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THE ORDER JOURNAL

We have available in English about forty Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Yet scholars have calculated that there are up to six hundred that have survived to this day in various eastern languages. The truth is that there is a vast treasure house of the Dharma which remains locked away untranslated, and unavailable to Buddhists in the West. Yet do we make the best even of those that are available to us? To study the Dharma is to engage in an endlessly fascinating drama of self and world transformation, as one brings to life in the minds of oneself and others, the ageless utterances of the Buddha. Yet it appears that there is, according to some, a need to 'revitalise interest in Dharma study'. While we must beware accepting invalid generalisations, the question has been raised and the issue needs to be addressed.

What, then, should we be studying? We already have excellent and well established study materials in the FWBO, yet one wonders whether we need to beware neglecting primary sources, the *sūtras*, in favour of commentaries upon them, an approach which also limits us to those texts upon which we have commentaries. An important aspect of Sangharakshita's teaching has been his return to primary sources, and it would be an irony if we were, within a single generation, to reverse that very trend through an over-emphasis upon his commentaries, and the almost total neglect of the *sūtras* themselves. Addressing the *sūtras* has the advantage, amongst others, of maintaining a sense of adventurous discovery combined with direct contact with the Buddha, a sense which can otherwise be lost and replaced by one of dry, academic rehearsal. This issue is linked to the value of being open to a broader range of *sūtras*, rather than just those so far introduced into the FWBO 'library' - perhaps six out of the forty mentioned above, so far as the Mahāyāna is concerned. This is not intended as a counsel of appeasement to a neurotic desire for things new or different for their own sake, but an acknowledgement that it is natural for some, who have already engaged for some years in Dharma study, to wish to explore the word of the Buddha.

'Study' in FWBO circles often consists of more or less directed discussion, based loosely around a text, and sometimes of late with a smattering of communications techniques employed to 'facilitate' the discussion. Yet how we go about Dharma study is of crucial importance. As far back as 1981 Sangharakshita made a clear distinction between discussion groups and study groups proper, the latter being characterised by the coming together of individuals in an attempt to understand what is being said objectively in a particular text, rather than to examine their personal reactions to what they think (or feel) is being said. We might also consider the utilisation of one-to-one tutorials, seminars run along the lines of the common designation of the term, essay writing, and even correspondence courses (perhaps as an extension of the informal sharing of ideas that already takes place). We also need to ensure that Sangharakshita's teachings currently available only on tape be transcribed, edited, and published, particularly as for many people this can be a more appropriate form in which to study them.

One should also remember that effective study always requires a degree of emotional involvement. This is not a reference to the emotional basis of false

views, but rather that, on the positive side, we are drawn forward by emotion, so that there must be some positive emotional involvement with the material we are to study. The unfortunate part of this is that emotional engagement does not always follow pre-arranged courses or programmes, so that any structures that we develop should allow individuals to pursue paths of interest as and when they are motivated to do so. Above all this would greatly encourage the practice of proper preparation, both on the part of the study leader and the other participants.

Study leading is a vital area of activity within the FWBO and the growth of suitably qualified study leaders an urgent concern. Yet what are the appropriate qualifications? An interesting area to discuss in this connection is the need for intellectual independence as a prerequisite for the development of *cintamayaprajñā*. This is not a suggestion that Sangharakshita's teaching, which inspires and guides us all, should be usurped or displaced in any respect by more 'up to date' or popular (or less radical) ideas, but is an acknowledgement that for people to be effective thinkers, they need to feel potent, itself a corollary of feeling a freedom to think. Sangharakshita has always encouraged independent thought amongst his disciples, and touched obliquely but significantly upon this area on the FWBO Chairmen's AGM (1988) when making a distinction between his teaching regarding Going for Refuge (the very basis of his teaching and of the WBO), and his intellectual understanding of the Dharma as doctrine. Whereas, as members of the WBO and hence disciples of Sangharakshita, we have made a fundamental commitment to his teachings on the former, he pointed out that the Dharma as doctrine is a subject so vast that no-one could conceivably have a total grasp of its every facet, and that it is perfectly feasible that some of his disciples may improve upon his presentation of the latter.

The enduring popularity and usefulness of Sangharakshita's study seminars reflects the fact that as his disciples we have recognised his hitherto unique abilities and experience as a Dharma teacher. In part this has included some areas of specialist knowledge, such as Pali, and it is increasingly clear that such specialist knowledge needs to be acquired by members of the WBO. How often does study within the WBO involve the pooling of views, by a group who have no particular knowledge of the text under review? Where suitable, members of the WBO should be encouraged and even supported to acquire such skills as would help them achieve and communicate a more intimate and personal understanding of specific texts. This will, to some extent, involve the acquisition by some of the appropriate linguistic skills (Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan) to be able to approach the various recensions of the Tripiṭaka directly. We should also support the efforts of those who have the appropriate background and vision to delineate the points of contact between the Dharma and areas such as the arts, sciences and philosophy.

Study-needs within the FWBO change according to the level of one's experience, interest, and temperament. We therefore need to think clearly about the precise goals of specific study courses and programmes. For example, at the earliest phase it is appropriate to see study as concerned with helping people to gain a general grasp of the Dharma, and particularly of the teachings of Sangharakshita. At a later phase, on the basis of the former, individuals may

wish to specialise in individual texts or groups of texts which particularly stimulate their imagination. This sort of specialisation could be exploited to the advantage of study programmes at individual centres, as for example a specialist in the *Lotus Sūtra*, could be invited to lead study on that text, and thus alleviate the pressure upon local study leaders.

Furthermore, while there may be some lessons regarding discussion to be drawn from the world of communication skills, in respect of study proper these will always be 'the icing on the cake'. No amount of such skills will replace the irreducible necessity that the study leader must have something of value to say about the material under discussion. Nor do such requirements devolve only upon the leader of a group; it is also necessary that the other participants have an active, self-motivated interest which they feel is being substantially satisfied by any study in which they engage. This 'substantial satisfaction' would manifest primarily in three areas - firstly, the application of Dharmic principles, explicit or implied in a text, to the life of the individual; secondly, the clarification of *sammādiṭṭhi*, as the latter has been understood by the tradition at the various phases of its development; and thirdly, the creation of a link with the historical and archetypal realities represented by the text, through the agency of the imaginal faculty.

There are many subsidiary issues which would help produce and support a mature study environment within the FWBO. For example, we might learn lessons from the approach adopted in institutions of Higher Education, where various facilities have been evolved which help the process of and motivation for study. One thinks of well designed study rooms with adequate provisions of light, air, writing surfaces, wall boards (for group demonstration), as well as other teaching aids, and last but not least, libraries. We should also consider a fuller utilisation of existing library facilities; increased access to journals and periodicals that specialise in Buddhist studies, and are usually unavailable to the public; the preparation of more specialised study materials than at present are available, such as linguistic commentaries upon popular texts (eg. the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*), in order to give the non-linguist greater access to the original than a single translation; the preparation of bibliographies to facilitate research into specific areas of interest; the publication by the movement of books that command the attention of the academic community, and also of translations of Dharma texts, especially where they would otherwise be unavailable (and the subsequent utilisation of such texts within FWBO study programmes); and the preparation by members of the WBO of more accurate and even of more inspired translations of the Dharma.

One might also point out the value in encouraging such developments, of *The Order Journal*, for the publication of non-fiction writing pertaining to the spiritual life in the broadest sense, and providing the WBO with a vehicle for the written dissemination of ideas without limitations of space.

If these and doubtless other considerations are taken into account then I am confident that by a twofold process of an intensification or specialisation of expertise, and a general broadening of scope, Dharma study in the FWBO will maintain an ever increasing vitality.

STHIRAMATI

MEDITATION AND GOING FOR REFUGE

by Dharmachari Kamalaśīla

Going for Refuge means wholeheartedly committing oneself to one's development. We can see the principle of Going for Refuge expressing itself in numerous different ways, eg. in the realm of friendship, in the realm of work, in the realm of ethics; but in all these realms, the act of Going for Refuge happens first in our mind. It is a direction, a directive, which comes from the heart. This is why it is important to see Going for Refuge in the context of meditation. Meditation is the situation in which, more than anywhere else, we come into contact with what is in our heart, with what we really think and feel. When we are sitting and directly experiencing our own mind in that way, and we make the decision to transform ourselves, to create ourselves anew, we are Going for Refuge in the deepest and most direct sense of all. In this sense we can say, as we can with spiritual friendship too, that meditation is Going for Refuge; Going for Refuge is meditation. Because we Go for Refuge to the Transcendental principle, and because through spiritual friendship we can transcend our narrow egoistic point of view, Going for Refuge is spiritual friendship; and meditation helps to make that transcendence possible.

Just try for a moment to imagine Buddhism without meditation. We'd have all our teaching, ideals of right livelihood, archetypal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, practical precepts, and metaphysical doctrines; we'd have the notions of *samathā* and *vipaśyanā*, of insight and stream entry, of *sūnyatā* and the *trikāya* - but without meditation, there would be no way of making it all real. Buddhism would be a bit like Christianity, which says, 'love thy neighbour', and then gives no method, no practice, no way of overcoming the obstacles to friendship, no way to develop love and compassion. Without meditation, we would not have such easy access to ourselves and the way we really are. Meditation holds up, so to speak, a great mirror in front of us and says, "look! this is what is going on!" Meditation gives us access to awareness, to self-awareness. It develops that ever-fresh awareness of the progression of our life which we call mindfulness. When we rise from meditation, even if it has not been what we sometimes call a 'good' meditation, we have renewed, to some extent, the freshness of our approach to things. It is having access to this openness to things, to this ever-fresh awareness, that enables us to make progress on the path.

Often people feel that unless they are getting into *dhyaṇa* regularly there is something wrong. After all, hasn't Sangharakshita said that if you're not enjoying your meditation, there's something wrong with your meditation? The important thing here is whether or not we are satisfied with the way we are working in meditation, because a good meditation is not necessarily a *dhyaṇic* meditation (even though *dhyaṇa* is, of course, a desirable result of meditation). A good meditation is essentially one in which I am satisfied that I have worked, to the best of my ability, with whatever has arisen in my mind, and not just passively accepted my mental states; I've been mindful of what has arisen, and I've worked with that, whatever the conditions, and I have tried to cultivate *dhyaṇa* to the best of my ability at that time. If I have at least done that,

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then I feel that I've used my meditation time creatively and made some progress. It is our intention, our underlying purpose and attitude, which is the important thing. It is more important than what we experience. Each of our attempts to practice meditation, however bad the conditions are, will bear some fruit, because the intention, the mental effort we make, is what really counts. The effort made in unsatisfactory conditions will also make meditation easier at times when we find ourselves in good conditions, such as on a retreat.

Meditation is an important aspect of Going for Refuge because it takes our experience deeper. Unless we meditate we are likely to remain on the surface of things. We all want deep communication, for example, but to have 'deep' communication you need 'deep' people, and to be deep, we need to contact our depths (and our heights) regularly. These depths and heights are with us right here, right now, in each moment. As Buddhists we believe that our present experience is not ultimate, not final. It is relatively superficial. The Buddha said that this world we live in is a world of becoming, a world made up of changing things. Each thing, each thought, each object of sight or sound, each form that we perceive, is changing into something else, even in the very moment that we perceive it. In the instant that we perceive something in the present moment, that present moment has slipped away and a new moment has taken its place. In the new moment, our perception has changed, we have changed, and the object has changed, too. In fact this present moment does not even exist, except in the abstract, because it doesn't actually have any duration. How long is the *present* moment supposed to last? If we say that the present moment lasts for any period of time at all, let's say a tenth of a second, then within that tenth of a second itself there has to be a past, present and future, ie. a bit which has just gone, a bit which is about to come, and, in between them, another 'present moment'. Yet that present-moment-within-the-present-moment is just one more present moment nested within the first one! We could go on nesting moments within moments until the end of time, but each one would still have a past, present and future, if we say that the present moment has duration. Time, in fact, is illusory. It is impossible to say at which point the present moment slips into the past. The past itself does not exist in our experience, because it has gone; and the future moment does not exist, in our experience, because - well, it hasn't happened yet! So, though we are forced by our conditioning to describe experience using the idea of time, existence is not truly like that, time is not like that, reality is not like that.

The Buddha said that this world is in a constant process of becoming, that its mode of existence is like a mirage, or a magical illusion. If we look at our experience of the present moment in the way I have described, we may get some glimpse of the magical nature of things. We perceive our existence in the ordinary way that we do, because we habitually ignore the fact of impermanence, and the relativity of our experience of time. He also said that *nirvāṇa*, the state in which one dwells in the real nature of things, is "*unbecome, unmade, uncomposed*". [Udana VIII. 1] The more we come to understand and, more important still, to experience the real nature of things, the more we will understand ourselves, the more we will understand others, the more we will be transformed, and the more free we will be - free from our conditioning, free

to be compassionate towards others, free to give ourselves to the world, free to be effective Dharmacharis and Dharmachariṇīs.

Any description of reality is limited. The important point is that there is a 'real nature of things'. This real nature of things is called *dharmatā*, or Dharma-ness, Reality. The Way Things Really Are is also how we really are. It isn't as though this *dharmatā* is separate from us. It is in us, and we are in it. We participate in the same reality. There probably comes a time in most people's lives when they start, at least in a small way, to become aware of this reality. They have a flash of something more than the ordinary experience of the world; or perhaps it's more that they start to become aware just that there is 'something'. Unfortunately people have theistic conditioning and easily jump to a premature conclusion. They assume that this 'something' must be God, they join the most acceptable religion, and that's often the last that we hear of them. Yet what is happening when we start to become aware that there is 'something'? We are starting to become aware, not only that reality is far greater than the little world we have so far built up, but that that reality is in a certain way, and not in any other way. No doubt in the ultimate sense, reality has no characteristics as such, as it transcends all description, but in our present state we experience reality as having certain characteristics; things happen in particular ways and not in others. I'm not just talking about observable scientific facts, like gravity. I'm also talking about the ethical nature of reality - the reality of our desires and emotions, positive and negative, and the reality of their consequences. The reality in which our ignorance leads to craving and hatred, in which our attachment leads to a fixing of our personality; the reality in which letting go of these states results in freedom, joy and bliss. This is how things have to be for us; they are never otherwise. This is how reality is, the way things really are.

This reality is all-embracing. It consists of consciousness: of aware consciousness and unaware consciousness. It consists of Mind. All is Mind, Mind-only (*cittamātra*), and this mind-only universe functions in particular ways, depending upon conditions. There is reactive mind and creative mind, *samsāric* mind and *nirvāṇic* mind, Ignorant mind and Enlightened mind. The possibility of Enlightenment and the possibility of ignorance is constantly present; in every moment we have the choice between moving towards *samsāra*, or moving towards *nirvāṇa*. In every moment we can 'live in the gap' between what we passively experience, and our active responses to that experience - between the *vipāka* we passively experience and the *karma* we actively create - between our passive feelings and our active emotions. We have the choice of reacting to our experience with negative emotions, or responding with positive emotions, like faith, and joy in the Dharma. This is our reality; the way things really are. At least, this is a *description* of the way things really are, from the unenlightened point of view. In fact, it is the Buddha's description of the way things really are, and so it is an important aspect of our Going for Refuge, because to some extent we ourselves have seen this vision, and in Going for Refuge to the Buddha's teaching we Go for Refuge to realising fully the nature of reality, and to living fully in accordance with reality.

Our visualisation meditation is one way in which we can 'close the gap' between the way we are now and that living in accordance with reality. There

we re-enact, or celebrate, this relationship between ourselves as we are now - that is with a limited vision of reality - and ourselves as we will be - that is with a total vision of reality. The blue sky symbolises 'the way things really are' (ie. Reality, or Mind) so that we are sitting, surrounded by Reality. The longer we sit in the midst of this blue radiance the more we can feel its character. We don't understand its character, but we can feel it. Reality has its own special presence or atmosphere, and there is a relationship between this presence or atmosphere and us. We have Gone for Refuge to the Dharma-ness of things, so we are open to it, open to being penetrated and transformed by it. In fact it can transform us because it isn't just an idea, it is a living reality. Reality is alive, just as the Mind is alive, just as we are alive, and in the visualisation we imagine that reality responding to our Going for Refuge.

The relationship between ourselves and Reality is a bit like the central three sections of the Sevenfold Pūjā: the *Confession of Faults*, the *Rejoicing in Merit*, and the *Entreaty and Supplication*. To visualise the infinite blue sky is to be open to Reality; emotionally and ethically open. At this stage of our own visualisation we could confess to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Whether we do so literally, or on the level of feeling, we accept ourselves for who we really are, and so come that bit closer to reality; or rather, we do so if we also rejoice in our own merits, as confession is incomplete without rejoicing in merits. Then, in the visualisation practice, there should also be an attitude of entreaty and supplication, in other words, requesting the Dharma, asking to be shown Reality, to experience the Enlightened consciousness. In other words, we show that we want to communicate with Reality, and because we put ourselves in that position, reality has to respond. We set up the conditions for a response. Of course, we do all this in our own imagination, in our own mind; but then everything is mind, everything is imagination. So somewhere there is a point where there can be a connection between the Enlightened consciousness and our ordinary consciousness. If we put ourselves in a position of receptivity, then we are making it most likely that that connection will happen.

Our visualisation practice is a very important aspect of our Going for Refuge. It is not only important because it deepens our awareness, and brings us closer to reality, it is important because it is a connection with our ordination. Yet why is ordination especially important? Ordination, and initiation, is important because it represents a peak, a climax in the growth of that inner aspiration which we call Going for Refuge. We may well surpass it later, but even if we do it remains a very powerful landmark in our spiritual career, one which we will never forget, and which carries a particularly potent charge of inspiration. It carries such a charge due to the nature of the ordination ceremony, both public and private, for in the ceremony our commitment is formally recognised. Having our Going for Refuge tangibly recognised, 'officially' recognised, is very important indeed, and has a very great effect on our confidence to pursue the rest of our spiritual life. So when we do our visualisation practice we reconnect with that original thrust of inspiration.

If keeping a connection with our visualisation practice is an important part of Going for Refuge, so is meditation generally. Nowadays we all have access to Vajraloka, ie. to a place where conditions are ideal for meditation, and there is a community of members of the WBO with a deepening experience of meditation.

We can attend retreats, or join the community itself for extended periods. Over the years at Vajraloka we have evolved approaches to meditation which have revolutionised the meditation practice of hundreds of people. We have isolated particular difficulties which prevent people from effectively meditating, and we have stressed particular positive qualities which will help them. For example, many people seem to suffer from what is popularly known as 'wilfulness'. This term has quite a broad range of meaning, but basically means that we tend to force the pace in our practice when we ought to be more receptive to what actually happens. It means that we do not respond appropriately to the mental states which are present in our mind, but tend to work mechanically, trying to force our mind onto the object of meditation without any regard to how we are feeling. This is the opposite of Going for Refuge in meditation - when we are meditating wilfully we are not working appropriately. We are not making progress, and in fact the results of this way of meditating could be fairly serious. I know, for example, that some meditation teachers consider that wilfulness can even lead to an emotionally alienated awareness.

Wilfulness does seem to be quite common, so it is good that we have isolated it as a modern hindrance to meditation. However, I think that when we emphasise the danger of wilfulness, we have to be a little careful that people don't start to use the idea as a way of avoiding conflict. I've noticed that to get out of the habit of wilfulness, people can cultivate a sort of pseudo-relaxation - an easy-going, free and easy approach to life, which doesn't solve the problem of wilfulness, but just pushes it under the surface. People insist on having no hang-ups, no problems, no involvements, no commitments, so that they can be nice and relaxed all the time. They can then become afraid of committing themselves to anything that could possibly stretch them, because - well, because they do tend to get rather wilful, and they've been told that wilfulness is a bad thing by their meditation teacher!

The bogey of wilfulness can be called to witness every time some kind of conflict arises. A conflict arises in our mind, whether at work or in our meditation, and what we really need to do is to try to resolve it. I don't mean that we must always confront such things directly (that might not always be practical) but at the least conflict needs to be acknowledged. In fact growth and development can be seen in terms of resolving greater and greater degrees of conflict. In meditation, *dhyāna* is a resolution of emotional conflict, when the mind all at once becomes calm and free of the turmoil of the hindrances. Yet our meditation practice also seems to stimulate situations which will arouse conflict. When we start meditation, often everything goes extremely well for several months, perhaps because we have quite a backlog of emotional conflict to resolve - perhaps the very same collection of unresolvable conflicts which led us to try meditation in the first place. When we try meditation, more and more of that backlog is resolved, and in the process we enjoy some very clear and dhyānic meditation. Yet after a while, that all gets sorted out, we become much more free than before, and meditation often becomes less easy at this point. Because of the meditation, our awareness has deepened, and we have revealed some new areas of emotional conflict of which we were never before aware! We find that our desires are in conflict with reality in a completely new way. Part of us wants one thing, another something else; perhaps we find

that we want to be loved, but at the same time we do not want to be friendly with anyone. Our whole being is riddled with contradictory impulses of this kind - all the results of our actions in the past. Our actions have not been consistent, and so have conditioned a lot of inconsistent *karma-vipāka*, experienced as a lot of conflicting feelings about things. I think the Buddha somewhere compares the human situation to a ball of tangled grasses, difficult to unravel. However, meditation doesn't attempt to unravel the tangle through analysis. It works in a more indirect way, a more magical way.

The spiritual life evolves out of our meditation practice. Our meditation practice changes us, and by doing this it often seems to cause us to enter situations which we would probably never enter if we didn't meditate. Just imagine what you might be doing at this moment, if you had not taken up meditation. I'm sure you have found yourselves in one challenging situation after another, perhaps it's been one 'cremation ground' after another. We grow through conflict - through facing up to the conflicts which already exist in our minds, conflicts which we realise are impeding our progress, holding back our development. Revealing and resolving conflict is an important aspect of the process of development. The main point in all this is that conflict is not to be avoided. Conflict is part of creative evolution. The current conflict that we have is exactly what we need to tackle next. It's like one of these hero myths - the hero, whether Odysseus or Hercules, or whoever, has to make a success out of one quite impossible dilemma after another; and, in many ways, life is like that - life presents us with one dilemma after another, dilemmas which cannot be solved on their own level. They require us to resolve them, in other words to rise to a new level of understanding of ourselves, at which level the conflict no longer exists.

Yet surely these situations do not arise just at random, as though there happens to be a certain quantity of difficulties around in the world, and statistically we are bound to run into one or another sooner or later? In reality these irresolvable dilemmas arise in direct response to the irresolvable conflicts latent in our consciousness. You cannot separate external and internal events. Meditation stimulates the process of growth through exposing latent conflict. It propels us into an adventure, a quest which involves heroic difficulties; difficulties which are uniquely appropriate to our spiritual needs. To get over, or under, or through, these difficulties, requires all our energy. It requires a lot of dedication and commitment. In fact if commitment is a problem, we aren't yet in a position to develop spiritually. If commitment is a problem, we may try to avoid committing ourselves by saying, "I can't, because I do get rather wilful. I really have to be so careful not to force myself."

Sometimes you can deliberately create a situation in which conflict can come out in the open and be resolved. In ancient times a *yogī* like Padmasambhava would go to the charnel ground, to a fearful place where he would definitely arouse fear of death - perhaps the ultimate emotional conflict. There are many other ways in which any of us might place ourselves in a crucial situation of this kind, perhaps by starting a Buddhist centre, or by confessing some fault which we are very afraid to admit. When we have been meditating for some time, however, we may experience this phenomenon of conflict, and find that we don't like it. We find that we don't want to resolve our existential

conflicts, because it will mean changing our life, yet again. "All this change I've made...", we might think, "...and now this! Will the changes never come to an end? When will I ever be able to settle down?" When we think like that, we want to settle down and stop developing. We have forgotten that we have become happier since we started changing our life, and that more changes are likely to make us still happier. In reality we would be happier to have transcended this new conflict; but if at this point we stop, and cling on to the desire to settle down, we can back away, we can back away from meditation. We can back away from the awareness which most of all reveals the conflict in our life. We either meditate less, or we meditate in such a way that we cease to experience ourselves. We might even start meditating wilfully, and start getting a problem with our meditation, so that we just can't meditate anyway!

I'll start to draw to a conclusion now, by going back to what I was saying at the beginning, about conditions which make our meditation practice satisfactory or unsatisfactory. I was talking then in terms of the physical circumstances in which most of us have to meditate. However, there's something more than the physical circumstances which we should take into account, and that is inspiration, or faith. Our meditation practice is especially dependent upon inspiration, and it's very often that which we miss. It is not so much that we mind meditating in the atmosphere of a noisy, busy city, but just that we are out of touch with our inspiration.

We can look at how inspiration arises in the sequence of positive *nidānas*. In dependence upon suffering arises faith. In dependence upon faith arises *pramodya* or delight, then rapture, then calm, then bliss, then meditative concentration or *śamādhī*. Faith, or inspiration, is confidence in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, though it is perhaps better put as placing our heart on the possibility of our development. Essentially, it is inwardly Going for Refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. On the basis of that inward Going for Refuge, we start acting outwardly. We start acting skilfully, or at least trying to act skilfully. Our placing of the heart, our Going for Refuge, flows outwards in an attempt to practice the precepts. This is how the next *nidāna*, delight, comes into being. Delight isn't just pleasure, it is more like freedom from a sense of guilt. We feel joyful because we are acting skilfully; because if we don't act skilfully, we will quite naturally feel some sense of guilt. In itself, this feeling has nothing to do with Christian conditioning, though that does tend to confuse things quite a lot. It is quite universal - everyone feels a sense of guilt, what we call 'rational' guilt, if we act in a way that we regret; or at least, perhaps I should say we do if we are at all sensitive to our feelings. Guilt of this kind is a positive state of mind. It's an acknowledgment that we regret what we have done, and that acknowledgement brings us closer to reality.

However, now our actions are flowing outwards from our Going for Refuge. They are therefore more positive, more in accordance with ethics. We have changed some of our attitudes and ways of behaving, and so we have fewer causes for regret, we no longer feel a sense of guilt. In fact we feel this sense of delight, *pramodya*, and on the basis of this delight, only on this basis, meditation in the sense of *dhyaṇa* can arise. The sequence is delight, rapture, calm, bliss. Rapture is the physical ecstasy, the thrill which we experience when we start to meditate with the whole of ourselves. Bliss is an even

greater enjoyment, but it is more contained, more whole, more refined, and in a way more mental than physical. Calm, *prāśrabdhī*, is the process which links the two, the wilder more physical *prīti*, or ecstasy, being absorbed into the more refined *sukha*, or bliss. On the basis of this process of ever-deepening emotional integration comes full concentration, or *śamādhī*. Thus the whole process of meditative development proceeds on the basis of faith, or inspiration, the state which arises as a response when we truly see the value of the Three Jewels. Seeing their value means seeing their real nature - seeing, clearly, what the Buddha represents for us - seeing that spiritual development exists as a possibility at any time, in any situation.

