

## General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

### Hidden Treasure

From the mid-seventies through to the mid-eighties, Urgyen Sangharakshita led many seminars on a wide range of texts for invited groups of [Order members](#) and [Mitrās](#). These seminars were highly formative for the FWBO/Triratna as Sangharakshita opened up for the still very young community what it might mean to live a life in the Dharma.

The seminars were all recorded and later transcribed. Some of these transcriptions have been carefully checked and edited and are [now available in book form](#). However, a great deal of material has so far remained unchecked and unedited and we want to make it available to people who wish to deepen their understanding of Sangharakshita's presentation of the Dharma.

How should one approach reading a seminar transcription from so long ago? Maybe the first thing to do is to vividly imagine the context. What year is it? Who is present? We then step into a world in which Sangharakshita is directly communicating the Dharma. Sometimes he is explaining a text, at other times he is responding to questions and we can see how the emergence of Dharma teachings in this context was a collaborative process, the teaching being drawn out by the questions people asked. Sometimes those questions were less to do with the text and arose more from the contemporary situation of the emerging new Buddhist movement.

Reading through the transcripts can be a bit like working as a miner, sifting through silt and rubble to find the real jewels. Sometimes the discussion is just a bit dull. Sometimes we see Sangharakshita trying to engage with the confusion of ideas many of us brought to Buddhism, confusion which can be reflected in the texts themselves. With brilliant flashes of clarity and understanding, we see him giving teachings in response that have since become an integral part of the Triratna Dharma landscape.

Not all Sangharakshita's ways of seeing things are palatable to modern tastes and outlook. At times some of the views captured in these transcripts express attitudes and ideas [Triratna has acknowledged as unhelpful](#) and which form no part of our teaching today. In encountering all of the ideas contained in over seventeen million words of Dharma investigation and exchange, we are each challenged to test what is said in the fire of our own practice and experience; and to talk over 'knotty points' with friends and teachers to better clarify our own understanding and, where we wish to, to decide to disagree.

We hope that over the next years more seminars will be checked and edited for a wider readership. In the meantime we hope that what you find here will inspire, stimulate, encourage - and challenge you in your practice of the Dharma and in understanding more deeply the approach of Urgyen Sangharakshita.

*Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team*

## DISCLAIMER

This transcript has not been checked by Sangharakshita, and may contain mistakes and mishearings. Checked and reprinted copies of all seminars will be available as part of the [Complete Works Project](#).

RRJV I

THE "RED ROCK JEWEL VALLEY SEMINAR" HELD AT 'PADMALOKA' IN JULY/AUGUST 1976.

THOSE PRESENT: Ven Sangharakshita, Sagaramati, Ananda, Padmaraja, Dharmarati, Vessantara, Padmapani .

Peter Cowen, Alan Angel, Mike Chivers, Pat Dunlop, Graham Steven. Kim Catala.

Sangharakshita; Today we come to the last of our study texts, the tale of 'Red Rook Jewel Valley'. Let's start reading.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Once the great Yogi Milarepa was staying at the Eagle Castle of Red Rock Jewel Valley, absorbing himself in the practice of the Mahamudra meditation. Feeling hungry, he decided to prepare some food, but after looking about he found there was nothing left in the cave, neither water nor fuel, let alone salt, oil or flour. 'It seems that I have neglected things too much!', he said, 'I must go out and collect some wood.'

He went out. But when he had gathered a handful of twigs, a sudden storm arose, and the wind was strong enough to blow away the wood and tear his ragged robe. When he tried to hold the robe together, the wood blew away. When he tried to clutch the wood, the robe blew apart. Frustrated, Milarepa thought, 'Although I have been practicing the Dharma and living in solitude for such a long time, I am still not rid of ego-clinging! What is the use of practicing Dharma if one cannot subdue egoclinging? Let the wind blow my robe off if it wishes!' Thinking thus he ceased resisting. But due to weakness from lack of food, with the next gust of wind he could no longer withstand the storm, and fell down in a faint.

When he came to, the storm was over. High up on the branch of a tree he saw a shred of his clothing swaying in the gentle breeze. The utter futility of this world and all its affairs struck Milarepa, and a strong feeling of renunciation overwhelmed him. Sitting down upon a rock he meditated once more."

S: So here we seem to encounter Milarepa at a comparatively early stage in his career. Just staying in a cave, he is meditating according to his Guru's instructions, and he is still wearing at least some clothing. But he has become so absorbed in meditation, he has forgotten all about food and drink and fuel and so on. So he starts collecting some wood. So when he tries to hold the robe together the wood blew away, when he tried to clutch the wood the robe blew apart. 'Frustrated Milarepa thought, 'Although I have been practicing the Dharma in solitude for such a long time, I am still not rid of egoclinging!' Why do you think he thought that. What made him think that?

\_\_\_\_\_; He still wanted these things perhaps, the wood and clothing. It's a simile

perhaps of ( ).

S: Yes he almost instinctively clung on to his robe, that was his robe. So that meant there was a feeling of mine. If there is a feeling of mine there is a feeling of I, there is a feeling of ego and he realised that. So what does this suggest, the fact that Milarepa  
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realised that so quickly. What sort of stage does it seem that he has reached?

Padmapani; Objective thinking.

S: Well first of all it shows he is very mindful. He is keeping a very close watch over himself. There is a very trivial thing. The wind tries to blow away his robe, he clutches his robe, and clutching his robe he loses the wood. Most people would not think anything at all about it but in Milarepa's mind there is a very definite feeling of frustration. He can't catch hold of the wood because he has to clutch onto his robe, he can't hold his robe because he has to hold onto the wood. Then it dawns on him, 'Why am I doing this? What is making me cling onto my robe in this way? It is because I feel that it is mine, it is my robe, it has to cover my body.' So because this feeling of mine is there, the feeling of I is there. I have been meditating all this time but that subtle I feeling that subtle I experience is still there. So this shows us two things. First of all, how close a watch Milarepa was keeping over himself, and secondly it shows that we can detect in our true state of mind our true attitude. Some very very small things, not just in our own state of mind but that of other people too. The very small things that give us and other people away.

So what sort of stage does Milarepa seem to have reached? He has been meditating, he has been in fact practicing the Mahamudra meditation. He has been living in solitude for a long time. So he has no doubt made a great deal of progress, but a subtle feeling of mine, a subtle feeling of I is still there. He is able to recognise it as soon as it manifests, and is able to take the necessary action. And that in fact, is all that can be asked of anybody. We are not expected to be perfect all at once, or even for a very long time. All you are asked to do is you keep wide awake, you keep watch, as it were over yourself, especially you pay attention to very small, seemingly trivial, insignificant things, understand their significance and take action immediately. This is why perhaps the Buddha as we know concluded his farewell words to his disciples at least according to one tradition with the words (upama denasa ) which were used in connection with the ordination ceremony. (Upama desa) with mindfulness strive, with mindfulness make an effort. As though just these two things are expected. Remain mindful, keep a watch over yourself, know what you are doing, see what you are doing, even pay attention to very trivial seemingly insignificant thoughts and words and actions. And if you see any vestige of anything unskillful, any ego-clinging, any attachment, any experience of 'mineness' take immediate action to put the situation right, that is all that can be asked of anybody. But of course that is everything. So Milarepa as it were takes immediate action. At once there is a sort of realisation, and he says, 'What is the

use of practicing Dharma if one cannot subdue ego clinging. Let the wind blow away my robe if it wishes.' Now he is ready to give up both of them. At first there was a conflict, whether to lose the wood and keep the robe, or lose the robe and keep the wood. But now he says never mind let them both go. Let the wind blow the wood away, let it blow the robe away also if it wishes. 'Thinking this he ceased resisting but due to weakness due to lack of food, with the next gust of wind, he could no longer withstand the storm and fell down in a faint.' Not only did the storm apparently blow away the wood, it nearly blew away Milarepa as well.

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'When he came to the storm was over.<sup>1</sup> He must have remained in a faint for a long time. 'High up in the branch of a tree he saw a shred of his clothing

swaying gently in the gentle breeze.' You can just imagine him, he is lying on the ground, has not even got his robe on any more, he has been in a faint. The first thing that he sees as he opens his eyes is the branch of the tree and fluttering from one of the branches is a small shred of his clothing. Just that little shred fluttering in the breeze. 'Then the utter futility of this world and all its affairs struck Milarepa and a strong feeling of renunciation overwhelmed him.' Why do you think that sight of that shred of clothing, on the branch of the tree, swaying gently in the breeze, or fluttering gently in the breeze affected him in this way?

\_\_\_\_\_ The absurdity of it.

