

4: The Heights and Depths of the Spiritual Life

This is a chapter on a topic which constitutes one of the most important aspects, if not the most important aspect, the most important principle, even, of Buddhist thought, of Buddhist philosophy, that is, what is called the Law of Conditionality. The Law that whatever arises arises upon conditions and ceases when those conditions cease to exist, it may be in the material world, the mental world, the emotional world, even the spiritual world, whatever arises arises in dependence upon conditions, there is no chance, no accident, no fate, no destiny, but what we call the process of universal conditionality on all levels of existence from the very bottom as it were to the very top as it were of mundane phenomenal existence. Now we saw in the course of those first few talks in that series and also on various other occasions that, broadly speaking, there are two kinds of conditionality, or two ways, as it were, in which the law, or the principle of conditionality can act or operate. One we called the cyclical, the other we called the style#. Now the cyclical mode or the cyclical track of conditionality is that cycle, that mode, which consists in a process of action and reaction between factors which are opposites as, for instance, when you go from pleasure to pain, or when you go from life to death, birth to rebirth and so on. This is the cyclical movement of action and reaction between pairs of factors which are opposites.

Now the other with which we are not concerned so much this evening, the cyclical order or mode of conditionality is a process of action and reaction between factors which progressively augment one another, that is the succeeding factor augmenting the effect of the preceding factor instead of reacting from it to its opposite. So that when you have, for instance, pleasure you go from pleasure to happiness, from happiness to joy, from joy to rapture, from rapture to bliss, in an ascending progressive spiral, as it were.

So within conditionality there are these two great modes, great ways, as it were, in which conditionality operates. Action and reaction between factors, or pairs of factors, which are opposites and action and reaction between factors which progressively augment the succeeding augmenting effect of the preceding action. Now this process of action and reaction between factors which are opposites, between happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and pain, birth and death, loss and gain, this is what we call in Buddhist language the samsara or the Wheel of Conditioned Existence within which we revolve round and round and round within the two extreme limits, within the great opposites, that is birth on the one hand and death and rebirth on the other. Now within this great process of action and reaction between birth and death, samsara, the Wheel of Life, the Wheel of Existence, there are many different pairs of opposites again, we might say minor pairs of opposites, so this evening we are dealing with one of these pairs.

Last week you heard, most of you, those of you who were here, what the topic of today's lecture was going to be, you were told, if you remember, that it was going to be what we call the Heights and the Depths in the Spiritual Life, so this evening we are dealing with this particular pair of opposites between which we act and react as it were within that great pair of opposites represented by the samsara or conditioned, or phenomenal existence as a whole. So, as the title of the talk suggests, we are dealing with the heights and the depths not just, as it were, in its abstract, but we are dealing with them within the context of the spiritual life.

Now we may say that, very broadly speaking, there are two kinds of pairs of opposites. We can say that these are, as it were, the horizontal and the vertical. The horizontal meaning when you have got a pair of factors which are, as it were, on the same level. The other, the vertical, when the pairs of opposites are, as it were, arranged hierarchically. As an example of the first you might say take the pair of opposites represented, say, by the two sexes, say man and woman, this is a horizontal pair of opposites. If you take the pair of opposites, say, represented by teacher and disciple, this represents a relation of opposites not on the horizontal but on the vertical, as it were, in a hierarchical kind of order. So when we speak of the heights and the depths obviously we are concerned with a vertically arranged pair of opposites, that suggests itself from the very words themselves, the heights are, as it were, up there, the depths are, as it were, down there. Now what exactly do we mean by these expressions, the heights on the one hand and the depths on the other,

in the context of the spiritual life? Very broadly speaking we may say that in this context what we call the heights represent, to begin with, consciousness, and the depths, we may say, represent what is usually called the Unconscious, with a capital 'U'. Or we can say, paraphrasing, that the heights represent mind or thought or intellect, whereas the depths represent what we may call instinct or emotion or will, volition, collation and all the rest of it. So we've got these two, as it were, we've got the conscious, intellectual heights and the Unconscious, intellectual#, emotional depths. So the question which arises is the question of the relationship between these two, the heights and the depths, the conscious and the Unconscious, reason, if you like, thought, intellect, instinct, emotion, will.

