

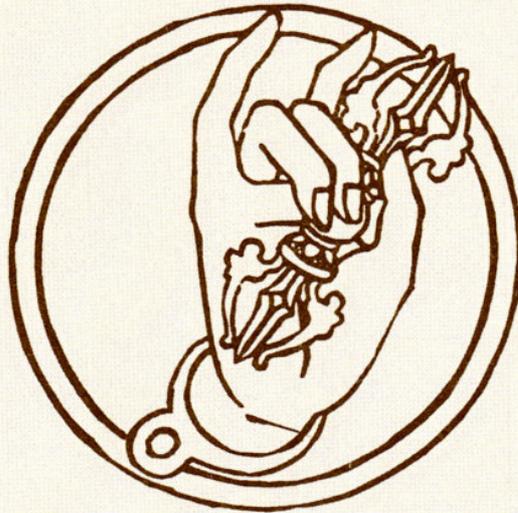
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# THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

2

The Buddha and  
the Bodhisattva:  
Eternity and Time



Series No. 16  
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Cover Symbol:

The symbols on the covers of the issues in this series are from original lino-cuts by Dharmachari Alokā based upon the *mudrās* of the eight principal Bodhisattvas of Mahayana tradition. This issue features the *mudrā* of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, 'The Universally Beneficial'. In his right hand he holds the *vajra* or thunderbolt, symbol of Perfect Wisdom, which breaks through all false views.

# THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

## 8. The Buddha and the Bodhisattva: Eternity and Time

### Part 2

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\*Indicates refer to Glossary

## Editorial

For the past two and a half years *Mitrata* has been concerned with *Aspects of the Bodhisattva Ideal*. Now, introducing the last issue in the present series, I find myself reluctant to leave our theme. But a Buddhist, of course, can never be done with the Bodhisattva Ideal. It is not something merely to read about: it is a way of life.

The Bodhisattva Ideal must be put into practice. With sixteen issues of *Mitrata* on the subject we have plenty of material for guidance and inspiration. We have indeed the first stage of the Bodhisattva Path itself, the first *pāramitā* — *dāna*; the gift of the Dharma being the 'greatest gift of all'. We have, if I might be excused a romantic indulgence, a Bodhisattva in our midst. A Bodhisattva in the form of *Mitrata*. A Bodhisattva strives towards Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. He enlists their help in the building of a Buddhahood. Through joint effort, cooperation, friendship — *kalyāṇa mitratā* the Way to Enlightenment is effected.

This gift, this Bodhisattva, manifests through the efforts of a team of people working together. The 'Lion's Roar' team constitutes the main 'body' — Dharmacharinis and women Mitras responsible for researching seminar material, copy-preparation, editing, typing, proof-reading, illustrations, paste-up, publicity and distribution. Valuable assistance has been provided by the 'limbs' — transcribers, designers, writers and additional researchers and editors. The Venerable Sangharakshita takes his place at the heart of the Bodhisattva; without him many of us might not have even begun to tread this Path. On behalf of all who have benefitted in any way from this particular gift I would like to thank and rejoice in the merits of those who have made it possible.

In spite of so much voluntary help *Mitrata* has been in financial danger. Happily, at a crucial moment, support was forthcoming and, for the time being at least, publication can go on. If you would like to help ensure the continued life of *Mitrata* please consider a subscription.

After a single issue on the subject of 'Wisdom' our new series will be *The Tantric Path* based on the Venerable Sangharakshita's lecture series *Creative Symbols of the Tantric Path to Enlightenment*. From the glorious realms of the Mahayana we will venture on into the esoteric mysteries of the Vajrayana. We will be faced with a wealth of powerful images — challenged to take a good look at ourselves in the light of our aspirations. Far from leaving behind the Bodhisattva — the Buddhist *par excellence* — we will find further opportunities to deepen our understanding of what it means to be a Buddhist. Opportunities which, if we have the courage to take up, will transform both ourselves and others on our way to realizing the Ideal.

SRIMALA



## Seminar Extracts

### 1 Blue Sky and Rainbows

from 'The Sutra of Hui-Neng' (*A Buddhist Bible*), Mixed Retreat, Abhirati, March 1974

Sangharakshita: There is a traditional comparison for the 'Three *Kāyas*'.<sup>1</sup> In this comparison the *dharmakāya* is the pure blue sky without cloud. Then the *sambhogakāya* is a cloud appearing in the midst of this surrounded with rainbows. And the *nirmāṇakāya* is the rain that falls from that cloud. Again in Buddhist art — that is, Vajrayana art — you get the 'Three *Kāyas*' [depicted] as Buddha figures, one above the other. Here the *dharmakāya* is a completely naked Buddha figure, sometimes in *yab-yum*,<sup>2</sup> sometimes single. Then the *sambhogakāya* Buddha is a richly adorned and decorated Buddha figure in gorgeous embroidered robes and wearing, perhaps, a wonderful crown. And the *nirmāṇakāya* is our own familiar Buddha, Śākyamuni, with his shaven head and his staff and his patched yellow robe. That's the historical manifestation.

Buddhadasa: Then what is the *Ādi*-Buddha?

S.: This is another aspect again. You can say this is another dimension, as it were, of the *dharmakāya*. *Ādi* means 'primeval' or 'from the beginning' or, in a sense, 'out of time'. So the *Ādi*-Buddha is Buddhahood in that aspect which has nothing to do with time. Maybe you realize it in time but when you realize it you also realize that it was there from the beginning. It was there all the time. It's timeless, not called into being [in time]. That aspect is called the *Ādi*-Buddha.

Mangala: I've heard the *sambhogakāya* described as archetypal.

S.: Yes. Archetypal in the sense of [being] the celestial pattern from which all individual Buddhas are derived. For instance — you can put it this way — an historical Buddha isn't able to manifest all his perfections fully because of the limitations of the historical situation. If you can imagine a sort of universal situation where there are no limitations and endow the Buddha in that situation with all possible, conceivable perfections and virtues and attributes, then that is the *sambhogakāya*.

Ratnapani: Is it the 'Five *Dhyāni* Buddhas' and Vajrasattva?<sup>3</sup>

S.: In a way all the different forms of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas belong to the *sambhogakāya*. They are all aspects of it except for those who actually symbolize the *dharmakāya* itself. Vajrasattva is technically the esoteric aspect of Aksobhya who is one of the 'Five *Dhyāni* Buddhas'. What should be emphasized is that the *sambhogakāya* represents the aspect of richness of endowment beyond the limitations of any actual historical situation. So in that sense the archetypal Buddha is the Buddha beyond space, beyond time, beyond history, but endowed with all the perfections of all the historical Buddhas and more. I'll put it in this way to make it clearer: suppose you want to draw a perfect human being, the most beautiful human being conceivable. Suppose you do that. It isn't any actual individual human being [that you create]. You might have taken the eyes from this person, the hair from that and the fingers from somebody else. You could say that that was an archetypally perfect human being. So the archetypal Buddha, the *sambhogakāya* Buddha, is a bit like that, but very, very much more. Therefore the *sambhogakāya* Buddha or the aspect of the *sambhogakāya* Buddha is represented as extremely beautiful and richly adorned and decorated. [Or we can look at it another way:] It is said that a Buddha achieves his *dharmakāya* as a result of his *jñāna-sambhāra*, his accumulation of *jñāna* or Wisdom, and that he achieves his *nirmāṇakāya* and *sambhogakāya* as a result of his accumulation of *puṇya*.<sup>4</sup> So there you get another connotation. ....

Cintamani: Could one call the *sambhogakāya* the mythological Buddha?

S.: In a sense, yes, provided you don't use the word mythological in a pejorative sense as meaning just imaginary. [It is] mythical rather than mythological.

[Perhaps you are beginning] to get some idea of *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*. [One could say that] *nirmāṇakāya* is what we would call the historical Buddha. Sometimes the *sambhogakāya* Buddha is called the Buddha of Glory or the Glorious Buddha or even Glorified Buddha.

Devamitra: Was the *trikāya* doctrine accepted by all the Mahayana schools?

S.: As far as I recollect, yes, though it developed a little late. But you find traces of it even in the Pali scriptures.

Buddhadasa: When an individual realizes the *sambhogakāya* for himself — can that be associated with the Bodhicitta in any way?

S.: No, I don't think there is any direct correlation there. Hui-Neng is saying, of course — this is how the subject comes in — that if the Buddha is to be found in our own mind, then the *trikāya* is to be found within our own mind, which means it's germinally present even now. Therefore in the Vajrayana it's said that what in the Buddha is *trikāya*, in us is body, speech and mind. Guenther, of course, points out that it isn't body as opposed to mind [that's referred to] here. It's more our existential presence in the world. That we are *here*. This is our *nirmāṇakāya*. That we communicate, that we have a medium of communication, is our *sambhogakāya*. And what we are in our essence, that is our *dharmakāya*. So the germs, the seeds of the 'Three *Kāyas*' are already there and when fully developed they become *nirmāṇakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *dharmakāya*.



## 2 Subtler than the Subtle

from 'Buddha Activity' (*The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*), Women's Mitra Retreat, Padmaloka 1980

Sangharakshita: In Buddhism the human being is divided into body, speech and mind. In the case of a Buddha also there is body, speech and mind. But in the Mahayana and Vajrayana it is often said that what in us is body in the Buddha is *nirmāṇakāya*, what in us is speech in the Buddha is *sambhogakāya*, what in us is mind in the Buddha is *dharmakāya*. We are ordinary unenlightened beings with body, speech and mind, the Buddha is an Enlightened human being with the 'Three *Kāyas*' —the *nirmāṇakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *dharmakāya*. So the threefold unenlightened individual is to be transformed or transmuted into the threefold Enlightened individual. The *nirmāṇakāya* is, so to speak, body raised to the highest power (in the mathematical sense); *sambhogakāya* is speech raised to its highest power; and *dharmakāya* is mind raised to its highest power.

Bonnie Quirk: How can a body be raised to its highest power?

