced when people started degenerating; before that they were perfect and never thought about such things! Buddhism isn't something you take up as if it were a separate interest, such a stamp-collecting or bee-keeping. It is something you do all the time because it is a natural expression of yourself, the way you feel, the way you are, the way you function.

And what applies to *dāna* applies also to ethics and the other *pāramitās* – patience, energy, meditation, and even more so Wisdom; they should not be too self-conscious. This means really understanding that to grow, to develop, is in the deepest sense a natural thing. It is not grafted onto you in an artificial manner, but [is] an expression of your deepest nature, your deepest need; so that when you are, as it were, being religious, you are being yourself in the best sense of the term. Some people do seem to practice their religion in a highly artificial way, like a dog walking on stilts. They do it quite well, they can probably walk on stilts better than any dog in town, but that is not a simile for the spiritual life – which is not just putting your unredeemed doggy nature up on a pair of stilts and calling it 'spiritual development' and then parading along in a highly artificial manner in front of an admiring audience.

People shouldn't notice it when you are being 'religious' – or if they do, only because they are so unaccustomed to naturalness that it is unnatural to them – just as the Greeks with gymnasia took note of the fact that the Egyptians didn't have any. Of course, you could turn that argument around. The Egyptians did have lots of temples; you could argue that if they had been really balanced and healthy, they wouldn't have needed any temples. Then they might have come back and said that that was just our way of looking at it, that the temples were houses of the gods, and that the gods were real and lived in their temples and needed to be served. And that the whole of society, of the state, was in fact geared to that, and in that way everything was completely unified: everybody was a servant of the gods, everything belonged to the gods.

So, in that sort of society, to be religious is to some extent an ordinary natural thing, a part of life – as it is to modern Tibetans. It is not something superimposed on life or added to life.

So perhaps we can think of the Bodhisattva practicing *dāna*, and the other *pāramitās*, in that sort of way – at least as a beginning, to help us get some sort of feeling for what the Bodhisattva and his practice of the *pāramitās* represent. It does seem to be clear that in this chapter the Buddha is saying that one who wants to be a Bodhisattva should practice the *dāna-pāramitā*. This seems to be the gist of the matter. And because he is practicing the *dāna-pāramitā*, not just *dāna* in the ordinary sense, he should practice in a particular way; he should try to bring himself to a state of mind in which to give without thought is natural.



13 The most precious gift of all

from 'Milarepa and the Novices' (*Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*), Men's Seminar, Padmaloka, July 1978

"Let a present be given to mark this meeting of you faithful pupils with so happy and contented a yogin."

So saying he initiated them and set them practising, and when the right kind of perception arose in them, he was so pleased that he sang this song expressing the essence of good counsel:

*Buddhist Texts Through the Ages, ed. E. Conze, Harper, Harper & Row, New York
1964, p. 258*

Sangharakshita: So Milarepa gives his pupils a present. What can he give them? He hasn't got anything material. He can't give them any food; not even Tibetan tea, or biscuits. He says, '*Let a present be given to mark this evening to you faithful pupils with so happy and contented a yogin.*' So saying he initiated them'. What does that suggest? What is the best present? The best present is the Dharma.

This remind me of an experience of my own. In 1956 I was invited by the government of India as one of the fifty-seven 'distinguished Buddhists from the border areas' to visit Delhi for the 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations. In the course of our travels we came to Benares, and one of the other distinguished Buddhists from the border areas, a friend of mine who was a lay Nyingmapa Buddhist²⁴ called Sonan Topgay Kazi took me into Benares to see a Tibetan Lama – not an incarnate Lama, an ordinary monk – who was living there to learn Sanskrit. I think his name was Tendzing Gyaltsho. He was over seventy. The Dalai Lama had wanted him to start teaching, but he had refused. He told the Dalai Lama that he was too busy learning; he hadn't finished his studies. So he settled in Benares to study Sanskrit. We found him at a place almost like a typical Hindu Ashram. He had a little room at the top, but it was quite bare. He was sitting on the floor with a tin trunk in front of him which served as his desk and table, with just a little text on it which he was studying. He was very pleased to see me and we talked for about an hour. As we rose to depart, he said, "I really must give you something." He looked around the room, and there was absolutely nothing. I could see that he was almost desperate. He had nothing but his rosary, so he broke his rosary and gave me one bead and said, "Please take this. I must have said many millions of mantras* on it. It's all I have to give you." It's a little like this. Milarepa must have had absolutely nothing, maybe not even a rosary. All he could give was this song, but in a way he gave the most valuable gift of all, the gift of the Dharma.