Now perhaps it's best to explain or expound the relationship not by way of an abstract definition, but by way of an illustration. As I prepared this talk, as I thought over this particular portion, this particular section, there came as it were floating into my mind's eye, a picture of an iceberg. You've all seen pictures of icebergs, some of you might even of# seen icebergs if you went near enough to the North Pole or to the South Pole. An iceberg, as you know, is an enormous mass of ice, but the strange thing about it is, that by far the greater portion of the iceberg is beneath the water, beneath the waves, I think its seven-eighths, but only one portion, that is one-eighth, is above it. So that we may say that the relationship between the conscious and the Unconscious, the thought and the emotion, intellect and volition, is rather like that between the unsubmerged and the submerged portions of the iceberg. The submerged portion is very much greater, the unsubmerged portion is comparatively, I won't say insignificant, but very small in comparison indeed. So this is the picture. We can develop this, we can compare not only to an iceberg, we can compare to a mountain. The peak of the mountain is very narrow, culminating in a point, the base of the mountain, as it broadens out and out and out is very broad indeed. I remember so many times in my own monastery in Kalimpong, I looked out towards the Himalayas, to the peaks of K() one sees that the base is very, very broad indeed, hundreds of miles in extent, but the peaks, the higher they get, the narrower, the taller they get until they culminate, as I said in a point. So the relationship between the conscious and Unconscious, between thought and emotion, or the instinct, on the other hand, is just like this, they're unequal, there is what we might call a tremendous disparity, the heights, as it were, infinitesimal almost and the depths, as it were, almost infinite.

Now this brings us, or we are brought in this way directly to what we may say is perhaps the central problem of the spiritual life. Take, for instance, in our own case, say, our knowledge of Buddhism, our knowledge of the Buddha's teaching. Whence have we derived that knowledge? In the case of most of us the greater part of our knowledge is derived from what we've read from books about Buddhism, to a lesser extent, perhaps, from what we've heard. So this is how we get our knowledge, so in this way we may come to be well acquainted with things like the life of the Buddha, the Jakata stories, the history of Buddhism, how the Order was founded, the various doctrines, schools, theory, principles of meditation and so on. In this way from the books and the lectures we can, as it were, get it all, in a sense we know it all, but at the same time we have to admit, we can't help admitting, we can't avoid but admitting, that though we know all this, though we could perhaps if we took a little thought, give a fairly complete, fairly coherent account of the Buddha's teaching, though we could explain and expound all the different texts leading to nirvana, though we might even be able to give a quite accurate account of what nirvana is, at the same time we have to confess, we have to admit, that we're not Enlightened. We know it all, but in another sense, a profounder sense, we don't know anything at all. So why is this#, the facts are all before us, the information is there, we know everything, we've got it all at our fingertips, but at the same time we aren't Enlightened. What's the reason for that? So the reason very obviously, very evidently, is that though we know we know only superficially, we know, as it were, only with the unsubmerged portion of ourselves, the unsubmerged eighth or ninth or whatever it is, we know intellectually but that is all, we don't know profoundly, we don't know with that unsubmerged portion of ourselves, we don't know as it were emotionally, we don't know instinctually, we might say that we know in the heights of our being, but we don't know down in the depths, so we might even go so far as to say that we don't therefore know at all. Now should you have noticed there is not even a question of half and half, if there was a question of half and half it would be something, because then a real sort of tension would be set up, a