S: The absurdity of it. (Pause) It is as though that shred of clothing represented all worldly attachments, all worldly things, after all it was the last thing he had left, the robe he was wearing, and even that was blown away and the last shred of it is just hanging from the tree and just fluttering there. So it is as though that thread stands for all worldly possessions, everything that you could cling onto. It is just a shred, just a shred of clothing but in that Milarepa can see houses and property and land, wives and children, friends and relations, gold and silver, he can see all these things. But they are liable to be taken away, they can all be torn away from us at any instant. So all things are like that. They can be blown away at any instant just like a shred of clothing. 'Therefore, the utter futility of this world and all its affairs struck Milarepa, and a strong feeling of renunciation overwhelmed him. Sitting down upon a rock he meditated once more.' We find incidents like that in the lives of some of the Zen masters. Just some very simple, seemingly insignificant incident really sparks off something. We find it in the Pali texts. There is someone sitting in the forest meditating and they see one single yellow leaf fall. Just one yellow leaf, and this gives them an actual insight into the transitory nature of everything, one yellow leaf falling. We are told there is a Jataka story of a king who once summoned this barber to trim his beard, and cut his hair. In India you do not usually do these things for yourself. There were barbers in every village and certainly a king would have a barber in his own palace. So the barber came and he was attempting to cut the king's hair and he said to the barber, 'What is that that you are doing' when he felt the barber plucking out a hair; and the barber said, 'It is your first grey hair, Idok.' So he just held it in front of the king. 'Your first grey hair.' So the king at once thought, 'I am getting old, no time is to be lost, I must give up everything, so he walked out of his palace, wandered off into the forest and became a monk. This is the story. Just that one grey hair and he saw old age

disease and death all worldly possessions in that one grey hair. So in the same way, Milarepa saw all worldly possessions fluttering from the tree in that one shred of clothing, all about to be blown away. So 'Therefore, a strong feeling of renunciation overwhelms him and sitting down upon a rock he meditates once more.

So what happens next  
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"Soon a cluster of white clouds rose from Dro Wo Walley far away to the East. 'Below this band of clouds lies the temple of my Guru, the great Translator Marpa', mused Milarepa, 'At this very moment Ne and His wife must be preaching the doctrines of Tantra, giving initiation~and instruction to my brothers. Yes my Guru is there. If I could go there now, I should be able to see Him.' An immeasurable, unbearable longing for his teacher arose in his heart as he thought despairingly of his Guru. His eyes filled with tears, and he began to sing a song, 'Thoughts of my Guru.'

S: Let's look at that paragraph first.

So Milarepa was meditating sitting upon a rock. 'Soon a cluster of white clouds arose from Dro We Valley far away to the East.' What sort of suggestion do we get here, a cluster of white clouds rising from far away to the East shortly after Milarepa started meditating..

He must be very high up somewhere.

S: He must be very h-igh up soiewhere, also there is almost a suggestion as though the cluster of white clouds has something to do with the' meditation. Doesn't it strike you like that? 'Sitting down upon a rock he meditated once more. Soon a cluster of-' white clouds rose from Dro We Valley far away to the east.' There does seem to be a subtle suggestion, something is happening as a result of the meditation. Maybe there was a cluster of white clouds rising, maybe it is a sort of vision. But he thinks, 'Below this bank of clouds lies the temple of my Guru, the Great Translator Marpa,' mused Milarepa. 'At this very moment fle and His wife will be preaching the doctrines of Tantra, giving initiation and instruction to my brothers. Yes my Guru is there. If I could go therenow I would be able to see him.'

'Giving initiation and instruction to my brothers.' What does he mean by brothers?

\_\_\_\_\_ The other disciples.

S: The other disciples. They are often called Vajra Brothers. That is to say fellow disciples, not in the ordinary general sort of way, but fellow disciples on the account of the fact you have all received Tantr C initiation from the same teacher. The same Vajra Carya, the same Tantric Guru. So they are known as your Vajra Brothers. Your brothers in Tantric initiation. It's considered especially serious if you quarrel with a vajra brother, that is much worse than quarrelling with anybody else.

Padmapani; Why is that?

S: Why do you think that is? Why should it be worse to quarrel with someone who has taken an initiation, the same kind of initiation as you have yourself?

Padmapani; Because you should be relating through that same ideal.  
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S: Yes, you should be relating through that same ideal. You are Vajra brothers, so you are brothers by virtue of that common Tantric initiation. So you have that common element but instead of relating through that you are not relating at all, but relating only negatively. So what effect will that have?

Sagaramati; It will bring that ideal down.

S: It will bring that ideal down. So what does that mean?

Padmapani; Your inspiration will be lost.

S: Your inspiration will be lost, it will detract from your own practice. Because of the common element within you and within him there is a common initiation and a common commitment. So if you quarrel with him, you quarrel with him which includes his commitment. If you quarrel with his-commitment you quarrel with your own commitment because you have the same commitment in common. (Pause) So if you quarrel with someone who is following the same spiritual path as yourself, someone who has made the same commitment or who has the same initiation, who has the same teacher, that is quite a serious matter because it undermines your whole spiritual practice and whole spiritual life. Therefore traditionally this sort of thing is taken very very seriously indeed. Not only in the Vajrayana but also in the other yantras. But it is taken very seriously in the Vajrayana, in as much as at least in principle that is a higher yana. The Tantric initiation is more significant let us say than other initiations and ordinations. Therefore to quarrel with a Vajra brother becomes a very serious matter indeed. And similarly on the positive side the relationship with the Vajra brother is at least potentially closer than that with somebody who is not a vajra brother.

How do you feel about this in general. Does it correspond to one's general experience; that you have a closer relationship with those who are committed as you are committed or do you find sometimes it is not so?

Padmapani; It is almost as though the whole commitment can start up almost like a

process. You can tend to rub up sometimes with similar people who have taken the same vow.

Sagaramati; Everyone's got their own ideas about their commitment and I find that is where the trouble lies. When someone has no idea of how you feel about it you have no idea of how the other person feels about it and you can break down in communication.

S: Yes or sometimes you can have a miscommunication in the first place. Otherwise one would not be in the dark about what another person feels about their own commitment and what your common commitment means.

Sagaramati; Perhaps it could be (just the approach) Again differences in temperament. There are quite a few quarrels and they seem to fall into that sort of sphere.

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S: I have been wondering recently quite a bit about this whole question of temperament. I have referred recently to the organised and the unorganised. Recently I was reading a little bit of Jung. It struck me perhaps that the organised are the extroverts and those who are not organised or resist being organised are the introverts. According to Jung the difference between these two characteristic types is quite profound. He emphasised that introversion and extroversion are only mechanisms and that you become an introvert or extrovert type only when you have repeatedly resorted to one mechanism rather than the other, so that that particular mechanism determines your character formation but the end product does seem to be people of very different ways in many respects, in that they are introvert or extrovert. There must be quite a bit of mutual understanding and miscomprehension between them. So I think one has to pay some attention to differences of this sort. The person with whom one has a misunderstanding may simply be of different temperament, and character type from you. Jung goes into some detail about this, for instance he says an introvert thinking type can get very much bound up with his own thoughts about things and get more and more remote from actual facts. Actual facts do not interest him. Very often he starts his thinking from his own feelings and his own feelings, his own ideas even are his raw material. He also makes the point and gives some quite interesting examples. That introverted thinking types make very bad teachers. It is the extrovert thinking type who make good teachers. The introverted thinking type is too interested in his own ideas. He will get absorbed in the material for its own sake and develop his own interest in it, regardless of the needs of the people he is supposed to be teaching. For instance he gives the example of quite a famous chemist (and he quotes from his biography) his students ask him a question, and they rarely get an answer. The question would spark off all sorts of trains of thought in his own mind, he would get very involved in these and forget all about the student's question, he said, 'I'll let you know next week, I'll let you know next week!' But the student was waiting to get on with his work, waiting to get on with his experiments but the professor would go away and work it all out and then send the student a long and learned note, very abstruse, very difficult, which had no bearing on the original question - merely sparked off by the question and was completely useless to the student. Because the professor was an introverted thinking type. So Jung makes this interesting and relevant point that introverted thinking types do not make good



teachers. It is the extroverted thinking type that makes a good teacher. He is aware of the Student, aware of the students' needs, knows why the student is asking the question. He is aware that the student needs at least a provisional answer so that he can get on with his own work. So the extrovert thinking type as a teacher will not lose himself in his own reflections which may well be sparked off by the student's question. He remains related objectively to the student's actual needs. So this seems to be the sort of point that we can take note of.

\_\_\_\_\_ Glancing back through my school days it seems to me that it was the extroverted based teachers who provided the, not entertainment but who put the message across a lot better.

