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DHARMA E-NEWS

Christopher Titmuss

In seeing -
What utter joy!
The small mind becomes
transparent, empty,
without foundation.

Christopher



DHARMA E-NEWS ISSUE 16 - January - April 2009 & INTERNATIONAL SCHEDULE

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to keep questioning.

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Thank you for your messages of appreciation.

In the Dharma

Three Bows

Christopher

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DHARMA TEACHERS THE POWER OF AUTHORITY AND FRIENDSHIP

Christopher Titmuss

11, 660 words

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Few would dispute that the extra-ordinary awakening of the Buddha is a seminal moment in the history of humanity. Yet, soon after his realisations of the Four Truths of the Noble Ones - namely that human beings must face suffering, the causes and conditions for its arising, the total and unshakeable resolution of it, and of the way to its resolution - two curious events took place.

The Buddha had spent seven weeks meditating in all four postures, sitting, walking, standing and reclining, until he had fathomed out a comprehensive path to dissolve difficult issues of daily life, but (as reported to his friends years later) he experienced a real hesitation to establish himself as a teacher. The thought arose in his mind that it would be difficult for others, due to the forces of attraction and a

version within themselves, to realise the truth of what he was pointing to. He said to himself:

*"Enough with teaching the Dharma
that even I found hard to reach.
Those wrapped in darkness will never discern this abstruse Dharma
which goes against the worldly stream,
subtle, deep and difficult to see." (M1.168).*

*"If I were to teach the Dharma,
others would not understand me,
and that would be wearying and troublesome for me."*

For final measure, he then admitted that his "*mind inclined towards inaction.*"

No sign there of any confidence in humanity.

It was an incredible statement to make. These words followed on from the full flush of his awakening and after several weeks of reflection and meditation on the path for people to experience and know liberation. He had realised the importance of the limitless heart through love, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. Yet, all of those experiences, reflections and insights could not inhibit the doubts from arising. It was an admission that after six years of dedicated practice, of engaging in numerous satsangs, with respected teachers, of frequent contact with great yogis, he still doubted their capacities for the same awakening and liberation as himself. He did not think he would be understood. He obviously felt that what he realised would be incomprehensible to the vast army of yogis, meditators, householders, theists, mystics and gurus living in northern India at that time.

We might assume that the Buddha would have had immense compassion and concern for the plight of human beings, and their self-deluding activities in the relative world. We might think that he would have had no hesitation to communicate the Dharma teachings and supportive practices that he had developed. But perhaps it is not so surprising that he questioned the capacity of men and women to realise for themselves the liberating and ultimate truth of things. He knew that those who really listened to his teachings would have to give up all materialism and belief in any kind of God, either dualistic (being a child of God) or non-dualistic (oneness with God). He would also point to the renunciation of all notions of possessing an ego self, a higher self or a true self. Those who listened would have to give up not only conventional secular

and religious life but all the meaning given to these lifestyles. The Buddha thus rendered the Vedas, the caste system and the prescribed social norms, beliefs and rituals for ascetics and householders as largely irrelevant.

The Buddha had come to an awakening of a completely different order, unknown and unheard of. Would human beings understand the very nature of dependent arising, non-self and emptiness? Why end up wearied and frustrated trying to teach others this Dharma? Who would be ready for a total revolution in consciousness, a dramatic breaking away from all the familiar beliefs, views and experiences about being and becoming? He knew the letting go of belief in the world of "I" and "my" and the dissolution of all desire would seem utterly incomprehensible.

Fortunately, according to the story, the Brahma, Sahampati, gave a short, terse response to the doubts of the Buddha: *"There are beings with little dust in their eyes wasting through not hearing the Dharma. There will be those who understand the Dharma."*

The Buddha clearly needed a firm reminder that there were sincere and receptive people to the Dharma and the deepest teachings. The conviction of Sahampati touched the Buddha enabling him to make the 180 km walk to Sarnath to meet with his five austere yogi friends in the Deer Park there to give his first teachings.

But having overcome his resistance to teaching, he found himself in another awkward situation. Not long after he set off for Sarnath, he met Upaka, a yogi, who remarked that the complexion of the Buddha was "pure and bright."

"Who is your teacher? Whose Dharma do you profess?" Upaka asked.

Natural humility did not occur to the Buddha. The Buddha replied

"I am the one who has transcended all.

"I am the knower of all. No one like me exists anywhere in the world.

"I am the teacher supreme.

"I alone am a fully enlightened one.

"I go to beat the drum of the deathless."

Upaka replied with probably a touch of irony in his voice *"May it be so."*

The Buddha's highest possible evaluation of himself made no impression upon the yogi, who showed not interest at all in his teachings. The text says that Upaka shook his head and walked off down a side road. The Buddha, claiming himself as the teacher supreme before he had even taught anybody, must have sounded like a pompous ass.

It was certainly a very inauspicious beginning. Firstly, he thinks nobody can realise what he has realised. Next he places himself in a unique category - the 'teacher supreme.' It is especially incongruous that the teacher of *emptiness of "I" and "my"* should make such incredible claims about *himself* not realising that the listener would simply interpret his words as someone either on a complete ego trip or he had gone completely mad.

The Buddha was neither the first nor the last Dharma teacher to have ignominious moments in the teaching role!

As the Buddha continued his walk to Sarnath, he would have had plenty of time to reflect on this disastrous start to being a teacher. As sons and daughters of the Buddha, we need to be mindful with regard to our doubts or claims, or both, and the impact those doubts and claims have upon ourselves and others. By the time he arrived in Sarnath, the Buddha had learnt two important lessons: 1. Listen to the wise voice of another rather than to one's own doubts. 2. People are put off listening to the Dharma if the teacher sounds like they are on an ego trip.

In this article on Dharma teachers, authority and friendship, I wish to address several areas relevant for Dharma teachers and our relationship to the Sangha as we offer a range of practices and insightful knowledge. I will also address the role of Dharma teachers, the relationship of students to teachers, contemporary attitudes, and the benefits and limitations of the role of teacher and student. The question of wise application of authority weaves its way through this article. I believe we need to question a whole array of beliefs, assumptions and views about authority. We may need to examine our assertions, self-righteous standpoints, conditioning, tolerant and intolerant views. It may well be that some readers will agree wholeheartedly with what is expressed in some places and disagree equally wholeheartedly with what is written elsewhere in the article.

There is no absolute yardstick around authority (from the Greek *author* - to create, to make happen) whether in the East or West. Historical, cultural and religious views meet with our own latent

tendencies and thoughts about authority. We have to explore through our own experience as well as the wise counsel of others the skilful means to relate to authority in a way that is effective, immediate and relevant. We need to know what the teacher has to offer, and acknowledge their limitations, as well as what we need to listen to and apply. We take refuge in the Triple Gem - the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - while listening to the wisdom of the teacher and watching our responses to what else is said. (Incidentally, we take "refuge" because we are refugees from materialism, narcissism and self hate.)

Three Kinds of Teachers

In a talk on teachers, (DN. Sutta 12), the Buddha referred to 3 kinds of teachers who deserve criticism. One kind of teacher

- *has not reached the goal of Dharma practice so he or she does not arouse his students to full awakening.*
- *has not reached the goal but he or she does arouse his students to pursue full awakening.*
- *has reached the goal of liberation but his or her students don't listen.*

The Buddha compared the first kind of teacher to a man wishing to embrace a woman who always remains at a distance from him. He criticised the second kind of teacher for "neglecting the weeds in his mind to uproot the weeds in the minds of others." The third kind of teacher also deserves criticism *because he is unable to inspire practice and realisation through the view of "what can one person do for another."*

The Buddha said the teacher teaches the dharma "beautiful in the beginning, middle and end." The student "comes to excellent distinction." Delighted in the words of the Buddha, Lohicca, a Brahmin, said the Buddha had brought a lamp to a dark place. Today's spiritual culture however appears to see it as inappropriate to criticise Dharma teachers for failing to arouse students to reach the goal or failing to reach the goal themselves.

Essentially, Dharma teachings embrace the transmission of knowledge for the deepest welfare of a human being. This knowledge transmitted from the teacher to the student (often referred to as the 'yogi' or 'practitioner') addresses every area of life as embodied in the noble eightfold path. This knowledge acts as a vehicle for transformation not merely information. Each of the discourses of the Buddha begins with the time honoured words

"thus have I heard," indicating that the act of listening to the Dharma plays an immensely important role when the Dharma is offered.

If the listener does not come to an immediate understanding of the Dharma teachings, then he or she engages in various forms of practice in order to overcome any hindrances, mental blocks or corruptions in lifestyle so that a liberating wisdom emerges. The teacher has a vital role to play throughout the whole process. It is a constant exploration beginning with listening to the teachings along with meditation, reflection and confirmation through seeing through one's own experience. All the Dharma teachers that I know (I have taught or attended meetings with some hundreds of teachers) offer a truly benign expression of authority, consistently caring and thoughtful. It is a credit to them all in a society where authority can be controlling and dogmatic.

The Dharma teacher plays a different role to either a religious or science teacher who tend to depend upon an external authority, whether an individual, book, tradition or well researched set of theories. Among contemporary teachers, the relationship to authority varies considerably. Some, like myself, will make use of words of the Buddha to add extra weight to the authority of one's teachings. Other teachers adopt an eclectic viewpoint and quote at random from different religions, philosophers and poets, while some stick primarily to quotes from their own teacher and lineage. Some have dispensed altogether with any kind of authority outside of themselves and instead speak from their experience and personal understanding. There are limitations to all of these approaches but, at the heart of the matter, the intimate encounter of the dialectic between teacher and listener is crucial.

It is unfortunate that the word "guru" has become so tarnished in the West that it is often associated with exploitive behaviour in terms of power, sex, money, or all three. The word "guru" means "heavy" or "weighty", and came to refer to a venerable or respected person. In the ancient traditions of India, the guru had a central role in spiritual teachings. He (it was rarely she) often presented himself as a transcendent figure - one with God, one with the divine energy who had gone beyond all the conventions of daily life. He was treated as a great master, worthy of surrender and total devotion. This tradition is still very much alive in India today. We are warned frequently enough about the dangers of guru devotion, thus blinding us to any benefits.

Gurus and devotees have to ask themselves some hard questions.

Are we looking for a mother or father figure?

Are we caught up in transferring qualities onto another that become our blind spot?

Are we letting ourselves be swept along by the views of others?

Are we engaged in transference of our unresolved needs onto another?

Is the guru accountable to the devotees?

Do devotees suspend all judgement on behaviour and views?

Those who reject gurus and devotees also have to ask themselves some hard questions.

Is there any value in guru devotion?

If so, what is it?

Is the widespread Western cult of individualism as unreal as idolising an individual?

Is devotion to making money showing a clarity of mind?

Is it always wise to reject those who live outside the box?

I am reminded of the film "A Life of Brian" when Brian, who mistakenly becomes treated as the Messiah in ancient Palestine, tells his audience "You are all individuals." With a single voice, they respond "We are all individuals." Devotion of the disciple to the guru can be a valuable practice. There is a power to such unwavering devotion regardless of any perceived imperfections of the guru - it can release love, heal old wounds, inspire acts of service and expand the heart in limitless ways. Yet, guru devotion is not everybody's cup of tea. The Buddha refused to adopt the role of a guru since he encouraged the questioning of authority, non-clinging to an identity and the dissolution of the self-other viewpoint

Friendship

The Buddha said "If one can find a worthy friend, then walk with him content and mindful." M128.

The importance of the *kalyana mitta* - the *worthy or good friend* - cannot be over emphasised. In the world of spiritual authority, gurus, priests, rabbis and spiritual masters generally remain aloof from their followers. This kind of authority figure does not share his or her personal life with their students, nor socialise with them. The guru or aloof Dharma teacher will appear in various settings to offer teachings and then withdraw. It is the same in the professional life. We do not expect to socialise with our doctor, school teacher or psychotherapist. The conventional view is to observe a strict boundary so that the role of the authority remains their exclusive appearance. This approach sets clear guidelines for forms of behaviour and communication that may become compromised if friendship develops between the teacher and the yogi similarly as for the therapist with his or her client.

