Tape No 7: Buddhism and the new Reformation
Sangharakshita

(SIDE 1): Friends, most of you know or remember, perhaps I can say that something more than a year ago, I gave a talk on the subject of 'Buddhism and the Bishop of Woolwich'. That talk wasn't given here, in the vihara, it was given not so very far away at Berg? House in Hampstead. On that occasion so far as I remember we had a rather small gathering. I think the weather wasn't particularly propitious on that occasion, or for whatsoever other reason it might have been, but we had rather fewer people than we usually get for talks of this sort. However that didn't matter very much because the talk was tape-recorded so we had it as it were permanently for posterity, ready to hand down. And that talk has been played not only here at the vihara but elsewhere many, I might even say, many many times and has in fact become quite well known. Many of you do know that it has got as far as the episcopal ears of the Bishop of Woolwich himself. He also has sat or had to sit and listen to this particular talk and out of this there have been some rather interesting developments and not the least of which, I suppose, is that some months ago the Bishop and myself had a personal meeting and discussion. Now that isn't I believe the end of the story. He I think is just back from holiday; I am just on the point of going away for a little rest, but we shall it seems be meeting again. But meanwhile I thought it might be a good idea to have a sort of follow-up to this talk on 'Buddhism and the Bishop of Woolwich'. And that is the reason why today we are having for our subject 'Buddhism and the New Reformation'.

Now the religion which we in the West know as Buddhism, which is usually referred to in the East as Dharma or Dhamma or Cho, whatever else it may be, and the religion which is known as Christianity, the teaching of the Buddha on the one hand and the teaching of Christ on the other, are two very radically different systems in many ways. Those of you who have come along regularly will be quite aware of the fact that I would be almost the last person to identify these two religions or these two systems. At the same time, we must recognise the fact – we must see the fact – that both of these great systems, Buddhism on the one hand and Christianity on the other, are in fact what we popularly call 'religions', not a word very much in favour at present but we don't have any other word which we can use in its place. Some time ago I remember in India, I hit upon the working equivalent of, instead of 'religious', saying 'normative' which I thought rather good but it didn't catch on at all. So I just went back to 'religious' and in the same way to 'religion'. Now both of these systems, both of these religions, Buddhism and Christianity, besides both being religions in the full sense of that term, both find themselves today faced by, we might even say beset by, surrounded by, or almost overwhelmed by, especially in the case of Christianity, problems of various kinds. Christianity is trying to face up to some of those problems, Buddhism also is trying where necessary to face up to some of those problems. And it is therefore inevitable inasmuch as both are religions, both are facing up to what are very often the same sort of problems, it's inevitable that we can learn from each other. Now in the last talk, that is to say the one on Buddhism and the Bishop of Woolwich, I was more concerned with what the Bishop could possible learn from us. But I do know from my own personal encounter with him, that he is a quite open-minded man and he did express his wish to make a proper study of Buddhism. I pointed out to him that it couldn't be done by reading just two or three books, that he would have to embark on a serious course of study and I think it not at all impossible that he might be thinking of doing that. In fact I think that in the course of his holiday, he will be getting through quite a lot of Buddhist literature.

One of the things I felt the Bishop, in fact Christianity generally, could learn from the Buddhist tradition is in this matter of what I have described as the 'non-theistic' approach. For modern Christianity, for modern Christians, one might say God has become a considerable source of embarrassment. Many of them feel, as the Bishop of Woolwich seems to feel, that the churches and the Christian religion generally could get along much better without Him altogether. Now that's a rather radical conclusion but it seems that's the sort of conclusion the

have been almost forced to. Well Buddhism supplies the example, as I pointed out at length in that talk on 'Buddhism and the Bishop of Woolwich',Buddhism supplies the example of a religion, faith, a way of life, which has got on without the idea of god, without recourse to belief in god, or prayer to god very well indeed for about 2500 years. So this is perhaps the principle point on which Christianity in general and the Bishop of Woolwich perhaps in particular – inasmuch as he represents a sort of advanced guard of contemporary Christian thought, at least in this country – can learn from us, can learn from Buddhism. But in this talk I am concerned with a rather different approach.

In this talk I am concerned more, not so much with what he can learn from us, but with what we possible, we hope, can learn from him. In particular what we can learn from him with regard to the contemporary religious situation. We need to apprise ourselves of this, we need to know about it because we are confronted by it at, we may say, almost every turn. Some Buddhists, especially in the East, like to sit back as it were, complacently and feel or think that there are no problems for Buddhism. The approach of some Eastern Buddhists, if I may say so, is a trifle naïve. Just as in the old days people used to quote the bible as the solution for every difficulty and every problem, in some Eastern Buddhist countries you just hear it said "well, the Buddha has said…" and that is very often considered to represent the last word on the subject. When you say "well, the Buddha has said…" the discussion is closed. But it isn't so easy as all that and we certainly realize in this country, those of us who are Buddhists, that it isn't as easy as all that. We do feel quite definitely that sometimes with regard to these various problems, we do have a bit of an edge over Christianity.

As I have already pointed out, we are not embarrassed by the idea of god. We've got on very well without him all these centuries and we continue to get on very well without him. So this is a particular problem we don't have to face up to, the fact that modern man isn't interested, broadly speaking, generalizing, in this personal theistic, anthropomorphic sort of approach to religion. At the same time though we don't have this sort of problem, though we're not faced by this sort of problem, we do live, even those of us who are Buddhists, we do live, or should live, or try to live in the modern world, right in the midst of the 20th century with all its remarkable developments and problems. And this modern world, in the midst of which we find ourselves, willingly or unwillingly, is a very complex one, a very difficult one and one in short in which it isn't always at all comfortable to live. So people dream rather nostalgically of the past. They think perhaps they would like to have lived in the days, the heroic age say of ancient Greece or some think they would like to have lived in the Middle Ages – the ages of faith when there were no intellectual problems such as we are beset by today or when intellectual problems arising within a religious context were just technical problems, little problems of exposition or presentation but within a wider generally agreed doctrinal framework But this sort of nostalgic thinking and dreaming is all right for an occasional afternoon and doesn't really in the long run help us very much. We are in the midst of the 20th century. We do live in this modern world of ours, a very complex and difficult one, and we do as religious people need to know what problems it has, what needs it has, and to try to become more and more deeply aware of those problems and of those needs. It's not as though we can stand aloof, it's not as though we can even be really objective because we ourselves willy-nilly, inasmuch as we live at this time and in this place are involved in all those problems and share those needs.

