

Tape 189: Reflections on Going Forth

Dharmacharis and Dharmacharinis. Those of you who have received and read the current Shabda will know that I was announced that I was going to speak this evening, either by way of giving a poetry reading or giving a talk. My original idea was to give a poetry reading and in particular my idea was that I should read a selection of my own on the topic of Going Forth. But on looking through my Complete Poems, I found that there are very few poems which could be described as having any connection – even a tenuous one – with the actual process of Going Forth. I then thought perhaps I could find somewhere in English Literature – in English Poetry – on Going Forth from this or that situation, but I didn't really meet with any success. So I was left with the other alternative of giving a talk. And I have to admit quite frankly I'm not really much inclined to give talks. I don't mind giving the occasional paper – reading the occasional paper. In many ways, the days of my giving talks, giving lectures are over. Though sometimes I say – usually over a meal at Madhyamaloka – that I reached my peak as a lecturer, (if one can call it that) was some ten or fifteen years ago. Though sometimes I think I was at my best some twenty-five to thirty years ago and I therefore sometimes say that as a speaker the FWBO has probably not often heard me at my best at all. My best probably belonged to a period, fortunately or unfortunately, before the FWBO was even started. I was, in that respect, well past my peak probably. I say this by way of introduction, partly so that you should not be expecting too much this evening. I am very, very aware – I am pleased to be aware – that nowadays within the Order we have some very, very good speakers indeed – both among Dharmacharis and Dharmacharinis. Some of them – most of you perhaps – will have heard quite recently. Sometimes I hope – sometimes I almost pray – that as the years go by, the dharmacharis and dharmacharinis as *speakers*, will be better than I ever was. I look forward to seeing that day.

So much for by way, as it were, preface. As I have also pointed out from time to time, that it's not enough for disciples to be as good as the teacher. The disciples, at least in certain respects, have to do better than the teacher – otherwise the movement doesn't grow. And – if in every generation – they do a little less well, then in a course of a few hundred years, you've got quite a degree, one might say, of degeneration and decline. So I expect each and every Order Member to do better than me, better than I have ever done, in at least a few respects, and then we can be quite sure – quite confident – about the future of our Order. And I say this partly by way of just a little bit of a reminder – but also so as to avoid having to begin my talk when my notes begin. Not only in the course of the book launch, but in the course of the little introduction, my opening has been sort of lifted out of my hands. So I wanted to create a little space between the two. Because otherwise it would seem really quite odd if immediately after Suvajra had said something, I had said exactly the same thing! But in the hope – well not exactly in the hope – but in a manner of speaking, in the expectation that, well you haven't exactly forgotten what he said but at least it's not quite so impressed upon your mind, I think. I'm now, more or less, in the position to begin.

And this is the real beginning – the official beginning – according to my notes. On the 18th of August, 1947, I was in India. I was then staying in the little hill station of Kausali,

which is situated in East Punjab. I'd been staying there, I think, for two or three weeks. But anyway, that morning, I got up as usual. I think I must have meditated – we were meditating nearly every morning then and instead of putting on my usual clothes, I put on a saffron-coloured sarong and shirt. My friend and I had dyed our previously white sarongs and shirts the previous day. We dyed them with **jeruva-mati** (SP?) – a sort of red earth which is used for that purpose by Sadhus and ascetics in India. Also, the precious two or three days, we'd given away all our possessions and destroyed such identification papers as we had. Had breakfast with a friend and then went 'forth'. I took with me, when I went forth, only the robes I was actually wearing, a blanket and a few books and notebooks. Among the books I remember, there was the Dhammapada – the one I had with me in fact for several years. So that was my 'Going Forth' fifty years ago. And as you've already been reminded, I was very young at the time. I was only one week short of my twenty-second birthday. So that – strictly speaking – I was just twenty-one when I went forth. And obviously this step what I took that day, on that occasion – that morning – was a very important one indeed for me. In going forth in that way, I was following as I thought – as I believed – in the footsteps of the Buddha. The Buddha too had Gone Forth from home to homelessness at an early age. Though, according to most traditions, not until he was twenty-nine. Though there are some grounds for thinking that it was actually when he was nineteen. But most accounts say twenty-nine. But at a relatively early age, he had left his family, his friends, his circle of acquaintances. He had given up his civil identity – if he wasn't actually a prince, he was the son of a leading citizen who came from a patrician high-caste family. He gave all that up – he went forth from that. He went forth from – he renounced all worldly ambitions. He wasn't thinking in terms of conquest – in terms of extending the territory of his tribe or anything of that sort. He had no worldly ambitions. I suppose I was trying to do likewise, though I was only twenty-one, nearly twenty-two, I had had some experience of worldly life. I had recently, of course, had, well two or three years of wandering life. Before that, I had been in the army for three years and before that, I had been in local government for two years and before that, I had been in commerce for one year – and before that I had received what little schooling I ever did receive. So I had some experience of worldly life. But my experience of worldly life had not left with any worldly ambition. So I was trying to do what the Buddha had done – to Go Forth from all that. But that is not to say that at that time – least of all perhaps on that day – that I realised the full significance of what it was that I was doing. I can't really claim that at that time, I had a very deep understanding of what Going Forth really meant. Nonetheless, it did mark a turning point in my life, little as I did really understand its significance and thereafter, my life could not be the same. So now, fifty years later – almost to the day – I want to share with you just a few reflections on Going Forth. I want to place my own useful Going Forth within a broader context and I want to try to have a deeper understanding of its significance. I also want to explore with you tonight some of its more important aspects.