However it is clear from the widespread teachings of the Buddha concerning the Sangha, including himself, that he did not adopt the same model of relationship as a priest or psychotherapist. The role of good friend (*kalyana mitta* in Pali) makes clear the difference. The *kalyana mitta* has an indispensable function in the Buddha's teachings. I believe the dynamic and exploratory nature of the Sangha, including both the voices of authority, and the relative new comers within it, moves outside of the religious and professional criteria and points to the full exploration of deep friendship with all the risks and potential misunderstanding that can arise.

Some Dharma teachers have very little social contact with their students. They teach retreats, offer workshops and give public talks, and perhaps attend retreat centre committee meetings. Outside of these functions as a teacher, they may well disappear from public view. It is a withdrawal into their homes from personal contact and association with the Sangha. Some teachers find this necessary in order to renew their energy as well as find time to prepare talks or write books but this can lead them to become disconnected with the Sangha.

We live in conservative times. There continues to be a considerable and understandable reaction to the permissive attitudes of a generation ago particularly in relation to issues around sex. This has had a significant impact on contemporary Dharma teachers, young and old, as well as the rest of the Sangha. There have been various allegations ranging from flirtatious behaviour to romantic involvement to sexual harassment between teachers and yogis. Some in the Sangha see suspension or banishment of a teacher as a responsible way to ensure a climate of safety. Others, teachers and yogis, see the same decision as a vindictive and unnecessary

punishment for different kinds of misunderstanding that do not involve harassment or grooming for sexual favours.

In the Buddhist tradition, the violation of the third precept *kammesu micchachacara* - is generally translated as *sexual misconduct*. This sets a limitation to the Buddha's use of *kammesu*. The Pali gives the concept a much wider meaning. *Kammesu miccharacara* refers to "*misconduct through pleasure*." This certainly includes forms of sexually harmful behaviour but equally includes any kind of misconduct, harmful behaviour, excessive and mindless stimulation through all of the senses - eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch or inwardly.

Some Dharma teachers avoid socialising or cultivating informal relationships and spending time together with their students outside of retreats and workshops. This means that the precious significance of *kalyana mitta* is under threat leaving only a traditional interpretation of it as functioning only within a formal teaching role. The teacher's informal contact with practitioners does not make him 'one of the boys,' so to speak. The teacher must know themselves, their position of authority and be willing to voice it any time.

I believe we can develop deep and lasting friendships in the Sangha. We live as a body of really good friends while acknowledging the variety of roles. The teacher who regularly meets with a yogi (s) in various environments will get to know the student far more than in the formality of a retreat. Of course, the powerful archetype of the teacher may diminish through seeing the Dharma teacher as a friend. The student who spends informal time with their teacher will learn a lot about their teacher and may find out things about him or her and their lifestyle that may affect their perception while listening in retreats to Dharma teachings. But that is what Sangha explores "self" and "other" dynamics. Priests and psychotherapists do not share their personal life with their parishioners or clients. Dharma teachers frequently bring in stories and experiences into their teachings. The practice of Sangha includes trusting in formless communication as much as in formal roles, through language, through presence and through sharing the arts.

It requires skilful application of several factors of the eightfold path to secure and develop deep friendship. We have to be clear about our views, intentions, speech and subsequent actions. If we are not clear, whether as teacher or student, we may slip into a painful sequence of dependent arising in contact with another that leads

into vulnerable feelings, continuing on into desire and clinging. The development of kalyana mita can generate a liberating wisdom or, through unresolved needs, produce a cesspit of confusion and misunderstanding. The same principle applies also to seniors in the Dharma including directors of centres, retreat managers and long-standing experienced yogis in relation to new practitioners.

Errors of judgement will be made within and outside of retreats, testing the metal of our friendship. Mistakes will occur. Either the authority figure or the practitioner may misunderstand the other's intentions or their own. There is a widespread view that it is not possible for a person to fulfil two roles with the same person -- a professional and personal relationship. Those who hold to this standpoint demand the separation of one role from the other. Others, including myself, disagree.

During my years as a Buddhist monk during the 1970's, we used the word *virtuesila*." In recent years, the word "virtue" has been quietly dropped and replaced with the word "morality" or "precepts" as the translation for the word *sila*. There is a significant difference between the meaning of virtue and morality. Western liberal values have been preoccupied with morality, emphasising non intrusion into another's life. This view has brought about social and religious legislation and statements by institutions and centres to stop people impacting upon somebody else in unsatisfactory ways. Morality, laws, rules, precepts, rights and obligations become a means of trying to control behaviour. Legalistic morality, in aiming to control the abuse of power, sex or money, tends to determine situations in terms of abuser and victim. as the translation for the word "

The Buddha commented: "Not the sweet smell of flowers, not even the fragrance of jasmine, blow against the wind. But the fragrance of virtuous people pervades all directions." (Dh 54).

In Ancient Greece, the philosophers placed friendship at the heart of a fulfilled life. Plato said that Socrates regarded close friendship mattered more than possession of all the gold. Epicurus wrote that friendship and wisdom were the two goals of life. Aristotle wrote that friendship goes towards the whole of the person not "incidental details." The word "idiot" comes from the Greek "idiotes" - it means 'one who only lives for themselves.' As a divine virtue, friendship belongs to the very pith of dharma practice, interlocking with wisdom and liberation

I believe controlling rules, and consequences for breaking them, reflect neither the spirit nor the letter of the meaning of "sila." A

better translation of *sila* is 'ethics' (as the word *virtue*, sadly, has little contemporary use in language). *Sila* is a practice, a training, (sekha), a development of healthy and wholesome attributes. In the Buddhist tradition, qualities such as generosity, kindness, right livelihood, non-harming, sharing and moderation in lifestyle show immense virtue (*sila*) in lifestyle. You cannot legislate for that. You cannot write up codes of morality and force the Sangha or anyone else to submit to them. Our *sila* (ethics) in life come through love, through deeply rooted responses to a noble way of life. Rules of *do and don't* impose upon us a mechanical obedience but this is not *sila*. We practice to develop a virtuous way of life, kindly conduct and respectful action towards ourselves and others.

It is a sign of our narrow and rigid times that the word *virtue* is excluded from our daily vocabulary and instead we have replaced it with a climate of public shaming, rejection and condemnation of those who fall foul of codes of morality. We have to find a common language that pays respect to the diversity of exploration so that virtue, meditation and wisdom can develop. The Sangha must remain committed to the ongoing practice of virtue, as well as training in meditation and living with wisdom. I believe we, Dharma teachers, and all other practitioners, need to be clear about the difference so that we recognise that practice means learning from errors of judgement. If we, teachers and yogis, don't make errors of judgement, then we don't need to practice.

Some years ago, I attended a meeting of Dharma teachers at the Spirit Rock Centre in California. We were handed some papers dealing with the issue of Dharma teachers and yogis under the supervision of two facilitators connected with the Zen tradition. One page had the headline "possible Dharma teacher involvement with students.

We were handed papers for our determination that referred to

no special friendships.

a Dharma teacher does not go out for dinner or a movie with students,

attend only Sangha business meetings in student homes.

jealousy is possible or likely and making things "even" is difficult

no dual role

no romantic or special relationships

cannot be a special friend and also a Dharma teacher for the same person.

too numinous a presence in the person's life.

the professional relationship must be terminated for a period of time before a romantic relationship is pursued.

potential for harm and suffering to increase.

There is a widespread view that there is an inherent abuse of trust if a close or intimate friendship arises. Most teachers at the meeting agreed that if a romantic or personal relationship seems to be on the horizon the teacher should tell his or her student to find another teacher to safeguard any conflict with regard to the dual role. They adopted the view that it is wrong to support a dual role because it will lead to confusion and conflict. I would agree with the risks but there is equally the potential for love, deep friendship and insight.

Those who adhere to this view will claim that the authority is taking advantage of the vulnerability of the yogi. They will oppose the view that meaningful consent based on contextual circumstances of wisdom and shared responsibility can arise between two adults. The power imbalance is too great, we were told. Not all teachers and yogis agree with this assumption. Some dedicated practitioners have told me that Buddhist institutions have no business interfering with the development of friendship and intimacy within the Sangha. These yogis, women and men, categorically reject the standpoint that they are vulnerable, easily manipulated and caught up in problematic transference onto a Dharma teacher. They dispute the notion that they are blindly susceptible to the attention of a teacher and cannot handle a dual role of intimacy (sexual or otherwise) and still attend the retreats of the teacher. In spite of different roles, women and men in the Sangha must be given the opportunity to experience their autonomy, integrity and capacity to act for themselves. The same principle applies around money and power issues. Foolishness will arise but a code of morality that blocks informal communication anywhere and at any time is not the solution. It is not what the Sangha is about.

If confusion, irresponsibility or simple misunderstanding arises, there is a real danger that the yogi will feel a genuine sense of betrayal, a loss of trust with subsequent doubt in the teacher and

possibly the teachings. Yet stringent rules and attempts to control individuals' feelings and lives exacerbate the problem. With his endorsement of kalyana mitta, and his hesitancy to use the language of "teacher", the Buddha offers a middle ground between a strict professional code and the rejection of all authority. He offered a way of life that is truly dedicated to good friendship. We have to bear in mind the deeper levels of Dharma where all constructions of the self are ultimately empty of true reality, of any kind of substance. If we identify with our role in the same way as a priest or psychiatrist, we will lose sight of the precious significance of kalyana mitta for everybody in the Sangha.

Who determines what is healthy and what is harmful?

Is it the two people involved, one of them, or others?

The kalyana mitta does not fall into the same category as a friend or acquaintance in a social sense, namely somebody we hang out with, chat to and engage in superficial levels of communication. In the Sangha, the kalyana mitta relationship is expressed as love and respect between the two or more people. Thoughtful and sensitive use of language, and a serious interest in each others' inner and outer lives that is free from manipulative intentions. It may occasionally occur that the two people become very close together, as confidants or lovers, but I believe that that doesn't necessarily undermine the value of the role of spiritual authority and dedicated practitioner. Wisdom can easily hold dual roles. Inner freedom allows the movement between the two.

The Role of Teachers to the Sangha

A number of Western Buddhist institutions, mostly in Anglo-American countries, have opted for a corporate model to run the centre. There will be a body of teachers, an executive director, finance manager, some paid staff and a group of volunteers. Each person in this corporate model has a clearly defined role. These relationships may become similar to the ones in the business community or some centres combine strict roles with development of close connections. There are other centres and networks that rely totally on voluntary service, donations and countless acts of support. The latter model can only operate successfully through the development of numerous Dharma friendships. These Sanghas that engage in unpaid Dharma service have to support Dharma programmes, and their members also find ways to live on a small budget due to their lack of regular income.

Outside of retreats, teachers work in different ways. Some teachers offer one to one Dharma counselling at an hourly rate comparable to psychotherapists. Other teachers offer interviews on a dana basis while others simply meet with the yogi without mentioning a rate or dana. Some teachers do not offer any kind of personal teaching to a yogi outside of a retreat, and are only seen at committee meetings when off retreat. I would suggest that teachers need to review regularly their way of offering the Dharma. There is often far too much talk around money for services from more affluent Dharma teachers. Poorer yogis, single parents, elderly people living on a state pension, nomads, India wallahs, unemployed and those in debt can feel excluded from access to Dharma teachers in daily life as well as from attending retreats.

You might have thought that since the Buddha endorsed so wholeheartedly a voluntarily homeless and penniless way of life for the seeker that he would have had a very low regard for those who spend their lives making money. In fact he took a remarkably practical point of view rather than leaping on the moral high throne about money makers. The Buddha did not have a problem with people becoming wealthy providing they examined the means employed to make money, the impact it had on others and whether the individual or family displayed kindness and generosity through sharing their wealth with the less privileged.

We are also reminded that the Buddha regarded as far preferable the happiness of renunciation, of living simply, of inner discipline and living in a sustainable way. When you are desirous of doing something, he suggests you should reflect thus; "Is this action unskilled? Does it lead to anguish? Does it show inner skill? Does it lead to happiness for myself and others?" (MN 58). The Buddha realised that "happiness is the greatest wealth."

However, the Buddha criticised teachers who lived in a luxury home, dined out expensively, bought expensive clothes and jewellery and lead a lifestyle not conducive to the teachings of letting go. (D 1.105). "These teachers were not trained in the way of a sage," he said. The Buddha knew the danger of getting out of touch with the reality of most people's lives and the inability to experience deep levels of meditation when the teacher's mind gets consumed in desire and thought around pleasure, money and possessions.

