

Aspects of the Bodhisattva Ideal

Lecture 65: The Origin & Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal

Mr Chairman and Friends,

I'm going to start this evening by asking a question, a question which perhaps the majority of you will not have anticipated. Usually, of course, one comes along thinking that one just has to sit back and listen, and take it all in, and no demands will be made upon one, much less still any actual question. But this evening I'm going to start off with a question, which, in any case as I've said you might not have anticipated. And the question is - the question which I think we have very seriously to consider - the question is: *Why do we have these lectures?* Or one can put it in another form, and one can ask: *Why does one come to these lectures?* Now a number of possible replies, of course spring to one's lips - some people might think that we have these lectures, courses of lectures, because we - that is to say 'The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order' - are (for want of a better term) a religious organisation. And of course it is well known that religious organisations always do have lectures or they have sermons, so that we also naturally have them. Some people might just think in this way. Others again might think well it's only natural, we had them last year and presumably the year before that (laughter) we'll go on having them this year too! It's a sort of - part of the natural order of things by this time.

But I'd like to suggest at the outset that it isn't perhaps quite like that. The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order is, for want, as I've already said, of a better term, a religious movement. I don't like this word 'religion' or 'religious' but it seems to be the only one that we have which is in any way adequate, even though it is liable to misunderstanding, and one therefore may say that as a 'religious' (inverted commas) movement, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order represents one of the various growing points of what we have in the past sometimes described as the Higher Evolution. We're familiar with the idea of evolution in general, how lower forms of life evolve into higher forms of life.- and by the higher .evolution we mean. the evolution of man, unenlightened man, into a state of Enlightenment, into a state of Buddhahood, as a result of his own spiritual growth, his own awareness, his own determination, and so on. So that we find that our Movement, our Organisation (if you like) represents the evolutionary process become, as it were, self-conscious, self-aware, not just blindly striving and thrusting upward like a plant into the sunlight, but knowing where it is going, what it is doing, and how and why it is functioning. So all our activities, all our activities conducted under the auspices of, in the name of, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, are intended as, in a way, manifestations of this upward evolutionary trend, from a lower to a higher degree of perfection which constitutes the Higher Evolution of humanity, of the whole human race. And this is something which we should do well to bear in mind. We have various kinds of activities, as most of you know: there are meditation classes held several times a week, there are now sutra study classes - classes in which canonical Buddhist texts are studied, are analysed, pondered upon. We have, also, our retreats when we all go away, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty of us go away together at a time, to some quiet place in the country where we get away from it all, and where we simply occupy ourselves with Buddhism and the spiritual life. We have also as we very well know now an arts group, which has under it's wing such activities as poetry reading, and I believe now a music group, and so on. And of course, we have our Yoga class which meets here in this very room once a week, and of course we have lectures, and we even have receptions, we even have things like tea-parties. But, we should never lose sight of the fact that all these activities, the most extraordinary and also the most ordinary, are all parts of our common theme, our common function, which is, as it were, to assist in this Higher Evolution of that portion, that section, of humanity with which we ourselves are personally in contact. So that all these different kinds of activity, whether it's the meditation class, the lecture, the Yoga class, and so on. These all represent, we may say, different aspects of the spiritual evolution of those who are participating. This is their function. This is their meaning. This is their purpose. If they don't fulfill this purpose, if they don't establish this meaning, then they are nothing.

So, we may say that in all these activities of our Movement there is nothing merely formal, there's nothing merely theoretical. It's all part of a great upward wave, if one may use the expression, of spiritual life and spiritual activity, what we call the Higher Evolution. And this applies very much to these lectures which we have from time to time. The purpose of these lectures, the purpose of these talks, is not merely to convey information about Buddhism. They may, of course, incidentally do that. This is one of their subordinate functions -to acquaint people with the history of Buddhism, the life of the founder, the development of the schools, the fate and the fortune of Buddhism in the East. All this sort of information can very well legitimately be imparted. But it's not the primary function, it's not the primary purpose of these lectures to purvey information, even information about Buddhism, even information about the Path, even information about Enlightenment, if one can speak in those terms. The primary purpose, one may say, of these lectures, of all these lectures, is to enable those who attend to experience, through the medium of the spoken word, a higher degree than is usually the case of being and awareness. This is the meaning, this is the purpose, this the function, of these lectures. In other words when we attend, when we come here, when we sit down, when we listen, when we take it all in, we're not just hearing about Buddhism, we're not just absorbing information. But we are, if we are receptive, if we are attentive, if we are

aware, then we are participating, while we listen, in the spiritual life of Buddhism. We ourselves are living Buddhism at the moment of our participation. It might even be said that if we fully participate, if we experience through the medium of the spoken word, then we are in fact being Buddhism, as we sit here.

Now, obviously one must approach Buddhism, in these lectures, in such a way that this sort of experience becomes possible. This also means that one must select topics within the field of Buddhism which make this possible, which assist this sort of process, this sort of experience. And today, as you all know, we're starting the fourth series of lectures under the auspices of the FWBO (the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order). For the next eight weeks we shall be dealing with, we shall be considering 'Aspects of the Bodhisattva Ideal'. And let me say at once that as soon as we start considering this topic, this subject of the Bodhisattva Ideal, then we step immediately right into the heart of Buddhism. One could hardly have anything less peripheral, more central, more immediate, more direct, of greater spiritual import, than this. If one comes into contact with the Bodhisattva Ideal then one is placing, as it were, one's hand on the very heart of Buddhism, and one is feeling, as it were, the beating of that heart.