In the moment that Going for Refuge arises, life becomes clear, and what we need to do becomes obvious. It is not an excited, tumultuous, noisy, or glamorous emotion. We tend to think of Going for Refuge as rather like that, but it isn't. Rather, it's something which happens quietly within us; because what we need to do has simply become obvious, in the light of our appreciation of the value of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. There is a quality of humility, a quality of down to earth straightforwardness in our faith and inspiration. Since what we need to do has become obvious, we simply get on with it, and of course we feel good about that, and of course, on that basis meditation becomes easier, because we are experiencing much less emotional conflict. With Going for Refuge we can transcend a lot of conflict all at once! So faith is certainly not an ordinary emotion. In fact it's an emotion which partakes of something of the transcendental. In certain respects, there is an element of insight. In a provisional way, at least, we've seen the transcendental value of the 3 Jewels. This is the kind of inspiration which is needed to support our practice.

However, the big problem is 'How?'. How can we produce faith? According to the *nidāna* chain, faith is dependent upon suffering! So, to have faith, we have to suffer? Well, no, it isn't that we have to suffer. There's no need for us to suffer any more than we do at the moment! Limited human beings as we are, we suffer continually! We suffer from getting what we don't want. We suffer from not getting what we do want, and in between, we suffer from wanting, full stop. Yet this suffering occurs quite naturally. It is the most natural thing for us, as unenlightened beings, to experience suffering. Suffering is a given fact in our existence. We don't have to do any more of it to experience faith.

The *nidāna* of suffering conditions inspiration because it represents the awareness of suffering, not the mere experience of suffering. Faith and inspiration can arise only if we are aware that we suffer. Otherwise we would simply accept it in an animal-like way. So the *nidāna* of suffering stands for awareness, an awareness, moreover, not just of suffering in the immediate sense, but of the whole *samsāric* process (illustrated by the 12 cyclic *nidānas*) which makes up 'this whole mass of suffering'. This first positive *nidāna* represents the fact that in our unenlightened state we inevitably act blindly, and that our deeds affect our state of mind; that we are born in particular states of mind in accordance with these deluded deeds; that taking birth in a body inevitably involves experiences of pleasure and pain; that to experience pleasure and pain is to be confronted with the problem of craving for pleasure, and aversion to pain; that if we indulge either of these emotions attachment arises, and that attachment fixes our personality, so that we become likely to be reborn in

accordance with our attachments. This huge endless process of becoming is certainly an unsettling, frustrating business. Seeing that cyclic existence has definite limitations is thus implied by this initial positive *nidāna* which we call, for want of a better term, suffering, or *duḥkha*. The great *nidāna* of *duḥkha* is the basis for the arising of the nirvāṇic chain of *nidānas*, and for the arising of inspiration for our meditation practice. To gain inspiration, therefore, we need to develop our awareness of *duḥkha*. We can see that the elements of the positive *nidāna* of *duḥkha* are firstly awareness, or mindfulness, and then knowledge, or vision, - at least some initial vision of the overall significance of the process of *samsāra*. We need to be aware of what is happening, and also have a modicum of Dharma knowledge to give us a context from which we can grasp the significance of this. So to a great extent the development of faith depends upon learning the Dharma, because, essentially, the Dharma is an awareness of the nature of *samsāra*, and the way out of *samsāra*. Dharma study can give us a perspective on our life which is equivalent to the first positive *nidāna*, and the inspiration it can give us.

Yet we have to make that link. How does suffering (awareness of *samsāra*) condition inspiration (for meditation)? Just think of the Buddha. Why did He take up the spiritual life? Why did He take up meditation? Why did He Go for Refuge? You could say, as He did, that He 'did what needed to be done', but I've never found that particular utterance of the Buddha's very illuminating. Why did it need to be done? The Buddha left home because He wanted to realise Enlightenment, the nature of existence; but why did He want to do a thing like that? He bothered, He cared, because He had seen something of the problematic nature of *samsāra*. He had come to that ultimate conflict, that ultimate creative conflict, which has always caused Buddhas to leave home and, eventually, sit under the Bodhi Tree and gain Enlightenment. He had experienced worldly power and pleasure, and He had seen a sick man, an old man, a dead man. He had seen suffering. He had seen the world, the endless, pointless round. That is why He did it, that is why He went for Refuge; and that's why we have Gone, and will Go for Refuge. That's why we Go for Refuge to meditation. We do it because it needs to be done, our development needs to be done, for the sake of the world, for the sake of our own influence upon the world.

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## MAÑJUŚRĪ: ORIGINS, ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE (PART 2 - MAÑJUŚRĪ IN MAHĀYĀNA LITERATURE)

by Dharmachari Ānandajyoti

This article is primarily concerned with an examination of Mañjuśrī as portrayed within *sūtra* material. I look firstly at the sorts of roles in which he is found, and follow this with a discussion of references to his status. Hopefully this division of the material can throw some light on how Mañjuśrī appears in the Mahāyāna. Despite my remarks in the foreword to the first article I have decided to append a short section dealing with the tradition linking Mañjuśrī with the *Vaipulya Sūtras*, as this came to take an important place in the overall Mahāyāna perception of Mañjuśrī.

### A. MAÑJUŚRĪ'S ROLE IN MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

#### 1) Interlocutor

Mañjuśrī has a role as interlocutor in many Mahāyāna *sūtras*, particularly on questions dealing with wisdom and ultimate truth. He has this function in both the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (hereafter *Lotus Sūtra*) and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, both early *sūtras*.

In the opening of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Mañjuśrī is enumerated first, before Avalokiteśvara, in the assembly of Bodhisattvas. [1] He knows what the Buddha is about to do, whereas Maitreya does not. The Buddha, deep in *śamādhi*, has emitted a ray of light which illuminates eighteen thousand Buddha lands along with their Buddhas. Maitreya asks Mañjuśrī the significance of this and, being aware of events in the lives of previous Buddhas, Mañjuśrī is able to inform Maitreya that such events always precede the preaching of the *sūtra* itself. [2]

In the initial chapters of the *sūtra*, however, it is Śāriputra, the early disciple of Śākyamuni and the one particularly associated with wisdom, who is the major interlocutor. Not until Chs.12 & 14 does Mañjuśrī have this role. He can be seen, in some respects, as Śāriputra's Mahāyāna equivalent here. He is the Bodhisattva foremost in wisdom. Śāriputra's position now shifts. He becomes the embodiment of wisdom that is limited in scope and depth.

In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* Mañjuśrī's role as interlocutor is much more prominent. He is the only Bodhisattva prepared to enquire of the householder Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti's apparent ill-health. [3] Their subsequent dialogue forms the core of the *sūtra*. Śāriputra becomes something of a target for ridicule in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, fun being made of his narrow perspective.

The role of being Śākyamuni's interlocutor shades into that of becoming his chief spokesman. Whereas, for example, in Ch.14 of the *Lotus Sūtra* Mañjuśrī is just the recipient of a teaching of the Buddha, in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* he articulates with eloquence the teachings on *sūnyatā* (even though Vimalakīrti does have the final 'say'). In works like the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Mañjuśrībuddhaḥśeṭraguṇavyūha Sūtra* (hereafter MBKS) he fully functions

as Śākyamuni's spokesman. This is possible because of his status. Insofar as he is a Bodhisattva already perfect in wisdom, he can act fully on behalf of his presiding Buddha.

It is interesting to note that Mañjuśrī does not appear in what is usually taken to be the earliest *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* particularly in view of his later strong association with the Perfection of Wisdom literature, with Nāgārjuna [4] and the Madhyamaka school. In the early part of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, however, no Bodhisattvas are mentioned. Śākyamuni is attended by *śrāvakas*, Subhūti and Śāripūtra being the other speakers.

In the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (25,000 lines) and the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (100,000 lines), placed by Conze in the second phase (c.100-300 CE) of the development of the Perfection of Wisdom literature, Mañjuśrī is still only mentioned in passing. [5] It is not until the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (700 lines), mentioned above, that Mañjuśrī has a speaking role.

#### ii) Converter of Beings

This role is less prominent. Mañjuśrī is predominantly found discoursing on the emptiness of phenomena and stressing that (on the ultimate level: *paramārthasatya*) no-one saves anyone! Having said that, there are a number of episodes that testify to Mañjuśrī's compassionate activity.

In Ch.12 of the *Lotus Sūtra* [6] Mañjuśrī is recounted as having visited the underwater palace of Sāgara, king of the *nāgas*. A Bodhisattva present in the assembly, Prajñākūṭa, asks Mañjuśrī how many beings he has converted there. "The number is beyond dimension; it is incalculable", he replies, at which point,

"...numberless Bodhisattvas, seated on jeweled lotus blossoms, welled up out of the sea and went to mount Gṛdhra-kūṭa where they rested in mid-air. These Bodhisattvas had all been converted and conveyed to salvation by Mañjuśrī, all had perfected Bodhisattva-conduct, and all were discussing together the six pāramitās." [7]

This episode has a further interest insofar as it establishes a connection between Mañjuśrī and the *nāgas*, a connection that may have been significant for the (later) tradition linking Mañjuśrī and the placing of the Perfection of Wisdom with the *nāgas* for safe-keeping, to be subsequently retrieved by Nāgārjuna.

Another example of Mañjuśrī's activity as a converter of beings, that also strengthens his link with the *nāgas*, is found in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*. [8] After setting Sudhana off on his wanderings Mañjuśrī, according to the *sūtra*, goes to the large town of Dhanyākara (possibly also the residence of Nāgārjuna [9]) to teach the Dharma. Millions of *nāgas*, leaving the ocean, join the inhabitants of the town to hear him. As a result of his teaching they change their destinies for those of gods and men, several thousand becoming irreversible Bodhisattvas. [10]

In the *Ratnakāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* [11] there is an account of Mañjuśrī converting some of the followers of the Jain teacher Satyaka Nirgranthaputra.

[12] Satyaka is staying at Valsāli with many (60,000) disciples. The *bhikṣu* Pūrṇa attempts to preach the Dharma to them, but is completely without success. So, using his magical powers, Mañjuśrī creates five hundred *tīrthikas*, and, posing as their teacher and leader, goes with them to Satyaka, where, prostrating before him and saying they have heard his praises from afar, they ask to become his pupils. By means of this infiltration into Satyaka's camp Mañjuśrī and his disciples are able to work on gaining the confidence of Satyaka's followers, until, one day when the time is ripe, Mañjuśrī explains the Buddhist to them. So effective are his words that five hundred of them experience the opening of the Dharma-Eye and eight thousand others generate the *bodhicitta*. At this point the five hundred disciples created by Mañjuśrī prostrate on the ground with a cry of, "Namo Buddhāya, Namo Buddhāya!" This ruse carries the day and the remaining *tīrthikas* follow suit prostrating, also crying, "Namo Buddhāya!" [13]

Mañjuśrī's psychic powers as a high-level Bodhisattva thus aid him in his role as a converter of beings. A further instance of this is seen in the *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, which I will discuss later.

The last example of Mañjuśrī in this role also illustrates the tension that may sometimes exist between the pursuit of skilful means (*upāyakaushalya*) by the Bodhisattva and the following of the precepts (*vinaya*). In the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita Sūtra*, referred to by de La Vallée Poussin [14], Mañjuśrī converts a "light woman" by means of the taking on the guise of a handsome young man. This Bodhisattva-activity contrasts with Ch.14 of the *Lotus Sūtra*, "Comfortable Conduct" where the Buddha gives a discourse to Mañjuśrī on the morality (*śīla*) of the Bodhisattva. It is largely a reiteration of the essentials of the *bhikṣu vinaya*. There is a list of people with whom he (despite the events of Ch.12 [15], the Bodhisattva here is very much male) should not become familiar. He should keep away from women:

"Not even for Dharma's sake does he become familiar or close. How much the less for anything else!" [16]

There is also a passage which enjoins the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva not to approach with familiarity any Nirgranthas! [17]

There is, of course, precedent for Mañjuśrī's conversion of the prostitute. Vimalakīrti engages in a wide range of 'worldly' activity out of skilful means. There is also a passage in the *Sūtraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra* where the aptly named Bodhisattva Māragocārānupālita ('Undeiled by Māra's Sphere') makes love to two hundred divine maidens who live in Māra's palaces by transforming himself into two hundred equally beautiful gods. Once satisfied they are receptive to hearing the Dharma. [18]

#### iii) Mañjuśrī as Spiritual Friend

In the *Ajātaśatruṛāja Sūtra* Mañjuśrī is said to be the spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitra*) of the Bodhisattvas. [19] In another *sūtra* [20] Ajātaśatru is told he has the great advantage of having Mañjuśrī as a spiritual friend. Perhaps, though, the most important source for this role is the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* which has for its theme the arising of *bodhicitta* and the subsequent quest for

Enlightenment. It is also a progress from seeing things as they are ordinarily seen (*loka-dhātu*) to seeing things as they are seen by the Bodhisattvas (*dharma-dhātu*). The *sūtra* follows the quest of Sudhana, the son of a rich merchant, who hears Mañjuśrī teaching at Dhanyāśkara, as a result of which *bodhicitta* arises in him. Mañjuśrī teaches him that the basis of all Bodhisattvas is the state of *samantabhadra* ("all-round benevolence"). He then sends him to seek for the life of the Bodhisattva by seeking out spiritual friends who will teach and guide him. Thus Mañjuśrī is the first of fifty-two *kalyāṇamitras* that Sudhana visits culminating in his meeting with Maitreya who takes him into Vairocana's tower, the realm of perfect interpenetrability, the *Dharmadhātu*. Maitreya describes Mañjuśrī to Sudhana as "the good friend Mañjuśrī". [21] He then sends Sudhana back to Mañjuśrī who reiterates the teaching on *samantabhadra*. [22]

The emphasis on *kalyāṇamitra* pervades the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* and is established at the outset by Mañjuśrī's initial teaching to Sudhana,

"Therefore, O son of good family, if thou wishest to attain the knowledge which is possessed by the All-Knowing One, be ever assiduous to get associated with good friends (*kalyāṇamitra*)."[23]

Mañjuśrī's relationship with Sudhana is immediate, practical, 'down-to-earth'. It is interesting that in China, where the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* became very popular, there was what D.T. Suzuki calls a gradual 'secularization' of the celestial Bodhisattvas. They are shown in paintings as increasingly inhabiting the ordinary world. [24] This would be further encouraged by the identification in China of Wu T'ai Shan as Mañjuśrī's principal abode, accounts of visions of him and of physical encounters there, Mañjuśrī often taking the form of an old man. [25]

#### iv) Mañjuśrī as object of meditation and devotion

Key *sūtras* here are the *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (hereafter MPS) and the MBKS. I will leave discussion of the MBKS until later. As for the MPS, it survives in a third century Chinese translation by Nie Tao-tchen. It is a short *sūtra*, less than four pages in Lamotte's translation into French. [26] The title is misleading insofar as the *sūtra* is not about Mañjuśrī's actual *parinirvāṇa*, but one 'performed' out of skilful means. The *sūtra*, as we shall see, has connections with the *Sūtraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra*.

Towards the end of the MPS the Buddha itemizes the benefits and results of meditating on, and being devoted to, Mañjuśrī. Just hearing his name will lead to many aeons being subtracted from one's stay in *samsāra*. Those who pay salutation to him and venerate him will be reborn into the family of the Buddha and will enjoy Mañjuśrī's protection. Meditating on his statue (*rūpa*) and his teaching will lead to seeing him and obtaining insight. If one cannot see Mañjuśrī, then reciting the *Sūtraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra* and repeating his name will have the result that he will come to one within seven days. Alternatively, if one is shackled by one's previous action (*pūrvakarma*) then he will appear in a dream; and a little later the *sūtra* says that to those who believe firmly in the *Vaipulya Sūtras* ("extended *sūtras*") Dharmakumāra Mañjuśrī will appear in *dhyāna*,

whereas to the distracted (*vikṣiptacitta*) he will appear in a dream. Also, contemplation of Mañjuśrī's thirty-two major and eighty lesser marks (*lakṣaṇa*) will lead to seeing him.

To understand the significance of these passages it is necessary to see their wider context. The conclusions will also be relevant to the subsequent discussion of the origins of Mañjuśrī's cult. The sorts of benefits described above and the language used are reminiscent of passages in other *sūtras*. One striking example from the *Pratyutpannasamādhi Sūtra* [27] is:

"If he concentrates on the Tathāgata Amitāyus with undistracted thought for seven days and nights, then when seven days and nights have elapsed he shall see the Lord, the Tathāgata Amitāyus. If he does not see the Lord by day, then in a dream while sleeping the face of the Lord, the Tathāgata, will appear." [28]

In the *Saptaśatika Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, where Mañjuśrī is the interlocutor, the Buddha tells him that to attain enlightenment quickly one should cultivate the "single-minded *samādhi*". This involves concentrating one's mind on a Buddha and reciting his name single-mindedly. As a result, those who do this "will be able to see all the Buddhas of the past, present and future right in each moment" [29]

These sorts of meditations and their results most probably have their roots in the practice of the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussmṛti*), a practice which goes back to the earliest phase of Buddhism. Buddhaghosa says that it results in, among other things, the practitioner coming, "to feel as if he were living in the Master's presence". [30] In the *Sutta Nipāta* there is a description of a Brahmin, called Piṅgiya, who praises the Buddha saying,

"with constant and careful vigilance it is possible for me to see him as clearly as with my eyes, in night as well as day". [31]

Indeed the actual practice of the recollection of the Buddha, as based on the nine *Buddhagūṇas* (the qualities of the Buddha enumerated in the *Triratna-vandana*), may have been centred on visualization rather than recitation (*japa*). [32] There is also some evidence that such forms of the practice were considered to have far-reaching effects. In his study of *buddhānussmṛti* in the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* Paul Harrison quotes a non-Mahāyāna *śgama* passage that describes it as leading to magic powers and also to, "the fruit of the *śramaṇa*", *nirvāṇa*. [33]

Within the expanded Buddhological context of the Mahāyāna it would be a natural step to extend *buddhānussmṛti* to Buddhas and their Buddha-lands, and thence to Bodhisattvas. As for the geographical context of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* concerned with these practices, Kashmir may be a possibility. There were important meditation schools based there. [34] This also would have formed a good spring-board for diffusion to China where, indeed, *buddhānussmṛti* practices became popular quite early. [35]

The meditations on Mañjuśrī and their results described in the MPS are clearly *buddhānussmṛti*-type practices. The link with the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* might be particularly close. As well as the close parallelism of passages

concerning such practices, they are in both cases described by the Buddha to the same Bodhisattva, one Bhadrāpāla. Also, the MPN seems to be aware of other traditions. After describing the meditations on Mañjuśrī it reads,

"Those who perform this meditation are the true meditators; the others are false meditators." [36]

Might these 'others' include devotees of the meditation on Amitāyus in the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra*? [37] The *Pratyutpanna*, translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema in 179 CE places it among the earliest *sūtras* introduced into China. The MPN was not translated until over a hundred years later. [38] This suggests it may be a later work. Also, as we shall see, the MBKS is aware of the competing merits of Amitābha's Buddha-land.

The foregoing evidence indicates, then, that the sort of claims that the MPS makes concerning the benefits accruing to those who meditate on Mañjuśrī are locatable within a developing *buddhānusmṛti* tradition. It also points to a picture of competing cults centred on different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the cult of Mañjuśrī probably post-dating that of Amitāyus/Amitābha.

Note: Mañjuśrī's role as an object of meditation expanded greatly within the tantric tradition in India and Tibet. For instance in the *Sādhanaṁālā* (c. 7th-10th CE) there are forty-one *sādhana*s devoted to him. [39] Closely connected to the role of object of devotion is one of visionary inspirer. Mañjuśrī is recorded as appearing, often in dreams, to the devotee or meditator. [40]

#### v) Mañjuśrī as Protector

This is not a role that is very prominent in the *sūtras*. The function of protector is closely linked to devotion. Protection reciprocates the attention of devotion. In the MPN, as we have seen, Mañjuśrī gives the devotee his protection in future lives. The role of protector becomes strongly associated with Mañjuśrī, particularly in Tibet, where the triad of Protectors (*nāthas*), Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi is very common. An early example of this triad is found in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* [41] where also Yamāntaka [42], later to be identified as a wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī, is portrayed as being at Mañjuśrī's service.

#### B. MAÑJUŚRĪ'S STATUS IN MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

##### i) Bodhisattva of the tenth *bhūmi*

Mañjuśrī is a Bodhisattva of the tenth and final stage (*bhūmi*) of the Bodhisattva Path. As such he joins figures such as Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya. Mañjuśrī's epithet *kumārabhūta*, in its sense of 'being a prince', has as technical meaning which indicates that its bearer is a tenth stage Bodhisattva. In this stage the Bodhisattva receives initiation (*abhiṣeka*) which consecrates him as the Crown Prince (*kumāra*) of the King of the Dharma and associates him with the power of the Buddha. [43]

A tenth stage Bodhisattva is, from the point of view of the unenlightened, indistinguishable from a Buddha. The *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*

says, "The Bodhisattva, the great being, who is found in the tenth stage must be called, purely and simply, a Tathāgata." [44] He is able to enter the *Sūrangama Samādhi* ("The Hero's Journey *samādhi*") which only he and Buddhas are able to attain, and which enables him to manifest the stages of birth, going forth, *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa* of a Buddha (including leaving relics: *śarīrānupradāna*) [45]. He can do this anywhere in the ten regions of space. A tenth stage Bodhisattva can thus emanate Buddha forms!

In the *Sūrangamasamādhi Sūtra* the Buddha describes the career of a Tathāgata of the past called Nāgakuṭottama:

"The life-span of Nāgakuṭottama was forty thousand years. Having worked for the welfare of the world with its gods and men, he entered mahāparinirvāṇa. Since his relics increased copiously, a huge number of stūpas were erected over them, worshipped by all beings" [46]

Nāgakuṭottama, before entering *parinirvāṇa*, also prophesies the name of a future Buddha. The *sūtra* reveals, however, that Nāgakuṭottama is "nobody else but Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta". The *parinirvāṇa* of Nāgakuṭottama is therefore only apparent. It is being manifested by Mañjuśrī for the benefit of the living beings of that region.

In an earlier section of the same *sūtra* Mañjuśrī becomes a Pratyekabuddha to help beings in a previous time when the Dharma had disappeared. Here we have an unusual instance of a Pratyekabuddha described as teaching. [47]

The MBKS [48], probably an important *sūtra* in the development of the cult of Mañjuśrī, describes how for Mañjuśrī, now a tenth stage Bodhisattva, the *bodhicitta* arose in the past when he was a universal king (*cakravartin*) called Amba. It also describes his vows before the Tathāgata of that time, Thunderous Voice:

"I shall not cherish the idea of attaining Buddhahood in haste,  
But until the end of the future I shall benefit all living beings,  
And adorn and purify incalculable, inconceivable Buddha-lands." [49]

Mañjuśrī goes on to describe what sort of Buddha-land his will be when he becomes a Buddha. It is a pure Buddha-land: lacking women and inhabited just by Bodhisattvas (born dressed in monastic robes!) It will contain no Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas. [50] As mentioned earlier, one passage shows an awareness of the competing attractions of Amitābha's pure-land. Mañjuśrī's is said to be incomparably more magnificent:

"Supposing a person splits a hair into one hundred parts and, with one part, takes a droplet of water from a vast ocean. If he compares the droplet of water to the magnificence of Amitābha's Buddha-land, and the remaining water of the vast ocean to the magnificence of Universal Sight's [Mañjuśrī's name when he will become a Buddha] Buddha-land, the contrast will not suffice." [51]

##### ii) Mañjuśrī as Buddha

The MBKS contains a passage where Mañjuśrī is asked why, since he has

attained the ten stages of a Bodhisattva, he does not attain enlightenment. He answers,

"Good man, no-one realises enlightenment after he has achieved perfection in all Buddha-Dharmas. Why? Because if one has achieved perfection in all Buddha-Dharmas, he need not realise anything more." [52]

and further on he says he does not seek enlightenment because "*Mañjuśrī is no other than Enlightenment and vice versa.*" [53]

Mañjuśrī would seem, then, to be fully enlightened. Yet at no point in the MBKS is he said to be a Buddha. He could not be said to be one for the reason that Buddhas arise one at a time. You cannot, by definition, have two Buddhas arising in any one Buddha-field at the same time. Yet full enlightenment is that possessed by a Buddha. It seems to me that the MBKS exhibits an ambivalence concerning the goal of Buddhahood. On the one hand it is seen as the embodiment of full enlightenment. On the other, its attainment implies the subsequent entering of *parinirvāṇa* and going beyond the reach of beings, which could be construed as abandoning them. So, on the one hand, Mañjuśrī will become a Buddha with his pure-land, yet on the other hand, he does not seek enlightenment because he is already enlightened, as a Bodhisattva; and his not seeking enlightenment is here not just an expression of a shift in the level of semantic analysis from conventional truth (*samvṛti-satya*) to ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*) that is a common device in literature dealing with *sūnyatā*. (In other words Mañjuśrī is not just saying that there is, ultimately, no 'thing' to be sought after.) [54] This ambivalence towards Buddhahood seems to be present in his vow not to attain Buddhahood in haste (quoted above).

In one *sūtra*, the *Aṅgulimālīya* [55], Mañjuśrī is actually said to be a Buddha of the present, though not in our universe. He is the Buddha of a universe named *Nityapramuditā* ("Always Happy") because in it the words 'old age', 'disease', and 'suffering' are unknown. Only the Mahāyāna is practiced there. It is always pleasant. [56]

Finally, in the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana Sūtra* [57], the Buddha says that in the past he was a disciple of Mañjuśrī and that to him he owes the fact that he is a Buddha. Also, in the past, innumerable Buddhas were Mañjuśrī's disciples; and Buddhas in the future, equally, will be led by his power and compassion. Furthermore,

"in the same way that, in the world, all children have a father and a mother, so in the religion of the Buddha, Mañjuśrī is the father and mother". [58]

This is, of course, reminiscent of the figure of *Prajñāpāramitā*, who in Ch.12 of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is said to be the mother of the Buddhas. In that she embodies the wisdom of *sūnyatā* that results in enlightenment, she can be said to give birth to the Tathāgatas. Mañjuśrī, being so strongly associated with wisdom, could easily take on this function of spiritual progenitor.