Some teachers will give a lot of personal attention to very wealthy or famous practitioners. After a retreat, they may cultivate a questionable friendship towards a rich meditator with a view

towards securing a donation or becoming a spiritual presence in that individual's life. Students of the teacher may make phone calls to the wealthy practitioner to ask him or her if they would like a personal meeting with their teacher. Some wealthy and famous people are sick to death of being cuddled up to in such a way. Is the teacher engaging with another as a kalyana mitta or using his or her role to exploit the good will of the practitioner?

The Buddha teaches challenging practices and guidelines, not absolutes. You can feel the kindness and friendship in his words. Here are a few quotes:

"It is natural law that non-remorse will arise in one who is virtuous." SN 10.2

"People who only see one side of things engage in quarrels and disputes."

"We will guard the doors of our sense faculties. On seeing a form with the eye, we will not grasp at its signs and features. We will practice the way of restraint." M39.

*"It is living close to a person that his or her virtue is known.
It is by associating with a person that his or clarity is known.
It is in adversity that a person's fortitude is known.
It is by discussion with a person that his wisdom is known, and then only after a long period, not a short time." (Ud.6.2).*

*"Rain soddens what is covered up.
It does not sodden what is open
Therefore uncover what is covered
Then the rain will not sodden it." (Ud. 5.5)*

"How is it possible that being bent on the search for pleasure, one could know, see and realise that through letting the search for pleasure go? That is impossible. " M125.

The Power of Empathy

The Buddha kept to the same lifestyle as other renunciate yogis. The Buddha made it clear that the "*whole of this spiritual life is lived for good friendship, good companionship and good association*" (SN 45.2) through which we free ourselves from the problematic views around desire, existence and non-existence. As he said to three people in the Sangha who were practising together:

"I hope that you are all living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes." (M.31).

I have been a servant of the Dharma for nearly 35 years offering teachings focused on transformational knowledge and powerful practices. Practising yogis usually view myself, and other teachers, in one of four ways.

1. Main teacher. The student tells me that he or she attends my programmes to listen to my teachings. He or she wants me to speak as much as possible through talks, inquiry, instruction, guided meditations, groups and interviews. The yogi rarely goes to another teacher. That person makes efforts to see me and attend my programs on a regular basis, listens to my talks, reads my books and perhaps has e-mail contact with me.

2. One of the yogi's teachers. This yogi appreciates equally the teachings of my co-teachers, new teachers as well as myself. This yogi also participates with various religious and spiritual teachers in the same or different traditions.

3. A good friend. There are people in the Sangha who attend my retreats or other Dharma programs and regard me as a good friend, rather than their teacher. The depth of friendship may have developed over several years, or through spontaneous connection, or simply not carrying the archetype in consciousness of "teacher." She or he has not problem at all with the dual role of teacher and intimate friend.

4. A guru. I neither regard myself as a typical "guru" nor encourage this archetype, but some people do treat me as their guru. This is usually in a positive light though it also can change into a negative perception of my persona. Despite this risk of disillusionment there is a beauty in a rather devotional attitude. It shows in the way some students use their eyes and the rather gentle, humble way of asking questions or responding to my questions, whether inside or outside of a retreat.

All four of these kinds of perceptions of the student are valid. It is not unusual that the practitioner moves freely at different times between any of these roles.,

All of the noble ones, who have come to profound realisation and truly tasted liberation, have a deep and strong sense of empathy

with others. It is this empathy which is the motivating factor to give so much time and attention to the Sangha. The depth of friendship makes an enormous contribution to the cultivation of the seven factors of enlightenment namely mindfulness, enquiry, happiness, calmness, energy, meditative concentration and equanimity.

I would never encourage seasoned teachers or new teachers to develop a detached view towards students. A Dharma teacher lives, works and communicates outside of the conventional agreements. I tend to take the view that it is a wise and healthy to freely associate with students in a wide variety of settings and environments. The Buddha makes it clear that there is much that one person can do for another. The Buddha said that the signs of a good friend are "he or she gives what is hard to give, does what is hard to do, bears what is hard to bear, confesses his own secrets, keeps others' secrets, and does not leave a friend who is in need." (A.1V.31). This description of a good friend supports the importance of the deep encounter between teacher and yogi.

A good friend stays dedicated to the friendship and remains open, saying and doing what is necessary or helpful. The discourses of the Buddha remind us of the importance of the middle way between isolation with its consequences and the blind pursuit of pleasure and fun in the company of others.

Some spiritual 'teachers' prefer to use exclusively the language of friendship ('we are friends exploring together. I am not your teacher') as they regard the word 'teacher' in a pejorative way. Nevertheless, the fact of sitting and facing others, whether in a classroom format or inner circle, will immediately arouse the powerful archetype of the 'teacher.' I see little point in engaging in a refutation of the role and the authority that accompanies it. Yes, the words of such a 'teacher' show his or her empathy with students. We may wish to minimise the differences between the teacher and the student so we treat each other as equals, who all share the same Buddha nature. However, outside of deep realisation, it is not easy to dismiss the powerful archetypes accompanying important roles. Most students of dharma will see a teacher whether the teacher likes it or not.

It is in the exchange of the intimacy of the dialogue that liberating realisations can come about. It is not unusual for a student to say "I felt you were talking directly to me in your teachings this afternoon." They are right. The talk should hit the spot for every practitioner with the ears to hear. One of the values of the informal encounter with its emphasis on intimacy is the opportunity for role

reversal. The student may wish to respond to the teacher with appreciation, insights and helpful feedback. That may well take some time: a time possibly not available during a retreat, and probably not a priority for the student either. Although, very occasionally, a yogi may walk up to the front of the Dharma hall for the one-to-one inquiry and take the opportunity to shoot from the hip. I know from experience.

By having a professional outlook on the role of Dharma teacher, along with strict boundaries in terms of contact, teachers may deprive themselves of the opportunity to be the student, to listen and learn from the observations of the student about the activities of our body, speech and mind.

It takes five minutes to walk from my home in Totnes to the Barrelhouse coffee shop in the high Street. I usually go there once a day; sometimes carrying a book or two, or my laptop, or a daily newspaper if something is happening in the world that interests me. I used to sit at a small table by the window downstairs as I enjoy people watching - without having to be responsible for them! Having lived in Totnes for around 26 years, I have many *Dharma friend]* in the area. Since the coffee shop opened some 12 years ago, I have spent many hours exploring the Dharma of daily life with a person or persons who have joined me at the coffee table. In the last year or so, I had sought refuge in the upstairs part of this funky coffee shop so that I could get on with my reading and writing. People know where to find me!

I regularly move backwards and forwards between the role of Dharma teacher, yogi, good friend and occasionally guru with those engaging in close personal encounter with myself. It is vitally important that the teacher never forgets, not for a single day, that he or she was a Dharma student before being entrusted with the role of Dharma teacher. It took a little while for me to realise how important it is in every area of relationship to keep things as open and fluid as possible. It is a great pity if a Dharma teacher tries to have a secret life behind closed doors. In the spirit of kalyana mitta, we share with the Sangha our feelings, experiences and stories connected with our personal relationships, family and social contacts. As I teacher, I am blessed to experience the Sangha as a teacher.

Offering of the Teachings

Teachings on true reality must not mask the ethics of profound friendship. It is vitally important that we realise that authentic

reality is not tied either to the doer, the enjoyer - the self as the agent of actions - or to the experiencer of the results of actions. Dharma teachings point to the unconstructed rather than simply moving around in the field of the constructed, of self and other. In the depth of such teaching, the boundaries between the teacher and student lose any reality. There is equal opportunity for this discovery over cafe latte in a coffee shop as in any inquiry in a Dharma Hall during an intensive retreat.

We have to look from different angles. The boundaries devised to protect individuals from any kind of vulnerability can become the blocks that inhibit communication towards a great liberation. As I wrote earlier, the Sangha does not belong to conventional constructs, though it demands us to be as vigilant as possible around sensitivity, respect and skilful communication. We have to remember that the Buddha's teachings are primarily concerned with truth for the simple reason that it is truth that liberates. Nothing else has that capacity.

We can all too easily substitute effort, especially on the meditation cushion, for truth. The discourses of the Buddha remind us that the direct teachings, relatively and ultimately, have the most impact upon the consciousness. Everything is second place to the power of oral communication. This places a great responsibility on all Dharma teachers to ensure that their teachings are as deep, clear and insightful as possible. One significant insight for the Dharma student can save a thousand hours of the self struggling with itself on the meditation cushion. Just as one picture can say more than a thousand words.

It is unfortunate that some teachers endlessly repeat much the same Dharma talk. If students hear over years the same talk what impact does this have upon them? Is it numbing? Is it conditioning them into a small view of Dharma? Do they close down? Do they still get something out of it? Is the teacher willing to prepare fresh teachings or too lazy? There are plenty of expositions on mindfulness, impermanence, loving kindness, meditation techniques and equanimity. Yogis may need to encourage their teachers to expand their teachings, so that everybody in the Dharma Hall, without exception, listened to a fresh talk, original and insightful for all the yogis.

A sign of respect and deep friendship is offering the deepest teachings. Shankara, the great sage of seventh century India, reminded us to be utterly indifferent to the transitory so that we can give our full attention to the Immeasurable. He encouraged us

to treat the relative world of impermanence as *maya*, as false and deceptive. In that light, the intimacy of the encounter between the teacher and practitioner takes on great significance. The authentic teacher points directly to that what the yogi has not realised while the Sangha of teachers and yogis weave together to share and explore a long thread of knowledge running for more than a hundred generations that unveils our ignorance, dissolves hindrances and awakens our consciousness to an illuminating wisdom.

Challenge of the Five Trainings

The threefold training for practitioners consists of ethics (sila), meditation (samadhi) and wisdom (panna). All teachers are deeply committed to this training for their students.

The first area of development consists of the five trainings -

- 1. not to engage in killing,*
- 2. not to engage in stealing,*
- 3. not engaging in sensual misconduct*
- 4. not engaging in lying*
- 5. not engaging in abuse of alcohol and drugs.*

In a cursory examination of the five trainings, the vast majority of citizens would claim to observe this as seen as a basic code of morality. I don't commit murder or go hunting. I don't rob people. I don't rape or sexually abuse others nor am I a paedophile. I don't lie and deceive. I am not addicted to alcohol and drugs. Teachers and yogis can live in a comfort zone with regard to such a simplistic view of the five trainings.

This interpretation of five precepts only addresses some aspects. As voices of authority, Dharma teachers need to address the contemporary issues involving all five trainings. Some major contemporary ethical issues were not around in Indian society 2500 years ago so ancient Chinese, Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan texts cannot shed light on them and they insufficiently addressed in the Buddhist world. There are exceptions such as Journal of Buddhist Ethics available on the Net. To their credit, a tiny number of lecturers in universities have attempted to offer a Buddhist analysis

on some aspects of ethics and other important dharma themes while some students will write theses on an aspect of Buddhism and ethics but there is not a great deal of written material either in books or on the Internet.

We also cannot find much insight into these contemporary issues from Buddhist monks and nuns in any tradition. The Buddha compared over-adherence to tradition to a long line of blind men holding each other and following on from the first blind person who started the tradition. (D 1.240). It seems to me so much energy is siphoned off to preserve an ancient code of monastic ethics (Vinaya) and that lay Dharma teachers are often unwilling to offer a view or an opinion for fear of sounding judgemental or moralistic.

By unpacking each of the five trainings, we come to realise how challenging they are. It is an enormous undertaking to find wisdom in the expanse of ethical issues. There are usually four responses from Dharma teachers or practitioners to ethical questions. There are:

Yes,

No,

It depends

I don't know.

Here are some examples of ethical issues. Remember the trainings serve to make us reflect on the way our actions or support for actions cause suffering or eventually lead to suffering.

First Training.

Is support for the nation state engaging in acts of war a violation of the first precept?

Is an abortion or support for an abortion a violation of the first precept?

Are experiments on animals showing a disregard for this precept?

Is embryonic research a violation of the sanctity of life?

Is eating animals, birds and fish a rejection of a Buddhist commitment to save all sentient beings?