S: It may well be the introverted thinking type that may know the subject much better; he  
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may have a more profound much more vast knowledge, and understanding of the subject but he is not good as a teacher, because he is not aware of the student's needs and where the student is at. So that is the sort of teacher you need and within the context of the Friends, within, the context of the Order. An order member may be a very good teacher and really put things across, but he may not have all that much knowledge. Whereas somebody else may have a great mine of information but be a very poor teacher because he is too interested in the subject and his own thoughts about it and -forgets all about the person he is meant to be explaining it to. So one should watch over oneself perhaps in this respect if you are asked for a reply to a question when one is asked anything on the Dharma. Come back always to the question and the questioners needs.

So the question of temperament seems to be quite important.

\_\_\_\_\_ You mentioned earlier about ego-clinging. I find it difficult to resolve where ego-clinging--ends and where pride begins and vice-versa.- Pride in doing a bit of work or preparing food, or something like that. Is pride just a subtle form of ego-clinging

S: It is very difficult to distinguish, I mean in the Tantra, and in the Mahayana too, there is reference to a positive pride. There is pride which presumably is not connected with ego-clinging which is a kind of honest satisfaction ~in and with what one is doing. It can even be used as a kind of spiritual incentive for instance the Bodhisattva is exhorted to reflect, 'How can I possibly do any evil deed or perform any unskilful action? I have taken the Bodhisattva Vow, I belong to the family of the Buddha. I must not cause any disgrace to the family to which I belong. How can I possibly do that?' In that way he creates a positive feeling of pride which helps him in his spiritual life.

\_\_\_\_\_; Well that is the bodhisattva. What about the majority?

S: Well try to apply it, try to translate it into your own terms. How would one do that. Well take the example of cooking. One could have an ego clinging attitude towards it. 'Oh look what a good meal I've cooked. how good I am, and I'm better than other people~ Other people ought to acknowledge that I ought to be appreciated.' and so on. Well how would one put it a long~the lines of the higher level of the Bodhisattva pride?

\_\_\_\_\_ Well that would be blatant ego-clinging.

S: No put it in terms of a good way, a positive way. (Pause) Well what should be ones attitude . How should one go about a simple job.

Sagaramati; Do it to the best of your ability.

S: Do it t(b the best of your ability.

Do it so you can make as good a meal for everybody else as possible  
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S: Yes you could say, how can I not do it to the best of my ability. If I do not do it to the best of my ability then it is just not worthy of me, not worthy of my supposed attitude to all my friends. One could think in this way. This would not be ego-clinging. This would be encouraging one to perform that particular service in a skilful way.

Kim Catala; You could put a bit of metta into it couldn't you.

S: You could put a bit of metta into it. (Laughter) But that is a bit different from this question of the feeling of pride, the healthy positive pride is non egoistic. Well you could say how could I possibly not do it with metta. After all I am meant to be practicing the metta bhavana every day, so it would be quite shameful to prepare a meal without metta. 'How could I possibly do such a thing?' This would be the healthy positive sort of pr~de in that situation. 'How could my food possibly not be full of metta, people ought to be overcome by feelings of metta as they eat it.' (Laughter)

I think also we have to be very careful not to damp ourselves down by telling ourselves every step, 'Oh that's the ego'. I have a friend who does this. She is a dear old lady, I haven't seen her for several years and she writes me long letters containing lots of good advice, every few months. She is well into her seventies now, always going on about the ego. She writes 'I was rather disappointed not to hear from you for such a long time but it was just my ego.' (Laughter) Or else she would say

'I felt quite pleased when someone came to see me and told me how nice my paintings were but of course that's just my ego!! (More laughter) Some good people they almost do this every step, they are always apologising for their ego. They say, 'Well I did this quite well or I made a good job of that, but I guess that is just my ego.' So this is not a very healthy sort of attitude. It can be a bit, mechanical sometimes. This apologising in advance forestalling criticism as it were by admitting that it is your ego. It may not be at all. You should not be too ego conscious as it were.

Padmapani; Don't you think by not being so ego conscious one does have these clashes with say order members.

S: By not being ego conscious? I think you have missed the point of what I was saying. I mean don't be ego conscious in a self-conscious automatic sort of way. Why does a person do that sort of thing, put themselves back? I gave some hint when I said to forestall criticism.

Why should one at every step trip over yourself and say, 'Oh that's my ego'?

Padmaraja; It is an inverted form of conceit.

S: It is an inverted form of conceit really, dressed up as non-ego. So if you are just mindful sure that is enough.

Saaramati; I think some people think being mindful is sort~of ego (RRJV IX

\_\_\_\_\_; Ego bashing. (Laughter)

Padmapani; Maybe it is mindfulness in the ~ense that it is not integrated, there is a certain amount of alien ation. It's like what you were saying Sagaramati, about right mindfulness having a feeling quality to it.

S: Well you could even exaggerate a bit and say that right mindfulness is a form of metta.

Sagaramati; Well really you can't have metta without mindfulness can you.

S: No you can't. You have to call to mind certain individuals, at least in the course of one's practice. You have to recollect them, and recollection is mindfulness, at least one form of it. If you can't remember them and who they are then you can't practice metta. You might say to yourself, 'Oh I'm sure I've forgotten somebody. I'm sure I've left somebody out of my metta.' A bit like Christopher Robin saying his prayers, 'I'm sure I have left somebody out, Oh yes it's me!!' Christopher Robin says, 'Oh I remember now it's God bless me.' So you might say, 'Now I remember it is metta for me!' (Laughter)

So Milarepa says, 'Soon a cluster of clouds rose from Dro Wo valley far away to the East. Below this bank of clouds lies the temple of my Guru, the great Translator Marpa, mused Milarepa. At this very moment he and his wife will be preaching the doctrines of Tantra giving initiation and instruction to my brothers.' So it is the Vajra brothers, that is how the whole discussion arose. 'Yes my Guru is there. If I could go now I should be able to see him. An immeasurable unbearable longing for his teacher arose in his heart as he thought despairingly of his Guru. His eyes filled with tears and he began to sing a song, 'Thoughts of my Guru.'

\_\_\_\_\_, "In thoughts of you, Father Marpa, my suffering is relieved; ~, the mendicant now sing you a fervent song.

Above Red Rock Jewel Valley, in the East,

Floats a cluster of white clouds;

Beneath them, like a rearing elephant, a huge mountain towers;

Beside it, like a lion leaping, looms another peak.

In the temple of Dro We Valley rests a great seat of stone;

Who is enthroned there?

Is it Marpa the Translator?

If it were you, I would be joyful and happy. Though limited in reverence, I wish to see you; Though weak in faith, I wish to join you. The more I meditate, the more I long for my Guru.

Does your wife, Dagmema, still dwell with you? To her I am more grateful than to my mother.

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If she is there I will be joyful and happy.

Though long the journey. I wish to see her,

Though perilous the road, I wish to join her.

The more I contemplate the more I think of you;

The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.

How happy I would be could I join the gathering, At which you may be teaching the Hevajra Tantra.

Though of simple mind, I wish to learn.

Though ignorant, I long to recite.

The more I (contemplate the more I think of you; The more I meditate the more I think of my Guru.

You may now be giving the Four Symbolic Initiations of

the Oral Transmission.

If I could join the gathering, I would be joyful and happy. Though lacking merit, I wish to be initiated. Though too poor to offer much, I desire it.

The more I contemplate, the more I think of you; The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.

You may now be teaching the Six Yogas of Naropa; If I could be there I would be joyful and happy. Though short my diligence, I have need for learning; Though poor my perseverance, I wish to practice. The more I contemplate, the more I think of you; The more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.

The brothers from W'u and Tsang may be there. If so I would be joyful and happy. Though inferior my Experience and Realisation, I wish to compare mine with theirs. Though in my deepest faith and veneration I have never been apart from you,

I am now tortured by my need to see you. This fervent longing agonizes me, This great

torment suffocates me.

Pray, my gracious Guru, relieve me from this torment."

S: So what does this song tell us about Milarepa's state of mind?

\_\_\_\_\_ He is very sentimental at the moment.

S: But is he just sentimental?

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\_\_\_\_\_ No. It's the relationship with the Guru.

S: You notice though it is called 'Thoughts~of my Guru' but he seems to feel a separation from his brothers, his vajra brothers, more than the separation from the Guru. Do you see that? Because he says with regard to the fellow disciples, 'I am now tortured by my need to see you, this fervent longing agonises me, this torment suffocates me,' which is strong language indeed. Whereas in the case of the Guru he says, 'The more I meditate the more I long for my Guru, the more I meditate, the more I think of my Guru.' which is comparatively mild. So why do you think he misses his brother disciples even more than he misses the Guru.