It is but a short step from seeing Mañjuśrī as in some sense 'lying behind' all Buddhas to seeing him as a primordial Buddha (*Ādibuddha*), the *locus*

classicus for which is the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti* (v. Wayman, 1985, and Davidson, 1981). This, however, takes us into the role of Mañjuśrī within the tantras, an area which lies beyond that of the present discussion.

In the Mahāyāna *sūtras* discussed, then, Mañjuśrī is clearly "*an entirely Buddhist personage*". As, at the least, a Bodhisattva of the highest level, he is able to perform a number of important roles. He can be the Buddha's spokesman and is perfectly equipped to help beings and be their spiritual friend. Insofar as he is indistinguishable from the Tathāgatas, he can be the object of devotion and meditative recollection.

Yet however important Mañjuśrī is in the *sūtras*, there still remains the question of how important he was 'on the ground'. Was there a cult of Mañjuśrī as some of the *sūtra* material might suggest? If so, where were its origins, and how significant or sizeable was its following? As Paul Williams points out, Mañjuśrī does not always emerge victorious in the *sūtras*. In the *Vimaladattā-paripṛcchā Sūtra* an eight year old girl, whose Buddha-Field will excel Mañjuśrī's, defeats him in a discourse on wisdom. [59] Along with the material from the contextualisation of the devotional and meditational passages on Mañjuśrī and the references to Amitābha in the MBKS this strengthens the suggestion that the early Mahāyāna was not of a piece but centred on allegiances to certain *sūtras*, meditative absorptions, and Buddha and Bodhisattva figures.

#### Appendix: Mañjuśrī and the *Vaipulya Sūtras*

The following discussion may be framed by two sets of data. Firstly, as we have seen, Mañjuśrī does not appear in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (8,000 Verse) and has only a passing reference in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (25,000 Verse) and the *Śatasāhasrikā* (100,000 Verse). Furthermore, according to B. Bhattacharyya [60], neither Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, nor Aśvaghoṣa mention him. Secondly, however, Atiśa (c.1042 CE), in the autocommentary to his highly influential *Bodhipathapradīpa*, refers to Mañjughoṣa as the inspirer and guru of Nāgārjuna. [61] In the same way that Maitreya is seen as Asaṅga's teacher, Mañjuśrī becomes Nāgārjuna's, the former pair becoming associated with the extensive deeds (ie. Compassion) of the Bodhisattva and the latter two with his profound wisdom. [62] Not only is Mañjuśrī Nāgārjuna's guru, but it is Mañjuśrī that entrusts part of the *Śatasāhasrikā* for safekeeping to the *nāgas*. [63]

How is it, then, that Mañjuśrī came to be so associated with *sūtras* in which, and with figures by whom, he is hardly mentioned? As with much of the material in this article, the work of Etienne Lamotte is particularly valuable. He approaches the problem from a slightly different direction, however. [64] The commentators of the Mahāyāna maintained that the Mahāyāna *sūtras* were the authentic word of the Buddha. Yet it was known, argues Lamotte, that they did not appear in India for some centuries after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. In the legends accounting for these *sūtras* being taught by the Buddha and accounting for the gap before their appearance, Mañjuśrī came to play a role. In the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, translated and annotated (402-4 CE) by Kumārajīva, there is reference to a gathering of Bodhisattvas who compiled the Mahāyāna *sūtras* at the same time that the five hundred Arhants gathered to recite the



Hīnayāna *dharma* and *vinaya*. [65] Haribhadra (C.9th.), in his *Tarkajvāla*, mentions Mañjuśrī as one of the principal compilers, along with Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi and Maitreya. Bu ston comments that tradition located the gathering on Mount Vimalasvabhāva, to the south of Rājagṛha, where Mañjuśrī recited the Mahāyāna *Abhidharma*, Maitreya the *Vinaya*, and Vajrapāṇi the *Sūtras*. [66]

Lamotte cites Fa Tsang (643-712 CE) as giving a resumé of the traditional account for what occurred during the interval between this recitation and their promulgation. After the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, he says, the 'saints' of the Mahāyāna hid themselves, and the 'heretics' contended for power. Because there was nowhere to put the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, they remained in the palace of the King of the *nāgas* until, six hundred years later, Nāgārjuna entered the *nāga* palace and learnt them by heart. On his return he was able to proclaim them to the world.

There are variants to this basic story, though its core - the visit to the *nāga* palace to recover some part of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, particularly the Perfection of Wisdom - remains stable. I have not, however, been able to make all the links. I have not found a non-contemporary reference to it being specifically Mañjuśrī who took the *sūtras* to the *nāgas*, though the two *sūtra* passages mentioned earlier (under Mañjuśrī as 'Converter of Beings') that connect him with the *nāgas* would make such a step easy. Also, the step of linking Mañjuśrī and Nāgārjuna is understandable. [68] They share connections with the *nāgas*, with the Perfection of Wisdom, as well as geographical links with the South of India. [69] Perhaps by the time the association was made, the tradition of Mañjuśrī appearing personally in dreams or visions had become established. Mañjuśrī could have been Nāgārjuna's guru using these means.

Finally, Lamotte points out that there was a tradition that the Mahāyāna *sūtras* taught by the Buddha, and compiled by the Bodhisattvas, were very large: at least 100,000 verses (hence the term *Vaipulyasūtra*, "extended *sūtra*"). [70] Of the Perfection of Wisdom *sūtras* there thus arose, especially in China, the belief that the 100,000 verse *sūtra* (the *Śatasāhasrikā*) was the oldest and hence the original *sūtra*; and so the most to be valued. It is not surprising that it is this *sūtra* that Mañjuśrī is represented as giving to the *nāgas* and as being recovered by Nāgārjuna.

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#### Abbreviations:

|       |                                                                                    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| JIABS | <i>The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</i> , Berkeley |
| JIP   | <i>The Journal of Indian Philosophy</i> , Dordrecht and Boston                     |
| MBKS  | <i>Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha Sūtra</i>                                         |
| MCB   | <i>Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques</i> , Brussels                                  |
| MmK   | <i>Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa</i>                                                           |
| MPS   | <i>Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇa Sūtra</i>                                                   |

#### Notes:

1. v. Hurvitz, 1976, p.1.
2. *ibid.* p.4f.
3. v. Thurman, 1976, p.42f.
4. v. Atiśa in his *Bodhipathapradīpa* autocommentary, Sherburne (trans.), 1983, p.144; Lamotte, 1949, p.939, n. 1, for Mañjuśrī's role in the compilation of Mahāyāna *sūtras*; also, Lamotte, 1960, pp.40-46.
5. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.8, n. 20.
6. In the Sanskrit edition it is Ch.11; in Kumārajīva's translation it is Ch.12.
7. Hurvitz, 1976, p.198.
8. This survives in Sanskrit and so is probably of Indian origin, unlike much of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* of which it is a part. This means that it could be, along with the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, a source for *śāstra* material on Mañjuśrī.
9. Lamotte identifies Dhanyākara with Dhānyakaṭaka, the capital of Andra, which is mentioned frequently in Buddhist inscriptions in Brahmi. According to Bu ston and Tāranātha it was the residence of Nāgārjuna. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.46.
10. *ibid.* p.47.
11. Extant in two Chinese translations: 1. Dharmarakṣa, 270 CE; 2. Guṇabhadra, between 436-468 CE, plus a Tibetan translation by Ratnarakṣita. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.39.
12. Known in the Pāli texts (as Saccaka Nigāṇṭhaputta). E.g. in the *Cūlasaccaka Sutta* (M I 227-237).
13. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.40.
14. de La Vallée Poussin, in Hastings (ed.), 1908, p.405, n. 2.
15. In this chapter a young *nāga* princess is revealed as an advanced Bodhisattva, thanks to Mañjuśrī's teaching. Śāriputra is astounded that such a thing is possible for a female. Tensions such as these within a text, as in this case, or between texts, can be partially resolved by taking a diachronic, rather than synchronic perspective. Williams, 1989, p.153, for example notes that Ch. 12 of the Lotus Sūtra is probably a late interpolation. Also the notion of the Bodhisattva probably evolved over time. P. Harrison, 1987, has a very interesting discussion of evidence suggesting that the early conception of the Bodhisattva was that of a *bhikṣu* devoted to the goal of Buddhahood; in other words, of an ordinary human (monk) following certain ideals. Within the Mahāyāna itself a key hermeneutic device for dealing with such tensions was the distinction between meaning that is provisional (*neyārtha*) and so in need of interpretation, and meaning that is final (*nītārtha*) and so in no further need of interpretation. The discussion of which teachings were provisional and which final constituted much of Indian, and subsequently Tibetan, Buddhist philosophy.
16. Hurvitz, 1976, p.209.
17. *ibid.* p.208.
18. The passage is translated in Snellgrove, 1987, p.66; v. also the *Vidyutprāptaparipṛcchā*, quoted in Sangharakṣita, 1985, p.185.
19. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.95.
20. The *Drumakīṇanarājaparipṛcchā Sūtra*; v. Lamotte, 1960, p.95.
21. v. Suzuki, 1953, p.185.

22. The embodiment of this state, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, appears at the end of the *sūtra*. The teaching of the *sūtra* means that *bodhicarya* is identified as *bhadracarya*.
23. *ibid.* p.170.
24. v. plate VII, "Mañjuśrī in a grass-robe", in Suzuki, 1953, facing p.80.
25. v. Birnbaum, in Eliade (ed.), 1987, p.175; Welsh, 1967, p.307; Luk, 1988, p.14f.
26. v. Lamotte, 1960, pp.36-9.
27. The full title is the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi Sūtra*.
28. quoted by Harrison, 1978, p.43, with Tibetan text.
29. Chang (ed.), 1983, p.110.
30. v. *Visuddhimagga*, VII.67, Ñānamoli (trans.), p.230.
31. v. Williams, 1989, p.217; (SN 1140-42).
32. This was suggested in a paper by C. Hallisey, "Varieties of Pāṇi in Theravāda Buddhism" (unpublished) given in May 1990 at the Oriental Institute, Oxford.
33. *Ekottarāgama*, quoted in Harrison, 1978, p.37; v. Williams, 1989, p.219.
34. v. Demiéville, 1954.
35. v. Williams, 1989, p.220f; Beyer, 1977, p.337f, for Central Asian interest.
36. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.38, my translation.
37. Despite Amitāyus not being central to the *Pratyutpanna* the *sūtra* does suggest the existence, at some level, of his cult: rebirth in his *buddhakṣetra* is described as a goal of practice; v. Harrison 1987, p.80.
38. *ibid.* p.7.
39. Bhattacharyya, 1958, p.102. For Tibetan *sādhana*s, v. Mullin, 1982, pp.65-8; p.75f.
40. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.49.
41. v. the translation in Snellgrove, 1987, pp.192-4.
42. v. Guenther, 1976, pp.28-30, for Tsong kha pa on Yamāntaka.
43. Lamotte, 1960, p.12; also de La Vallée Poussin, in Hastings (ed.), 1908, p.4056, n. 1.
44. quoted in Lamotte, 1960, p.13, my translation.
45. MPS trans. Lamotte, 1960, p.37.
46. Kalsang & Pasadika, 1975, p.4; Lamotte, 1965, pp.260-3, gives the name of the Tathāgata as Nāgavapśāgra.
47. Lamotte, 1965, pp.242-4.
48. Lit. "The array of qualities of Mañjuśrī's Buddhafield." v. "The Prediction of Mañjuśrī's Attainment of Buddhahood.", in Chang (ed.), 1983, pp.164-186.
49. Chang (ed.), 1983, p.175.
50. *ibid.* p.180.
51. *ibid.* p.183.
52. *ibid.* p.177.
53. *ibid.* p.183.
54. v. *ibid.* p.178 for an example in MBKS.
55. Extant in Chinese translation by Guṇabhadra (between 436 & 443 CE), and a Tibetan translation.
56. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.29.
57. *ibid.* cited p.93.
58. *ibid.* p.93-4.
59. v. Williams, 1989, p.240; Chang (ed.), 1983, p.84.

60. This statement is, perhaps, problematic given the number of works ascribed to Nāgārjuna and the difficulty of ascertaining those which he is likely to have authored. I have not checked Bhattacharyya's claim. v. Bhattacharyya, 1958, p.101.
61. Sherburne, 1983, p.144.
62. For a recent formulation of this see Geshé Wangyal, 1973, p.11.
63. v. Jamyang Khyentze, 1974, p.13.
64. v. Lamotte, 1960, pp.40-6.
65. v. Lamotte, 1949, p.939, n. 1.
66. cited *ibid.* p.940.
67. v. Lamotte, 1960, p.42.
68. The reference by Atiśa is the earliest I have found.
69. v. n. 9 for Nāgārjuna's connection with South India.
70. v. Lamotte, 1960, pp.42,5.

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## MALLARMÉ AND THE MYSTICISM OF POETRY

by Dharmachari Sāsanaaratna

The western Buddhist, it seems, is often able to gain inspiration not only from traditional Dharma teachings, but also from a medium that he may be more happily disposed towards, that of western literature. Any good writer may be capable of communicating an aesthetic awareness of life and perhaps a few insights. Above this general qualification, however, there are few selective names who stand out with both a rare spiritual depth and the skill to convey it. Shakespeare, Goethe, Blake, Whitman, Nietzsche, and Rilke are all well respected in this way by both the critic and the public reader. For years now I have been fascinated by the works of a less famous figure, the late nineteenth century French poet, Stéphane Mallarmé. After a recent study of his writings I now believe that his insight was not only spiritual but transcendental.

Although the name Mallarmé may not be familiar to many English speaking readers, his influence on European literature cannot be ignored. W.B. Yeats, Oscar Wilde, André Gide, and Stefan George amongst others, were all greatly inspired by him. His devoted disciple and friend, Paul Valéry, in turn was a major influence on Rilke and other poets. Jean Paul Sartre also venerated him and wrote a lengthy philosophical appraisal of his work.

However, although his impact on the world of literature was to resonate well into the twentieth century, it would be wrong to see him as a stepping stone. His role in the history of literature was more like a dazzling beacon off the main track, enchanting or irritating passers-by with its uncanny light flashing from some distant depth or vortex. He was a landmark of extremity. No one, except in certain respects Paul Valéry, was either willing or able to follow him entirely, though many were to marvel at his strange endeavours.

One reason why Mallarmé should be seldom celebrated by the public is that he is not easy to come to terms with from the point of view of conventional language. In his poetry, not only is the vision and message often sublime but even more often the medium itself is also sublimated and this can create problems for the casual or untrained reader. Valéry claimed that Mallarmé "created in France the conception of the difficult author". [1] By way of introduction to this demanding but highly rewarding poet I would like to share some knowledge about his life and some observations regarding his poetry.

Mallarmé was a failure. That is, he had a literary ambition that was impossible to achieve. *The Orphic Explanation of the Earth* was to be a lengthy poetic book, perfect in its every word and detail, which would reveal the essential answers to all the mysteries of the universe. Although saddened and frustrated by his failure to write such an impossible book, he did write a number of poems which, though he saw them as preparatory scraps, are unique for their beauty, mystery, and depth. He also led frequent salons; gatherings of writers, artists, and composers, many of them now famous, who would listen in awe to his strange, poetic, and profound utterances. He was also practically, though unofficially, adopted as the leader of a literary and artistic movement

which after a while became known as 'Symbolism'. Subsequent movements, the 'Decadents', and 'Aesthetes', were also inspired by him.

Stéphane Mallarmé was born in 1842 in Paris where he spent most of his life, with short stays in London, Tournon, and Avignon. His mother and sister both died during his childhood. His father also died while he was still young, and Stéphane himself later lost his own eight year old son. Death became an obsessive theme for him and he struggled to face the fact of death bravely, with periodic success. He worked mainly as an English teacher and university lecturer, and married around 1862. He died in 1898 in his country house in Valvins on the Seine.

Unlike the other Symbolist poets, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud, Mallarmé's life was marked by sanity and the absence of moral conflicts. Though less dramatic than the other three, he was certainly no less revolutionary. He was very influenced by Baudelaire's poetry. Shaking off the restraints of both classical and romantic styles, Baudelaire had created an opening in the world of literature that Mallarmé was keen to explore further. That opening was what was later to be known as Symbolism.

Symbolism involves images, themes, and metaphors that are suggestive rather than explicit and which, whilst expressing some meaning, also retain some mystery as a vital ingredient of their power and beauty. The best Symbolists at least are concerned not so much with the mysteries of the external world, or even of imaginary worlds, but with the mysteries of human emotions, thoughts and perceptions. The imagery used, however, is primarily sensual, and an otherworldly setting is occasionally used, as in Mallarmé's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (A Faun's Afternoon), which begins like this:

Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer.

Si clair,

Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air  
Assoupi de someils touffus.

Aimai-je un rêve?

Mon doute, amas de nuit ancienne, s'achève  
En maint rameau subtil, qui, demeuré les vrais  
Bois mêmes, prouve, hélas! que bien seul je m'offrais  
Pour triompher la faute idéale de roses.

I would perpetuate these nymphs.

So clear,

their light carnation, that it drifts on the air  
drowsy with tufted slumbers.

So I loved a dream?

My doubt, a mass of ancient night, concludes  
in many a subtle branch, which, since the real woods  
remain, proves, alas, what I offered to myself  
as triumph was the ideal lack of roses. [2]

The subject is a reverie within a reverie, and the relevance to the human emotions is suggestive rather than explicit. The dream-like atmosphere is at least as important as the plot or meaning. Debussy's *Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune* was inspired by this poem. In Mallarmé's poems the general atmosphere is often easier to ascertain than a sequence of events in time. The impact is more vivid than the plot.

The Symbolist style had appeared occasionally in the works of Edgar Allan Poe and France's own Gérard de Nerval, and it became a more consistent and thorough feature in Baudelaire's verse, but it was Mallarmé who made the style most conscious and brought it to its climax. The Symbolist poet aims to communicate the mystery and beauty of human experience directly without diverting into moral evaluations. Baudelaire was to communicate his religious experience intact in this way. The fact that he loved Satan more than God and lived in fear of them both is merely incidental. (The original 'satanic verses'?) As with Mallarmé, his prime spiritual goal lay in poetry itself. In the same way, Mallarmé aimed to enrich our perception and language rather than teach us how to lead our lives. Being a calm atheist, however, he was in a better position to reach a depth of wisdom than was Baudelaire. It is as if Baudelaire cleared the way with his emotional honesty, enabling Mallarmé to unfold a more profound spiritual vision.

Mallarmé's own development of Symbolism was the aim and practise of what he called 'pure poetry'. This involved a condensing of style so that virtually every word in a poem would be carefully selected for its poetic impact in terms of imagery, sound, and metaphoric power. In order to do this he was not afraid to bend or break the rules of conventional syntax or punctuation, a certain tension of ambiguity adding to the beauty and mystery of the poem. The result is often characterised by a rich and pleasurable concentration akin, perhaps, to a meditator's experience of *dhyāna*. For example, to describe something as trivial as a woman's hairstyle, we have this verse from *La Chevelure*, (The Mass of Hair):

La chevelure vol d'une flamme à l'extrême  
Occident de désirs pour la tout déployer  
Se pose (Je dirais mourir un diadème)  
Vers le front couronné son ancien foyer

The mass of hair a flame's flight to the extreme  
Occident of desires there to unfold all  
Settles (call it the dying of a diadem)  
Towards the crowned brow its ancient hearth [3]

Or to celebrate the consciousness of humanity we have these two verses from a nameless sonnet:

Oui, je sais qu'au lointain de cette nuit, la Terre  
Jette d'un grand éclat l'insolite mystère,  
Sous les siècles hideux qui l'obscurcissent moins.

L'espace à soi pareil qu'il s'accroisse ou se nie  
 Roule dans cet ennui des feux vils pour témoins  
 Que s'est astre en fête allumé le génie.

Yes, Earth, I know, flings far into that night  
 A great, unwonted mystery of light  
 Beneath the foul ages that dim it less.

Space like itself increasing or forswearing  
 Spins in that apathy base fires to witness  
 The genius of a festive star is flaring. [4]

At this point it is worth noting that the use of the symbol in the poetry of the Symbolists, and especially of Mallarmé, is different from its use by other previous or contemporary writers. The symbols used by Blake or Nietzsche, for example, tend to have such specific roles that they can be easily personified. (Urizen, Luvah, Zarathustra, etc.) They are also mainly allegorical. The symbolism in Mallarmé's work, on the other hand, tends to be non-allegorical and is rarely personified or systematised into an interplay of specific roles. It is instead a free-flowing process whereby any phenomenon, whether mental or physical, can liberate itself from its conventional identity; a process which is held to have a truth revealing value in itself.

In Mallarmé's later poems, especially, the poem is no longer just a colourful narrative of an antecedent spiritual experience, but is now seen as a spiritual experience in itself. The medium becomes more important than the meaning. The metaphor is no longer just a coloured garment to clothe a dualistic meaning, but gains a central importance of its own accord. The meaning serves the metaphor rather than *vica versa*. In Mallarmé's own words:

The pure work implies the disappearance of the poet as speaker, yielding his initiative to words, which are mobilized by the shock of their difference; they light up with reciprocal reflections like a virtual stream of fireworks over jewels, restoring perceptible breath to the former lyric impulse, or the enthusiastic personal directing of the sentence. [5]

Paul Valéry, at least, seemed to believe that Mallarmé's poems lived up to this ideal. He complemented them with a similar metaphor:

The brilliance of these crystalline constructions, so pure, and so perfectly finished in every part, fascinated me. They have not the transparency of glass, no doubt; but in that they somehow break habits of mind on their facets and on their concentrated structure, what is called their obscurity is only, in reality, their *refraction*. [6]

On reading his poems one can receive the impression of a poetry conscious of itself, being no longer content to be dictated to by the ideas of the poet as separate from the poem.

This shift in emphasis from creativity as expressed in the meaning to creativity as expressed in the medium has a spiritual significance. The medium of a work of art conveys or suggests a general state of consciousness, held at

least momentarily by the artist and potentially by the audience. Whereas the meaning conveys or suggests only intellectual understandings.

However, the meanings, implicit or possible, in Mallarmé's work should not be neglected either. Throughout the thirty-five years of his long but unprolific writing career a common theme is recurrent. That is, the paradox of oblivion and sterility on the one hand, and infinity, purity, and perfection on the other, often reflecting or inferring one another. Blank pages, death, a clear sky and the absence of an object all become symbols of either side of the paradox. The early poem, *L'Azur* (The Sky), illustrates this ambivalent obsession. The poem opens with this verse:

De l'éternel azur la sereine ironie  
 Accable, belle indolemment comme les fleurs,  
 Le poète impuissant qui maudit son génie  
 A travers un désert stérile de Douleurs.

The tranquil irony of the eternal sky,  
 Indolently beautiful like flowers,  
 Crushes the impotent poet, cursing his gift  
 Across a sterile wilderness of Sorrows.

and finishes:

Il roule par la brume, ancien et traverse  
 Ta native agonie ainsi qu'un glaive sûr;  
 Où fuir dans la révolte inutile et perverse?  
 Je suis hanté. L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur!

Ancient it rolls through the mists and penetrates  
 Your native agony like a faithful sword;  
 Where can I flee in this useless perverse revolt?  
 I am possessed. The Sky! The Sky! The Sky! The Sky! [7]

With such a theme prevailing we soon have a subtlety and complexity of meaning in addition to a developing subtlety and complexity of style. It is no wonder then that Mallarmé becomes a 'difficult' poet. Indeed, ambiguity can be a problem when the options of interpretation become too varied. For example, this paragraph from the prose poem, *Igitur*, is not exactly easy to understand:

Certainly a presence of midnight subsists. The hour did not disappear through a mirror, did not bury itself in curtains, evoking a furnishing by its vacant sonority. I remember that its gold was going to feign in its absence a null jewel of reverie, rich and useless survival, except that upon the marine and stellar complexity of a worked gold the infinite chance of conjunctions was to be read. [8]

Why should his expression of his philosophical and spiritual ideas be so oblique? One answer is that to him they were not merely ideas but expressions of his actual personal experiences, of which the rich and complex symbolism was an integral part. At any rate, even if it is not easy to understand Mallarmé, it is easy to be affected by him.

Evidence to suggest strongly that his insights were not merely intellectual but based on direct experience lies in his letters to his literary friends. This is a passage from a letter that he wrote to Henri Cazalis in 1867:

These last months have been terrifying. My Thought has thought itself through and reached a Pure Idea. What the rest of me has suffered during that long agony, is indescribable. But, fortunately, I am quite dead now, and Eternity itself is the least pure of all the regions where my Mind can wander - that Mind which is the abiding hermit of its own purity and untouched even now by the reflection of Time. Unfortunately, it was my horrifying sensitivity that brought me to this extremity, and I must veil it over now with outward indifference. That is the only way to recover my lost energy. I achieved a supreme synthesis, and now I am slowly recovering my strength. As you can see, amusement is impossible. And yet how infinitely more impossible it was a few months ago when I struggled with that creature of ancient and evil plumage - God - whom I fortunately defeated and threw to earth. But I had waged that battle on His boney wing, and in a final burst of agony greater than I should have expected from Him, He bore me off again among the Shadows; then victoriously, ecstatically, infinitely, I floated downward until finally one day I looked again in my Venetian mirror and saw the person I had been several months before - the person I had forgotten. I should add - and you must say nothing of this - that the price of my victory is so high that I still need to see myself in this mirror in order to think; and that if it were not in front of me here on the table as I write to you, I would become Nothingness again. Which means that I am impersonal now: not the Stéphane you once knew, but one of the ways the Spiritual Universe has found to see itself, unfold itself through what used to be me.

[9]

Neither does this experience seem to be an isolated one. There are accounts of similar experiences dating throughout the period between 1866 and 1869. It was around this time that his poetry started to intensify itself into its unique 'pure' style. These later poems are often accused of being impersonal and cold. In a sense they do tend to be impersonal, but they do not lack warm emotion. The personality is merely less visible than it is in most forms of poetry such as that of the Romantics, or of his contemporary Symbolists. In this way there similarities between Mallarmé and one of his many artistic friends, Claude Monet, whose paintings rarely depict people, and when they do the faces tend to be indistinct. The same can be said for Mallarmé's poems. Indeed he is as much an 'Impressionist' as a 'Symbolist', in that he often uses simple sensory situations to reveal depths of beauty and liveliness. The poem, *Autre Eventail* (Another Fan), is an example of such a simple sensory experience seeming to breathe inexhaustibly its own conscious life. In the first verse he identifies himself with his daughter's fan:

Ô rêveuse, pour que je plonge  
Au pur délice sans chemin,  
Sache, par un subtil mensonge,  
Garder mon aile dans ta main.