Second Training

Is the maximisation of profit through investments in unethical stocks and shares a form of stealing from the poor?

Is withholding taxable income stealing from the national purse?

Is the illegal copying of software, music and film CDs a form of stealing from those who own the copyright?

Is spending money on luxury goods, gambling or extravagance in lifestyle a corruption of mind at a cost to others who need our support?

Is the abuse of natural resources a form of taking what has not been given?

Is living beyond our means causing suffering now or near future and depriving future generations of resources?

Third Training

What is sexual freedom and what is sexual irresponsibility?

Is love-making between a teacher and yogi, or guru and disciple, inherently sexual misconduct?

Does violation of this precept always involve harassment or manipulation?

Is taking a lover while in a marriage always a violation of the third precept?

Is three or four people making love together sexual misconduct?

Is having more than one partner, including several partners, sexual misconduct?

Is a monogamous relationship with a long term commitment a Judeo-Christian value or a personal preference?

Is watching pornography showing a disregard for the third precept?

Is using sex to market products an abuse of the precept?

Is working in any capacity in the sex industry an abuse of the third precept?

Fourth Training

Is the selling of goods (a house, policies, shares, goods) that knowingly can result in deep distress for the consumer a breaking of the fourth precept?

Is lying ever justified?

Is secrecy a form of rejection of the fourth precept?

Is going into a country or occupied territory and lying to immigration authorities by claiming tourist status when one is going to teach the Dharma a breach of this precept or a skilful means?

Is teaching about renunciation and a simple life when one is living a wealthy lifestyle a form of deception?

Is using the Dharma to maximise a certain lifestyle acting falsely?

Is secrecy or confidentiality a form of suppression of freedom of speech and a violation of the spirit of the fourth precept?

Fifth Training

Is the taking of mind altering drugs for recreational purposes a violation of the fifth precept?

Is the taking of mind altering drugs for spiritual exploration a violation of the fifth precept?

Is the taking of such drugs giving support to the world wide drug mafia that that ignores all five trainings?

Is a problem with alcohol or drugs an abuse of the fifth precept or, if there is respect for the precept, is it an addictive problem, rather than an ethical issue?

Is smoking cigarettes a violation of the fifth training, bearing in mind that nicotine is the most addictive of all substances with a very high risk of causing cancer and much resultant heartache and suffering for oneself and loved ones, while precious land is wasted on tobacco crops.

There is no room for complacency in the area of the five trainings. We need to keep constantly inquiring into the mindfulness of ethics. There will be no consistency of view among teachers in all aspects of each of the five trainings. We cannot quietly drop ethics from the teachings and restrict teachings to mindfulness or meditation as some do who teach in a professional capacity in the mind/body field. That is not an option for a Dharma teacher. We cannot rest on our laurels, nor cling to long standing views, nor assume we uphold in a pristine way all five trainings. Those who sincerely believe they do so are deluding themselves. As Jesus said: "He who is without sin can throw the first stone." The Buddha said those who uphold ethics make wisdom shine and those who uphold wisdom make ethics shine.

If we have not inquired into these issues of daily life, we may find ourselves becoming increasingly reliant on the voices of authority. There are some traditions in the East where devotees rely totally on the words of the guru as the ultimate authority on a diversity of themes far beyond the guru's remit - as if the guru was omniscient. In the discourse to the Kalama people, and in other discourses, the Buddha expressed deep concern about personal claims to knowledge of an authority figure, if not an abuse of authority, by teacher and follower.

How to know an authentic teacher

Some practitioners are looking for a teacher. It tends to happen organically through the regular contact with a teacher rather than seeing the relationship in mystical terms. We come to know the authority and friendship of a teacher over a long period, and see the depth of the teacher not only through their words and actions but also through their capacity to handle difficult situations. We stay with a teacher or a number of teachers as long as the insights and benefits still arise.

Some traditions take a different view. In a Dzogchen text of the Tibetan tradition, it is written that there are different ways to give service to the guru. The text says "*offer your own wealth and your body without the least selfish desire*" and goes on:

*"To always believe what your guru does is good.
To be able to give him whatever you have
To be able to do whatever he orders
To always believe whatever he says is true.
When you see any faults in him, you must realise that they are in
fact your own...Please bear this in mind."*

Quote from **Simply Being. Texts in the Tsog Chen tradition.**
James Low. Vajra Press London

While another Tibetan text says:

*"Not to examine the teacher is like drinking poison. Not to examine
the disciple is like leaping from a precipice."*

Quote from **The Words of My Perfect Teacher.** Patrul Rinpoche.
Sacred Literature Series

*We might take up the view that no teacher is worthy of total
obedience no matter how accomplished a practitioner he or she
may be. Yet there are practitioners of guru yoga, who have adopted
it as their way despite others' mistrust of the guru figure or the
ideology of Western individualism. Some devotees say they
experience enormous benefits from such a practice, even if it is
incomprehensible to other deeply committed spiritual practitioners.*

Application of the Dharma

The application of the Dharma frees us from our projections and predilections, so we can fearlessly explore together the Dharma and the drama of daily life. There is a revolutionary impulse in the teachings that never leaves us in the comfort zone. We advocate constant inquiry so that we don't submit to social and religious norms as if there was no alternative. The Sangha keeps faith with learning through experience, through what is skilful and unskilful and through emergence of insights. We practice to live without boundaries so that we act as a liberating force. It is sometimes a bit scary, and sometimes ruthlessly challenging. We, the torch holders of the Dharma, the collective network of practitioners, stretch ourselves to our limits, and then go further.

We never marginalise renunciation from our range of commitments since the nice home, new car, redesigned kitchen and five star holidays in the Caribbean confirm the mundane mind, not the development of it. The Sangha loves to travel with freedom of movement, through pilgrimages, journeys to India, to the desert, to

the rainforest, in nature, and to monasteries or urban and rural Dharma centres. It prefers hardship to comfort, the tent to the villa. Authentic Buddhist monks and nuns have a precious role since they set the example of renunciation but they need to be fearless in their criticism of the opulence of far too many Buddhists who practice Buddhism as a hobby, a method of stress management or a satisfying cosmology around karma and rebirth. The Buddha encouraged the Sangha to make war on greed, hate and delusion. It is the task of contemporary Dharma teachers to be the generals upholding a revolutionary vision for change, inner and outer, and offer the specific attitudes and tools to make it possible.

We usually consider renunciation as an ethical act to live more simply, to give support to a more sustainable world or as a practice to learn to travel more lightly in our journey through life. At a deeper level of Dharma, renunciation moves out of the field of conventional ethics. Renunciation is an indispensable feature of the path so that there is no clutter whatsoever in the mind, nor tendency for the self to latch on to "this is mine" or "this is not mine" or "I want it"

We must allow for dissent in the Sangha on sensitive issues such as ethics, renunciation and power. We sometimes conceive dissent as a peripheral activity, a departure from the mainstream. This perspective is unhelpful. Honest dissent enriches the Sangha as a valid expression of the middle way. It is willing to draw from the wisdom of the conservative tradition and then move into areas of exploration where conservatives are not willing to go. Some of us feel concern that the Dharma in the West - mostly White Buddhism - has become a path for personal contentment through the application of a handful of tools stripped of a revolutionary way of life that is neither materialistic nor theistic.

I believe the new generation of Dharma leaders, including teachers, organisers and all others in the Sangha need to explore creative and radical new forms free from the authoritarianism of the religious institution. If there is a loss of diversity, there will be a gradual shrinkage in the Sangha. Its lifestyle, age, language and values will merge into a bland uniformity along with a self-righteousness that disregards those who think and act differently. The conservative and radical values of Buddhism can support each other.

We offer teachings to encourage thoughtful men and women to renounce the narrow endless pursuit of conventional education, career and wealth. We have little regard for the orthodoxy of

pursuit of position and personal prosperity and instead are committed to a totally different way of life. Members of the Sangha have no need to seek approval from parents, education nor employers but we support together our abiding interest the depths of consciousness, an active and fearless love and liberation. The Triple Gem is our support and reference point.

Today's renunciate lives outside the mainstream values of conventional life with no sense of loyalty to the nation state, and its political and economic imperatives. We renounce beliefs in the *nation state* (including Tibet, Israel, Ireland etc) to point humanity to an *awakened state* free from the wasted energy and violence needed to make the nation and then defend it. The Sangha lives in a different state altogether - without boundaries of any kind. Teachers need to be at the forefront of this level of consciousness. It is great tragedy that Buddhism has either fallen into the trap of personal salvation or endless chanting about compassion but little real action on the ground.

The Sangha rejects the infantile worship of a loving God and equally mundane belief in salvation through materialism. Most important of all, we teachers and yogis, must not be afraid to take risks, to allow our wings to spread, to stay true to a vision otherwise we will lose our nerve and fit in to the controlling interests of conservative Buddhism and the unquestioning dogma that controls all major political parties.

Dharma teachers share a common responsibility for the turning of the Dharma Wheel. I believe we are now in the era of the 4th major turning of the wheel. The first occurred 2500 years ago when the Buddha first gave teachings in Sarnath. The 2nd Turning of the Wheel arose in the widespread response in Asia to Mahayana Buddhism. The 3rd Turning of the Wheel arose with Zen and its emphasis on depths of meditation and immediate liberating realisation. Each turning of the wheel took centuries to evolve to become a significant influence. The 4th Turning of the Wheel consists of Dharma teachers in the West offering knowledge and practices in the three-fold training of ethics, meditation and wisdom to break open the narrow view of life in contemporary Western thought.

The Buddha said there are five ways that Dharma teachers serve the Sangha:

They give through instruction

Make sure they have understood what needs to be understood

Give them a thorough grounding in all the necessary skills

Recommend their students to others

Enable them to feel secure (DN.31)

There have been developments within each Turning of the Wheel - including Vipassana, Zen, Vajrayana and Tsog Chen. These and many other responses often arose through men and women seeing the necessity for change with teachers and practitioners implementing that change despite opposition by the religious orthodoxy. Global change moves along at such a speed that we no longer have the privilege of several hundred years to develop this 4th new turning of the wheel. Until Buddhism liberates itself from the weight of its own long history, it can hardly act as a liberating force in society. We have to distinguish clearly what we hold onto in the Dharma that keeps us stuck in the past. We question our society's blind adherence to science as the only means to know reality and our dependency on informational knowledge in education. We apply the principle of co-operation and exploration, a cornerstone of Sangha life, rather than adherence to competition in the market and the worship of status and materialism.

Dharma points to the emptiness of such obsessional thinking and a liberating and compassionate wisdom as the true revelation of our humanity.

With an eye to the future

Hierarchy comes from the Greek word *hieros* means sacred. *Archos* means *ruler*. A true hierarchy, that is a sacred rule, permits others to expand and develop as human beings. The hierarchy in the Sangha includes the role of teacher, roles that support the practice of others, voices of wisdom and experience, and those who are new or relatively new to Dharma practice. We become authoritarian when we fail to allow for dissent, exercise our influence in a narrow way or dissuade others from pursuing a wider exploration. The other unhealthy tendency shows as the dumbing down of the role of authority - either by teachers or yogis in the Sangha or cynical voices outside of the Sangha. This means some people fear hierarchy whatever their place is on the ladder.

The Sangha does not imitate an army of soldiers who engage in

unquestioning obedience to orders. Some Buddhist teachers insist on strict adherence to certain methods and techniques. While this may be necessary in an intensive retreat, it produces harmful consequences (sectarianism, cults, submissive behaviour and loss of natural autonomy) when it becomes a view that yogis must submit to or be ostracised. Some schools and teachers insist their students do not practice with other teachers or traditions, refuse to allow others outside their circle to attend their teachings, or tell students to stay away from meditating with others of a different practice. There are various rationalisations for the imposition of such restrictions - 'you will become confused,' 'you can't mix practices, 'others won't understand unless they join our programme. 'Serious practitioners need to be aware of such attitudes and be mindful of any restriction of freedom to inquire or share with others. People who belong to a sect or cult often live in denial as much as any other form of questionable behaviour. We have to listen to those who agree with our priorities and listen to those equally disagree.