Padmapani; Because the Guru is above the level that he sees his brothers at and can relate to them.

S: Yes. No doubt he does miss the Guru, but even more he misses the companionship of the fellow disciples, and no doubt for that reason. It is not lack of devotion to the Guru, but the disciples are much more on his own level. (Pause). You also notice he says, 'Though in my deepest faith and veneration I have never been apart from you, I am now tortured by my need to see you. Speaking of his vajra brothers. So what does this suggest? Is this true to life?

\_\_\_\_\_ It could be.

S: It could be yes. So what sort of situation does it represent?

Sagaramati; Half in the spiritual world, half in the human.

S: Yes. Spiritually speaking he feels he is at one with his brother disciples and not

separate. But at the same time the human side of him does feel the separation, does feel the need of more direct contact. So we see that Milarepa is still on the path as it were. So he is praying to the Guru to relieve him from the torment of the suffering created by this separation from his fellow disciples.

Dharmarati; Could this echo his state over losing the wood and the robe be coming aware of his ----ego. He still has ego-clinging.

S: Could be. (Pause) There is also the fact that in the course of his practice, in the course of his meditation, he was doing some kind of Guru Yoga. So that could explain the feeling of closeness with his Guru. But as far as I know there is no corresponding practice for disciples. You do the Guru Yoga, you visualise the Guru, but I don't remember any practice where you visualise your brother disciples, unless you do the metta in the way that we do it, and there is no reference to that at least. But even so, if we were very well up on the path that still would not be enough. You would still have that human vehicle, the tangible, personal, even physical contact. To see them with your own eyes,

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hear them with your own ears, actually talk, actually communicate with them in the flesh. You would have to be on a very very high level of spirituality before the purely spiritual content arises.--- Perhaps Milarepa and the disciples are not sufficiently advanced to be able to make that spiritual contact.- Perhaps he can make it with the Guru, because it is not a question of him being only able to make that contact with the Guru, but the Guru being in contact with him, as we shall see. He can't make spiritual contact with the disciples but they can't make spiritual contact with him. So in a way he is more cut off from the fellow disciples, even though he needs U~em even more. He is less cut off than from the Guru as in a sense, he needs the Guru less. The Guru, as we shall see can appear to him in a vision, he knows what is going on, but the disciples do not appear in any vision. They really do not know what is going on.

Let's read on.

\_\_\_\_\_ "No sooner had Milarepa finished than the Revered One, the Jetsun Marpa, appeared on a cluster of rainbow clouds resembling a robe of five colours. With an ever-increasing celestial radiance suffusing his countenance, and riding a lion with rich trappings, he approached Milarepa."

S: Why do you think he was riding a lion?

Peter Cowen: The lion represents the teaching of the Buddhas.

S: Yes. He says riding a lion who would be supported by eight lions. A lion. So who rides a

lion usually?

\_\_\_\_\_ Manjusri.

S: Manjusri. So it suggests that he is a manifestation of ManjuSri, the wisdom aspect of the Dharma. Then what does he say. ...

\_\_\_\_\_ "Great Sorcerer. my son why with such deep emotion." he asked, 'did you call me so desperately? Why-do-you struggle so? Have you not an abiding faith in your Guru and Patron Buddha? Does the outer world attract you with disturbing thoughts? Do the Eight Worldly Winds howl in your cave? Do fear and longing sap your strength'? Have you not continuously offered service to the Guru and to the Three Precious Ones above? Have you not dedicated your merits to sentient beings-in the Six Realms? Have not you yourself reached that state of grace in which you can purify your sins and achieve merits? No matter what the cause, you may be certain that we will never part. Thus, for the sake of the Dharma and the welfare of ~entient beings continue your meditation."

Inspired by this sublimely joyous vision Milarepa sang in-reply:

When I see my Guru's countenance and hear his words, I the mendicant, am stirred by the Prana in my heart. In remembrance of the teachings of my Gfuru Respect and reverence arise in my heart.

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His compassionate blessings enter me;

All destructive 'thoughts are banished.

My earnest song called, 'Thoughts of my Guru', Must surely have been heard by you, my teacher; Yet I am still in darkness.

Pray, pity me and grant me your protection!

Indomitable perseverance

Is the highest offering to my Guru. The best way to please him Is to endure the hardship of meditation! Abiding in this cave alone, Is the noblest service to the Dakinis! To devote~myself to the Holy Dharma Is the best service to Buddhism To devote my life to meditation, thus To aid my~helpless, sentient;~t fellow beings! To love death and sickness is a blessing Through which to cleanse one's sins; To refuse forbidden food helps one to attain Realisation and Enlightenment; To repay my Father Guru's bounties I meditate and meditate



again.

Guru - m1r~~e~, pray -- grant me - your protection!' Help this mendicant to stay ever in his hermitage."

Ray Chipps; What is a mendicant?

S: Mendicant means a bhikkhu strictly, one who lives on alms. But looking at the~~whole episode, and leaving aside Milarepa's spiritual need for his fellow disciples his need for spiritual fellowship, it is almost as though Milarepa, thinking of the Guru and his wife and the happy band of di~ciples all there in the temple together underneath the cloud, almost like a sort of religious group. Do you see what I mean? He is sent up into the mountains to meditate on his own, he wasn't with all the others, he was not joining in whatever was going on. He was by himself. So it suggests, as it were, that at this stage he was not seeing the spiritual community as a spiritual community, he was seeing it more as a religious group and he himself ~rvp-st cast out of that - sent away - he had not been allowed to join in. It seems to be that feeling of melancholy, not really wanting to be on his own. In other words, not really wanting to be a spiritual individual. In a sense of course he did. That was his conscious aim:~and aspiration but there was still some sort of lingering longing for membership of the group, albeit the religious group. So no doubt that we are quite familiar with that sort of difficulty. You might imagine

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someone going away on solitary retreat, maybe not being all that happy about it', maybe being just sent there and then thinking, 'Here am I, all by myself. Back at Pundarika, I bet they are having a happy time. Today it is Sunday, oh yes there will be so and so there, this person there probably listening to a tape, and having a good chat together after it. Here am I all by myself all alone, having to do my meditation, I don't really feel like it.' Maybe it is in that sort of situation, on a much more sublime level. After all Milarepa has been getting on with his meditation and no doubt Marpa and his disciples are not just a religious group, they are a spiritual community. But perhaps at this stage Milarepa just can't always see them in that light. He is still longing for the warmth and companionship of the religious group, at least to some extent occasionally in his weaker moments. This is incidentally the first section of the 'Hundred Thousand Songs', so perhaps he has not been meditating on his own for very long, not for many many years at any rate. Therefore it is significant that he ends by saying, 'Guru mine pray grant me your protection! Help this mendicant to stay ever in this hermitage.' In other words not to succumb to the longing for, not spiritual companionship so much as warmth and fellow feeling of the religious group.

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"Exalted, Milarepa adjusted his robe and carried a handful of the wood back to his cave."

S: So he got both his robe and the wood in the end it seems.

"Inside he was startled to find five Indian demons with eyes as big as saucers."

S: Why do you think five Indian demons? Why not Tibetan demons or

Sagaramati; Even more frightening.

S: Maybe even more frightening yes.

- ; "One was sitting on his bed and preaching. two were listening to the sermon, another was preparing and offering food, and the last was studying Milarepa's books."

S: Why this bizarre scene. There are five of them and why are they doing this? Why was one sitting on his bed. Why were two listening to the sermon, and another preparing an offering of food and another studying Milarepa's books. It is a rather odd way for Indian demons to behave although their eyes may be as large as saucers.

\_\_\_\_\_ It's strange that he has the books.

S: Ah yes, it is still at the beginning of his career relatively speaking. Anyway what does this represent?  
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Alan Angel; Aspects of himself.

\_\_\_\_\_ It almost parallels the group that he has just been thinking of doesn't it.

S: Yes. In fact it parodies it doesn't it in a sort of mockery of it. And what are these saucer eyed Indian demons. What do they remind you of?

\_\_\_\_\_; Pretas!

S: Pretas, yes, so what is this associated with? (Pause) Craving and neurotic desire. So

do we begin to see a glimmer of meaning in this. What do you see?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Could it be they are trying to celebrate?)