spiritual tension, and out of that spiritual tension, something might come, but it isn't even that, just on the one hand as it were knowing with a seventh or eighth part of ourselves, even then not very thoroughly, not very seriously, and not knowing at all with the rest of our being. Most of the time we might say in the case of most of us there is at best a sort of mild oscillation as we can call it, a mild oscillation, not even a violent one, we come to meetings, come to lectures, read books, and just for a minute we are mentally lifted up to the heights, just mentally, but we put the book aside, we leave the vihara, go back home, turn on the television, listen to the radio, go to the cinema, whatever else it happens to be and with that we're down in the depths again, the unregenerate and incoherent depths. So there is a mild oscillation going on like this all the time, not even, as I have said, a real tension, much less still one might say an actual conflict. So some people are quite happy to go on like this in a Christian context, of course, they go to church on Sundays, half sleep through the sermon, sing a hymn or two, say amen at the end, go home and carry on living their lives, they feel uplifted a little bit, you can't say it hasn't done them any good, it's done them some good, they're being uplifted in a sluggish sort of way for a few minutes, I think it's twenty or twenty-five minutes# they've cut the services down to nowadays, and there is the danger also that Buddhists do the same thing, they come along to a meeting, come along to a lecture, even go to the summer school for ten whole days, and they're uplifted while they're there, but they can't keep it up, they slip down, back as it were into the depths and most people, as I've said are quite happy to go on like this with an occasional little bit of uplift just to keep them feeling good, to prevent too much tension from developing, just to burn a little incense at the shrine of religion as it were to show that they respect all members of society and then that's that. But it isn't of course enough from a deeper point of view because it means that people are involved only mentally, they've mentally accepted, mentally acknowledged, but not anything more than that. So the problem which faces us, the problem which we have to solve is how to bring in as it were the depths, how to know as it were emotionally, not just to know on the heights, not just to know mentally, but to know in the very depths of our being, in the profoundest places of our being, to know from the top to the bottom of ourselves wholly and totally. We can't possibly ignore the depths. It's out of the depths that our energies come, energies of instinct, energies of emotion, energies of will and somehow or other these have to be harnessed to the chariot, as it were, of the spiritual life. Otherwise we just have our little bit of superficial mental understanding up there and all these energies, all these forces welling up from the depths are just dragging us in some other direction. So they've got to be harnessed, they've got to be integrated somehow and it's here that there comes in what we call or what we refer to as the devotional side of Buddhism.

Devotion or sraddha, in Sanskrit, saddha, in Pali, is one of the ways, one of the most important ways in which these energies of instinct, emotion and so on can be harnessed, can be refined, can be sublimated and gradually integrated with our mental understanding contributing their energies to that mental understanding and helping us in the direction of the actual realisation of what we've merely so far understood. If we go to any of the Buddhist countries, whether Ceylon, or Burma, or Thailand or Tibet, Japan or China in the old days at least, we find that the worship of the Buddha in the sense of paying homage to the Buddha's memory and to the ideal, the spiritual ideal which he represents, paying homage either by offering flowers or incense, chanting from the Scriptures and so on, occupies a very, very important place indeed because it helps to refine and sublimate those emotions which otherwise would just be dissipated and perhaps even pull us in a direction opposite to that of the one that we're trying to go in. It was I would say a very interesting experience for me at the Summer School recently to find how warm a response there was to the devotional meetings which were held on the last three evenings. We had rather imagined that just perhaps ten or twelve more pious people would come along and that the rest wouldn't, but it so happened that practically everybody turned up for these meetings held on the last three days of the Summer School at 9.30 at night, they even left their coffee to attend these meetings and it was very interesting to find that some people afterwards said that the meditation which followed went for them much better on account of the previous devotional meeting for evidently what had happened was that the devotional meeting had just not really aroused, not really stirred up, but harnessed those emotions which are usually just dissipated so that when the time came to meditate the force and the energy of those feelings and emotions there behind the

meditation were as it were pushing it forward so that the meditator was able to derive energy from this particular source, so this is the sort of thing that we find happening, all these devotional practices, all these devotional exercises in Buddhism have, among other reasons, this reason for their existence, that they refine and sublimate the emotional nature and replace this energy at the disposal of the spiritual, the religious life.