Dharma teachers with years of experience need to ensure continuity through establishing a solid Sangha of teachers, facilitators and organisers. Some of these long standing teachers feel inhibited to invite one of their students to teach in case it gains the disapproval of their own teacher. As teachers, we express leadership, and take responsibility for our decisions with regard to others. This is an important aspect of our authority as Dharma teachers.

Some teachers report that they never felt totally ready to teach. There is always more practice for us to engage in. Some teachers move effortlessly between teaching and being students of other teachers. The Buddha's claims about himself to Upaka hardly reveal selflessness. If we have too high expectations of ourselves or others, we will never be ready to share the Dharma with others and never sense that anybody else is ready to teach either. To cherish ideals of total selflessness inhibits the spirit of being a teacher/kalyana mitta for yogis. It seems to me pointless advocating a selfless existence as the ultimate goal. If we have that aim in mind, nobody will ever be ready to teach. I have spent my life moving in religious/spiritual/service orientated groups and networks and have not found one individual who is totally selfless. The Buddha does not offer such a romantic ideal He teaches liberation from suffering so that we understand ourselves and others - ultimately and relatively.

If we never lose contact with ourselves as a kalyana mitta, a practitioner or yogi, then, as a Dharma teacher, we are less likely to get caught up with an unhealthy teacher image of ourselves, nor

engage in a mode of relationship involving misuse of power, intentionally or otherwise. Dharma teachings are a constant encouragement to explore - different teachers, practices, lifestyles, meditation, yoga, psychotherapy, trainings and forms of service. In any authentic exploration, we might find ourselves up against a strongly differing view from our own. Some teachers will remain determined to sustain the accepted moral order refusing to perceive a morality outside of it. Codes of morality, precepts and vows have worked in the past and must be observed, they believe. These teachers see any questioning of a fixed moral order as a rationalisation for questionable behaviour.

Others will claim the old moral order of right and wrong is repressive, self righteous and leads to punitive and reactionary treatment of those who defy the order. Some authority figures in the Dharma state the need to explore human relationships, to allow different kinds of interaction to take place so the authoritarianism of the old order dissolves allowing for greater freedom of expression in our inner life and with others.

Adherents of the old order and those exploring an evolutionary shift may find it hard to experience a common ground of understanding. There is a moral certainty among the traditionalists, free from ambiguity of right and wrong.

Those engaged in an unfixed, non-absolute Dharma inquiry, as an expression of inner exploration of life; find themselves (ourselves!) coming across cautiously in our communications with certain Buddhist institutions, who strongly advocate the old order. We can feel somewhat on the defensive with neither a clearly defined set of absolutes in morality, nor the certainty of the old order.

The old order sanctions those who adhere to fixed norms in some areas but often ignore other areas of ethics. Adherents will privately and public rebuke or excommunicate those who act differently. The danger of the old order is the rush to judgement without giving real consideration to the causes and conditions that determine action. The danger of those who regard the Dharma as a constant exploration is that they can deceive themselves and others in their behaviour. There is the fear of coming to a judgement about unwise action and its consequences and a clinging to a moral relativism.

We live in a time where it becomes increasingly harder to admit faults. There is such a backlash. We resist admission of failings or we blame another (s) or identify ourselves as a victim.

Dharma teachers must remain committed to transforming the lives of others so that they express same depths of Dharma, relatively and ultimately. For this to take place, it requires the development of relationships with practitioners over months and years and employment of the divine power of friendship and insight so that the skills of the teacher and yogi are fully brought out. The Buddha said the noble ones experience empathy with others, and, in terms of leadership, it requires that teachers make themselves approachable and accessible for the sharing of knowledge and direction. A Dharma leader can offer not only knowledge but also an infectious enthusiasm. A Dharma teacher makes things happen through dedication and communication.

The leadership of Dharma teachers matters significantly if the Dharma is to take root in the West. We have the immense task of not only sowing seeds in the hearts and mind of individuals and society but contributing to a revolution of consciousness. Dharma teachers may offer very helpful retreats, workshops and public talks but the same teachers need to remember that change comes through total dedication to others outside of these forms. There is no substitute for a Dharma teacher. We have our mentors, we listen to the wise counsel of others, inside and outside of the Sangha, but we have to be fearless in our love of the Dharma and in releasing the fullness of the Sangha and ourselves.

As Dharma teachers, we have to keep expressing our authority, our friendship and our vision to ensure the West adapts to the Dharma, and not the other way around.

MAY ALL BEINGS LIVE AN AWAKENED LIFE

Previous articles of Christopher in the **Dharma e-News** addressing some of the issues in above article.

Go to www.insightmeditation.org. Click on Dharma e-News

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For further reading:

[Teacher or Friend. The Image of the Teacher in the Four Primary Nikayas.](#)

MA Thesis Asaf Federman

TRANSLATING THE OTHER Reflections on a Fictional Dialogue - The Emperor and the Ascetic

Daniel Raveh 2533 words

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Translation is a great necessity. Every language might not have a Valmiki, a Vyasa, a Homer, a Rumi, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Hugo, a Tolstoy and a Dickens (Rao 1998: 68)

In every possible sense, translation is necessary but impossible (Spivak 2000:13)

In the following lines I would like to reflect on a short fictional dialogue between Alexander of Macedon and an Indian ascetic (sadhu) as imagined by Vikram Chandra in his novel Red Earth and Pouring Rain (2001). I will offer a close reading of the text, followed by a short analysis of the translator's role in Chandra's dialogue as an illustration of the dialogue between 'me' and the 'other' which for me is the very essence of a cross-cultural translation.

As just said, the dialogue to be discussed is between Alexander the Great and an Indian sadhu. The dry historical facts tell of a brief

encounter between Alexander and naked ascetics during his invasion of India. Apparently Aristotle himself requested that he bring along a wise man from India, implying an unexpected openness on the part of the famous philosopher towards other traditions of knowledge.

It is also said that the sadhu taken along by the emperor never reached Greece, having immolated himself somewhere along the journey. But the historical or semi-historical details are not the focus of our discussion here; rather I am interested in the literary response of Vikram Chandra to the alleged anecdote about the king and the ascetic. I will not touch on the place of the dialogue in Chandra's novel, as I believe that it can stand on its own and be discussed independently; especially since I aspire to comment with and through Chandra's dialogue on the far wider 'me'-'other' dialogue which underlies every translation of a text 'belonging' to one culture into another.

Apropos cross-cultural translation, I would like to suggest that language is culture or at least the spinal cord of a culture. Hence translation from language to language is necessarily translation from culture to culture. Nevertheless, the following observation will focus primarily on translation in the contemporary encounter between India and 'the West'. It will not be restricted to a specific field, yet in writing these lines I am thinking primarily of translation of philosophical texts. Since every language might not have not merely a Valmiki, a Vyasa, a Homer and a Rumi, but also a Patañjali, a Sankara, a Confucius, a Plato, a Maimonides and a Kant.

A final word before I invite you into Chandra's text: as you will shortly discover, the 'real' dialogue is not between Alexander the Great or Sikander as he is called in India and a sadhu, but rather between Sikander's translator and the sadhu. The emperor himself is present in this dialogue merely in his absence. A power-shift between the king and the translator takes place. The latter shifts to centre stage and emerges as a mediator between two cultures, between altogether different ways of thinking. His job, as the following lines will reveal, is to reconcile the irreconcilable. Here is the dialogue then with my own bhasya ('live-commentary') interwoven with Chandra's text.

Translator: He [Sikander] wants to know why you're naked.

Sadhu: Ask him why he's wearing clothes.

The fictional dialogue begins with a question. The king asks the

sadhu why he is naked; or rather the 'dressed householder' ('dressed' in views and opinions, in a certain thought-pattern) acknowledges the otherness of the 'naked ascetic'. In the present case, the twist lies in the fact that the sadhu demonstrates the reversibility of the 'me-other' dialectic. The king is as much his other as he is the other of the king.

Hence he refuses to accept his interlocutor's presupposition that one should wear clothes in order to be considered 'normal', 'civilized', even 'human'. By turning the question back to Sikander, the sadhu refuses to be objectified by the king and insists on creating a dialogue between equal participants instead of a foretold monologue in which the 'other' is but an excuse to listen once again to me and myself.

Translator: He says he's asking the questions here.

Sadhu: Questions give birth only to other questions.

So the sadhu breaks another convention. We are so used to think that questions give rise to answers, and suddenly we (and Sikander) are faced with a person who suggests that questions simply raise new questions. Where do answers come from then? And what is the relation between questions and answers? Chandra leaves these questions open for the readers' reflection.

At the narrative level it is clear that the emperor is not interested in an open dialogue with the sadhu; he insists on having control of the whole episode; for him, the so-called dialogue is all about domination, about appropriating the 'other' rather than respecting his otherness. The question is of course whether such is the case in the contemporary dialogue between India and 'the west'. Is it a real dialogue between equals or just a power-game or a new form of colonialism?

Translator: He says people that get funny with him get executed.

Sadhu: Why?

Translator: Because he's the King of Kings. And he wants you to stop asking questions.

Sadhu: King of Kings?

Translator: He came all the way from a place called Greece, killing

other kings, so he's King of Kings, see.

The sadhu continues to question each and every utterance of his interlocutor ('why?', 'King of Kings?'). The translator is no longer merely 'Sikander's mouth', bilingual-technician repeating the king's words in the ascetic's language as accurately as he can. My impression is that in this case, the translator provides his own answers without even translating the questions to the emperor. His answers are over-simplified or perhaps cynical, yet reveal an inescapable historical truth: when a king conquers and kills, he is considered 'king of kings'.

Sadhu: Fool of Fools. Master-clown of clowns.

Maha-Idiot of idiots.

Translator: You want me to tell him that?

The sadhu ignores the translator's implied warning: the emperor kills whoever refuses to surrender, be it kings in a battlefield or sadhus who ask questions. His refusal to surrender or accept the 'logic' behind Sikander's definition as 'king of kings' reveals its futility. The translator becomes more and more independent. He explicitly says that Sikander need not necessarily know what is said in the dialogue. He suggests not translating the ascetic's words, fearing their lethal consequence with regard to the sadhu and perhaps even to himself.

Hence it is no longer a dialogue between the king and the ascetic but rather between the latter and the translator. Furthermore, the 'other' does not always say what we ('me', Alexander in the narrative, the readers of a text in translation) want to hear; that is what makes him an 'other'. The dilemma, as reflected here, is whether to translate his/her words or not. This point will be further discussed later.

Finally, Chandra beautifully twists the word maharaja which has become Standard English word (minus the diacritical marks which my computer has been programmed to automatically add). For the sadhu, an invader and a killer cannot be a maha-raja but rather maha-idiot. For him Sikander is indeed Great (maha) but not in the usual sense of the word. The idiom 'maha-idiot' which plays both with 'maharaja' and with 'the Great' reveals Chandra's own position as a 'translator' or a 'dvibhasi' between two cultures.

Sadhu: I said it, didn't I?

Translator: You are crazier than he is. He says he'll kill you. Right here, right now.

Sadhu: I'll have to die some day.

Translator: Listen, don't do this. He's demented, he doesn't realize who you are, he thinks naked people are poor savages. He'll really kill you.

Sadhu: I'll really have to die some day.

Now the dialogue is entirely between the sadhu and the translator. The latter still tries to prevent violence, reinforcing his independent position between the king and the ascetic.

The sadhu embodies the yogic approach which sees abhinivesa, 'fear of death', as a klesa or 'cause of suffering'. He is more concerned with his freedom than with extending his life-span. Like the translator, he too secures his independent position. The independence of both of them is a precondition for a genuine dialogue to take place between them.

Translator: He wants to know why you aren't scared of dying.

Sadhu: That'd be silly.

Translator: He says that's not a satisfactory answer.

Sadhu: What sort of answer would he like?

Translator: He says you should tell him exactly what mystic path you followed to reach this sublime state of indifference. And he wishes you would stop asking questions. Really, this is incredible, I think you've got him hooked.

Sadhu: Mystic path?

Translator: Mystic path. Literal translation.

The emperor refuses to accept the sadhu's 'unsatisfactory answer'. The sadhu is intrigued to know what the king wants to hear. As I have suggested above, the 'other' does not always say what we expect him to, or says something which we cannot digest or in

some cases even understand. The first instance which comes into my mind is Patañjali's picture of yoga as world-renunciation, unfolding verse after verse in his famous Yogasutra. This is definitely not what the majority of the western readers of the text want to hear.