S: No, I wouldn't say that. It is as though that really is your state of mind, you have almost this preta like craving for warmth and companionship. It is as though you are seeing the spiritual community in these sort of terms, as a lot of pretas, a lot of people all gathered together out of a neurotic craving. One is sitting on his bed and preaching and two are listening to the sermon. What is the basis of it all? It is just neurotic craving for one another's company. So what is the use of that sort of spiritual community? It is really just a group, not just only a group, not a happy human group but a neurotic group. A lot of neurotic people getting together, supposedly preaching and other listening, another preparing food, another studying books. What is keeping them all together. It is just that neurotic desire for company, both for human contact and human warmth. So they represent a parody of the real thing, not even the healthy group. So it is as though Milarepa sees in a way that this is his state of mind. He was being a bit like a preta. Wanting to join in with the other pretas. It is just a ghastly parody of the real thing. He was not longing for spiritual companionship, he was merely craving for pseudo-religious company. Anyway that seems to me what is suggested by this.

Let's carry on.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Following his initial shock Milarepa thought, 'These must be magical apparitions of the local deities who dislike me. Although I have been living here a long time, I have never given them any offering or compliment.' He then began to sing a 'Complimentary song to the Deities of Red Rock Jewel Valley.':

This lonely spot where stands my hut Is a place pleasing to the Buddhas, A place where accomplished beings dwell, A refuge where I dwell alone.

Above Red Rock Jewel Valley

White clouds are gliding;

Below the Tsang River gently flows

Wild vultures wheel between.

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~are hummin' among the flowers,

Intoxicated by their fragrance; In the trees birds swoop and dart, Filling the air with their song.

In Red Rock Jewel Valley Young sparrows learn to fly, Monkeys love to leap and swing, And  
beasts to run and race,

While I practice the Two Bodhi-Minds and love to meditate.

Ye local demons, ghosts, and gods, All friends of Milarepa, Drink the nectar of kindness and  
compassion, Then return to your abodes.

But the Indian demons did not vanish, and stared balefully at Milarepa. Two of them  
advanced, one grimacing and biting his lower lip, and the other grinding his teeth horribly. A  
third, coming up behind, gave a violent, malicious laugh and shouted loudly, as they all tried  
to frighten Milarepa with fearful grimaces and gestures.

Milarepa, knowing their evil motives, began the Wrathful Buddha Meditation and  
recited forcefully a powerful incantation. Still the demons would not leave. Then, with great  
compassion, he preached the Dharma to them; yet they still remained

Milarepa finally declared, 'Through the mercy of Marpa, I have already fully realised  
that all beings and all phenomena are of one's own mind. The mind itself is a transparency of  
Voidness. What, therefore, is the use of all this, and how foolish am I to try to dispel these  
manifestations physically!

Then Milarepa, in a dauntless mood sang 'The song of Realisation';"

S: We'll go into that in a minute. Let's go into it. 'Following his initial shock  
Milarepa thought. 'These must be magical apparitions of the local deities who dislike me.  
Although I have been living here a long time, I have never given them any offerings or  
compliments.' So what is the idea. Giving offerings and compliments to the local deities.

Have you come across this sort of idea before? What is it? What does it stand for?

Padmapani; The Tibetans saw in nature that spirits and demons inhabited rocks and  
mountain passes and by giving worship or certainly respect, they favoured them in a way.

S: Do you then think this is to be taken quite objectively. Could there be any  
other logical significance?

\_\_\_\_\_ Trying to rationalise the craving in his mind.  
RRJV XVII

S: There is also straightforward fact. Milarepa thought - maybe this is a well known Buddhist belief as you said, that both. gods and goddesses, spirits inhabit various places such as natural objects, and they have to be as it were (vacated) so that they do not disturb one's meditations. So perhaps he is thinking, well maybe these five Indian demons are local deities that I have forgotten: to pay homage to, forgotten to appreciate, forgotten to make offerings to. He does seem to be searching for an explanation, but it does not seem to be the right one, because it does not work. But taking that idea on its own merits what does it suggest? Remember for instance Padmasambhava, subduing the local deities in Tibet. The deities of the soil. What does that represent?

Jyotipala; Surroundings have to be harmonious.

S: Yes. But something a bit more than that perhaps.

\_\_\_\_\_ To calm yourself.

S: To calm yourself

So you've got them to work for you.

S: But are they external things, external forces, external influences?

Sagaramati; They seem to satisfy certain psychological traits.

S: Yes. It is almost as though these gods and goddesses and spirits represent certain aspects of oneself on a lower level. Certain energies, certain basic primitive energies just cannot be ignored, they can't just be put on one side. They have actually to be subdued. Padmasambhava-- seems to harness them. These energies have to be utilised. These energies find their expression in nature, in your own indigenous culture, folklore and things of this

sort. These things correspond to certain levels within you. So even though you are going to go further, you cannot completely cut yourself off from these energies. But you can, as it were, take them up, absorb them, assimilate and direct them. This is possible. So these deities, the gods and goddesses, and spirits represent a sort of psychic force within oneself, energies within oneself which have to be harnessed and directed. So it is not surprising that Milarepa thinks of this sort of explanation of the apparition.

\_\_\_\_\_;; In what sorts of ways could you go about the utilising of these energies?

S: To give you an example. Supposing you are building a Buddhist Temple in the country. You could for instance build a complete replica of something Tibetan or something Japanese. But what sort of effect do you think that would produce?

\_\_\_\_\_; You would be alienated from it.  
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S: You could produce certain materials, certain objects in indigenous tradition. It would be a Buddhist temple, no doubt about that. But at the same time you would introduce certain motives or symbols which have a certain indigenous significance. What sort of effect do you think this would have? (Pause) Just to give you an example, you, instead of having a border of Bodhi leaves carved all the way round you would have oak leaves carved all around, though naturally it is still a Buddha image in the temple, but the decorative touches are of this kind. What sort of impression would that create?

Sagar~amati; Something is being integrated.

S: Yes. Integration. The lower is being integrated with the higher. The higher is not cut off from the lower, the lower not cut off from the higher. So if we take the example of oak leaves we get all kinds of associations. The Druids worshipped the oak trees, so we are told. The mistletoe comes from the oak tree and there are hearts of oak and things like that. We always associate them with England, they have always grown here so we are told they have strength and stability and qualities like that. In Nelson's day ships were made out of oak. This is very interwoven with the idea of the Buddhist temple. They should reinforce it and contribute their energy to whatever is done in that temple. So you, as it were, subdue the local gods. You have incorporated those energies to some extent, into your overall spiritual pattern, your spiritual ideal. They contribute their energy to your ideal. We are introducing a few touches of this sort at Sukhavati in this way. I don't know if anyone knows about this. The Sumeru throne, on which the Buddha will be seated in the main shrine is going to be of oak. So there are a few touches of this sort, maybe later on we will have even more. But for the present we are just keeping to very few. You see the idea. For instance in India after the

time of the Buddha but not very long after there were two Indian gods, not worshipped by everybody but very important - Indra and Brahma. So they were not banished completely but you did have an image of the Buddha standing and descending from the Deva-loka descending down that mythic stairway led by these two deities like attendants. And they are shown very much smaller and one of them is holding a fly whisk and the other is holding something else and they are shown very much as attendants of the Buddha. So they have not been excluded, they have been given their place, they have been integrated. The ethnic has been integrated with the universal, the lower religious ideal with the higher spiritual ideal;

Graham, Is it just the surroundings which bring about these primitive energies or are there certain spots that conduce more to those energies.

S: Well different spots have different atmospheres and even different energies. One

has noticed that. What the reason is is difficult to say. There are all sorts of theories

and explanations. It is sometimes said that one should choose a very quiet and peaceful spot which has naturally a good vibration, where the deities are favourable to build your temple. Sometimes one does find such places, sometimes other places may be very disturbed. There you do not build your hermitage.'

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Padmapani; Presumably then by choosing the right spot you would have your work cut out for you in one sense you would have to work on yourself but you would not have these psychic forces working against one.

Sagaramati; But even then that would be a matter of temperament. Some people like Sariputra lived like this all the time.

S: Yes quite oblivious but that was after he had gained enlightenment. Anyway that particular explanation doesn't seem to be the right one..

Why does he say, 'While I practice the two Bodhi-Minds and love to meditate.'?

Well he is as it were letting them know that he has made a Bodhisattva Vow, how wishes them well, he would like to save them too. He is trying to create a favourable impression on them, a positive impression so that they may let him alone. So, 'Ye local demons, ghosts and gods, all friends of Milarepa, drink the nectar of kindness and compassion and return to your abodes.' But they don't.

'But the Indian demons did not vanish and stared balefully at Milarepa. Two of them advanced, one grimacing and biting his lower lip and the other grinding his teeth horribly. The third coming up from behind gave a violent and malicious laugh, and shouted loudly. They all tried to frighten Milarepa with fearful grimaces and gestures.

