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drinking alcohol or going out and just wandering around. But think about the influence that such people can have on your life in the long-term. You might drop out of your course. Even worse, as a result of smoking and drinking, your health deteriorates and your mind becomes disturbed.

It is important to know what you want to achieve in life, and accordingly try to do the right actions that will propel you towards your goal. Apart from your actions, you need to be aware of the people you mix with because they influence your life. Let's say you have a strong interest in the Dharma, in doing virtuous or positive actions. But you might mix with people who live their life completely opposed to the Dharma; the views they hold and the actions they do are opposed to Dharma. If you befriend or trust in them, it is easy to believe that what they think is noble, and a good example, and you can be easily influenced by them. By applying this instruction [from the text], you can inspire yourself to create a life conducive to performing more virtuous or positive actions, and to distance yourself from non-virtuous or negative ones.

That is the end of the teaching tonight. We will as usual chant the Buddha's mantra. Try to prepare your mind and body to do the chanting meditation. Fully relax your body and mind, removing all distracting thoughts and, bringing the mind fully inward, focus on the mantra.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from the tapes by Jenny Brooks  
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