Now this talk has been called 'Buddhism and the New Reformation'. 'The New Reformation' of course is the title of the Bishop's second book, that is to say the one he wrote after 'Honest to God'. We always call 'Honest to God' his first book, and 'The New Reformation' his second book even though he has written quite a number of books apparently on various aspects of theology before he wrote 'Honest to God'. It's a very small book, by the way, as most of you who have seen it remember. This is perhaps because the Bishop realized very well that even though what he had to say was very valuable if he enshrined it – or entombed it we may say – in a tome, a weight tome of 500 pages noone would have read it except the

reviewers and the professional theologians. So he has produced a second book of just over 100 pages which he realizes quite well is all that the average layman these days can stand of religion, in one dose. Now this book consists of 4 chapters. One is called 'Troubling of the Waters'. Chapter 2 is called 'Starting from the other end. 3 is called 'Towards a genuinely lay theology' and 4 is called 'Living in the Overlap' – all quite arresting titles, you'll agree.

Now each of these chapters is concerned with a particular problem or a particular aspect of a problem or perhaps we shouldn't even say 'problem' at all. Perhaps to speak in these terms is rather too negative and defensive. Perhaps we could say that each particular chapter is concerned with one particular area of opportunity or area of challenge. First of all let me say a few words about the title of this book of the Bishop of Woolwich's 'The New Reformation'. Now when one speaks in terms of the new reformation it suggests of course that there has already been an old reformation. The old reformation of course is that inaugurated by Martin Luther when he rather bellicosely nailed him, I think it was 94, I forget the exact number, of theses on the church door at Wurtemburg and it is out of this old reformation of Luther's of course that there eventually emerged that welter of reformed and protestant churches – hundreds of them including of course our own dear old Church of England. And the reformation of course is the movement which we can say split Christianity into two halves. On the one hand, monolithically as it were, the Roman Catholic church, on the other, all the reformed and protestant churches.

Now, that's the old reformation, so what about the new reformation? The bishop, in his preface and elsewhere, thinks, in fact he's convinced, that the new reformation - or what he calls the new reformation - is already here and has in fact already begun. It seems that he thinks essentially that reformation means the adaptation of this religion - Christianity - to the needs of our times. He's very deeply aware, as we've seen in his book 'Honest to God', that there's a great deal of theological and ecclesiastical lumber which needs to be cleared away, a lot of it is kept up in the attic of course, out of sight but even that doesn't help us very much. He is of the opinion that even the attic ought to be cleared, all the lumber taken down, taken out, and just burned. The essentials of these Christian message restated in a way that people can appreciate, in a way that they can understand. But of course, and he's very strong on this point also, without any loss of integrity.

Now, it's an interesting thing that the Bishop is very well aware that this new reformation about which he speaks, in which in fact he is involved, cannot be confined to the west. On one page of The New Reformation he refers to Pallinder's? book 'The Christian Debate: Light from the East'. He makes it quite clear that he is quite well aware that whatever is said on this sort of subject within the limits of the Christendom, the Christian churches, is, as he put it, overheard elsewhere by followers of other religions, especially by the Hindus and especially also by the Buddhists.

Now I feel that we can go even further than this. It's not so much that Hindus and Buddhists and followers of other eastern religions, overhear what is going on in this way of the new reformation within Christianity itself. We can even go so far as to say I think that we, that is to say the Buddhists, are currently having a sort of new reformation of our own though that may not be very obvious to western Buddhists, that's simply because they have comparatively little contact with popular traditional forms of Buddhism. But this new reformation, as we can call it, within the context of Buddhism itself is certainly we may say in evidence here and there in the eastern Buddhist countries.

With regards to the new of the term new, new reformation, in the case of Buddhism, it is perhaps a little out of place. It suggests that as it were like Christianity, Buddhism has had just one reformation. But in fact we can say that Buddhism has had several reformations already. This of course raises the question again here within the context of Buddhism, what exactly do we mean by a reformation? Basically we mean, that a reformation is a restatement of the

essentials of a religion in terms meaningful to a contemporary culture. It's not just a sort of locking away of the bad, that's what very often people tend to think, that a reformation means a cutting out, a getting rid of things something nearly, and preserving what is good. But it's much more than that. Reformation really means getting down to rock bottom, getting down to the essentials of what you think, the essentials of what you believe, the essentials of what you're trying to practise. Grasping that the essential, even you may say the intangible essence, and putting it across in a new way, a way which is more immediately relevant to the needs of the people around you than any of the old ways of putting it. What you put across, or try to put across, that intangible essence of that whole, may be the same as what previous generations were trying to put across. Your way of putting it across must be uniquely your own, uniquely suited to the needs of your generation. It's this sort of putting across, whether doctrinally or institutionally, or in any other way, that we call a reformation.

Buddhism, as we all know has had a very long history indeed. 2500 years of it, and a little more, and it's unthinkable we may say that in the course of those 2500 years Buddhism hasn't needed to restate it's message, to put it's message into fresh terms. If you assume that in the course of 2500 years Buddhism hasn't needed to restate it's message, you're really saying, you're really making the statement, that in the course of those 2500 years people didn't change. The people among whom Buddhism was spread, among whom it was preached and practised, didn't change. In India alone, Buddhism has a history of 1500 years, their period corresponding to the 4th century of the Christian era in the west, to the 19th century - 1500 years. Obviously in a period like that there's going to be a tremendous amount of change. Think how much we've changed in the course of 1500 years, so certainly the India of say 1000 AD, the India wasn't anything like the India of 500 BC that is to say in the Buddha's own day. ?? were different, attitudes were different, art works were different. So this being the case, it's inevitable that in the course of it's 1500 years development in India, it's 2500 of total history, it's inevitable that Buddhism should have changed. Changed in the sense that it's fundamental message of ethics was restated again and again and again in accordance with the changed needs of the times. Now we know as a matter of historical fact that the message of Buddhism has been restated at least 4 times in the course of the 2500 of history, in other words we can say, we can assert that in the course of 2500 years of Buddhist history that there have been 4 major reformations.
Now this may come as a surprise to some of you, some may say we've heard of <u>the</u> reformation in Europe in the 15th century but we've never heard of any Buddhist reformation, we haven't even heard of one, not to speak of 4. But this is perhaps because we have tended to be misled by the world. We've all heard of the 3 yanas of Indian B: Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Now these are usually described by just schools of Buddhism, or even sects of Buddhism- a very unfortunate expression. But basically these 3 yanas, Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana, are not schools, are not sects at all, they're really three successive stages in the development of Buddhism in India - I've gone into all this before as some of you know. Or we may say, rephrasing it again, they are 3 separate statements or restatements of the essentials of the Buddha's teachings. Hinayana statement, Mahayana statement, Vajrayana statement. And it isn't perhaps too much, it's isn't stressing the terminology too far to describe each of them as in fact a reformation.