S.: What is body? It isn't just physical body. We were talking earlier of being conscious of people's presence after death. When that happens, what are you conscious of? Let me give you an example [of this kind of experience] which might help to explain what body is.

Years ago [before I started the FWBO], I used to go down to the Brighton Buddhist Society every month to take the meditation class. Naturally I got to know the people in the group quite well, particularly the secretary and treasurer, Violet and Carl, a married couple in their seventies. I often used to stay overnight in their house in Hove and we became quite good friends.

One particular Wednesday I was not well and I phoned to say that I would not be coming down. So Violet took the meditation class, as she sometimes did if I couldn't make it. Everything went normally and she was perfectly all right. The Centre was in a large room on the ground floor and they lived above, so after the class she went upstairs and just sat down in her usual armchair. Two minutes later her husband came to ask her if she would like a cup of tea, and there she was sitting in the armchair dead, just like that. He told me this himself.

A week later I went down to conduct the funeral. Whenever I used to arrive from the train, I would go upstairs to their flat and have a cup of tea and a chat with Violet, who would be sitting in her usual chair, the one in which she died. So when I arrived for the funeral I sat down as I usually did, and in came Violet — yes, in came Violet! She sat down in her chair as usual and, as it were, asked me how I was. After a few minutes she got up and went away.

Now I didn't see Violet — I didn't have an hallucination. I didn't hear Violet. But there she was. She wasn't a disembodied spirit. She had body — yet I didn't see her with the physical eye. So what is it [that I experienced]? I've had experiences of this sort on a number of occasions and I have come to the conclusion that body isn't just gross physical body. For instance, I have myself had various experiences of being out of the physical body. I had one such experience in connection with acupuncture treatment which some friends persuaded me to have shortly after I returned to England. During the second session I had just one little prick in a finger and as soon as the silver needle entered I felt a rush of energy up my arm, which hit me in the brain and, as it were, knocked me right out of my body.

So there was I, about 25 to 30 feet above the body and a little to one side, looking down obliquely at my gross physical body. It wasn't that I was disembodied. I still had a body which sort of occupied space but it wasn't the gross physical body. [I looked down from this body and] saw the acupuncturist frantically massaging the legs [of my gross physical body], trying to bring me back. I afterwards learned from a friend who became a pupil of that acupuncturist that for 35 minutes my heart stopped beating and that [he considered that] I was technically dead [although medical friends have subsequently informed me that this is unlikely]. I had no consciousness of how long it was [that the experience lasted] — I thought that it was 15 or 20 minutes but it was about 35 minutes. I eventually sort of came back [to my gross physical body] and went round the corner for a cup of coffee with the friend who had accompanied me to the acupuncturist. I felt extremely well — I hadn't felt so well for a long time.

This and other experiences I have had have convinced me that there is a sort of subtle body. It is the same as the physical body in all respects except that it is not a gross physical body. One can only describe it as a subtle physical body. [When you have these experiences] your subjective experience [of being in a body which occupies space] is exactly the same but it is not really the gross physical body you experience but the subtle one. So when you die you've still got a body — the body in which, according to Tibetan tradition, you are in the *bardo* and have those *bardo* experiences.<sup>5</sup> There is no difference [between your self-experience of having a body after death or in out-of-the-body experiences and the like and of having a body in ordinary waking experience.] You always have a body, [in the sense that] the body principle is always there.

A Buddha's body, in the sense of *nirmāṇakāya*, is not the gross physical body, probably not even the subtle physical body, but something even subtler than that. The subtle body is less limited by space and time than the physical body but the *nirmāṇakāya* is subtler still. It is the body principle itself, a sort of presence which is not limited by space and time [at all]. Guenther translates *nirmāṇakāya* in a rather individual way as 'authentic being'. It is not a gross physical body in the ordinary sense, not even a subtle physical body, but it is the fact that the Buddha is *there*, as it were. He is not a vague abstraction or a sort of general idea. He is concretely existent, but without existing as anything in particular.

Marichi: So it is actually a separate existence?

S.: In a manner of speaking, yes. The point about the *nirmāṇakāya* is that it is the determinantly existent. That is to say it is not something vague and ghostlike. [On the other hand] it is not concretely existent in the sense of existent as opposed to non-existent. It is subtler than that.

Dhammadinna: Does [the *nirmāṇakāya*] apply to the *arūpaloka*,<sup>6</sup> if you were in that realm?

S.: I would say that [your body in the *arūpaloka*] would be a subtle body. [When you are meditating deeply, in the sense of being in *dhyana*, you are in a subtle body.] In the case [of the *nirmāṇakāya*] of the Buddha one has to speak, if this is not a contradiction in terms, of a Transcendental body [i.e. a body not merely going beyond the realms of form as does the subtle body in the *arūpaloka* but transcending the mundane altogether].

Marichi: This is where angels and devas and so on come in — the more subtle level.

S.: Yes, [the bodies of] angels and devas are on the more subtle level [but are still not Transcendental]. The *nirmāṇakāya* of the Buddha is not identical with his physical body, any more than our own subtle body is identical with our gross physical body though they may be as it were fused or confused. The *nirmāṇakāya* of the Buddha is, I can only say, Transcendental. We are getting into rather deep waters here!

Bonnie Quirk: Would you say the *nirmāṇakāya* is something again other than the subtle body? We all must have a subtle body and at times some of us experience it. I did experience it myself and it was pretty scary because I didn't know what was happening.

S.: I would say — this is a little tentative and only partly based on experience — that there is a whole series of bodies. We usually identify ourselves with and operate in or from the gross physical body, less often from the subtle body. But there are bodies subtler than the subtle. [However], whereas all these bodies are mundane and conditioned, one could say that there is also a Transcendental body which we can hardly imagine or conceive of because it goes completely beyond our experience ...

So 'raising the body to its highest power' means making the ascent from the gross body to the subtle, from the subtle to the more subtle, and so on.



### 3 No-possession of No-marks

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

*The Lord continued: 'What do you think, Subhuti, can the Tathāgata be seen by the possession of his marks?' — Subhuti replied: 'No, indeed, O Lord. And why? What has been taught by the Tathāgata as the possession of marks, that is truly a no-possession of no-marks.' The Lord said: 'Wherever there is possession of marks, there is fraud, wherever there is no-possession of no-marks there is no fraud. Hence the Tathāgata is to be seen from no-marks as marks.'*

*Buddhist Wisdom Books*, trans. E. Conze, Allen & Unwin, London 1958, p. 28

Sangharakshita: It's as though one cannot or should not infer the existence of a Buddha. Putting it in syllogistic form, the argument — the argument which is in the balance because [in this passage] its premises are [said to be] false — would be: a Buddha is one who possesses the 32 signs; Gautama

possesses the 32 signs; therefore Gautama is a Buddha. Can you reason in this way? Can your knowledge that someone is Enlightened be the result merely of inference in this way? Can Buddhahood be inferred, and if it cannot be inferred how can you know that someone is Enlightened or that there is such a thing as Buddhahood? Of course, there is the fact that someone can possess the 32 marks and not be a Buddha because he is a *Cakravartin* [or 'Universal Monarch']<sup>7</sup> – that would in any case falsify the argument [because not all those possessing the 32 marks would necessarily be Buddhas]. But, leaving that aside, even if there were no such thing as a *Cakravartin*, could you then infer the existence of the Buddha from possession of the 32 marks?

Amoghavira: There are lists that consist of a few more than 32 marks.

S.: Yes there are other lists of qualities or attributes of the Buddha which are not included in the 32 marks, such as the 'Ten Powers'<sup>8</sup> and the eighteen special qualities of a Buddha. Even on this comparatively common-sense level, Buddhahood is not to be inferred from the existence of the 32 marks. But could Buddhahood be inferred from the possession of any number of external marks of any kind?

In other words, is Buddhahood to be known through reason, through inference? You've been told that the Buddha possesses these marks (leaving aside the *Cakravartin*), so you look at him and you see the 32 marks. [What] you see [is] the 32 marks, but you don't actually see that he is the Buddha. You have an inferential knowledge that he is the Buddha [from seeing- the 32 marks]. But is that good enough? Presumably it is not — there must be some kind of direct perception.

Jinavamsa: Only a Buddha could recognize a Buddha.

S.: One might say only a Buddha could fully recognize a Buddha, but perhaps even someone who is not a Buddha could have an inkling, by some means other than inferential, that another person is in fact a Buddha.

Amoghavira: What other means are open to him, then?

S.: Well, what other means of knowledge does one have other than inference?

Subhuti: There's only experience, isn't there?

S.: There's only experience, which will include direct intuitive perception.

It occurs to me that Conze's divisions [in his commentary on this passage] are perhaps a bit too schematic in distinguishing the *sambhogakāya* endowed with marks from the *dharmakāya* not endowed with marks; and faith, by means of which you perceive the *sambhogakāya* but not the *dharmakāya*, from Wisdom, by means of which you perceive the *dharmakāya* but not the *sambhogakāya* and no-marks rather than marks. Is it really as neat or schematic as that? In what sense has the Buddha two bodies? Have we been misled by this word 'body'? 'Personality' might be better. We speak of the *trikāya*, the doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha. But does the Buddha have three bodies? What does one mean by this? Is it three aspects?

Subhuti: It's three levels of increased experience of the Buddha.

S.: Or it's three circles — an outer, inner, and innermost circle. But is it true that faith can only penetrate so far and that only Wisdom can penetrate further?

Amoghavira: I think it's another case of inference from your own experience. We see the Buddha and we split him up [on the basis of our experience of ourselves].

S.: There's nothing wrong in that because we are told that we consist of body, speech and mind: unenlightened body, unenlightened speech and unenlightened mind. The Buddha also consists of body, speech and mind, only in his case they are Enlightened. His Enlightened body is the *nirmāṇakāya*,

Enlightened speech is the *sambhogakāya* and Enlightened mind is the *dharmakāya*. So there is nothing wrong in seeing the Buddha in terms of our own self, provided that you remember that we are unenlightened and the Buddha is Enlightened.

Amoghavira: You could say that body and speech come from the mind.