So – let us go back to the beginning. And the beginning for Buddhists – as Buddhists – is the Buddha's enlightenment beneath the Bodhi Tree. So, in what did that enlightenment consist? What it was – what it is in itself – is very difficult to say. In fact, one might say – it's impossible to say. It's beyond conception – beyond thought – but one says, in a manner of speaking provisionally – that he possessed three great aspects. First of all –

there was the aspect of purity. In his enlightenment experience, the Buddha's mind was free from greed, from hatred and from delusion. And of course, it's very, very difficult even while we pronounce those words – even while we (so to speak, provisionally) describe the Buddha's enlightenment in those terms – in terms of freedom from greed, hatred and delusion. It's very difficult, if not impossible for us to frame an idea, really of what it's like to be free from those three mental states – because every moment of our waking consciousness (and of course when Buddhist think as well) they're conscious of elements of greed, elements of at least of aversion or dislike and of course, elements of delusion within our own minds. So imagine all those states of greed, hatred, delusion as not being there and something very pure and positive in their place is very, very difficult for us, but nonetheless, we have to make that effort. We have to try to see the Buddha's enlightenment as a state in which the Buddha's mind was totally free from greed, hatred and delusion – was perfectly pure. And then again, another great aspect – compassion. We sometimes feel pity for others – for human beings who are suffering, pity for animals who suffer or are persecuted. But it's not so easy to feel even a glimmering of real compassion – because in the state of real compassion, there's no distinction between self and others. Or one can also say that in the state of compassion, one feels for others as for oneself. One does not experience the usual subject/object self and others dichotomy. Again it's very difficult for us to form an idea even of a state of that kind – a state of compassion. But this, the Buddha's mind when he gained the state of enlightenment was a mind full of compassion in that sense. And then there's the aspect of wisdom in which the Buddha saw through – not from any limited point of view, not from any limited perspective, not in any distorted fashion – but as they really are. And again, it's very, very difficult for us to form a concept of a state of that kind. So purity, compassion, wisdom – these are the three great principle aspects so far as we can imagine of the Buddha's enlightenment.

But at the moment – this evening – we're concerned just with the last of these. We're concerned with the wisdom aspect. We're concerned with the fact that the Buddha saw things as they really are. What is it that he saw? What does he as Buddha see? What did he see, for instance, when he looked at the world, at existence, at mundane existence? Well, in brief, he saw three things. He saw first of all that there was nothing in existence that was static – nothing that did not change. Well firstly, he saw that everything was in process. And secondly, he saw that this process was not a random process, whatever phenomenon arose, arose in dependence on certain definite conditions. And it ceased to exist when those conditions ceased to exist. And thirdly, there was this thought that things had no permanent, unchanging being of self-hood. He saw that they were devoid of those things. He saw that they were (in the technical terms of Buddhism) shunya. And he saw, moreover that this principle of conditionality (as we call it) applied at all levels of existence. It applied on the physical-inorganic level, it applied on the physical-organic level it applied on the psychological or mental level (that is to say the non-volitional of the mental or psychological level), it applied also to the ethical or karmic level and it applied to the dharmic or spiritual level. And these of course – these five levels – represent the five niyamas. These five niyamas – I'm proceeding rather quickly here because this is probably all quite familiar ground to you – these five niyamas can be divided into three groups – first of all for those niyamas governed only by the principle

of action and reaction between pairs of opposites. That is to say the physical-inorganic and organic levels or niyamas. And secondly, there are those which are governed by the principle of action and reaction between pairs of opposites and the principle of action and reaction between factors where the succeeding factor augments (instead of undoing) the effect of the preceding factor. Herein are included the ethical or karmic level and the lower reaches of the dharmic or spiritual level. And thirdly, we have those niyamas which are governed only by the principle of action and reaction where the reaction is augmented rather than otherwise. The second and third of these groups, corresponding between them, to the fourth and fifth niyamas, are explained in detail in the twenty four links of the complete nidana chain. The nidana chain itself is divided into two sections – each comprising twelve nidanas. The first is the mundane section (as we may call it) – its action process and its result process and its three points of transition from the one to the other. The second is the spiritual section (as we may call it) and this is divided into two subsections – one reversible and the other irreversible – that is to say consisting respectively of reversible and irreversible nidanas. The two are separated by Stream Entry. The mundane section of the chain makes up what we call the round of existence. And the spiritual section makes up the spiral path. All this is familiar ground to you. So, as I said, I haven't felt it necessary to go into detail, it's just by way of a refresher. I assume most of you have done your homework, so to speak, many years ago. But in case anyone has got lost, let me go back to the Buddha – or rather back to the Bodhisattva – that is to say Siddhartha Gautama, before he became the Buddha. In the Aryapariyesena Sutta of the Madhyamanikaya of the Pali Canon, the Buddha tells the monks how he came to go Forth. First, he explains that there are two kinds of search – the noble search (Aryapariyesena) and the ignoble search (the an-aryapariyesena). Let me just read you a section from that particular sutta. The Buddha says:

Bhikkhus, There are these two kinds of search. The Noble Search and the Ignoble Search. And what is the Ignoble Search? He is someone being himself subject to birth, seeks what is also subject to birth. Being himself subject to ageing, he seeks what is also subject ageing. Being himself subject to sickness, he seeks what is also subject to sickness. Being himself subject to death, he seeks what is also subject to death. Being himself subject to sorrow, he seeks what is also subject to sorrow. Being himself subject to defilement, he seeks what is also subject to defilement.

The Buddha then proceeds to give a detailed account of what may be said to be subject to birth, to ageing, to sickness, death, sorrow and defilement. After which, he proceeds.

And what is the Noble Search? He is someone being himself subject to birth, having understood the danger in what is subject to birth, seeks the unborn, supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Being himself subject to ageing, having understood the danger in what is subject to ageing, he seeks the unageing, supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Being himself subject to sickness, having understood the danger in what is subject to sickness, he seeks the unailing supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Being himself subject to death, having understood the danger in what is subject to death, seeks the deathless

supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Being himself subject to sorrow, having understood the danger in what is subject to sorrow, he seeks the sorrowless supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Being himself subject to defilement, having understood that danger in what is subject to defilement, he seeks the undefiled supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. This is the Noble Search. Bhikkhus, before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I too, being myself subject to birth, sought what was also subject to birth. Being myself subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement, I sought what was also subject to ageing, sickness, sorrow and defilement. Then I considered that. Why, being myself subject to birth, do I also seek what is also subject to birth? Why, being myself subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement, do I seek what is also subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement? Suppose that, being myself subject to birth, having understood what is the danger in what is subject to birth, I seek the unborn supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Suppose that, being myself subject to ageing, having understood what is the danger in what is subject to ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilement, I seek the unageing, unailing, deathless, sorrowless and undefiled supreme security from bondage – Nibbana. Later, while still young, a black haired young man, endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, though my mother and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces, I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe and went forth from the home life into homelessness.

You notice, by the way, the Buddha says nothing here about leaving wife and child, as in the later, more so-to-speak, romantic accounts. But I'm not concerned with that. I'm concerned with just one thing. In fact, I'm concerned with just one word. And that is the word *Pariyesena*. This word is made up of two parts – first of all there's the prefix – *pari* meaning round. Then there's the noun *esena*, meaning desire, longing. This is according to the Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary. So *pari* meaning round and *esena* meaning desire, longing. So *pariyesena* therefore means a 'searching round'. Even an investigation. Even an enquiry. The usual translation is simply 'quest'. So, *Aryapariyesena* is the Noble Quest and *an-aryapariyesena* is the Ignoble Quest.

Now here I want to point out something which I think has not been noticed before and this in fact is what I'm really getting at. The same word is used to describe the noble quest as the ignoble quest – that is to say the word *pariyesena*. It's used to describe both the noble and ignoble quest and this point is really of crucial importance both theoretically and practically. Years ago, non-Buddhists or people were new to Buddhism, were fond of putting a certain question. I've been asked it many a time. And perhaps you also have been asked it. The question is this: Doesn't Buddhism contradict itself when it says that desire must be eliminated for how can desire be eliminated without the desire to eliminate it? This question is supposed to completely floor the unfortunate Buddhist. But it is in fact based on a misunderstanding. Even on ignorance. It's not a question of there being one kind of desire, which is trying as it were, to commit *hara-kiri*. We may say, that there are two kinds of desire with two radically different objects. There is desire, *esena* for what is conditioned and there is the desire for Nirvana.

