

Lecture 58: Monks and Laymen in Buddhist Tibet

Mr. Chairman and friends

Most of those I think who study Buddhism for any length of time, superficially even, eventually come to realise there are three things which in Buddhism occupy a supreme position – and these are what the tradition itself terms the three jewels or the three most precious things. And they're called the three jewels or the three most precious things simply because they represent, what are for Buddhists, for the entire Buddhist tradition, the three highest spiritual values. Three things, for the sake of which as it were, everything else in the spiritual life exists. And these three jewels, also known as the three refuges, are as most of you know perfectly well, first of all the Buddha, secondly the Dharma – the doctrine or the teaching, and thirdly the Sangha or spiritual community. These are the three jewels, the three refuges, the three most precious things, the three ultimate, the three highest spiritual values.

Now Tibetan Buddhism with which we are dealing in the course of these talks, Tibetan Buddhism adds to this series of three jewels a fourth. Usually it puts the fourth first so that you get your first refuge, your first jewel and then the three others and this fourth or this first jewel or refuge in Tibetan Buddhism is the Guru or the Lama or the spiritual teacher. In other parts of the Buddhist world when they take the refuges they say to the Buddha for refuge I go, to the Dharma for refuge I go, to the Sangha for refuge I go, expressing their committing of themselves to the realisation of these three highest values. But in Tibet there is this addition, there is this fourth or rather first refuge preceding the others and they say to the Lama or to the Guru for refuge I go. And they do this because according to the Tibetan tradition, especially according to the Tantric element in the Tibetan tradition you do not even know the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha except through the Lama, through the Guru, through the spiritual master or spiritual teacher. So they have these four refuges, the Guru, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Now the Buddha of course means the enlightened teacher, the one who initiated the whole great spiritual tradition which nowadays we call Buddhism. The Dharma of course means the way to enlightenment, the path or the method whereby we realise for ourselves the same goal of enlightenment or Buddhahood that the Buddha realised for himself all those centuries ago. When we follow the Dharma we, as it were, transcend time and we reach from the present the same point above and beyond time, that the Buddha reached from his point in time 2,500 years ago. We meet, as it were, in eternity. The Sangha of course means the spiritual community of those who are following the path, those who are going along the path, as it were, hand in hand sharing the same spiritual ideals, having the same ultimate spiritual objective, pledging themselves and dedicating themselves to the same way of life the same path. This is the Sangha, the spiritual community.

Now this Sangha or spiritual community can be considered from three distinct points of view or we may say it can be considered as existing at three different levels. For those of you who have come to other series of lectures before, this is familiar ground, it may be new to those who are comparatively new themselves to our movement. The three levels

as it were at which the spiritual community exists are known in the Buddhist tradition first of all as the Ariya Sangha, secondly the Bikkhu Sangha and third the Mahaya Sangha. But these represent three different levels at which the spiritual community can exist. The Ariya Sangha is the spiritual community proper those who share certain spiritual experiences, certain degrees or stages of enlightenment, those who are nearing the goal, those who are not far from Nirvana, who share that common experience, and that common realisation as they get nearer and nearer to the goal of supreme enlightenment, they are if you like, the spiritual elect or spiritual elite. And secondly there is the Sangha as it exists on the ecclesiastical level as we may call it, or the level of formal monastic life, the Bikkhu Sangha – the order of monks - these are those who have separated themselves from the world, who are devoting all their time, all their energies, to the spiritual path and the religious life. And thirdly there is the Sangha, the spiritual community in the sense of Mahaya Sangha, that you could say in the sense of all those who, regardless of the degree of spiritual attainment, or regardless of the fact as to whether there is any attainment or not, regardless also as to whether they are monks or whether they are laymen, whether they are nuns or whether they are lay women have committed themselves, at least verbally or at least to some extent, to following the path, practising the Dharma and realising the ideal of Buddhahood. This is the Mahaya Sangha the great community or the great assembly. The second we may say – the Bikkhu Sangha in a sense is contained in the third, the great community or the great spiritual assembly which includes as I said not only lay people but also monks and nuns.

Now this evening we're concerned with the spiritual community known as the Bikkhu Sangha. The order of monks and as the community of all the faithful as existing in Tibet. And this is why this evening we are concerned with the subject of monks and laymen in Buddhist Tibet.

Now when we acknowledge this title, when we speak of monks and lay men in Buddhist Tibet we are not of course suggesting that you find Buddhist monks and Buddhist lay people only in Tibet. One finds them of course in every Buddhist country and much of what I am going to say this evening about monks about lay people in Tibet will be true about monks and lay people in Ceylon, in Japan, in Thailand, in Burma in Vietnam. At the same time, as I think it has become obvious already in the course of this series, at the same time Tibetan Buddhism has many distinctive features of its own. And therefore we find that Tibetan monks, Tibetan Buddhist lay people have certain distinctive features also within the context of a shared tradition as compared with the monks and the lay people in other parts of the Buddhist world. So I am going to try to emphasise these distinctive features more this evening even though this will be done admittedly against the background of a common tradition, that tradition which is common to all forms and all schools of Buddhist whatsoever.

Now if one has any contact at all with Tibetans or if one has any contact at all with Tibetan Buddhism one very quickly comes to understand that Tibetan Buddhists and Tibetan Buddhism itself attach very great importance to what we would call the idea of precedence. Social, ecclesiastical, spiritual precedence and precedence is very strictly observed by Tibetan Buddhists on all formal religious occasions. And it is important for them because this idea of precedence, religious precedence especially, reflects the very important spiritual principle of spiritual hierarchy. And this is why we find that Tibetan Buddhism is very very particular about things which perhaps in the West we regard as

being of comparatively little importance. Just to give you an idea, if you attend a Tibetan religious ceremony especially if this is held in a temple or in a monastery, you will notice that when you are seated for the ceremony the seats are graded. You will notice that towards the altar the seats become very very high. Now the seats may be even be 6 feet from the ground, real thrones, then you'll find seats that are 6 inches lower, then one 3 inches lower and it will come down and down until you are sitting perhaps on an ordinary mat. And this isn't an accident, this isn't in accordance with any aesthetic principles. This is in accordance with strict ideas of precedence and hierarchy. And you can very quickly tell in your contact with Tibetans how they regard, you how they estimate you as senior or otherwise, according to the number of inches from the ground that you are required to sit. And very very great importance is attached to this, rightly or wrongly, by the Tibetan Buddhists themselves. Now this is just a very simple example, but there are many many others and here I can speak very much from my own experience. I've noticed that when I've visited Tibetan friends, when I've taken part in ceremonies in Tibetan monasteries and temples not only was the seat graded but the little table, the choksa (?) in front of the seat, where you had one, that also was graded. In front of the elevated seats there was a magnificent carved, painted and gilded table and the seat correspondingly had a sort of silk cushion, and even there were grades of cushions and I remember when I started arranging Tibetan ceremonies at my own **Vihara (?)** I had to be very very careful and I had to consult somebody when I invited certain incarnate lamas especially to see that everybody got the right cushion and the right number of stripes of brocade and all that sort of thing. It was really carried to a very fine art. And then not only the table but even the tea cups. When they served tea ceremonially the most simple kind of cup is of course an ordinary china cup. Chinese pattern of course, without a handle and that sort, but you can also go a little bit higher in the social scale than that, if they want to pay a little more honor. What they will do is put a little lid on the cup and a bit higher still you will find that the cup has not only a lid, but also a stand. And then you find the material changes. You may get a beautiful jade cup instead of an ordinary china one. And you may find that you've got a silver stand for your cup and a silver lid. And you may find eventually as you go up and up, as you approach the higher and higher seats, that on the little lids of the tea cups there is a jewel and the jewel becomes more and more precious. And then you get gold creeping in and eventually to your astonishment, and this happened to me, you find yourself being served with tea in a massive, a very ancient jade cup on a solid silver stand with a gold gauze decorated lid and a magnificent jewel. And then of course you know, that as far as Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhists are concerned, you've really arrived. But I mention all these things just to illustrate this principle of precedence. A social principle, a social practice admittedly, but based on a spiritual idea, the idea of spiritual hierarchy. The idea that in as much as there is a path, and inasmuch there are stages on that path there are also grades of attainment, grades of realisation and that people can be, as it were organised along these lines and looked up to and regarded along these lines. Inasmuch as they form a sort of hierarchy, so that every thing with they do, or everything that is done in connection with them, should reflect this hierarchy, reflect these stages and grades of realisation and attainment. So inasmuch we are talking about Tibetan Buddhism, it is only right it is only correct, it is only proper that we ourselves should observe a sort of precedence otherwise you deal with Tibetan Buddhism in a manner that is not in accordance with the spirit of Tibetan Buddhism itself.