S.: You could say that but what would be the point of it in this connection?

Amoghavira: Well, when you say body, speech and mind you are [speaking of] three separate entities, whereas there are quite a lot of interrelations between them, so you can't just put them into compartments. I think that you can't do the same thing to the three bodies.

S.: The word 'body', in other words, is misleading because [when you speak of the three bodies] you think, perhaps, in terms of three bodies stuck one on top of the other. [This is] especially the case when the 'Three *Kāyas*' are represented [in iconography] by three different figures. (There is of course a fourth *kāya*, the *svabhāvikakāya*, which is said to represent the unity of the other three. Then there is a fifth *kāya* in the Vajrayana: the *mahāsukhakāya*, the body of great bliss.) [The *trikāya*, then,] presumably represents the different degrees of externality and internality of the Buddha-nature, but not three different *bodies* — that perhaps is a misleading, almost theosophical way of splitting things up.

Vessantara: What do you mean by the degree of externality and internality of the Buddha-nature?

S.: It corresponds to relative externality and internality in the case also of [an ordinary] human being. First of all you see their outermost body, the part that is most obvious to you. When you start speaking to them they reveal at least something of their mind, their ideas and thoughts, so you're in contact with them on a deeper level or a more interior circle of their being. Then, by living with them for a long time, you become as it were directly acquainted with their mind. You know what is going on in them, even though you may not actually see them — sometimes you can have a sort of telepathic rapport with them. [In this way] you come to the innermost circle of all, the mind itself.

In the case of the Buddha, seeing his marks corresponds to seeing the external physical appearance of another human being. Then hearing the Buddha teach reveals a bit more to you, but you still don't know the mind of the Buddha just by hearing his voice. You can't know the mind of the Buddha by his external bodily appearance, whether adorned with marks or not. You can't even know the mind of the Buddha fully just from the words of his teaching or the ideas through which the teaching is communicated. You can only know the Buddha's mind through your own experience of it, either because you yourself are in contact with that mind or because you yourself have developed an Enlightened mind. To know the mind of the Buddha you must be either Enlightened yourself or well on the way to Enlightenment.

Vessantara: Why do you think the other two *Kāyas* developed — the *svabhāvikakāya* and the *mahāsukhakāya*?

S.: In the case of the *svabhāvikakāya*, it perhaps began to be felt that the 'Three *Kāyas*' had become too differentiated from one another, almost as though there were three Buddhas rather than 'Three *Kāyas*' of one Buddha. So the *svabhāvikakāya* idea seems to have been developed to stress the fact that they were one unified system, so to speak.

As for the *mahāsukhakāya*, perhaps it represents the Vajrayana's emphasis on the whole notion of bliss (*sukha*). *Mahāsukha* is bliss which has gone through what Mr Chen used to call 'the fires of *śūnyatā*'.<sup>9</sup> The Vajrayana seemed to stress, at one point, that one's essential being was bliss. So one had as it were in the deepest depths of one's own self a body that was nothing but bliss. This is of course vaguely reminiscent of the Upanisadic *pancakōśa* doctrine. We are possibly straying into heresy here (*laughter*), but perhaps it isn't a bad thing to risk that occasionally!

One of the best known of the Upanisadic teachings is that of the 'Five *Kośas*' or 'Sheaths', which has its origins in the *Taittirīya* and other Upanisads and is taken up by the Advaita Vedanta. [In this teaching] a human being is thought of as rather like an onion, consisting of layers. The most superficial layer is *anna-maya-kośa*, the sheath made of food; that presumably being the physical body. Then, at a slightly deeper layer, there is the *prāṇa-maya-kośa*, the body made of energy — literally, of breath or vitality. This presumably corresponds to the subtle or astral body. Then there is the *mano-maya-kośa*, the body made of mind — and don't forget that the Buddha spoke of a *mano-maya-kāya* (he said *kāya* for body rather than *kośa*). Then there is the *vijñāna-maya-kośa*, the body made of intelligence. And lastly there is the *ānanda-maya-kośa*, or body made of bliss.

So in the Upanisads there is the conception of a human being as existing on these different levels. Rather than *kāya*, the term '*kośa*' is used, which is perhaps even a little more helpful. The dreadful thought occurs to me that it's almost as though Buddhism in its development has recapitulated these *kośas*: the fifth *kośa* is *ānanda-maya-kośa* and the Vajrayana [completed the system of the *Kāyas*] with [a fifth *kāya*], the *mahāsukhakāya*!

The basic point is that the individual, whether Enlightened or unenlightened, exists on different levels, whether he knows it or not. We are used to identifying ourselves with the lowest level on which we exist: the outermost sheath of our personality, our grossest body. [So the text is saying] merely by knowing that first *kośa*, you do not know the fifth — or even the second. A Buddha is not just one who possesses marks any more than [our] Subhuti is just one who possesses black, curly hair. He is a bit more than that: there's a brain underneath his black, curly hair (*laughter*), to say no more than that.

I have more than once adverted to the fact that it is extremely difficult to really know another human being, not to speak of a Buddha. It's difficult enough even to know the person with whom you are living, even in the same community and sharing the same room; it takes years and years perhaps. [By knowing them I mean] not just externally, not even just talking to them, but really getting to know their minds, sharing their thoughts and emotions. So knowing or being able to recognize a Buddha is really quite unthinkable.

#### 4 Do Buddha Images Leave You Cold?

from Questions and Answers, Pre-Ordination Retreat, Tuscany 1981

Murray Wright: Can you say anything about the way a myth stimulates a particular archetype? Do you know how it works that just by reading a myth you can have certain aspects stimulated in yourself?

Sangharakshita: It's as though we have a certain potential which isn't just a mathematical potential but rather a sort of latency. It's not that we merely have the bare possibility of certain other kinds of experience but that we have the seeds, at least, of those other experiences actually present within us ...

Murray Wright: (*Interrupting*) ... So in a sense there is a spark of energy ..?

S.: (*Continuing*) ... so that when we come into contact with the Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious<sup>10</sup> or their representations, or with myth or symbol or anything of that sort, these seeds become stimulated or somewhat activated. [In other words] we respond, and that whole aspect or level of our nature starts developing.

Murray Wright: What form would these 'seeds' take? Is it energy that's dormant or is it more like kinetic or potential energy, just waiting to be touched ..?

S.: One can think of it in terms of all these models — though here I've used the vegetable analogy, [saying it's] like a seed. Yes, it is a latent energy. It's not — and this is the point I wanted to make — it's not a bare, abstract possibility. It actually represents a whole underdeveloped area of oneself which, germinally, is

already there. Even though it's in a very vague and undeveloped form, there is something of it already present in us.

Subhuti: So we experience bits of it in dreams?

S.: Yes, exactly.

Murray Wright: So a coherent myth or something even more sophisticated, like a painting of deities, provides the soil on which it can grow?

S.: Yes. And different symbols and myths appeal to different people. I think one just has to follow up what appeals to one without necessarily trying to work it all out rationally for the time being. For example, some people found themselves responding to some of the myths which Abhaya related in a talk he gave at [a Men's Retreat at] Vinehall. Subsequently I gave him a copy of William Morris' *Life and Death of Jason*<sup>11</sup> to read because he hadn't said anything about the Jason legend or myth in his talk and I thought he might find it of interest. He said he responded very strongly to the figure of Juno, the goddess-protector of Jason. He didn't quite know why, but he found himself responding to it very strongly.

So this is what one has to do: read through myth and legend, even look through illustrated books, just see what you respond to and follow it up. You might even find that Buddhist myth, legend and iconography left you cold. [For them to be effective for you] you've got to find some connecting feeling — that is very important. I was recently reading something in Ruskin which is quite relevant here. In one of his writings Ruskin discusses the representation of Apollo in Greek art or in modern, neo-classical art of various kinds. He says that because people are acquainted with the form, say, of Apollo Belvedere, they think they know what Apollo looks like. But he says no, they don't know what Apollo looks like at all. They only know what the *statue* of Apollo looks like. (*Laughter.*) That's quite a different thing.

This is an important point and you can see its relevance in Buddhism. People say they know what Mañjuśrī or Tārā look like. But they don't [really know]. They know what the medieval Indian and Tibetan representations of Tārā and Mañjuśrī and so on look like. [These Indian and Tibetan representations] may give a clue to some people as to what those Bodhisattvas actually are. But not necessarily. You mustn't think that because you can recognize and identify the iconography, you therefore really know in any genuine sense what those Bodhisattvas are like.

At a certain stage you've got to put aside, or put behind you, all the classical, traditional iconography and ask yourself, what do I really mean by that, what do I really experience? What is really conjured up before me when I speak the name of Avalokiteśvara or Tārā or Mañjuśrī or Apollo or whatever else it may be? It could be that nothing is conjured up! [It could be that] we merely know the traditional iconography and haven't felt our way through it to the reality which it represents. Just as, for instance, most people nowadays are fairly familiar with, say, the statue of Apollo, but they've not the slightest feeling for what Apollo represented to a sensitive Greek. In the same way we might be very familiar with the iconography of Tārā and read that big, fat book about it (*laughter*), but we might not have any feeling for what Tārā represents in the way, say, a Tibetan Buddhist might. We have to establish our own connections with the archetypal from our own literature, tradition, personal idiosyncrasies et cetera.

[After all], most Buddha images leave most people cold, don't they? Most people don't have a very strong reaction or response to Buddha images because they haven't been able to make a connection with them — which is not their fault. In a way it's up to the artist of the image to make a connection with you. Perhaps he did that for some people hundreds of years ago, but he doesn't do it for you now.

Alan Angel: How would one translate one's feelings for Western mythological figures into this [Buddhist] context?

S.: I don't think it's a question of translating at all but rather of gradually leading [one's feelings] and finding connections wherever one can. I don't think it can be a rational process. You can't say such things as, "I've

got this strong feeling for Apollo and now I'm trying to transfer it to Avalokiteśvara." (*Laughter.*) You've got to see some little glimmering of, say, Avalokiteśvara or Mañjuśrī in Apollo, assuming that you've got some feeling for the figure of Apollo.

