

Ven. Namgyal Rinpoche - 'A Working Week-End' - with Wesley and Angela
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 8a.m., March 23, 1991

Re: Children's courses and natural History Studies at Kinmount

Preamble

Recording begins:

My mother, she's in Scotland, she's gone to visit her sole surviving sister, she's going to live at the house.

Q. How old is she?

R. Well, mothers don't have age! Would you kindly note these deep truths? Does a child ever know the age of her mother? They are ageless. She must be in her seventies, she's eleven years younger than my father, ninety-one - and I will say one thing in defence of my mother, she can beat most of you hollow with her energy.

Just while we're waiting, it's very interesting – ...”Your love of flowers, you got that from me.” Right? The nerve! She would...demand it, not indiscreetly. I don't know if this helps you at all, does it? Even Rinpoches have mothers you know – the various things that she would sort of compliment - if she was in favour of anything, ...”You got that from me!” and so on. I certainly didn't get it from my father.

I daren't share any personal remarks with you. Do you know what my mother always referred to my father as?

Q. What?

R. Misery guts! [Gales of laughter ensue at this point – editor]

Q. A term of endearment, right?

R. Sure! Poor fathers suffer in the propaganda war. Mother has more time! You haven't noticed these great truths? Oh dear! Fortunately, my mother, when she makes these numbers she has a slight smile on her face.

Q. She's aware?

R. She's aware! – With these mysterious little numbers... we are all victims of mothers, haven't got a chance. You know, despite the fact - mothers are like the Catholic Church,

Q OK, we'll bite, why?

A. The Society of Jesus, 'Give me a child at an early age and I have a child for life!' The fathers sort of have a little bit of a look in, but not too much and jealously defend their territory. (I'm sure they have their territory). Oh well! Not that you would ever know these things...

Q. That's changing.

R. That's a personal remark of mine, please; don't make it into a big thing... They complain that their men are not involved, but could they get involved? How to get involved? "You could be involved ..." "As long as you do it my way"...

Once at the Dharma Centre, by the way, when the men started to get involved and they wanted to go and take the children down a mine in Bancroft – "Oooh, you aren't taking the children down a mine in Bancroft, Oooh..." - and it came to naught!

It is sad, it's very sad. They never got to the mine for some reason or other – you know, those mysterious dead endings - not quite agreeable? They did actually try to make a tentative effort to be involved and take the children, boys and girls, to do something – and somehow, mysteriously, it dead ended. Could you believe that? No, it didn't happen. If it could be ballet or something that the women approved of, it was alright – but, no enthusiasm – and unfortunately the result was, you know this one, the men somehow just lost interest.

Q. It doesn't say much for their real interests, you have to push a little too, you know...

A. Yes, it isn't that you have to push the children; you have to get involved in pushing the women! They were absolutely bored, they had nothing to do - and what was worse, what was worse was, 'Rinpoche doesn't want children's programs at the Centre' - which is not, in fact, the truth.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the ecology work on Saturday?

A. I'm going to put in my personal, little; persistent voice – and that is, I think there's no point in the Dharma Centre doing things which are much more professionally done in Toronto. Which you might get at the museum or they might get at judo classes. It's all amateurish. And what I'd like to say here in the form of Terry, in particular, and myself to a certain extent, and I'm sure there are others around - you have a wonderful resource which you don't tap – and that is, not the Teaching, thankfully - and that is natural history studies!

Because some of my very close friends in this life, I do have friends, not students, friends! – (I have students that are friends also, but)... Outside of the Teaching - people like Sir Peter Scott, Jack Shackleton, Ryan Ball-Taylor [?] - I can go through a whole list; Jack Randall who is the director of the Hawaiian museum and so on. All these friends - and so in the realm of birds very knowledgeable, and Ryan teaches flora and fauna in places like Antarctica and the Southern Antarctic islands etc.

And I think that one thing that the Dharma Centre, at the centre, can do is - it's out in Nature - for young people, (children if you wish), and adults in particular, presumably because they are the inspirers of others – it's already there and Bancroft nearby and many other things - natural history studies!

It's made for that - and meditation and/or through art or through something or other, meditative religious path but, in addition, natural history. I could foresee introducing the children to come for a week of study of natural history plus some meditation surrounding

other things from nature. I think that's what they should be doing. It is my personal, held opinion...

Q. It's a place to begin?

R. It's not only a place to begin – it's a full Path! Sir Peter Scott who was the son of 'Scott of the Antarctic' - you know, Scott of the Antarctic, he died in there and he left a will - and in his will (to this very young son), he asked his wife to bring up him up as a natural historian, a naturalist. And he achieved incredible things!

Quite apart from sailing around the world more or less single handed, he skippered the - in addition to the round trip, (this was later on), he took the - I think he won the sky diving championship and the figure-skating championship, he skippered the America's Cup challenger, he was one of THE world's experts on birds, founded the Wildlife Trust of England. He was Chairman of the World Wildlife Fund – you know, the one with the Panda number - along with Prince Philip as president and then at an advanced age, he took up the study of fish.

He would go down and he would spend an hour on the bottom of the sea, coral beds and all the rest of it, about 100 or 60 feet down probably. After that he would move up slowly from 100 feet to 30 feet up and he would note all the species of fish – and he put out fish books too! He would get about 100 different species of fish in an hour. He named them all in Latin.

He used to come to me to get the, not so much to get the correct pronunciation but, "...back-up for his pronunciation" he said, while laughing. He would have a debate between the English and American Latinists, how you pronounce certain words and I would always side with him against Jack Randall. Anyway, things like that, really beautiful experiences for me personally, to be able to do so much swimming and study coral reefs and so on – I can say as much as anybody in Canada - probably know as much of the Antarctic and fish as a goodly number! Hm? Having seen and been there...

And that's it - that's my private passion and I share that with you. I think you should tap those things quite frankly. I could carry on but I'm going to talk about meditation this morning – not 'corporate' meditation much this morning, but something about it.

I think you're too unbalanced and I'm going to talk about that...