So we are going to observe a suitable precedence in accordance with the ideas of Tibetan

Buddhism this evening. We are going to deal with the monks first and then we're going to deal with the lay people because in Tibet in all formal religious occasions the monks take precedence. And after, that we are going to study, we are going to try to understand the connections between them, the connections between the monks on the one hand, and the laity on the other, both social and spiritual. And we shall also have something to say on the subject of nuns and the subject of lay women.

Now first of all, before we really start, I want to clear up a misunderstanding, at least a possible misunderstanding about monks in Tibet. Some people I discovered both in India and in this country, are under the impression that there are no monks, at least no proper monks, no real monks in Tibet. That you could say, no monks in the sense that one has monks in Ceylon or in Burma and this misunderstanding I know is rather widespread in the Theravadin countries of the Buddhist East in Ceylon, in Burma in Thailand and so on. They seem to be under the impression that in Tibet there are no monks or at least no real Buddhist monks. And this impression is based partly simply on lack of information, they don't seem to know very much about Buddhism in Tibet having being cut off from it for centuries. It is also based on, one must admit, on a certain emphasis that one does find in some of these Theravadin countries on the non-essential. For example, if you wore an orange robe or a yellow robe like this, they would think you were a real monk but if you wear a red one like the Tibetans do they might be rather doubtful as to whether you were a monk or whether you are not. So they do tend to attach in some parts of the Buddhist world, in some Theravadin countries importance to things of this sort, so it is rather difficult sometimes for them to see the Tibetan monk to be really and truly monks. It's a bit like in this country if you see a clergyman without his dog collar you can't really feel he's a clergyman if you been brought up as a strict High Anglican. So it is a little bit like that with some of the Theravadin Buddhists. If they see the Tibetan monks in their red robes they don't react in the same way, they don't respond in the same way as they would do if they saw someone in a yellow or in a saffron coloured robe. But one can state, one can affirm quite definitely that Tibet does contain monks in the full technical sense of term and the Tibetan monks belong to the Sarvastivadin branch of the Sangha. Perhaps I should explain something here. The early Indian Sangha the early Indian monastic orders split into four great divisions that are known as Nikayas. And when the Buddha passed away there was nothing very organised in the way of a Sangha, in the way of a monastic order. There were various people, men and women, following him, having given up worldly life, devoting themselves to meditation, devoting themselves to the realisation of higher things. There were just a few rules, but on the whole, they led a fairly free and easy sort of existence not unlike I would say that of the modern Hindu sadhu. But as time went on, more rules were introduced, the monastic order became more organised, and inevitably certain differences of opinions started to manifest themselves. So we find that about 100 years after the death of the Buddha, there was a split in the monastic order between what we call the Sthaviras and what we call the Madhyamikans. The Sthaviras means the elders and the Madhyamikans means we may say the great assemblies. The Sthaviras tended to be more conservative and the Madhyamikans, the great assemblists, they tended to be more progressive. And it was in fact out of the Madhyamikans, out of the great assemblists, that eventually arose the Mahayana.

Now subsequently the Sthaviras themselves, the conservative party, split in the course of the next 150 to 200 years, they produced first of all the Pudgalavardins or personalists and secondly the Sarvastivadins or plain realists. There is not time this evening,

in fact it isn't necessary to explain why the Nikaya had these names but we may say briefly that these were the four Nikaya. First of all the Sthaviras then the Pudgalavadins and then the Sarvastivadins. And subsequently these all subdivided even more and these subdivision make up the 18 schools, the classical 18 schools of early Buddhism. And these 18 schools are collectively are known as the Hinayanans.

Now all four Nikaya whether it's the Staveras or the Madhyamikans or the Pudkalavadin or the Sarvastivadin, they all transmit what is essentially the same code of monastic discipline or vinaya. And in India itself, all these four Nikaya accorded one other mutual recognition, there was mutual respect between them even though they did differ on several particulars. Now all the Tibetan monks, all the monks of Tibet today belong to the Sarvastivadin branch of the Sangha and they follow the Tibetan version of one of the sanskrit recensions of the Vinaya – it is rather important I think to remember this. The lineages of the Pudkalvardins and the Madhyamikans these have died out in the Buddhist world. You've got only two traditions nowadays of monastic ordination. One is that of the Staveras in their Theravadin form which you find in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and so on and the other is the Sarvastivadin tradition which you find in Tibet, China in Mongolia in Vietnam and a few other places. So the Tibetans we say follow the Tibetan version of one of the sanskrit recensions, there are many recensions of Vinaya or the monastic law. Now those who attended the first lecture may remember that the second religious King Trisong Detseb (?) in the 8th Century decided that Tibetan Buddhism should be a Three vardin system, that is it should comprehend, it should embrace all the 3 great stages of the development of Buddhism – Hinayana, Theravadin and Vadjrayana. He decreed we saw that Tibetan Buddhism should follow the Sarvastivadins Vinaya thein Philosophy and the Tantra in meditation and this system as we pointed out then and subsequently continues right down to the present day and this explains why the Tibetan monks belong to the Sarvastivadins Branch of the sangha rather than to either of the 2 Branches which have died out or the Theravadin branch which flourishes in south East Asia.

So hence we may say, summarising this slightly historical, slightly technical discussion hence we may say, we may conclude that the Tibetan monks are in fact monks in the full technical sense of that term. But unfortunately this is not always understood by some at least of the Theravadin Buddhists of South East Asia.

But so far as Buddhists in the west are concerned, we have no reason not to be objective. Now coming closer to the subject of the Tibetan Buddhist monks we may say that there are six grades, six grades of Tibetan monks. The 1st is what is called the grade of Genghya – Genghya corresponds to the Indian for parsica (?) or lay Buddhists. And in Tibetan buddhism, there are two kinds of Genghya one is simply a layman who observes the 5 silas that is the 5 moral precepts, and the other sense of the term is the probationer in a monastery who observes 10 silas. And when we speak of the Genghya as the first grade as it were of Tibetan monk then Genghya is to be understood in the second of these, in other words as a sort of probationer living in the monastery, serving the monks and observing 10 ethical precepts. So this is the first grade of Genghya.