[This has application to visualization meditation practice.]<sup>12</sup> It could be that you can visualize quite correctly the traditional form of, say, Avalokiteśvara but still have no feeling, no conception even, of what Avalokiteśvara really represents. The fact that you can successfully reproduce the iconography in your meditative experience — that is to say on the level of concentration — doesn't mean that you've got any understanding of what that particular figure is about at all. [Knowing what the figure represents] is a separate thing [from knowing the iconography], and [to bring it about] needs reflection, understanding and an emotional connection.

Alan Angel: That reminds me of what you have said about the two levels of *samaya-sattva* and *jñāna-sattva*.<sup>13</sup> You said one might have to leave the first one behind to be able to find the meaning ...

S.: Right. If the *samaya-sattva* — the traditional iconographical representation — is emotionally sympathetic to you or you are emotionally sympathetic to it, if it *means* something to you, then it can suggest the *jñāna-sattva*; otherwise not. Though I'm distinguishing rather sharply between *samaya-sattva* and *jñāna-sattva*. Even that [distinction] one must not take too literally.

[The point is] one must *respond* to symbols. If one does not respond to them, then they are not symbols for you.

Mike Sherck: Is it good to cultivate a richness of symbols to which one responds? I don't mean by that reading poetry nonstop, just one poem after another, but rather taking advantage of different opportunities, say, of going to concerts where the music has some power over you, or going to see a Shakespeare play that you know. Not just sticking with one narrow band but deliberately broadening out. Or is it possible just to get a conglomeration of symbols, each of which affects you slightly?

S.: I think that to begin with you just have to explore quite a wide range, especially if that whole aspect of you has not been activated at all. You have to do it at first a bit mindfully because you don't just want, say in the case of concerts, to go to anything that just happens to stir you up — it might stir you up in the wrong sort of way. But I think as you explore you do discover, either in auditory or in visual terms, certain things which do affect you more powerfully than others and which lead you further on. These you gradually have to specialize in.

You might want to follow up a study of something. For instance you might find yourself fascinated by the image of the unicorn. For some reason or other you can't help feeling very interested in unicorns. So you think, "I'll read up about unicorns and collect examples of paintings and tapestries in which unicorns figure." But you won't smother your interest in the unicorn in just academic study. You'll try to feel and understand why it is that the unicorn has that sort of appeal for you, and you'll try to intensify that feeling at the same time.

I think we mainly encounter a lot of these symbols through literature and the visual arts — not so much through music, which seems to be a rather different case. Opera, because it has a visual element, can contain quite powerful archetypes, as with Wagner's operas.

Steve Francis: With the arts and with myths I tend to think that there are good ones and bad ones which one should avoid. [For instance] one should avoid the Romantic periods and go straight to the Classical periods, the Classical myths being sort of better than the Romantic myths.

S.: Do you mean Romantic myth as such or Romantic versions of myths?

Steve Francis: I mean the Romantic myths, from the Romantic period, like the Romantic writers and ...

S.: I think to begin with you should just follow up whatever appeals to you. But obviously try to connect up with the more powerful and effective forms of the myth. Very often they are the earlier ones. For instance, you might find the Prometheus myth appealing but you might prefer it in Aeschylus' version or in Shelley's. It's perhaps a matter of taste. Probably Aeschylus is more powerful but some people will find him relatively inaccessible, especially since they'll probably have to read him in translation.

Coming back to this question of my own usage of Jungian terminology, I think that probably nowadays I would be more inclined to speak not so much in terms, for instance, of the Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious as of the images of the *rūpaloka*.<sup>14</sup> So I'd speak more in terms of extending one's meditations to include at least some of the images of the *rūpaloka*. It seems less confusing to say that one is not yet conscious of those images and that one has not yet entered those worlds rather than speaking in terms of Archetypes which are in a Collective Unconscious and have to be brought up from there. After all, when you say something is in the unconscious, what do you mean? You only mean that the present, conscious mind does not include it, that it is not present to the conscious mind. When you become conscious of the images of the *rūpaloka*, at the same time you extend or expand the conscious mind itself to such an extent that you could even be said to go beyond it. Not that you literally leave it behind but that your consciousness is swallowed up in a superconscious state.



## 5 Savour Your Dreams...

from 'The Sutra of Hui-Neng (*A Buddhist Bible*), Mixed Retreat, Abhirati, March 1974

Devamitra: I find that for most of my meditation practice, [where I am] just sitting and watching the breath, I just experience boredom and sometimes — particularly in the early morning — complete alienation.

Sangharakshita: It's interesting what you say about the early morning. It may be that [whilst you are asleep] you get very much into the dream state and you are not properly back [from that level when you subsequently try to meditate].

Devamitra: I have no recollection of my dreams.

S.: That doesn't matter. That's partly why [you are experiencing such difficulty], you see, [because your dreams are] so separate; there's not much connection between that level and the conscious mind. In a sense, you are still at the dream level even after you've woken up and opened your eyes, and therefore you find it difficult to get into the meditation. Your energies are still on the dream level, even though you are not aware of that [level]. In everybody, there's a lot going on all the time [on levels which are] not conscious, and often *that's* where one's energies are employed and *not* on the conscious level.

Devamitra: So does one just wait for this to resolve itself in the course of practice? In my own case it's been going on for rather a long time.

S.: Well, the fact that you say that you don't remember your dreams is interesting. Maybe alienation is too strong a word [here], but it does suggest that there is not enough contact between that level of yourself [on which you dream] and the conscious mind. It seems to me that so much energy is [engaged] in these other levels that you haven't enough for the meditation; so you are left dry and empty and bored. You have

got to establish contact with these other levels. [You could] start [by] wanting to know what you dream — this would help to loosen you up a little [in this respect.]

Mangala: Do you think that it's worth taking note of and paying much attention to dreams?

S.: Yes I do, but then again it mustn't be made too much of. It may be that you could well do this for a time — if, for instance, your meditation or your general feeling is somewhat arid and lacking in richness. [Then] I think it would be good to pay attention to your dreams, [because] the chances are that a lot of energy is going into them and you need to establish contact with those levels where the energy is going.

Ratnapani: Then it's not so much a question of understanding the dreams but rather of remembering them?

S.: Yes. Don't bother about understanding and interpreting them; that doesn't matter at all, [even though] sometimes you may feel there is a meaning there. Just remember your dreams; dwell upon them; turn them over in your mind; enjoy them. *That's* what is wanted. Revel in them a bit; savour them. Don't bother your head over what they mean — they mean what they say.

Devamitra: I've tried to do this but I can't.

S.: You will eventually. I've met several people like this, who said to begin with that they didn't dream, and sometimes it took them a year or more to recollect even a part of their dreams. If you *want* to establish contact with those levels then you will, but you must want to remember your dreams. I suggest that when you wake up in the morning you just lie there quietly. Don't [specifically] try to remember your dreams but just give them a chance to come up. You will get some sort of feeling [from the dream] and sometimes you can 'feel' your way back into the dream [itself.] For instance, when you wake up, ask yourself, "How do I feel? What am I feeling now? What do my feelings tell me?" Dwell on [your feelings] and try to experience them more, whilst thinking "What experience, what incident would be appropriate to this feeling or could have given rise to this feeling?" Just try to hold yourself receptive and see if any sort of image flashes up, as it were. Sometimes it does [happen like that]. Or you may get a vague recollection: "Oh, it must have been something to do with adventure, trees, the sea," — something like that — or "I get a feeling of having been shut up or confined. What was that? What could have given rise to that?" Try and work your way back very gently and subtly in this kind of way, not making a great effort to remember — that doesn't help at all — and eventually you will establish contact with those [previously subconscious] levels.

## 6 ...But Don't Indulge

from *Dhammapada*, Ch. 9, Men's Order/Mitra Weekend, Padmaloka, March 1983

Sangharakshita: I think the great weakness of dream analysis, in the modern sense, is that all the time you are concerned with yourself: *your* dreams, *your* feelings, *your* mental states. Speaking more specifically about the FWBO, I think there is [generally] an over-preoccupation with oneself, rather than with things outside of oneself: things needing to be done or people needing to be helped. Therefore, I think, one has to be quite careful that one's dream analysis doesn't become indulgent and narcissistic. If you do study your dreams it should be with a view to finding a key to better self-understanding [so as] to enable you to function better in the world from a *spiritual* point of view, not just to function in the ordinary way. Quite a few people in the Friends write to me about their dreams, especially when I figure in them personally (as I do in all sorts of strange ways). Sometimes it seems rather self-indulgent, this pre-occupation with one's own dreams.

## 7 From Reflection to Reality

from *The Ten Pillars of Buddhism*, Questions and Answers, Ordination Retreat, Tuscany 1984

Abhaya: [I'd like to raise] a small point. I've noticed during the Question and Answer sessions over the past few weeks you've sometimes talked about how difficult it is for us to contact the Bodhisattvas. The overall impression I get from your remarks is that we're so remote from them spiritually that we would be better advised to concern ourselves with more accessible figures or goals. [But at the same time,] in the past you've often been quoted as saying that Stream-Entry is a realizable, achievable spiritual goal for all Order Members in this lifetime. Since, as you have explained, Stream-Entry is the achievement of the Transcendental Path, and the same spiritual achievement as the arising of the Bodhicitta, I was wondering why, in that case, you seem to consider the Bodhisattvas as so remote as to be hardly contactable for most of us?

Sangharakshita: I won't say more remote than Stream-Entry because one could certainly say that when one enters the Stream one at the same time makes contact with the Bodhisattvas, or with a Bodhisattva if you prefer, so that at that moment — in a sense — the Bodhicitta arises. So I would certainly not say that the Bodhisattvas are more remote than Stream-Entry. It's only at the point of Stream-Entry that one makes real, actual, or live contact with the Bodhisattvas. Until then you are in contact either with mental images of Bodhisattvas derived from your reading and study of iconography, or at best some reflection of the Bodhisattva onto those mental images — a genuine reflection perhaps, more or less clear, but still only a reflection and not the object itself.