Therefore Patañjali's radical approach is modified in translation after translation, to create an altogether different, 'friendlier' yoga-picture, more digestible at least for a western/westernized stomach; to provide the readers (or the 'buyers') with what they want to hear (namely integration, harmony, God and Love with capital letters and the like). Chandra's Sikander (like the buyers of the Yogasutra in translation) wants the Eastern Wisdom. He will not buy the sadhu's profane, even vulgar answer ('That'd be silly'). Chandra's sadhu is not very mystical; his straightforward secularity (which is the last thing expected of him) is emphasized by Chandra's slangy language throughout the dialogue. Chandra's translator is caught in the gap between the king's unfulfilled expectations and the ascetic's sheer refusal to play the role intended for him. Overwhelmed by his incapacity to bridge the gap, the translator takes a step back to the seemingly safer zone of literal translation. Don't we all opt for literal translation when we have no idea what to do with the text? Literal translation indicates the limitedness of the translator and the dead ends one often encounters in the act of translation, especially translation as a cross-cultural dialogue. Let me now skip a few paragraphs and reach the final passage of the dialogue:

Translator: You're lucky. He's decided killing you would be bad for the campaign at this moment, he'd look cruel, and then nobody would surrender. He's having his chroniclers strike this conversation from the record. Now history will state that Sikander the Great met some strange naked men under a tree, that's all.

Sadhu: Well, well. Good luck, friend.

Translator: Good luck to you too, or is that what one wishes people like you? Now I'm asking questions.

This last paragraph shows that in fact two dialogues have taken place simultaneously in front of our eyes, one fictional, the other authentic. The fictional dialogue is between the king and the ascetic. It is fictional because they have not really met. The words could not bring them together. Each remained isolated in his own world. The barrenness of their meeting is emphasized by the fact that the conversation has been deleted from the record. In this case

the 'empty' record reflects that which has actually taken or more precisely not taken place.

Words have been exchanged; a real dialogue could not be established. Nevertheless, in between the lines of the emperor-sadhu fictional dialogue, an authentic dialogue has taken place between the ascetic and the translator. Authentic in the sense that friendship has been created; in the sense that like the sadhu, the translator takes the liberty to ask questions. Questions are the pillars based on which the whole dialogue-structure is built.

The translator in the episode under discussion first represents the emperor, then provides independent answers to the questions of the sadhu and finally asks a question of his own. Perhaps this is the recipe of translation at large: First to be loyal, appreciative, even identified with the source-text; then to answer questions which arise in the target-culture or the target-language (the translator's answers or 'solutions' are necessarily independent, as these questions/problems did not arise in the source-language); and finally, being aware of the fact that as a translator one is an active participant in a cross-cultural dialogue. As such the translator may raise questions and share with the reader not merely a 'final product' but also the hardships and uncertainties of the translation-journey.

The active role of the translator is transparent both in a 'textual translation' from one language to another and in a two-way 'simultaneous translation'. I do not see a fundamental difference between the two. In either case the translator must be an insider/outsider in both languages/cultures: an insider to be able to feel the unique pulse of each language, to understand not merely the said but also the unsaid; an outsider in order to be detached enough to cut - like a film director - scenes (or lines) of the original which do not fit in the rhythm of the newly created translation-text, indispensable as they might seem to the insider. In other words, the translator should establish a 'realm of between': between languages, cultures, loyalty and betrayal.

Translation is a close encounter. Every encounter consists of two, 'me' and the 'other', whether it two people or two cultures; it is two who try to come close to each other. Each gives something of herself. Each holds something of the other. Translation is a 'realm of between' in the sense that nothing gets lost. The 'source' remains the 'source'; the 'target' is still the 'target', but at the same time a new place, where both are transformed, is being discovered.

The Yogasutra in English is not Patañjali's book but a new creation. The Iliad in Hebrew is not the text written by Homer, but rather a new, intriguing composition. The translator is the facilitator of such encounter; she is also the encounter itself. Translation is necessary in order to open up, to become receptive to other traditions of thought, to new forms of creativity, to the 'other' outward and inward.

Translation is impossible if anyone is naïve enough to believe that she reads the source-text in the target-language rather than a new text composed by a translator who has read the source-text in the source-language. A flower in the open field is not the same as the 'same' flower in my garden. Translation is possible merely as transformation: of a text; of the translator; and if it is a good translation, even of the reader.

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T. Mukherjee (ed.), Translation: From Periphery to Centrestage, New Delhi: Prestige

Spivak, G.C. (2000) 'Translation as Culture', Parallax, 6: 1, 13-24

FAVOURITE SONGS OF BOB DYLAN

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In May 1966, my editor sent me to interview Bob Dylan in the Mayfair Hotel in London. There were about 15 reporters in the room. You can see a clip filmed in the hotel room in the Dylan documentary of the 1966 tour "Eat the Document" on *You Tube*. I still have the cutting in my scrapbook. I recall it wasn't easy. Dylan said less than nothing, totally uninterested in the media. Bless him. I liked his utter indifference. I regard Dylan as the great poet/songwriter of our time. There is Bob Dylan and The Beatles - the two true Gods of contemporary music in the last 50 years.

Here are my 14 favourite Bob Dylan songs, the name of the album, a line or two of appreciation (in capital letters) and a few lines from

the song. You can find clips of Dylan singing most of the songs on *You Tube*.

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall (1963)

Album: From the Freewheelin Bob Dylan

A SONG OF PROFOUND PROPHECY.

"Where the people are many and their hands are all empty
Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters
Where the home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison
Where the executioner's face is always well hidden"

Angelina (1981)

Bob Dylan Bootleg Series 1-3

TAKE RISKS AND DIVE INTO POLITICAL, SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

"Do I need your permission to turn the other cheek?
If you can read my mind, why must I speak?
No, I have heard nothing about the man that you seek?"

Blowing in the Wind (1962)

Freewheeling Bob Dylan

TRULY THE GLOBAL ANTHEM. FOR ALL THOSE WHO DEFY WAR.
AN INVITATION FOR HUMANITY TO WAKE UP BUT NEVER
KNOWING IF OR WHEN IT WILL HAPPEN

"Yes n how many years can some people exist
Yes n how many times can a man turn his head
Pretending he just doesn't see
The answer my friend is blowin in the wind."

Don't Think Twice It's Alright (1963)

The Freewheelin Bob Dylan

WHEN A PARTNER WANTS MORE THAN ONE CAN OFFER. DYLAN
WANTS LISTENERS TO USE THE TITLE OF THE SONG TO FEEL
BETTER ABOUT OURSELVES.

"I gave her my heart but she wanted my soul."

Forever Young (1973)

Planet Waves

DYLAN SINGS THIS SONG WITH A RARE DEPTH OF LOVING
KINDNESS AND TENDERNESS. HEART-OPENING.
A SONG WITH EXCEPTIONAL EMOTIONAL SENSITIVITY. MUCH
LOVED WHEN HE SINGS IT ON STAGE.

"May you grow up to be righteous
May you grow up to be true
May you always know the truth
And see the lights surrounding you."

Gates of Eden (1965)

Bringing it all back home

THE EXTRAORDINARY LYRICS ARE A STATEMENT ON THE RELATIVE AND ULTIMATE TRUTH. To what Did Dylan realise that? THE PENULTIMATE LAST VERSE SAYS IT ALL.

"At times I think there are no words
But these to tell what's true
And there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden."

I Shall Be Released (1970)

The Basement Tapes

A SONG OF IMPENDING LIBERATION

"I see my light come shining
From the west unto the east
Any day now, any day now
I shall be released"

It's All Over Now, Baby Blue (1965)

Bringing it all back home

AS THE TITLE STATES, SO GO START ANEW.

"Leave your stepping stones behind, something calls for you
Forget the dead you've left, they will not follow you
The vagabond who is knocking at your door
Is standing in the clothes you once wore."

Like a Rolling Stone (1965)

Highway 61 Revisited

SIX MINUTES OF REALISING ONE'S NON-SELF AND REMINDING US THAT WHEN WE HAVE NOTHING WE HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE.

"How does it feel
How does it feel
To be without a home
Like a complete unknown
Like a rolling stone"

Mississippi (2001)

Love and Theft

NOTHING IS WORTH CLINGING TO

"Every step of the way we walk the line
Your days are numbered so are mine
Time is piling up, we struggle and we scrape
We're all boxed in, nowhere to escape."

Mr Tambourine Man (1965)

Bringing it all back home

A BEAUTIFUL REMINDER TO FOLLOW THE *MUSIC* OF OUR LIFE AND ALL THAT GOES WITH IT.

"Then take me disappearin through the smoke rings of my mind
Down the foggy ruins of time, far past the frozen leaves
The haunted, frightened trees, out to the windy beach
Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow."

Shelter from the Storm (1974)

Blood on the tracks

WE NEED TO TAKE REFUGE. IT COULD BE INTO THE ARMS OF A
WOMAN.

"But nothing really matters much, it's doom alone that counts
And the one eyed undertaker, he blows a long-forgotten horn
"Come in" she said ""I'll give you shelter from the storm.""

Simple Twist of Fate (1974)

Blood on the Tracks

*The tingle in the bones at first contact on the park bench didn't lead
anywhere. Oh, tell me about it.*

"People tell me it's a sin
To know and feel too much within
I still believe she was my twin, but I lost the ring
She was born in spring, but I was born too late
Blame it on a single twist of fate."

The Times they are Changing (1964)

The Times they are Changing

A SONG THAT TRULY BELONGS TO ANY ERA, INCLUDING THE
CURRENT ONE.

"There's a battle outside and it is ragin
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are changin'"

THANK YOU BOB.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE MUSIC/ POETRY OF LIFE IS
IMMEASURABLE

THE PRACTICE OF RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

AND (non) SELF-EMPLOYMENT

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*In October, 2008, Christopher gave a one workshop at the Bodhi
Garden, Brighton, England.*

There is an important meeting point between right livelihood , self=employment and Networking to establish the knowledge and skills that we have developed for the welfare others. We need to share our experiences and concerns with others for fresh insights and inspiration to arise.

As a self-employed person (or as I prefer to say a *non-self* employed person), I work in a variety of ways to develop my network of contacts through various ways.

Friendship is an important and powerful resource in the development of right livelihood.

Money

Are we charging too much or too little?

Do we find it difficult to negotiate an agreed amount?

Can we adjust our prices according to the financial circumstances of the client, charity or business?

Can we ask the client what the service is worth?

Do we keep careful accounts of inflows and outflows?

Do we put pressure on those who neglect to pay, skilfully remind or remain indifferent?

Inner relationship to work.

Is my self worth determined by the number of clients, by feedback or my judgements of what I do?

Do I take the view that others are better than myself?

Do I get caught up in regarding myself as superior, inferior or equal to others?

Do I feel there are already too many yoga teachers, artists or designers so I lose enthusiasm?

Do I need to develop appreciative joy for my skills?

Do I love my work?

I encouraged the group to be original and creative in their expression of what they have to offer.

We easily slip into habits both in what we do and the way we think about what we do. During a tea break, I invited everyone to write down a maximum of three sentences to describe in an original way what they have to offer. I encouraged them not to be shy of stating clearly and precisely. "I am a, My work is to, Each person then read their sentences to us.

The Buddha said *saddha* (a Pali word that means both *confidence* and *trust*) is of foremost importance. He referred to it as the first god of the mind. In terms of right livelihood, confidence is the ability to reach out and communicate one's skills and authority. Trust is the capacity to be patient for a supportive response to the act of confidence.

It was reported that we can become deluged with much work in a short period and then the workload drops away. We need to develop skills to handle calmly intense working periods, save money for the low periods, and make wise use of the time for developing skills in the times of absence of employment, otherwise stress and anxiety haunts our daily life.

In the afternoon period, I divided participants into three groups -

Self employed working with business and charities

Self employed offering mind/body services to individuals and groups

Those who wish to look into their inner attitude to work, money and self worth.

I gave a 45 minute recorded talk *The Practice of Right Livelihood*, and recorded some questions. The talk addressed features of the inner and the outer. (Please note the word *Samma*, usually translated as *Right* actually mean *Fulfilling*. It is one of the eight links in the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path for a fulfilled life.