The first, the desire for what is conditioned, is represented by an-aryapariyesena, the ignoble quest. The other, the second, the desire for the Nirvana, is represented by the aryapariyesena, the noble quest. The fact that there is two kinds of desire with two radically different objects, is reflected in another pair of terms which we have. That is to say the terms kammachanda, and dhammachanda. Chanda is a very strong term indeed. According to the PTS's Pali-English Dictionary, chanda means impulse, excitement, intent, resolution, will, desire for, wish for, delight in. Kamma is sensuous experience and Dhamma is the Buddha's teaching inasmuch that teaching reflects through all reality. So it's easy to see what kammachanda and dhammachanda mean. There's also the term tanha – or trishna in Sanskrit – literally thirst or drought (usually translated as craving) and this is a very strong term too. Unlike esena and chanda, it has no positive counterpart and it is almost always used in an entirely negative sense. That of course is something into which Sagaramati enters in the book which was launched a little earlier this evening. So it's this craving. This kammachanda, this trishna, which based on ignorance, keeps the wheel of life revolving. It's the energy that, we may say, that powers the wheel of life. So, the question that arises is what is the energy that powers the spiral? The trishna powers the round, the wheel of life. What powers the spiral? Or what powers us inasmuch as we are on the spiral (to the degree that we are on the spiral) or what makes the transition from the round to the spiral? So powers us is aryapariyesena. What powers us is kammachanda. So it's not enough to eliminate tanha, craving, desire for the conditioned. We also have to cultivate the positive esena, the positive chanda. In fact, we may say, it's doubtful if we can simply eliminate tanha. It's more a question of gradually replacing desire for conditioned things with desire for Nirvana. A desire for conditioned things, as we know only too well, is very, very powerful. Tanha or craving is very, very powerful. As I've said, it's the energy that keeps that whole process going. It's the energy that powers the wheel of life as it turns again and again. It powers every aspect of ordinary unenlightened human existence. It powers our personal life, it powers our domestic life. It powers our social and political life – our professional life. It powers much of our cultural life, and it even powers some our so-called religious life. So it's not easy to get away from craving – not easy to get away from trishna. Usually we are in its grip. So we can get away – we can get out of its grip, only to the extent that our arya-pariyesena, our dhammachanda, is stonger. And this means our arya-pariyesena, our dhammachanda, has to be very strong indeed. It has to be a powerful emotion. It has to be an act of concentrated will. Not just an idea, faintly tinged with emotion. It's no accident that ancient Greeks spoke of the love of wisdom – philosophy. Love with us often a very, very weak term. It would be better perhaps if we spoke of a passion for wisdom. Even a craze for wisdom. Love for wisdom in English, at least, sounds very, very weak. It's sounds a bit pathetic. So it's no accident that Buddhism speaks of dhammachanda. Unfortunately, in the West, philosophy has become mainly a purely intellectual exercise. And similarly, Buddhism has become in some quarters, simply a subject for academic study. Only too often, we set up an idea of the arya-pariyesena, an idea of the spiral, and then we try to grasp it by means of an intellect powered by the energy of craving. The result very often is what I call 'literalism'. But this is not the way. The way is to learn simply to concentrate, initially, the idea of the arya-pariyesena, the idea of the spiral. We have to learn to appreciate, in the full sense of that word. We have to learn to be moved by its beauty.

We have to learn to be emotionally stirred by it and then when we've learned to appreciate to some extent, when we are moved to some extent by its beauty, emotionally stirred by it, then from deep within, there will arise – at least the germ, at least the glimmering – of the aryapariyesena itself. The dhammachanda itself. This is – presumably – what happened in the case of the Buddha when he was still a Bodhisattva. This is what led him to go forth. You remember the fourth of the four sights was a Sadhu – a wanderer. The Buddha just saw him. That decided him. The first three sights turned him away from conditioned existence, but it was the sight of the beauty, so to speak, of that fourth sight, the Sadhu in his yellow robes – the wanderer – that moved him to go forth in the direction of Nirvana – the unconditioned. This is what led him to go forth. To go forth from home into homelessness. So his Going Forth, his pabbhujja, to use the traditional term, was the movement away from conditioned things and towards Nirvana. It was a movement made possible by a shift in the emotional centre of his being. The shift that was occasioned by his seeing the four sights – whether literally or metaphorically.

My own Going Forth, I have to admit, was occasioned by something rather less radical. The immediate occasion, of course – as was mentioned a little earlier – was my disillusionment with organised religion as I'd so far encountered it as represented by the Maha Bodhi Society of India and my old friend Panditji (whom some of you may remember). But no doubt deeper forces were also at work. However, that may be, I certainly did feel that I was following in the footsteps of the Buddha, even though I was far from realising the full significance of what I was doing. I perhaps I don't realise it's full significance now, fifty years later! But at least I am now able to place it within a broader context. In any case, there were important differences between the Buddha's Going Forth and my own. Apart from the obvious ones, there was the fact that I was a Buddhist. I went forth as a Buddhist. The Buddha, of course, was not a Buddhist. Buddhism didn't exist then. Siddhartha Gautama, rather, was not a Buddhist. Some Indian scholars are rather fond of saying that he was a Hindu, but that wasn't the case either. What was he? He was, we may say, just Siddhartha Gautama just going forth. I was a Buddhist because I had gone for refuge – before my going forth – to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The Buddha – or the Buddha to be – had not gone for refuge to anyone. He didn't follow in anyone's footsteps. He was a pioneer.