Now there are various other ways, various other means of refining and sublimating the emotional side of our nature. One can do it, or some people can do it, through the arts in their more refined forms, especially one might say, the Buddhist arts, such as the arts say of ancient India, or of China, or Japan, Tibet, all those countries where arts in the traditional sense are, as it were, impregnated with spiritual values, even though not explicitly expressed in religious terms, has been cultivated. Many people, looking at, say, a Chinese landscape painting or just looking at a sculptured image of the Buddha, can develop the same state of refined emotion and feeling as others get from the more religious devotional practices. There is also the practice of what we call the Four Brahma Viharas, the systematic cultivation as a type of meditation of the sublime sentiments of love or *mitri*, friendliness, loving kindness, *karuna* or compassion, sympathetic joy, *mudita*, and tranquility and equanimity, or *upekkha*. These practices also refine and sublimate the entire emotional nature. To me it was rather interesting to find on my return to this country a year ago when I started teaching meditation that many people had difficulty, even had great difficulty with this practice of *Mitri Bhavana*, or the Development of Loving Kindness. It seemed to point to a certain difficulty in them of refining and sublimating their emotional nature. Those who find the *Mitri Bhavana* difficult usually find the Mindfulness of Breathing, the counting of the breath, a much easier practice. So for them there is a sort of temptation to follow in that line of least resistance, to concentrate on doing that which you do most easily, but one might say that this is a temptation which should be resisted. If you find the emotional side difficult and the intellectual side easy you should cultivate the emotional side more, if you find the intellectual side difficult and the emotional side easy, then vice versa. Cultivate, therefore, that which is weakest in us, not just following the line of least resistance which might tend to lead us into rather a lopsided development. This is, of course, the significance of that very famous teaching that I've often mentioned here before, that is the Five Spiritual Faculties. The Five Spiritual Faculties as you should know by now are Faith and Wisdom, then Energy and Concentration and finally Mindfulness. So the first and second and the third and the fourth constitute two pairs, Faith and Wisdom first, Faith represented on the emotional and devotional side of the spiritual life, Wisdom represented on the intellectual and cognitive side. So these two must be balanced, according to the Buddha's teaching. Unless you have these two in balance, the development of the following of the higher spiritual life is very difficult, one must be emotionally and intellectually in harmony as it were. Then there's the extrovert and introvert, the active and the meditative, these two have to be balanced and balanced, of course, both pairs, with the fifth faculty, the faculty of Mindfulness which is described as being always useful. So here, of course we're concerned more with the Faith and the Wisdom in balance, if these are not balanced, then, of course, spiritual progress will be hampered, hindered, if not actually delayed.

Now so far we may say we have considered the heights and the depths in a comparatively mundane manner, we haven't gone very far, we haven't gone very deep into the matter, but we can go farther and deeper yet, even, we might say, much deeper. We might say that as we lead our spiritual lives, as we get more and more, I don't like to say advanced, because it isn't a very pleasant sort of expression, but as we become a little more accustomed to it, as we get more into the way of it, as we make a certain amount of progress, especially in meditation, we find that there come to us various experiences, to begin with, of course, the experiences are comparatively superficial, some people meditating see lights or hear sounds, these are all very incidental things, not to be taken at all seriously, just to be noted and passed over, as you progress, as you go further than that, higher than that if you like, other experiences come of a loftier kind, a rarer kind, experiences which we may call transcendental experiences, experiences which are as it were glimpses, even if only from afar off, from a great distance, glimpses of ultimate Reality, glimpses of Truth, glimpses of Enlightenment. Now there are various names, various terms used to describe these glimpses, these flashes if you like. The Theravadins talk in terms of flashes of