Now tonight it falls to us to consider the Origin and the Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal. But before we go onto that principal topic of the evening, just a few words about the series as a whole. Most of you, I think by this time, will have seen, will have encountered, if only at the door as you came in, our latest Newsletter. And you, no doubt, will have noticed the illustration on the cover of that Newsletter. It shows a hand - evidently the Buddha's hand; there's a robe hanging down - a hand which is holding just a few leaves. And, this illustration illustrates the Buddha's parable of the Simsapa leaves. It is said that the Buddha was one day wandering, as often was his custom, in the forest, in the depths of the Indian jungle, presumably to get away from the heat of the Indian day - wandering with a few of his disciples. And the Buddha often taught in a very simple, a very direct way, not always with long and elaborate discourses. So on this occasion, it is said, he just bent down, and he scooped up a handful of leaves. And then he asked his disciples, 'Tell me, what do you think? - These leaves which I hold in my hand, as compared with all the leaves of the forest, are they few or are they many? So the disciples of course replied, 'Well, in comparison with all the leaves in the forest the few leaves which you hold in your hand, these are as nothing, They are just a handful.' So the Buddha said 'So it is with all the truths which I have seen, which I have understood, which I have realised, as compared with what I have been able to reveal to you'. So this is something upon which we need, often, to ponder. Even the Teaching, though the scriptures are voluminous they represent just a fraction of the Buddha's infinite knowledge, his infinite understanding, his infinite experience.

So the Dharma, the teaching, Buddhism, is, in any case to begin with, a handful of leaves. But in this series we are offering, as it were, just a few leaves from that handful itself, not even the whole handful. The Bodhisattva Ideal is a very, very vast subject. It is conterminous practically with the whole of Buddhism, and one cannot possibly hope to exhaust this subject, even in the course of eight lectures. And therefore the series as a whole is entitled simply 'Aspects of the Bodhisattva Ideal'. Not only does the series present certain selected aspects, but it is not dealing, it will not deal, with the subject systematically. It will try to deal with it much more directly in terms of the spiritual life and experience itself, with a minimum of historical and doctrinal detail.

So much by way of preface. Now we come to tonight's subject proper, which is, as I've said, the Origin and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal. And when one comes up against this subject, when one begins to speak upon this subject of the Bodhisattva Ideal, though one might have studied it for many, many years, though one might even have spoken upon it before many, many times, all the same, one hardly knows where to begin. Even in the handful there are so many leaves, as it were, one hardly knows which one to take up first. But these lectures are meant for beginners, as well as for more advanced students, so perhaps it is better this evening to begin right at the beginning, with the word 'Bodhisattva' itself.

It's a Sanskrit word and it may well be unfamiliar to at least some of you. The word Bodhisattva consists of two parts: *Bodhi* and *Sattva*. *Bodhi* means knowledge it means 'Awakening' - not knowledge in the ordinary sense, not awakening in the ordinary sense, but knowledge in the sense of supreme knowledge, spiritual knowledge, knowledge of Reality. And awakening in the same sense - awakening to reality, awakening to the ultimate truth of things; seeing, penetrating to the heart of existence, seeing reality, seeing truth face to face, and becoming one with it. *Bodhi* is of course in English, in English translations, usually rendered as Enlightenment. And that's good enough, provisionally speaking, provided of course we don't understand Enlightenment in the eighteenth century rationalistic sense; provided we understand it in its full spiritual, even transcendental, sense.

And this Enlightenment, this Bodhi, this supreme, spiritual knowledge, this Transcendental Wisdom, this great spiritual awakening, this we may say is the ultimate Goal of the Buddhist life. This is what we're really concerned with, this is what we're really concerned about, Enlightenment, Awakening, Supreme Knowledge.

Now *Sattva*, the second part of the word means simply a living being. Not necessarily a human being, it can mean any living being, even an animal, even an insect. So Bodhisattva means an 'Enlightenment Being'. a 'being of

Awakening', if you like. And therefore the term means a being whose whole life is dedicated to the attainment of Enlightenment. This is what a Bodhisattva means. This is the meaning of the word. A being whose whole life, all of whose energies, are devoted, dedicated, to the attainment of this knowledge of Reality, this state of Enlightenment. So in a sense, we may say, to begin with, provisionally, the Bodhisattva is the ideal Buddhist. The Buddhist, ideally, is devoted, is dedicated, to following the teaching of the Buddha, and, by following that teaching, to reach, to realise, the same spiritual experience of Enlightenment as the Buddha himself. So therefore we may say that the Bodhisattva, the one whose whole being, whose whole life, all of whose energies are devoted to the attainment of Enlightenment, this Bodhisattva is the ideal Buddhist. We may also say therefore, that the Bodhisattva Ideal is the Buddhist Ideal itself, the Bodhisattva ideal is ideal of the Higher Evolution, of one's self-transformation from unenlightened to Enlightened humanity. The Bodhisattva Ideal, in a word, is the ideal of the attainment of Buddhahood.

