Do not bestir yourself with many things

Relax, and sit at ease,

Remembering your Guru

And his grace and bounties!

This sort of idea, this teaching of relaxing and sitting at ease, is very important for the

Kagyupas, in fact, for the Vajrayana generally. It's not relaxation and sitting at ease in quite

the ordinary sense of just stretching out your legs and having an easy time. It's a complete,

total psycho-physical, or spiritual-cum-psycho-physical relaxation. A complete absence of

strain of any sort, like a complete spontaneity and naturalness of the deepest, or if you

like, the highest level. (long pause) I mean, relaxation of this kind is quite difficult to

practice. In fact it can't be practiced at all. So one can't even say its difficult to practice or

that it's easy to practice.

G: I don't quite understand that. Is it relaxing but sitting in a (primal?) position.

Bhante: It says sit at ease but this is not to be taken literally. You can relax in any posture. I

mean if it depends upon any particular posture you could say it isn't real relaxation. (Pause)

M: You say that stress is laid on it. How is stress laid upon it in that tradition?

Bhante: Well in the sense that it is pointed to or it Is inculcated or you're reminded of it.

There is not anything you can do about it really. I mean, Milarepa exalts Rechungpa to relax

and sit at ease. Well, he doesn't tell him how to do it. If someone says to you, 'just relax' they

aren't asking you to do anything in particular. They are asking you to stop doing anything in

particular. So don't even meditate. Don't even try to practice the precepts. Don't indulge in

any unskilful mental activity. Don't even indulge in any skilful activity. Don't think about

the samsara. Don't think about nirvana. Don't try to be a Bodhisattva. Just relax.

K: So it seems to correspond with, sort of like, what the Bodhisattva's meant to do. He's meant to be vigorous but always be in a meditative state. You mean...

Bhante: Well it's a state, looking at it in another way, from another point of view, of

complete spontaneity. It's not relaxation in the ordinary sense because, you know, when you

relax in the ordinary sense, you relax from doing particular things. Wordly things. But here

you relax from even that sort of relaxation. You're not even, you know, not making an effort.

(Pause) So really what is being emphasized here is "spontaneity" and "naturalness", inverted

commas, at the very deepest level.

A voice: So Milarepa's not saying, sort of like, 'do that'. He's saying that's something you must tend towards developing.

Bhante: You could put it like that. Though even that doesm't really cover it. But it's not

doing anything in particular. Certainly not, deliberately trying not to do anything. You just

like, let go.

M: Is he, sort of, saying this to Rechungpa because also, I mean, he's just been through

quite a lot, sort of, emotionally very up and down?

Bhante: And been making all sorts of efforts. Wrong efforts in various ways. All the

trouble, you know, and worry, in a way. The wear and tear of his going off to India.

M: Its almost like there's so much churning around there still that, you know, it would be

better just to let go of it all and almost start again.

Bhante: But it isn't just a psychological relaxation which he's advising him. Its more, well

one can call it, an existential relaxation.

G: He does say 'Remembering your Guru"

Bhante: Yes he does.

D: Presumably this is in terms of, perhaps, the Mahamudra.

Bhante: Yes the Mahamudra is involved. I mean,the Mahamudra is of this type, so to speak.

It's not anything that can be practiced. If you can practice it it's not the Mahamudra . If it's

anything that you can deliberately do in any sense at any level it's not thc Mah~mudra

A voice: What is the Mahamudra? (Laughter).

Bhante: It's just relaxing and sitting at ease. If you, you know, sort of, perch yourself on the

chair, and say 'here I'm sitting at ease'. It's not really sitting at ease. It's not something you

can do deliberately. You just have to let go. Just let yourself sink back.

So you just let yourself sink back into the absolute, so to speak. Take your ease, you know, in

the absolute. Without making any sort of effort, either after Samsara or Nirvana.

K: Would you say this is what the just sitting practice really aims at in a way?

Bhante: Only in a way because, you know, if it aimed at anything there'd be no .. ..(laughter).

That's why you just sit. That's all that you're doing. You don't think of it as a means to

anything.

A voice: How do you describe that as being vipassana or samatha practice?

Bhante: Well it wouldn't be samatha. If it was anything, if it could be classified under either

of those terms it would be vipassana. Anyway we seem to have come to the end for the time

being. (long long pause).

So these are Milarepa's words to Rechungpa at least for the present just "relax, and sit at ease, Remembering your Guru, And his grace and bounties!”

Perhaps the suggestion is, inasmuch that these two lines come after the exultation to relax and

sit at ease. Perhaps a suggestion is that Rechungpa's remembering Milarepa and his grace and

bounties should be quite a quite spontaneous and natural thing. It's not a sort of exercise that

he's expected to do. It should be spontaneous and natural just like the, you know, the

relaxation and sitting at ease itself. Something that quite naturally sort of, floats into or

springs up in his mind.

A voice: Which is the nature of Milarepa's feelings towards Marpa.

Bhante: Yes, yes. If it's something, if gratitude is something that you have to be taught, well,

it isn't real gratitude.

From the Rechungpa's Departure seminar.