Now there is a difference when we think or when we speak of reformationin the 15th century, in the 16th century in Europe, we think in terms of blood and violence and slaughter and burning at the stake, forcible conversion. We've got all the bloody wars of religion which disfigured the face of Europe almost completely. ? final religious settlement. But of course in the history ofBuddhismwe don't have anything of that sort. We have rs but nothing forced, no bloodshed, complete tolerance, and this is of course is in accordance with the much more pacific and tolerant nature of Buddhism. Now it is incidentally significant and interesting that each of these yanas - the Hinayana, the Mahayana, the Vajrayana - was dominant in India for a period of about 500 years. A period in the course of which one might have expected in ancient times considerable cultural and other changes could take place. The Hinayana, the

first of the stages of development, the first of these reformations as we may now say, the Hinayana isBuddhismstates in terms which are predominantly ethical and psychological. There's a great stress on conduct, on discipline, on pyschological analysis, especially in the form of the Abhidhamma. So these are the sort of terms that the Hinayana's presentation ofBuddhist works through. In modern times of course the Theravada is the most prominent representation of this type of approach, it's one of the 18 schools of the Hinayana.

The Mahayana - this stage of development, this reformation, describes or expresses the essence ofBuddhismin terms which are predominantly devotional and metaphysical. Some might think it rather surprising that the Mahayana should be both of these things - devotional, attaching great importance to the devotion, to the worship of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and also metaphysical and philosophical approach, discoursing at length on the nature of the Void, the nature of Reality, of Mind and so on.

Now the Vajrayana, the third state or third phase of development, third reformation, the Vajrayana speaks in terms which are predominatly yogic and ritual, or ritualistic. The Vajrayana is very much concerned with all that pertains to meditation, especially meditation of a more esoteric type, and especially meditation as is coordinated at least on the lower levels, with various kinds of symbolic ritual. The Vajrayana speaks this sort of language.

Now each yana - Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana - each of these 3 stages of development, we may say represents a reformation or restatement in relation to the one preceding. So these are the 3 stages of development or the 3 reformations we may say of Indian Buddhism. So what about the fourth major reformation - we spoke about four, not only three. The fourth major reformation we may say is that which is generally known as Ch'an or Zen. This isn't of course an Indian development at all. But whenBuddhismwent to China, went from India to China, then there gradually came about, there gradually developped an attempt to restateBuddhismin terms of Chinese life, Chinese thought, and Chinese culture. And this, at least from one point of view, is what we call Ch'an or Zen, it's not just one school, one sect standing over against other schools, other sects. We may say that Ch'an, Japanese Zen, doesn't altogether correspond with these descriptions, but certainly Ch'an represents not so much a school or sect but a rework completely of the whole substance, the whole essence, the whole message of Buddhism. It's as though those great Indian teachers who went to China went with completely open minds; their minds were enlightened, so naturally they were open. So it's as though they put aside their own Indian psychology and they tried to get across directly to the hearts and to the minds of the Chinese people, spoke to them in terms of Taoism, spoke to them in terms of Confucianism, but especially of Taoism, especially in terms of Taoist conceptions like non-action or acting through non-action, something a little foreign we may say to the Indian mind.

So the result of this attempt, this effort, to put across the truth ofBuddhism in terms that could be assimilated by the Chinese mind, that is to say Chinese terms, terms derived from Chinese life, Chinese thought, Chinese culture, the result of all this was the 4th great development, this 4th major reformation that is to say Ch'an or Zen Buddhism.

Now what about the <u>new</u> reformationso far asBuddhism is concerned? We've had four - Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana, then Ch'an or Zen - but what about the new one, what about the fifth one? Now the new one, the 5th one, I feel is inevitable asBuddhism moves West. As people in the west, whether it's Europe or whether it's America or whether it's even Australia, get to know about Buddhism. Also of course as the West moves East, as western culture, western knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, even unpleasant things like industrialism, gradually moves into the Buddhist lands, Buddhist cultures. This modern world of ours which is in terms of thought and culture we may say a predominantly western world, is a very secular one. Nowadays religious approaches, religious terminology, aren't at all popular. If you want to discuss any of the profounder questions of life, so far as the average

man is concerned, you can discuss them more satisfactorily, more meaningfully, if you discuss them in secular rather than in specifically religious language.

So this is whatBuddhism in the West, or in the midst of western thought and culture, even ???, has increasingly to do, it has to state itself, it has to state it's message or it's essence, also in addition to the traditional sense in secular terms which are acceptable to, understandable by, people who consider themselves nowadadys, and many of them do, as secular. So this means thatBuddhism has got to try and put itself across in terms of secular philosophy and psychology, this is the language of Freud and Jung sometimes, in terms of secular ethics. Not saying you can't do this, this isn't enough - it's prohibitive, a commandment against it, that won't do, no discussion of the ethics on that sort of basis will get you anywhere nowadays, one has to discuss ethics in secular terms. Say even in terms of secular spirituality. If we look through works of literature, works of art, produced by people who are sometimes innocent, or we may say quite oblivious of any sort of spiritual motive or religious motivation we cab see that there is very often in the midst of ??, in a sense even giving life to them, something spiritual, some touch at least of the spiritual. We have to be able to use that, we have to be able to as it were take these terms of what I call secular spirituality and put across the meaning, the teaching, the message ofBuddhism in those terms.

Of course this doesn't mean, this would be quite a disastrous misunderstanding, it doesn't mean identifyingBuddhism with secular philosophy or psychology and so on. This would be a complete misunderstanding. Yet sometimes unhappily of course, in the case of some people, who get just a little knowledge of Buddhism,a little knowledge of say Jungian psychology they ??? the two are the same. So instead of talking aboutBuddhism in terms of Jungian psychology, they get it all mixed up. They talk sometimes about Buddhism, sometimes about Jung and then it goes just like this, and in the end they don't know whether they're talking about Buddhism or Jung, they become completely confused and completely mixed up. But what one should do is, knowing the terms, in this case Jung's system of psychology, knowing also, which means experiencing, being if you like, the essence of buddhism putting across to people familiar with those Jungian terms your feeling, your understanding, your experience of buddhism in those terms.