Oh dreamer, that I may plunge  
Pathless to pure delight,  
Learn by a subtle lie  
To keep my wing within your hand.

There are then no more first-person pronouns to appear in the remaining four stanzas, as if his personality has been dissolved into the experience, or is irrelevant. In the third stanza, the air itself becomes personified:

Vertige! voici que frissone  
L'espace comme un grand baiser  
Qui, fou de naître pour personne  
Ne peut jaillir ni s'apaiser.

Now feel space shivering  
Dizzy, some great kiss  
Which, wild to be born in vain,  
Cannot break forth or rest.

In the final stanza the fan, now closed, with the sun setting in the background, still creates a scene burning with vitality:

Le sceptre des rivages roses  
Stagnants sur les soirs d'or, ce l'est,  
Ce blanc vol fermé que tu poses  
Contre le feu d'un bracelet.

The scepter of pink shores  
Stagnant on golden eves is  
This white shut flight you pose  
Against a bracelet's fire. [10]

In such a poem by Mallarmé, or in a later painting by Monet, sensations appear to have an inexhaustible vitality of their own. In other poems by Mallarmé it is his imagination, thought or emotion that can seem to explode into a self sustaining vitality. It is as if the energy of life is not being attributed to the ego-personality, but is showing its limitless source to be present in any aspect of conscious experience. This principle is not unrelated to the Buddha's advice, "*In the seen there will be just the seen, in the heard, just the heard, ... etc.*"

Both Mallarmé and Monet also seem to have developed the skill to indicate the presence of the ineffable within the defined, or the non-finite within the finite. A branch or a waterlily painted by Monet when seen from a certain angle or distance dissolves itself into an unformed fluid energy of light. A similar effect can be found in Mallarmé's poems, due to, first of all, the reflective resonance between the words, caused by the marginal ambiguity, and secondly, due to the sensual connotations of the words themselves. In the three stanzas just quoted there are several words that suggest a free and fluid movement (plunge, pathless, wing, flight) and there others that suggest translucency and brightness (pure, space, pink, golden, white, fire). In this way Mallarmé is pointing us towards an open and unrestricted dimension of

consciousness, the access to which lies in the mundane world, *nirvāṇa* being immanently present in *samsāra*.

Mallarmé's spiritual or mystical disposition is notable for its consistency. Though separated by a period of twenty-six years, his two most profound poems, *Igitur*, written in 1869, and *Un Coup de des n'abolira jamais le hasard*, in 1895, are both concerned with similar themes; eternity, the defiance of the rules of time, voidness and the ambiguous role of chance. As these two works are also his least comprehensible, a definite resumé of either is beyond my capability. However, I shall offer a brief and rough interpretation of the later poem, the title of which could be translated as 'Dice thrown never will annul Chance'.

The setting is a sunken ship at the bottom of the sea. The captain's skeletal hand still grips the wheel in what could be described as a vain and stubborn attempt to rescue himself. Chance as contained within time is powerless to help him, but the principle of chance outside of time can make anything possible. (This latter kind of chance could be seen to represent the creative aspect of *sūnyatā*.) The poem ends with the line, "All Thought utters Dice Thrown." In traditional Buddhist terms, this could be said to mean that it is our perception (*samjñā*) that, in conjunction with the other four *skandha*, causes us to be restricted by the changes in events and circumstances around us. Our limited perception makes us slaves to chance as experienced within time.

I would like to conclude by looking at another consistent and related theme of Mallarmé's; one which affects us all in one way or another - death. As he was an atheist, facing up to the fact of death was not easy. He was to gain some conciliation by seeing that certain creative individuals, at least, seemed to gain some kind of immortality by the brilliant effects of their creative work. He wrote several beautiful after-death tributes, known as *Tombeaux*, or 'Tombs'. These were dedications to Poe, Baudelaire, and Verlaine. For Mallarmé death is not the destruction of the poet but the means whereby the poet becomes complete and eternal. For example, the *Tombeaux d'Edgar Poe* begins with this verse:

Tel qu'en Lui-même enfin l'éternité le change,  
Le poète suscite avec un glaive nu  
Son siècle épouvanté de n'avoir pas connu  
Que la mort triomphait dans cette voix étrange!

By eternity changed at last into Himself,  
The Poet arouses with a naked blade  
His century terror-stricken not to have known  
Death was triumphant in that strange voice! [11]

A longer poem, entitled *Toast Funèbre* (Funeral Toast), dedicated to the poet Théophile Gautier, gives us the impression of a funeral being dramatically led by a magician, who throws all our conceptions into chaos. God, the 'Golden Monster', is dismissed and it is poetry itself that eternalises the poet. Here is a section that displays Mallarmé's magical use of words:

Le Maître, par un oeil profond, a, sur ses pas,  
Apaisé de l'éden l'inquiète merveille

Dont le frisson final, dans sa voix seule, éveille  
Pour la Rose et le Lys le mystère d'un nom.  
Est-il de ce destin rien qui demeure, non?  
O vous tous, oubliez une croyance sombre.  
Le splendide génie éternel n'a pas d'ombre.  
Moi, de votre désir soucieux, je veux voir,  
A qui s'évanouit, hier, dans le devoir  
Idéal que nous font les jardins de cet astre,  
Survivre pour l'honneur du tranquille désastre  
Une agitation solennelle par l'air  
De paroles, pourpre ivre et grand calice clair,  
Que, pluie et diamant, le regard diaphane  
Resté là sur ces fleurs dont nulle ne se fane,  
Isolé parmi l'heure et le rayon du jour!

The Master, with his eyes profound bent low,  
appeased, as he went, the troubled marvel of Eden  
whose final shudder, in his voice only, wakens  
for the Rose and the Lily the mystery of a name.  
No! nothing of this destiny remains.  
O all of you, forget so drab a creed.  
Genius, eternal and glorious, has no shade.  
As you desire, I would see, for this one  
(yesterday, to the ideal duty gone,  
assigned for us by the gardens of this star)  
survive for the honor of the tranquil disaster  
a solemn agitation of words through the air,  
drunken crimson, a chalice large and clear,  
that, rain and diamonds, the diaphanous gaze,  
fixed on these flowers of which not one decays,  
isolates in the hour and the radiance of the day! [12]

However, the death of a famous poet is one thing, and the death of an eight year old boy is another. In 1879 Mallarmé's son died; a boy, of course, who did not have the chance to reap much of the fruits of life, nor to be very creative. Mallarmé was heart broken, and in the middle of his poetic career he momentarily left his extravagant Symbolism to the side and initiated a sober minimalist style that was later to be used by poets of the twentieth century. Like *Un Coup de des n'abolira jamais le hasard*, *Un Tobeau pour Anatole*, his longest poem, uses typographic spacing. Here is a brief excerpt:

non - je ne  
laisserai pas  
le néant  
père - - - je  
sens le néant  
m'envahir  
  
no - I will not  
give up  
nothingness

father - - - I  
 feel nothingness  
 invade me [13]

In 1898 Mallarmé himself died from choking. Here is an account by his devoted friend and disciple, Paul Valéry, of their last afternoon spent together:

We went into the country. The 'artificial' poet gathered the simplest flowers. Our arms were filled with corn-flowers and poppies. The air was on fire; the splendour absolute; the silence full of intoxication and communication; death impossible or unimportant; everything amazingly beautiful, afire and asleep; and the landscape trembled.

In the sun, in the immense arc of the cloudless sky, I dreamed of an incandescent space where nothing distinct exists, where nothing lasts, but where nothing ends, as if destruction itself was destroyed before it was accomplished. I lost my perception of the difference between being and not-being. Sometimes music gives us this impression, which is beyond all others. Is not poetry, I thought, the supreme pastime of transmuting ideas?

.....

Mallarmé pointed out to me the plain which summer was already beginning to turn to gold; "Look," he said, "it is the first drum-beat of autumn on the earth."

When autumn came, he was no more. [14]

wwwwwwwww

#### Notes:

1. from *On Mallarmé - selected writings of Paul Valéry*, New Directions
2. from *Stéphane Mallarmé: selected poems*, translated by C.F. MacIntyre, University of California Press
3. translator and source unknown
4. from *Mallarmé: Selected Poems*, translated by Keith Bosley, Penguin
5. from *Stéphane Mallarmé: Selected Poetry and Prose*, New Directions
6. as note 1
7. as note 3
8. as note 5
9. *ibid.*
10. translated by Peter and Mary Ann Caws; see note 5
11. as note 3
12. as note 2
13. as note 5
14. as note 1

## A TANGLE OF VIEWS

by Dharmachari Khemaloka

[A few words of introduction; I wrote this talk for a recent Men's Event at Padmaloka. The talk was intended for male Friends and Mitras, and followed another by Ratnaguna that outlined the doctrinal formulation of the *micchā-diṭṭhi*. I was asked to choose examples of some modern *micchā-diṭṭhis*, commonly found in everyday life.

I would ask the reader to bear in mind that the following is a transcribed *talk* given to a particular audience and therefore tolerate the repetitious style and other rhetorical devices. I would also like to record my thanks to Cittapāla for kindly offering to transcribe the talk for publication, and to Sthiramati for publishing it.]

All our views, ideas, opinions, whether right or wrong are, from a Buddhist perspective, limited in validity, because they are conditioned. We think what we think because we have been, directly or indirectly, influenced by a great variety of social, biological, psychological, and spiritual factors that have made each of us the sort of person that we are. We are all conditioned beings. Our consciousness, and consequently all our actions, are conditioned by many factors past and present. More significantly, what we think, or rather what we *think* we think, is often determined by what we feel, although many of us who are less integrated than we could be (less in touch with our emotions) are not fully aware that this is the case. This becomes particularly significant in the case of what Buddhism calls wrong or false views (*miccādiṭṭhis*) which, Buddhism says, are based on, conditioned by, negative emotions such as greed, envy, hatred and so on. In this way the wrong view is really an opinion or attitude, a way of looking at the world that is fundamental to one's being, and which is later rationalised (consciously or otherwise) or made to appear rational and objective by giving this view the appearance of a logically-formulated thesis or doctrine, determined solely by a sober examination of and reflection on things as they really are.

As such, these wrong views or *miccādiṭṭhis* become very difficult to deal with, or even identify, because what we eventually have to tackle is not the logical formulation of the view as it is put forward (because with a little intellectual vigour it is comparatively easy to make almost any notion appear logical) but rather the underlying opinions, assumptions, prejudices, cravings, jealousies and other negative emotions that lie behind it. To counter the false view, instead of carefully aiming our arrow at a bull's eye, rather we are lunging at shadows in the gloom. An even better simile for this sort of activity might be trying to clear a pond that is choked with weeds. Instead of simply chopping off the tops of the weeds we have to plunge our hand below the surface of the dirty water to pull up the roots. Strange to say, when we have pulled up all the roots from the mud and can see what they look like, many of them surprisingly begin to look the same. We might even be tempted to the conclusion that all the different weeds have only one big root, and that all their tendrils are inter-connected and go down very deep indeed. As I thought about



this talk, I realised that I was repeatedly coming up against the same sort of collective attitudes, even though the types of wrong view that I was considering appeared superficially quite different. It was like trying to grope one's way through a vague, indistinct fog of misunderstandings and assumptions. It was a rather chilly fog, difficult to define or delineate, but which appeared totally different, even antithetical, to the underlying spirit of the Dharma. This fog probably affects us all to a greater or lesser degree. We are born and bred out of it, conditioned by it, and therefore we have to be aware to what extent it can affect our spiritual progress, and to do this we have to plunge into it to try to see of what it consists.

Part of the process of transformation, both individual and collective, of which Buddhism basically consists, is the growing attempt to see things as they really are, which includes seeing ourselves and other people clearly and, as far as possible, objectively. By objectively I mean without a vested interest, without having an axe to grind, without imposing our cravings and other negative emotions on what we see; and whilst Buddhism admits that true or Absolute objectivity is more an ideal than a reality, it nevertheless stresses the importance of our continually trying to understand reality, that is to say, to try to attenuate our habitual subjectivity, to try to be less subjective in our view of the world, to try to separate our negative feelings and negative emotions from a clear perception of it, at least temporarily, in an attempt to arrive at the truth. We do this because so many of these clouding subjective emotions, at this stage at least, are negative rather than positive; negative in the sense that they are emotions that can ultimately hold us back from growing: emotions such as fear, guilt, hatred, envy, and so on. It is very easy to believe what one *wants* to believe, rather than really understand what is going on; and so, in the early stages of our growth we are encouraged to put our dearly-cherished opinions to one side whilst we look at ourselves and the world, in short, to try to be objective. We could see this as trying to develop the positive practice of truthfulness, of trying to see the truth in any idea or situation, and making that truth part of oneself; or rather to extract what truth there may be from a mass of opinion, prejudice and wishful thinking that too often surrounds us, and to express that truth as far as possible in our thoughts, words and deeds.

This practice of seeking the truth can often involve looking at our personal history as well as the history of the group in which we find ourselves, and comparing that group with those of other peoples, past and present. Our collective past and the experience of other human beings can have something to tell us. We do not have to start from scratch; we can benefit from the experience of other individuals and human institutions. The passage of time, moreover, can be a great "prover", or otherwise, of ideas and philosophies. It can be useful to see how certain philosophies and ideas have stood the test of time, and to see the consequences of the ideas for human beings. Individually, we can examine how far we personally have been influenced in our views and general outlook by the sort of society in which we grew up, how far our ideas really may be only the ideas of our parents, schoolteachers, friends, political mentors, or later on, employers and colleagues. Do we really think for ourselves? Or do we passively accept the views of the group in which we find ourselves at any particular time?

In this respect the FWBO has seen much debate on our Christian conditioning, the extent to which the whole outlook of Western society, to which most of us belong, has been determined by the Christian religion, with its theistic beliefs, and its long history of ecclesiastical political activity. This has inevitably affected many of us as individuals, and probably determines our personal attitudes in ways of which we are not always fully conscious; but some people would agree with Henry Ford that, "*history is bunk*". They cannot see the relevance of the past and may even wish to destroy all evidence of it, whether in the form of study, buildings, or cultural and other institutions. There is even a modern school of thought, or rather a Modernist school of thought in art, literature, and politics, that says that knowledge of the past is not relevant to our contemporary needs; that we do not need to know where we came from, that it cannot help us know who we are, that all reference to the past should be discarded. In fact reference to the past, is seen as "old-fashioned" or anachronistic, having no importance because it is dead and gone, or rather gone and therefore dead, useless. In fact, this pseudo-materialist view does not see man as a continuum of human development at all, but only sees the relevance of here and now, does not take account of the principle of conditionality. According to this view, contemporary man, as it were, popped up from nowhere, rather than evolved over long periods and ages. He is a completely free spirit, he can do what he likes, physically and morally. He creates the future with no reference to the past.

Aspects of this view have permeated many areas of our society. It has even percolated down to secondary school education where History is now re-named Environmental Science, and where traditional study of the past has been largely replaced by "empathy exercises". I recently met an example of one of these exercises in a homework given to a 13 year-old. It read: "*You are an Irish emigrant, leaving your home at the time of the Great Potato Famine. How do you feel?*" Surely this attitude is a little arrogant, egotistical and deluded. It is as absurd to deny the usefulness of all history as it is equally to slavishly follow all traditions. It reminds me of the stupid Brahṃā in the Buddhist scriptures who believed that he created the world he inhabited because he couldn't think of a more likely reason for its existence. At it's worst, this view denies the validity of Buddhist teaching and of Buddhist scriptures. It can even undermine the whole basis of Buddhism insofar as it denies the usefulness for us of the Buddha's own experience. Buddhism is based on the premise that Siddhartha Gautama achieved Enlightenment through his own efforts and that we can do the same through the benefit of his experience. If we are not prepared to believe this, then Buddhism does not have very much to teach us. It would be ludicrous to call the Buddha's account of this Enlightenment experience 'old-fashioned' or to think that the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and the Precepts had no relevance for us today. It is precisely because the fundamental nature of human existence, *samsāra*, is unchanged and unchanging, that Buddhism has something to say to human beings at any time in their history. Conditioned existence rolls on forever. It is only enlightened individuals that can transcend this cycle.

Moreover, a lack of healthy respect for truth and historical accuracy can so easily do harm. It can easily become a bad habit. It may even strike at the

basis of our common humanity. I remember once seeing a Japanese film called *Rashomon* where several different and conflicting accounts of a certain event (the attack on a young couple by a bandit) could not be reconciled by the three characters who were later discussing it. Eventually, their failure to discover the truth of the matter almost leads to their mental and psychological collapse. They repeatedly ask the same question, "*What happened? What actually happened?*" They had a human need to know, in this case whether good had been rewarded and evil punished. Their ignorance of the facts had undermined their very belief in the value of ethics. (Interestingly, the film was seen as a metaphor for the position of the Japanese people at the end of World War II).

Complete or Absolute truth, like complete objectivity, may be, from a philosophical point of view, impossible to achieve. It is an impossible ideal, but it is precisely because it is an ideal that it is useful for the aspiring individual. It is something we should always strive for, even though it may be unattainable. In Buddhism it is the striving that is important. It is this process that creates true individuals. The opposite view to this is a disregard for truth or factual accuracy, to exaggerate and distort facts quite freely for one's own vested interests and then rationalise the process by saying that true objectivity is an impossibility.

But, as Pilate asked, for reasons of his own, "*What is truth?*" These days the commonly held view is that truth is not *absolute* but *relative*. By this it is meant that no single fact can be scientifically proved to be incontrovertibly true beyond all possible doubt whatsoever. Consequently, and thanks to the predictable failure of science and logic in this respect, no statement about anything can be said to be true in all possible cases. Therefore, no one statement, all being equally untrue absolutely, is any better than any other. They are all equally, relatively true, and by this what is usually meant is that they are only as true as the person making the statements seems to believe them to be. If you believe something, well then it's true for you. There is no necessity for me or anyone else to agree with you because your statement cannot be proved absolutely. I may be prepared to listen to you but I do not have to believe you. There are no longer any general truths (that would be a massive generalisation). We can all live in our small, subjective worlds, comforted by our subjective truths, and isolated from one another; and we can all believe what we like about almost anything, because it is impossible to prove any of us absolutely wrong.

Before we go any further down this rather muddy path, perhaps we should make one or two points. It is true that Buddhism also speaks in terms of relative and absolute truth. Buddhism does indeed posit an absolute standard, in this case broadly synonymous with the state of mind of an Enlightened Being or Buddha. From this absolute point of view, what we call reality does indeed, so we are told, appear relative, that is to say not absolute. For example, it is deficient in many respects, impermanent, devoid of true being, and ultimately unsatisfactory, even though this is not always our everyday experience of it. Therefore all that we know of this world we do not know, metaphysically speaking, absolutely. Our perception of the world is, therefore, par excellence, provisional. But Buddhism in no way seeks to deny the provisional usefulness of this perception and knowledge. On the contrary, it says that as it is the only

tool we have, short of our own Enlightenment, we should use what we think we know as much as possible. This is why Buddhism stresses the practice of the development of awareness. We move from a state of the unknown to the less unknown, from the shadows to the penumbra, from the dualistic to the less dualistic, from the conditioned to the less conditioned; but this path is gradual and progressive. The path to the Absolute is via the relative. To deny the usefulness of the intervening stages, relative though they may be, is simply absurdly nihilistic, an extreme view we are encouraged to avoid.

This is quite different to the current use of the terms absolute and relative which succeeds in saying quite simply that we can know nothing. In this universe all facts are equally true or untrue, all opinions equally valid or invalid, irrespective of who holds them. In a politically and socially democratic society, all personally held views and opinions become equally valid and of equal weight. What are the consequences of this ideology? In this universe all events become the same, good becomes the same as bad (they are after all only relative to one another and have no real meaning), happy is the same as unhappy, intelligent the same as stupid, (it all depends on your point of view), up is the same as down, 'yes' the same as 'no'. In fact objectivity, in the sense of a clear use of perceptive and discriminative intelligence to try to understand the world around us, becomes something to be discouraged. Discrimination itself becomes a dirty word. Why make any effort to think if all truth is relative? This view represents a complete abdication of the human faculty of cognitive intelligence. We are discouraged from making choices, from thinking for ourselves, from taking responsibility for our thoughts and actions (they are ultimately all relative and therefore have no value), in short, from behaving in all the ways that distinguish human beings from dumb animals. It represents the suicide of true humanity.

Perhaps the most pernicious form that this relativist view takes is in the fields of history and sociology. For example the prevalent view amongst much contemporary liberal opinion is that all cultures and civilisations can only be compared with one another in a relative sense, that is to say on their own terms. There are no longer any general standards that apply to all people and situations. According to this view, if we compare say the society of fifth century BC Athens with that of the Eskimo, we cannot say absolutely that either one culture is any more developed, more civilised, in short better, than the other. The Athenians produced poetry and drama, so did the Eskimo, the Athenians produced statues and artefacts, so did the Eskimo. Because we cannot give any absolute value or worth to their respective achievements, that is, a value that could apply to both cultures, they somehow become equivalent, even of equal value. It all depends on your point of view; everything depends only on your point of view. It all depends on who you are.

Relativism, in culture as well as everything else, becomes ironically an absolute value, an absolute universal truth. All assessments of art and literature become completely subjective. Beauty is totally in the eye of the beholder. Who are we to say that the Parthenon is a nobler building than an igloo, or that Oedipus Rex is a greater dramatic experience than a whale hunt? Objective comparisons are ruled out. Because beauty cannot be measured mathematically, absolute beauty cannot exist; nor can creativity, intelligence, and as for genius,

well that is no more than a figment of the romantic imagination. Mozart was after all just another guy with domestic problems, Michaelangelo worked off his sexual hang-ups by making things, whilst Nelson was quite obviously just another [emotionally] 'blocked' Englishman who could only overcome his public school repressions by resorting to violence. In the culturally relative universe there are no heroes, no great cultures, no golden ages, nor even times of darkness. The only reason we admire (if indeed we do) Leonardo's *Virgin on the Rock* and prefer it to, say, an African witch doctor's mask is simply because we are ethnocentric. We misguidedly prefer Western art and culture simply because we are racially Western ourselves. We are guilty of not being "open" to other cultures, not even open to other aspects of our own culture. Who is to say that Hamlet is a nobler dramatic experience than QPR versus Manchester United? After all, all culture is the product of middle class, even bourgeois values. Culture is a sham and civilisation a myth foisted on us by the ruling classes.

I could go on but I am sure you get the drift, and I am sure you have met similar points of view yourselves, indeed you might even agree with this point of view. Personally I think this view is false and I shall attempt to explain why.

This view, like all views, is conditioned, conditioned in this case by the recent history of Western culture and by a reaction to it. First, it is a reaction to the great degree of racial and cultural prejudice that existed up until the last war in Europe, but especially in America. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century (despite the influence of Rousseau) no culture other than the European post-Hellenic, no religion other than the orthodox Christian, was given much credence in the West. In England, for example, Buddhism though known, was only considered to be of anthropological interest until the end of the nineteenth century. With the growing discoveries of exploration and science and the emancipation of many different social classes and ethnic groups, again especially in America, came a realisation, largely brought about by campaigns by previously underprivileged groups, that other traditions and cultures had something to offer; but the eventual result of this long process of emancipation was that the practice of ascribing values to respective cultural traditions was made to appear unethical and even in some cases, later made illegal. Discrimination of any sort in this field was outlawed.

Second, the process was hastened on by the experience of two World Wars. After all, it was said, it was precisely due to national differences, political and religious beliefs, and other deeply-felt convictions that these terrible conflicts had taken place at all. Therefore, the way to avoid future wars would be to cultivate the opposite extreme, interpreted as not really believing in anything, which easily slides into the maxim that "everything is true in its own way".

Informed opinion furthermore moved over a period of time from the extreme of nihilism in this respect to the opposite extreme of eternalism. This process was mirrored in religious developments of the time. With the death of God and traditional religion, society was nevertheless left with a "God-shaped hole". In the same way the doctrine of relativism became the new religion and belief in this doctrine was absolute - in fact became the new faith. As a consequence all world religions came to be considered as "one". Why should the strife persist between Christian and Jew, Protestant and Catholic? After all, all roads,

even Buddhism, lead to God. Criticism of other faiths came to be thought wrong-headed, intolerant, bigoted, in a system where all belief, all faith, however passionately it might be felt, is simply only a value judgement, a matter of opinion, a personal point of view.

A recent event that has high-lighted the prevalence as well as the deficiencies of this contemporary view is of course the Salman Rushdie affair. Rushdie, a liberal Westernised author, published a fictional work that ridiculed the historical figure of Mohammed. For this so-called blasphemy, he has been sentenced to death by Muslims world-wide, and Rushdie has gone into hiding as a consequence. This had been the cause of some confusion in the cultural relativist camp. According to this doctrine, no single religion has a monopoly of truth and Rushdie is therefore free to write what he likes about Islam. Belief in freedom of expression, itself based on the doctrine of cultural relativism, is sacrosanct, an absolute belief. But what happens when two relative views disagree absolutely? What if Muslims wish to kill Rushdie for his alleged blasphemy? After all, they too have a point of view which must be considered in this case an absolute belief that blasphemers should be punished by death. How tolerant is the tolerant society prepared to be? Does religious tolerance extend to fanatics and murderers? Or should the blasphemy laws be extended to protect the religious views of a religious minority? In a culturally relativist society, should freedom of conscience be extended by law to protect the very people that wish to destroy that same freedom? Cultural and religious relativism, taken to extremes, has no reply to the extremism and absolutism of others.

Indeed, the relativist argument can be defeated quite simply on its own terms. If all views are simply relative then the relativist view itself is also relative. Therefore, it is no more or less true than its opposite, that all values are absolute. Thus, following this argument to its logical conclusion, the view that fifth century BC Athens was the peak of human civilisation, or that the Buddha was the greatest spiritual teacher who ever lived, could be absolutely true. As such, the relativist view ceases to be of practical use.

Nevertheless, the relativist view is embraced by a large proportion of modern society, whether consciously or not. Why is this? It is because the relativist view frees us from the responsibility of having to make choices. By insisting on the relativism of all values, we deny ourselves and others the right to think and the right to choose for ourselves. In fact, one consequence of this view is that firmly-held views or beliefs in others are perceived as anti-social and threatening. (Perhaps you have met this in the area of vegetarianism for example). Belief in a system of values is threatening to those who refuse to commit themselves to any view whatsoever, or who refuse to think for themselves. These people may pretend that they are in fact more tolerant and more liberal than the committed, but this tolerance is a sham. It is a sham because the effect of liberal relativism is to rule out any serious debate or enquiry into the nature of things. Anyone who wishes to think for himself should therefore oppose this tendency in the strongest possible terms.