The second becomes the Gitsu and this corresponds to the Indian shramanira (?) and according to the Tibetan tradition following the Sarvastivadins tradition the shramanira (?) is a novice monk one who is studying to become a fully ordained monk, a novice

monk observing 36 silas or 36 moral precepts. This ordination, the ordination of a Gitsu, or shramanira (?) cannot be given before the age of 7 or 8. And incidentally, I should observe that Tibetans like most Buddhists, when they reckon your age they don't count your years from the date of your birth, they say quite rightly, quite logically that you begin your existence before birth. They count from conception, so whereas you would say perhaps that you were 25 as the case may be, the Tibetans would say that you are 26 because they add on an extra year or at least an extra 10 months to cover the prenatal period. So when you apply for ordination, they expect you to give your age according to the date, at least the rough date of your conception, rather than the date of your birth which would seem to me to be rather more logical. So this is the 2nd degree or 2nd grade of ordination or 2nd kind of Tibetan monk the Gitsu or the novice monk.

And thirdly we have the Gelong, the Gelong corresponds to the Indian bikkshu or parli Bikku and the Gelong is of course the fully ordained monk. One can't be ordained as a Gelong before ones 20th year and very often one waits until later. You may remember that the week before last we saw that Tsong Khapa (?) the great founder ofwaited for his higher ordination until he was 25. Now the Tibetan Gelong observes 150 silas or 150 ethical precepts divided into 7 categories. And in addition to these 150 rules proper there are various rules of what we would regard as monastic etiquette. The first of the 7 categories of rules proper contains 4 precepts, and these are the most important. And these precepts prohibit for the fully ordained monk first of all marriage, secondly theft, thirdly taking of life deliberately and fourthly the making of false claims regarding ones own spiritual attainment and experience. So this is the Gelong – the fully ordained monk.

Fourthly there's the Geshe. The Geshe is usually translated or sometimes translated at least by some people as Doctor of Buddhist Divinity, but somehow I don't feel that that is quite suitable. And when I first saw it on the visiting card of an English Tibetan Geshe I was quite astonished he put his name then Doctor of Buddhist Divinity and then I think he put in brackets Lhasa or something like that. So the Geshe is the learned monk, you may say. And for the Geshe there a 5 chief subjects for which he devotes we shall say many many years of his life.

First of all he studies Vinaya or monastic discipline. There is a very great deal of literature, a very great deal of material under this heading some of it rather abstruse. A few simple monastic rules in the course of centuries have grown into a vast and complex and quasi-legal system. And sometimes in the monastic order, you have to have special monk lawyers as it were to unravel all the complexities of the monastic law so you can know and be quite sure whether you have committed an offence or not. So in this way it does become a little complicated. So the Geshe first of all has to study the Vinaya, the monastic law.

The 2nd subject of study is the Abhidharma, I don't know if many of you or any of you have encountered the Abhidharma before this is a rather abstruse and technical division of Buddhist literature. It embraces what we would call psychological ethics. It is descriptive psychology, analytical psychology in the sense of the analysis of mental states. So analysis of them into their constituent functions and so on and it does become very very complex indeed there is enormous literature in this field. In Sanskrit in Tibetan in Chinese and so on, it is in a sense Buddhist theology you may say provided you

understand that there is no theos in Buddhism. So the Geshe has to study the Abhidharma and he has to study it in the Sarvastivadins version. The Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit translation of the Abhidharma. Thirdly he studies the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures – the Prajnaparamita sutras and the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures are the most important group of Mahayana sutras. There are about 35 of them all together – 35 Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, and luckily for us they are all available in English for us now thanks to the labors of Dr. Edward Conze who had translated them all. As I am sure most of you know – the Diamond Sutra – the Vajracchedika Sutra is particularly popular. As popular in Tibet as it is in Japan in the Zen school and it is recited on every possible occasion. The Tibetans call it thewhich means the Diamond Cutter Sutra. So the Geshe, your Doctor of Buddhist Divinity studies the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures – all 35 of them ideally commentaries and sub-commentaries. And fourthly he studies Madhymika philosophy, I put philosophy in single inverted commas because it isn't quite philosophy in our sense. So the Madhymika, the teaching of the doctrine as the middle way, is a highly metaphysical even a highly dialectical teaching which was, or the tradition was founded by Nagarjuna, the great Indian Buddhist thinker early in the Christian era and the Madhymika tradition is based on the Prajnaparamita or the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures and we may say that the Madhymika is a sort of dialectical, a logical version of the Perfection of Wisdom teaching a more intellectualised version if you like.

Fifthly, and lastly the Geshe studies logic. Indian Buddhism had a very rich tradition of logical studies and the Gelugpas especially attached very great importance to this.himself placed very much importance to this buthimself was very much given to logical studies and his disciples tended to follow in his footsteps so the Geshe studied logic – Buddhist logic and the Gelugpas studied it more, the other schools tended to be less enthusiastic about it. There are many Indian Buddhist treatises about logic by the great Masters of Indian logic likeand.....these have been translated into Tibetan and they are very very avidly studied by the Tibetan and Mongolian Geshe. In fact we may say that Tibet has kept up the tradition of the study of Buddhist logic more than any other part of the Buddhist world. If you look at Chinese Buddhism you will find no logic. They just weren't interested in Indian Buddhist logic, same as Japan, they prefer the more direct, the more intuitive approach, but the Tibetans, especially the Gelugpas, they thrive on logic, they love these logical distinctions and they have worked out all sorts of theories of the.....very much alonglinesand have come back even more complex than that so Indian Buddhist logic is possibly almost as advanced as the most recent Western logic in many respects. So some scholars are of the opinion that the Indian Buddhist, and the Tibetan Buddhist logicians got rather far away from the spiritual teachings of the Buddha, but the Indians and the Tibetans justify themselves and say well it's all part of the Bodhisattva ideal because what is the Bodhisattva supposed to be doing, he's supposed to be converting everybody, maturing everybody, spiritually bringing them onto the path, so it isn't so easy you've got to discuss, you've got to argue with people, so how can you argue with them unless you know logic, unless you can argue rationally. So therefore they say the Bodhisattva ought to study logic, or to study rhetoric or to study poetry even and some go as far as to say the Bodhisattva should know arts and crafts and should also be a good dancer. But you see the idea, so all this is equipment as it were to help and to lead beings on the path to enlightenment. So therefore the Geshe usually with great enthusiasm also studies logic as the fifth and last of these five subjects of his course. Now even with just these 5

subjects with Vinaya, or the monastic discipline, or with the Abhidharma or with the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, with the Madhyamika philosophy and with logic with just these 5 subjects it takes not less usually than 12 years to complete the Geshe course and sometimes it takes 20. I have met several Geshe myself who didn't finish until well into their 40s and into their 50s.

One may say even that the system of study is largely tutorial, that is to say there are no lectures to large audiences you usually just go along and study the subject concerned the Vinaya, or Abhidharma or Perfection of Wisdom or Madhyamika or logic with your own teacher, your own tutor, either just by yourself individually or just with two or three others. So it is either individual tuition or very very small classes. And examinations are held yearly. Every year there is an examination, and you'll be interested to hear that the examinations are entirely oral. There is no written work at all.