So Milarepa, knowing their evil motives began the Wrathful Buddha meditation and recited forcefully a powerful incantation. Still the demons did not leave. Then with great compassion he preached the Dharma to them yet they still remained.'

So why does the forceful powerful incantation just not work?

\_\_\_\_\_ Because he is not trying to integrate them. He is trying to get rid of them.

S: Yes. He is trying to get rid of them. But that is taking them as local gods and deities but really I do not think they are that at all. I think they are something quite different.

\_\_\_\_\_; They are his own neurotic manifestations. They are still there after making the incantation.

S: But it is a Wrathful Buddha meditation.

Padmapani; It is forceful.

S: It is forceful so what does that suggest?

\_\_\_\_\_ Repression.

S: Certainly repression but what else. What is forceful meditation?  
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\_\_\_\_\_; One based on will and power.

S: Well not on power.

Will rather than power.

S: Yes will rather than power. What is will an expression of?

\_\_\_\_\_ Aggression.



\_\_\_\_\_ Egotism.

S: Yes egotism, ego. So what do the demons represent? Well it is ego-tism. You cannot get rid of egotism with egotism, even though the egotism which is trying to get rid of egotism takes up a Wrathful Buddha meditation and chants a powerful incantation. In biblical language it is trying to cast out Satan with the fire of Satan almost.

Padmapani; In that case would it not strengthen that?

S: It might even strengthen it yes. (Pause) So the five Indian demons represent something quite basic, something quite fundamental. They represent aspects of Milarepa's unsubdued ego, a subtle ego, a subtle clinging. A clinging of course to the group, to the religious group. So you won't get rid of the ego by means of the ego. So still the demons would not leave. 'Then with great compassion he preached the Dharma to them. Why did compassion not work. Preaching the Dharma not work?

\_\_\_\_\_; Still his motive was not quite right.

S: Yes. Even with great compassion. He only has cause to great compassion when the Wrathful Buddha meditation failed. It is like trying to throw somebody out by force and you don't succeed so you try to get rid of him by kindness but is it real kindness? No. So really it was not great compassion on Milarepa's part. He was trying to get rid of them. So naturally they still remain. He even preached the Dharma to them. It was the same sort of thing.

Anyway, 'Milarepa finally declared, 'Through the mercy of Marpa, I have already fully realised that all beings and all phenomena are of one's own mind. The mind itself is a transparency of voidness. What therefore is the use of all this, and how foolish I am to try to dispel these manifestations physically.' No he suddenly realises it. Physically meaning apparently by force of will. After all I am supposed to have realised that it is all one void. I am void, the demons are void. Who is trying to get rid of what? This is just foolish. 'So then Milarepa in a dauntless mood sang 'The Song Of Realisation.':

RRJV XXI

Father Guru, who conquered the Four Demons,

I bow to you, Marpa the Translator.

I, whom you see, the man with a name,

Son of Darsen Gharmo,

Was nurtured in my mother's womb,

Completing the Three Veins.

A baby, I slept in my cradle;

A youth, I watched the door;

A man, I lived on the high mountain.

Though the storm on the snow peak Is awesome,

I have no fear.

Though the precipice is steep and perilous,

I am not afraid!

I whom you see, the man with a name,

Am a son of the Golden Eagle;

I grew wings and feathers in the egg.

A child, I slept in my cradle;

A youth, I watched the door;

A man, I flew in the sky.

Though the sky is high and wide, I do- not fear;

Though the way is steep and narrow, I am not afraid.

I whom you see, the man with a name,

Am a son of Nya Chen Yor Mo, the King of fishes.

In my mother's womb I rolled my golden eyes;

A child I slept in my cradle;

A youth, I learned to swim;

A man, I swam in the great ocean.

Though thundering waves are frightening, I do not fear;

Though fishing hooks abound, I am not afraid.

I whom you see, the man with a name,

Am a son of Ghagyu Lamas.

Faith grew in my mother's womb.

A baby--, I entered the door of Dharma;

A youth, I studied Buddha's teaching;

A man, I lived alone in caves.

Though demons, ghosts and devils multiply, I am not afraid.

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The snow lions's paws are never frozen,

Or of what use would;~it be To call the lion 'King' He who has the Three Perfect Powers.

The eagle never falls down from the sky; If so would that not be absurd?

An iron block cannot be cracked by a stone; If so why refine the iron ore?

I Milarepa, fear neither demons nor evils; If they frightened Milarepa, to what avail Would be his Realisation and Enlightenment?

Ye ghosts and demons, enemies of the 'Dharma, I welcome you today!

It is my pleasure to receive you!

I pray you, stay; do not hasten to leave; We will discourse and play together.  
Although you would be gone, stay the night; We will pit the Black against the White Dharma,  
And see who plays the best.

Before you came, you vowed to afflict me.

Shame and disgrace would follow If you returned with this vow unfulfilled..

Milarepa arose with confidence and rushed straight at the demons in his cave. Frightened, they shrank back, rolling their eyes in despair and trembling violently. Then, swirling together like a whirlpool, they all merged into one and vanished."

S: So this time Milarepa rushed straight at the demons in his cave. They shrank back rolling their eyes in despair and trembling violently. So why does he succeed this time?

Alan; He has named them, he knows what they are now.

S: Yes, he knows what they are now. But is this rushing a sort of willed thing?

\_\_\_\_\_ No it is an action isn't it.

S: It is an expression of his spiritual power, the spiritual power in turn being an expression of his realisation that in the ultimate sense there are no demons. So there is no need to be afraid of them any more, no need even to get rid of them. He says, 'I pray you stay. Do not hasten to leave.' It does not matter if they stay. (Pause) This contrasts in a way very much with the christian attitude, especially in connection with the  
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devil as we were discussing the other day. Do you remember. So long as you try to fight the devil, so long as you are wrestling with the devil you will not get rid of him. If you regard the devil as something real, something really out there, you will never get rid of him. But if you recognise the devil as essentially Mara, well, Mara is basically a state of one's own mind. It is much easier to see through Mara to get rid of him.

Why does he call himself the man with a name.?

Padmapani; It's almost as if he has a recollection of the process of all the energies coming together. Then all these energies become integrated, the demons are not apart from that.

S: Yes. (Pause) There is also a parallel with the earlier experience right at the beginning. When he was trying to catch the piece of wood and at the same time keep hold of his robe. He had been practicing the Mahamudra Meditation, so he had had a great realisation but there is still this vestige of ego clinging. But as soon as he remembered that he recognised it as such.

In the same way when he had been practicing the Mahamudra meditation he had realised that all phenomena are of one's own mind, the mind is a transparency of voidness,

and realised that. So for a moment he forgot all that. When he saw these demons he saw them as actually existing objectively, and to be got rid of. But he failed to get rid of them and then he realised, 'Well what is this, what is the point of trying to get rid of them. I am supposed to have realised that they are all phenomena of my own mind.' And he did realise that and he did get rid of them.

\_\_\_\_\_ ; There is a bit of a parallel here between the Buddha's ~irvana and the Branna Sahampati. Something quite similar. A different level of realisation but the same adjustment to it.

S: Yes right.

Padmapani; It also reminds me of the Buddha having his realisation after going through a period of asceticism. He sorted out what it was and then he had a vision underneath the Bodhi tree.

S: Yes that is quite significant in a way because I was talking about this to somebody some time ago... The point I made was that in a way when you are quite young you already know it all. But you seem to get led away from that. Then for quite a few years you are led away and when perhaps you are in your early twenties you start remembering and recollecting. It all comes back to you. And in a sense you, for a long time do not get very far beyond what you already knew and understood when you were young, from which you were led away. Quite a few people I know have said this, that when they were children they knew certain things, saw certain things quite clearly but it got obscured. They grew up, listened to other people, got involved in this, got involved in that. They got

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away from their own vision, their own insight almost and found they had to come back to it, maybe very slowly and painfully many years later.

\_\_\_\_\_, I can see how at the beginning of your life, you are in a clearer state of mind and you realise things which you don't later on because of life's conditioning. But how is it that maybe when you were very very young you were that much better off in respect of how you see things but accepting reincarnation, that you were born before. Perhaps it is similar to the state between death and rebirth, it brings you back to a realisation.

S: Well there is the Tibetan teaching that when you reach the intermediate state you do have opportunities of higher spiritual realisation that you are not able to assimilate, so you go on bouncing down to the next level and the next level and until you are bound right into this world again. But you have had that intermittent vision in between. So there can possibly be some vestige of it lingering on, even in this life and perhaps it is that the child has a sense of - even very vague and very obscured - from a worldly point of view the child sees things quite

clearly. I wasn't thinking so much of the very young child, but the child growing up, the twelve to fourteen year old. Just the pre adolescent age, though maybe including adolescence too. Before you get involved in the world in a social way while working and earning and so on. Before this you are relatively innocent, you are very much a spectator as it were.