So what, we may ask, is the relation between Going Forth and Going for Refuge. Here we have to remember that there are different levels of going for refuge. You may remember that they are the cultural, the provisional, the effective and the real. Similarly, there are four levels of Going Forth. There's a cultural Going Forth. That's when one in a Buddhist country just becomes a monk – just undergoes the ceremony of act of ordination without any real sense of vocation. Just because it's part of your culture. This is very often accompanied, this cultural Going Forth, by a very strong sense of socio-religious status. Then there's provisional Going Forth. The provisional Going Forth is when you give up worldly life for the time being, just to see what it's like to be without all these things. This happens of course, to some extent at least, when you go on a long retreat – either a solitary retreat or a retreat with friends. Effective Going Forth is when you are making a sustained, systematic effort to give up worldly attitudes. And also

when you do this with the help of at least a degree of external renunciation. Real Going Forth is the equivalent to Stream Entry. So when we compare Going Forth and Going for Refuge, we have to compare cultural with cultural, provisional with provisional and so on. As Order Members, we are basically concerned with effective and real Going Forth, with effective and real Going for Refuge. So how are these related? Both of them are expressions of the movement from the mundane to the transcendental. The first, the Going Forth, is more general, more philosophical, as it were (taking philosophical more in the ancient Greek sense) and the second – is more specific. We may say it's the more religious form of the same thing. So, we can Go Forth without Going for Refuge. But we cannot Go for Refuge without Going Forth. Perhaps you'd like to reflect a little on that in future.

So there are many different ways in which we, as Buddhists, can go forth. Going Forth has many different aspects. I want to spend the rest of my time this evening going into to just some of them. I'll deal with them under three headings. Going Forth is respect of one's body. Going Forth in respect of one's speech. Going Forth in respect of one's mind. We're all familiar with this tri-partite division of the human person. It's reflected of course, in the distribution of the ten precepts. There are three precepts of the purification of body, four precepts for the purification of speech and three for the purification of mind. The ten precepts themselves represent a Going Forth – a going forth from the unskilful to the skilful. From the impure to the pure. And this particular Going Forth, of course, follows immediately from the act of our Going for Refuge. This is well known to you, so I am not going to say anything to you about the ten precepts as a Going Forth. I want to speak to you about aspects of Going Forth that may not – at least in some cases – have occurred to you.

But before going on to these, I'd like to say just one thing. I sometimes get the impression that not all Order Members are as scrupulous, shall we say, about the observance of the ten precepts as they might be. But the ten precepts are really very, very important. They're an expression of our Going for Refuge. They're the foundation of our spiritual progress. They're the foundation of meditative experience. They're the foundation of real understanding of the Dharma. So, if our observance of the precepts is lax, it means that our Going for Refuge is weak. It means that our spiritual progress will be slow, uncertain or even non-existent. So Order Members need to be very careful about their observance of the precepts. Very careful about their ethical life in general. They should encourage one another to observe the precepts, should discuss our mutual observance of them at chapter meetings and so on. If everyone does that, then the ethical health of the Order will be assured.

Now for those other aspects of Going Forth. Going Forth in respect of one's body. What does this mean? One's body, one's physical body, occupies space. That's pretty obvious, isn't it? We're very conscious of that on this convention because space is becoming a bit limited. So the body occupies space. One goes forth in respect of one's body when one moves (physically that is) from one place to another. In the Buddha's case, he moved from Kapilavastu, in the foothills of the Himalayas to the forests of Maggadha. In my own case, I moved from Kausali in the Punjab to South India. I had

already been moved from England to the India Subcontinent – from the West to the East. A change of place, a change of environment is very important. The physical body is equipped with five senses and these five senses feed the mind. Change of place is never just change of place. It also represents a change of experience. It's not just that, because we're not just passive. We act to our experience. We respond to our environment. Sometimes it happens that aspects of ourselves which cannot come into play in one environment come into play in another. We all know how different we feel when we go on retreat. Especially when that retreat is in the countryside. Sometimes people say that they literally feel reborn after a few days. A new self, so to speak, comes into existence. I used to notice this very early, in the very early days of the movement and I've often spoke about that. I've often spoken about how quickly I saw people change in the course of two or three retreats, simply by being lifted out of their workaday urban environment, and put down in the countryside on a retreat for a week. In a more congenial environment and with positive, inspiring things to do. That – the fact that I noticed this very early on – was one of the factors that served to convince me of the need to transform the world as well as to transform self because without transforming the world to a degree (at least a portion of it) is very difficult to transform the self. In a more ideal world, it's easier for people to develop spiritually, so we need to work towards the creation of such a world. Whatever, that's a little 'by the way'.

When the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, moved, he went from one country to another. One state to another. He moved from the Kingdom of Kausala – of which the Shakyan republic was a feudatory, to the kingdom of Maggadha. Nowadays, of course, people often go abroad. They go abroad on holiday, or on a business trip – but this of course, does not constitute a Going Forth. They go forth only for a very short while and very often they take their whole family with them – even the cat and the budgerigar! But going abroad can be an aspect of Going Forth – it can be an aspect of going forth in respect of one's body. It can be an expression of one's going for refuge. So when does this happen? It happens when one goes to live permanently in another country for at least an indefinite period. When one does not take one's family with them, when one does not take one's girlfriend or boyfriend with them, but when one goes forth to that other country solely in order to communicate the Dharma. This is an aspect of Going Forth and it represents a very important step in one's spiritual life and development – especially if one continues to devote oneself to communicating the Dharma in the new country – provided one does not succumb to worldly pleasures and attractions, forgetting one's original purpose. Now a number of Order Members have taken this step. Some have moved from England to North America and to Germany. Others have moved from Australia and New Zealand to England and the courage and determination of such Order Members is to be admired. It's a truly heroic step that they've taken, even though travel is now very much easier than in the Buddha's day – or even in my day. Nor must we forget those who come to England from other parts of the world in quest of ordination. There's too a Going Forth.