What happens is this. On the day of the examination, you, the individual candidate, all by yourself, you come into the examination hall and sitting around all around you there are hundreds of Geshe, those who have already passed out, that is passed the Geshe course, in a vast hall and they're sitting all around in a great circle and you are in the middle just sitting there all by yourself, there is no other candidate with you. And what do they do, they fire at you questions one after the other on any of these five subjects and the question may come from any part of the hall. So what will happen is, and I've had this described to me by people who have been through it you'll just be sitting there quaking and waiting for the first question and from the right will come a very technical question about Vinaya, you have to give the answer just like that, and when you have just given your answer then behind you comes a question about logic, a very technical question, you have to give your answer to that and before you've recovered from that a question about the Perfection of Wisdom and it gets more and more abstruse and they're trying to catch you out the whole the time and this goes on, this grueling sort of examination goes on for several hours together. Questions are fired as I say from all sides and even the Dalai Lama has to go through this, and some of my friends who were present gave me a description of the Dalai Lama's examination and they said the Dalai Lama at one crucial moment was almost caught napping, almost, the questions are so tough that though he had been trained and taught very very well I forget whether it was logic of vinaya or it was but for one question just for one terrible instance it seemed as if he wasn't going to be able to answer it and then someone told me he sort of suddenly recovered himself and he came up with the answer with a terrific sort of roar and everyone was very very pleased, because, after all he was the Dalai Lama, very pleased that he had given the right answer. But, but there are 4 grades of pass, you have 1st class, 2nd class, 3rd class, 4th class, the Dalai Lama was given a 2nd class pass which shows the system is very very fair and objective, a first class is almost unheard of, I believe that only 2 or 3 Geshe alive at present who've passed in the 1st division as it were. You very very rarely get more than a 2nd pass. Now I should also mention that this whole sort of process, this whole process of oral examination, this viva voce examination is strictly stylised. When you ask for the question and when you answer there are certain sort of ritual gestures you have to assume, there is a certain way of asking. I've seen it all done, but I can't quite recall it or reproduce it. But very roughly sometimes it happens when you put your question, you have to thrust out your forefinger like this, and fix your opponent with your eye and then as he goes to reply you go like this, and if he can't reply you make a gesture of triumph and if he can get back at you there is a special gesture

with which he has to do this and its very very animated and very dramatic and very very interesting indeed. Even if you don't quite follow the very abstruse debate, I must say that this sort of formalised or stylised debate on all these technical point of vinaya or logic these are very very popular with the Gelugpas they spend hours. And if you go and tour a monastery you will find very often under the trees in the courtyard groups of young monks practicing on one another like this, so even if you're going around on some other business, someone may fire at you a question about logic or a question about the Perfection of Wisdom and you are kept on your toes all the time. So this is the way in which they study, the way in which they learn. I should also incidentally mention that if you fail, and this happens very very often, if you don't pass the yearly examination you just carry on studying and you just try and take it the next time. And you can take as long as you like and there is no fixed time limit that you must pass the course in so many years. If you're brilliant you do it in 10 years. If you're just average, well 12, 14, 16 years but in some cases people who may not be so bright or they may want to take their time or they're not in a hurry they may take 20 years, may take 25 may take 30 – no one minds, you just present yourself for the examination when you feel ready and if you pass you pass and you go on to the next examination. This is the system which seems a quite practical and quite sensible one. So this is how you become a Geshe. So obviously you have to start rather young if you want to get it anywhere at all by middle life.

Now fifthly, the 5th kind of Tibetan monk is what they call Lama Dupas (?) means literally the lineal lama, the lama in the lineage, the lama in the tradition, that you could say the guru-disciple tradition of the Tantra. And the Lama Dupa means one who is proficient in both the theory and the practice of the Tantras. The Geshe course, the Doctor of Buddhist Divinity course, this is concerned with the Hinayana and Mahayana. Vinaya is a Hinayana subject Abhidharma is a Hinayana subject, Perfection of Wisdom this is a Mahayana subject, Madhymika again Mahayana, logic a mixture of Mahayana and Hinayana. So in the course of the Geshe course of study you cover only the Hinayana and Mahayana but it's only after that according to the Gelugpas system or Gelugpas tradition. Only after passing out as a Geshe, having mastered more or less the Hinayana and Mahayana traditions, it's only then the you go on to take up the full Tantric course and this system or tradition is very strictly observed by the Gelugpas. The Gelugpas say that only after studying the Hinayana and Mahayana thoroughly should one embark upon the study and the practise of the Tantra. The other schools, that is to say the Nyingmapas the Kalacakrapas, the Sahajapas, they are not in a way so strict, they tend to allow people to go directly to the Tantra source, to go to it with a minimum of acquaintance with the Hinayana and Mahayana whereas the Gelugpas, following Tsongkhapa's teachings insists on a rather through acquaintance with the Hinayana and Mahayana first before you go on to practise the Tantras or the Vajrayana. The 3 great monasteries of Lhasa or rather to say around Lhasa, that is Ganden, Drepung and Sera these were, or are perhaps meant for the Geshe's course. There is no study of the Tantras there, they're strictly for the Hinayana and Mahayana. For the study of the Tantras both theoretical and practical there are, or there were, in or near Lhasa two colleges as we would call them, and you could join these Tantric Colleges only after passing out from Ganden or Drepung or Sera having taken your Geshe degree. And I am told, I have been told that in these Tantric Colleges the discipline is extremely strict in the big monastery in Ganden or Drepung or Sera for instance you may have your individual room, your own cell as it were, your own property, but not in the Tantric Colleges. There you sleep in a hall just sort of side by side just with one common blanket over two or three people usually quite thin or even

threadbare and you have to get up very very early in the morning and you follow a very very strict routine indeed of study and meditation, a discussion and practice of all kinds and I have been told by a number of people who have been through or partly through this course that one's health sometimes breaks down the system is so strict and so severe. I remember particular particularly Dudjom Rinpoche (?) telling me that he joined the Tantric College or one of the Tantric Colleges after passing out of the Geshe from Sera the biggest of the 3 monastic universities as we may call them, and he was only able to remain in the Tantric College for a year because owing to the rigorous discipline and the austerity practised there his health broke down almost completely after a year. And this does quite often happen, from all that I have been able to gather, I have the impression that the discipline in the Tantric Colleges is very similar to that of the very best Zen Monasteries in Japan. One might even also say that there is a very definite affinity that the highest level between Zen on the one hand and the Vajrayana on the other especially between Zen and the Mahamudra and Atiyoga practices of Tibetan buddhism. Both the Mahamudra and the Atiyoga stresses, as Zen does at its height, the direct approach through the realisation of truth but we haven't got time to go into that now. The Lama Dupas (?) – those who have gone through the Tantric Course at one of these Tantric Colleges or are in the process of going through it after passing Geshe, these are very highly honoured not only by the lay people but by the other monks as well. I remember many years ago when Tibetan refugees started flowing out of Tibet especially from about 1959 after the Lhasa uprising I remember there were many monks coming in as refugees Dudjom Rinpoche who I have mentioned was very very much concerned about all this quite naturally and I was seeing him quite often, quite frequently during this whole period. I noticed that he was concerned about one thing more than another, he was concerned in a general way about everything, about everybody, about all the refugees be they monks or lay people, but I noticed that he was particularly concerned about the fate of the Lama Dupas and I once asked him about this why was it that you were particularly concerned about the Lama Dupas and so he said the reason is that the Geshe they have studied what can be found in books so the books are available even if the Geshe don't survive even if there are no more Geshe the books are still there, you can read them, you can study them but the Lama Dupas he said, have had translated to them the oral teachings and the oral traditions. They have spiritual experience as a result of this and this is much more easily lost, if they are not rescued, if they are not helped, if they are not able to pass it on to pass these oral traditions on to other people then they may be lost forever because they are not written down anywhere. So therefore he was particularly concerned that arrangements, special arrangements should be made for the Lamas Dupas and you will be happy to learn that a number of the refugee Lama Dupas are now accommodated at Delhousie in the Punjab in North Western India. Some of you may remember in the course of our slides we showed groups of Tibetan lamas who were studying english and these were Lama Dupas in Delhousie and you might have noticed that they were all very elderly men indeed and the reason of course for that is that they joined the Tantric Colleges, they become Lama Dupas only after having completed their course of the Hinayana and Mahayana and passed Geshe at one or another of the great monastic universities. The ordinary monks and the ordinary Geshe by the way are accommodated at Lakhisa (?) near.....and there are nearly a 1,000 of them there and at Delahousie there are about 200 of the Lamas Dupas of both Colleges that all that survived. So much then for the Lama Dupas.