Now this is the literal meaning, and I've gone into it a little more carefully and closely than usual for the benefit of those who may not have encountered this word or this ideal before at all. So this is the literal meaning of the word Bodhisattva, it's what logicians call the 'denotation' of the term the plain, simple, straightforward, verbal meaning. But there's also what is known as the 'connotation'. The connotation means various associated shades of meaning which are not given directly in the literal meaning of the term itself. And the connotation of the term Bodhisattva is expressed by an, important rider, as it were, to the main definition. A Bodhisattva is defined, a Bodhisattva is described, as one who is dedicated to the attainment of Enlightenment not for his own sake only, but for the benefit of all living beings. This is the full doctrinal, traditional definition of the term Bodhisattva - not just one who is seeking for Enlightenment, striving for Enlightenment, but one who is seeking and striving for it not just for his own benefit, not just for his own individual emancipation, his own private Nirvana, but so that he may benefit, so that he may lead to the same state, all living beings whatsoever. So this is the rider, as it were, which is added. So what is the significance of this rider? Why was it added? Why was it not merely said that the Bodhisattva aims at the attainment of Enlightenment. Surely that was enough. Why add this qualification, this rider, 'for the benefit of all living beings'? Why this implied distinction, as it were, between the attainment of Enlightenment for one's own sake, and the attainment of Enlightenment for the sake of others. Now to understand this matter we have to go back to the origins of Buddhism, we have to get down to certain fundamentals of human life, human nature, human character, itself.

If we think about the matter, if we reflect at all deeply, we shall see that there's a quite important distinction between what a person is and does, and what he or she says, or what he or she writes. And the two, the being and the doing on the one hand, and the saying or the writing on the other, these two are very often incommensurate. We may find, for example, that a certain person, say a psychoanalyst, may write about love, write a whole book about love, very, very beautifully indeed. They'll explain to you all about it, what love is, how it develops, how it grows, how one is to maintain the state of love, how one goes against it, what one is to do when things go wrong, and so on and so forth, but, very often, if one examines the life of that psychoanalyst, the person who has written that book, all about love, you'll find that, though they seem to know all about it, though they're able to express it, write about, speak about it, very beautifully, very fluently, their own life fails to be, in any way, an embodiment of love. So there is an incommensurability here. Love is manifested yes, in words, in the written word, but not in the life.

On the other hand, one may have the opposite case. One may have the case of a person who really does embody love in his or her life, so that even other people meeting quite casually with that person feel that this person is kind, this person is affectionate, this person, in a sense, radiates goodwill, as the Buddhist expression is. But the person may not have a very adequate verbal expression of that. They may not be able to talk about it, may not be able to analyse it, may not even be able to put it into words at all, even to those to whom they're quite close. So this is the sort of situation that we find: that as between being and doing on the one hand, and verbal expression on the other, there is very often a sort of chasm - the one does not always correspond with the other.

Now, let us apply this to the Buddha himself. Let's apply it in other words on the very highest level. The Buddha by very definition was, we might even say is, a Fully Enlightened being. Now we hear these words, we even pronounce these words, but it's a very, very difficult thing for us even to imagine. If we try really hard to think, well, what an Enlightened being must be like. We read the scriptures, we read books about Buddhism. We read that a Buddha, an Enlightened one, knows Reality; he's compassionate, he's wise, and so on and so forth, But most of the time, usually, these are just words. We don't really make an effort, an effort of imagination, to try to visualise, to try to realise, what this really means, what a fully Enlightened being really is. And even if we saw, even if we encountered, an Enlightened being, it's very, very doubtful whether we would be able to recognize that that person was an Enlightened being. Now, in the case of a Buddha, in the case of an Enlightened being, his Enlightenment, his inner experience, his knowledge of Reality, expresses itself primarily in terms of what he is, what he does. This is the primary expression, an expression in terms of being. It expresses itself only secondarily in terms of what he says. In the case of the historical Buddha, The Buddha, Gautama the Buddha, he, of course, didn't actually write anything, didn't get even as far as that. There was verbal expression in oral communication, but nothing actually written. And it's interesting, incidentally, to observe that there's no evidence that the Buddha

could even read and write, and this is a bit significant. If we think about it, it should give us considerable food for thought, that an Enlightened being like the Buddha, in all probability, could not read, could not write, had never read a book, never read a newspaper, hadn't even read the Dhammapada, hadn't even signed his name to a document, was quite innocent of all these things.