But let us pass on to another aspect of Going Forth in respect of one's body. As I've mentioned – the body is equipped with five senses. There are constantly clamouring for satisfaction. A good deal of our attention is centred on the body. Some of that attention

is necessary and some of that is unnecessary. We have to feed and clothe the body – we have to keep it clean. This is necessary. We also have to keep it healthy – this is necessary too and shouldn't be neglected. But a lot of the attention that we give very often to the body is unnecessary, even harmful. Sometimes we eat simply out of neurotic craving. We give too much thought to what we wear and we spend too much money perhaps on clothes. And then there's the question of cosmetics – even cosmetic surgery, which is very expensive! And some people going for tattoos.... Now I know quite well that most Order Members don't give unnecessary attention to the body. Very few of you, so far as I know, buy designer clothes, for example. But that is the modern tendency – the modern trend – and we have to be careful that we're not affected by it. Especially as the movement becomes bigger and more 'prosperous', we may start thinking that we're entitled to a higher standard of living. So let us go forth in respect of the body, in this way too. Let us live simpler – as simply as possible. Let's give the body only what it really needs. Let us try consciously to reduce our expenditure on its upkeep. Let us concern ourselves with it, so to speak, objectively. But all this applies more to Order Members in the West than to Order Members in the East. But even Order Members in the East need to be careful. It's only too easy to be seduced by the attractions of the middle class lifestyle. It's easy to think that this is the lifestyle appropriate to an Order Member.

So now for the third and last aspect of Going Forth in relation to one's body. I mentioned that this was Going Forth in space on the surface of the earth. You can describe it as a horizontal Going Forth. But this third aspect of Going Forth in respect to the body can be described more as a vertical Going Forth. I could also describe the second one as coming somewhere in between, but you can work that one out for yourself. So what is vertical Going Forth with respect to the body, the physical body? Well, it's really very simple. You go forth vertically in respect to the physical body when you meditate. That is to say when you really meditate, not just when you are trying to concentrate. But when you ascend, so to speak, into the dhyanas. For the time being, you leave the body behind – or you only have a very peripheral awareness of the body, and perhaps not even that. No messages are coming to you from the senses – or even if such messages do faintly come, you ignore them because you're absorbed in that higher state of consciousness. That is what I call Going Forth vertically in respect of the physical body. This sort of Going Forth – this vertical Going Forth – helps us to realise that the physical body is not the be all and end all of our existence. It helps to remind us that we are not to identify ourselves with it – with the physical body – exclusively. It doesn't much matter how you attain that higher state of consciousness. You can take the Mindfulness of Breathing practice as point of departure, or Metta Bhavana or can contemplate your chosen Buddha or Bodhisattva, but what is important is that you should become absorbed – at least from time to time – in that higher state and be oblivious of everything else for at least a short time each day. This will give us inspiration – it will renew our spiritual vision and help us to live more in accordance with the Dharma. There is of course, another way, we can Go Forth vertically in respect to the body and that is when we die. I've spoken as meditation as a kind of death and that death is a kind of meditation. Death, when we die, the body – the gross physical body – is no longer there. So we have the opportunity to go forth vertically to a higher state of existence but

we'll able to go forth vertically at the time of death only if we have had some experience of such going forth during our lifetime. Otherwise, we shall be obliged to go forth horizontally – that is to say, to be reborn in much the same circumstances as before.

So, second – Going Forth in respect of one's speech. Obviously one goes forth from wrong speech to right speech. But I am not concerned with that now. As I have said before, I am not going to say anything about the observance of the ten precepts as a Going Forth. But I will say just one thing about going forth from wrong speech to right speech. I have said it before, but I think it will bear repetition. In a way, right speech is the most difficult of all the precepts to practice. It's the most difficult because we have innumerable opportunities of practising wrong speech. We often have hundreds of opportunities everyday. Opportunities to say what is not quite true – opportunities to speak just a little roughly or harshly or unkindly and of course many opportunities of talking idly, frivolously without any real meaning. And even, unfortunately, opportunities to slander and backbite and misrepresent. So we need to be very, very aware of our speech. Especially of course, on occasions like this on a convention when the Order is gathered together. We meet on such occasions lots of old friends and we feel sometimes like making up for lost time and sometimes our time does rather run away with us. Now, a little while ago, I spoke of moving from one country to another as one form of Going Forth – that is to say Going Forth in respect of one's body. But when moves to another country, one very often has to learn a new language. One has to go forth from one's own language. Not that one forgets one's own language (one usually doesn't), but one is accustomed to one's own language. One uses it without speaking, so to speak and using the new language is much more difficult. You feel clumsy and unspontaneous. You can't say what you want to say. Your range of expression is very limited. You can't always understand people. What is more – they can't always understand you. You feel stupid. You even feel like a small child and all this can feel very humiliating, very frustrating. In your own language perhaps, you're a brilliant talker with a wonderful power of expression, but your limited knowledge of the new language makes you seem an imbecile. Of course, this state of affairs does not last very long – maybe not more than three or four years. But in the meantime, life can be quite difficult and painful for you at the same time. Very interesting. As I've already said, the courage and determination of those Order Members that go and live abroad for the sake of the Dharma is to be very much admired. But it is to be especially admired when this involves in having to learn a new language because theirs is not only a going forth in respect of the body, but also in respect of speech and they are therefore doubly heroic. I'd like all Order Members – mitras even – to be prepared for this sort of heroism. I would like every Order Member to learn at least one foreign language. Even if you have at present no intention of going and working for the Dharma abroad. It has been said, that when you learn a new language, you acquire another soul. But you also lose something. You don't lose your old self, but it maybe modified by the impact of the new one – but you lose a bit of your self. You cling a little less tightly to your old linguistic and national identity. In other words, you go forth in respect to speech.

