Guruji on Temp. Ordination

Bikram- Guru ji I have another subject to discuss with you

Guru ji- Ok

Bikram -If somebody wants take bhikkhu ordination on a temporary basis, do you have any objection?

Guruji- look, there is such a tradition in Burma, people take ordination for 10 days or 15 days. Their view point is …..there is belief that when we make contact with future Buddha and we are looking for a donor to give us a set of robs we might not find a donor…..etc…..I don’t know why I didn’t become a Bhikkhu. My friend who was the Prime minister of Myanmar and when I was in a pilgrimage with him at the Gijjakut hill in Rajgiri, he sent forward the 10 or 15 people who were with us but held me back with him. Then he said to me ‘Goenka, I want to make a request to you on this Dhamma land, please don’t decline my request!’ In politics he didn’t take a single penny from me and I was also determined that I would not offer any donation to any political party in order not to get into partisan politics; even if I support someone’s candidacy at heart. I would not offer my car or any expenses to any candidate in politics. I might give any amount for Dhamma activities. Since my friend was aware of this, I was wondering what he might now demand from me; if I can afford it of course I would like to help. So he caught my hand and said, ‘Look, I want you to become a bhikkhu for 10 days and I would like to have the honor of offering you the set of robs…..I cannot imagine a higher merits than to offer robs to a meditator such as yourself, were you to become a bhikku…’ I was left stunned, wondering what to do?

I have always believed were I to become a bhikkhu then where is the question of coming back to the householder’s life? I would become a bhikkhu to renounce the householder life and thereafter have no relationship left with it….and being a bhikkhu and having to go back in 10 days, this didn’t not set well with me at all. I could not explain this to him well enough…..He kept trying to convince me… But I never stop anyone if they want to ordain, if somebody wants to become….if it comes to your mind…..then I don’t stop anybody I only present my point of view. Because from childhood, it could be from many previous lives I wanted to stay a brahmchari all through my life… at that time I didn’t know the Buddha’s teachings…so sanyasi….but circumstances developed in such a way that I had to marry and the entire sanyasi dream was left behind. So there was that desire in my mind to become a sanyasi...many people ordain for 10 days, even my guru ordain for 10 days.

Bikram- Yes, I read that today itself.

Guruji- So I could not enter that realm; there must be something that was stopping me.

If it comes to your mind then go ahead I don’t say no either, I have said my bit about how my mind is oriented.

Bikram- Without asking you I dint want to think in this direction

Guruji-no no its ok but keep one thing in mind you would like to be in a very good monastery; this is also a problem…. where will you ordain?

Bikram- I asked Bhante Ratanapala….

Guruji- Yes Ratanapala

Bikram- I will go to him.

Guruji- yes, he is a meditator so if he can ordain you that will be good, Otherwise what may happen is some other bhikkhu may get you involved in some rites and rituals. He might get you involved in those activities and you might get stuck in them. Your meditation may get sacrificed. And there is another aspect about food, in many places meat etc is offered and we don’t have the habit of eating that sort of food. So somebody who knows will not insist that you must eat whatever you are served. So if this bhikkhu is ready to ordain you….

Bikram- Bhante says he has not ordained anybody yet and without committing to ordain me he encouraged me to visit him saying he will find a suitable solution for me.