Abhaya: But you did say the other night that it was a good thing in the visualization practice to contact the real Bodhisattva, as if the visualization is just a photograph and what we need to do is to contact the real person. When you said that, it seemed to me to be a sort of encouragement: [one felt], oh, yes, maybe the Bodhisattva isn't all that far away [after all].

S.: If I'm to bring all those different statements together without withdrawing whatever previous encouragement I seemed to give, [then I would say that] the Bodhisattva is no more remote and no more near than is the Stream. They're really different expressions for the same thing. Of course, in the case of the Bodhisattva and the visualization practice you can have very vivid and very meaningful experiences which aren't actually experiences of the Bodhisattva himself, but only of what I've called in this case a reflection of the Bodhisattva himself in the mental image that you'd formed of him or of her.

One could even speak of three levels [of contact with Bodhisattvas]. (It's difficult to speak of Stream-Entry in these terms, for obvious reasons — in a way it's a more abstract concept.) But you can speak of [contacting] Bodhisattvas first of all in the sense of [forming an] *idea* of a Bodhisattva, derived from reading and so on. Corresponding to that idea, you may be able to produce an eidetic image — some people seem to have the natural capacity to do that. That eidetic image is not the Bodhisattva himself nor even the archetypal image. But it is good if you can produce it [since] it is quite helpful as a focus of concentration.

But after a while there is a further stage of development when this particular mental image [begins to] reflect the Bodhisattva — one can't really put it any more clearly than that. There are certain spiritual qualities which [the image] acquires which are not the actual qualities of a Bodhisattva, but are somehow akin or analogous to them on that particular level.

But then the time comes when you are able to proceed from those reflective qualities to the qualities themselves and to the Bodhisattva. So perhaps one could work out a threefold division analogous to the three levels of Going for Refuge. You've got a provisional contact with the Bodhisattva, an effective contact and a real contact. The real contact is synonymous with Stream-Entry and is [therefore] no nearer and no further [from us now] than Stream-Entry. And inasmuch as I do believe that Stream-Entry is within the grasp of every serious-minded Order Member, — and clearly there should only be serious-minded Order Members — in the same way real contact with the Bodhisattva is possible.



## 8 The Totality of Reality

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

Abhaya: I want to try and relate something you said in the lecture with something you said [recently]. In the lecture, you're explaining a quote from the *Diamond Sutra*, and you say: 'The Buddha is not really his physical body, nor even his archetypal form, but is the *dharmakāya*, is (as it were) Reality.'<sup>15</sup> My question is: couldn't you say that the archetypal form is a metaphor, in your sense of 'a case of Reality being under certain special conditions'?

Sangharakshita: Yes, you can certainly say that. It's a question of two different ways of looking at things, or two different approaches — because obviously it isn't easy to express or convey these things. For instance, [to simplify,] you've got here Reality and there non-Reality — let's use those terms. Reality and non-Reality are quite distinct, so if you want to get to Reality you have to leave behind non-Reality. But you can also look at things in another way: non-Reality may be non-Reality, but inasmuch as you can speak or think of non-Reality at all, it has a sort of quasi-existence. So what are you going to call that which is, as it were, Reality-plus-non-Reality? Is that a more as it were total Reality than as it were Reality-by-itself? This is really the crux of the whole matter.

One does speak of the *dharmakāya* as the Ultimate Reality; so that leaves, say, the *sambhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*, or whatever corresponds to them, as less real, to say the least. But if one thinks of Reality as necessarily something total, should not, in a manner of speaking, the *dharmakāya* include the *sambhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*?

So one can look at it in those two ways: one can either regard the Ultimate Reality as Reality as distinct from non-Reality, or one can regard Ultimate Reality as Reality-plus-non-Reality. Because we come, in a way, to the different degrees or levels of *śūnyatā* where you've got the Unconditioned — which in a sense is Ultimate Reality, after all — and you've got the conditioned; but then you've got the *mahāśūnyatā*, which embraces or comprises both of those [and so on]. And therefore you have a Reality which is beyond Reality itself, and *Ultimate Reality* which is more ultimate than Ultimate Reality.

Here one is trying to deal with realities which it's difficult to deal with in terms of human speech. But it would seem that if one thinks more conceptually, then Ultimate Reality represents a total negation of all unreality. But if one thinks in terms of images, then one can think in terms of, or even experience, things in a more metaphorical way. That is to say the archetype — to use this language — is implicit in the image. Ultimate Reality is implicit in lesser Reality, or even in non-Reality. So it's a question of either distinguishing [conceptually] Ultimate Reality from, say, relative Reality, or regarding [metaphorically] Ultimate Reality as a *totality* of Reality-and-non-Reality. There are these two possible approaches.

I think that your question really is about that difference. I'm not sure that it's two different ways of looking at things; it's more a question of two different modes of expression with regard to Reality.

Abhaya: It just seemed, from what you were saying the other night, that to [use such terms] as 'Ultimate Reality' didn't really have any meaning, and what you were positing instead was the Reality and the metaphor sort of overlapping in some kind of experience or other. That's where the meaning was.

S.: In order to speak about Reality, one has to abstract it from things, [whereas,] in fact you can't do that. Reality is *not* abstracted from things, *śūnyatā* is *not* different from *dharmas*. It is not that it's the same as

*dharmas*, but you have to speak of it as non-different from *dharmas*; [so] that Reality as one thing plus *dharmas* as another [together] make up the sum total, so to speak, of Ultimate Reality. Therefore metaphor [probably] more adequately reflects the true nature of the situation than does more abstract or more conceptual speech, because of the very nature of metaphor.

Abhaya: So would that mean, in traditional terms, that the *sambhogakāya* form or the *nirmāṇakāya* is a much more healthy way of looking at things than, say, the *dharmakāya*?

S.: Yes. It's not that up there is the *dharmakāya*, which is absolutely beyond you, so you concentrate on the *sambhogakāya*. In a sense, yes, the *dharmakāya* is a higher Reality, so in a sense you leave behind the *sambhogakāya*. But *again*, in a sense, the *dharmakāya* is the inner dimension of the *sambhogakāya* itself; so you do not find the *dharmakāya* by discarding the *sambhogakāya*, but by going more deeply into the *sambhogakāya* itself. That is a way of putting it. Not that they are three [mutually] exclusive Realities — the *dharmakāya*, the *sambhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*.

Abhaya: So what you're saying is that you can't really usefully talk about the *dharmakāya* apart from, in some sense, the *sambhogakāya* or the *nirmāṇakāya*? It doesn't really have any meaning, conceptual or otherwise?

S.: It is not that the *dharmakāya* is, so to speak, a separate Reality existing apart from the *sambhogakāya* — but that is not to say that the distinction [between *dharmakāya* and *sambhogakāya*] is completely meaningless.

Abhaya: What does it mean, then?

S.: Well, that the *sambhogakāya* itself contains, for want of a better term, an element which is not expressible in terms of what we regard as the *sambhogakāya*!

I think in a way the whole problem is created by the abstracting nature of conceptual language, and the use of metaphorical language gets round or obviates that difficulty.



## 9 What is There to Lose?

from 'Precepts of the Gurus' (*A Buddhist Bible*), Chairmen's Retreat, Padmaloka, September 1978

*(4) - One's own mind being of the nature of the Dharma-Kāya, uncreated, it would be a cause of regret to let it be swallowed up in the morass of the world's illusions.*

'The Supreme Path, The Rosary of Precious Gems', trans. Evan-Wentz, *A Buddhist Bible*, ed. Dwight Goddard, Beacon Press, Boston 1970, pp. 600-1

Sangharakshita: '*One's mind being of the nature of the Dharma-Kāya*'. This is clearly the specifically Mahayana point of view, but what is the *dharmakāya* — what exactly does it mean?

Devamitra: Ultimate Reality, the seeds of Buddhahood [or the] potential of Enlightenment.

S.: [The text] puts it, in a way, more strongly than that. It's not speaking in terms of potentiality or using the language of potentiality — it [talks of] one's own mind *being* of the nature of the *dharmakāya*.

Devamitra: Like the Zen approach ...

S.: Yes.

Siddhiratna: It seems to be talking about purity ...

Mangala: [Being] undefiled.

S.: Yes.

Sagaramati: [Surely] you cannot take that concretely?

S.: But it isn't as though one is here and now actually, consciously in possession of the *dharmakāya*, and therefore has to be careful not '*to let it be swallowed up in the morass of the world's illusions*' — it isn't that. I mean, so far is one's own mind from actually *being* of the nature of the *dharmakāya*, in that sense, [that] one rather wonders about it: what does it mean? (*Laughter.*) Maybe putting it more realistically, what is it that one must not let '*be swallowed up in the morass of the world's illusions*' — say, something that one actually has?

Devamitra: Spiritual aspiration?

S.: Spiritual aspiration, yes.

Devamitra: Even your meditation.

S.: Even your meditation. Or your Ideal, you could say. It seems almost unrealistic to speak in the terms [used in the text] because the point is one has lost the *dharmakāya* '*in the morass of the world's illusions*', so to speak. That is the present state: it is *lost*, because you don't consciously experience it here and now. Where is it? Where is your *dharmakāya*? The Zen people say "Show me your Buddha-mind." Well, of course you can't. There's no question of your losing it: you've lost it! That is the actual position. It *has* been swallowed up by '*the morass of the world's illusions*'. You don't even know that you've lost it — you don't even know for sure that you actually [ever] had it. All that you know is that you don't, in a conscious, aware sense, have it now; you've just got an ordinary mind. Therefore, what meaning can this have for one: '*One's own mind being of the nature of the Dharma-Kāya, uncreated, it would be a cause of regret to let it be swallowed up in the morass of the world's illusions.*'? The most that you can manage is not to let your Ideals be swallowed up. In other words, it's a question of knowing where one is at at this moment.

Devamitra: This [i.e. the wording of the text] seems quite an unskilful way of putting it.

S.: Well, that depends to whom it is addressed. Devamitra: To whom could it be addressed meaningfully?