We now come to an aspect of Going Forth in respect of speech which is in a sense, even more radical. The fact is that we usually talk far too much. So we need, from time to

time, to go forth from speech altogether. We need to observe silence. This is not, I believe, a very popular spiritual practise. At least, not in the FWBO. I do believe that people coming along to an FWBO centre – perhaps from some other spiritual group – are very impressed by our friendliness, our organisational skills – but I have heard that they're not always impressed by our capacity for silence. So, Going Forth from speech in this sense is very necessary. I remember that during the War that careless talk costs lives. Well, careless talk also wastes energy. People often complain of a lack of energy. I am really surprised when young people complain of a lack of energy – when I said young, I mean anyone under fifty – and I think one of the reasons why people are deficient in energy is that they talk too much. When you observe silence, you accumulate energy, you refine energy. This of course, brings me (some of you might have been expecting) to one of my pet abominations and that is the Business Lunch. This is an occasion when two people try to do two quite different things at the same time. They try to eat and they try to talk business – sometimes quite serious business. Both of course are important activities, but each of them needs your undivided attention. If anything, eating is the more important of the two. You need to eat slowly, you need to eat mindfully, you need to eat quietly, otherwise you won't digest your food properly, you won't even enjoy your meal! So keep eating and business separate. Eat quietly together first, then talk. The same applies to the Business Breakfast, which is also quite popular in some FWBO circles. It also applies to what we call the Kalyana Mitra Lunch and the Kalyana Mitra Breakfast. I expect you all know what I mean. By all means, have lunch or breakfast with your friend, but don't try to eat and talk at the same time. This applies very much to occasions such as conventions and national and regional Order weekends. Once again, no doubt you haven't seen your friend for a long time and no doubt you want to have a meal with him, but don't start eating and talking at the same time. In any case, we should remember that speech is not the only form of human communication. Sometimes, even, we talk to avoid communication. We have to remember that silence also can be a form of communication. Silence enables you to tune in to your friend's wavelength. Silence enables you to be more receptive to him or her. So let's perhaps try to give a little more space to silence in our lives, especially when we meet with our friends. On some previous conventions, the noise at mealtimes has been really quite deafening. This is why a little while ago we introduced silent breakfasts. So let's learn to value silence more and let's have perhaps more periods of silence on retreats or when we meet as an Order. Mozart was once asked what was the most important part of his music and he replied 'the pauses'. So pauses, silence, should be an integral part of our lives.

So this little anecdote brings me to the third and last aspect of Going Forth in respect of one's speech. You may find this aspect of Going Forth rather more acceptable and enjoyable than the last. What is it – it's going forth from speech into song. Now, what do I mean by that? I am not referring to singing in the bath or shower, though I am not against that. I am referring to something that has recently arisen within the FWBO which I am very glad to see. I am referring to choral singing – I am referring to choirs. This is a new development and it's one that's taken place, I am very glad to say, without any initiative on my part. It makes me very glad when I see these sorts of initiatives. It's a very positive development. Singing is very good for one. I'm told it's good for one

physically, it's good for one emotionally, especially when we sing together with others. I once said that an orchestra is a spiritual community, at least when it's playing and the same is true of a choir. An FWBO choir is a Sangha. I'd like every centre to have its own choir. This means every centre should have a choirmaster! He or she should be a trained musician. In a way, the choirmaster is no less important than the Mitra Convenor or the Chapter Convenor! Eventually there should be a national choirmaster and choirmasters should meet together from time to time – just as mitra convenors do. On special occasions, local choirs should join forces. This has already happened a few times at least to some extent. But let me add a word of warning – we should be careful what kind of music we sing together. It should be music that is noble and inspiring or peaceful and meditative to reflect. It should be music that helps raise the level of consciousness – both for the singers themselves and the listeners. We should be careful what words we sing. The words should be in keeping with the music. They should be words we can sing with heartfelt conviction. So perhaps we could start producing our own choral music. We have composers in the movement and we have poets. Perhaps they should sometimes join forces. But one thing we should remember above all – we should regard singing in choir as a spiritual practice. A spiritual discipline and we should approach it with awareness, with emotional positivity and a sense of responsibility.