Padmapani; This brings up the idea of the Buddhist school. Can you envisage this although presumably there are not going to be many children. (Chuckles)

S: When you say a Buddhist school and children what do you mean? What children and whose children?

Padmapani; I was thinking of the fact of hearing some talk in the Order, I think it was from Sulocana, thinking of opening a school for Buddhist children.

S: What does one mean by a Buddhist child. Let's make this clear.

Padmapani; I was thinking of a child whose parents are Buddhist, and that some Order members wanted to start up a school for them.

S: Yes so what was the question.

Padmapani; Have you had any thoughts about this matter'?

S: Not specifically or systematically. I have had thoughts on this matter from time to time. It is really connected with education as a whole. What is the best kind of education. So if one specifies a Buddhist, an Order member who has certain ideas, a certain insight into human development and at the same time has children obviously you will want to put them in the way of human development, personal development. So having to use that  
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term, a Buddhist school for them, does not mean an indoctrination of Buddhism but actually creating the best sort of environment in which a child could grow up and which could help the child in becoming gradually more of an individual. Because even though you are Buddhist parents you might have a child who did not want to grow up in that way. Even putting them in the best possible Buddhist school they could turn out to be a little terror. You would have to take that risk. But yes it would be a good thing to do if there were people who had children and wanted to do this. Not in the sense of being a different kind of education for Buddhist children but a sort of pioneer project of the sort of education which ideally should be given to every child. The kind of education which will naturally help the child first of all in his growth and development and at least point the way, the direction which

leads to higher development.

Padmapani; When I think about it I meant it really in the context of what you said yesterday. Let the child do what it wants. But it depends on the type of set up. It would have to be of the right kind.

S: Yes. There are all sorts of complications of that kind. You would not have to have qualified teachers in the same sense, but it could be done. As yet I have not really got round to thinking about it seriously. Maybe it will not happen for some time ° ---as it would be quite a big job. Also there are not all that many children. It is not as though you are all producing dozens and dozens of children but very few. Though maybe that is an advantage because quite a bit of research and a great deal of energy could be put into it for the benefit of just a few children to begin with. We could see how it works out, perhaps having only fifteen to twenty children to begin with. But there are no plans at present. I personally have not thought about it very seriously yet though the idea has come to mind from time to time.

Padmapani; I was just thinking that there does seem to be a lot of people who are snared by their experiences in the world, they have come right up against it and from the point of view of making contact with young people who are open, in this context it would be a good idea.

S: But when one is young with lack of positive guidance, then one is able to make all sorts of mistakes and come up with all sorts of wrong ideas and experience all kinds of confusions which have to be sorted out perhaps many years later when it is difficult to do something about it all. So really, the earlier people can come in contact with the Dharma, and come into contact with us, the better. I am beginning to think that coming into contact with a movement like the Friends at twenty one/twenty two is even a bit late. (laughter) It would be best really at fifteen or sixteen or even earlier, because after all, you are very intelligent at sixteen. In fact you are as intelligent at sixteen as you ever will be, you are simply lacking in experience, but you are also lacking the wrong kind of experience in a sense and you are nice and fresh and open.

Padmapani; It seems to me a thing that the women could do in the movement anyway.  
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S: What's that?

Padmapani; Well their interests might lie more in that direction than

S: That is half the trouble. (Some laughter) You should read your D.H. Lawrence and what he has to say about young boys being brought up by elderly spinsters. Alright women are very

good as far as looking after young children is concerned but growing boys, adolescent boys, do you really want women playing the greater part in their bringing up? No I don't think that would be at all positive, one must be very careful about these things(Pause) (May as well send them to the navy)(Laughter)

Why do you think Marpa addressed in a vision to go back a bit, Milarepa as a great sorcerer?

Peter; He was practicing black magic.

S: Yes but why do you think he is still using that name. He seems to be reminding Milarepa of the past, he is not really a great sorcerer any longer. Why does he not call him by some other name?

Padmapani; It might be that Marpa is trying to predict that a situation is going to come about where he is going to need those occult powers.

S: Yes. Because this is the sort of thing he does. He might say, 'Well OK you have been meditating all this time in that cave but you are still the same old great sorcerer trying to do things forcibly by means of magic.' Maybe there is just a hint or suggestion of that. He calls him great sorcerer because he is a great sorcerer\* perhaps there is quite a streak of this left. He has a tendency to do things the forcible way.

He struggles so much too.

S: Yes that is true. (Pause) Of course at the beginning there has to be a struggle but Milarepa has begun to reach a stage where that kind of struggle is no longer the most positive thing to do. Perhaps it is this in the vision that Marpa is reminding him of.

Alright read the conclusion of the chapter then.

\_\_\_\_\_, "This was the demon king Vinayaka, the Obstacle Maker, who came searching for evil opportunities', thought Milarepa. 'The storm, too was undoubtedly his creation. By mercy of my Guru he had no chance to harm me.

This story relates the attack of the Demon King Vinayaka; it has three different meanings a~a hence may be called either 'The Six Ways of Thinkillg of My Guru', The Tale Of Red'~ock Jewel yal~ey', or 'The story of Milarepa collecting wood.'~

S: Why do you think that after this Milarepa gained immeasurable spiritual progress?  
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\_\_\_\_\_, He has removed obstacles.

S: Yes. Which obstacle in particular'?

\_\_\_\_\_ ' The ego.

S: Yes the ego basically.

Padmapani; In terms of energy, does it mean that more energy will be available?

S: Yes. (Pause) So this matter we~are representing signifies quite an important part of Milarepa's career. He walked through to an~ actual, a full realisation of the Mahamudra teaching, he really did have a complete realisation of the void with no vestiges of ego left.

Immeasurable is quite a strong word. If it is immeasurable what does it mean? It is transcendental without limits, cannot be measured, cannot be counted.

Well that is the end of the section. Are there any general points on the Tale of Red rock Jewel Valley?

\_\_\_\_\_, Why does It say that there are three different meanings and then give these three different titles?

S: Yes I think 'meanings' is rather a bad translation. It may well be that there were different traditions among Milarepa's disciples, different versions, one giving one name, one giving another and eventually all being compiled together in a single collection. And it transpires it might be called either this or that or something else. You find this sometimes with suttas that alternative names are given at the end.

Padmapani; What were 'The Six Ways of Thinking of the Guru'?

S: Well I suppose one just has to count. Let's go backwards. He's thinking of his brothers, thinking of his Guru giving the teachings of Naropa, giving the initiations, thinking of him teaching the Tantra, thinking of his wife and thinking of the temple itself and the Guru in it presumably. Those are the six.

\_\_\_\_\_ Why does it always start off with 'Obeisance to all Gurus'?

S: Well this is because Milarepa belongs to the Kagyupa tradition and the Kagyupa attaches great importance to the ear whispered transmission from Guru to disciple. They do not attach much importance to books and intellectual studies. So at the beginning he salutes the Guru meaning all Gurus of that particular lineage because what else has he got as it were. Though we do find a reference to a book here most of the emphasis in this tradition is emphasis on personal transmission, down through the line of Gurus. So he salutes all th~

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Gurus right back to the Vajradhara Buddha at the beginning. He opens himself to the spiritual influences coming right down through that line of Gurus and disciples to which he belongs.

In what sense is Milarepa the son of a snow lion, the son of the golden eagle, the son of a king of fishes?

S This is simply poetic elaboration. He is rather fond of that in many of the songs. There are references to these mythological creatures in quite a number of the songs. Particularly to the king of fishes. It is just sort of elaborating the basic theme. Nurtured in my mother's womb, a baby I slept in my cradle and paralleled with that I grew wings and feathers in the egg. I think it is obscured by the way it has been translated. He says a child I slept in my cradle, a youth I watched the door instead of the corresponding terms for a bird. It might be a chick I slept in my nest rather than child I slept in my cradle, a fledgeling I watched the door, something like that, a fully grown bird I flew in the sky. Maybe the Tibetan does not differentiate in this sort of way. Anyway Milarepa is as it were ringing the changes on his original statement.

\_\_\_\_\_; Why is Marpa called the translator?

S: He went to India, studied under many Gurus, especially Naropa and he translated many many texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan and taught those texts and instructed his disciples including Milarepa in them. So he was very famous as a translator.

\_\_\_\_\_ So he was very important in bringing the Dharma to Tibet.

S: Yes he was.

\_\_\_\_\_; I am not sure what 'Completing the three veins' means.

S: The Three Veins according to Tibetan tradition are the basic three veins in the body developing first in the embryo and around which the rest of the embryo first develops.