Freedom of thought and enquiry is essential for the developing individual, whether it be in the sphere of religion, politics, art, literature or anything else.

This pseudo-tolerance is, like all *micchā-ditṭhi*s, bred of a negative emotion, in this case the emotion of fear, fear of committing oneself to a particular point of view, fear of taking responsibility, fear of growing up. Therefore, it follows that if we are to avoid this particular false view, we should endeavour to cultivate its opposite, that is to decide what we really think for ourselves, to commit ourselves, however provisionally, to a particular view, belief or system of values, in short, to use the traditional terminology, to Go for Refuge to a particular teaching, to gradually identify oneself with a particular teaching and way of life. Perhaps, after sober and deliberate consideration of all the facts and personal experience, it is no bad thing to nail one's colours to the mast, or to say, like Martin Luther, "*Here I stand; I can no other.*" It may be that our ideas will prove to be wholly false and erroneous (we have always to be open to that possibility) but even if this happens we can pick up the pieces and start again. Meanwhile, it is important that we make a start somewhere. We have to take the leap, take the risk of believing in something, rather than spending our lives sitting on the fence. Otherwise, life, our lives, will simply pass us by.

As Buddhists it is absolutely essential that we think for ourselves and equally essential that we are free to think for ourselves. Anything or any view that discourages this is to be avoided. I do not mean by this that we should adopt an unreasonably argumentative attitude to everything we are taught, and even less that we should become cynical, but that we should never give up our personal responsibility for individual thought and reflection. Eventually, in the spiritual life, as the teachings of the Dharma begin to permeate our thoughts and feelings, we will face choices that we need to make and we should be as sure as we reasonably can be that the choices that we make are indeed truly our own, as we can be sure that we will have to take the consequences of these choices, positive and negative. There can be no coercion of body, speech and mind in the truly spiritual life.

In secular life by contrast, coercion does exist, including coercion of thought. It is always easier to manipulate people who do not think for themselves than people who do, and it is for this reason that those who wish to get their own way at any cost discourage individual thought. Often this is done through the surreptitious manipulation of language. An example of this is the way in which a new word, or a new meaning of an old word, is invented and then let loose on an unsuspecting world, and through persistent extensive usage the attempt is made to give the impression that the notion or object that the word describes does, in fact, exist. Little or no proof is offered for the idea's existence. The big lie shouted loud enough is often eventually believed.

An example of what I mean can be found in the current use of the word "gender". The original meaning of the term (which takes its derivation from the Latin *genus*) was simply a kind or type or class of thing. It was a quasi-scientific term. More frequently the term "gender" was used to distinguish specific grammatical classifications in many languages, some having three genders; masculine, feminine and neuter. The terms masculine, feminine, etc. in this context had no strict correspondence to the biological or sexual classification of the object in question. Although broadly analogous to sex in the case of human beings (although there are exceptions to this rule), in the case of inanimate objects the gender they are given bears little or no relation

to the object described. In French for example a table is of so-called feminine gender whilst a carpet is masculine. English, the language of the British and the Americans amongst others, has no gender distinctions of this type other than those directly related to living beings, (although boats are usually feminine, not female), and it is in English that the term has been misused to great effect. The Oxford English Dictionary gives another modern meaning of the term "gender" as follows: "*In feminist use, a euphemism for the sex of a human being, often intended to emphasise the social and cultural as opposed to the biological distinctions between the sexes.*"

In this way the term "gender" is now commonly used to replace the term sex in everyday language. The use of this term implies that the sex, i.e. biological sexual category of a human being, is seen, by use of the term "gender", as having no more significance than a grammatical or theoretical distinction. The inherent implication is that sexual differences in humans are no more than a technicality and therefore that these differences should not be allowed to make any significant difference to our everyday social behaviour. Therefore the sexes themselves are only "relative". The issue itself is further complicated by the assumption that sexual difference is thus defined, not by biological distinctions, but instead by choice of sexual behaviour. The objective fact of the sex of a person becomes irrelevant. A biologically male human being is no more male than, say, a French carpet. His sex becomes no more than a figure of speech.

Is this a true representation of the facts? We know that there do seem to be effective sex differences between the male and female of the species, not least that the female may conceive and give birth whereas the male cannot. Doesn't this fact alone have significant social and other repercussions? The replacement of the term "sex" with that of the term "gender", or worse "gender role", seems to be a conscious attempt, through the manipulation of language, to put forward a particular point of view - in this case the socio-political notion that biological-cum-sexual differences are no more than the result of mere social conditioning and should play no part in our social, political and economic life. The difference should make no difference, and therefore ceases to exist. We should have sexual equality, which in this case means sexual equivalence. From here it is but a short step to attempt to change and undermine the entire basis of a particular area of thought and language. Words that do not agree with this particular unproven thesis are outlawed as "sexist".

We can laugh at this sort of abuse of language but it is really quite serious. Not only does this abuse of language often involve some breach of the speech precepts, but it also represents a conscious attempt on the part of one section of society to impose its views on the others, if necessary by force of law - in this particular case in the name of the feminist cause. It does not seek to convince through rational argument or debate, but rather chooses the short cut of coercion. It is therefore an act of violence. When questioned, its supporters will reply blandly that "language always changes" and that it would be anachronistic folly to resist such change. Underlying this statement is yet another false view that all change is necessarily progress and by definition irreversible, and, even more perniciously, that this sort of change is not somehow man-made but rather drops from the sky. Whereas in fact the sort of

changes to the English language I have mentioned have been brought about by the most vigorous lobbying and deliberate manipulation that we have ever seen outside of Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia.

How do we counter this sort of abuse of language? How do the non-violent resist violence, in this case violence done to truth and objectivity? This is a perennial question that we, as Buddhists, have to face.

First, we have to make up our minds to what extent we think that this thesis on the non-differentiation of the sexes is valid. Are we, or are the people around us, truly androgynous? Or are we simply unaware of, or unhappy with the notion of a sexual identity? Are we, for example, fully aware of the possible sexual cravings and motivations that can fuel so many of our views and actions. Some degree of self-scrutiny in this area can be very useful.

As far as the vexed question of equality of the sexes goes, we are fortunate in the FWBO in the respect that we can, if we wish, sidestep the issue altogether. As yet, we can, if we wish, simply avoid some of the dictatorial effects of a particular point of view. We can do this, both individually and collectively, through more practical emphasis on the single-sex ideal. There are both mixed and single-sex activities available to all in the FWBO and we can choose which we wish to join. Conflict in the sexual equality argument seems to be at its worst, in the world at least, in mixed situations. In a single-sex situation, on the other hand, the accusation of oppression of one sex by another becomes an absurd fantasy. There need be no demands for equal rights for the sexes in a men's single-sex community. Similarly, there need be no accusations of sexual discrimination in a women's right livelihood business. The entire issue need not arise. This is the love mode's answer to the power mode.

If we need address the issue at all it might be more useful to see it in terms of a contest between the biological and spiritual demands of life, between what Sangharakshita has termed the respective paths of the Lower and the Higher Evolution. Theoretically at least, the only legitimate demand that the mixed-sex situation can make on the single-sex ideal is a strictly biological one, that of reproduction. Reproduction itself is really no more than a biological habit, for many people a habit that has long outlived its usefulness. It is also a habit that we, as individuals, can choose to give up if we wish to. Therefore, to the extent that an individual identifies himself and his life with the reproductive or biological evolutionary process, rather than that of the Higher Evolution, sometimes called the spiritual life, to that extent only will the issue of sexual differentiation, oppression, or rights be of any real personal significance. The true individual has no need of equal rights based on sex alone. The biological need have no claim, except subjectively, in a single-sex environment and issues such as sexist versus non-sexist language dissolve away. For example I need have no reservations here tonight about addressing you as "men", because you all are, so far as I know, biologically male. Therefore because this is a single-sex event I need make few, if any, concessions to contemporary preoccupations and prejudices; but of course this is not always the case, by any means.

Dr. Johnson one day admonished his friend and biographer Boswell with the following words: "My dear sir," he said, "free your mind of cant." By cant Johnson meant Boswell's habitual infatuation and superficial appreciation of fashionable notions and views. He was trying to encourage Boswell to think for himself, even to think creatively, rather than simply swallow other people's ideas half-digested. Boswell was a magpie (which incidentally made him a good biographer) and he picked up ideas as other people pick up mud on their shoes. The result was that his mind was a clutter, a confusion of views, that prevented him from ever really thinking for himself.

Many of us are, perhaps, in a similar position to Boswell. Few, if any of us, come to the Dharma with our minds as clean slates. In the late twentieth century, we have been stuffed with other people's views from the time we were born, and many of them are wrong views at that. What we have to do, before we can begin to understand Buddhist teaching is clear out the clutter, clear the weeds from the pond, to put to one side at least the views and attachments that may obscure our vision of the truth. Many of our views are no more than habits and like any habit, they can be given up if we really want to do it. All we have to do is make room, clear out the old to make room for the new.

If we can do this, and at the same time develop sufficiently the positive emotion that is the basis for right view, then creative, committed and clear thought will inevitably follow. In this way, the fog will clear, the weeds will shrivel up and die, leaving our minds, our consciousness free, receptive and ready for the moment when it will be lit up, illuminated by a flash, at first just a glimpse, and the first we hope of many such glimpses, of things as they really are.

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SCHILLER'S AESTHETIC EDUCATION

by Dharmachari Vipassī

Friedrich Schiller's *Aesthetic Education of Man* was published in 1795. The book takes the form of a series of letters and attempts to show how art, beauty and aesthetic experience are of central importance to our ethical and political lives. He claimed that aesthetic experience is the key to political freedom because the latter can only be reliably brought about in a society whose members have achieved 'wholeness of character', a possibility that itself depends upon the sense of totality that is found in aesthetic experience.

Schiller wrote in the aftermath of the French Revolution, sobered, to put it mildly, by the events of the Reign of Terror. He had seen the Revolutions, in America and in France, as the great opportunity for bringing Reason to bear upon our social institutions. But the book explains how the condition of the species made such an enterprise impossible; it describes how this condition came about, and how it is to be overcome. In effect his response to the Terror is astonishing:

"If man is ever to solve that problem of politics in practice he will have to approach it through the problem of the aesthetic, because it is only through Beauty that man makes his way to Freedom." [p. 9]

What follows is really a series of notes, neither systematic, critical nor complete. In fact they omit discussion altogether of the dense metaphysical reflections that begin around letter thirteen. A guide through these pre-Hegelian Idealist complexities must await another occasion. There is enough to do, for all that, in commenting on the first dozen letters (which, we are told, Goethe read at a sitting with great excitement) and on those dealing with the structure of aesthetic experience.

Schiller is nowadays a relatively neglected thinker, though vastly influential as far as Romanticism is concerned. He is also an acknowledged influence in our own day on the work of C.G. Jung and Herbert Marcuse. It is fascinating to see how close he comes, in his discussion of the 'fragmentation of the personality', to his contemporary William Blake's more mythological account of the Four Zoas. It will become obvious, I hope, if it is not so already, that he is of some interest also to Western Buddhists, since in his attempt to reconcile Reason and Emotion and to describe the form of an integrated psyche, he remains a great exemplar of that part of the Western tradition that Sangharakshita has found it useful to draw on in his location of the Dharma in a Western context.

I shall begin by offering a brief account of the background to Schiller's text, indicating the debate towards which it contributed. For the emphasis in the title is on the word *aesthetic*: 'On the *aesthetic* education of man', and Schiller is intervening in a discussion started by Rousseau and developed by Kant. Indeed, the earlier parts of the work are thick with the atmosphere of these two thinkers, and it is to the earlier part of the text that I shall direct attention now. The full title is *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a*

series of Letters, and there is a quotation from Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* on the title page, which takes us at once to the centre of Schiller's concerns: *si c'est la raison, qui fait l'homme, c'est le sentiment, qui le conduit*. (If it is reason which makes humankind, it is feeling which leads it). Schiller's central preoccupation is the relation between reason and feeling, or, since he follows Kant so closely, between duty and inclination, because it is, according to the philosophy of pure practical reason, reason itself which provides us with the objective criteria for determining what our duty is. Perhaps it ought to be said that Kant comes dangerously close to, if he does not actually embrace, the idea that if it is reason that makes us and feeling which leads us, then feeling invariably leads us *astray*, and Kant's moral heroes invariably manifest their heroism in the struggle *against* inclination for the sake of duty. I think we could say that for Schiller this struggle between duty and inclination, so far from being the path by which human beings are to attain their humanity, is itself a *symptom* of the antagonism which has to be overcome if the species as a whole is to advance, and indeed, if the Kantian prescription were to be followed, it would simply lead to one form of *political oppression*: that in which, as Schiller puts it, the ideal human being suppresses the 'empirical' human being, and the state annuls individuals. In brief, then, Schiller identifies the conflict between reason and feeling, duty and inclination, mind and matter, not as a permanent feature of our human situation, but as a disunity dependent upon conditions, which it is our task as a species to overcome: the vices and corruptions of social and political life are a function of this split within us, and they will not be eradicated in advance of the overcoming and healing of the split itself.

In the first two books of Rousseau's *Social Contract* we find the famous distinction between the state of nature and the civil or the legitimate society. The early parts of the *Aesthetic Education* are, as I have said, thick with the atmosphere of Rousseau, and Rousseau's distinction is relied on heavily by Schiller. Without looking too closely at the doctrine of nature that underlies this distinction, let us turn our attention to the *terms* in which Rousseau enlarges on it. Essentially Rousseau seeks to establish a contrast between two general forms of social relation. The state of nature is defined in terms of social relations that are determined entirely by desire, physical impulse, instinct and inclination, (Schiller's 'blind forces'), in which, as a consequence, the will of the strongest rules. In a civil society, on the other hand, social relations are determined by considerations of reason and justice. In a civil or legitimate society the law will have effective sanctions, and it will establish rights, or areas of freedom, and corresponding duties, upon which those freedoms partly depend, conceived as being in the best interests of each of the members. By these standards, of course, we none of us live in a civil or legitimate society, but are still more or less in a state of nature. But according to Rousseau's picture, a stage is reached at which the people have found it too dangerous to continue to live in such a state and are ready to exchange their natural freedom for civil liberty. But the people at once face an embarrassment, an impasse. When they decide to enter upon the civil society it can be said of them that they *will* the good, but are unable to discern it. They want what is in the common good, but they do not know what the common good consists in. They stand in need of *education*. Their educator, in Rousseau's

scheme of things, is the *law-giver*, who can frame just laws because they can discern the common good. Unfortunately, such a law-giver is impossible. If they come from among the people, then, *ex hypothesi*, they cannot discern the good: and where else are they to come from?

In his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* Kant offers a succinct formulation of Rousseau's dilemma:

But since (man) needs, for his moral education, *good* men who must themselves have been educated for it, and since none of these is free from (innate or acquired) corruption, the problem of moral education for our *species* remains unsolved even in principle ...

But Kant has his own proposal. The education of the species is to come not from an impossible law-giver but from Nature herself acting through history, teaching human beings the value of concord through the prolonged experience of antagonism and conflict. Apart from anything else, such antagonism is necessary also for the development of our human faculties, for, if concord were to be won too easily we would simply lead an Arcadian shepherd's life: 'Men, good-natured as the sheep they herd, would hardly reach a higher worth than their beasts'. Be that as it may, the Kantian prescription puts a high price on the education of the species: he makes the following prophetic, not to say chilling, comment:

It is *only from Providence* that man anticipates the education of the human race, taking the species as a whole ... Only from Providence does he expect his species to tend to the civil constitution it envisages, which is to be based on the principle of freedom but at the same time on the principle of constraint in accordance with law. That is, he expects it from a wisdom that is not *his*, but is yet the Idea of his own reason, an Idea that is impotent (by his own fault). This education from above is salutary, but harsh and stern; nature works it out by great hardships, to the extent of nearly destroying the whole race.

But Kant also made the important point that for Rousseau man is evil only in a negative way, i.e., man is not evil of his own accord and on purpose, but only insofar as he is led astray by evil or inept guides. For Rousseau, the people *will* the good, but do not discern it. Kant, on the other hand, sees no difficulty in principle with the thought that human beings can already *discern* the good, but prefer to follow the worse:

The moral predisposition. The question here is: whether man is *good* by nature or *evil* by nature ... Man is a being who has the power of practical reason and is conscious that his choice is free (a person); and in his consciousness of freedom and in his feeling ... that justice or injustice is done to him or by him to others, he sees himself as subject to a law of duty, no matter how obscure his ideas about it may be. This in itself is the *intelligible* character of humanity as such, and in so far as he has it man is *good* in his inborn predispositions (good by nature). But experience also shows that there is in man a tendency to actively desire what is *unlawful* even though he knows that it is unlawful - that is, a tendency to *evil* - which makes itself felt as inevitably and as soon as he begins to exercise his freedom, and which can therefore be considered innate. And so

we must judge that man, according to his *sensible* character, is also evil (by nature). It is not self-contradictory to do this if we are talking about the *character of the species*; for we can assume that its natural destiny consists in continual progress towards the better.

Schiller's response to this rather long-term (and optimistic) project is a sharp one:

And in what kind of relation would we stand to either past or future ages, if the development of human nature were to make such sacrifice necessary? We would have been the serfs of mankind; for several millennia we would have done slaves' work for them, and our mutilated nature would bear impressed upon it the shameful marks of this servitude. And all this in order that a future generation might in blissful indolence attend to the care of its moral health, and foster the free growth of its humanity! [p.43]

It is at this point that Schiller enters the debate with his passionate proposal that the education of the species is to be an aesthetic one.

Schiller's argument can be stated very briefly. The transition, which is a moral necessity, from the natural state ('which we may term any political body whose organisation derives originally from forces and not from laws', p. 13) to the still hypothetical ideal society, has got to be effected without putting into jeopardy the very existence of society: physical humanity needs still to be around if moral humanity is to emerge, and so the transition has got to preserve it:

the living clockwork of the state must be repaired while it is still striking, and it is a question of changing the revolving wheel while it still revolves. (p. 13)

Schiller concludes that

a support must be looked for which will ensure the continuance of society, and make it independent of the natural state which is to be abolished. (p.13)

Very well, then, where is this support to be found? It is *not* to be found in the natural character of human beings, on the grounds that this tends in part towards selfishness and violence, 'and aims at the destruction of society rather than its preservation'. But nor is support to be found in our *moral character* (our capacity to act in accordance with that Pure Practical Reason by which we determine what our Duty is) because this is yet to be achieved and find expression in the ideal society itself. We cannot, by the same token, look for action from the state, which only gives expression to our natural character:

For the state as at present constituted has been the cause of the evil, while the state as Reason conceives it, far from being able to lay the foundations of this better humanity, would itself have to be founded upon it. (p. 45)

If neither our natural character nor our moral character is available to carry society through the transitional phase, then where are we to turn? We are to turn to a *third character*, which is kin to both the others, and this

might prepare the way for a transition from the rule of mere force to the rule of law, and which, without in any way impeding the development of moral character, might on the contrary serve as a pledge in the sensible world of a morality as yet unseen. (p. 15)

Only where such a character is predominant among a people, he thinks, is it safe to undertake the transformation of a state in accordance with moral principles. What is the nature of this character? It is in effect a fusion of aspects of the natural character and the moral character. The setting up of a moral state requires that we can count on the moral law as an effective force:

if we are to be able to count on man's moral behaviour with as much certainty as we do on natural effects it will itself have to be nature, and he will have to be led by his very impulses to the kind of conduct which is bound to proceed from a moral character. (p. 17)

To put it another way, the motive force of inclination and duty must produce 'completely identical results in the world of phenomena'. *Si c'est la raison qui fait l'homme, c'est le sentiment qui le conduit*. So feeling has to put its full weight behind reason. It is only when reason has the full weight of feeling behind it that it is possible for us to climb out of the state of nature.

It is necessary to pause here, I think, to consider the importance of what Schiller is saying, since it marks a difference with Kant. Kant argued that what, as rational beings, we judge to be objectively necessary in conduct is, from a subjective point of view, i.e., from the point of view of the will, only contingent, because we can be diverted by the sway of contrary inclinations. It is only in a wholly rational being that what is judged objectively necessary is also subjectively necessary, because, said Kant, in a wholly rational being the will is the power to do only that which reason requires. Given the presence of contrary inclinations, given indeed, it almost looks, the presence of inclinations at all, we are not wholly reliable as moral beings. It looks very much as though Kant regards inclination as an aspect of our humanity that has to be curbed if reason is to rule. In some natures this no doubt works, but in others the odds are stacked pretty heavily against reason winning the contest, which is part of Schiller's point. In order for it to be safe to effect the transition from the state of nature to the just society, duty and inclination must flow in the same direction. That is not, however, the way things stand at present. Human beings are one-sided in one of two ways: they are at odds with themselves either when feeling predominates over principles, or when principles destroy feelings:

One can ... imagine two different ways in which man existing in time can coincide with man as idea and in consequence just as many ways in which the state can assert itself in individuals: either by the ideal man suppressing empirical man and the state annulling individuals; or else by the individual himself becoming the state, and man in time being ennobled to the stature of man as Idea. (p. 19)

And Schiller comments:

It is true that from a one-sided moral point of view this difference disappears. For reason is satisfied as long as her law obtains

unconditionally. But in the complete anthropological view, where content counts no less than form, and living feeling too has a voice, the difference becomes all the more relevant. Reason does indeed demand unity: but nature demands multiplicity; and both these kinds of law make their claims upon man. The law of reason is imprinted upon him by an incorruptible consciousness; the law of nature by an ineradicable feeling. Hence it will always argue a still defective education if the moral character is able to assert itself only by sacrificing the natural. And a political constitution would still be very imperfect if it is able to achieve unity only by suppressing variety. The state should not only respect the objective and generic character in its individual subjects: it should also honour their subjective and specific character. (p. 19)

This last remark seems to be a shaft directed against Rousseau, for whom there seems to be no special difficulty about the idea that private interest should be entirely submerged in the embrace of the General Will.

But let us return to the two ways in which human beings may be at odds with themselves. The two one-sided conditions are that in which feeling predominates over principle (or reason), and that where principle destroys feeling. People are either 'savages' or 'barbarians'. But, and here we get a hint about what that third character is going to be, by contrast 'the man of culture' (*der gebildete Mensch* is not well translated here: I think the idea of a 'developed' person brings us closer to the German) makes a friend of nature, and honours her freedom while curbing only her caprice. In other words, "wholeness of character must ... be present in any people capable, and worthy, of exchanging a state of compulsion for a state of freedom." (p. 23)

So Schiller has offered us the idea that beauty precedes freedom. He has referred to our 'natural character' and to our 'moral character'. Neither of these can be relied upon to sustain physical humanity in the transition from a state of nature or compulsion to a state of freedom. Recourse must be had to a third character. The nature of this third character is now being revealed: it is the character of a human being who is at one with himself, in whom it is neither the case that feeling predominates over principle nor that principle destroys feeling, one in whom, in consequence, it is possible in principle for inclination and duty to come to produce identical results in the world of phenomena.

Schiller now moves to the question whether this character is already present in his own society. Needless to say, the answer is no, and he offers a stark enough description of that society, a description which is firmly anchored in a philosophical view about human nature. On the credit side he thinks

- that the authority of received opinion has declined
- that arbitrary rule is unmasked, though still armed with power
- that people are beginning to demand their rights, even seizing by force what has been wrongfully denied them
- the fabric of the natural state is tottering
- its rotting foundations are giving way

- there is a physical possibility of setting law upon the throne, of making true freedom the basis of political association

But no:

Vain hope! The moral possibility is lacking, and a moment so prodigal of opportunity finds a generation unprepared to receive it. (p. 25)

The picture that he now paints is founded upon what he has just described as the two ways in which human beings can be at odds with themselves. They are now presented as the 'two extremes of human depravity', on the one hand a return to the savage state and, on the other, complete lethargy.

Not surprisingly, it is the lower orders who are savage and the bourgeoisie who are lethargic. 'Among the lower and more numerous classes' we have

crude, lawless instincts, unleashed with the loosening of the bonds of civil order, hastening with ungovernable fury to their animal satisfactions. (p.25)

He remarks at this point that an unjust state is better than no state at all, that the rule of law is better than its breakdown, even if those laws are sectional and exploitative. But let us come to what Schiller calls 'the cultivated classes', whose depravity is lethargy or enervation. Presumably they correspond to the case where principle destroys feeling. But Schiller offers a more subtle picture than that perhaps suggests. It is a not unfamiliar anatomising of the middle-class and its discreet charm. Before coming to it I want to stress the point made about lethargy as a form of depravity. Remember that earlier Schiller has talked of the two motive forces of inclination and reason. The energy of the savage is unrestrained, but it predominates over reason. The state of lethargy among the so-called cultivated classes is a function of the antagonistic relation between the motive forces of inclination and reason as Schiller is about to present it. The point about *energy* is of the very first importance, and it has, I believe, been neglected almost entirely by Western philosophers, with the exception of Schiller and Nietzsche and, in our own time, Simone Weil. It emerges that the *whole* character is a *vigorous* character: the absence of vigour is an objection. The energy of our natural impulses are not to be emasculated but redirected. This makes Schiller a worthy forerunner of Nietzsche, who diagnosed the ills of Western society precisely as the emasculating, enervating outcome of internal division and self-violence. It is worth noting here that Nietzsche's admiration for Goethe is couched in terms that Schiller would have approved. Goethe strove to overcome in himself the separation of reason and feeling, sensuality and will. So, for Schiller, the *whole* character will be vigorous because it will be a character in which reason and inclination are no longer antagonistic, and in which reason will have the full force of impulse behind it. Energy of *character*, he will tell us, is the 'mainspring of all that is great and excellent in man'. But let us return to the cultivated classes.

Here we have a case where the vices of reason are mixed with the vices of nature in a combination that leaves room for the virtues of neither. Instead of reason we have rationalisation justifying the worst aspects of nature, its ruthless acquisitive egoism. Where nature ought to be allowed to prevail and be accepted we have 'sham propriety', instead of natural sympathy we have 'proud

self-sufficiency', instead of autonomous judgment we have subjection to slavish opinion. This confused complexity of internal division issues in a kind of exhaustion: the cultivated classes are ... worn out. So the upshot is that the present age does not manifest the wholeness of character upon which further advance depends, but the opposite.

