

VEN. NAMGYAL RINPOCHE - SPEAKING ABOUT THE DHARMA CENTRE

*Epilogue to his Discourse on "The Forest Grove Vanapattha Sutta"*  
3pm - April 1 - 1991

At minute 23:

*And that's the discourse on the Forest Grove - the seventh actually, the seventh discourse on the Forest Grove. Don't know where the other six are. So that's it! May you be well and happy! "Sabbe sutta sukhita hontu". And it's for you to work it out, it's your salvation – you know, work out your salvation with diligence. What can you do about it? Now, begin to ponder.*

By the way, if you have very bad people - they're part of the environment. The Buddha said not to associate with fools you know so drop it - it's a great blessing if you learn to break that one. These people - let's put it in simple language – these people bring me down – and they lead me astray; you know, when they put that pressure on, you know, the emotional blackmail, they do little things which are not correct – DROP IT! - As part of your environment. If a person, however, is not bringing you down, if in fact they are supportive in a way – take a bit of flack from them – but sort it out.

If you could only just sit down and sort of think... Now this is why I get so concerned about the Dharma Centre in Kinmount. Do you hear me? And why? Because it's supposed to be an environment for people, of Refuge! Not that the people there indulge themselves to the point where the person loses - people who come lose creativity possibly; lose serenity; don't feel the sense of freedom; don't feel that their defilements... And sometimes feel that the defilements are increasing, by getting embroiled in internecine or you know what I mean - or petty numbers.

And certainly I hope that the Dharma Centre doesn't give them that feeling that they can't afford to go there! That needs to be said too. That's under the necessities of life. Ideally, what we would like for the Dharma Centre, is not a price tag on everything, but that people who genuinely want to unfold, are free to go there, and cover – you know what I mean - the bare necessities that exist for the path, and get on with it – and not feel they have to worry, worry, worry, worry, worry about the financial level!

Because that puts a block on the spiritual development, we know that... we have to be a bit, sort of, pragmatic. I think someone who, possibly, hasn't got much to get by with, has to be sort of encouraged to feel that they can go there – and hopefully they'll just sort of live in a kind of 'The Lord will provide' kind of thing – and hope that other people will take up the slack for them. We live in a pragmatic world too, but it's a feeling that you have to remove - to give a sense of freedom to the being. It's a very important point, very important!

*Q. Is there any way that some kind of specific guideline could be given to the Dharma Centre to allow that?*

Well, I think they do have it, but people don't trust it. You see, anything happening at the Dharma Centre, as far as I understand it – and I'm not responsible for the Dharma Centre, the Board of Directors are – I want to make that very, very clear – should be only guidelines. It costs so much to house and feed, and there are bills. So I think people – may I say, can know that – but as far as I know, they write it out; that if you cannot do that – *and maybe that should be even more emphasized – if you can't do that, please, come, anyway! We invite you to come anyway,* if you're a genuine aspirer! And that feeling should be given to people, so that the criterion of money is only a guideline and not a demand from the being.

Q. *Is that the actual?*

It's up to the karma of the being to work it out whether they are just flopping on others, or whether they are genuinely short – short-changed. What do we want? We don't want the money - we want the unfolded beings to transform the society! That's what we want.

It does raise the question – with some people, not with all people who genuinely want to come – but some people who never think in terms of other people, that there are bills. You understand what I mean – they don't think 'well, there are bills – how do you run this place?' And it's for self-respect of the being; I believe it is very important for people to give Dana, because then they think 'I am participating; I'm not just taking, I'm giving'.

Now please take that, under advice, that this can mean I'm, you know, the Widow's Mite ... I'm doing the best I can with that level ...

Jesus praised – and you know, so did the Buddha too - Jesus praised – there were people who came and gave a lot of money, and the wealthy merchants and so on, to the support of that ministry at that time - and then there was someone else who was just a widow – she came up and she put in the temple coffers two pence – and Jesus praised, because that was more a sacrifice actually for her than other people who would just toss off this or that amount, and all the rest of it.

So, I think teachings about money should be given. The Order and the – (if it could work), the Dharma Centre should work only on Dana – as in pure theory - should work only on gifts! Therefore, they can never charge anything.

They can suggest: discreetly, reverently, respectfully, to beings – the lay out; 'this is approximately what it costs to feed and house beings'. And put it as a question, 'What can you do?' Not 'oh well you can't attend this course because it costs x numbers of dollars!'

Q. *Well that has been the impression a lot of times in the past.*

Yes, but it's not there! It should not - I mean please, I'm not that directly involved, I'm guiltless, I'm really truly out of it – what goes on - what they do. But I thought that it was written out fairly clearly – and you can at least draw the attention of the being; there's a paragraph that says 'if you haven't got it for some reason, do the best you can. That's all'.

The principle of Dana, which is 'free giving', transcends - if you practice according to the East you do not say 'this course costs so much!' You can only say, 'we would like to raise this much per person', and so on.

Now I want to tell you, myself - this is a personal thing. I give courses; I never get – never, never, never, get - the theoretic amount, that if you counted the heads of beings – (you know, as they suggested) –30 people meditate, and they suggest an amount – let's say, whatever it is - if its \$100 per head, it never works out that way. Because there are other people in the Order, there are people who simply haven't got it because they maybe have children responsibilities, etc. The guidelines are not met. I'm just stating a fact. And I'm sure for the Dharma Centre, the guidelines are not met. There are people who come forth and behind the scenes – fill in. This is the actuality. So please don't think that either I or the Dharma Centre get the – I mean, you know - if you just sat down and said: 'oh, so many people came and they all paid and

everything's 'hunkey dorey'. It doesn't work like that. There are quite a number of people who take, sometimes, direct advantage, that there isn't a bill, and you know, some people trade on it. People do all sorts of numbers...