Sixthly and lastly we come to the Khanpo. This is the 6th kind or 6th type of Tibetan buddhist monk.. Khanpo means, or it is usually translated as Abbot and the Tibetan Khanpo corresponds to the Indian Upadaya (?) or Preceptor, the one who gives precepts, the one who gives ordination in other words, and the Khanpo is the head of the monastery. Now if the monastery has a rather complex organisation with a number of constituent colleges as happened say at Drepung or Sera, then each college has its own Abbot and then over them all is this sort of Grand Abbot an assistant Grand Abbot and so on ,but Khanpo means Abbot generally speaking. And the Abbot or the head of the monastery or one of its constituent units is appointed always by the Dalai Lama from among the Geshes and Lama Dupas on the recommendation of the monastery council so you can see it is a fairly democratic system. There is a sort of governing body for each monastery and when a Khanpo or Abbot dies from among the existing Geshes and Lama Dupas from members of the monastery or maybe who members of other monasteries, then the governing body or the council selects someone to be the Khanpo Abbot and the Dalai Lama confirms this. And very very rarely does the Dalai Lama ever refuse to confirm anybody who is recommended by the monastery or the monastic council. So he has the power to do this and does in fact sometimes occasionally do so. Now the Abbot, the head of the monastery, the Khanpo has under him lay administrators who are responsible for various public works as we would say, the upkeep of the monastery, and so on and various purely monastic functionaries, those in charge of discipline and ceremonies and so on and if the monastery is large then has a number of administrators and monastic functionaries is quite large also, there is no need to go into all this.

So these are the 6 chief grades if you like of Tibetan monks. Let me just briefly recapitulate them so that you can remember them if you want to. First of all the Genghya who is the probationer in the monastery, secondly there is the Gitsu who is the novice monk, thirdly the Gelong who is the fully ordained monk, fourthly the Geshe who is the learned monk, the punditer or if you like the Doctor of Buddhist Divinity and then fifthly there is the Lama Dupas, the one versed in the theory and practice of the Tantras and 6th and lastly there is the Khanpo or the Abbot.

Now at this stage some of you may be wondering where the incarnate Lamas come in after all we've heard a lot about incarnate Lamas about the Tulkus, so where do they come, they haven't been mentioned at all. We've spoken about the Genghya, the Gitsu, the Gelongs, the Geshe, they all begin with Ge you notice, because Ge means simply virtuous as in Gelugpas and in the Lama Dupas and the Khanpo but there's been so far, although we've spoken of all the different kinds and grades of Tibetan monks, no mention of the incarnate Lama. So the question may well arise in your minds so where does the incarnate lama come in, well the answer to that is quite plain and simple, the incarnate Lama doesn't come in at all here and he doesn't come in at all for a reason. These grades, whether a Genghya or Gitsu, and so on these are achieved by ordination, by passing an examination, by appointment. But incarnate lamas belong to a quite different category – they're not made incarnate lamas, they are born just as the Dalai Lama is born, no one elects him as Dalai Lama, he doesn't pass an examination and become a Dalai Lama, he's not the most learned monk, so he is someone who is recognised as the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama. So in the same way that the incarnate lamas, the Tulkus as the Tibetans call them, the Nimanakayas, they are people who are recognised from birth or from shortly after birth as being the reincarnations of their predecessors. So this is a quite different category, a quite different context, so in

this 6 fold division of Tibetan monks, the incarnate lama as such does not come in.

So one may say that normally, especially in the case of the Gelugpas incarnate lama, they normally progress through all 6 stages. After their discovery, or after their identification the incarnate lamas are ordained first of all as Genghyas and then when they are 7 or eight as Gitsu, or the novice monk, and when they are about 20 as Gelong. And long before that, they will have started on the Geshe course. The little incarnate lamas I have been told start on their Geshe course very often when they are about 8 and they're studying Buddhist logic and Abhidharma and Perfection of Wisdom and monastic law all the rest from about that tender age. So if they start early they finish early and some of them manage to pass out as Geshe with flying colours in some cases by the time their 25 or 26. Other monks usually start later and take much longer. But the incarnate lama seems to go through all these things much more quickly than the others. And of course after going through the Geshe course he joins the Tantric College, that's if he's a Gelugpas incarnate lama he completes that, he may then also be appointed to a monastery or more usually he begins to act as the Abbot or his predecessors monastery. The incarnate lamas in fact really are the reincarnations of the most distinguished Abbots so in a sense you may regard the incarnate lamas as a subdivision on the Khanpos. The Abbots that is to say.

Last time, last week we saw that the Dalai Lamas are the reincarnation using this rather ambiguous word, are the reincarnations of Trankapas (?) nephew who was the third Abbot of Ganden and subsequently recognised as manifestations of Avalokiteshvara.

Now for a few words about nomenclature in Tibet among Tibetan Buddhism. Monks are usually referred to collectively as Traapas. If you see a group of monks walking along the road you say there goes the Traapas and Traapas means quite literally students. Monks are students but they go on studying ideally all their lives, their everlasting students and this is why if you have ever moved much with monks as I have moved in the East you'll find that the mentality of the monks is very much a student mentality. I'm not saying that in a derogatory way, I am saying it in rather the reverse way, you will find that the monks whether there are 15 or whether they are 50 have an outlook on life which is very much that of the student. Someone who is very much interested in studying, interested in knowledge and who isn't concerned with getting on in the world. And their reactions very often, and even if I may say so, their playfulness is very much that of the student one who thinking more in terms of knowledge than in terms of worldly advancement. So it isn't perhaps a coincidence that the Tibetans call all their monks traapas or students.

It is wrong incidentally to use the word lama indiscriminately as if it meant monk. Lots of Western writers on Buddhism use the word lama as though it meant monk. And they would say, well the lamas were walking along the road, when they should be saying the monks or the Traapas. Lama simply means guru or spiritual teacher. Literally it is spiritual superior, it translates the sanskrit *uttama* (?) which means superior, so it used in Tibet only in the sense of the spiritual superior, the spiritual teacher or the guru. The spiritual master it is never used in the sense of monk. Out of our six kinds, or six types or six grades of Tibetan monks, it is only grade 5 and 6 that is to say the Lama Dupas and the Khenpo who strictly speaking are lamas. Spiritual teachers or guru.

You also have I am sure hear of the word Rinpoche. Rinpoche is not a rank, it is only a mode of address, if you speak to someone you may address him as Rinpoche and it means simply great precious one or great jewel, it translates in sanskrit as Maharatna – (?) great jewel or greatly precious one. And this mode of address or this term is used in speaking to or sometimes speaking about grades 4, 5 and 6. In other words if you are speaking to a Geshe – a Doctor of Buddhist Divinity – you'll address him as Rinpoche or at least as Geshe Rinpoche, and if you are speaking to a Lama Dupas, one who had gone through the tantric course you'll address him a Rinpoche or you'll address the Khanpo the Abbott and of course the incarnate lama as Rinpoche, and sometimes, although not very often the word Rinpoche is used in addressing either very old or very learned or very pious monks who may not technically be Geshe, if you just want to pay respect to their great age or great learning, even though they are not technically entitled to it you address them as Rinpoche this is what it means, or this is how it is used.