At times, we may experience ongoing doubt with our work. There are two possibilities to attend to doubt. Does it require a change of attitude? Does it require a change of work? If it is the latter, there

is a risk involved that when leaving the known and the secure, we step into the unknown and the insecure? Are we willing to go through such an experience instead of just complaining about our current situation?

E-mails were exchanged between a numbers of people who attended the workshop. (I will invite the group and others to attend an evening meeting in 2009 to share developments in our working lives since the meeting).

I would like to thank you for your kind words after the workshop and generosity in terms of the donations (*dana*).

PREPARATORY NOTES ON RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT.

Four ways to Communicate Work skills.

1. **Advertisements** (flyers, business cards, notice in shop windows, handout on streets, paid ads, news items, quotes from satisfied clients)
2. **Communication** (word of mouth, invitations, telephone calls, referrals, cold calling, announcements at meetings,)
3. **Written and Visual** - posted invitations, logo, flyers through the door, websites, e-mails, proposals, e-newsletters, news items, You tube, Flickr, articles, letters to organisations in the public and private sector, follow up after offering service.

Offers, samples, including the arts, creative initiatives, wild ideas, discounts, memberships, small gift or special thank you to someone who brings you a new client.

It takes a lot of work to bridge the gap between the coach (in whatever capacity) and the client. We have to "mind the gap." If there is not a fulfilling flow between oneself and other (s) we have to name the gap and work to bridge it. It is easy for some people to complain about the lack of interest in their services. Please remember that you have to work very hard to establish a network of clients. This work never stops. After more than 30 years, I know from experience. We cannot rest on our laurels. **An indispensable aspect of work for the self-employed is ensuring regular information goes out to potential clients and old clients. This is part of the job!**

Try to avoid the language of "selling yourself." You are offering a service.

POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND TO ESTABLISH RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

Referrals are the best way to develop the number of clients.

Keep in touch with your network of contacts

Is there a real opportunity in the area where you live for your service?

Are you willing to diversify so that you are not reliant on a single skill?

Do you need to concentrate on a particular skill?

Clear message of skills needs to be delivered effectively.

CONTACTS

Prepare as full a list as possible of those who you know. Seek their support.

Do you have contact with others working in a similar field with whom you can share what works or doesn't work for you?

Do others recommend you and do you recommend others?

Do you practice to expand your skills and inspire others to join with you as you develop?

What is the essence of what you want people to remember about your programme?

Make sure your brochure and website answers the who what where when and how questions.

Brainstorm regularly alone or with others putting the wildest ideas to paper.

Communication is the link between coach and client.

COMMUNICATION

What can you do for them?

When do you do what you do?

Why will the client benefit from contact with you?

What makes your work interesting?

Why is your work important?

What is a one line statement that you can express to encourage a client to see you again?

MAY THE SANGHA GIVE SUPPORT TO THE non-SELF EMPLOYED
ENGAGED IN RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

MANAGER FOR BODH GAYA REQUIRED 2010 - 2011

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The annual retreat staff in Bodhgaya, India is currently looking for a new retreat manager to begin in January, 2009. The position offers a chance to practice while developing leadership skills and supporting the 10 day retreats which have been held at the Thai Monastery for over 35 years.

Volunteers should be able to:

- maintain a three year commitment to the program (from December 20- February 4 annually).
- Work diplomatically with the staff and monks at the Thai monastery and supervise 5 local cooks (Hindi is helpful but not necessary).
- Collaborate with a team of teachers and managers to best serve the process of our yogis.
- Manage a budget and maintain simple bookkeeping.

The role of a manager is an opportunity to bring one's practice into

the world within the support of a silent retreat environment and direct mentorship from teachers. A manager should have retreat experience and have traveled in India. Airfare, trainfare and expenses while in Bodhgaya will be paid annually plus dana.

Chad Bennett with Karen have kindly managed the Bodh Gaya retreats for the past three years. They will conclude after the 2009 Bodh Gaya retreats finish in February. Chad and Karen can provide the necessary training in early January, 2009.

For further information: christopher@insightmeditation.org

Audio Website, Zen Moments,

Meditation Bench and T-shirts

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CHRISTOPHER'S AUDIO WEBSITE. Andy, Asaf, Benoit and Nadamo are kindly co-operating to make a significant number of my dharma teachings over the last three years (talks lasting from 40 minutes to one hour, and some inquiries) freely available. The team are making it possible to freely download the full talks/ inquiries from the website. It is currently work in progress. An announcement when ready will be made on the home page around late January. www.christophertitmuss.org

ZEN MOMENTS (www.zenmoments.org) is a new website launched three months ago, and is proving to be very popular (over 300,000 visitors in three months).

Zen Moments features inspiring stories about the transforming power of awareness. These are stories of the magic that happens when we stop pushing to try to get somewhere else, when we open our eyes and hearts to the present moment, to that which right is in front of us... inspiring moments of humour, insight, wisdom or compassion.

The most popular story is this one <http://www.zenmoments.org/the-cab-ride-ill-never-forget/> about a cab driver who picks up an old lady who asks him to take her to a hospice, as she has a terminal illness. It's a profoundly moving story, and has been read by

160,000 people.

Currently there are about 35 articles, with new submissions being added every couple of days. You can sign up to receive email or RSS updates.

Zen Moments also welcomes YOUR stories - teaching stories which have inspired or helped you, or stories of your own insights.

Meditation Bench

Dear friends, while on the French Yatra this summer, struggling with a bad knee that made sitting hard, I designed a light weight flat packable kneeling bench. On my return I made one and found it so comfortable I have started to market them. If anyone is interested please visit www.zenbench.co.uk Best wishes, Ken Streat, Totnes, Devon, England.

White T-shirts with original Buddha quote prints, made by two Vipassana practitioners from Israel.

A fair amount of the profits is being donated to the new upcoming meditation center in Israel. Please visit our web-site: <http://www.buddhasaid.net>

CHRISTOPHER TITMUSS - INTERNATIONAL SCHEDULE

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Dharma Retreats, Dharma Gatherings, Yatras (Pilgrimages), Dharma Talks and Inquiry

See www.dharmafacilitators.org for DFP dates for October 2008 in Totnes and Brighton for one day workshops open to all. See website for DFP residential programmes in Germany, Israel, Australia and New Zealand.

For comprehensive flight information, times and costs between two cities check out www.farechase.yahoo.com

For current exchange rates between two currencies, check out www.xe.com/ucc

- **Christopher's websites are:**

www.insightmeditation.org (teachings, articles, practices)

www.livingdharma.info (do you need a Dharma Mentor?)

www.dharmafacilitators.org (programme for experienced meditators)

www.christophertitmuss.org (to order CD's of teachings, inquiry etc)

www.christophertitmuss.org/blog (Christopher's Dharma blog)

www.bodhgayaretreats.org (information about Bodh Gaya / Sarnath programme in India)

www.dharmayatra.org (annual French pilgrimage. July 30 to August 9, 2008. Foix, Toulouse)

Dharma Retreats, Dharma Gatherings, Yatras (Pilgrimages), Dharma Facilitators Programme, Dharma Talks and Inquiry

INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

See below for dates, places, website addresses and e-mail contacts of centres organising the international schedule.

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY. 2009 INDIA. TIRUVANNAMALAI, BODH GAYA AND SARNATH

MARCH, 2009 UK AND GERMANY

APRIL 2009 ISRAEL

MAY 2009 ENGLAND AND GERMANY

JUNE 2009 ENGLAND

JULY 2009 ENGLAND AND FRANCE

AUGUST 2009 GERMANY

OCTOBER, 2009 UK and Germany.

NOVEMBER, 2009 AUSTRALIA

INDIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our India programme will probably run through from November, 2008 until May 2009

Every month during this time, there are teachings and practices in very different environments all over India including **Jaya, Gemma, Ajay, Sanghaseva** and others.

See also www.opendharma.org

email opendharmainfo@yahoo.com

www.sanghaseva.org

email sangha_seva@yahoo.co.uk

-
Do come to India to join all or part of this extraordinary and truly unique six month programme, much of it run entirely on your donations (*dana*).

Our retreats in Bodh Gaya (started 1975) and the Dharma Gathering in Sarnath (started 1999) are run entirely on dana (donations) from participants.

TO REGISTER FOR BODH GAYA RETREATS

See www.bodhgayaretreats.org for more information on our programme for Bodh Gaya bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR NAME FOR BODH GAYA AND SARNATH BY E-MAIL.

INDIA

January 15 18.00 to January 22, 2009 12.00

1st DHARMA GATHERING IN TIRUVANNAMALAI

Five minutes walk from Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram

Mountain Breeze Guest House

Tiruvannamalai

Tamil Nadu.

Christopher, Jaya, Radha, Lila, Jenny, Kailash and Rani.

Contact : anicca@rocketmail.com

INDIA JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2009

35TH ANNUAL DHARMA RETREAT IN BODH GAYA

January 17 - 27, 2009

BODH GAYA RETREATS

[Martin Aylward](#) and Yvonne Weier

Thai Monastery

Bodh Gaya, near Gaya, India

www.bodhgayaretreats.org,

bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

January 27 - February 6, 2009

BODH GAYA RETREATS

Christopher Titmuss, Radha Nicholson,

Thai Monastery

Bodh Gaya, near Gaya, India

www.bodhgayaretreats.org,

bodhgayamanagers@yahoo.com

February 9 - 19, 2009

11th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DHARMA GATHERING

Christopher, Jaya, [Radha](#), Gemma, Ajay, Zohar, Nathan, Kailash,

Rafaket and Denis.

Thai Monastery

Sarnath, near Varanasi, India

Come any day, leave any day. Dharma Gathering offered on donation.

www.bodhgayaretreats.org

No need to register. See also www.insightmeditation.org

We have printed a beautiful flyer with colour pix to promote Bodh Gaya and Sarnath.

Families welcome.

Saturday March 7, 2009 10 pm to 6 pm.

Totnes

LOVE AND INTIMACY

What is a relationship - whether as a friend, relative, partner or employer? Our relationships can touch places of love, sharing and joy or hit a dark place of feeling misunderstood, unloved and unwanted.

Love without understanding ourselves or another is likely to end up with waves of discontent. Love with wisdom doesn't trigger disappointment, guilt or ongoing resentment. It is an enormous challenge to stay true to Love, no matter what. In this workshop, we will include different kinds of love - romantic love, friendship, loving kindness, generosity and compassion. Handled well, love is a powerful force for healing and happiness for our humanity.

Sunday March 8, 2009. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Totnes

THE PATH OF AWAKENING

Many people have as a priority the maximisation of pleasure and the minimisation of pain. Others have expanded their values. Life is looked upon as a journey of exploration, an inquiry into being and doing and a path to profound realisation and awakening. What does all this mean for us in the course of our daily life? Where do all our thoughts come from? Do we have any spiritual experiences? If so, what are they? If not, why not? Some people have been on the path of awakening for years and are still struggling in so many areas. Others feel enormous benefits from the path, from the range of practices and way of life. Others intimate or claim to know the end of the path of awakening? In this workshop, we will explore features of the path, our relationship to them, and address the end of the path of awakening.

Sunday March 14, 2009 10 am to 6 pm

Bodhi Garden, Brighton.

DOES ANYTHING MATTER?

At times, our life seems swept along with daily circumstances - work, money, friends, love, social life, spiritual interests. Does anything really matter? If so, what matters? Are we living according to what matters? If we are not, what stops us? If, ultimately, nothing really matters, then how do we feel about that? Are we relaxed

about that or cynical? If we wish to make real changes in our life or our attitudes, what would they be? What matters can show itself through contentment or discontent. In this workshop, we will share our experiences in small groups, intimacy circles and inquiry. The workshop will keep to the practical level, not in terms of philosophical abstractions

Saturday March 15, 2009 10 am to 6 pm

Bodhi Garden, Brighton

THE POWER-LESSNESS OF NOW?

Contemporary spirituality and Buddhist practices put much emphasis on being here and now. Thoughts of the past and future are said to be unreal. Is this a wise view or a delusion? Have we identified with this view as if reality is the Now? What are the benefits to this standpoint? Is there anything naïve or irresponsible about it? Is the view substantial or insubstantial? In this workshop, we will explore and share our experiences of the Now through meditation, reflection and inquiry. Open to all.