S.: It's like saying to someone, "Look, be very careful that you don't waste all those millions you have got; invest them properly," when they haven't even got sixpence in their pocket! It's rather like that, isn't it?

Devamitra: But somebody who's in possession of the *dharmakāya* ...

S.: But if you're in possession of it, could you lose it?

Devamitra: Well, no. It's pointless, [this precept] ...

S.: In a way it is, actually, looking at it from that point of view.

Manjuvajra: I think it could be [saying that] your own mind is of the nature of the *dharmakāya*, however, it's all caught up in the morass of the world's illusions, but don't let it be totally swallowed by it.

S.: It has been totally swallowed, hasn't it?

Manjuvajra: Well, [has it] totally? There must be a little ...

S.: Well, what is that? Has one even a glimpse of the *dharmakāya*?

Manjuvajra: You must feel its influence to a certain extent,

otherwise you wouldn't be involved in any form of spiritual ...

S.: Ah! So you can look at it from the standpoint, perhaps, of the *Awakening of Faith*,<sup>16</sup> and say there is a *reflection* [of the *dharmakāya*] however dim or distorted. One at least has that and it is that that one must preserve at all costs. This is not what the text says, but one could understand it in that way. So what form does that reflection take? Well, there is one's basic aspiration, one's basic Ideal, as it were — one could say that that is the reflection of the *dharmakāya*. The fact that you can have that at all means that behind your ordinary mind there is the mind which is of the nature of the *dharmakāya*.



## 10 Buddhafields in Progress

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

10b *The Lord said: If any Bodhisattva would say, 'I will create harmonious Buddhafields', he would speak falsely. And why? 'The harmonies of Buddha-fields, the harmonies of Buddhafields', Subhuti, as no-harmonies have they been taught by the Tathāgata. Therefore he spoke of 'harmonious Buddha fields'.*

*A Buddhafield is a part of the world in which a Buddha matures beings. As a harmonious structure it is compared to an orderly and well-arranged military array. In contradistinction to an ordinary, defiled world such as ours, in a 'Pure Land' all is beauty and order. 'Field' has the same connotation as in 'Elysian Fields'. The term create should not be pressed too closely. The Sanskrit nispādayati also means to 'accomplish, perfect, achieve, ripen and mature'. The force of their meritorious karma enables the Bodhisattvas to realize, or to bring to perfection, a Pure Land, an unworldly world, a 'heaven' or 'paradise' which offers ideal conditions for rapid spiritual progress. It is here assumed that also the material world is a reflex of karma, and that the spiritual maturity of beings determines their living conditions.*

*For two reasons the Bodhisattva would speak falsely, i.e. against the facts, if he were to say, 'I will perfect harmonious Buddhafields': (1) Any statement which contains the word 'I' is ipso facto false, because in the real world nothing corresponds to it. (2) A Buddha field is no material or perceptible fact, and its harmony is not an objective arrangement. It has a quasi-sensory appearance as the by-product of a Buddha's meditative gnosis, but in reality it is no more than a mental construction.*

*Buddhist Wisdom Books*, trans. E. Conze, Allen & Unwin, London 1958, pp. 46-7

Sangharakshita: Here the general philosophy of the Perfection of Wisdom is applied to the characteristic and important action of a Bodhisattva: establishing a Pure Land, a Buddhafield.<sup>17</sup> The Bodhisattva doesn't do this in a self-conscious sort of way. It's the natural spontaneous result or unfolding of his own spiritual life and activity. He doesn't think: "Well, here I am, creating a Buddhafield." One shouldn't be so self-conscious or possessive about achievements of any kind. Otherwise one might even spoil the achievement itself. It's like a musician playing a piece of music. If he becomes too self-conscious of how well he's playing, he loses his concentration. If you're meditating and you think: "Gosh, I'm getting on really well today; I'm getting really concentrated, really deeply into it, hardly any thoughts", you will start losing your concentration. It's just the same — on an infinitely loftier, Transcendental plane — when the Bodhisattva establishes his Buddhafield. He just doesn't think in that sort of way. He's natural, spontaneous.

I take it everybody is familiar with the concept of a Pure Land — *'which offers ideal conditions for rapid spiritual progress. It is here assumed that also the material world is a reflex of karma, and the spiritual maturity of beings determines their living conditions.'* There seems to be a slight conflict that Conze hasn't resolved between the Bodhisattva establishing the Buddhafield and the world in which one lives reflecting one's own degree of spiritual maturity. Is it the Bodhisattva's merit that determines the nature of the Pure Land, the Buddhafield? Or is it the merits of the beings who inhabit it? Conze doesn't seem quite to resolve this. He seems to say both things. Well, perhaps down the ages the Bodhisattva is working with a number of beings that he is gradually bringing to maturity, and they establish the Pure Land or Buddhaland together; though in a sense the Bodhisattva establishes it because he continues to take the leading part. I don't think the scriptures actually say this, but if one wants to reconcile the two points of view, perhaps one could. The Bodhisattva is like a queen bee in a hive.

Amoghavira: Is it fair of Conze to say *'but in reality it is no more than a mental construction'*? Because some schools take, say, Amitābha's Sukhāvātī as objectively existing.

S.: Ah, but if it is a mental construction it can still be objectively perceived, like a mirage. *'It has a quasi-sensory appearance as the by-product of a Buddha's meditative gnosis'*. Here he seems to leave out of account the question of the spiritual maturity of the beings. I think he can't quite make up his mind as to the status of this Buddhafield.

Vessantara: I'm not quite clear what he means by: *'A Buddha-field is no material or perceptible fact, and its harmony is not an objective arrangement.'*

S.: Well, the Buddhafield is a material and perceptible fact to the extent that this world is a material and perceptible fact. It is more refined but it is in principle really material and perceptible in the same way. At the same time, of course, like this world it is *śūnya*, it does not absolutely exist. Indeed, it exists just as much as this world exists.

Vessantara: What does he mean by saying: *'Its harmony is not an objective arrangement'*?

S.: If the Buddhafield itself is not a thing, the harmony cannot consist in an arrangement of things — which is quite correct. But I think he is in a way begging the question. I don't think he has really thought this through: the ontological status, let us say, of the Buddhafield. Buddhist tradition does represent it as actually existing in exactly the same way that this world exists: equally material, in fact equally perceptible, but at the same time equally void, no less void. Conze seems reluctant to accept its *relative* Reality.

To say: *'It is no more than a mental construction'* — well, this world itself is no more than a mental construction in a sense, but it's perceived as real, perceived as existing. So I don't think one can draw any distinction between this world and the Buddhafield — other than a distinction of degree of Reality.

A Voice: Degree of Reality?

S.: The Buddhafield is more archetypal as it were. In a manner of speaking, it both is and isn't closer to Reality. You can speak of the *rūpaloka* and *arūpaloka* being nearer to Reality, the Transcendental, than the *kāmaloka*<sup>18</sup> inasmuch as you have to pass through them after having passed through the *kāmaloka* in order to attain to the Transcendental. But in an absolute sense they're not nearer, because in an absolute sense the conditioned in any form is infinitely remote from the Unconditioned.

Sometimes Buddhist texts do give the impression that the Bodhisattva works all on his own, sets up this Buddhafield entirely as a result of his own merits and his own efforts; and then along comes a host of beings to inhabit it. I wonder if one should really think in those terms. To me it does seem much more likely, especially in view of what Conze says about the spiritual maturity of beings determining their living conditions, that from a certain stage, maybe from the initial stage itself, the Bodhisattva is working in successive lives with a host of other beings in conjunction with whom he eventually establishes his Buddhafield into which they are all born. Inasmuch as he has taken the leading part he is by then the Buddha of that Buddhafield. They are all his disciples in varying degrees, at various stages of spiritual development. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Otherwise it's almost as if the Bodhisattva can establish his Buddhafield irrespective of what other beings are up to. And even if he did establish it independently and they were suddenly reborn into it — well, why would they be reborn into it? They would be reborn into it as a result of karma.<sup>19</sup> And how would they get to that point unless they had some sort of association with him? Why into his Buddhafield rather than the Buddhafield of some other Bodhisattva or some other Buddha?

This model of the creation of a Buddhafield does also fit in with Buddhist tradition better. The *Jātaka* tales — taking them at their face value — represent the Buddha with the same group of people, the same group of characters, life after life right down to the present day when here they all are again. There's Ananda and all the others reborn with the Buddha for the umpteenth time. They've been together before and here they are with him again, here in that life in which the Buddha becomes Enlightened — and they all become disciples and they too gain Enlightenment. So in the context of the Hinayana you have the idea or concept of a whole group or association of people under the leadership of one powerful personality traversing life after life together and eventually emerging in the world in their last lives of all and gaining Enlightenment all together. One gains first; the others gain by following in his footsteps.

On the other hand you've got the Mahayana conception of a Bodhisattva and a group of beings being reborn again and again in different worlds, even in different world systems, and ending up in a world of their own which they have created by their joint efforts. And this is not just a Buddhafield but a pure Buddhafield, as contrasted with the impure Buddhafield of the other tradition or the other line of development. The two are sort of parallel. In neither case is there just one solitary individual all on his own, calling the others to him only in that last life, only after he has himself gained Enlightenment. No, they have been with him all the time, all along, at the different stages of his career.



## 11 The Clinging Absolute

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

Kulamitra: The Absolute and the relative Bodhicitta<sup>20</sup> share the same name and would appear to share the same quality of creative force for good. But as the Absolute Bodhicitta is Reality it must also encompass the counter force of the gravitational pull. The problem of one Reality encompassing counter forces may be impossible to resolve rationally, but why should the relative and the Absolute Bodhicitta share the same name? Is there any way of trying to describe the Bodhicitta which is less fraught with philosophical difficulties when taken literally?

Sangharakshita: I think any description would be fraught with difficulties if taken literally, and inasmuch as it was a description it could always be taken literally. I think this is something that I have to go into, if I go into it at all, at greater length in a proper paper. The whole question is fraught with difficulties, whether taken literally or not.