But does that help you a bit? *If you see some guideline which is something or other, you can – if you are good-hearted – ignore it. I wish they would stress that – and possibly they do. But people have a great deal of distrust, I think, at the money level anyway, and they are likely to ascribe motivations to the Board and to the technical staff, which aren't actually there. They say 'oh, I haven't got it' and they feel guilty. **It's not the money you've got to have; it's the good heart for development!** [Pause] Put that in the box.*

However, it is very important – extremely important - a point which you can not ignore – that you must be a giver and not just a taker. That's the beginning of maturity and liberation – 'I feel good! I don't necessarily have money, but I feel I give work, or energy, or I give – you understand, support to people, or I move a few plates around'. Or, you know what I mean?

You know that (movie) Little Shop of Horrors? I sometimes see the Dharma Centre as a Little Shop of Horrors, you know. Do you know that one? Who's seen it? Do you know that one? You haven't seen it? Oh you've got to see it. These flowers that keep growing and growing and growing? [low voice] Feeeed me, feeeed me... All those little flowers in the room? – feeeed me, feeeed me...

But of course, the point is, you wouldn't be able to digest the food unless you felt that you were feeding – in some way or other, you feel at home with that. Unfortunately, people have a lot of guilt about money. Bear that in mind. It's a very difficult area for people, and they worry, worry - and that's what I'm pointing out. You've got to transcend that; you've got to drop the worry about money.

Jesus again – 'take no thought for the 'morrow'. **Don't get so het up about the money level, and then your attendance; whether you've got it or you haven't got it, right?**

I just speak personally; I don't even worry if someone doesn't give. I worry for them! Can you hear that? Not the amount, but I wonder – I just wonder; and I certainly would wonder if someone had a lot of money and didn't give, wouldn't you? Wouldn't you, if you knew someone who was very wealthy? And by the way, I'd like to point out that the wealthy people are extremely stingy – very frequently, are very stingy. [Long Pause]

How do you think they got to be so rich? [laughter]

*I went on the alms round in – I want to share these ideas with you – maybe it will clear up where 'my' mind is, it might help you. I went on the alms round in Sri Lanka, and you know the down of the down are the Tamils; you know that there is sort of a revolt happening, and the Tamils have the revolutionary army or whatever it is they are trying to do – but the Tamils are the down people and the Sinhalese are the up people in Sri Lanka. And I went on the alms round, and I did receive food from Sri Lankans in prosperous houses, through the alms bowl, going through the village. And I go to the other side of the village, and the alms bowl is full - and I'm not supposed to have it overflowing - so I'll go back. Just as I was going back a Tamil woman, who was relatively poor actually, very poor, very simply dressed - a very simple sari – there was no money around, right? Barefoot children, naked children running around in the mud and the house which wasn't too glorious and all the rest of it - and very obviously you knew in a moment that this woman was just barely surviving – and she motioned, to give, she wanted to give!*

*Place in the alms bowl – and she only had rice to give. She didn't have fine meats and 'viands'. Well mostly, they have vegetarian food – so she didn't have any of the fine things, but she had a lot of rice. And she started to pack the bowl. And she packed, and she packed, and she packed the bowl! She was the most generous person in regard to what she had – the ratio of what she had. And the bowl - the food was dripping over the side and you're not supposed to do that! Bad, bad monk! I kept saying, 'tikka, tikka', which means, little, little. So she kept packing the bowl and I had to go back to the monastery with this bowl and it was disgraceful. It's a big bowl and it was full. And I was obviously being greedy. The Abbot called me in. He said, 'are you aware of the rules, that you're not supposed to have the bowl full? 'Amah Bhante'. I did not do it consciously - not I, not I – a very Buddhist answer. I gave an explanation that because of the language and the woman not knowing the rule – she didn't break the rule and I didn't break the rule...*

But in my experience, in my experience, it is the - per ratio – it's the people who haven't got, who are the most generous! And the people who do have – well, that's how they got to have! I think that's basically what it is.

I've seen people – and I've seen the change in their life – I've seen people around the Dharma Centre, as soon as they became financially wealthy – depart; just go off – into the woodwork – just dropped any respect or any appreciation for the teaching that they received. They just got some money, they got lucky, anyway; they went, and that's the last we heard of them. Sold this or that, or bought a house or got a hundred or two hundred thousand, and so on.

What did they take off for? To do meditation - to develop new creative dimensions? Well, maybe. To develop serenity? No. To develop liberation from defilements? No. To develop a sense of – well, I guess a sense of freedom - if you consider that taking off for say, Mexico and smoking pot is freedom, right? You know, they gave up the whole idea of the holy life. So I guess one of the motivations for the holy life is also poverty! The Buddha said that in life, if you get too rich, you lack motivation; if you are too poor, you lack opportunity. Somewhere in the Middle Way, there is a possibility. So, that's what it is. May you be well and happy!

I wanted to share these personal ideas with you.

Did you record any of this today?

*I did sir; if you want, I'll erase the tape...*

Oh no, no, no, not at all - I don't want it erased, why not - It's a Statement of Truth!