DHARMA FACILITATORS PROGRAMME

www.dharmafacilitators.org

to attend this course on Dharma exploration for those experienced with

inner work, please register first with the website,

or e-mail christopher@insightmeditation.org. Second course

is in

October, 2009 at Waldaus, Nickenich. Bonn

Thursday March 26 at 9 am to Sunday March 29, 2009 at

13.00

Pauenhof e.V.

D - 47665 Sonsbeck Hamb

Pauendyck 1

(40 minutes from Düsseldorf)

Germany

Tel. 0049-2835 / 44133

info@pauenhof.de

www.pauenhof.de

ISRAEL

Friday April 10 - Wednesday April 15, 2009 Regular course - for new comers and old students

Thursday April 16 - Tuesday April 21 Old Students' retreat.

April 17-18 City Gathering in Tel Aviv (with you giving talks in the evenings, Stephen stays in Ein Dor to cover for the retreat).

April 22-25 DFP.

Tovana, Post office box 23504, Tel aviv, 61234, Israel

tovana@tovana.org.il

Tel: 972- 54 - 5695931

ENGLAND

Friday May 1 to Monday May 4, 2009

Talk and Inquiry. Freedom Without Measure

(time and date for talk at festival to be fixed)

Wild Heart Gathering

Ashdown Forest

East Sussex

Ticket Sales from January 27, 2009

01273 480429

<http://wildheartgathering.com>

GERMANY

Friday May 8 - Friday May 15, 2009

A DEEP SENSE OF PRESENCE

A SILENT RETREAT

with Christopher and [Nicole Stern](#)

translated into German

This classical Vipassana retreat will include comprehensive meditation instructions in Vipassana (Insight) meditation, a daily talk and regular one to one meetings with the teachers. The retreat offers the opportunity to go deeply into ourselves in a supportive and caring atmosphere. The retreat points to inner renewal, a deep sense of presence and the emptying of the mind for fresh perceptions and insights. Suitable for new and experienced meditators. The retreat will include regular one to one meetings with the teachers. Suitable for new and experienced meditators.

EINE TIEFE ERFAHRUNG VON PRÄSENZ

Schweigekurs

Englisch mit deutscher Uebersetzung

Dieses klassische Vipassana Retreat beinhaltet umfassende Meditationsanleitungen der Vipassana (Einsichts-) Meditation, einem taeglichen Vortrag und Einzelgespraechen mit den Lehrern. Das Retreat gibt die Moeglichkeit tief in eine unterstuetzende und fuersorgliche Atmosphaere einzutauchen. Es geht um innere Erneuerung, einem tiefen Gefuehl von Gegenwaertigkeit und dem "Entleeren" des Geistes fuer frische Sichtweisen und Einsichten. Geeignet fuer neue und erfahrene Praktizierende.

Zentrum for Buddhismus

Waldhaus am Lachersee

D 56643, Nickenich, Germany

0049 2636 3344

budwest@t-online.de

www.buddhismus-im-western.de

ENGLAND

Thursday May 28, 2009

Talk and Q and A

Romantic Love as a Vehicle for Transformation

7 pm to 10 pm. £5.

The **Barrel Coffee Shop** (upstairs), high street, corner of Castle Street),

Totnes

Devon

Saturday June 13, 2009 10 am to 6 pm

Bodhi Garden, Brighton, Sussex, England

WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

In this one day workshop, we will look at some Pali texts of the Buddha's teachings. The day will consist of pointing out some of the main discourses of the Buddha and how to squeeze the honey out of the texts. We will examine some of the key themes that the Buddha addressed. Participants will leave with some valuable tools to dig deeper into these ancient texts much loved for more than 2000 years. The Buddha's teachings address both relative and ultimate. Suitable for those who have had exposure previously to Dharma practice.

Sunday June 14, 2009. 10 am to 6 pm

Bodhi Garden Brighton, England

WHAT AM I WILLING TO GIVE UP?

Life is given to us. In course of time, life will give us up. Yet we live as though life is made for us to take what we want from it. Human desire is having a destructive impact on the individual level since never experience a deep, inner contentment and at the global level. If the technological fix is not the answer, then what is? What are we willing to give up to live wisely, sanely, happily and freely? We will look into these important issues, share our concerns and perhaps be ready to make some real commitments at the end of the day.

Wednesday July 15 to Sunday July 19 2009

DHARMA DOME, BUDDHAFIELD FESTIVAL

DHARMA TEACHINGS, INQUIRY AND WORKSHOPS

Christopher Titmuss and co-teachers

The site address is:

The Gallops, Clayhidon, Nr Wellington, North Devon, England

(roughly six miles south of Taunton and three miles from Wellington)

Around 3000 adults and children go to this festival with numerous workshops, one to one sessions for mind, body, spirit, plus music and dancing.

Must book in advance.

www.buddhfield.com

FRANCE

**Thursday July 30 16.00 to 12 noon, Sunday August 9, 2009
9th ANNUAL YATRA (PILGRIMAGE) FOR 10 DAYS.**

Christopher, Cristelle, Denis, Ian and other teachers.

Retreat will begin from Serres Sur Arget, 15 minutes from Foix, one hour by train south of Toulouse in south east France

Run on donations (dana).

To register, please send €50 or £35 or more to support initial costs or pay upon arrival.

For further information contact Muriel in France

murielbansard@laposte.net

www.dharmayatra.org

GERMANY

Wednesday 18.00 August 26 to Sunday 13.00 August 30, 2009

DHARMA INQUIRY AND INSIGHT MEDITATION (Vipassana)

Christopher and Tineke Osterloh

In this four day programme, we will lead inquiry into the dharma in the morning with small groups. There will be silent meditations in the afternoon and a Dharma talk in the evening. This retreat provides the opportunity for in depth exploration of the Dharma and daily life with silence and stillness in the afternoon for meditation and reflection. Wake up until 9.30 am in the morning will also be a silent period. We will provide comprehensive meditation instructions. The programme is suitable for experienced meditators and beginners. There will be opportunity for one to one meetings with the teachers. The retreat will be taught in English/German.

Pauenhof e.V.

Pauendyck 1

D - 47665 Sonsbeck Hamb (40 minutes from Düsseldorf)

Germany

Tel. +49-(0)2835 / 44133

www.pauenhof.de

To register for 1st Dharma Gathering in Germany:

dharmatreffen@web.de

Saturday October 3, 2009 10 am to 6pm

Bodhi Garden. Brighton

TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK?

When we speak we express not only our views and opinions but reveal our attitudes, expectations, tone of voice and needs. We need to listen equally to ourselves as to another or others. What are supportive conditions if we have something important to say to another? Do we get lost in the story of the situation? Do we want to be heard by another? Wise communication is a skill and a practice. In this workshop, we will share our experiences, learn skilful tools

and apply in two's and three's. We will examine the construct of language, of words, including the spoken and the written, and the importance of silence and space in and out of communication.

Saturday October 4, 2009 10 am to 6pm

Bodhi Garden, Brighton.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS? WHAT IS SEEING?

The Buddha has made a clear distinction between the practices of mindfulness, meditation, concentration and the nature of 'seeing.' The practices all belong to the path of awakening. Seeing and knowing is a different order and dimension altogether. How do we distinguish mindfulness from seeing? In this workshop we will explore through our experience these important features of consciousness. The intention is to come to deepen our insights into our processes. Suitable only for those who have prior experience in the Dharma.

Friday evening 19.00 October 16, 2009 to lunchtime

Tuesday, October 20, 2009.

Dharma Facilitators Programme (DFP). PLEASE REGISTER FIRST WITH DFP WEBSITE OR

christopher@insightmeditation.org

Zentrum for Buddhismus

Waldhaus am Lachersee

D 56643, Nickenich, Germany

0049 2636 3344

budwest@t-online.de

www.buddhismus-im-western.de

www.dharmafacilitators.org

This residential DFP will be followed up with a silent retreat - open to all - until Sunday lunchtime.

Tuesday evening October 20 2009 to Sunday lunchtime

October 25, 2009.

A SILENT RETREAT

with Christopher

translated into German

This classical Vipassana retreat will include comprehensive meditation instructions in Vipassana (Insight) meditation, a daily talk and regular one to one meetings with Christopher. The retreat offers the opportunity to go deeply into ourselves in a supportive and caring atmosphere. The retreat points to inner renewal, a deep sense of presence and the emptying of the mind for fresh perceptions and insights. Suitable for new and experienced meditators. No groups. Suitable for new and experienced meditators.

Totnes DFP dates and themes for June 2009 and October 2009 not

yet fixed.

Do pass the word onto others who might be interested to attend the residential DFP in Germany, Australia, Israel and New Zealand. For DFP in Germany, contact myself christopher@insightmeditation.org

Austalia

Friday November 6 at 6.00 p.m. until lunch time Wednesday, November 11, 2009

A RETREAT IN NSW, OZ ON MINDFULNESS, INSIGHT MEDITATION AND AWAKENING

Christopher and [Radha Nicholson](#)

at Gunundi, Ballina, NSW

Organisers: Judy Baderle jbaderle@bigpond.net.au

Tuesday November 17. Evening Talk. 7 pm to 9pm

Dharma Talk

Cloudroom

147 Richmond Road

Morningside

Brisbane

Australia

www.dharma.org.au

Thursday, Friday November 20

ONE DAY WORKSHOP

For Australian Council of Insight Meditation Teachers with Christopher at Yarrhapinni Rainforest, NSW

Saturday November 21- 28, at 2 pm. 2008

DHARMA GATHERING

Christopher, Subhana, Radha, Patrick Kearney and several other Dharma teachers

Yarrhapinni Rainforest,

near Coffs Harbour,

NSW, Australia

Yarrhapinni Ecology Centre is situated on coastal rainforest.

Coffs Harbour is the nearest major airport and Macksville the nearest major town.

Families welcome.

Contact: Will James wvjames@yahoo.com.au

www.dharma.org.au

Saturday evening November 28 - Wednesday 2 December, 2008 until 2.00 p.m.

[Dharma Facilitators Programme](#)

Christopher and [Radha](#)

Yarrhapinni Rainforest,

near Coffs Harbour,
NSW, Australia
Yarrahapinni Ecology Centre is situated on coastal rainforest.
jbaderle@bigpond.net.au
www.dharma.org.au

In the Dharma
Three Bows
Christopher

E-mails are checked very irregularly when teaching overseas. See teaching schedule on websites. Websites regularly updated. Control and click on website name below. Christopher's dharma blog is www.christophertitmuss.org/blog See flickr for around 3000 photos of Sangha in various sets.

See www.youtube.com for five minute Dharma clips of Christopher.

1. www.insightmeditation.org International teaching schedule of Christopher Titmuss, to subscribe to freely distributed quarterly Dharma e-News, Dharma teachings, guided meditations, Dharma reflections, articles, social-political-analysis, 150 linked sites ... Around a million hits a year on this website.
2. www.christophertitmuss.org Audio library of world-wide talks and inquiries. Listen to audio guided meditations, poems, extracts from books and see more than 1500 photos of Sangha around the world on *flickr*. Listen to teachings and opportunity to download or order on CD.
3. www.dharmafacilitators.org Meet for four days twice a year to explore the depths of the Dharma and develop facilitation skills - DFP held in Australia, England, Germany, Israel and New Zealand. Limited to 35 people in a session.
4. www.livingdharma.org Twice a month personal e-mail contact with a Dharma mentor. To develop your meditation, practice and wisdom in daily life. Around 28 mentors from 12 countries. See photos, bio, article of mentors and how to join. Donation based with modest registration cost.
5. www.bodhgayaretreats.org How to register for the two annual 10 day Bodh Gaya retreats in Bihar, India, dates and information. 35th annual retreat in January 2009. Join also the 11th annual 10 day Dharma Gathering in Sarnath, near Varanasi in February 2009. All run on donations
6. www.dharmayatra.org Join the Dharma Yatra (pilgrimage) in France starting in Serres-sur-Arges, 15 minutes from Foix, one hour south of Toulouse, south of France between afternoon of August 11 and morning of August 21, 2008. Places for 108 adults and children. Run on donations with modest registration cost. _

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