Glossary

Mantra (Skt.): From the Old Vedic (and Indo-European) root 'man' – 'to think', combined with '-trā', which is the suffix '-kr̥t', signifying instrumentality. A literal rendering of 'mantra' would therefore be 'an instrument of thought'. The traditional etymology of the word is 'that which protects the mind'. A mantra is usually a short string of Sanskrit syllables which are chanted or spoken. In Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, mantras came to play a significant part in devotional rituals and visualization practices. Each Buddha or Bodhisattva would have a particular mantra associated with him or her, the mantra being an equivalent in sound of the Buddha or Bodhisattva in much the same way that an iconographical depiction is a visual equivalent. Thus a mantra is a sound symbol of the Enlightened mind. Its essential meaning is in its sound. Even in cases in which the syllables of a mantra form words, they are not usually translated or translatable. It is not just an external sound, but also an internal one; in fact, mantric sound is essentially an inner vibration, the gross or external repetition of the sound being only a means to the subtle, inner recitation. Mantras help invoke the particular quality which the Bodhisattva embodies. One of the most famous mantras is *OM MANI PADME HUM*, the mantra of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. In the FWBO, mantras are chanted during the performance of devotional ceremony known as the Sevenfold Pūja and are recited by Order Members as part of their visualization practice.

Micchādiṭṭhi (Pali) (Skt. *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*): 'wrong view'. A wrong view is the conceptual crystallization of a deeply embedded attitude to life which is not in accordance with how things really are. Although *micchādiṭṭhis* are given rational expression they are usually very strongly based in emotion. The consequence of holding wrong views is that one suffers through having an incorrect apprehension of life and one's growth as an individual is stultified to a greater or lesser extent because one misunderstands the nature of human development. The two classic wrong views are Eternalism (the belief that some aspect of one's personality is beyond change) and Nihilism (the view that death is the final end to one's experience). There are however many different kind of wrong views and they abound in the culture that surrounds us, ranging from sophisticated metaphysical systems, which do not accurately reflect the real nature of things, to fashionable opinions and idea, casually adopted without real thought. 'Buddhism' in the West is unfortunately also often tainted with these fashionable views. Right views (*samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, Pali *sammādiṭṭhi*) express, as far as it is possible to do so, the real nature of life. They act as a basis upon which one can develop so that, ultimately, one sees directly for oneself their truth by means of Insight. At this point right view becomes Perfect Vision.

See *Mitrata 40: 'Perfect Vision I'*, Windhorse, London 1983.

Mudrā (Skt.): 'gesture', 'seal'. Iconographical representations of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas depict their subject in a certain posture. The position of the hands, in particular, varies and helps indicate which figure is being depicted. This gesture of the hands is called '*mudrā*'. *Mudrā* reflects the truth that we cannot help but express ourselves by our whole posture, including the way we gesture with our hands; our whole physical bearing reflects our mental state as much as our thoughts and words. In the case of Enlightened being, it is as if the Transcendental permeates the entire psycho-physical organism, even down to the very finger tips. Hence the position of the hands helps communicate a particular quality as much as the colour of the figure, the facial expression or the name.