The Buddha just spoke, the Buddha just taught orally, but though he might speak quite a lot, though he might teach quite a lot, though he might even speak about Nirvana, about Enlightenment itself, nothing that he said could fully, could adequately, express what he was. What the Buddha was infinitely exceeded what he said. This is, of course, evident from the parable already cited, the parable of the Simsapala leaves - when the Buddha told the monks that what he'd realised was infinitely greater than what he'd imparted in verbal communication to the disciples. And this sort of thing, this incommensurability between what the Buddha was and what he was able to say, what he was able to express, is underlined in a very striking manner by an incident which occurs quite a number of times in the scriptures. And it usually goes something like this: We're told that the Buddha meets a certain monk, a certain disciple, or the monk meets the Buddha and, either in reply to a question or spontaneously, the Buddha gives a few words of instruction, and most of them are still in the scriptures. And they're usually very simple words, just a few of them. And then to our astonishment we read that hearing those words, monk so-and-so, or nun so-and-so, became Enlightened, became an Arahant, and this is really staggering. And we can't help thinking well but why? How? We read those same words, we read them a hundred times over, we might even read them aloud, but nothing happens! There might be a dim glimmer of understanding; we might just think, well, of course, yes, it is so, we agree, we accept, but nothing, as it were, clicks, nothing happens, and we certainly don't go spiralling up into Enlightenment, nothing like it. So how was it, how did it happen? How was it that on these occasions - and there are quite a number of them recorded in the scriptures - these few words, apparently, were able to produce such a dramatic, such a tremendous effect. You might try to explain it by saying, "Well, after all, the monk was prepared", and that is true. It's not the whole truth, but it is true. Very likely he'd been meditating for years and years before he approached the Buddha and put his question. So he was ready, he was receptive. But it isn't the whole explanation, there's another factor to be taken into consideration, a factor which is even more important, and which though so important we often overlook. And that is the Buddha himself. It wasn't a question of just those words being spoken, as it were, or appearing in the air. It was the Buddha speaking those words, and in a sense it didn't really matter what the Buddha said. It was the Buddha who was saying those words, It was the Buddha who was speaking. So it wasn't so much what the Buddha said to the monk that made the impression, which brought about the transformation. It is what the Buddha himself was which produced the impression, and which brought about the result. Sometimes we find, sometimes we are told the Buddha didn't say anything at all, didn't even have recourse to words, but the effect was still the same, the effect was tremendous. We all know the story, the old story, of the golden flower. This is a Zen story, of course. We know the story of how the Buddha, without saying anything, held up a golden flower in the midst of the assembly. All the monks were sitting round - hundreds, thousands of them - all quietly sitting, meditating. and they all saw the Buddha hold up this golden flower, and the Buddha didn't say anything. And no-one understood what he meant by it, no-one understood what he was getting at except one, a very old disciple, Mahakasyapa. So he understood what the Buddha was getting at, so he looked at the Buddha, and he smiled. And the Buddha looked at him, and he smiled. And we're told that that was the origin of Zen. (Laughter) But that, as they say, is another story. The anecdote may be apocryphal. It's said now to have been invented, oh, about a thousand years later, but that doesn't really matter. It embodies a very important truth indeed. And the truth is that the Buddha, Gautama the Buddha, taught, influenced people quite as much by what he was and by what he did as by what he said.

Drawing a modern idiom, we may say of the Buddha that the man himself, the Enlightened man, was the message. We may even say that Buddhism is the Buddha. The Buddha is Buddhism. So thus it was during the lifetime of the Master on Earth, the tremendous results which were produced in the way of the production of so many Enlightened beings were produced not just by the words he uttered, words which are still available in the scriptures, but by his tremendous presence and personal influence, the influence which emanated, as it were, from him. But after death, after his parinirvana as it's called, a change set in - at least in certain quarters. There are several accounts available of what happened, but they're rather contradictory and rather confused, but they seem to agree that not long after the Buddha's parinirvana, not long after his passing away, his disciples, at least his monk disciples, or at least a very large number of them, held a big meeting. And they discussed, in effect, the question "What is Buddhism". What is Buddhism? And, this is, of course, a question which still very much concerns all of us. So far as we're concerned, the Buddha is, as it were, dead. Dead within us. In the sense that we are dead to, not aware of, not awake to, our own inner Buddha nature. So he's dead, so far as we're concerned. And therefore, inasmuch as he is dead, we too discuss, from time to time, what is Buddhism? What is the path to the realisation of Enlightenment, to the recapturing of our own, lost, Buddhahood?

Now, after the Buddha's parinirvana, after his passing away, it seems that there were among his disciples, two parties, representing two rather different points of view. One party said, in effect, that Buddhism is the Teaching of the Buddha - what the Buddha has taught. Buddhism is the 'Four Noble Truths', plus the 'Noble Eightfold Path', plus the 'Three Signs of Conditioned Existence', plus the 'Twelve Links of the Chain of Conditioned Co-production'. These teachings, in their entirety, in their totality, these teachings given out by the Buddha during

his lifetime, these constitute Buddhism. Buddhism is the Teaching, the Doctrine.

Now the other party disagreed with this. Not that the other party rejected the Teaching. On the contrary, they valued the Teaching, they prized the Teaching very highly indeed. But they did not feel, they did not agree, that Buddhism was fully embodied in the verbal Teaching. According to these people - and they seem to have been rather in the majority - Buddhism was represented by, embodied in, two things. One, of course, was the teaching itself, consisting of various doctrines, various rules of conduct, and so on. But the other was the life and the example of the Buddha himself. And they felt that if anything, the latter - the life and the example of the Buddha himself - was the more important of the two. Even more important than the verbal, doctrinal Teaching.