Now monks – traapas whether they are Genghya or Gitsus or Gelongs or Geshe or Lama Dupas on Khanpos. I hope you are beginning to become familiar with these terms, nearly always live in Gompas or monasteries. A Gompa literally means a place for meditation. Gom, Gom is meditation, so Gompa is a place for meditation and practically all monks live in and belong to monasteries. And usually they are formally enrolled. You have to have your name enrolled at a certain monastery and you belong to, you officially belong to you officially belong to that monastery and that means that you cannot be absent without permission. There are proctors that go around every night making sure that every monk is in his cell and they go around with great iron staves and they bang them on the ground as they go along making a great jangling and jingling noise just to let you know that they are coming and you have to be there in your cell. I don't know what the time is, I think it is 10 or 11 o'clock at night but you have to be in. You mustn't be outside of the monastery gate after that hour otherwise you are hauled up before the Khanpho, the Abbot, next morning. And monks are allowed to visit their old home very rarely. I think it's a matter of once a year or once every 2 or 3 years they're allowed to go home and see the old folks and their brothers and sisters but not more often than that for obvious reasons.

So you might be wondering well how do the monks spend or how do they pass their times. First of all there are lots of services as we would call them in every monastery whether large or small, every day there are 3 or 4 sometimes 5 sort of liturgical services where there is lots of chanting, lots of blowing of horns and banging of drums and clashing of cymbals and it is all very very impressive and very powerful and very effect producing. And they engage in this they participate in this at least as I say at least 3 times a day, sometimes 4 sometimes 5. And you can imagine the tremendous effect of all this if 3 and 4 and 5 times a day you are sitting for half an hour, 45 minutes sometimes 1 hour or sometimes two hours together you are chanting. And you are not chanting something meaningless or something nonsensical or valueless, you are chanting the words of the scriptures, you're chanting prayers, you're chanting invocations to the Lamas, praises of the Buddha, you're chanting the Diamond Sutra, the Heart Sutra, you're chanting summaries of the doctrine, you're chanting meditation texts. And all the while as I said the booming of these great trumpets and the rattling of the tambourines and the higher sounds of the clarinets at certain points, certain intervals where certain deities, and Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are invoked and asked to be spiritually present. And this is very very impressive and if you join to this the sound of the monks voices when they chant, and don't forget that Tibetans have very deep bass voices I think

they've got the deepest and bassest voices in the world. They're rather like Russian basses, it's extraordinary the low notes that they can sound and I may say in passing the Dalai Lama especially is a case in point. I remember many many years ago, well maybe six or seven years ago I was present with him in Bombay when he happened to visit the Japanese Buddhist Temple at xxxxx in Bombay and for some reason or other, I don't know how it happened, he was quite on his own. Because usually there is a swarm of monks or a swarm of officials around him but on this occasion he seemed to have been able to shake them all off and he got away on his own in some fashion, so there he was surrounded by these people in this Japanese Buddhist temple and with myself also, we were together in the shrine and everybody was outside and he started chanting and believe it or not but his voice filled the place and there was the deepest voice even for a Tibetan that I have ever heard. And he was quite young at that time, he was in his middle 20s. And when he chanted the mantras especially, the whole place sort of trembled and people felt, they told me afterwards, and I certainly felt sort of little shivers going up and down the spine it was quite an extraordinary sensation. So you can imagine when there is not just one person doing it but when you get a great hall semi lit half in the darkness with these great images at one end and Thangkas on the wall and you get the sounds of the musical instruments and you get the incense burning and the flicker of lamps and you get hundreds and in some cases thousands of voices all chanting, these very deep bass voices with just a few boys voices in between then I'm told and I've heard, at least a few hundred monks chanting together it is like a great wave a great rolling wave of sound which goes from the back right up to the front of the congregation and people say there is nothing else like this on earth in a sense as far as sound is concerned for sheer volume and depth and intensity so imagine if you 3 or 4 and sometime 5 times a day are participating in this, it is a sort of liturgical meditation you may say, you are swept along on a sort of wave of sound and you hardly need to meditate, you just sort of let yourself go you just participate and perhaps you can say well there you are. So you are immersed in this, you are immersed in this wave of sound or this ocean of sound, this ocean of vibrations or this ocean of mantras if you like 3 and 4 and 5 times a day. And even if you may not be a very holy monks and you may not be a very good Geshe and you may not know your vinaya or logic very well but it cannot fail we may say in its effect when you participate in this way 3 and 4 and 5 times a day. Other times you may be doing anything. You may be chatting with you friends or you may be studying in your cell or you may be reading by yourself or you may be splitting wood in the monastery kitchen or you may be ploughing or reaping outside in the monastery fields or you may be painting a picture or you may be sawing a piece of wood or you may be bringing great buckets of water up thousands of stone steps it doesn't matter. When the trumpet sounds you drop everything and in you go, in you go, and you immerse yourself. So when you do this week after week, month after month, year after year, when you spend your life in this way. When you come to a point when you don't remember the day that you weren't a monk then obviously it all sinks in, it all has it's effect. So this is one of the ways in which the monks pass their time, perhaps a third of their time in many monasteries is given over to the participation in these great liturgical services which have a tremendous spiritual and psychological effect.

And then what are they doing at other times. Other times if they're studiously inclined if they're intellectual, well they study thy read the scriptures they go to their teachers, they ask for explanation, they discuss among themselves, they practice the great debate, the T.....with all the ritual gestures, they practice meditation, they teach if they're

qualified to teach, and many monks of course, the less intellectual ones, they follow various professions and they practice the arts and the crafts and you may be interested to know that in Tibet the doctors are mostly monks. This is one of the sciences or the arts that they practice and there is a special medical college or was in Lhasa for training monk physicians and they follow incidentally a mixture Indian or Chinese medical systems and they practice among other things acupuncture. I don't know whether everyone knows about acupuncture but it's, what shall I say, it is carried on with a great silver needle and punctures are made, that's why its called acupuncture, in your skin at various points that correspond into various nerve centers and the flow of energy through those nerve centers is deflected, is changed and energy in that way can be directed to one part of the body that needs it or deflected from another part of the body or another organ that doesn't need so much energy and so on. And I do know that the Tibetan practitioners of acupuncture, like their Chinese counterparts, there is a Chinese system by the way, have effected quite a number of remarkable cures. And the Lama physicians or monk physicians also practice what we would call psychotherapy or if you like even faith healing and sometimes this too is very effective. In addition to this monks are also artists. Now most of these beautiful Thangkas that you see, these painted scrolls are painted by Tibetan monks. They are also carpenters, they make the monastic furniture, they make the tables, and the desks and the stools and so on and they're tailors, they not only make the monks robes, they make garments for lay people too. So they ply the trade as a tailor as it were on the site, you can go and visit the monk in his cell and he'll sit there stitching and he'll do you a coat or a pair of trousers and well he earns a little money in that way on the side. And well the Tibetans see nothing wrong in it, it is part of life they would say, and I remember that when I was in Kalimpong the best ladies tailor there was a monk and all the fashionable, all the aristocratic ladies of the locality used to swarm around this monks quarters asking for new bouckles (?) and new aprons and new whatever else it is that they wear and the monks had a tremendous clientele and was very very well known throughout the whole area as a ladies tailor. And again the Tibetans see nothing wrong in this, he is just pursuing a craft, a trade and helping to make both ends meet as it were. And also of course the monks are cooks, you've got this vast army of monks in a monastery, they have to be fed and on the premises so you've got monk cooks, monk chefs and monk kitchen boys and all the rest of it and you've got monk cooks in chief who preside over about 200 monastery cooks who are preparing breakfast for say 6,000 monks every morning and preparing lunch and so on. So it is quite a business. I remember again another little incident in Kalimpong when a new restaurant opened after the refugees came in and everybody started going to that restaurant because the food was so good Tibetan, Chinese, Indian, it was so good, and so I made a few enquiries as to why this was and I was told that among the refugees there was some of the best cooks from Drepung monastery, monks of course and they had taken on this restaurant and so they were running it and they were able in this way to provide for themselves even though they were refugees. So these are some of the things that monks do, they all participate whatever their ranks whether they are Abbots, whether they're great spiritual masters, teachers or whether they are cooks, or carpenters or artists they all participate together every day, 2 or 3 or 4 times a day in these great spiritual services and chanting then they follow their various vocations, some may teach, some may study, some may administer, some may be carpenters, cooks, drawers of water, hewers of wood and so forth, all for the monastery.