Going Forth in respect of one's mind. In a sense, this is the primary Going Forth. It's what gives life to one's Going Forth in respect to one body and in respect to one's speech. It has obviously many aspects and there is much that could be said about it. But this evening, I'm going to confine myself to two aspects only. First of all, there is Going Forth from the kama loka to the rupa loka. The kama loka is the world of the physical senses and the mind that is concerned with sense experience. It is what is generally known as the material world. It's in this world that we live most of the time through our physical bodies. It's with the things of this world that we are usually most concerned – that is to say, food, drink, clothing, sex, shelter and so on. The rupa loka is the world of form – that is to say, the world of archetypal form – or more simple the world of archetypes. Not just Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious, but also what we may call the archetypes of the super-collective super-consciousness. We have access to the rupa loka through dreams, through great works of art, literature and music, through images, myths and symbols. The greatest works of art, literature and music are those that speak to us of this world, of this realm most directly and most profoundly. We experience the rupa loka by means of what Buddhism calls the Divine Eye – the divyachakshu – together with the Divine Ear (the divyashrota). In other words, we experience that higher realm, the rupa loka, by means of the imagination. Not imagination in the popular sense, but rather in the sense in which Coleridge uses the term. And perhaps it's useful to speak of some of them, as some of us recently have started doing, of the imaginal faculty. Distinguishing between imagination and the ordinary things and the imaginal faculty in the sense of this faculty that gives us access to the rupa loka – this higher archetypal realm. This helps to avoid confusion. It's by means of the imaginal faculty, as we may call it, that we experience the imaginal world. The world of devas and brahmas, the world of angels and archangels, the world of light, colour, sound. The world that at its highest levels reflects the transcendental. So we should go forth to this world. We should live more in this world. Go forth to it in

dreams and visions. Go forth to it through the fine arts, music and poetry and the highest and finest expressions. And above all, go forth to it in meditation. The rupa loka is the world of beauty. In Sanskrit, rupa can also just mean beauty. It's the world of pure beauty. There's no doubt that we need beauty in our lives. Beauty nourishes us, so to speak – it inspires it. Without beauty, we tend to dry up, even to perish. So, let us go forth from the kama loka to the rupa loka. Let us dwell there as much as we can.

The second aspect of Going Forth in respect of one's mind is a going forth from mannas to aryajnana. Intellectually, mannas is the rational mind. Emotionally, it is the ego-consciousness. It operates within the dualistic framework of subject and object, self and others. More often than not, this concerns what we experience through the five physical senses and the lower mind (that is to say the mind that is concerned with sense experience). Mannas is also the faculty of abstract thought. It is capable of generalising from the perceptions of the five senses and the lower mind. It's capable of drawing conclusions from them. In a sense, mannas is the scientific mind. The greatest scientists, it has to be remembered, seemed to possess in addition, a degree of imagination. Reason as such, is not to be despised. Mannas is not to be despised, but from an evolutionary point of view, it has taken humanity a long time to develop it. But it does not represent the last word in human development. Beyond mannas, there is aryajnana. Aryajnana means noble knowledge. It is noble in the sense that it is transcendental. Being transcendental, it is non-dual. It is knowledge without a subject and without an object. It is knowledge in which there is nothing to know and nobody to know it. At the same time, it is not a state of unconsciousness like deep sleep – it is pure, blissful, radiant, non dual awareness. Being non-dual, it cannot be an object of knowledge, that is to say, cannot be an object of knowledge among us. But for practical purposes, we think of it as such an object. We think of it as something to which we go forth, to which we go forth from mannas. Obviously, this is not easy. It's hardly possible for us to start out immediately without preparation, but we can make a good beginning. We can make a beginning by becoming more aware of the extent to which we are dominated by mannas, the extent to which we are dominated by the rational mind. Dominated by our ego-consciousness. Indeed, dominated is too weak a word. We are usually much more identified with mannas, identified with our ego-consciousness. So we have to become more aware of this – we have to stand back from our selves. Then perhaps we can start slowly turning round and facing in the direction of the aryajnana. Even stop start moving towards it. And when that happens, we shall have begun to go forth from mannas to aryajnana. We will have started transforming our effective going for refuge into real going for refuge.

So much then for my reflections on Going Forth. So much for the different aspects of Going Forth. There is a going forth in respect of one's body; a going forth in respect of one's speech; a going forth in respect of one's mind. We go forth in respect of the body when we go to live in another country, especially when we do so for the sake of the Dharma. When we live more simply, reducing our bodily needs. When we meditate in the sense of experiencing the dhyanas. We go forth in respect of speech – we do this when we go forth from our own language while learning a new language; we may observe silence and when we sing as members of a choir – a Dharma choir. And finally, we go forth in respect of the mind and we go forth in this way when we go forth from the

kama loka to the rupa loka and from mannas to aryajnana. In going forth in these ways, we move from the anaryapariyesena to the aryapariyesena – from the ignoble quest to the noble quest; from kama chanda to dhammachanda; from the round of mundane existence to the spiral of spiritual development. In other words, we follow in the footsteps of the Buddha. And one day, it is to be hoped, we shall arrive – or the Buddha arrived at the foot of the Bodhi-tree.