Now let us look into this just a little more closely, a little more deeply. Let's try to place ourselves imaginatively in the position of those early followers of the Buddha, that is to say those who were unable to identify Buddhism exclusively with the verbal Teaching. And in case some of you may be thinking that we've wandered rather far from our subject, let me observe at once that we're very close now to the origin of the Bodhisattva Ideal.

The Buddha died. The Buddha passed away. And by all accounts the disciples were grief stricken. Not quite all of them. The Arahants we're told, those who had reached emancipation, those who were Enlightened for themselves, who'd gone beyond all passions, all sorrows, they were not affected, they were not moved. But everybody else, we're told, was struck almost dumb with grief. According to tradition, even the animals were affected. And there are very beautiful traditional representations, representations in Buddhist art, of this very solemn, final scene of the Buddha's passing away. They're mainly Chinese in origin, and they usually show a scene in the forest. (It's rather interesting, it's rather significant, incidentally, that the Buddha was born in the midst of trees, and he gained Enlightenment sitting underneath a tree, and he also died in the midst of trees). And the scene which the scriptures conjure up for us, the scene which is depicted by these ancient Buddhist artists, is of a grove of Sal trees. Sal trees are very, very beautiful, I've often seen them in India - they're perfectly straight, there's just one straight, slender stem. They're not quite even a foot in diameter, they're very, very straight, and they grow up to a height of about twenty or thirty feet. They've broad, green leaves, beautiful, white flowers. So we're told that the Buddha passed away, lying on a stone couch at the foot of a cluster, a group, of these Sal trees. And these representations show the disciples - the monk disciples, kings, princes, merchants, wandering mendicants, brahmins, traders, flower-sellers - in attitudes of grief grouped around him; and, a little further away the different animals of the forest, domesticated animals, and all of them weeping, as if to say the whole world shared a common grief in the loss of the Buddha. And there's a little sort of folk-lore incident here, which says that amongst all the animals there's only one animal which didn't weep, and that was the cat. And that's why the cat in Buddhism, I'm afraid, has a rather bad reputation, (laughter) and there was a rule which said Bodhisattvas are not supposed to keep cats (laughter), as cats are supposed to be devoid of compassion, feeling, because even on the occasion of the Buddha's passing away the cat just went on presumably licking her paws, and didn't take very much notice. But, however great their grief might have been, however great their grief undoubtedly was, even though they felt - in the words of the scriptures - that the light of the world had gone out, still, slowly the disciples recovered, as we all have to recover on these occasions, from their grief. And they started taking stock of the situation. The Buddha was gone. At first they couldn't believe it that the Buddha was no longer there, the Master was no longer there, the Teacher was no longer there. But, eventually they had to settle down to life without the Buddha (life in a Buddha-less world, as it were) which especially for those who had lived in his presence and his shadow, as it were, for many, many years, was a great, a catastrophic, a terrible change.

But, eventually they settled down and they started taking stock of the situation, and they started trying to understand, well, what was it with which they were left? What did they have left? Now that the Buddha had gone. And some said, "Well, we've got the Teaching, the Teaching that the Buddha has given us, the doctrines: the 'Eightfold Path', 'Seven Stages of Purification', the 'Five Skandhas', we've got the rules of behaviour - the ten rules, the hundred and fifty rules, and so on, We've got those." And some of them were quite satisfied, or more or less satisfied, after the parinirvana of the Buddha, to be left with the rules, to be left with the doctrines, the teachings. They felt that they'd got it, as it were, all there. They perhaps were the more intellectual ones. They perhaps, were those who were quite happy analysing and classifying the teaching (the tradition which later became what we know as the Abhidharma). But there were some, in fact there were many among the disciples of the Buddha, who were not satisfied with that. Yes, they had the Teaching, they had the Four truths, the Eightfold Path, they had the Five Skandhas, and all the rest of the Teachings, they had the rules. They had nothing against the Teaching, nothing against the rules, but they weren't satisfied. They felt that there was something missing from their lives, now that the Buddha himself had gone. And they couldn't help remembering the Buddha. They couldn't help thinking of the Buddha. Even when they were supposed to be thinking of the Teaching, committing those long lists of terms to memory, they couldn't help thinking of the Buddha. They couldn't help remembering him, couldn't help thinking of his qualities. And they couldn't help, so far as we can see, recalling various incidents in his life, incidents with which many of them must have been personally acquainted, incidents which exemplified his personal qualities. For instance, some of them no doubt remembered the occasion, the very well known occasion, when the Buddha was going round from one little hermitage to the next, and he found in

one little hut an elderly monk just lying on the floor in a terrible condition. Evidently he'd been there for days and days without any attention, any help. And he asked Ananda who was going round with him, "Well, what is this? What has happened?" And Ananda said, "He's an elderly monk, he hasn't got a very good temper, He's not very popular with the other monks, so they've neglected him. And he's lying here in his own filth without anyone to care for him." So the Buddha sent Ananda for water, and the water was heated, And we're told that the Buddha took the head and Ananda took the feet, they lifted him onto a bed, they washed him, they made him comfortable and then the Buddha, we're told, called all the monks together, And he said that, "Monks, you have neither father nor mother nor brother nor sister, You've given up the world. You must be brother and sister, you must be mother and father, to one another". And then he said "He who wishes to serve me, let him serve the sick."