Alan; What does it mean at the end, 'By the mercy of my guru he had no chance to harm me'?

S: Presumably his vision of the Guru has reminded him of that higher state of realisation, that is of the voidness, the Mahamudra practice within which he does not see the demons as real, objectively existing. Presumably he means (that). The vision of the Guru has recoiled him to his higher experience.

Alan; But they are like christianised terms in a way.

S: Yes.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Was there any Tibetan religion of any kind before the Dharma came to Tibet?

S: There was a tradition called 'Bon' which was the old indigenous tradition which was somewhat shamanism). They practised powers of nature, mediumism, animal sacrifice. That continued to some extent even after the Dharma was introduced, but it was greatly changed. It was developed to some extent by some Buddhist Lamas but became eventually a very subordinate tradition. A bit like the Druids in ancient Britain, that sort of level as it were, or even not as developed as the Druids. It was generally considered a form of (shamanism).

Padmapani; Do you actually feel in this country there is too much civilisation and culture and that it's difficult for people to get in touch with their energies which are in nature. These things which are mentioned in the text like

S: I don't think you need worry about 'demons with saucer shaped eyes' or anything like that. I just wonder about this. There are advantages of living in a city, that is a fact. Are you really very cut off from natural forces living in the city?

Padmapani; Maybe it's more that it is easier to get in touch with those things in the country.

S: Well for instance if you go into a forest you feel different from how you do amidst brick mortar and stone. But there are in London many parks with very beautiful trees and you can very quickly get in touch with something of that nature.

\_\_\_\_\_ ' There is the aspect though of living in a city. You can always make sure you go for walks where there are trees and really experience them.

S: I think the point about living in a city is not the absense of nature it is more the presence of nature in a certain form. Too many human beings. It is a bit overwhelming.

\_\_\_\_\_ ; In that sense there might be so many demons you cannot sort them out.

S: And so many pro~as. (Pause) I think we need to be aware of romanticising the country. We must be aware that living in the city has its advantages and disadvantages. I do not feel it would be~good thing to stay indefinitely in either, but good to alternate if you can. You can get very sluggish and lethargic in the country, very much in a rut. Of coursE when you think of living in the country you do not mean living and working in the country, being a farmer or anything like that. One thinks more of holidays in the country, things of this kind. Working in the country is quite different. Cities are quite stimulating. You meet interesting people in cities.

\_\_\_\_\_ ; There is lots of good energy.

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S: Lots of good energy. You get more spiritual activities in the city than you would in the country. You would be more likely to meet interesting people, more likely to experiencE spiritual things in the city. How dull a small town or village can be. (Pause)

What does one mean by the country, a primaeval forest or a pleasant, cultivated colourful landscape. Does one mean a village or a small town. What does one mean by the country?

Alan; It is somewhere where I can go and be away from people and get to quite a(nice mental state.

S: So to get away from people rather than bricks and mortar?

Alan; I think that is the primary characteristic.

S: Well the country is where the population is very much lower. The desert would be the country.

Alan; Well I meant the primary characteristic, the actual environment physically has the effect of calming you down.

S: There is also the fact of the presence of non-human forms of life, even animal life. Someone remarked on this some time ago, that if you went to some of the countries in Africa it would be absolutely swarming with non-human animal life. There were antelope everywhere. There were deer, zebras, elephants, not just people. This was a very different type of experience. So even if you go into the country at least you are in contact with cows and horses and sheep. In the city it is completely the reverse, just millions upon millions of human beings. There may be a few small creatures, like dogs and cats and a few birds but human beings monopolise everything, they are all out of proportion. When you get into the country though you see more non-human animals than you do human animals. It reverses the balance a bit. You are more in your place in nature. You are at the top as it were with a great pyramid of other forms of life below you.

\_\_\_\_\_; Having good surroundings as well like coastline and mountains has an effect.

S: Yes indeed. I remember when Buddhadasa had his solitary retreat up in Scotland in a very remote area. I think he was on a big island. He wrote that life was absolutely swarming around him. He had this sort of cabin which was very primitive, very simple but all around him there were herds of deer, flocks of seals - it was near the coast - all kinds of birds and squirrels all or mostly very tame. Deer would come up to the door. seals would not plop straight into the water when he walked along the seashore, lots of rabbits and hares. All kinds of animal life all swarming around him and himself the only human being. So you get a much better view of oneself as part of nature, one's place in nature than if there is just man, and the vegetation but in a way that is not natural. There~

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are all kinds of intermediate life in between vegetable and human.

\_\_\_\_\_; You don't appreciate the fact that you are a human being so much when you are surrounded by millions of human beings. But where you have a lot of animal life you are aware you are not like them, you are a human being.

S: And you all share in life as it were, but there are so many degrees of manifestation. They are very alive, very attractive, very beautiful, but you are very very different. You cannot

have with them the sort of companionship or communication that you can with a human being. You might say, my cat is like a human being or my dog is just like a human being but that is only in a sentimental manner of speaking. You can't really hold a conversation with a dog however intelligent he may be.

\_\_\_\_\_; People do. (Laughter)

S: Well they become just like dogs or cats. (Pause) On occasion I have actually spoken to my cat but I have no illusions as to the cat's capacity for conversation on the Dharma!! (Laughter) I might even convince myself that when I asked the cat if it wanted any more milk it understood me, but if I asked it a question on the Dharma it would not understand me, So a certain amount of contact with animals is possible, even a degree of primitive communication. Our cat could come and ask me to open the door for him but that is very low level communication isn't it. If you want a real companion to communicate with it must be another human being.. (Pause) If you are a man you might feel it can only be another 'man. Or if you are a committed person you might find it is only another committed person. If you are a Buddha you might feel it can only be another Buddha. You need someone as it were, on your own level.(Pause) But when you are amidst a great deal of natural animal life you do see your own place in the hierarchy.

\_\_\_\_\_ You also seem to cut away a lot of the things which in the town you thought you needed but out there you never need.

S: Yes and when you see lots of animals around you you are very conscious of yourself as another kind of animal. There are sheep, cows, pigs and in a country like India and Africa there are elephants, giraffes and so on. All these forms of animal life. You are aware of your place in the animal life, but you are also aware of a tremendous difference between you and them. So you become more aware of yourself and of the significance of human life. More aware of your similarity to animals, more aware of your difference to all the animals. This you can get much more in the country than in the town. Even if you go to the zoo in the city, it is really not very satisfactory is it.

Kim Catala; One thing more difficult I notice in big towns is following the seasons. You know if it is Winter or Summer and all the rest but when you are in the country you notice much more when the leaves are brown and everything is growing.

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S: But you see even trees in the city. Not so many of them perhaps.

Kim; I am not aware of them so much though.

S: Yes well you are less exposed it that is true. There mig~ be a fall of snow but it is quickly cleared away.

Kim; But in the country when it is spring for example yousee so much more.

S: Whereas in the city in spring you get a sort of distant whiff of-it but you do not get a full blooded experience of it. You can't roll in the pollen or dance naked among the buttercups.  
(Laughter)

\_\_\_\_\_, You feel very much more controlled in the city also with everything running in straight lines. In the country it is far more flowing with rows and twists and bends.

S: Yes1~the country generally one is much more aware of the power of nature. The power of the elements. I felt that when we were living down in Cornwall in a little chalet perched on a cliff. I really felt when there was a storm that the wind was going to tear the roof off the chalet. It is so powerful. You would never notice that in the town. In a big solid house you hardly notice the wind. There if you really dared to open the dooi and go out you really felt it. You are exposed much more to the force of nature than in the town. If it rains you may be swept away, you may be flooded in some parts of the world or if you live near to a volcano or in a country where there are earthquakes. I remember when I was living in Kalimpong, the Assam earthquake or an Assam earthquake anyway where there were very violent tremors in Kalimpong which was a very weird experience. I was standing outside the house and saw the whole house just jump. It seemed to jump a couple of inches, it was most strange. It just jumped - a two storey house. It was 12 000 miles above sea level and the house jumped so the mountains just jumped. You really felt there were powerful forces around whi~~ were just beyond human control. You were reminded in physical terms that human life is very insignificant compared to the forces of nature. That was a very salutary reminder. It is very difficult to remember this in the city unless the city has an earthquake. But that is more of a man made thing. You would find that something had gone wrong with the drainage or the engineering or something of that sort.

Anyway how did we get to that particular point?

Padmapani; The meditations in the mountains and so on.

S: Yes the country, the power of the deities of the earth and so on.

So although we are early I think we could leave it there.

THE TALE OF RED ROCK JEWEL VALLEY      END OF SEMINAR