In the case of the 'Five Buddhas', the Blue Buddha, Akṣobhya, has his left hand resting, palm upwards, in his lap, while he touches the earth in front of his right knee with the finger tips of his right hand, palm inwards, in the earth-touching *mudrā*. The yellow Buddha, Ratnasambhava, with his left hand in his lap, holds his right hand, palm outwards, in front of his right knee, in the *mudrā* of supreme giving. The red Buddha, Amitābha, holds his hands resting one on top of the other in his lap, palm upwards. This is the *mudrā* of meditation. The green Buddha, Amogāsiddhi, has his left hand in his lap, but holds up his right hand at chest level, palm outwards, with the finger tips slightly curled. This is the *mudrā* of fearlessness. The central, white Buddha, Vairocana, holds both hands up at chest level, in a more complicated gesture in which the index finger and thumb of each hand, are touching. This is the *mudrā* of turning the Wheel of the Dharma.

Prostrations: The term can refer to several related practices. Firstly, it can simply refer to the act of bowing before a Buddha-image, one's teacher, or some other eminent spiritual personage by falling to one's knees and then lying full length on the ground with one's joined palms raised over one's head. In this way one expresses one's devotion and reverence. Secondly, the term is applied to a practice widespread amongst Tibetan Buddhists and popular within the Western Buddhist Order. More properly, this practice is called the 'Going for Refuge and Prostration Practice'. One sits to meditate, visualizing a Buddha figure who embodies the Ideal. In more elaborate forms of the practice (which should only be undertaken with the permission of one's teacher) one sees a plethora of figures arranged in a 'Refuge Tree', so that all objects of reverence and devotion are before one. One may even visualize that all beings are around one, participating with one in the practice. One then stands up and physically prostrates oneself over and over again to the visualized image, whilst saying verses expressive of Going for Refuge. It would be common to do perhaps 108 prostrations in one session. When undertaken as the first of the Four Foundation Yogas of Tibetan Buddhism (a very demanding system of preliminary practice), practitioners are required to perform 100,000 prostrations in total over a number of months or years. This quantification of the amount of practice to be done can degenerate into a rather mechanical way of practising. The Going for Refuge and Prostration Practice is very effective in developing a greater depth of feeling for the significance of Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels as well as cultivating devotion to the Buddhas and one's teachers. It is particularly popular in the FWBO amongst those preparing for the ordination.

Refer to Sangharakshita, 'The Four Foundation Yogas of the Tibetan Buddhist Tantra', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/phml47k> ; Sangharakshita, 'The Symbolism of the Cosmic Refuge Tree and the Archetypal Guru', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/qew2oog> ; and Sangharakshita, 'Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism', Windhorse Publications.



Notes

¹ See *Mitrata* 57 in this series, 'The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal - Part 2', Glossary.

² See *Mitrata* 56 in this series, 'The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal - Part 1', Glossary.

³ In Tantric Symbolism, each of the Jinas or Buddhas in the Mandala of the Five Buddhas is head of a particular family. Akṣobhya is head of the *Vajra* family, Amitābha is head of the Lotus family. The central Buddha, Vairocana is head of the *Tathāgata* or Buddha family. See Sangharakshita, 'The Symbolism of the Five Buddhas, "Male" and "Female"', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/o6nmokt> or Sangharakshita, 'Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism', Windhorse Publications.

⁴ This is a Vajrayana practice, one of the 'Four *Mūla*' or 'Foundation Yogas'. It is common to all major schools of Tibetan Buddhism and is concerned with the symbolism of the Cosmic Refuge Tree, one of the richest and most complex in the whole field of the Tantra. The practice involves the visualization of a multitude of figures of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gurus, guardian deities and others on and around five lotuses arranged in mandala form. While visualizing, the practitioner recites devotional verses and repeatedly prostrates full length before the visualized image. For a detailed account of the symbolism and the practice, see Sangharakshita, 'The Symbolism of the Cosmic Refuge Tree and the Archetypal Guru', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/qew2ooq> or Sangharakshita, 'Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism', Windhorse Publications.