So, incidents like this, incidents which show the Buddha's practical compassion, surely must have remained in the memories, in the minds, in the hearts, of many of the disciples after his passing away. And then some of them, especially the lay disciples, might have remembered, might have recalled, the story, again a famous story, some of you, no doubt, have read it or heard about it, of Kisagotami. In India in those days, as at the present, infant mortality is very, very high. And the story goes that a young woman, a newly married woman, lost, soon after his birth, her only child. And as mothers naturally tend to be she was very very much attached to the child, She couldn't believe that the child was dead, she didn't want to believe that the child was dead, and she took it in her arms from house to house asking for medicine for her child to make it well. And she became almost crazed with grief. And the Buddha, we're told, heard about it, And people sent Kisagotami in fact to the Buddha saying that, "He is a great physician, He can heal your child". So she asked him to help her and to heal her child, to bring her child back to life. So, what did the Buddha do, What did the Buddha say? He didn't give her a long sermon. He knew that would be useless; she was crazed with grief; she couldn't listen to words of that sort. So he said, "I will cure your child if you bring me a certain medicine". So very eagerly she said, "Of course". And he said, "Bring me just a few grains of sesamum seed, but bring them from a house where none have died". So, off she went, knocking on the door of house after house, and everywhere she went, yes, they were ready to give the sesamum seed, but when she asked "Has anyone died in this house" what did they say? They said, "Do not remind us of our grief. The dead are many, but the living are few." So from house to house she went, and at every door that she knocked, at every house from which she sought the sesamum seed, she learned the same lesson, that the dead are many, but the living are few - death comes to all, death takes away father or mother or brother or sister, and she wasn't the only one, she wasn't the only one who had been bereaved. So eventually she came back to the Buddha, and she just sat quietly at his feet. And, the Buddha said, "Where is your child?", but she didn't have the child any more, she'd just left the child's body in the jungle. And she didn't say anything for a long time. And then she said at last, "Give me a refuge". And she became a nun.

So this is another story which no doubt, the monks, after the Buddha's death, remembered how sympathetic he was; how understandingly he dealt with Kisagotami, with this poor woman who had been bereaved of her only child. And the Buddha didn't have just these qualities of compassion, of sympathy, of love, He had also more vigorous qualities, No doubt they remembered his fearlessness, his equanimity. No doubt they remembered how the Buddha behaved when one of his disaffected disciples, Devadatta, tried even to take his life. We're told that Devadatta was the cousin of the Buddha, but he was a very ambitious man. He's been with the Buddha, as a monk, for quite a long time, for quite a number of years. He was very good at meditation, and he had all sorts of supernormal powers, he could do all sorts of wonderful things, all sorts of psychic tricks. But he was ambitious, and he was proud. And one day he went to the Buddha, when the Buddha was a very old man, and he said "Lord, you are now old. Please retire. (laughter) Don't give yourself any trouble. I will take over the Sangha. I shall lead the Sangha. You please go into retreat. Spend your time quietly and happily." So what did the Buddha say? The Buddha knew his mind, so he said, "Even to Sariputra and Maudgalyayana I would not hand over the Sangha, much less still to you." And Devadatta was so incensed and so offended by these words that he resolved to take the Buddha's life. And he conspired with a wicked king, with whom he was on friendly terms, and he bribed - he bribed the king's elephant trainer - to release against the Buddha a mad elephant, but nothing happened. So Devadatta got desperate, and he knew that the Buddha used to walk at the foot of the Vultures Peak sometimes - he climbed up onto this rocky peak and he pushed a great boulder down, right onto the Buddha. And it bounded down, bounced down the hillside, just missed the Buddha. But a splinter pierced the Buddha's foot and drew blood. So after these incidents the other disciples became very, very alarmed for the Buddha's safety, for the Buddha's life in fact. So, what did they do? They thought they ought to protect the Buddha, look after the Buddha. So, without saying anything to him, they constituted themselves into a sort of bodyguard, and they ringed the vihara where the Buddha was sleeping with a circle of disciples, some with sticks, and they were going to guard him. So during the night the Buddha came out because the Buddha never spent the whole night sleeping - he'd sit up half the night meditating - so he came out in the middle of the night, and He saw all these monks around. So he said, "Monks, what is this?" So the monks said "Lord, we're protecting you". So the Buddha, what did he say? He said, "Go away. The Buddha needs no protection. Go away". So slowly and shamefacedly they all just melted away. And the Buddha just remained there by himself. So this was the spirit of the Buddha. This was his fearlessness. So incidents of this sort too, surely, must have remained in the minds of the disciples after the parinirvana. And no doubt there were other occasions which showed qualities no less remarkable.