We know that beauty is somehow involved in the cure. But first Schiller offers us a brilliant account of the *causes* in his sixth letter, where he sees the *fragmentation of the personality* as the consequence of the division of labour brought about by the complexity of social organisation. He does not, however, see this fragmentation as permanent: civilisational progress must wait upon its overcoming:

"with us, one might almost be tempted to assert, the various faculties appear as separate in practice as they are distinguished by the psychologists in theory, and we see not merely individuals, but whole classes of men, developing but one part of their potentialities, while of the rest, as in stunted growths, only vestigial traces remain." (p. 33)

The inner unity of human nature, which, he believed, was still to be found among the Greeks, was severed 'through the rigorous separation of ranks and occupations, the divisions between the sciences, the necessary consequences of the increasingly complex machinery of the state' (p. 33):

"and with this confining of our activity to a particular sphere we have given ourselves a master within who not infrequently ends by suppressing the rest of our potentialities." (p. 33, my italics)

This is a nice touch because it hints that the master-slave relation is reflected in the organisation even of our inner lives. Schiller now offers a poignant image of the enslaved and fragmented individual, caught up in the ghastly machinery of the state:

"it was scarcely to be expected that the simple organisation of the early republics should have survived the simplicity of early manners and conditions: but instead of rising to a higher form of organic existence (government) degenerated into a crude and clumsy mechanism ...

... an ingenious clockwork, in which, out of the piecing together of innumerable but lifeless parts, a mechanical kind of collective life ensued. State and Church, laws and customs, were now torn asunder; enjoyment was divorced from labour, the means from the end, the effort from the reward. Everlastingly chained to a single little fragment of the whole, man himself develops into nothing but a fragment; everlastingly in his ear the monotonous sound of the wheel that he turns, he never develops the harmony of his being and instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature he becomes nothing more than the imprint of his occupation or of his specialised knowledge. But even that meagre, fragmentary participation, by which individual members of the state are still linked to the whole, does not depend upon forms which they spontaneously prescribe for themselves (for how could one entrust to their freedom of action a mechanism so intricate and so fearful of light and enlightenment?); it is dictated to them with meticulous exactitude by means of a formulary which inhibits all

freedom of thought. The dead letter takes the place of living understanding and a good memory is a safer guide than imagination and feeling." (p. 35)

And so on, until Schiller affirms that it must be open to us "to restore by means of a higher art the totality of our nature which the arts themselves have destroyed"

How then is the restoration of totality to be achieved? We cannot look to the state since as presently constituted it has been the cause of the evil, and the state as reason conceives it, 'far from being able to lay the foundations of this better humanity, would itself have to be founded upon it'. Rhetorically, we have reached the Rousseauian impasse, though we know that the cavalry, in the unlikely form of Beauty, is about to gallop over the horizon. But first Schiller draws a conclusion about which my first thought is that it is unduly pessimistic and my second that it is only just unduly pessimistic:

"If therefore the principles that I have laid down are correct, and if experience confirms my portrayal of the present age, we must continue to regard every attempt at political reform as untimely, and every hope based upon it as chimerical, as long as the split within man is not healed, and his nature so restored to wholeness that it can of itself become the artificer of the state and guarantee the reality of this political creation of reason." (p. 45)

On the Schillerian view, then, corruption and violence is a permanent feature of political life in one form or another, since it is no more than an expression of the gap, within the species as a whole, between moral values and self interest: if it is suppressed it will manifest itself in another way. If you toss out nature with a pitchfork, it will return in one form or another. Corruption and violence do not recede in advance of the split within us being healed and overcome.

Now let us turn to the remedy. Where can we find and "open up living springs which, whatever the political corruption, would remain clear and pure"? Well, the instrument is the Arts and Beauty. Although Schiller offers a pretty dense discussion of aesthetic experience and its relation to the nature of personhood, I shall offer here no more than a schematic, impressionistic account.

What beauty must be able to do is to counter the two opposite deviations from harmony and unite nature and reason. It should be noted that Schiller is not offering the effete thought that 'a developed feeling for beauty refines morals'. Energy of character, at whose expense aesthetic culture is commonly purchased, is, remember, 'the mainspring of all that is great and excellent in man'. This is reminiscent of the Nietzschean criticism of *décadent* morality, of a system of moral values founded unconsciously upon the onesidedness (not in favour of nature!) diagnosed by Schiller. Of course Nietzsche tended to see the virtues of the *décadent* morality as simply the expression of that dismaying disunity, the final exhaustion, but there is no reason to see that as the whole story, to see all the values of the slaves, for example, as a function of their condition.

Schiller makes a distinction between *melting beauty* and *energising beauty*, and, as you can guess, when wrongly applied they reinforce the pathology, but when applied judiciously they calm the savage breast and buck up the neuroaesthetic aesthete. (Cf Plato's view of music in the *Republic*):

"Energising beauty can no more preserve man from a certain residue of savagery and hardness than melting beauty can protect him from a certain degree of effeminacy and enervation. For since the effect of the former is to brace his nature, both physical and moral, and to increase its elasticity and power of prompt reaction, it can happen all too easily that the increased resistance of temperament and character will bring about a decrease in sensitivity to impressions; that our gentler humanity, too, will suffer the kind of repression which ought only to be directed at our brute nature, and our brute nature profit from an increase of strength which should only be available to our free person ... And because the effect of melting beauty is to relax our nature, physical and moral, it happens no less easily that energy of feeling is stifled along with violence of appetite, and that character too shares the loss of power which should only overtake passion." (p. 113)

People are either *tensed* or *relaxed*; those who are tensed need 'melting beauty' and those who are relaxed need 'energising beauty'. A person is tense when they are under the compulsion of thought or the compulsion of feeling:

"Exclusive domination by either of his two basic drives is for him a state of constraint and violence, and freedom lies only in the co-operation of both his natures. The man onesidedly dominated by feeling, or the sensuously tensed man, will be released and set free by means of form; the man onesidedly dominated by law, or the spiritually tensed man, will be relaxed and set free by means of matter. In order to be adequate to this twofold task, melting beauty will therefore reveal herself under two different guises. First as tranquil form, she will assuage the violence of life, and pave the way which leads from sensation to thought. Secondly, as living image, she will arm abstract form with sensuous power, lead concept back to intuition, and law back to feeling." (p. 119)

Before concluding I shall refer now to Schiller's comments on *aesthetic experience*, again abstracted from the dense and necessary argumentation upon which it is founded. The context is one in which Schiller is resolving an antinomy: on the one hand there is the claim that beauty produces neither knowledge nor character, and on the other that it is the most fruitful of all in respect of these:

"In the aesthetic state, then, man is nought, if we are thinking of any particular result rather than of the totality of his powers ... Hence we must allow that those people are entirely right who declare beauty, and the mood it induces in us, to be completely indifferent and unfruitful as regards either knowledge or character. They are entirely right; for beauty produces no particular result whatsoever, neither for the understanding nor for the will. It accomplishes no particular purpose, neither intellectual nor moral; it discovers no individual truth, helps us to perform no individual duty, and is, in short, as unfitted to provide a firm basis for

character as to enlighten the understanding. By means of aesthetic culture, therefore, the personal worth of a man, or his dignity, inasmuch as this can depend solely upon himself, remains completely indeterminate: and nothing more is achieved by it than that he is henceforth enabled by the grace of Nature to make of himself what he will - that the freedom to be what he ought to be is completely restored to him." (p. 145- 147)

On the other hand,

"One cannot ... say that those people are wrong either who declare the aesthetic state to be the most fruitful of all in respect of knowledge and morality. They are entirely right; for a disposition of the psyche which contains within it the whole of human nature, must necessarily contain within it in *potentia* every individual manifestation of it too ... It takes under its protection no single one of man's faculties to the exclusion of the others, it favours each and all of them without distinction." (p. 151)

The aesthetic state, then, represents, as it were, a suspension of practical activity, in which, however, the nature of the springs of action are revealed more clearly to the agent: it is a state in which a person is granted a sense of their own totality - in *potentia*: for the totality of their nature to express itself in reality is quite another thing and so is the direction in which that totality might press. For Schiller is quite right to say that there are no automatic consequences for action, and this is one of the limitations of his case.

A point I should want to make myself, at this stage, turns on a distinction between reflection and the contemplative aspect of aesthetic experience, and, more comprehensively, of meditation. The very concept of the *human being as a totality* depends upon a contrast and so seems to me to derive, not from reflection upon ordinary practical experience but from reflection upon something like aesthetic or meditational experience. It is in the context of the latter that we discover the sense of a contrast by reference to which our earlier one-sidedness becomes apparent. The point is that in aesthetic experience, according to Schiller, we become aware of aspects of ourselves that reveal a completeness we might not otherwise know existed. Needless to say, this is more systematically available in the practice of meditation, and the experience of *returning* from meditation. Without these kinds of interlude, allowing us the sense of a contrast, the one-sidedness, the fragmentation, that Schiller refers to, is not aware of itself (except perhaps in the form of what we could call a prereflective *dukkha*). The onesidedness has its own characteristic feel, perhaps, but the person in whom, say, 'principle destroys feeling' is not aware of this condition through simple reflection upon their experience, since the form that their reflection takes *participates* in the very one-sidedness that is at issue. (On the other hand, such a person can dwell upon that aura of prereflective *dukkha* that unpleasantly envelops their experience, and this is already to take a step towards meditation.) But the person who reflects upon their experience without the benefit of that sense of a contrast that comes with aesthetic experience, will examine themselves and find the natural state of things: not satisfactory, perhaps, but at least the way things are, and have to be. They will refer to their own experience as the touchstone for judging the

plausibility of claims about experience. (This is why Kierkegaard wanted to insist that communication in this area is necessarily *indirect*, and has to take an artistic form). In other words, the form of reflection upon a person's internal states and the behaviour to which they are seamlessly connected, simply reduplicates the condition observed. From the point of view of reflection, then, the person dominated by thought (say), in whom a certain range of feelings is repressed, will reflect upon themselves with that same one-sidedness and reinforce their own condition. This is the pedagogically significant fact which explains the necessity for the strange responses of discerning teachers: they do things that will activate what needs to rise to the surface. And art can do this too.

Nevertheless, although we may be moved by Schiller's talk of 'living springs, which whatever the political corruption, would remain clear and pure', we shall probably share the general scepticism about his claim that 'it is only through Beauty that man makes his way to Freedom'. Art and aesthetic experience seem a frail foundation for the overcoming of the fragmentation of the personality and the development of a just society. But maybe it is enough to acknowledge that Schiller has glimpsed a Royal Road and discovered a point of entry.

In this connection, here is a strange remark from Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*:

"Living without art and wine. Works of art are like wine: it is better if one has need of neither, keeps to water and, through one's own inner fire and sweetness of soul, again and again transforms the water into wine on one's own account."

(trans. Hollingdale, CUP, 1986, p. 237)

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Note: this article is based on a talk originally given to the Indian Institute of Education, Pune, in 1985.

References are to the Wilkinson and Willoughby edition, Oxford, 1967

THE VAJRASATTVA MANTRA: NOTES ON A CORRECTED SANSKRIT TEXT

by Dharmachari Sthiramati

Introduction

April 1990 saw the publication of the fifth edition of *The FWBO PUJA BOOK*, and readers may have noticed that this new edition now includes a full apparatus of diacritical markings for the passages of Sanskrit and Pali. Preceding editions had been less felicitously endowed with these signs, and in order to comply with Sangharakshita's request that this situation be remedied, in January 1989 Windhorse Publications asked me to correct the spelling and diacritical marking of all such passages, ready for the new edition.

In reading the relevant passages it was quite clear that many of them had become corrupted in the course of the typesetting of previous editions, the main mistakes occurring by the omission of diacritical markings and the misplacing of breaks between words. Of all the passages contained in the book the most difficult to correct, because the most severely corrupted, was the Vajrasattva Mantra. The text had been included, with translation, since the first edition, but without a single diacritical mark, and also, I concluded, with several misplaced word breaks. Independently of these observations (though undoubtedly affected by them) I also noted that the translation did not accurately reflect the Sanskrit text which it accompanied. The task of correction therefore involved a complex process of adding the correct diacritical marks to the words as hitherto printed, of adjusting the text so as to be a credible passage of Sanskrit, and, both informing and informed by the preceding, developing a closer translation of the new Sanskrit text. The following notes are an account of the details of this process, and are offered on the one hand to explain the necessity for making changes to what had become an established piece of FWBO liturgy, and on the other to help non-Sanskritists to a greater appreciation of the connotations of the language of the mantra - though this is not to assume that the literal meaning of the text takes any precedence over the tradition of exegesis of the mantra current within the WBO.

Perhaps it is necessary at this point to explain to readers not familiar with Sanskrit, that diacritical markings are an essential component of the spelling of Sanskrit terms when the Roman alphabet is used. This usage reflects the fact that whereas the Sanskrit alphabet is made up of a total of 48 letters, the Roman alphabet has only 26, and if one is to represent the former by the means of the latter, one has to adapt it appropriately. The adaptation now universal for the transliteration of Sanskrit is the addition of diacritical markings to the letters of the Roman alphabet in order to make up their number to the required level. By way of example, in Sanskrit a total of 4 'n' sounds are distinguished and represented by separate letters, thus: , and . The Roman letters are adapted as follows: n ñ ñ and ñ. Because of the necessity of using what, in the Roman alphabet, are apparently superfluous marks of this kind, the non-Sanskritist can easily fall into the error of seeing them as more ornamental than functional, and hence ignoring them altogether. The

fact remains that they are essential to the correct spelling of Sanskrit (and Pali) words. It follows that a piece of Sanskrit written in the Roman alphabet without its correct diacritical marks (as in the case of the old Vajrasattva mantra) is quite simply misspelt (even to the point of changing the meaning), and that to supply diacritical markings for such a text necessarily involves an understanding of what words are being used, which in its turn is dependent upon an understanding of what the text appears to be saying. Furthermore, because Sanskrit is an inflected language, and grammatical relationships between words are indicated by variations in their spelling, one inevitably has to consider the way that words are being used, and all this, in turn, requiring an attempt to read the text as a coherent statement of some kind. If the words appear to form a coherent, grammatical statement, that is if they are more than just a list of arbitrary terms, then one is immediately, and perhaps irretrievably, engaged in an act of translation.

Sources

Before looking at the text itself, I shall indicate the sources upon which I have drawn in making this revision. Alldredge I have located 21 versions of the mantra, and have used 19 of them in preparing the revision. (I am indebted to Dharmacharis Aloka, Anandajyoti, and Dharmapriya, for their help in locating a number of these.) These include the two versions which have been published in previous FWBO PUJA Books - both largely the same, although the earlier version was more accurate. The majority are romanised texts provided by the author/editor of the book in which they are found. The exceptions include a reproduction of a woodblock print in the Rañjanā script, reproduced in Brian Beresford's *Mahāyāna Purification* (p.97). There are also two versions which consist of a translation alone, with no accompanying Sanskrit text. Throughout the rest of this article, whenever I refer to the 'text' of the mantra, I mean the Sanskrit text (whatever script it may be in).

The following are my sources:

1. *FWBO PUJA Book* - 1st edition, Friends of the Western Buddhist Order 1973
2. *FWBO PUJA Book* - 4th edition, Windhorse Publications 1984
3. Rañjanā woodblock print, *Mahāyāna Purification*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives 1980, p.97
4. Lama Govinda's text, with translation, published in *Der Kreise*, as *Die Einhundertstilben-Dhāraṇī des Vajrasattva* (Provisional English translation provided by Dharmachari Dharmapriya).
5. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Tantric Practice in Nying-ma*, Rider and Company 1982, p.146 (includes translation)
6. Brian Beresford, *Mahāyāna Purification*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives 1980, p.108 (includes translation)
7. Martin Willson, *Rites and Prayers: an FPMT Manual*, Wisdom Publications 1985, p.48 (no line breaks indicated)
8. Martin Willson, editor and translator of Lama Yeshe's *Heruka Vajrasattva: Sādhana and Ritual Feast (Tsog)*, Wisdom Publications 1984 (partial version of this mantra)
9. Losang Chogyi Nyima, *Mañjuśrī Sādhana*, Mañjuśrī Institute 1983, p.25 (no

line breaks indicated)

10. Geshe Rabten, *Preliminary Practices of Tibetan Buddhism*, Wisdom Publications 1982 (not available for full consultation)
11. Tulku Thondup, *Innermost Essence of Preliminary Practice*, p.11 (publication details unknown)
12. Tulku Thondup, Tibetan text, (as above), p.113-4
13. Michael Hookham, translation of *Tharpe Delam*, p.5-6 (publication details unknown)
14. Namkhai Norbu, practice manual, p.60 (publication details unknown)
15. Tibetan text, in *Vajrasattva* manual, compiled and published by Dharmachari Aloka
16. David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, Serindia 1987, p.138 - English translation of partial version of this mantra; no text provided.
17. Stephan Beyer's translation (no text), *The Buddhist Experience*, p.141
18. Stephan Beyer's text, *The Cult of Tārā*, University of California Press 1978, p.144 (includes translation)
19. Kathleen Macdonald, *How to Meditate*, Wisdom Publications 1984, p.182-6 (includes translation)

[The two versions that I have not consulted are to be found in J. Hopkins's book on the Kālacakra Tantra, and Kalu Rimpoché's book, *The Gem Ornament*. Also of interest, for grammatical, structural and lexical parallels to the 'Hundred Syllable' mantra, are two mantras quoted by Snellgrove, on pages 142 and 219 of *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*.]

- a. Five of these sources provide a text accompanied by translations. (Two of them are our own.) These are: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 18. Numbers 16 and 17 are translations only. Text 19 is accompanied by a traditional gloss, rather than a translation.
- b. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 14, and 19 do not give diacritical markings.
- c. Those versions which follow more or less what I have called the traditional Tibetan interpretation are: 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 19.
- d. The eight versions which do not follow this interpretation completely are: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 16, 17, and 18.

With the exception of '3', which is the Rañjanā woodblock print, these last examples are all instances in which the editor has clearly tried to reconcile the text with the tradition. The editors concerned are Lama Govinda (4), Jeffrey Hopkins (5), David Snellgrove (16), Stephan Beyer (17 and 18), and Martin Willson (7 and 8); though the latter does not commit himself to a translation. The woodblock print is of interest because it is the sole primary source that I have been able to consult, and being in an Indian script, we might tentatively assume that it has not passed through a Tibetan recension and thereby suffered possible phonetic distortion.

Groundrules and Intention

General considerations at the back of my mind all through this investigation have been:

1. That the literal meaning of the words of the mantra are not primary, and that its correct translation is of only secondary importance to the

practitioner.

2. That a mantra need not be a coherent grammatical statement - it could just be a string of words with no internal grammatical structure. Against this, we must acknowledge that this mantra does seem to offer a coherent grammatical statement, and that this is acknowledged in the long established tradition of exposition.
3. That the original text of the mantra (if there ever was such a thing) may well not have conformed to the rules of Classical Pāṇinian grammar, though we cannot ignore the fact that with minimal adjustment, this text appears to do so.
4. Similarly, the 'original' may not have utilised Classical Sanskrit vocabulary or syntax.
5. Traditional interpretations cannot be dismissed lightly.
6. Tibetan commentators did not necessarily have an accurate grasp (if any) of Sanskrit vocabulary, syntax or grammar upon which to draw in making their interpretations.
7. Sanskrit mantras were not, on principle, translated into the Tibetan language (as distinct from the Tibetan script), but frequently suffered phonetic distortions as a result. Where these distorted verbal recensions were reduced to writing, a distorted text is to some degree inevitable.

Primarily I have been concerned to provide a reliable Sanskrit text for the mantra for the new Puja Book, but as this inevitably involves understanding and hence translating it, I have also felt that some comment has been required upon the translation of the mantra too. With these principles in mind, I would like to go on and discuss individually all points at which I have suggested an alternative translation to that published in the old Pūjā Book. There are two bases upon which I have made such recommendations - 1. accepting our text, but preferring an alternative translation; 2. changing our text, and thereby necessitating a new translation. I will make clear at each stage which of these two has governed any suggested change.

I think that there is an established Tibetan tradition which interprets the mantra in such a way as to necessitate a particular interpretation of word-breaks and spelling. I will deal with the details of this later on, but generally it appears to involve the incorrect breaking of words and/or lines (perhaps to facilitate chanting), and occasionally the misconstrual of words (*manupalaya*, *ivena/tena*, and *such* being the three terms I have in mind; *supoṣyaḥ* may be a fourth). The majority of texts which appear in traditional Tibetan publications use this text without comment. Significant variations from this begin to appear whenever the editor tries to make sense of the text of the mantra as a piece of Sanskrit language (see above). In other words there are clearly two approaches - one, which ignores grammatical and lexical considerations and offers a traditional (Tibetan?) interpretation; the other, which tries to integrate the traditional interpretation with the linguistic form of the mantra. The latter has been my own concern.

Overall, I would suggest that my revisions do not really affect the meaning of the mantra, as understood within the tradition. However, there are a few instances in which the changes I suggest involve a 'structural' change to the mantra (and its translation), and hence will affect slightly the manner in which

it is chanted. For this reason, it is upon these latter that I shall concentrate in the following notes, although I will acknowledge and attempt to justify briefly all the other changes I have suggested.

I will add diacritical markings and adjust word breaks without comment where such changes are clearly non-contentious, and unless such changes have any bearing upon the meaning of the text. Dictionaries I have referred to are those of M.Monier-Williams, A.A.Macdonell, V.S.Apte (Sanskrit/English, and English/Sanskrit), F.Edgerton, and the Pali Text Society *Pali Dictionary*. In order to facilitate discussion I have numbered the lines as reproduced in the last (ie. 4th) edition of *The FWBO Pūjā Book* from 1 to 16, and have used these numbers for reference.

THE MANTRA (old style)

1	OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA
2	MANUPALAYA
3	VAJRASATTVA TVENOPATISHTA
4	DRDHO ME BHAVA
5	SUTOSYO ME BHAVA
6	SUPOSYO ME BHAVA
7	ANURAKTO ME BHAVA
8	SARVA SIDDHIM ME PREYCHA
9	SARVA KARMA SUCHA ME
10	CHITTAM GREYAH KURU HUM
11	HA HA HA HA HOH
12	BHAGAVAN SARVA TATHAGATA
13	VAJRAMA ME MUNCA
14	VAJRI BHAVA
15	MAHASAMAYASATTVA
16	AH HUM PHAT

Inevitably such a task as this involves the use of grammatical terminology which may be opaque to the average reader. I can see no way of avoiding this, but hope that, despite such difficulties, the following will be of use and interest to as many as possible.

Notes on a new Sanskrit text and translation:

lines 1-2	OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA
	MANUPALAYA

These two lines need to be considered together. They involve the first structural change from the traditional interpretation of the mantra that I have suggested. If the text was written in an Indian script, eg. devanagari, then they would appear like this - *vajrasattvasamayamanupalaya*. The problem here is to establish the position of the word breaks. The texts following the traditional Tibetan interpretation always give *manupalaya*, as above.

My argument for changing this to *samayam anupālaya* is partly grammatical and partly lexical. If we accept our present translation then *manupalaya* is

interpreted as a Vocative nominal compound meaning 'O defender (*pāla*) of man (*manu*)!' - the Vocative case (as will be frequently seen) functioning as a direct exclamatory address to the person named. However I have not been able to identify any Sanskrit noun or adjective, *palaya*. There is, of course, *pāla* and *pālaka*, but not a *palaya* or *pālaya*. Given the absence of diacritics in our text (and in others), I wondered whether the -ya ending might be the Dative of *pāla*, ie. *pālāya*, but this only raises further difficulties of interpretation, because it would mean 'to/for the defender of man' and would not make sense on its own.

These difficulties are solved very simply if one moves the word break one letter forwards, to give *-samayam anupālaya*. We can then read *samayam* ('bond') as an Accusative object to the verb *anupālaya* - the 2nd person singular Imperative of *anupālayati*. This would be completely consistent with 9 other lines of the mantra, all of which use 2nd person singular Imperative verbs, in exhortation to Vajrasattva. This reading is adopted by several editors - 4, 5, 6, 7, 17 and 18. The woodblock print however retains *manupālaya*, but clearly indicates that the only *s* comes before the *l*. In other words, although it puts the word break before the *m*, the spelling of the word suggests that it is really dealing with the verb (*anupālaya*) rather than a Dative nominal compound (which would have to read *manu-pālāya*).

Anupālayati means, 'to guard, protect, take care of, be the guardian of, maintain, observe, keep (a promise, etc.) adhere to'. I would suggest that 'preserve' appropriately captures the connotations of guarding and adherence represented here. Hence, interpreted this way, the phrase reads, "Preserve the bond!"

The other significant word break in this line would be between *vajrasattva* and *samayam*. If there is one here, then *vajrasattva* becomes a Vocative, but if not, then we have a compound 'bond of vajrasattva'. The difference in question here is between, "Vajrasattva! Preserve the bond!" or "Preserve the bond of Vajrasattva!". Originally I chose the latter alternative, in conformity with our present translation, and on purely grammatical terms I can see little reason for choosing one against the other. Editors 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 19 divide *vajrasattva* from *samaya* - 9, 11, 12, and 15 are ambiguous as to their interpretation here. The woodblock (3) suggests a compound, because it runs the words together, and the usual practice is to observe a line break after Vocatives. The translations provided by 4, 5, 6, 17, and 18 all take *vajrasattva* as a Vocative. Upon consideration I have come to prefer this reading myself, largely in view of the formal structure of the mantra as a whole. I shall return to this at the end of the article, by which point my reasons will be more evident.

Revised version om vajrasattva samayam anupālaya

line 3 VAJRASATTVA TVENOPATISHTA

Again we need to consider word breaks here. Our present translation suggests that the first word of the sentence is *vajrasattvatvena*, ie. from the neuter abstract noun formed by adding the suffix -*tva* to a noun ('Vajrasattvahood/-ness' - see below). Some editors experience difficulty here, and try to suggest that there is a personal pronoun, *tvena* - 'by you' (4,5,6,11,13,17,18,) or *tena* -

'by him' (7,8,9,12,14,19), which has coalesced with the verb *upatiṣṭha*. The latter, *tena*, is meaningless in this context, and the former not a recognised form of the pronoun *tvam*, 'you' (even in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit). Therefore our layout needs to join the suffix, *tvena* back onto the stem, *vajrasattva*.

Two versions allow for our reading in their text - 3 and 15. Of the translations, neither 4, 5, 6, or 18 satisfactorily relate the text they present to the meaning they derive from it.