⁵ E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, Paperback Edition, Abacus Books, London 1974

⁶ For an explanation of the Pūja see *Mitrata* 58 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart – Part 1'; 'The FWBO Pūja Book', Windhorse Publications; Sangharakshita, 'Ritual and Devotion in Buddhism', Windhorse Publications; and Sangharakshita, 'Poetry and Devotion in Buddhism: The Sevenfold Pūja', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/p6xx4mr>

⁷ See *Mitrata* 60 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Vow – Part 1', Glossary.

⁸ See 'The Book of the Discipline', Vol. 4, trans. I. B. Horner, *Mahavagga* 1, pp 7-10 (*Sacred Books of the Buddhists*), Vol. XIV, Pali Text Society, London 1982; also Samyutta Nikaya (*The Book of Kindred Sayings*), VI, 1, trans. Mrs Rhys Davids, Pali Text Society, London, 1950.

⁹ P. A. Kropotkin (1842-1921), *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, P. Sargent, USA 1982; also see Herbert Read's 1942 selection of his writings.

¹⁰ 'Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha' is the act of personal commitment to the Ideal of Enlightenment, the Path to its realization, and the community of those who are similarly committed: Going for Refuge within the context of the Western Buddhist Order constitutes one a member of the Order.

¹¹ See H. Guenther and L. S. Kawamura, *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, Dharma, Emeryville 1975; also see *Mitrata* 18, *Self and Other*, Windhorse, London 1978

¹² *Entering the Path to Enlightenment: The Bodhicaryavatara of the Buddhist Poet Santideva*, trans. Marion L. Matics, Allen & Urwin, London 1971, Ch. VIII, vv. 90ff; see also Santideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, trans. Stephen Batchelor, Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamsala 1979, p. 114, vv. 90ff.

¹³ See *Mitrata* 58 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart – Part 1', Glossary.

¹⁴ See *Mitrata* 60 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Vow – Part 1', Glossary.

¹⁵ See *Mitrata* 57 in this series, 'The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal – Part 2', Glossary.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Glossary.

¹⁷ See *Mitrata* 58 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart – Part 1', Glossary.

¹⁸ Sangharakshita, 'Going for Refuge', Windhorse Publications; Sangharakshita, 'The Threefold Refuge', Windhorse Publications; Sangharakshita, 'Going for Refuge' available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/kfn5f6x>

¹⁹ From the Sermon of the Mount: New Testament, the Gospel of St. Matthew, Ch. 6, v. 3.

²⁰ See *Mitrata* 57 in this series, 'The Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal – Part 2', Note 5.

²¹ See *Mitrata* 61 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Vow – Part 2', Note 13.

²² Wesak: named after the Indian lunar month *Vaisakha* (Pali *Vesaka*, Sinhalese Wesak), which corresponds to the months April-May, it is the most important festival of the Buddhist Year. Followers of the Theravada observe Wesak as a threefold festival, celebrating the Buddha's birth, Enlightenment and Parinirvana. Others celebrate each event with separate festivals. In most cases, the Buddha's attainment of Enlightenment is celebrated at Wesak. This is the case of the FWBO and the festival is known as Buddha Day.

²³ The *Tao Te Ching* was widely revered in China as the classic work on Taoism [*Tao chia* – the school (*chia*) of the Way (*Tao*)]. Tradition has it that it was written by Lao Tzu, a contemporary of Confucius (551-497 BCE). See Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. D. C. Lau, Penguin Books, 1963.

²⁴ Nyingmapa Buddhist: the Nyingmapas, one of the major religious foundations of Tibet. 'Nyingmapas' literally means 'the old style ones', so-called because of their reliance on the earlier Tibetan translations of the Tantras; they claim to be connected directly with the original transmission of Buddhism from India to Tibet. They are popularly known as the 'Red Caps', because they wear tall red pundit caps. Padmasambhava, the Tantric guru of the eighth century CE, is honoured as the founding guru of the Nyingmapa School.