If one can do this or as one does this it's as though a new dimension, a new range of meaning will be added to that language, to those terms, which one is employing. Language is a very subtle thing, it's a very elastic sort of thing. You can give words almost any meaning that you like, you can take up for instance, this example comes to my mind, you can take up a term like Jung's 'archetype'. Now you can begin by using that term 'archetype' in a strictly Jungian sense but as you go on talking to someone who knows all about archetypes and about Jung's psychology, as you go on talking to him or to her about archetypes with your Buddhist knowledge and experience and the background, it'll come about insensibly, almost unaware, that you'll start injecting meanings derived from Buddhism sources into your useage of that word 'archetype'. Since you've established common ground, since there's already a common basis, between you and the person you are talking, you're both talking about the same thing 'archetypes', he won't notice this at first. Or even if he notices it either then or afterwards, the meaning will have got across. And incidentally the meaning of that word 'archetype' - it's range, it's connotation - will have been insensibly? expanded upon. So this is the sort of use that we have to make of these terms derived from these various modern, secular disciplines. Using them in this way they'll acquire, at least in our context, a new dimension, a new range of meaning.

Let's get back to the Bishop's book, back to the four chapters of 'The New Reformation'. As I said at the beginning, the first chapter is called 'Troubling Waters'. This chapter is in fact mainly concerned very much with what we have been talking about so far. The Bishop is concerned to assure us, to convince us if necessary, that the new reformationis already here, that it's already begun. No question apparently of let's have a reformation, whether we like it or not or in this case whether Christians like it or not, the new reformationis already here in

the midst of us. I've pointed out already it is here in the midst not only of Christians, but also of Buddhists. We know very well that many Christians already, we may say most Christians, don't realize that their own new reformationhas begun. Many no doubt tend to write off the Bishop of Woolich and people like him -"he's just an eccentric, he's the sort of person the Church of England can afford to accommodate, it doesn't matter, he's a sort of safety valve for the young person, one needn't take it too seriously" - this is the attitude of many, they don't want to face up to the fact that they've got the new reformationwithin Christianity whether they like it or not. They continue almost grimly hanging onto the old ways. If they talk at all of r, they talk of it in a sense peculiarly their own. They tend to think perhaps a reformationas meaning getting everybody back into church - "there's been a decine of religion, people have become very materialistic, they've drifted away from the churches, alright have a r, get them all back into their pews comfortable or otherwise. But don't change the Church, the Church is there, the building are already furnished, hundreds of hundreds of empty seats, so they're already waiting, reformationmeans putting people with a little gentle pressure perhaps into those empty seats". So that's reformation.

I'm sorry to say that we sometimes find the same sort of thing in Buddhism. Having smiled at Christianity, you can all smile at Buddhism. We smile at ourselves. Not exactly quite literally, because we find this sort of thing not so much in the West of course, but in the Buddhist East. I've travelled a little in the Buddhist East and I've found very often monks, elderly ladies, complaining that the young people especially the Western educated young people have very little time for Buddhism. It's not they're against it they just don't bother, it just seems to them a trifle irrelevant. This is a situation one finds in many parts of the Buddhist East, as the complaints there "Buddhist young people don't go to the temple, they don't make offerings to the monks". I remember some young men in one of the Buddhist countries told me "We don't go to the temple. Why? We don't go and see the monks. Why? Because the custom is that you must sit on your knees, so that's alright when you're wearing a lunghi or a sari, but when you're wearing a nicely creased pair of Western trousers, you don't want to sit on your knees on the floor because it will spoil your crease" they say, so they don't go. Now this is a trivial sort of example, but it does illustrate the sort of thing that does happen. So, the Western educated young people, especially those who have some scientific knowledge, in the Buddhist countries they very often tend to drift away from Buddhism and to care very little for it. And one must say in all fairness to them, that in some parts of the Buddhist world in the East, very little attempt is made on the part of those who ought to be making the attempt, to make Buddhism intelligent to the people who have received a Western education.

It's the same very often when it comes to preaching Buddhism in the West. There are lots of very nice innocent Eastern Buddhists in Ceylon and Burma, and ??, even Tibet and Japan and China, who think it would be a wonderful idea, a glorious idea to come and preach Buddhism in the West. It's a very laudable ambition, but the vast majority have got no idea of what they're up against. They just don't know how difficult it is to preach religion of any sort here in the West. It's difficult even for Dr Billy Graham I believe, so how much more difficult for a Buddhist monk or Buddhist layman coming from the East. Even those who do think in terms of preaching Buddhism in the West, tends to think of repeating the old familiar formulae and the old familiar pattern, over here in the West. This is natural of course when they haven't had any previous experience of conditions here but it is perhaps an outlook which isn't going to get Buddhism in the West very far. It is one of the reasons why in the West generally, not only here in England but in Europe and America too, there are so many different types of national Buddhism. When Christian missionaries went to the East, they usually distinguished - not on basis of nationality, but sects: the Catholic, the Protestant, the Methodist, the Baptist, the ?? and so on. But in the West Buddhists coming to preach Buddhism from the East are usually distinguished not on a doctrinal or theological basis, but on a national basis. We speak about the Sinhalese Buddhists or the Tibetan Buddhists, or the Thai Buddhists, and this is rather significant and this is because each tends to reproduce, or to try to reproduce in this country his own national religious and cultural patterns. Rather than to produce something

which is suitable for the indigenous patterns of this country. There was a rather beautiful example not so very long ago, it was just over a week ago, which was taken note of apparently by The Observer newspaper. And they were writing as some of you must have seen about the Buddhist movement in this country, about the Full Moon day and about this Vihara, so they just happened to point out, to comment on the fact, that the Full Moon day was celebrated by different Buddhism groups on different days, and they mentioned that the Sinhalese Bs in London had celebrated their Full Moon day on the Thursday, even though according to the calender it's on a Friday. But they celebrated on a Thursday, because according to the Sinhalese calender which they'd brought all the way from Ceylon Full Moon day was on Thursday. So instead of looking up into the sky in England and seeing whether it was full moon or not, they looked into their calender. So since the Sinhalese calender said full moon on Thursday, they observed it on Thursday regardless of whether it was full moon day in England on Thursday or Friday. Then the report went on to point out that the Thai had observed it not on Thursday but on Friday because presumably their calender agreed with the English one. Sometimes in India you can get quite startling variations. I've been sometimes in places where different Buddhist groups, national groups, had tried different Full Moon days as it were all in a row which makes for variety, but hardly for unity. But what is significant is that The Observer, as some of you must have noticed, went on to point out that the English Buddhism, referring to ourselves of course, weren't going to have their full moon celebrations on the full moon day at all. They were going to have their full moon day celebration on the Sunday immediately after their lecture, and that their's was the pragmatic approach. Pragmatic apparently being a term of praise from that particular reporter rather than anything else. So this is just a simple example you see, of how difficult it is for Eastern Buddhism coming to the West to drop their own national religious and cultural patterns. It's very difficult because they're not familiar with anything else.