But, to take you up on terminology a little bit, you spoke of the Absolute Bodhicitta as being creative. Strictly speaking it couldn't be that, because 'creative' implies production, and that implies sequence, that implies time. The Absolute Bodhicitta, by its very nature so to speak, transcends time; therefore, you couldn't really speak of it as creative.

Kulamitra: Right, but in that case, since the relative Bodhicitta appears to be so different from the Absolute Bodhicitta, why have the same name? It would be quite easy to have [them as] different phenomena, as it were.

S.: You are faced with two alternatives: either to imply that the two are different, or [to imply] that they are the same. If you speak of the relative and the Absolute Bodhicitta you are opting for sameness, but if you distinguish them by two quite different names you will be opting for difference and going to the other extreme. There seems to be no way round that.

Kulamitra: Yes, but logically wouldn't there be an equally good case for calling the gravitational pull the Bodhicitta, for the same reasons?

S.: No, because they are contradictories.

Kulamitra: The Absolute Bodhicitta and the gravitational pull are contradictories?

S.: No, the relative Bodhicitta and the gravitational pull are contradictories.

I think maybe the difficulty arises over the use of [the word] Absolute. When one translates the *parāmatha* Bodhicitta as Absolute Bodhicitta one doesn't have in mind a Western style philosophical, unitary absolute into which everything has to be incorporated in a Hegelian sort of sense.<sup>21</sup>

Kulamitra: What does one have in mind?

S.: One has in mind the *parāmatha* Bodhicitta. (*Laughter.*) *Parāmatha* Bodhicitta is, literally translated, [the] 'Bodhicitta in the highest sense'. This is approximately translated as the 'Absolute Bodhicitta', but one mustn't take 'absolute' in the Western philosophical sense. Maybe that gives rise to some confusion.

You could say that the relative Bodhicitta represents the path, the Absolute Bodhicitta represents the goal. You can't say that the two are the same otherwise you destroy the foundation of the spiritual life. Likewise, you can't say that they are different otherwise you destroy the foundation of the spiritual life. They are neither the same nor different. So the fact that you speak of a *saṃvṛti* and a *parāmatha* Bodhicitta means that you provide for both unity and difference. The unity is provided for by the common term Bodhicitta, and the difference is provided for by the different terms *saṃvṛti* and *parāmatha*.

One can think of the relative Bodhicitta as the dynamic reflection, in the individual, of the supra-individual Bodhicitta. Although of course, ordinarily speaking, a reflection is illusory, whereas in this case the reflection is not illusory, the reflection is for real.

Kulamitra: It does seem a very difficult concept.

S.: It does involve quite ultimate metaphysical questions, so one cannot expect it to be an easy topic to deal with. Perhaps one shouldn't go into it with beginners but put it in very common-sense terms.

Kulamitra: I almost feel that as soon as one tries to grab hold of it you have become too literal. Then when you try and let it go, you wonder whether you are actually being led any further into understanding the Bodhicitta. It just seems very difficult to understand that relationship between Reality and something that takes you towards Reality.

S.: Clearly for you to be able to go towards Reality [you must have] something that is akin to Reality; this is what it really boils down to. This distinction between the Absolute Bodhicitta and the relative Bodhicitta is really made to express or indicate the fact that the Reality towards which you are progressing is not, in the ultimate sense, foreign to you, and nor are you, in the ultimate sense, foreign to it; even though for the time being you are progressing towards it and appear to be different from it. Nonetheless, you could not even progress towards it if there was not in you, so to speak, some kinship with it. It is a bit like that verse by the late medieval German mystic, Angelus Silesius,<sup>22</sup> to the effect that the eye could not see the sun if there was not something sunlike in the eye. I think that is a Platonic, or neo-Platonic, thought, but he applies that to Reality. It is not just a reflection; you may use the image of reflection but again [that is] not to be taken too literally.

In *The Awakening of Faith*, Āśvaghoṣa translates it as 'the mutual perfuming of the real and the unreal'.<sup>23</sup> Something of the Absolute clings to you despite everything. It is not just a reflection. It's just as, when you are perfumed with something some infinitesimally tiny grains of the perfume adhere to you, and you can follow the track of these to the source from which they came.

Kulamitra: Maybe some [of the words used as] Western equivalents are even more confusing than the original Sanskrit terms. For instance, you equated the Absolute Bodhicitta with Reality; well surely things that exist are real and would therefore have an affinity anyway? Presumably, again, Reality is actually an inadequate term for translating what one is talking about.

S.: What one means by Reality does need to be defined.

The fact that one uses the two terms 'relative Bodhicitta' and 'Absolute Bodhicitta' is intended to indicate the fact that the goal towards which you are striving is not completely foreign to you, that you have an inner kinship with it, however deeply hidden. So perhaps with beginners one can leave it like that. If there wasn't that inner, even though concealed, kinship, you couldn't arrive at that goal: there would be no middle term to unite you.

In a sense, the Absolute Bodhicitta is the absolute dimension of something which is already present within us and experienced by us in a relative and limited form.

Kulamitra: So in that context, by absolute dimension you mean that thing to its highest power?

S.: Or perhaps one could say that thing to its highest conceivable power. ....

Dharmapriya: Could I just pick up something that you mentioned earlier when you corrected Kulamitra's use of the word 'creative' with regards to the Absolute Bodhicitta because [the Absolute Bodhicitta is] outside time? Would that imply that there is no creative element to Buddhahood as it, in a sense, is also outside time?

S.: Yes, definitely; except that you could say that when Buddhahood manifests within time, then this experience is creative. But you could not say that Buddhahood was in itself creative in that sense, inasmuch as it is outside time. In other words its creativity is a manifestation, at least from our point of view, and not

what Buddhahood *is* in itself.

But again, that is too simplified, because, does Buddhahood, does Ultimate Reality, exclude time? There is a sense in which creativity *is* within the Absolute, within Buddhahood, but not as constitutive of its essence, one might say. Does the real exclude the unreal? Does the unreal have no sort of existence at all — can it not be related to the ultimately real in any way? What does one mean by 'related'? It raises all sorts of questions.

We should be aware of the implications of this term 'creative', because it is a rather popular term in the FWBO and perhaps we overuse it sometimes. ....

There are also questions raised in connection with the Transcendental dependent origination, that is the sequence of Transcendental experiences (*lokuttara*) [which follow on] after Stream-Entry. We speak of Enlightenment as the culmination of that process. So we seem to imply that, at some level, Enlightenment is a process. I have spoken quite explicitly in these terms myself, but [the idea of a process] needs to be reconciled with the various more static conceptions of Enlightenment. It is not easy to reconcile the language of time with the language of space.

In a way this is what you are up against with these concepts of Absolute and relative Bodhicitta. The Absolute Bodhicitta is the Bodhicitta not so much outside time, in the literal sense, but conceived of in terms of space; that is to say as fixed, permanent, unchanging. The relative Bodhicitta is the Bodhicitta thought of in terms of time, which implies change, whether from greater to lesser or lesser to greater. Because, if in time [the relative Bodhicitta] doesn't change, there is no distinction between time and eternity, because change is the measure of time and time is the measure of change, so to speak.

So really, when one is concerned with the Absolute and the relative Bodhicittas one is concerned, in a sense, with the same thing (although 'thing' is not at all appropriate here!), and this is the nearest one can get to talking about it adequately. When one thinks of it (although 'it' isn't appropriate either) (*laughter*) in terms of space then one thinks of it in terms of the Absolute Bodhicitta. When one thinks of it in terms of time one thinks in terms of the relative Bodhicitta. But they are really the same, not two. It corresponds to the non-distinction between samsara and Nirvana, or *bodhi* and the *kleshas*. Perhaps that is as close as one can get to it in a rough-and-ready kind of way.

In one sense Enlightenment is eternally attained, and in another sense it is eternally in the process of attainment; and these senses ultimately coincide. That is why you have Absolute *Bodhicitta* and relative *Bodhicitta*, the same term being used in each case. As I said before, allowance is made for unity and allowance is made for difference too. I think that is about as far as we can go.



## 12 Such Fun Getting There

from 'The Meeting at Silver Spring', (*The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*), Men's Mitra Retreat, Padmaloka, August 1976

*I bow down to all Gurus. Great is the blessing  
From the compassionate Gurus of the Practice Lineage;*

*Great and powerful are the Key-Instructions of Marpa and Mila!  
You, Shiwa Aui, are industrious and hardworking.  
Through the grace of the Dakinis you have attained good understanding.*

*Dear son, if you want to consummate your meditation,  
Restrain yourself from bigotry and empty talk;  
Think not of the noble glories of the past;  
Stay in the valley to which no men come;  
Keep from bad companions, and yourself exam-mine;  
Yearn not to become a Guru;  
Be humble and practice diligently;  
Never hope quickly to attain Enlightenment,  
But meditate until you die.  
Forgetting words and studies.  
Practice the Key-Instructions.  
If you would benefit yourself,  
Renounce talk and word;  
Concentrate on your devotions.*

*The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* trans. Garma C. C. Chang, Shambhala,  
Boulder & London, 1977, Vol. I, p. 184

Sangharakshita: '*Never hope quickly to attain Enlightenment*,'. That sounds rather strange, doesn't it? Why do you think he says that? Surely you *should* hope to attain Enlightenment as quickly as possible?

Kuladeva: Presumably he should concern himself with where he is rather than looking at somewhere ahead.

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

Pat Dulen: There'll be no creative process at all.

S.: There probably won't be any creative process at all, because [for creativity] you have to be immersed in and devoted to the creative process for its own sake. In the same way you've got to be immersed in meditation. [You've got to be] so devoted to meditation that in a sense you're not bothered about gaining Enlightenment: you just want to meditate. You know that meditation leads to Enlightenment but in a sense you've forgotten all about Enlightenment, you're just meditating, or you're just into the spiritual life. You're not bothered about gaining Buddhahood: you find the process itself so satisfying that you don't mind being in it indefinitely. In a sense you're in no hurry to get to Enlightenment, it's such fun getting there.