But all the monks regardless of rank they wear a dark maroon dress, dark maroon, not

only regardless of rank but regardless of schools, except that the Nyingmapas perhaps wear a slightly brighter and lighter shade than do the Gelugpas and they incorporate also in their robes the three yellow robes of Indian tradition but although they have these yellow robes, though they are given them when they are ordained they usually keep them for ceremonial use only, they wear their red robes underneath and on ceremonial occasions when they go into the hall for chanting for example they put on the yellow robes over, but when they are going about on other occasions the yellow robes are folded up and kept in a box and they just go about in their ordinary red robes. Begging bowls incidentally which every monk has in the Theravadin countries, in Tibet for some reason or other are very rare and they're very highly prized.

But anyway, time is passing and perhaps we've said enough about the monks. If we're not careful we won't have any time for the lay people who are no less important. But before we go onto the lay people let's say a word or two about the nuns although we mustn't forget them either. There are no Bhikkunis or fully ordained nuns in Tibet and there never have been because for some reason or other, no doubt for purely historical reasons, this ordination was never introduced into Tibet. I gather that they couldn't manage to get enough Indian Buddhist nuns, Bhikkunis into Tibet to form the necessary quorum. So in Tibet, the nuns technically speaking are Genghyamas or female probationers or Gitsumas, that is to say female novice nuns. And there are not very many of them.. I met myself very few, I've met hundreds of Tibetan Buddhist monks but only 4 or 5 nuns. And the nuns are of 2 main kinds first of all there are those nuns who come from very well to do, or to say aristocratic families and who live at home who don't go into a nunnery, don't go into a convent, they live at home. But what happens is the family sets aside a special set of rooms for them or in some cases even builds a little cottage in the grounds of the property which is just reserved for that daughter, or their sister, or their mother as it sometimes happens or grandmother who has become a nun they don't usually go or they very very rarely go into a nunnery. They continue to live at home. They get their ordination, they are taught, very often a very learned monk comes every day or 2 or 3 times a week to teach them. They have their own shrine, they have their own kitchen their own separate establishment, but they live at home under the guardianship either of their parents or brothers or sometimes their sons and this is I think because of the rather unsettled conditions, social and political conditions in Tibet for many centuries it just wasn't safe for them to live in any other way. So this is one way in which the nuns live or this is one kind of Tibetan Buddhist nun, the girl or woman of good family who is a nun, who is ordained as a nun but who lives at home studies and practices at home but in her own separate apartments. And many of the nuns of this kind I have been told are very very good at meditation, they spend a lot of their time meditating. Then you've got a number of wandering mendicant (?) nuns who are really sort of beggars who got perhaps monastic ordination, perhaps not. And sometimes they're a bit sort of rough and ready sometimes they're very very pious even highly spiritual souls, again rather like the female Indian sadhus. You also get a few female hermits, that is to say monks sometimes lay women who are living quite alone regardless of the danger in the forest or in the mountain cave and simply meditating like Milarepa, you get a few of them and you got one female incarnate lama. That was the famous Dodjeshe came to Kalimpong incidentally while I was there but I did not have the opportunity of meeting her and she was a very interesting person because she was the Abbess of a monastery of 500 monks it's probably the only part of the Buddhist world where you would find this, 500 monks with an abbess, a lady incarnate lama in charge of

them. I am sorry to say that this particular Dodge....subsequently after her visit to Kalimpong defected to Peking and when she was last heard of she was broadcasting communist propaganda over the Peking radio, so there must be a moral there somewhere, if one could find it.

And now onto the laity, there's less to say about them I'm sorry to say because they are rather less colourful and less exotic than the monks but lay people are numerous even in Tibet. One often finds that they are no less serious in their spiritual life than are the monks. The strict lay followers, the strict lay Tibet Buddhists observe the 5 silas or the 5 precepts, but most I discovered to my astonishment observe only one, the one sila or precept – they only take the 3rd sila which is not to take life because they consider it a great sin to take the silas to take the precepts and then break them. So they take only those that they are quite sure that they are able to observe. A very few just take the 3 refuges, they don't dare to take any of the precepts at all which is of course very honest. Tibetan lay people are extremely generous, they are very very open handed and they give a great deal of money and they give much in kind for the support of their religion. I remember in my early days in Kalimpong I had a Tibetan student, he was a merchant from Com?Cum Eastern Tibet who was studying English with me, he was a man of about 35, and I am sorry to say that some years he was killed in the fighting in Eastern Tibet, he used to come to me about twice a week to study English and I remember him telling me once in response to a question of mine how in Com/Cum in Eastern Tibet he used his income. He was a merchant, a business man dealing in various things and he told me that the regular practice in income was for people to divide their income into 3 portions, 3 equal portions, one third went for religion, that is to say donations to monasteries, offerings to monks the ordering of new images, painting of Thangkas, alms to beggars, and so on after that 3rd has gone to ceremonies of religion, a 3rd goes for pleasure that is to say picnicking, gambling, horse racing, the Tibetans are very fond of these things too, they are very pleasure loving people, and a 3rd went to domestic expenditure, business, and so on, they don't have insurance, they don't have any taxes, so a 3rd when for purposes of that kind and this is how they spent their money. But it is interesting, if not significant in fact that a 3rd went to the support I one way or another to religion. Now almost all Tibetan lay people, like the Tibetan monks also regularly recite mantras. They've all be initiated into the meditation on or recollection of different Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, they've all been initiated with the mantras like om mani padme hum, and they recite these whenever they can. And very often, when they are walking along the road, I've seen most of them in the evening going for a little stroll, they take their rosary their prayer wheel and they're walking along saying om mani padme hum, om mani padme hum and you can tell as you pass them that they're quite absorbed. They don't do it mechanically, in the West we have a great deal of me mechanical repetition, and religion encourages mechanical repetition, mechanical repetition of prayers, but there is nothing mechanical about it in their case. They're deeply absorbed, they are recollected, there is a great deal of religious feeling, religious emotion, they spend quite a bit of time doing this.

When a woman hasn't got any work to do and they say that a woman's work is never done, but sometimes it does happen that even the Tibetan housewife, despite having to draw all her own water, brew her own tea and pound for about 2 hours the salted and buttered tea, she does have her bit of time on her hand so what so what does she do, she sits on the step, the doorstep, the front doorstep and she just quietly recites mantras to