When one speaks of the necessity of an adaptation to local conditions, one doesn't of course mean a compromise.

(SIDE 2) What is needed and very often we don't get is an attempt to speak about Buddhism in terms with which people are familiar. For the Eastern Buddhist this seems to be very very difficult for some reason or other, it may be partly because in many parts of the Eastern? Buddhist world Buddhism is having to adopt an increasingly defensive posture, so they tend to withdraw within themselves. But if Buddhism is to spread in this country, whoever spread it - whether from the East or from the West - will have to learn to speak the language, not only the English language but the cultural, religious, secular language - of this country of this age. So these are the sort of points which the Bishop of Woolwich has drawn attention to in a Christian context which I'm now trying to transpose as it were into the Buddhistic context.

Chapter two of this book, 'The New Reformation', is entitled 'Starting from the other end' - a rather intriguing title. What does this mean? In the Bishop's context it means starting from man and his problems instead of from God. Orthodox traditional Christian theology begins with God. Well first of all there is a God, God has made the universe, God has made this world, God has made you, God has made me. The fact that he has made us imposes certain duties on us, he's not only made us but he sent his son to save us. We have to accept that salvation. So in this way you start with God and eventually come down to Man. So this is the deductive approach rather than the inductive approach to religion. So the Bishop says that this all has to be reversed. He says that we have to start from the other end, or Christians have to start from the other end. Not from the end of God coming down to Man, but from the end of Man working up to God if at all possible. So in other words, inductive rather than deductive. This sort of approach, starting from the other end, starting with Man instead of God, this inductive sort of approach, for Christianity - for traditional Christianity - is not really reformation at all. I would say it's revolution because once you introduce this way of thinking it's no knowing where you may end, as I suggested even in the case of the Bishop in the previous talk 'Buddhism and the Bishop of Woolwich' you may end up, even if you're a

Bishop, outside the Church and possibly even in the bosom of Buddhism instead of Christianity.

But this sort of approach starting with Man, or starting with the end of Man, rather than from the end of God, the inductive rather than the deductive approach, is of course common place for Buddhism. Buddhism has always started from Man. It's approach has always been inductive. Doesn't even work it's way up to God, in Buddhism perhaps we rather consider that we work our way down to God, but that's neither here nor there - if we just leave God out of it altogether. But we work our way up to whatever we do work our way up to from Man. This perhaps is illustrated very well by the Four Noble Truths. You start with suffering. Suffering is a fact. Birth is suffering, sickness is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering. This is what we start from in Buddhism as classically stated. You don't start with abstractions, you don't start with transcendental first principles, you start right down here on the earth, the fact of human suffering which noone can deny. And then the 2nd Noble Truth goes on to reveal the cause of suffering, the 3rd the cessation, and the 4th the way to the cessation, and right at the end of that way when you've gone very very far indeed you come to what we call Nirvana and about which it seems the Buddha preferred to say very little though he said a very great deal about the 4 Noble Truths, especially about the very first of them, that is to say suffering. So it would seem as regards this matter, as regards the contents of this chapter, 'Starting from the other end', we - that is to say Buddhists - don't have very much to learn.

At the same time I'd like to introduce a word of warning. Sometimes one is asked the question - you may be asked the question, in fact very often or perhaps very likely you have been asked already - what is the goal of B? What as a Buddhist are you aiming at? Now the usual answer which is given, which is very easy to give, is the goal of Buddhism is Nirvana, or the goal of Buddhism is enlightenment. This from my way of thinking seems a little too easy. One may even say, just a little too slick. Just to trot out 'Nirvana' as your answer, ??? We know in a sense, yes, Nirvana, enlightenment, this is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. Though someone just put a question to you, 'what is the goal of B?' it seems to me that we shouldn't trot out 'Nirvana' as the answer too quickly, we shouldn't just pop up like a jack-in-the-box as though it is automatic, inevitable, irrefutable sort of reply. As if that settles it, close discussion. Sometimes we do get that in very traditional circles in the East, not only among monks but among lay people too - 'Nirvana is the goal, you've just got to work up to it'. Sometimes they bring out Nirvana very much as the Christians bring out God, but it isn't as easy as that. Nirvana we may say should emerge very much as it emerged for the Buddha. First suffering - the fact. Then go deeply into the cause of suffering. Then the cessation of suffering, then the way to the cessation of suffering, and finally Nirvana at the end of that. In other words, Nirvana should emerge, if it emerges at all, as a possible solution from a very deep analysis of a given problem. Not just be produced as it were like a rabbit out of a conjuror's hat. Not slickly, not easily, not readily. One should get around to Nirvana, one might say, with some difficulty. It's rather interesting that in Tibetan Buddhist circles, when one meets anyone especially a teacher for the first time, there's a sort of little procedure which one goes through, discussion-wise. Rather crude Western people usually come straight to the point. They meet a lama or they meet a teacher, Buddhist teacher, and they say after they've shaken hands, they just sit down and say "Well what's this Nirvana" - they've heard a lot about it - "what is it?" Now of course it's impossible just to give a spot reply like that. So the Tibetan sort of procedure for discussion is different. I've experienced myself many times; I was in the East and they still have a lot more time than we have, so they can afford to be leisurely. But what usually happens is if you meet someone, first of course there are mutual enquiries after health - "Well how are you, are you suffering from any aches and pains?" and sometimes they go into quite a lot of detail about this in a way which an English person might consider embarrassing, then they get round to where you come from and why you've come, your experiences along the way, and then very very likely somehow Buddhism slips into discussion. Then you get talking about manners and customs and rules, a bit of discipline, then a bit about the monasteries, festivals. Then they'll come on very cautiously to something

about the life of the Buddha, and a bit about doctrine, very cautiously edge their way to something about meditation. But out of the discussion, since it's been going all this time - might be 2 hours by this time - has brought about a certain rapport between the two people or three people discussing, they've got to know one another, then almost insensibly one finds profounder questions slipping in and even spontaneously sometimes questions like Nirvana come up. But they come up naturally. You don't get some Western globetrotter, just trotting along and saying "Well, what's it about?" and expecting a sort of spot reply - it can't happen or doesn't happen in circles of that sort. So this is how it should emerge for us too. We shouldn't trot out the profounder aspects of Buddhism too glibly or too slickly or too readily. They should emerge as I've said, only as the end result, perhaps by way of a possible solution of a very deep analysis of a given problem, and it certainly shouldn't be as it were prescribed in advance. So perhaps after all there is something which Buddhists can learn from this chapter of the Bishop's called 'Starting from the other end'. We know the end to which we are going, that is to say Nirvana, is we should know as Buddhists, but we shouldn't take it for granted that it's all that evident to other people. So we should start rather with their problems and their difficulties, analyse them, going into them deeply, try to throw light on them, and eventually if the light does seem to be the light of Nirvana or perhaps the faint shadow or reflection of that, well so much the better - let us follow it up, but we shouldn't be in too much of a hurry to bring in ultimate things. Let them come in naturally, let them emerge.