insight, of vipassana. The Mahayanists talk in terms of perfect wisdom or transcendental wisdom which dawns upon the meditating disciple. The Zen people talk more in terms of satori, we might talk in plain English in terms of Enlightenment experience, not, of course, full or total experience of Enlightenment, but glimpses, flashes seen as it were from afar, coming as it were at the heights of our spiritual life. These experiences, these transcendental experiences, we may say, constitute the peaks of our spiritual life, they come usually at very long intervals, they are few and far between, they're very rare indeed, but when they come, both at the time and in retrospect, they give us great hope and great encouragement. Sometimes its very difficult as it were sweltering along the plains, but when we look up, we see in the distance, high up, the peaks, and we know that one day we shall get there then that gives us a very, very great deal of encouragement and hope. So these sort of transcendental experiences, they represent the heights in the spiritual life, we might even say [the height]. Some of you, of course, think that this is the end, some of you when they get a sort of experience of this sort, a sort of transcendental experience, a sort of flash or a glimpse they think, well this is it, now I've got there at last, so they think that the experience constitutes the end of the journey, they think they've attained it. It's true they've attained something, it might be a very profound experience, it might move them very deeply, it might even shake them to the foundations of their being, but it isn't the end, we might even go so far as to say that Buddhism doesn't end with Enlightenment, usually people think that it does, you get Enlightened, well there you are, you're stuck with it. But we might even reverse that, we might say that Buddhism begins with Enlightenment, once you're Enlightened you're spiritual life really starts, it hasn't come to an end, not by a long chalk, but, of course, by Enlightenment in this context we don't mean the full, ultimate, final complete or perfect Enlightenment, but the initial experience, the initial glimpse or vision of Enlightenment which many people mistake for the ultimate goal or the complete, the whole experience. It's after that has been attained, we may say, that the real work begins, not before. Before that we're just trying to make a start, the start is really made once that transcendental experience, or once a whole series of transcendental experiences have occurred, and the work which we have to do consists in the transformation as we may call it of the whole nature, of the whole being at all levels, in all aspects, in accordance with that experience. It's not enough, as it were, to leave the experience hanging up there, the experience has got to come down, as it were, it has to descend, as it were, descend right down into the depths and it has to illumine the depths and transform, sublimate, refine the depths, and integrate them as it were with that experience so that there is one illumination, as it were, from top to bottom, not just a little sunlight on the peaks and the rest below in total darkness. So therefore it comes about that in Buddhism there are taught what are called two paths, first there is what we call the Darshanamarga, the Path of Vision, and secondly what we call the Bhavanamarga, or the Path of Becoming or Path of Transformation.

The Dharshanamarga, or the Path of Vision, this represents the initial transcendental experience, and the second, the Path of Becoming, or the Path of Transformation, represents one's working over of one's entire nature in accordance with that experience. Various illustrations can be given, of course, from the Buddhist tradition and from Buddhist teaching. First we may say with regard to the Eightfold Path, the Noble Eightfold Path. Now this is one of the best known aspects of the Buddha's teaching, or should be one of the best known and familiar, but one of the things which people very often don't know or don't realise about it is that there are really two Eightfold Paths, not just one. There is what we may call the mundane Eightfold Path and there is what we may call the Transcendental Eightfold Path. So when we take the Eightfold Path as a transcendental Eightfold Path, then we find that the first step, Right Understanding, which can also be translated as Right Vision, samyag-drsti, Right Seeing, represents what we call the Path of Vision, it represents actual spiritual experience not just an intellectual understanding, not just the ability to say truth of suffering, truth of the origin of suffering, cessation of suffering, the way to the cessation of suffering, not just that, that is just mental, that is just conceptual, but it represents at least the initial experience, the spiritual experience of transcendental experience of the underlying reality of that particular teaching. So this represents, therefore, this first step, the Right Understanding, the Path of Vision, the darsana-marga, and the rest, all the other seven steps, that is Right Thought or Right Intention, the Right Speech, Right Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness, Meditation, these all represent the path of transformation, the bringing of so many

different levels, so many different aspects about us in harmony with that initial transcendental experience so that it pervades as it were our whole being instead of remaining isolated at the peaks of our existence, the peaks of our being. I've no time to go into all this in detail, but to take just the last step or the last stage, that is Right Samadhi, Right Concentration and Meditation, this doesn't represent in the transcendental path, just correct concentration, not just using the right technique, even getting the right results, but it represents the absolute pellucidity and clarity of the entire emotional nature, the complete illumination of the depths of ourselves, so that the depths become one with the heights, one with that initial transcendental experience. So here we have this great teaching of the path of vision and the path of becoming or transformation illustrating this relationship between the depths and the heights in our spiritual life.