"Vajrasattva, through your support..." (4)

"Vajrasattva, reside [in me]." (5)

"Vajrasattva, may I be upheld by you." (6)

"Diamond Being/Vajrasattva, Let them be firm!" (18)

I think that *vajrasattvatvena* clearly is the Instrumental singular of the abstract noun derived from the name, *vajrasattva*, but I do not think 'with thy Vajrasattvahood' is the best rendering. Literally, 'with Vajrasattva-ness' would be a legitimate interpretation of such an abstract, but the Sanskrit idiom is that the Instrumental singular of such abstract nouns is used to signify in what quality or capacity someone acts. The most appropriate English idiom for the translation of this usage is 'as...'. In other words, in this case, to do something 'with Vajrasattva-ness', means to do it 'as Vajrasattva'. I think the best translation of this line should be, "As Vajrasattva, stand before me."

The remainder of the line is the Imperative verb, *upatiṣṭha* - from the verb *upa-sthā*. (Note that the final -a coalesces with the initial u- of the following word, forming an -o-, by the rules of sandhi.) This verb has a range of connotation that is very difficult to convey with a single English term: '- to stand near, place one's self before/near, be present; to approach; to become friendly with; to approach for intercourse; to attend, support; to worship; to attain (divinity); to make one's appearance, reveal oneself, arise, be imminent etc.'. Given the significance of the latter meanings in the context of visualisation practice, it is very tempting to reject our present translation for something rather more evocative: "As Vajrasattva, approach!"; "As Vajrasattva, manifest!"; "As Vajrasattva, reveal thyself!". Maybe this is too 'Faustian', though? According to Apte, the prime meanings are, 'to stand near, to approach'.

Revised version vajrasattvatvenopatiṣṭha

line 4 DRDHO ME BHAVA

There is little difficulty here, as with the next 4 lines. *dr̥ḍhaḥ* means 'firm'; *me* the abbreviated form of the Dative of the first person pronoun *aham* ('to/for me'); *bhava* another 2nd person singular imperative, this time of the verb *bhavati* - 'to be'. Hence 'Be firm for me' is entirely acceptable.

The most interesting textual variant appears in the woodblock (3), where we consistently have *bhāva* - but Edgerton notes that forms of this verb appear in Buddhist Sanskrit, derived from a verbal stem using a long ā, ie. *bhāvati*, in which case this would be consistent.

Snellgrove (16) gives "Be firm in me!"; but assuming he has the same text as we do, this is not an acceptable translation of *me*. Govinda (4) gives *dr̥ttho*, of

which I cannot make sense. He also, along with Hopkins (5), interprets *bhava* rather idiosyncratically - "let me become steadfast" and "Make me firm.", respectively. Beyer (17 and 18) gives, 'Be steadfast for me,...'.

Revised version dr̥ḍho me bhava

line 5 SUTOSYO ME BHAVA

I have changed 'glad' to 'greatly pleased' as I think the latter reflects the term *su-toṣyaḥ* more accurately, and also sounds more euphonious to my ear. The term is derived from the verbal root *tuṣ* - to become calm, be satisfied or pleased with someone, to be gratified, with the prefix *su-*, 'well, very'.

Beyer (17 and 18) has, "be satisfied..[for me]". Assuming Snellgrove's translation (16) to be derived from the same or similar Sanskrit text as ours, we should note that he gives 'Be stable in me!'; for this line - emphasising the notion of 'calmness' in the verbal root. Govinda (4) and Hopkins (5) interpret *bhava* as though it were *kuru* and make *me* the Accusative object of the sentence - hence "Make me content" and "Make me satisfied". If the quality concerned were demanded for the speaker, then the adjective denoting it should be in the Accusative, ie. we should have something like *sutoṣyaṃ māṃ kuru*. As it is, the adjective *sutoṣyaḥ* is Nominative and refers to the person addressed by the verb.

Revised version sutoṣyo me bhava

line 6 SUPOSYO ME BHAVA

poṣyaḥ means 'abundant, plentiful, inexhaustible, well-fed, thriving, copious, nourishing, causing wealth or prosperity', not, so far as I can ascertain, 'pleased'. A *poṣya-putra* is 'an adopted son'.

Beyer (17 and 18) has, "...be nourished for me!". Snellgrove (16) gives 'Be all-pervasive of me!'; Govinda (4), "let my desires be insignificant"; Hopkins (5), 'Fulfil me.'; Beresford (6), "May you be happy with me." This last version parallels our own, although I can find no explanation for this translation of *poṣyaḥ*, other than the implication that one who is well-fed, must also be happy.

The word is derived from the root *puṣ* which seems to be centrally connected with the idea of nurturing, nourishing and caring, and so a literal translation might be, 'Be nourishing for me.' I would translate it, 'Deeply nourish me.'

Revised version supoṣyo me bhava

line 7 ANURAKTO ME BHAVA

Again I have suggested an alternative translation of the text as we have it. 'Passionately', as suggested by Sangharakshita in his seminar on the mantra, would be a better translation of terms cognate with the root *rañj* - 'to be red, to be enamoured or impassioned'. I would suggest, "Love me passionately."

Revised version anurakto me bhava

line 8

SARVA SIDDHIM ME PREYCHA

The only correction to the text here (apart from joining the words *sarva* and *siddhi*) is in the verb, which, to be a correctly formed Imperative, should be spelt *prayaccha*. This was the form given in the first edition of the Pūjā Book, and is affirmed by 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15,18 and 19.

Our current translation of the line could be questioned however; *sarvasiddhiṃ* is singular, and, furthermore, *siddhi* means 'success, attainment, magical power' rather than 'perfection'. This rich range of connotation suggests that the term itself should not be translated, and the line rendered along the lines of "Grant/accord me the *siddhi* in all (things)". All the translations take the line to mean, roughly, "Grant me all *siddhis*" - though the Sanskrit is undoubtedly not plural.

Revised version

sarvasiddhiṃ me prayaccha

lines 9-10

SARVA KARMA SUCHA ME
CHITTAM SREYAH KURU HUM

Here we come to the second point at which I suggest a structural change to the text of the mantra. Once more it is a matter of establishing the correct word breaks. All texts which appear to follow what I call the Tibetan tradition take these as two lines, and regard the first (9) as comprised of four word elements - *sarva-karma-sucha-me*. I find this difficult to accept on a number of counts. Firstly, this gives us a sentence with no verb. This is possible in Sanskrit, but, being without a verbal adjective, this would have to be a copula statement saying, "All action is '*sucha*' for me", (assuming me to be the Dative/Genitive abbreviation of *aham*). The word order would then be irregular, as the predicate usually precedes the subject in such instances, and we are also faced with the problem of the meaning of *sucha*.

One suggestion is that there is a Sanskrit term *suca/sucha*, meaning 'pure'. I have done my best to find it but have drawn a blank. I suspect that this derives from a confusion with the Pali term *suci* which has that meaning. The Sanskrit equivalent term is *suci*, ie. with a palatal, rather than dental 's'. I have found no text of the mantra which gives this word as *suci*, including significantly, the woodblock, in which the distinction between palatal and dental 's's is clear. Furthermore, we would still have to explain how an '-i' stem adjective appears here as an '-a' stem adjective. Certainly, there seems little justification for giving this word a verbal function, as does our current translation.

A solution adopted by Stephan Beyer (17 and 18), and by Martin Willson (7 and 8), is to take these lines together, but construe the first three word elements as a compound, thus: *sarva-karma-sūca*. Willson does not translate, but Beyer takes the latter term, *sūca*, to mean 'indicator' - from the adjective of the same spelling, meaning 'pointing out'. Thus he takes the whole passage to read, "Indicator of all karma: make glorious my mind HUM!". The woodblock print distinguishes between long and short 'u', and clearly reads *suca*. I don't find this solution convincing.

All this difficulty can be swept away if we merely transpose the word break by one letter (in the Indian script a consonant and a following vowel are denoted by a single sign) - from *karma suca* to *karmasu ca* - and regard these two lines in our text (9-10) as being one. We can then read *karmasu* as the Locative plural of *karma* - meaning 'In all actions'; *ca* is the simple connective 'and', which when joining sentences always follows the first word of the subsequent sentence - here *sarvakarmasu*; *me* is the Dative or Genitive of *aham* ('of or for me'), and in that it precedes *cittam* (Accusative singular of 'mind/heart') it is naturally read as a Genitive which governs it, so giving as the object of the sentence, 'my mind'; *śreyah* is technically the comparative degree of *śrī*, hence our current translation as 'better', but which seems rather weak - it does have an idiomatic usage 'more/most superior, excellent, distinguished'; *kuru* is the 2nd person singular Imperative of *kr*, 'to do/make'.

Taken in this latter way we have a simple and perfectly natural Sanskrit sentence (*sarvakarmasu ca me cittam śreyah kuru*), which reads "and in all actions make my mind more/most excellent". This seems far preferable to trying to force a meaning out of the alternative reading with all its problems.

How is this passage treated by the other editors? The woodblock gives *sarva-karmasucame* - which allows for this interpretation. Beresford's translation (6) is more of a paraphrase - "make all my actions good". Both Hopkins and Lama Govinda (4 and 5) adopt the same analysis as the one I suggest here in their text and in their translation, as does Snellgrove, too (16):

"Also, make my mind virtuous in all actions." (Hopkins)

"and in all (my) action make my mind more talented" (Govinda)

"In all my actions make for felicity of thought!" (Snellgrove)

Finally, several texts give *śriyam/śriyam* rather than *śreyah* - 3,5,6,9,11,15; *śriyam/śriyam* is the Accusative of *śrī*. Also, 13 gives *śriyah*; 14 gives *śreyam*. Hopkins (5) translates *śriyam* as "virtuous", while Beresford (6) takes it as "most glorious".

Revised version: sarvakarmasu ca me cittam śreyah kuru hūṃ

line 11

HA HA HA HA HOH

Revised version

ha ha ha ha hoḥ

lines 12 and 13

BHAGAVAN SARVA TATHAGATA

VAJRAMA ME MUNCA

This is another instance in which I believe two lines need to be considered together. The core of the issue, as I see it, is how to construe the compound *sarvatathāgata*. In our present translation ("Blessed all ye Buddhas!") it is taken as the plural subject of a nominal sentence, predicated by the adjective *bhagavan*. This does not seem likely to me for several reasons.

Firstly, *bhagavan* is the Vocative singular form, just as *sarvatathāgata* would be under this interpretation. Hence the sentence would be referring to a single *Tathāgata* who is blessed. Furthermore, being in the Vocative case rather than

the Nominative, makes it an address, "O blessed *Tathāgata*!"; rather than a statement. Finally, the relationship between *tathāgata* and *sarva* has to be reconstrued. In the classical language the rules governing the analysis of compound words are complex and strictly applied. The translation "*all Tathāgatas*" takes this to be a Karmadhāraya compound, formed from a noun qualified by a preceding adjective. In the Classical language this was forbidden, such a combination being reserved for the Bahuvrīhi type of compound (clearly inapplicable here). This applied to *sarva*, as also other adjectives, although in later Sanskrit prose works this rule was occasionally excepted for *sarva* and some other adjectives, eg. *anya*, 'other'. Even if we argue that this is an instance of just such an exception, we would still need to explain why the compound as a whole is singular. The plural form would be *sarvatathāgatāḥ*, but no text, including the woodblock print, fails to spell it *sarvatathāgata*. If one insists on taking these two words as a compound, then one is forced to interpret it as a Tatpuruṣa compound, meaning something like, "*Tathāgata of/to/amongst all (beings?)*".

The simplest solution to this difficulty, one which sweeps all these problems away, (Occam once more?) is to see *sarvatathāgata* as the front part of a longer compound that includes the word *vajra* from the next line. Once *sarvatathāgata* is subordinated to a larger compound term the restriction upon the adjectival/nominal juxtaposition as a Karmadhāraya no longer applies (and the lack of indication of number irrelevant), and the new compound can be read as another Vocative singular term addressing Vajrasattva, and meaning "O *Vajra* of all the *Tathāgatas*!". This might either be qualified by *bhagavan*, or simply be a parallel but discrete exclamation.

This general interpretation, ie. *sarvatathāgatavajra*, is explicitly adopted in the text by 4,5,6,7,17 and 18, and is reflected in the translations of Hopkins, Willson, Beyer and Lama Govinda. Govinda prefers to see *bhagavan* as qualifying *sarvatathāgatavajra* rather than as a separate Vocative - "Erhabener aller *Tathāgata* Diamant" ('Sublime diamond of all the *Tathāgatas*' - translation courtesy of Dharmapriya).

Once we have adopted this interpretation we are left with the phrase *mā me muñca*. This is a simple prohibitive Imperative statement, meaning "Do not abandon me!", and is clearly requested of the object of the Vocative address. In other words, taking *sarva-tathāgata-vajra* as a single compound term reduces these two lines to another simple, natural, syntactically correct sentence.

I can find no basis for the present translation, "O *Vajra-like* Ones!"; nor does it seem appropriate to translate the verb, "*Liberate me*". *muñca* is the 2nd person singular Imperative of the verb *muc*, which can indeed mean 'to let go, set free, liberate', but given the prohibitive function of the particle *mā*, this is hardly appropriate, because then the sentence would be saying, 'Do not liberate me!'. However, this verb is also widely used in meanings such as 'send away, despatch, quit, leave, abandon, desert, give up, lay aside, relinquish, give away, etc.' - hence my suggested translation of "Do not abandon me!". The same interpretation is adopted by Lama Govinda, Hopkins, Beyer, Macdonald and Willson.

The restoration of this term also reveals a symmetry in the mantra previously obscured - The first line (restored version) is a request that Vajrasattva

preserve/maintain the bond or pledge that exists between the *yidam* and the practitioner (reinforced by the second line), while this line, coming virtually at the end, repeats this sentiment by demanding that meditator be not abandoned.

Revised version: bhagavan sarvatathāgatavajra mā me muñca

line 14

VAJRI BHAVA

Texts vary between giving *vajra* and *vajrī/vajri*; 1,2,4,5,7,11,12,13,14,15 and 18 all give the latter. Assuming the latter to be correct, then this line is another injunction made to Vajrasattva, in this case to 'Be a *vajrin*'; *vajrī* is the Nominative singular of the noun *vajrin* which means 'possessor/holder/bearer of the vajra'. I do not understand how our present translation, "...truly *Vajric*", is derived from this term.

Revised version

vajrī bhava

line 15

MAHASAMAYASATTVA

Govinda and Beresford construe this compound in such a way as to make *mahā* qualify *śamaya*, ie. 'great bond/pledge/vow'. Hopkins circumvents this piece of analysis by translating literally - "*great bond being*". Our present translation is questionable both because it takes *mahā* to qualify *sattva*, which latter it also translates as though it were *śatvan* (the Vedic term for 'hero'), which is a common scribal error for *sattva*. The more natural reading is "O *Being of the great bond*" - once more, an exclamatory address in the Vocative singular case.

Revised version

mahāśamayasattva

line 16

AH HUM PHAT

Revised version

āḥ hūm phaṭ

Thus far, my revision of the text would be as follows:

- 1 oṃ vajrasattva śamayam anupālaya
- 2 vajrasattvatvenopatiṣṭha
- 3 dṛgho me bhava
- 4 sutoṣyo me bhava
- 5 supoṣyo me bhava
- 6 anurakto me bhava
- 7 sarvasiddhiṃ me prayaccha
- 8 sarvakarmasu ca me cittaṃ śreyasḥ kuru hūm
- 9 ha ha ha ha hoḥ
- 10 bhagavan sarvatathāgatavajra mā me muñca
- 11 vajrī bhava
- 12 mahāśamayasattva
- 13 āḥ hūm phaṭ

Traditionally, the basic form of the mantra ends with the *Āḥ*. (This is the form given in 4,7,11,12,14,17 and 18.) The *HŪṃ* and the *PHAT* are added under specific circumstances, according to the intention of the practitioner; the *HŪṃ* when the mantra is recited for the benefit of someone dead, and the *PHAT* when the mantra is recited to subdue demons. The revised version that I have presented above contains exactly 100 syllables, excluding the *HŪṃ* and the *PHAT*.

Concluding observations

Now that I have been through the whole of the mantra in detail, I would like to return to the very first line, and take up once more the question of the interpretation of *vajrasattva samayaṃ*. I stated at the beginning that for formal structural reasons - perhaps I should better say for reasons of harmony and balance in the formal structure of the mantra - I prefer to read *vajrasattva* as a Vocative, giving the translation of the whole line as, "*Vajrasattva, Preserve the bond!*". The first consideration that has led me to this conclusion is that, unless we accept this as a direct address to Vajrasattva, then at no point in the entire mantra is he addressed directly by that name. It seems appropriate that the mantra should begin with the name of the figure to whom the mantra (itself a series of requests to him) is addressed.

Apart from this, with the text as I have revised it, we can see that the mantra consists of roughly a dozen lines, each containing an injunction addressed directly to Vajrasattva, in the form of a verb in the imperative mood. This has a pleasing consistency of form, and I would have thought was an integral part of the original '100 syllable' mantra. If we take the name in the first line to be a Vocative preceded by a seed-syllable, then we can see that this is mirrored by the concluding line of the mantra, where we have similarly a Vocative (*mahāsamayasattva*) followed by a seed-syllable. In other words, the mantra closes as it has begun - with a direct call to the Bodhisattva, by name. If this consideration is valid, then it might in turn suggest the layout of the mantra be adjusted to reflect this symmetry. The result would be as follows:

1	oṃ vajrasattva samayaṃ anupālaya	[syllable - name - request]
2	vajrasattvatvenopatiṣṭha	[request]
3	dṛḍho me bhava	[request]
4	sutoṣyo me bhava	[request]
5	supoṣyo me bhava	[request]
6	anurakto me bhava	[request]
7	sarvasiddhiṃ me prayaccha	[request]
8	sarvakarmasu ca me cittaṃ śreyāḥ kuru hūṃ	[request]
9	ha ha ha ha hoḥ	[laughter]
10	bhagavan sarvatathāgatavajra mā me muñca	[epithets - request]
11	vajrī bhava mahāsamayasattva āḥ (hūṃ phat)	[request - epithet - syllable]

Each line is a grammatically complete and correct statement, containing an imperative verb, asking Vajrasattva for some specific boon. It both begins by addressing him by name and concludes with two of his epithets - 'Vajra of all the Tathāgatas' and 'Being of the great bond' - the whole enclosed by the syllables *oṃ* and *āḥ*. My translation of this text is as follows:

- 1 Oṃ Vajrasattva! Preserve the bond!
- 2 As Vajrasattva, stand before me.
- 3 Be firm for me.
- 4 Be greatly pleased for me.
- 5 Deeply nourish me.
- 6 Love me passionately.
- 7 Grant me siddhi in all things,
- 8 And in all actions make my mind most excellent. HŪṃ
- 9 Ha Ha Ha Ha Hoḥ
- 10 Blessed One! Vajra of all the Tathāgatas! Do not abandon me.
- 11 Be the Vajra-bearer, Being of the great bond! Āḥ (HŪṃ PHAT)

Several of the lines are considerably longer than the version in the Pūjā Book because I have joined two that were shorter in the old version. There remains the question of whether these longer lines should be broken, so as to facilitate chanting. Though I suspect that some of the earlier corruptions that I have indicated may have entered the text as a result of such line breaks in time past, it seemed appropriate to minimise the disruption caused by revision, and to preserve the layout of the older version, *insofar as it does not break up compound words or distort the meaning*. It follows that the only change suggested here that might effect the chanting of the mantra according to our present tune appears in line 10 of this revised version (as printed here), where I have reconstituted a word which runs across the old line break.

I am uncomfortably aware that to be methodologically proper I should consult more primary sources. Time and facilities have not allowed such an approach, although it is some consolation to note that Lama Govinda's text was apparently based upon his reading of the *Sādhanaṃālā*. I would be especially interested to trace the history of the mantra - as Snellgrove's version shows, there are recensions that finish with the first HŪṃ and the laughter (ie. at line 9). As it is, these notes are based almost entirely upon secondary sources, and a more ambitious study of such materials must be saved for the future.

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COLERIDGE: IMAGINATION AND REVOLUTION

by Dharmachari Ananda

When presented with a task - any task - my immediate impulse is to engage my attention in something totally unconnected with it. It doesn't matter one bit how fascinating the given task might be - or how necessary its fulfilment; the impulse to do something totally at odds with it is often all but irresistible. In the present case, that is, the research for this paper, my first impulse was to read a good science fiction novel. Actually I was in a second-hand bookshop in Birmingham when I came across a book by one of my favourite authors - Colin Wilson - who incidentally is more widely known for his 'outsider' books published in the fifties and sixties than for science fiction. The book was called *The Philosopher's Stone*, and I plunged into it, to the abandonment of all other thoughts, and as far as I can remember - without the slightest trace of guilt.

This little digression is not without point, because it illustrates an intriguing aspect of the mind which I shall have cause to return to later on. That is, that this self-indulgent propensity to wander into apparently brackish and lifeless backwaters can often turn up gems which later become indispensable to the main current of one's thesis. Which indeed proved to be the case with *The Philosopher's Stone*.

Colin Wilson speaks, at one point in the book, of "that curious core of happiness - the mind's delight in truth at all costs, even if the truth is destructive". It was that particular phrase core of happiness which sparked off in me a train of thought - or perhaps rather a train of feeling - which gave shape to the whole project. Because it's not an association that one would immediately naturally make - happiness as being delight in truth. It's much more usual to connect happiness with the avoidance of truth at all costs!

In order to make sense of the title I've given this talk I must introduce at this point two more key words: REALITY and POETRY. So that we now have four key ideas: IMAGINATION, REVOLUTION, REALITY and POETRY. I also want - if you will be indulgent for a moment - to arrange these four words into a geometrical pattern: that is, at the four visible apices of a diamond, or, more correctly, as it is in two dimensions, a rhombus, as follows:



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Now, before plunging in to attempting to define these four somewhat abstract concepts, I want very briefly to talk about language. Any writer I think, will tell you that language is very far from being a simple equation between a sound or a shape on paper and a concept. Language for a start, changes all the time. It will not be tied down for a moment. It has a life of its own which defies limitation into categories or mental models. It plays with the world. In spite of our use of it to abstract 'meaning' from the world, language actually subverts all attempts to make sense of things. It insists on 'undermining' or overturning any structure which man may set up and which may have lost its appropriateness to a particular situation - whether that structure is a mental concept, the State, a religious tradition, or one's own individual habits and pre-conceptions - and very often this subversion will reveal or release a deeper, more effective, more fruitful one. Language, when used with sufficient sensitivity, obliges us to look at first beginnings, at what it is we are part of, what we share with other cultures, at the continuities within us, at what is dead and what is alive in the forms we surround ourselves with. Language obliges us not to tolerate those anachronistic, superficial, power-preserving or merely irrelevant elements in our social structures, institutions and ideologies.

So going back to our diamond with its four key concepts, I would like to treat these ideas as dynamic forces which are always changing their impact according to the context in which we experience them, rather than as inviolate dictionary-shaped objects which can only have a few pre-fabricated meanings. It could also be observed that, as every culture has its own distinctive set of associations - or accumulated resonances - inseparable from every word in its language, arriving at a consensus of understanding of terms which have been in constant use within that culture for centuries is no mean task, and let him beware who undertakes it lightly!

So firstly, Imagination. Chambers Dictionary defines imagination as "The faculty of forming images in the mind. The artist's creative power."

The literary critic Wilson Knight calls imagination "the sovereign faculty": in his important essay *Poetry and Magic* he quotes Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, referring to

"that synthetic and magical power to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination". [1]

Coleridge himself continues:

"Imagination is the soul that is everywhere, and in each;
and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole". [2]

Later in the same essay, Knight comments: [in the creative imagination] "there is a reality being apprehended as surely as in ordinary sense-perception." And Coleridge continues:

"I have known some who have been rationally educated, as it is styled; they were marked by a microscopic acuteness; but when they looked at great things, all became blank and they saw nothing... and uniformly put the

negation of a power for the possession of a power - and called the want of imagination judgement, and the never being moved to rapture, philosophy!" [3]

So already we have unearthed some valuable clues to the nature of imagination. It works with images. It is a source of creative power. It is synthetic: bringing things that were previously unrelated into a harmonious whole. It is 'the soul that is everywhere', transcending space and time, and also a faculty which 'apprehends reality'. (Note that Wilson Knight is careful to say 'apprehends' and not 'comprehends'). Coleridge places imagination at the pinnacle of man's faculties: the very weight that the word carries in English is largely due to him:

"Imagination is the living power and prime agent of all human perception... and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite..."

To understand anything fully, it has first to come alive in the mind. This can happen only by means of the imagination. You re-create the object to be understood in the mind, so that you literally embody it: the mind becomes suffused with the thing it is contemplating, and is altered in the process.

Secondly we come to Revolution. The dictionary, once again, gives us: "A complete change, turning upside down, a fundamental reconstruction - especially through use of force". Implicit in this definition are conflict and violence. The conflict may be between social classes, ideologies, systems of government, ethnic or racial groups, or traditions. Revolution is a flood, in the course of which many certainties are overwhelmed. In Yeats's beautiful lines:

"the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
the ceremony of innocence is drowned."

Revolutions usually come about as a result of a sense of injustice felt by a mass of people over a long period of time. The American radical activist Mario Savio:

"There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part in it... and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels and make it stop."

It is possible to regard the process of history as a continual dialectic of opposed power systems, one always being in the ascendent. William Blake had a very clear picture of this process, which he conceived largely as a product of a certain mode of consciousness:

"Single vision saw things at their lowest mechanical level, which [Blake] called Ulro. Double vision saw the two sides or contraries in a situation. But the clash of opposites, however essential, could not by itself bring development about. Ulro is thus the sphere of consciousness of all persons who accept uncritically a divided world." [4]

In the realm of Ulro, - nations, ideologies, or individual minds - there can be no resolution, no evolution onto a higher level, no true peace: only at best a stalemate or temporary subjugation of one element by another.

So revolution in this sense is very much a double-edged weapon. It is a means whereby oppressed peoples can throw off the yoke of their oppressors - but it's a dangerously unstable means. The trouble is there is always someone who thinks he knows exactly what medicine the people need, like the American publisher of *Time Magazine*, Henry Luce, who said:

"I want good editors with independent minds. I like to see independent thinking. If it's going the wrong way I'll straighten them out fast enough".

So we come on to poetry. How does poetry enter into this dialectic of ideology and imagination? I can best address this question by asking another: what are the aims of poetry in our culture and age? There are those of course who categorically deny that poetry can have aims or propound opinions:

"Any work of art that can be understood is a work of journalism."
(Tristan Tzara).