herself, she quite peaceful and quite happy doing that, she doesn't think about going to the pictures or anything of that type she just sits and recites mantras. And of course every Tibetan house, every layman residence has a domestic shrine, there is an image of the Buddha enshrined or an image of one of the Bodhisattvas. And this is the centre of the household, they don't have a sort of little chapel on the side, no it is right in the middle of the sitting room and the chapel and the sitting room are the same place. And then when you visit a Tibetan, a moderately well to do Tibetan, you're conducted at once into the sitting room or drawing room whatever you might like to call it, and that is the shrine at the same time, so there is the altar facing you with a lamp burning and incense burning and this is the centre of the whole household. Guests are entertained here and at night, if you stay the night, well you're just put up there, they just put 2 or 3 seats together, they're standard size, they put a rug over them – that's your bed. And there you spend your night in the drawing room or chapel as you like to call it. And that's the centre of the household and it has an unconscious effect and influence all the time that this is the centre the chapel is the centre, the image is the centre, your point of reference is that, your point of reference is there. And then again Tibetan lay people may love to take a long pilgrimage, there is a great deal of the nomad in the Tibetan, he loves to wander, he loves to go on long journeys hundreds of thousands of miles, he loves to wander all over Tibet, all over India even visiting the shrines and the holy places and sometimes again he likes to go into retreat to meditate. He'll say to his wife, well I'm going away for a few months, look after the children, carry on with the business, the Tibetan woman is very very capable and lots of Governors of Provinces just send their wives to govern the Provinces and they stay in Lhasa and have a good time. And the Tibetan woman is as I say very capable, she can do whatever her husband can do, so off goes the husband into retreat or the brother or the son as the case may be, maybe they spend 3 months meditating and reciting mantras and then they come back. As I have suggested the lay women are also very active in religious life, and they are very much in evidence at all religious functions where ever you go, religious functions, celebrations, pujas, meetings, lectures, the women are there to the fore and if an incarnate lama walks down the street well scores of women sometimes will come running up just to ask for his blessing. And often the women take the initiative and they've got their own religious organisations and they themselves quite independent of the men organise their own processions, their own meetings, their own lectures, their own publications even and so on.

Now just a few words about the connections between monks and the laity. The connections obviously are very close because every family has somebody in the robes, every family has a son or a brother who is a monk who is in a monastery. So it's as though they themselves are in the monastery. They've got their own representative there, a member of their family, and if some other member of the family wants to become a monk well they say you'd better go to such and such monastery because uncle so and so is there you go and be with him, he'll teach you, and in this way there is a very close connection, a very close link between the monks and the lay people. And of course most of the time the monks are dependent for their economic support on the laity, although perhaps to a lesser extent to the monks of South East Asia. Because in South East Asia for some reason or other a tradition has grown up where it is a disgrace for a monk to work or to do anything with his hands, even kindle a fire, but it's not like that in Tibet in Tibet a monk can work at certain things, he can be a doctor, he can be a carpenter, he can be a painter and he can be a monk at the same time. Now the laity are dependant on the

monks for spiritual guidance and spiritual help and advice, and they often go to the Gompas, they often go to visit the monks to consult them to attend pujas, to participate in processions to listen to lectures and so on, and they often invite the monks to their homes. The monks are free to go off in the day where ever they like practically, in between services, or they can even get leave of absence for a few days or even a few weeks or months if necessary to go to the house of some lay person, stay there, conduct services, teach and so on, so there is a constant coming and going, the lay people going to the monasteries and the monks going to the homes of the lay people. And the spiritual connection we may say is even closer. In Theravadin countries in South East Asia, they tend to divide the monks from the lay people rather sharply. There the view is that the monk is aiming at nirvana at enlightenment, but the poor layman he can't aim at that, he must aim just at a good re-birth, he'll have to come back anyway poor chap, he better aim at a good rebirth in a decent middle class, with a well to do family that can send him to a good school and get him a good job, and marry him off properly at the right time, that's the best he can hope for, a good rebirth, it is only the monks who can aspire to nirvana. This is a usual Theravadin view, so this tends to introduce a distinction, a cleavage, the monks can aim at nirvana and the lay people aiming at a good rebirth, but it isn't like this in Tibet. Tibet doesn't just follow the Theravada, doesn't just follow the Hinayana, it follows the Mahayana plus the Vajrayana, and according to the Tibetan Buddhism all people equally are aiming or should aim at enlightenment, at full enlightenment, at Buddhahood and therefore we find that all Tibetan Buddhists whether the monks, the lay people accept the Bodhisattva ideal, they accept that all of them ultimately should aspire to gain enlightenment for the benefit and the welfare of all living beings. And serious Tibetan Buddhists, either the monks or the lay people, they take the Bodhisattva initiation and the Bodhisattva vows, the vow that I will not strive for enlightenment not just for my own sake but for the sake of all living being in the Universe whatsoever. And at this time when they take the Bodhisattva initiation when they make the Bodhisattva vow they undertake to observe the Bodhisattva silas or Bodhisattva precepts and in the Tibetan tradition there are 18 major Bodhisattva precepts and 46 minor ones.

And I am going to conclude by quoting just a few of them because they constitute a common factor in the spiritual life of monks and lay people alike in Buddhist Tibet. In fact we may say that these Bodhisattva precepts have helped to mould the whole character, the whole nature of Tibetan Buddhism. Now the first major sila is a very simple one, its very simple, very easy in a way to understand, not easy to practice, it says not to praise oneself and disparage others, not to praise oneself and disparage others and if you think of it, usually in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously we're doing this all the time, either individually or collectively, trying to exalt ourselves and depreciate others either our own country, another country, our own religion and other religions, our own school and other schools or just our own self and our friends or our enemies and so on, so therefore the first of the major precepts then not to praise oneself, not to depreciate others. And we find in fact that the Tibetans are very very unwilling to criticise. I remember one of my own Tibetan students came to me horrified from the local bazaar where he heard a Christian preacher, and he said what do you think, what do you think I heard today, so I said what, and so he said I heard a man criticising religion and this is something the Tibetans just can't do, for them is unthinkable to criticise somebody else's religion, somebody else's faith. Now precept number 11 of the major precepts says not to instruct in the doctrine of the void S.....any one who is not psychologically prepared for it, teaching must be adjusted to the psychological and

spiritual needs of the person concerned, the 14th says not to disparage the Hinayana, it may not be as highly developed as the Mahayana, it may be comparatively speaking a stepping stone to the Mahayana, but a stepping stone is a stepping stone, it's indispensable you can't do without it. You might just as well abuse the lower rungs of the ladder and say that the higher rungs are more important, but without those lower rungs you'll never get to the higher rungs, so no disparagement of the Hinayana. 18 not to give up the bodhicitta, the bodhicitta is the thought of the will to enlightenment for the benefit of all, not to give this up however difficult things may be, however impossible other people may be, never give up the thought, never give up the idea that one day they too will realise enlightenment will come to Buddhahood.

Now among the minor offences for one who has taken the Bodhisattva vow are first of all not to show respect for seniors, seniors that is to say in Bodhisattva ordination, to despise evil doers, this is very easy, to look down on other people, those that you think as less virtuous than you, they may be, but that is not reason for looking down on them, and another one to laugh heedlessly, but it doesn't say you shouldn't laugh, but you shouldn't laugh if you are a Bodhisattva or laugh heedlessly without awareness and then another one, not to pacify those who have become angry. If you see people angry in your vicinity, in your neighborhood, you should try to pacify their anger. Anger is the worst of all mental states according to the Mahayana, there is nothing worse than anger, nothing worse than hate. So if there is even a hint of it in your surroundings try to pacify it, try to bring it up, try to reduce it. And then it is an offence also to neglect the sick, here we come to something very practical, very down to earth, an offence to neglect the sick. And then it is an offence not to work for one's own circle of disciples or students and so on. So these are just some of the Bodhisattva precepts, illustrating the spirit of Tibetan Buddhism, illustrating the common ideal of monks and lay men alike in Buddhist Tibet. Illustrating the ideal, the Bodhisattva ideal, the ideal of enlightenment of all, which brings monks and laity very close together indeed in Buddhist Tibet and we may say that if relations between monks and laity and indeed relations between all degrees and between all grades of the order of our Western Buddhist Order here in this small corner of the Buddhist world in here in England, here in London can live up to the standard of Tibet and be inspired by the same great spiritual ideal, the Bodhisattva ideal, then the success of this movement of ours is assured.