Now we've also got another illustration, which is of the Four Arya Margas, the Four Noble Paths. As you know or should know, if you've done your homework as it were, there are four paths, Four Noble Paths, the path of the Stream Entrant, the one who's entered the stream leading to nirvana, who will be reborn not more than seven times and within those seven lives or after the end of those seven lives will gain nirvana finally and completely. Then there's the Once Returner, the one whose got so far with his spiritual life he had to return and be born only once, then we get the Anagami, the Non-Returner, the one who won't return at all, who after death will go direct to nirvana from some higher stage of existence, and finally the Arahant, the one who in this life itself has become perfect, who has broken the web of birth and death, become emancipated, gained supreme knowledge, wisdom and illumination. Now these four paths, these four persons are determined according to the number of Fetters binding them to existence, mundane existence, which they have broken. In all there are ten Fetters, I'm not going to go into all of them this evening, only to those which are relevant to our purpose, but there are ten Fetters according to the general Buddhist teaching binding men down to the Wheel of Life. Now the Stream Entrant, the one who entered the stream leading to Nirvana, he breaks three, so which are these three, what we call sakkayaditthi, the wrong belief in a separate, unchanging self. Secondly, silabbata paramasa, attachment to moral rules and religious observances. Not that the moral rules and the religious observances are wrong, or unhelpful or unnecessary, but that one should use them as means to an end, not become attached to them as ends in themselves, one should form a middle path, neither dispensing with them nor becoming stuck in them, but observing them and practising them and using them as means to an end. Then vicikiccha, unwillingness to commit, inability to settle down, to take a firm decision, just as it were shilly-shallying, wobbling, unable to commit oneself to the spiritual life and its consequences. This is usually translated as doubt, but this is a very inadequate translation. Now all these three Fetters which a Stream Entrant breaks have one thing in common, we may say, they are all as it were intellectual, intellectual Fetters, sakkayaditthi, breaking that Fetter means giving up the wrong belief in a separate, unchanging self, silabbata-paramasa means understanding that moral rules and religious observances are not ends in themselves and vicikiccha obviously represents the need to commit oneself which includes coming to a clear understanding of things. So we may say that all of these three Fetters, these first three out of the ten Fetters, broken by the Stream Entrant are, as it were, intellectual Fetters.

Now coming to the next of the paths of the persons, that is to the Once-Returner, we find that he weakens only the next two Fetters, and what are they, raga or desire and greed and [] or anger, he only weakens them, these two Fetters. Then what about the next, the third, the Anagami, the Non-Returner, only he finally breaks these two Fetters, that is greed and anger. So this is very interesting, what does this represent? Intellectual fetters are, as it were comparatively easy to break, but the emotional Fetters, these are very, very difficult to break. Even in the first stage, out of these four stages, one can break these intellectual Fetters, but even at the second stage one can only weaken these emotional Fetters and only at the third stage when one is very near Nirvana can only finally break them even in their subtle forms. So this great truth, this great teaching, represents we may say the extreme difficulty of refining one's emotional nature as compared with correcting one's intellectual attitude. It's very easy to get the right ideas, to understand and accept the truth intellectually, but to bring the emotional side of one's nature into harmony with that, in accordance with that, is very, very difficult indeed, to transform the depths, we may say, is very,

very difficult.