There's a bit of a parallel to this in our recent experience with Sukhavati. Sukhavati was to have been completed by October but now it's been put back to the Spring.<sup>24</sup> When I was there recently I suggested that one shouldn't think so much in terms of finishing it by a certain date, or even finishing it at all, but should regard it more as a continuing process. I pointed out that even after we'd finished everything and had our opening ceremony and dedication, that wouldn't be the end. There'd still be so many things to do, even on the building, [in the way of] further improvements, further beautification. So why draw a deadline and say it's got to be done by that particular date? I suggested that people got more into the actual process and bothered less about actually finishing it, as though they were there just to work, just to enjoy the experience of being there and doing all those things.

Of course one knows that after a while it is going to be finished, relatively speaking, but one need not think about that too much, certainly not have it filling one's mind the whole time. One should identify oneself with and immerse oneself in the actual process much more.

And it's the same, apparently, with meditation, or with the spiritual life as a whole. Don't think too much about Enlightenment, think more about the spiritual life. Don't think too much about being a Buddha, just think about being a Bodhisattva. Don't think too much about being a Guru — don't think about it at all maybe — just be happy being a disciple. Don't be too eager to become a Dharmachari, be quite happy being a Mitra, at least until your inherent momentum simply carries you forward without your being able to do anything about it at all. Enjoy the present process until one fine day you wake up and find that you're there.



## Glossary

**Samṣkāras** (Pali *sankhāras*): The term has general and specific denotations. According to the Pali-English Dictionary (q.v.) it is 'one of the most difficult terms in Buddhist metaphysics'! It is variously translated, according to context, as 'formative forces or impulses' or simply 'formations', 'mental phenomena' or 'mental conditionings', that is, all kinds of conditioned mental attitudes in the sense of predispositions, tendencies, impulses, volitions, strivings, be they rational or emotional, conscious or subconscious. Conze renders it 'formative forces' or 'impulses', giving the bare literal meaning as 'together-makers'. In some contexts, 'samṣkāras' denote all things whatsoever in mundane existence, as when, in the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha declares: '*Sabbe sankhāra anicca'ti*'; 'impermanent are all conditioned things'.

More particularly, the *saṃskāras* appear in two important lists or formulations: as the second of the 'Twelve Links' of the chain of conditioned co-production and as the fourth of the 'Five *Skandhas*' or 'aggregates' which make up the psycho-physical system of the individual human being.

As the fourth of the 'Five *Skandhas*', *saṃskāras* is usually translated as 'volition' because it signifies all those conscious acts of will which give direction to our life, as we strive to possess what we see as 'good' and to reject what we see as painful. It is as the fourth *skandha* that *saṃskāras* correspond to the Abhidhamma classification known as the '*caitta-dhammas*' in Pali or the '*caitasika-dharmas*' in Sanskrit, which are the 'mental concomitants' or (Guenther) 'mental events'. These mental events come into operation with the arising of a particular type of consciousness. They can be either skilful, in which case they lead to a good rebirth, or unskilful, making for a bad rebirth. [The classification does not include *vedanā* (feeling), *saṃjñā* (perception) and *vijñāna* (consciousness), which are three of the other four *skandhas*].

The *saṃskāras* are also the second link in the *nidāna* chain or sequence of conditions which give rise to the individual consciousness. In English versions of the Pali texts, the passages which give the formula of the 'Twelve Links' render the word '*saṃskāras*' sometimes as 'karma formations' or, rather imprecisely, as 'activities'; thus we find: '... conditioned by ignorance, karma formations, conditioned by karma formations, consciousness ...' In the context of the 'Twelve *Nidānas*', *saṃskāras* suggest all unconscious or semi-conscious predispositions, motivations and even instincts left over, so to speak, from the last life and carried through to the next life; it is the driving force of the *saṃskāras* which determine the next rebirth. Since they are such powerful formative forces which shape our own future, the *saṃskāras* are represented, in the series of pictures around the rim of the Tibetan Wheel of Life, by a potter shaping pots.

See Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka 1980; Subhuti, 'The Buddhist Vision', Windhorse Publications; Sangharakshita, 'A Survey of Buddhism', Windhorse Publications.



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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See *Mitrata* 58 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart - Part 1', Glossary, as well as *Mitrata* 70 in this series, 'The Buddha and the Bodhisattva: Eternity and Time - Part 1'.

<sup>2</sup> *Yab-yum* (Tib.): lit. 'Father-Mother' or 'the union of Father and Mother'. This refers to the representation in Tantric iconography of male and female Buddha figures united in sexual embrace. The sexual symbolism is used to express the two-in-oneness of *prajñā* and *karuṇā*, Wisdom and Compassion, as the essence of Buddhahood. It is important to remember that for Tibetan Buddhists the symbolism is purely spiritual and has no erotic significance. 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; and *Mitrata* 70 in this series, 'The Buddha and the Bodhisattva: Eternity and Time - Part 1', Glossary entry 'Tantra'.

<sup>3</sup> Vajrasattva (Skt.): lit. 'thunderbolt (*vajra*) being' (*sattva*). For an explanation and illustration of the symbol of the *vajra*, see *Mitrata* 64 in this series, "'Masculinity" & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 1', Glossary; Sangharakshita, 'The Symbolism of the Sacred Thunderbolt or Diamond Sceptre of the Lamas', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/k8wybok> or Sangharakshita, 'Creative Symbols of Tantric Buddhism', Windhorse Publications.

Vajrasattva is sometimes translated as 'the Adamantine Being' and *vajra* as 'Diamond' as in the title, *The Diamond Sutra* (the *Vajracchedikā*). Vajrasattva is a very important figure in the Vajrayana. Iconographically, he is a Buddha in the form of a Bodhisattva and is sometimes referred to as the Sixth Buddha, not in the sense of being an addition to the Buddhas of the 'Mandala of the Five Buddhas', but as standing outside the plane of the Five. Sometimes, as above, Vajrasattva is seen as the esoteric aspect of Aksobhya, the Buddha of the Eastern direction of the 'Mandala of the Five Buddhas', but he is more usually represented as the esoteric aspect of the central Buddha of the Mandala, Vairocana, and could be envisaged as being *behind* Vairocana. He is usually depicted pure white in colour and dressed in the silks and jewels of a prince. In his right hand, he holds a *vajra* to his heart and in his left a *vajra* bell against his thigh. Vajrasattva symbolizes one's own mind in its Transcendental purity beyond space and time.

See Sangharakshita, 'The Four Foundation Yogas of the Tibetan Buddhist Tantra', available on FreeBuddhistAudio <http://tinyurl.com/phml47k>

<sup>4</sup> See *Mitrata* 67 in this series, 'On the Threshold of Enlightenment - Part 2', Note 3.

<sup>5</sup> See *Mitrata* 68 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy - Part 1', Glossary.

<sup>6</sup> See *Mitrata* 65 in this series, "'Masculinity" & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Glossary.

<sup>7</sup> This is the figure of the *Cakravarti-rāja* (Skt.): lit. 'the wheel-turning king', more commonly known in the history of Buddhism as the Universal Monarch, the ideal ruler who governs according to the Dharma, with justice and compassion for all his subjects and concern for their spiritual as well as material and social needs. At the Buddha's birth, it was predicted that the child would become either a Universal Monarch or a Buddha. A good historical example of a ruler who, to a great extent, lived up to the ideal of the *Cakravartin*, is King Moka (see *Mitrata* 62 in this series, 'Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual Life - Part 1', Note 21).

<sup>8</sup> The 'Ten Powers of a *Tathāgata*' are concerned with a Buddha's Transcendental attainments. See *Mahāsihanāda Sutta*, Majjhima Nikāya, I, 12.

<sup>9</sup> The 'Ten Powers of a *Tathāgata*' are concerned with a Buddha's Transcendental attainments. See *Mahāsihanāda Sutta*, Majjhima Nikāya, I, 12.

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<sup>10</sup> The 'Ten Powers of a *Tathāgata*' are concerned with a Buddha's Transcendental attainments. See *Mahāsihanāda Sutta*, Majjhima Nikāya, I, 12.

<sup>11</sup> See William Morris, *The Life and Death of Jason*, J. M. Dent & Sons, London 1917.

<sup>12</sup> See William Morris, *The Life and Death of Jason*, J. M. Dent & Sons, London 1917.

<sup>13</sup> See William Morris, *The Life and Death of Jason*, J. M. Dent & Sons, London 1917.

<sup>14</sup> See *Mitrata* 65 in this series, 'Masculinity' & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Glossary.

<sup>15</sup> See *Mitrata* 65 in this series, 'Masculinity' & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Glossary.

<sup>16</sup> A reference to a Chinese text, known in English as *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, a fifth century Yogācāra work. It is a '*śāstra*' or 'commentary' believed to have been translated from a Sanskrit original by the great Indian *Ācārya*, Aśvaghōṣa. '... recent investigations indicate that it is the work of a native Chinese author. Whatever its origin, it remains one of the best and most attractive expositions of Buddhist Idealism available.' (Sangharakshita, 'A Survey of Buddhism', Windhorse Publications).

<sup>17</sup> See *Mitrata* 59 in this series, 'The Awakening of the Bodhi Heart - Part 2', Note 4.

<sup>18</sup> See *Mitrata* 70 in this series, 'The Buddha and the Bodhisattva: Eternity and Time - Part 1', Glossary.

<sup>19</sup> See *Mitrata* 60 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Vow - Part 1', Glossary.

<sup>20</sup> See *Mitrata* 69 in this series, 'The Bodhisattva Hierarchy - Part 2', Glossary.

<sup>21</sup> George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 1770-1831, a German philosopher, whose view of man's mind as the highest expression of the Absolute is expounded in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807).

<sup>22</sup> Angelus Silesius is the pseudonym for Johannes Scheffler (1624-1677), German mystic and poet.

<sup>23</sup> See *A Buddhist Bible*, ed. Dwight Goddard, Beacon Press, Boston 1966, pp. 378ff.

<sup>24</sup> See *Mitrata* 65 in this series, "Masculinity" & "Femininity" in the Spiritual Life - Part 2', Note 16.