There was, for instance the Buddha's great love of silence. We often think of the Buddha - we usually think of the Buddha as talking, giving sermons, giving discourses - but it wasn't always like that. There's a very wonderful story in the scriptures about how the physician Jivaka, who was the Buddha's physician, and also the physician of Ajatasatru, a neighbouring king, took the king on a midnight visit to the Buddha. Apparently, they were all sitting on the roof of the palace admiring the full moon. The full moon of October, it was, when the lotus is supposed to bloom. And they agreed that it was a wonderful night for a visit to a holy man. You see the Indian tradition? Not a wonderful night to go to the cinema, or go somewhere like that. A wonderful night to go and see a holy man - twelve o'clock at night, when the moon was full, and the bright moonlight was over everything. So, off they went. And so being a king, he had to go in state, in style. So we're told that five hundred elephants were saddled (laughter), and five hundred ladies of the harem were mounted on the elephants, and the king went off at their head with Jivaka, to visit the Buddha in the depths of the forest. But as they got into the depths of the forest it was very, very dark, and the king, after all, was a king; and he'd got his throne by foul means, and he had a guilty conscience. So he became afraid, and he became suspicious, and he stopped and he said, "Jivaka, are you leading me into a trap?" (This is the way the minds of kings worked in those days) (laughter). So Jivaka said, "Fear not, your majesty. It's just a little way ahead. The Buddha lives in the depths of the forest". So they went on a few more hundred yards, and it became darker and darker, and more and more silent, they couldn't hear anything at all. So Ajatasatru again said to Jivaka, "Jivaka, are you sure you're not leading me into a trap?" So Jivaka said, "Be not afraid, your majesty. There's no trap". Then Ajatasatru said "But you've told me that the Buddha is living there with two thousand five hundred monks, and there isn't a sound. With two thousand five hundred monks, well, you should be able to hear them a mile away, but there's not a sound. But Jivaka insisted "Don't worry, look just over there you can see the lights burning in the Buddha's pavilion". And sure enough, as they got near, there was a great circle made under the trees, and a great clearing. And there was the Buddha sitting in the midst, surrounded by his two thousand five hundred disciples - all perfectly silent. All perfectly silent. All sitting there in the moonlight, sitting there in the light of the full moon, not a movement, not a sound, perfect silence. So the king, with all his fears, with all his suspicions, he came upon this sight, came into this clearing, and what did he say? We're told that he said to Jivaka, "O that my son might experience peace of mind such as this". In India they're very much attached to their sons, and so if you wish anything you wish it for your son. So this was Ajatasatru's wish. And this goes to show, this goes to demonstrate or illustrate, another great quality of the Buddha: his love of peace, his love of solitude, his love of silence. And this too surely, the disciples must have remembered after his death.

And, to touch upon something rather different, some of them, no doubt, must have remembered stories concerning what we would call miracles, all sorts of odd things that used to happen when the Buddha was about. There were supernormal happenings, even, as it were, miraculous, something for which there was no rational explanation. And they might have remembered also, they might have recalled also, how people used to say that, when the Buddha was staying anywhere during the night you'd see marvellous figures hovering around, going to see the Buddha, going to meet the Buddha, even going to speak with the Buddha. And how sometimes, it might even be, the Buddha would speak to them, give them instruction during the night, just as he gave to human beings during the day, so surely after the death, after the parinirvana of the Buddha, stories of this kind, anecdotes of this kind, from the life of the Master, must still have been very, very fresh in the hearts and in the minds of the disciples. And surely many of them must have felt that these stories, stories like the story of the sick monk, and the story of Kisagotami, these conveyed something of tremendous importance. And many of them might have felt that these stories, these incidents from the life of the Buddha, exhibited the qualities of the Buddha, conveyed something that the Teaching itself, the formal teaching - the Four Truths, the Eightfold Path, The Five Skandhas and so on - did not succeed in conveying. In other words, the stories, the anecdotes, the incidents, these were able to convey the personal influence of the Buddha, the personal effect of the Buddha on the minds and the hearts of the people with whom he came in contact. They conveyed in other words, the impact, the direct impact, of an Enlightened being, above and beyond all words.

And we can get an example of this, a very beautiful example from the story of Ananda. Ananda, you probably know was the cousin of the Buddha, one of the Buddha's cousins. And for twenty years, more than twenty years, he was the Buddha's personal attendant. He went with the Buddha everywhere. If the Buddha was invited for lunch, Ananda went. If the Buddha went to give a sermon, Ananda went. If the Buddha received visitors, answered questions, Ananda was present. He was always present. He was always there, He was the Buddha's shadow, as it were, His personal attendant, his servant, his disciple. And the Buddha, we gather, was all in all to him. And when the Buddha was about to pass away, Ananda, we can understand, felt it more deeply than anybody. And the Mahaparinirvana Sutra relates to us the scene. The Buddha was inside, as it were, dying, and Ananda, we're told, went to the door of the hermitage where the Buddha was staying at that moment before he moved out into the open air. And Ananda, we are told, stood leaning against the lintel. The door must have been very, very low, and he was just leaning with his elbow against the lintel. And as he was leaning there in that way, he was thinking that the Buddha was going to pass away very soon, in a matter of hours, or at most within a matter of days. And he was so upset, he was so grieved, that he was weeping bitterly. And as he wept he said to himself, "The Master is about to pass away from me: he who is so kind". These were Ananda's words which were heard by other disciples, and reported to the Buddha, who then called Ananda. And these words of Ananda, as