Now chapter 3 is called 'Towards a genuine lay theology'. Well I can say that for me personally, this was and is the most interesting of the four chapters. It is in fact full of material, full of interesting thoughts, quite thought-provoking reflections. No time to go into it in detail of course. The Bishop refers to 4 different types of theology for instance, he borrows the classification from another writer which he acknowledges, but he makes very ?? use of this classification. The 4 types of theology are first of all the episcopal, that is the theology created by bishops in the church in accordance with the needs of their episcopal functions or teaching functions, pastoral function. Then monastic theology - theology created in the monasteries in accordance with the needs, the spiritual needs, mystical needs, of monks. Then scholastic theology - theology created in the interests of professional thinkers, theologians, philosophers and so on during the middle ages. And lastly seminary theology - theology which is taught in such a way to equip a person to be a priest - professional, technical know-how. So these 4 kinds of theology - episcopal, monastic, scholastic and seminary - now the Bishop says, and this is quite interesting, that we need now above and beyond all these, a lay theology. He says episcopal theology was meant to help the bishop teaching people, monastic theology was meant to help monks living in monasteries, scholastic theology was meant to help people who were interesting in calculating how many angels could dance on a pin's head, and seminary theology was created for the sake of helping people who wanted to be priest or to be clergymen. But he says, well what about the lay people? They are after all the majority of the church as he points out, and the majority of the Buddhist movement too as we know. So he says what is there, is there a particular theology for them? In other words he says that what is wanted is a statement of Christianity not in terms of episcopal administration, or monastic life, or scholastic preoccupations, or seminary requirements but a statement of Christianity in terms of the life of lay people, in terms of lay life. Of course he doesn't mean, I don't also mean, merely a verbal statement but a whole fully-fledged expression. So I would take up this point among the many which the Bishop has raised as being of great interest, it applies to Buddhism too, because I always say we also need a lay, I can't say theology because we don't have a theos so no theology, we also need a lay, I can't say even Buddhology, but we need a statement of Buddhism, Buddhist principles, Buddhist truths, in addition to the existing one which we have, a statement in terms of lay life. Traditionally as you know, Buddhism is a strongly monastic movement, throughout the generations, throughout the centuries, the Sangha, the monastic order has been the backbone of the Buddhist community. Dr Conze goes so far as to say that without the Sangha, Buddhism just wouldn't have survived at all. So the historical reasons for this predominance of the Sangha, the central part played by the Sangha, we've no time to go into them now. But

one practical result has been that in Buddhism traditionally the teaching of Buddhism or the presentation of Buddhism is cast in a predominantly monastic form. In other words, the teaching is cast in a form adapted more to the requirements of monks living in monasteries or hermitages, than to requirements of lay people. It is in fact very rarely cast in lay form, there are few discourses in all the collections of scriptures made especially for lay people, but I would guarantee that for every one made for lay people there are 99 made for monks. In other words, Buddhism predominantly cast in a form acceptable to, useful to monks. Very rarely cast in lay forms. This sometimes gives the impression, the quite wrong impression, that Buddhism is a purely monastic religion, and that in Buddhism there is no place for a laity. And there are some scholars who hold this view. In India one will find it quite widespread among Indian scholars. Very often of course they're Hindu scholars who want to discourage people from taking an interest in Buddhism, so that Buddhism is purely for the monk, and they can of course produce quite a lot of historical evidence to support their contention. It is true that in some Buddhist countries, the laity play a very very minor role, a very very subordinate role. If you ask the average lay Buddhist, in Ceylon or in Burma or even Tibet, what is the main function of the lay Buddhist? He would say to support the monks. Monks don't work for a living, they're occupied with meditation, study, preaching, so they would say the main duty, the main function of the layman is to support the monks, to look after the monks, to care for them, to provide for them. Alongside that duty one finds in practice that the lay people have got a crude popular religion of their own. In Ceylon for instance as I've mentioned some time ago, the lay people are very devout, they look after the monks, support the monasteries, but their own religious life often tends to be centered about the Hindu shrines, not so much about Buddhism at all. Some people in Ceylon are quite worried about this.

So what we now need to do, what we now need very much to do, is as it were to reformulate the principles of Buddhism in terms, not only of monastic life, but in terms of lay life. This is something that must be done, especially now that Buddhism has come to the West. We can say, we can claim, it has already been done, to some extent, in the Mahayana. This was part we may say of the Mahayana reform, to try to as it were translate the teachings of the Buddhism as far as they could be translated out of the monastic language in which they had been handed down, into lay terms. Of course the Mahayana took its stand upon the very beautiful idea which we call the Bodhisattva Ideal, and it stressed that the lay person just as much as monk could be a bodhisattva, that is could take enlightenment as his or her aim or goal. So when we make this sort of restatement, when we try to put Buddhism across even in the West, in terms of lay life more than of monastic life then the Bodhisattva Ideal must be our ultimate basis, our ultimate foundation. Though the Mahayana has made this very important, very fruitful start, there is still a very great deal of work to be done, ?? translating monastic expressions into lay ones. Let me give you just a few examples.