Now just one more illustration, this illustration, we may say, is of a more symbolical nature. Most of you know, or should know, that in the Mahayana Buddhism of India there are two great philosophical schools, these schools are known as the Yogacara and the Majjhima. Yogacara means the practitioners of yoga and of meditation, the Majjhima means those who follow the mean in the sense of the Middle Way, these are the two great schools of medieval Indian Buddhist philosophy. Now in the Buddhist tradition, various designations attach to these two great schools, the Yogacara is called the sublime Yogacara and the Majjhima is called the profound Majjhima. So we may say that the sublime Yogacara represents the heights and the profound Majjhima represents the depths, so these epithets, these different characteristics of these two schools are illustrated by the stories about their respective origins. The Yogacara school, we are told, was founded by the great teacher Asanga. Asanga, we are told, ascended in meditation to the Tusita devaloka, the heaven, or, if you like, the state of continued happiness and there he encountered the future Buddha, Mitraya, now the Bodhisattva Mitraya. So from Mitraya he received five books, or five sets of teachings, or five sets of insights, or illuminations, and these five books of Mitraya constitute or form the basis of the Yogacara school, so it is said in the Buddhist tradition that the Yogacara tradition originated from the Tusita devaloka from Mitraya's teachings to the Sangha. So we may say that the Yogacara originated, or as it were, descended from the heights, from sublime spiritual experiences. Everyone might explain, whether one accepts the mythological presentation of it or not, something come down, as it were, from an infinitely sublime range of spiritual transcendental experiences. Now in the case of the perfection of wisdom, which is the basis of the Majjhima school, its exactly the opposite story, we are told that the Buddha preached these teachings during his lifetime, but they were so difficult, that they were kept as it were hidden for a while, where were they hidden, they were hidden right down in the depths of the ocean, right down in the depths among so many other treasures and they were brought up from the depths by the great teacher, Nagarjuna, the founder of the Majjhima school. In Tibetan Buddhist art this scene is very often depicted, we see a great ocean and we see a raft and sitting on the raft is Nagarjuna and coming up from the depths there is a serpent maiden with the books in her hands. So we may say that this represents the issuing the coming up of these profound teachings, these profound realisations out of the very depths of our being as it were. Now this is a very interesting thing to note, that in Tibetan Buddhism the two schools have been united, you don't get a separate Yogacara school and a separate Majjhima school, you get the two united into one, the Yogacara being considered as the sort of relative truth and the Majjhima being considered as it were the absolute truth, the one being the foundation of the other, the first the foundation of the second the second the completion of the first, one might say. So this also represents, one might say, the need, the necessity for uniting the heights and the depths in one's spiritual life, for bringing as it were the heights down to the depths, the depths up to the heights so that one is fully, perfectly integrated, whole and harmonious. To put it into more Western terminology, we might say that what the spiritual life means, above all else, is what Blake calls the marriage of heaven and hell, heaven representing the pure abstract understanding, hell, not of course the hell of conventional Christian thought, but that vortex, as it were of undeveloped (incoherent) energy which needs to be harnessed and integrated. So this is what is necessary above all else in the spiritual life, the bringing together, the integration of these great pairs of opposites, the heights and the depths.

Now we might say, how does this affect us here and now? How does it affect you, how does it affect me? We might say that we come here from time to time, attend lectures, so what happens and what should happen as we sit here, as we are calm as we are receptive, it should be just intellectual understanding that we have gained, but it should be something a little more than that, something a little clearer, something a little more refined, something a little pure, not quite insight, but at the same time not just intellectual understanding either, something more than that, something which represents a possibility of insight, even if not actually insight itself. So then what do we do? Do we go away and just forget about it, do we put it aside as we walk out of the door, what we should do during the week is to try to embody that in our day to day life. Here we might say we get the path of vision, during the week we shall get the path of becoming or the

path of transformation. This process must go on the whole time, the path of vision, the path of transformation, the inner and the outer way we might say. So we have to go on in this way week by week, year by year, until the heights and the depths in our own spiritual life, in our own spiritual experience become as it were one. We might even go so far as to say that the whole business in the sense of the spiritual life lies in the attainment of this sort of unity, or to put it more Buddhistically this sort of non-duality of overcoming in the fullest possible way of the dichotomy, the cleavage which usually exists between conscious and unconscious, between thought and will, between understanding and emotion, overcoming at a higher, higher and higher, or if you like at deeper, deeper and deeper levels of our being until we can truly say that the heights and the depths, the inner and the outer have become as it were one. When we do this, when we succeed in this great task, then we shall of course be Enlightened because there will be in us the fullness of Wisdom and also at the same time the plenitude of Compassion. So this is the goal, this is the aim, this is the objective, which we hope to reach, a state of full, complete and final integration, at the very highest, or very, if you like, lowest level possible, making one, as I've said, the heights and the depths of our spiritual life, of our spiritual experience.