he stood there, leaning against the lintel of the door and weeping, these words are of the very greatest significance. Ananda, as I've said, had been with the Buddha twenty years. He'd heard the Buddha deliver hundreds of discourses, no doubt often abstruse, deeply philosophical, deeply mystical discourses. He'd heard him answer thousands of questions. He must have admired his brilliance, his affability, the very easy way in which he handled difficult questions. And no doubt Ananda also must have witnessed all sorts of odd things about the Buddha, all sorts of strange, sort of supernormal happenings. But what was the overall impression of the Buddha's person, of the Buddha's character, upon Ananda, after those twenty years, when he'd heard so much? Well, the overall impression which the Buddha made upon Ananda is given in those few words which Ananda uttered as he wept: "He who is so kind". So this is very important, this is very significant. not, "He who is so wise", or "He who is so Enlightened", or "He who has such a deep, philosophical understanding", or "He who is such a brilliant debater", or "He who has worked so many miracles", or "He who is so brave" or "so tireless". Not that, but "He who is so kind". This was the overall impression of the Buddha after twenty years of intimate day-to-day contact: "He who is so kind". And we can say that half of Buddhism is in that remark. The origin of the Bodhisattva Ideal is in that remark. So how is that? We may say that the Buddha's wisdom is revealed in the Teaching - the Four Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Chain of Conditioned Co-production, the analysis of the being into the Five Skandhas, all sorts of other, deep, difficult, abstruse teachings found in the scriptures - these teachings embody the Buddha's Wisdom. But his love, his Compassion, his sympathy, which had so greatly, so deeply, impressed Ananda more than anything else, this love and this compassion was revealed in his life and his personal example.

So we can now perhaps understand the position of the disciples after the parinirvana. The position, that is to say, of those disciples who could not identify Buddhism exclusively with the verbal teaching of the Buddha. We can perhaps understand now what they were getting at. They were saying, in effect, that Buddhism was not just Wisdom, as represented by the teaching. They were saying that Buddhism was also love, it was also Compassion as represented by, as exemplified by, the life of the Buddha. And they were saying that both in a formulation of Buddhism itself, both should be taken into consideration. They were saying in a way, that the Buddha himself, the life, the person, the example - the inspiring example of the Buddha - cannot be left out of Buddhism, cannot be left out of his own religion. Buddhism, in other words, they were saying, the Buddhist life they were saying, is not just a development of Wisdom; it's also a cultivation of love, a cultivation of compassion. We should try to attain Enlightenment, yes; try to 'Awaken', try to see the Truth, yes - This represents the Wisdom aspect. But we should try to attain it for the sake of all sentient beings. And this represents the Compassion aspect. And these two together - Wisdom aspect (attainment of Enlightenment aspect), and Compassion aspect, (attainment of Enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings) - this is the Bodhisattva Ideal.

So now we can see how and why the Bodhisattva Ideal originated. In general, the Bodhisattva Ideal is a statement of the Buddhist ideal itself, the ideal of the Higher Evolution, the ideal of evolution from unenlightened to Enlightened humanity, up to Buddhahood. But it also stresses that Buddhism comprises, the Bodhisattva Ideal itself also stresses that Buddhism comprises, not just the teaching of the Buddha, but also his life and his personal example. And in practical terms this means that we must develop both Wisdom and Compassion; both the self-regarding and the other-regarding aspects of the spiritual life. And during the coming weeks we shall be seeing how this works out, how this principle, or this pattern, works out in detail.

Now, before concluding, just a couple of observations. I've said that the Buddha cannot be left out of Buddhism, and this links directly, this statement links directly, with what will be our concluding function of the evening, and that is of course the Puja - the sevenfold Puja. The Puja, we may say, brings us, as it were, face to face with the Buddha. And this is why we stand, or sit, directly facing the shrine and the image. Because this enables us to contemplate the Ultimate Goal. The Teaching is, as it were, for a moment forgotten. When we sit for the Puja, when we look at the Buddha image or a picture of the Buddha, we don't think of the Teaching for that moment, or at least, the teaching occupies a subordinate place. For a moment we are face to face, as it were, with Buddhahood. We contemplate Buddhahood, and we recognize in that Buddhahood our own ultimate, our own true, nature.

Now our second and final point relates to Wisdom and Compassion. These are what we may regard as the 'self-regarding' and the 'other-regarding' aspects of the spiritual life. And these two aspects, the self-regarding and the other-regarding, these constitute the basic polarity of the spiritual life: Enlightenment within, through Wisdom, manifesting without, through Compassion. And there are many manifestations, we may say, of this basic polarity of the spiritual life, the self-regarding and the other-regarding aspects, and some of these we shall be exploring, and studying, in the coming weeks. For instance, we shall be studying '*Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual Life*', and "*Masculinity*" (inverted commas) and "*Femininity*" (inverted commas) *in the Spiritual Life*'. And in this way we will come to understand some of the most important aspects of the Bodhisattva Ideal. And we will come to see in detail, as we've tried to see this evening in general, the origin and the development of the Bodhisattva Ideal.