One of the rules or one of the precepts or teachings for the monks is what is called 'abstention from vi???'. Vicara? means untimely, mojana?? means eating. So abstention from untimely food, abstention from untimely eating. Now the popular interpretation in most Buddhist countries is that this means that the monk should eat after twelve o'clock. And in many Buddhist countries they don't and they follow this quite strictly. Now the question arises, how does this work out in terms of lay life? What is the principle involved here in this particular rule, this particular provision, which could be applied in lay life in terms of lay life? Now it isn't just a matter of the lay person occasionally doing what the monk does, it's much more than that. ?? the principle involved is simply that of moderation. So translating this monastic precept of not eating after 12 o'clock which would be very difficult for the lay person, translating that in terms of lay life it means observing a consistent moderation in diet. In the Buddhist East it very often doesn't work out like this. In the Buddhist East it's very often thought that if you're not a monk, well you can do anything, practically. The monk has got to observe the rules, in this particular case the monk mustn't eat after 12 o'clock but the lay people they can stuff themselves as much as they like, after all they're not monks. So what is expected of them? It's enough if they give dana to the monks, if they make offerings to the

monks. This tends to be the approach, tends to be the attitude in Buddhist countries, almost as though sometimes the whole practise of the religion were left to the monks and the laity satisfies themselves as it were with supporting the monks and being Buddhist as it were by proxy or being Buddhist as it were vicariously. Now we can say that dana is definitely one of the virtues but it's no substitute for the other virtues. Remember there is an example which I was told some years ago, the example of King Thebor of Burma. King Thebor was the last king of Burma, he was a very devout Buddhist, and these anecdotes were related to me by his son-in-law who would have been king of Burma, had Burma been a monarchy nowadays instead of a republic. He said in the old days at King Thebor's court in King Thebor's palace all the Buddhist formalities were kept up very well indeed, and the king was so pious that he insisted that every day dana, that is food ceremonially served, should be offered to at least 100 monks in the palace. So my friend, the son-in-law of King Thebor, told me that – as probably some of you know – the last days of the Burmese monarchy were rather overclouded by all sorts of palace intrigues. King Thebor became very suspicious and he starting having killed quite a number of his close relations, afraid that they were trying to usurp the throne. It's a matter of history that he had killed altogether about 300 of his relations, only one or two were left, amongst them this particular son-in-law who was designed to be his successor. So this son-in-law, Prince Ata???, described to me how every day at a certain period there would be executions in the palace grounds, and the executions were carried out in a rather painful sort of way – apparently it was a traditional Burmese custom, King Thebor sent to Antwerp of all places, for beautiful red velvet bags, and the person who was to be executed was put in one of these red velvet bags, put in alive, the bag was tied up and he was trampled to death by elephants, this was the traditional mode of execution for members of the Royal Family. A Burmese orchestra would be playing music at the same time. So this was going on, but every day the King would offer dana to the monks, because he was a very pious Buddhist. Now this is a very extreme example, it shows the sort of thing that can happen, the sort of development which can take place when there's an assumption that the layman's only duty, only function is to offer dana to the monks, and he can do anything else. So we have therefore to counteract this, to safeguard against this by translating the principles of Buddhism, the teachings of Buddhism, not just into monastic terms and leaving it at that, leaving Buddhism for the monks only to practise, but translating also into lay terms, in terms of lay life. Therefore as I say with regards to this matter of food, the monk observes the precept of not eating after 12 o'clock, the lay Buddhist if he's sincere observes a sort of unwritten precept of consistent moderation and simplicity in that.

Another example, you all must have heard of the rainy season retreat, there's a rule that every year the monk, not the Western monk unfortunately, goes into retreat for 4 whole months, nobody bothers him, he can meditate, he can study, he can do whatever he likes, he's supposed to remain in one place completely secluded. Now this is a provision for the monk. What about the lay person, how does it work out in terms of <u>their</u> life? If it's of some spiritual value, this 4 months retreat, there must be some principle involved in it which could be applied to lay life which would be useful to the lay person. Now quite obviously the lay person isn't going to be able to make a 4 month retreat every year, however much they might like to. What about a one week's retreat? The principle is the same. There's only the length of time which is different. Some people have already done this, some people have had what really amounts to a weeks' retreat up at Biddells?? – a weeks' meditation course. So they're really doing in a way in principle what a monk does, at least in Eastern countries, when he observes the 4 month's retreat, the rainy season retreat. They've gone into retreat for a period, isolated themselves from all worldly concerns, shut out all worldly thoughts and they've tried to lead, at least for that one week, a purely spiritual life. Of course they eat and they drink, in moderation, but apart from that they're occupied entirely, exclusively, with the things of the Dharma, the things of the spirit.

One can go even further than that. Not only a week retreat but what about a sort of occasional retreat from our necessary social activities? There are some people who would welcome that,

avoiding social life as much as possible, letting all the meaningless, frivolous social engagements that is if you're extravert. If you're naturally introvert well you might be encouraged to go out and meet people a bit more. But if you're a natural extravert, which more people seem to be even in the Buddhist movement, will cut down on their social life. Going to retreats a bit more, try to get a bit more time, a bit more energy, a bit more thought to spiritual things. These are very simple examples, these 2 which I've given, they're both on the ethical plain. One can obviously go very very much further. It's not only simple ethical rules which have been translated as it were into terms of lay life. It's the whole body of Buddhism itself. It's all of Buddhist thought, of Buddhist practice which has to be translated in this way. If this is done, if Buddhism is expressed in terms of lay life, if we have what the Bishop calls 'a lay theology', then the result will be that the layman will be much more closely integrated into Buddhism. I've noticed in Eastern countries, especially in South-East Asia, lay Buddhists are very loosely connected with Buddhism, as I've said very often they think it's their chief duty, sometimes their only duty, just to support the monks. The monks get on with religion, they get on with secular life. A sort of division of labour. But that isn't really good enough.

So if all the fundamental concepts, if all the principle practices of Buddhism are restated in terms of lay life so that the lay person also can practice at home, in the office, in the factory, just as the monks or almost just as the monk practises in the monastery, then the lay Buddhist will have been brought very much closer to Buddhism itself, and even really closer to the monastic community too. We'll find I'm sure that the lay person will become more active and also will occupy, play a more responsible role. We can in fact see this happen, or beginning to happen, even in the East. It has been a feature of Buddhist life and Buddhist work in the East ??? for 30 or 40 years passed. That the Buddhist layman in some cases, or in some individual cases, has come to play a much more active part that he ever did in the past. In the past, by the past I mean any time before the beginning of this century, the Buddhist layman had very little part to play, you hardly heard of a prominent Buddhist layman as a Buddhist, certainly not in the South-East Asian countries, unless he was a king and making magnificent endowments and that sort of thing, otherwise you didn't hear of him at all. But it has been quite a feature in a small way, of Buddhist life and Buddhist work in the Asian countries in this century, that lay people have taken an increasingly active part. One very active, very prominent Eastern lay Buddhist whom we here know quite well, a very prominent, very good example of the sort of thing I'm talking about is of course Dr Malawasekura??? the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in this country. One can even say that Dr Malawasekura in Ceylon is probably better known even than any monk, which is a state of affairs which simply would not have been possible 100 or 200 years ago, but it is a sign of the times. There aren't many like him but there are a few and it is significant.