"Art evokes the mystery without which the world would not exist."
(Rene Magritte)

"The most beautiful works of art are those which express the pure fantasies of the artist."
(Delacroix).

Perhaps it should be recalled here that these are voices raised in reaction to the utilitarianism and materialism so widely prevalent in Europe in the early part of this century. However, it does seem that we have in our present ethos gone to the opposite pole of marginalising poetry, placing it outside the pale where it can have no creative contribution to our everyday lives. The great Chilean socialist poet Pablo Neruda however, insisted that poetry has a critical and central role to play in dealing with the conflicts and problems arising in the course of everyday life.

"We have to demand of the poet that he take his place in the street and in the fight, as well as in the light and in the darkness... poetry is rebellion. The poet was not offended when he was called subversive. Life transcends all structures..." [5]

The Ulster poet Seamus Heaney speaks of

"poetry as divination, as revelation of the self to the self, as restoration of the culture to itself, poems as elements of continuity..." [6]

Poetry in this sense must have different functions in different epochs of civilisation and in different social conditions.

To summarize, in our own time five very broad distinctions of purpose may be identified:

- 1 To give a sense of identity and purpose - as individuals as well as nations or civilizations.
- 2 To widen the horizons of our lives - enable us to fully inhabit the world of the imagination.
- 3 To reconnect us to myths and symbols, which are the driving forces behind the evolution of civilization.
- 4 To establish an intimacy with the objects of this world.

5 To restore a sense of the miraculous - enabling us (not just the mystics) to see 'heaven in a wild flower'.

I've left the most intractable - not to say inscrutable - of our four points of the diamond till last, although we've already touched on it in discussing the other three.

Reality: that which is the case; 'things as they are'; but also, the sense of something beyond things - beyond the mundane; the sense of mystery; the idea that life is not just a long, tedious succession of objects and delusions, followed by absolute nothingness; the sense indeed that we are part of something much greater, far more significant, than our separate egos, our little isolated individual worlds. Without this intuition, this conviction, we are bound to lead self-serving unfulfilled lives; we are bound to end up either as crass materialists or embittered sentimentalists, depending on our temperament! - because we're not allowing what is present in the depths to emerge and be known.

I think at this point I ought to invoke the presence of our tutelary poet who is, of course, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Coleridge was born in 1772 in the small village of Ottery St Mary in Devon. It is interesting to note in passing that he was born within three years of Beethoven, Wordsworth, Chatterton, Louis the Sixteenth, Jane Austin, Turner, Constable, Robert Southey and Sir Walter Scott! He was born the youngest of fourteen children. His father John, a lovable, learned, and absentminded clergyman, was the vicar of the parish church in Ottery, and a master at the Grammar School. He died when Samuel was only nine.

After his father's death he was sent to school at Christ's Hospital in London. There he made the most of the facilities for study that were available to him: free libraries, tutors, a large circle of stimulating friends, and the added stimulation to his already fertile imagination of being in the metropolis, surrounded by institutions of learning and the arts.

In 1791 just before his twentieth birthday, he went up to Cambridge, to Jesus College. Despite setting himself a strict schedule of study in mathematics and classics, his vast imagination slowly began to erode this regimen, and his room nightly became transformed into a meeting place of his conversation-loving friends. He befriended the many radicals of the day and avidly absorbed their pamphlets through the long nights in his rooms.

In 1794 he met Robert Southey, a Bristol poet, and went on a walking tour with him through Wales and the Wye Valley. It was on this trip that his radical plan for a 'new age' community in America - 'pantisocracy' - had its birth. Coleridge's friend Thomas Poole succinctly sums up the aims of this project:

"The produce of their industry is to be laid up in common for the use of all, and a good library of books is to be collected, and their leisure hours spent in study, liberal discussions, and the education of their children".

The project eventually collapsed, mainly due to Southey's pulling out of the scheme because of pressure from his influential family for him to take up the

career of Law. In 1795 Coleridge married Sarah Fricker, a Bristol girl, and took her to live with him at Clevedon - then a very sleepy and unspectacular seaside town in Somerset.

It's pertinent here to pause and recall what was happening outside England during these crucial years. They were of course dominated by the French Revolution. In 1792 the Revolutionary Commune was established in Paris. Louis XVI attempted to flee the city, and was assassinated the following January.

In 1793 the Jacobins overthrew the Girondin party, and France declared war. Jean Marat was murdered, and Christianity officially 'abolished'. In England, the Prime Minister William Pitt suspended Habeas Corpus. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* was published and despite being banned, immediately became a best seller: over 1½ million copies were sold in all.

In April 1794 the revolutionary Danton was executed by the followers of Robespierre, thus beginning the Reign of Terror. In July, Robespierre himself was executed by the moderates. To allay fears of similar conspiracies at home, Pitt introduced the Treasonable Practices and Seditious Meetings Bills, which paved the way for the trials of many reformist writers.

All this had a huge effect on English writers. Some felt they should be agitating for reform all the more because their colleagues were being persecuted; others queried the efficacy of political action at all. Most of the Romantics were shaken by the intensity of hatred and fear the Revolution had stirred up, not just in France but throughout Europe. The questions of individual freedom, freedom of speech, class, equality, Royalty, the owning of property and land, and the question of franchise, were hotly debated in sitting rooms, taverns, assembly halls and coffee houses throughout the land. One of the incidental effects of the repressive legislation introduced by Pitt at this time was to close down many of the coffee houses, as they were known to be the seedbeds of many of the small associations which advocated revolt.

Coleridge, with his irrepressible energy and social nature was inevitably in the thick of all this. But, after the failure of the revolution, his nature was such that he responded by turning inwards, turning to long periods of self-analysis and rigorous self questioning, in order to throw light on his own tumultuous feelings and inner processes.

Throughout the winter of 1795-6, Coleridge continued to work in Bristol though constantly "eaten up" by anxieties. His deep disappointment with the consequences of the revolution in France had led him to turn away, albeit temporarily, from journalism, lecturing, and public controversy. Charles Lamb,

in a letter to Coleridge in October 1796 wrote:

"I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans for life, veering about from this hope to the other, and settling nowhere... lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune, only to lay them down again..."

At the end of the year Coleridge moved with his wife to a tiny, cramped stone cottage in Nether Stowey, in the northern edge of the Quantocks. His friend Tom Poole had obtained for Coleridge the cottage next door to his own.

Here Coleridge set himself wholeheartedly to the task before him of supporting his young wife and family, studying poetry, science, philosophy and psychology, and struggling to come to terms with the divisions and wild-swings of mood proceeding from his temperament.

Richard Holmes, in his fine study, writes:

"The move to Stowey was a deliberate rejection of any conventional career in literature or journalism... He was seeking a form of self-sufficiency which would allow him time for inward growth and philosophical reflection, in tune with the natural seasons... It was indeed close to the monastic idea of a 'retreat': combining hard physical labour with profound spiritual self-examination." [7]

From 1797 to 1799 Coleridge threw himself into creative activity. He published his *Poems and Lyrical Ballads*; had a son; went on a walking tour of Germany, lectures on Poetry, undertook regular reviewing for the *Morning Chronicle*, published his own critical newspaper *The Watchman*, took up gardening, domestic chores, and even taught himself to dance!

In July 1800 he moved to Keswick, with his wife. It was a period of unhappiness and deepening conflict within him. He was married to a girl whom, he was slowly realizing, he did not love; He was penniless and had a growing family to support. He was in increasing pain from gout and rheumatism brought on by the cold and damp. And, worst of all, it must have seemed, he was falling in love with another woman - Sara Hutchinson - the sister of Mary who Wordsworth was soon to marry! Added to all this, he was undergoing a major crisis of confidence in himself as a poet - indeed, in the very possibility of original creativity.

Why was all this tumult suddenly happening at this point in his life? Holmes writes:

"The truth seems to be that all his life Coleridge longed to submit to figures of authority, while at the same time he secretly resented many aspects of their domination... yet he could rarely resolve the underlying conflict in his life; he longed to assert himself and give free reign to his enormous, anarchic talents; but at the same time he needed to submit, be petted and approved of; throughout his life and his writing he fluctuated wildly between these two extremes. In his letters... there is overwhelming evidence of his passionate desire for intimacy and acceptance. Self-dramatising and self-mocking by turns, he was like some brilliant overgrown child, performing ceaseless exhausting parlour-games for his elders... he danced and jumped on his own shadow, sitting scholarship examinations, writing for poetry prizes, dabbling in university politics, running up disastrous debts, flirting with drink, whores, and suicide... and all the time seemed to know that the performance was hollow, a dazzling demand for attention, sympathy, recognition. Yet, in the process something extraordinary and real did happen... it released the language of his imagination, at first in his letters, then gradually in his poetry."

All these conflicts came to a head in the autumn of 1803, and Coleridge resolved to leave the North, with its damp, chill unpredictable weather, its

associations and obligations: in fact he decided to leave England altogether for a period. At the invitation of John Stoddart, the newly appointed King's Advocate, he made for Malta - one of the few places in Europe accessible to Britons as a result of the War with France.

The journey was a disaster: he became ill with chronic constipation and became convinced he was about to die. Somehow he made arrangements to get back to England and eventually arrived home by slow degrees in 1806, "a shattered man". He spent the next ten years alternating between a state of impotent depression - at times paralytic with self-distrust - and a state of manic productivity. He set up and edited yet another newspaper - *The Friend*, which ran for 28 issues, despite disastrously bad management and virtually no marketing. He lectured again in Bristol and London on Shakespeare, Milton, education, and the drama in general. He tried more reviewing, and some miscellaneous journalism. And he began dictating his famous autobiographical, critical and philosophical prose work, the *Biographica Literaria*.

All through these worsening years, Coleridge had turned to laudanum for relief from guilt, anxiety and physical pain. In desperation in 1816 he went back to London and sought help from the physician James Gilman, who lived and practised at Highgate. "It was assumed" says Holmes, "he would stay for only a few months, until he got rid of the addiction, but in the end he stayed for the remaining eighteen years of his life".

At this point I'd like to break off my forlorn attempt at second-hand biography and look at a fragment of Coleridge's poetry, in the light of the four ideas we began by considering: that is, Imagination, Revolution, Poetry and Reality. The text I'd like to look at occurs near the end of his most famous poem, *The Rime of The Ancient Mariner*. The Mariner has returned to his own land, after his nightmarish experiences, and is compelled to tell his tale to certain individuals he meets:

"Since then, at an uncertain hour
That agony returns:
And til my *ghastly tale* is told
This heart within me *burns*.

I pass like *night* from land to land,
I have *strange power of speech*.
That moment that his face I see
I know the man that *must hear me*:
To him my tale I *teach*." [8]

There is something altogether uncanny and extraordinary in Coleridge's choice of language in the particular poem which few commentators have seen fit to recognise. Professor Wilson Knight, and more recently Richard Holmes, are among the very few to have noticed its unique poetic and particularly its *spiritual* quality (as distinct from the conventional religious aspect of the imagery). My own feeling is that it represents an attempt by Coleridge to present a visionary experience while at the same time *being afraid to present it as such*, because it is *his own* experience, and a terrifyingly radical one for his day.

I'd like briefly to consider this short passage in terms of Coleridge's own personal day to day experience, particularly in those few years from 1795 to 1804. Without too much distortion one could perhaps list them as follows:

- Self doubt: particularly in the matter of poetic inspiration and radical social change.
- Physical pain, repeated illness, lethargy.
- Nightmares and hallucinations.
- Growing interest in the occult, the unconscious, ghosts and invisible beings.
- Importance to him of close friendships and intimate communication.
- His lecturing on poets, the drama, and the function of poetry.

I hope it won't seem too far fetched to link these preoccupations with the passage quoted, in view of Coleridge's choice of language at this point, which would seem to indicate a particular resonance with his own inner life: it suggests to me that this figure of the Mariner is a model for Coleridge himself at a point of crisis in his own life, and a model which had been implicit, if buried, in his life perhaps ever since his first childhood attempt to run away from home at the age of eight. The poetic vision itself had been 'uncertain' all his life, coming fitfully, incompletely, unpredictably, conveying its truth ambiguously in symbols and paradoxes.

For several years Coleridge had been suffering almost constant physical pain from gout and stomach problems. It has been said that this was as much the consequence of guilt and self-division as it was the result of physical conditions. The biographer Jackson Bate writes:

"The demand - most of it self-demand - to live up to the burden of expectation was something he had been living with since his boyhood days at Ottery. Everything in him - if only because of the sheer monotony, the fatigue of constant pressure at one point and for one kind of thing - had long since begun to rebel against it. Of course, he tried fitfully to live up to it, and promised, and set goals for himself, and said things were almost finished. But the inner recoil was too strong. It seemed as though 'moral obligation is to me so very strong a stimulant that in 9 cases out of ten it acts as a Narcotic; the Blow that should rouse, stuns me'. [9]

The phrases 'strange power of speech' and 'must hear' are to my mind extremely significant. Coleridge had developed - to a great extent as a result of his explorations in German mysticism and philosophy - a theory of the poet as *mediator* of a higher truth; poetry was thus the means of carrying the naked reality of existence, which un-mediated would remain totally inaccessible by ordinary consciousness - onto a level of manifestation where it can be perceived by the human mind as *beauty* and *value*: and so this strange power of speech - ie, poetry - conveys a richer reality to those who are psychologically ready to hear it. Coleridge's ideal of the poet is

"[one who] brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity."

And the result of this activity of the poet is

"an intensification of the state of being; a heightened activity and an expansion of the conditions of reality: a greater and more complex sense of truth... ideally the poet gives us all that: and the clear implication is, that he turns us from limited social beings into visionary, spiritual ones."

Finally the word 'teach' (in the verse quoted) is used, I feel quite significantly: the poem is a teaching, or gift of knowledge, brought from another world - in the case of the *Mariner*, it is literally from another world: the world of primordial Nature, the world of supernatural beings, which are themselves, in the poem, images or emblems of the values of a higher, not yet realized or achieved, world - a world more attuned to absolute reality.

Richard Holmes, in his 1982 study of Coleridge, expresses this idea as follows:

"For Coleridge, the relationship between mind and nature is, at its deepest, a mystical one which could only be expressed in imaginative or symbolic terms. There is a transcendent or divine element within nature which finds a living response within the heart of every man, whatever his formal belief or unbelief. Mind and nature answer each other, and in that continuous living interchange, usually below the threshold of consciousness, is born what Coleridge calls 'Joy'. In the poet or artist, and pre-eminently in men like Shakespeare and Wordsworth, that interchange is made conscious and creative. But all men share in it. To lose such a consciousness, after having once experienced it... was a crisis of spiritual significance in which the very 'ground of being' was challenged."

So in this tiny fragment of one poem, we are presented with an entire realm of philosophy - a kind of inner cosmology - embedded in a few images. The poet is seen as a kind of shaman, an outcast, a magician or witch, who is likened to Night itself, possessing all the ancient qualities of night: dark, unpredictable, dangerous, disdainful of what mere sight can reveal, mysterious, other worldly: imbued with a kind of speech which deals in image, symbol, 'transforming archetype', (to borrow Jung's language), for the purpose of conveying to ordinary men and women the values of a hidden, richer, magic-laden and self-transcending world.

We've dwelt much on the power and the function of the Imagination. But what of that other apex of the diamond, revolution? How can these opposed and apparently irreconcilable concepts meet, without compromising their essential nature?

We do indeed tend to think of these two ideas as being fundamentally opposed: we say someone lives in the world of imagination, or he lives in the real, tangible world; we say someone is a dreamer, or a practical person; we say someone is an artist or a man of action. Our entire culture, inherited from Aristotle and Christianity, divided human experience into mind and body - Heaven and Earth, sacred and profane; our very language is interwoven throughout with this dualistic bias. Yet there are many examples of poets who were also true revolutionaries. Perhaps Donne expressed the relation between poet and nation most cogently in his famous lines from *Devotions*:

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main.

Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind..."

Many poets before and since Donne have felt this deep 'involvement' with mankind: Milton, Blake, Shakespeare, Hardy, Yeats, Wilfred Owen, Shelley, Osip Mandelstam, Pasternak, Clare, Pablo Neruda. Earlier we noticed that it is a function of the imagination as conceived by Coleridge to see all things as intimately related, as part of an indivisible whole. In some way we are all brothers, we are all part of one root, and therefore any kind of injustice or exploitation of one individual, class or nation by another amounts to a crime against our own nature - and therefore a diminishment of the reality of our existence. This is why poetry - good poetry - is inherently subversive of any established orthodoxy which may seek to represent the interests of a power-holding elite: because such an orthodoxy sets man against man, in envy or fear or ill-will, rather than asserting his unity and wholeness.

Herbert Read, in his *Poetry and Anarchism*, writes:

"The doctrinaire civilizations which have been forced on the world - capitalist, Fascist, or Marxist - by their very structure and principles exclude those values in which, and for which, the poet lives". [10]

This, one might think, is a somewhat radical and idiosyncratic view of the role of the poet; one might argue that the world has got to be governed, and that some system, no matter how imperfect, has to be devised to achieve this. The poet who snipes at established systems from the sidelines, without himself contributing anything concrete to replace them with, is simply being perverse and hypercritical. Values that cannot be embodied in a workable political system are at best a luxury, and at worst an impediment to the running of the social machinery, and should be dispensed with.

But to dispense with values for the sake of convenience or practicality is to dehumanize society, to deny the deepest levels of our experience, deny even our nature itself. The poet is simply not able to dispense with that which makes him what he is, for the sake of a quiet life. The poet (as poet) lives in order to bring his particular imaginative vision into existence within society. If he doesn't do this, or attempt to do it, his expression will be sterile, lacking reality or passion, and his life will be miserable. And so some kind of revolution has to come about as a result of this vision being present in the world. A vision without a revolution is like a sun without light: it's absurd enough to be almost a paradox!

The history of the world, however, has tended to show that revolutions are complex events, and are rarely without problems which as often as not make the remedy worse than the original disease. One could say that the history of man is the history of revolution, and the history of revolution is the history of *dis-illusion*: not a single part of the globe is free from the marks of some bloodshed, dispossession, torture, exploitation; revolution leaves in its wake a reduction of the complex subtleties of human experience to the icy-polarities of 'yes' and 'no'; 'for' and 'against'; reduction of the rainbow hues of the individual mind to a uniform grey unit of labour; the annihilation of the

middle-ground of 'unproductive' discourse; the marginalisation of everything not possessing the easy definition of a block of concrete or the simple quantification of a coal-heap; Coleridge's close experience of the French Revolution had made him extremely sensible of all this: along with many other English writers of the period it marked everything he subsequently produced. In particular it imbued him with a fervent conviction that "*no external political machinery could transform the inward nature of man*"; and threw into deep doubt the prevailing rationalist idea that "*all, or the greater part of, the happiness or misery, virtue or vice of mankind, depends upon forms of government*".

After 1797 and the move from Bristol to Stowey, Coleridge lives a life of increasingly questioning his prevailing convictions, turning away from addressing the problems which occupied his contemporaries, and focusing upon his own temperament and mental constitution. He speaks of "*bearing witness to truths painfully unearthed*". This image reminds one of the role of the poet as a delver into the unconscious - both individual and racial - to discover and bring into the light of day new orders of knowledge. He says

"the more the poet becomes critically conscious of his powers, the more he has a duty to society to show how every thing has a Life of its own, & that we are all one Life". [11]

Yet it is just at this turning point in his life, just when his youthful vision is beginning to reformulate itself in a mature, all-round, well-assimilated philosophy, that Coleridge is assailed by new adversaries: illness, anxiety about money, anguish about the failure of his marriage, self-doubt, disillusion with poetry itself as a path to truth. He begins to take refuge from all this conflict not in philosophy, but in laudanum. The public and private sides of his personality, never completely at ease together, are now increasingly at odds:

"In later life, there is almost an impression of physical discontinuity between these two sides. The public Coleridge seems to strike onlookers as large... slow, genial, expansive, - a sort of aimable performing bear. He took clouds of snuff, dominated every drawing room he shuffled into, and talked ceaselessly. But the *private* man always seemed to retain small, agile, child-like and secretive presence. He moved anxiously between rooms, houses, towns; he pounded over hilltops, leapt into coaches, and... hurled himself into the sea for fun. He dosed himself surreptitiously behind doors and bedcurtains with brandy and laudanum; nipped out to chemists's shops and pot-houses; and scribbled endlessly in his notebooks far into the night..." [12]

In these images we can glimpse a man in retreat from irreconcilable conflict. There seems to be no way out: livelihood, marriage, his friendship with Wordsworth, his belief in his own powers - all seem lost. Yet one can perhaps see now that all these situations, far from being a cause of his tempestuous mental states, actually arise out of them. They are part and parcel of his nature as a poet: the vision of unity and wholeness cannot arise with the force and clarity needed without the mind first being rent asunder and then becalmed in an alien world - as his own ancient Mariner was for not respecting the secret powers of the air and sea. And in suffering that spiritual death and transfiguration, he was able to come into a knowledge of himself and the

nature of the world which otherwise would have been inaccessible to him. He was able to dive deeper and bring back greater treasures of the ocean for mankind's welfare.

This process of being disabled and disorientated in order to discover wisdom and thus bring about healing in the body politic in uncannily paralleled in the journey of the North American Indian shaman through the underworld of the ancestors and the unconscious. In *The Wounded Healer*, Joan Halifax describes the terrifying journeys through the realms of the dead envisaged by some shamanic tribes:

"The opening of vision for the shaman unfolds in a realization resulting from a crisis of death and rebirth, a transformation of the profane individual into one who is sacred. For many neophytes, this realization awakens when animal-tutors and spirits of the Other world appear. They come as emissaries of mythical beings, of gods and ancestors. And the candidate is doomed if he or she does not accept the instructions received in the dream from these presences of the Other World.

On the journey to the Land of Death, the shaman and soul must brave icy winds, burning forests, stormy rivers, and bloody streams.... In the Land of the Dead, spirits of disease haunt the shaman, and the souls of transgressors reveal their terrifying fate with violent gestures. The shaman then confronts the Lord of the Underworld, who howls and bellows like a maddened bull. Thorough trickery and gifts, the shaman appeases this awesome presence. Finally, the shaman returns from the Underworld on the wings of the wild gander - in considerably more style than when he or she embarked on the journey. After undergoing all these trials the shaman is at last able to rescue the souls of others.

The Shaman also provides ... a language, by means of which unexpressed and otherwise inexpressible psychic states can be immediately expressed. And it is the transition to this verbal expressions - at the same time making it possible to undergo, in an ordered and intelligible form, a real experience that would otherwise be chaotic and inexpressible." [13]

I can't help but make a strong and consistent connection here with Coleridge's own journey to the underworld portrayed in his *Ancient Mariner*, the deep self-questionings he underwent during that journey, and his return to society after a long period of isolation in order to teach his tale of spiritual sickness and healing to those who can hear it.

Also, the American poet John Berryman in an interview has said something very similar:

"The Artist is extremely lucky who is presented with the worst possible ordeal which doesn't actually kill him; At that point - he's in business."

This approach is possibly contentious: perhaps this path only applies to certain kinds of personality with both a highly developed intuitional faculty - and great determination!

I would also like to mention at this point the poet Peter Redgrove, who has written extensively about this kind of 'underworld' approach to creativity:

notably in his book *The Black Goddess and the Sixth Sense*. Speaking of the weather-sensitivity of Coleridge which afflicted him for most of his adult life, Redgrove writes:

"It was an essential element in his poetic sensitivity... it would manifest itself either in poetry or in rheumatism after close contact with nature... When repressed, his dark or animal senses showed themselves as illness, and when the repression was overcome by working it through in poetry, illness was replaced by insight and the convalescent condition, which he regarded as a state of genius." [14]

In a letter of 1811, Coleridge writes:

"Whatever I keep out of my mind - or rather keep down in a state of under-consciousness, is sure to act meanwhile with its whole power on my body..." [15]

How much of this unconscious repression of his state of 'genius' was due to temperament, and how much to the rational and morally censorious climate of his day might form the basis for yet another fruitful discussion. But the point I want to emphasise is the abandonment of control which is necessary to the arising of inspiration: the dissolving of the conscious will's grasp of the situation - represented in Coleridge's case by illness - and the recognition of the 'dark' power of Nature.

After these wild excursions into the worlds of myth and metaphysics, it's time to return to the light of day and try to draw some of these threads to a conclusion.

I've been concerned to show that there is an intimate relationship between poetry and social action, and that the key to this relation is through the creative imagination. I've tried to examine the nature of the imagination in the light of Coleridge's philosophy, and tried to relate this to myths as embodied in the *Ancient Mariner* and the symbolic journey of the poet-shaman. I've tried also to look at what revolution means when viewed against the backdrop of this so-called 'romantic' perspective.

There are of course problems. The most obvious being perhaps that if poetry really is a revolutionary tool, and as there is such a lot of it around, how come the world is still in such an unredeemed state? If poetry is really a healing force, why is there still so much in our world manifestly unhealed?

The problem is that the poet (in England at any rate) has over the last three or four centuries gradually become a figure of learning and intellectual sophistication rather than a healer or teacher: a travesty of the true poet as he is envisaged by Coleridge, and embodied in the figure of the Mariner. In today's bloodless academics we see no more than a shadow of the poet as presented in, say, the great figure of the harper in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, or Merlin, the ancient shaman-poet of the border countries, or the Welsh bards who first sang the legends of the Mabinogion. We have really - to our great shame - lost the idea of the poet as one who enters the underworld and releases its life-restoring forces for the benefit and welfare of the community, and replaced it with a concept so diluted as to be virtually antithetical to the

original idea: that is, the poet as mere commentator, as game-player, as stand-in for the man of true vision. And the consequence of this is that we're on the brink of losing the concept of poetry as a vehicle for healing and hence for transformation: a means of making whole and restoring the essential myths of the tribe.

If poetry is ever going to become important and relevant to us again, if it is going to be taken seriously by the mass of people as a means of restoring the vision of society as a vital, thriving, community of mutually linked souls, it has got to take up that role again; it has got to wear openly the mantle of the bard, the harper, the song-maker, and the shaman.

And that is the point at which the real revolution will take place: for as the shaman suffers and is reborn, so is society reborn, insofar as he is the magical embodiment of it: when the poet - and the poet is all of us - undertakes the dangerous journey into the Realm of the Ancestors, and most importantly, returns "with glittering eye" to tell his tale to those who are able to listen.

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NOTES:

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Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 4th ed. Bangalore 1976, p.250

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