If one has one's lay Buddhists more closely integrated in the Buddhist movement, more active and more responsible, then what will happen is that lay society, secular society as a whole, that is non-Buddhist will tend to be infiltrated more and more. The monk after all is a rather prominent figure, he can't sort of infiltrate without people knowing anything about it, because his robe at least gives him away at once, people on their guard. But in the case of a lay Buddhist, if he's quite consciously well-integrated into the Buddhist movement, if he has a definite role, a definite responsibility, well he may be sitting quiet at his desk in the office, in his blue suit, or grey suit, and noone will know that he is a Buddhist. He just sits there grimly awaiting his opportunity, they don't know, but anyway never mind. So that even in the course of discussion and in the course of conversation, he maybe drop in little hints, little ideas, not because he's doing it deliberately but because he can't help it which tends to point in the direction of Buddhism. One day someone will say to him "your way of looking at things seems quite interesting. What makes you think like that?" ??? he'll think "now the moment has come, this is it". So he'll say, wiping the sweat from his brow, "well, to tell the truth I'm a Buddhist." Now by that time of course they will have got used to his idea, they won't be too much shocked, he looks normal, looks ordinary after all. So he is acceptable, his ideas are

acceptable, but many people quite frankly shite fy (!!), er fight shy of people who appear ostensibly religious especially when they wear religious robe and so on, and one doesn't get the chance of getting near to them, but the lay person can. The lay person, especially the committed lay Buddhist, can infiltrate much better. This sort of topic, this sort of question, came up last week when we had our question and answer meeting, and replying I did make the point that we needed a sort of third order, a sort of order of committed lay people intermediate between the vast mass of what the Christians would call 'the unchurched' and the little inner circle of the Sangha with the third order just in between of people who have one foot firmly in the secular world, secular life, lay life, and the other very firmly within Buddhism,inside the vihara. I think we can say, I think it's not unreasonable prediction, that for quite a few years, if not generations to come, the Buddhist monastic order will be very very small. That isn't altogether a disadvantage, provided of course the calibre is sufficiently high. It is of course important that those monks whom one does have shouldn't have to spend their time doing things which the lay person, the dedicated committed lay person can do just as well. For instance to give an example which some of you may know about, this question of lectures to outside groups. Here at the vihara we get so many enquiries, so many invitations to give a lecture, give a talk, sometimes 10 minutes, sometimes 15, sometimes a whole hour, to some school or socialist group or Conservative association, they just want one talk on Buddhism. Now obviously this is the sort of engagement with which the lay person, the dedicated lay Buddhist, a member of our third order, can very very well cope. Sometimes he can cope better than a monk. When a monk turns up sometimes people are a little surprised, they wonder "well, why is he wearing a yellow robe? How is it he comes to be living in a monastery?" But if they find that the Buddhist is someone who looks like themselves if he's wearing an ordinary suit or if she is wearing ordinary dress, quite normal, people are sometimes a little more receptive, at least at first, this counts very much. So there isn't a great deal of work of this sort which the lay people, lay Buddhists, fully integrated into the movement, can do, freeing of course the monks for other work – either their own meditation or study, or freeing them to be the teachers of the teachers who are going out and doing all the infiltration. These were just a few of the thoughts which occurred to me in connection to the Bishop of Woolwich's third chapter on a theology for the lay people, or the laity.

The 4th and last chapter has also got an interesting title, the Bishop calls it "Living in the overlap". I don't know whether any of you know what an overlap is, but I gather from what the Bishop has written, that an overlap is a period of transition, it is a period of overlapping between the old and the new, that is a traditional religious approach and a modern, secular approach. So we Buddhists of course, it's not just the Christians, we Buddhists are also living in this overlap. There's the overlap in all our lives between the traditional, the religious and the modern, the secular – we live as it were all the time in two worlds. Of course in the case of English Buddhists, we can say that we live in a double overlap. We're not only living in the overlap between what we may call the Christian and the Buddhist post-Christian period, but in the overlap between Christian and post-Christian on the one hand and Buddhist on the other. So we do live in a sort of double overlap. I for one don't regret that, in fact we may say that living in a double overlap is doubley exciting because it's double the challenge and no doubt we'll have a double reformation, and also of course the double responsibility. One has to confess, in fact we all have to confess, that it isn't easy to be a Buddhist in this country, the odds are all against it, if you do manage to be a Buddhist, if you've got a certain amount of backbone, a certain amount of intelligence, a certain amount of sheer obstinancy and indifference to what other people think. It certainly isn't easy to preach Buddhism,it isn't easy as I've said before to preach any religion nowadays, and to preach a religion like Buddhism,an exotic religion, coming from the East, it certainly isn't easy for anybody. We certainly have to carry on somehow. In this connection we may say that a vihara like this one should be thought of more along the lines of a sort of spiritual research station. This station rather than a centre for reasons which we'll be able to divine no doubt, we shouldn't think that the vihara is the Buddhist equivalent of the local parish church with a congregation of the faithful flocking there every Sunday, hearing words of wisdom or receiving their weekly dose

of uplift and then going away. It isn't like that, it is as I've said, or should be a spiritual research station. In fact the vihara should be a central, the centre, even of the new reformation for Buddhism and for Buddhists. Now I'm sure that for us, for all of us here, the Bishop of Woolwich's ideas and suggestions in his book 'The New Reformation' are of considerable interest and value, even of help, to us in our life and our work here. As I said at the beginning, my last on Buddhism on the Bishop of Woolwich was tape-recorded and eventually sent to the Bishop himself. I'm afraid on this occasion I rather hope that the tape won't be sent to the Bishop, because I feel that his book has been covered rather inadequately. However I'm also quite sure that if Mr Revel gets it into his head to send it to the Bishop, well nothing is going to stop him. One might say that I had once thought of giving a talk on Buddhism and Roman Catholicism but I didn't dare to do so because I knew that Mr Revel would send it to the pope, but in any case as most of you know already, I shall be away for a few weeks having a rest from lectures, a rest even from the Bishop of Woolwich, but as you all know also while the cat is away, the mice do tend to play. So perhaps this tape will be sent afterall, let us see. While I'm away of course – this is just by way of conclusion – the Sunday meetings will continue and I hope that all of you will continue to come. Announcements about my own future lectures will be made a little later on but perhaps I can tell you now that they will recommence as from the 21st of August.