

The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path

Lecture 48: Reason and Emotion in the Spiritual Life: Right Resolve

Mr Chairman and Friends

In our present series of talks we are studying stage by stage or aspect by aspect the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. We are studying it in the first place because the concept of a path, the concept of a way leading from a state of ignorance to a state of Enlightenment, from darkness to light, is central to the whole philosophy of Buddhism. And we are studying the Noble Eightfold Path because it is one of the most important, one of the most significant and best known formulations of that path or way leading to Enlightenment. And we've embarked on this study, on this course of talks, for the benefit of both old and new friends and members - for the benefit of the new so that they can get at least a glimpse, a general idea of very basic Buddhist teaching which is so often neglected - and for the benefit of old members and friends so that they can revise what they have already learned so they can brush up on things they have perhaps understood for many years, and perhaps prepare themselves, little by little, to pass on their knowledge and understanding to others in due course.

Now last week we considered the first stage or the first aspect of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, which was, of course, Right Understanding, or as we saw it should be more properly translated Perfect Vision. We saw that Perfect Vision represents not just an intellectual, not just a theoretical understanding of the principles of Buddhism, we saw it's much more than that - it represents the initial spiritual insight and experience which sends us off on our whole religious quest and compels us or impels us to tread the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. And this vision, this insight, this experience, pertains to, or has as its object, the nature, the true nature, of existence, of life itself.

We also saw last week that this insight into the nature of existence, this experience of the reality of things, can be expressed in two different ways, can be expressed in terms of images, can be expressed also in terms of abstract ideas, in terms of concepts, in terms, we saw, of images, Perfect Vision is represented by that great Buddhist symbol of the Wheel of Life, depicting the round of mundane existence by the figure or the image of the Buddha himself or a sacred circle, as it were of Buddhas, a mandala of Buddhas, as well as by the image or symbol or figure of the Path. And then again we saw that in terms of concepts this vision, this insight, this experience, is represented by the principal doctrinal categories of Buddhism, which are not something worked out intellectually but which are something which try to embody a vision, an experience of the true nature of things. And among these doctrinal categories, among the most important of them, we saw, were the Four Truths of suffering, its cause, its cessation and the way to its cessation. Then the three characteristics of existence, of conditioned existence - that it is impermanent, painful and without reality - then the four kinds of *sunyata* from the Mahayana point of view. All these we saw were attempts to represent on the intellectual level in conceptual terms what is essentially an experience, a vision, a Perfect Vision of the nature of things.

We also studied more incidentally the connection between Perfect Vision and the seven other stages of the Noble Eightfold Path. And we saw that if the first, if Perfect Vision, represents the initial, spiritual insight and experience, all the others, all the other seven steps, the other seven stages or aspects of the path represent a permeation, as it were, or penetration of all aspects of our being, all aspects of our life, in their height and in their depth, by that insight, by that vision and by that experience. This first step of the Eightfold Path, Perfect Vision, we saw also comprises what is technically called the Path of Vision, whereas all the other seven steps or seven stages comprise what is known as the Path of Transformation by following which all the aspects, all the levels, of one's being are transformed into an Enlightened being in accordance with the Path of Vision, the spiritual insight and experience which we have developed. And by following both these paths, the Path of Insight and the Path of Transformation or the Path of Vision and the Path of Transformation, Enlightenment is attained.

So so much ground we covered in our talk last week. This is just to refresh your memories, those of you who were here, and just to acquaint you, those of you who were not here last week, with how far we have proceeded to date.

Now today we come to the second stage or second aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path. And this is *amyak-samkalpa* as it is called in Sanskrit or *samma samkappa* as it is called in Pali. And this is usually translated as Right Resolve as in our printed programme, or Right Resolution. I shall have something to say a little later on about the correct translation of this term.

With this stage, with the stage of *samyak-samkalpa*, we come to one of the most important questions, not to say problems, in the whole of the spiritual life, and this is the question of reason and emotion. We all know from our own experience that it is comparatively easy to understand intellectually or theoretically a religious or a philosophical teaching. It may be quite abstruse, it may be quite complex, it may even be intrinsically difficult, but with a bit of mental exertion, with a bit of systematic study we usually can manage to understand without too much difficulty. But when we come to put that teaching, when we come to put that doctrine, that philosophy, that

religion, into practice then we find that this is very much more difficult indeed. In this connection there's an anecdote which I often relate, some of you may not have heard it, illustrating this point from Buddhist history, from China in fact. It appears that in ancient times in China a number of Indian monks used to go from India to China to preach the doctrine and it seems that at one period of Chinese history there was a very pious Chinese Emperor who was always very eager to welcome great sages and teachers from India. And one day it so happened that one of the greatest of the Indian teachers turned up in the capital of China, and the Emperor as soon as he heard the news was very pleased indeed. He thought he'd have a wonderful philosophical discussion with this newly arrived teacher. So the teacher was invited to the palace, received with all pomp and ceremony and respect, and when all the formalities were over the teacher and the Emperor took their seats together and the Emperor put his first question. He said, 'Tell me what is the fundamental principle of Buddhism?' Then he sat back to get it from the horse's mouth as it were. So the teacher said, 'Ceasing to do all evil, learning to do good, purifying the heart, this is the fundamental principle of Buddhism!' So the Emperor was rather taken back, he'd heard all that before you see - usually we've heard it all before. So he said 'Is that all? Is this the fundamental principle of Buddhism?' so the teacher said, 'Yes that's all, cease to do evil, learn to do good, purify the heart. It's as simple as that.' But the Emperor said, 'But this is so simple even a child of three can understand that!'. So the teacher said. 'yes your majesty that is true, even a child of three can understand this. But', he said, 'Even an old man of eighty cannot put it into practice!' So this little story illustrates this great difference. We find it very easy to understand, we can understand the Abhidharma, we can understand the Madhyamika, we can understand the Yogacara, we can understand Plato, we can understand Aristotle, understand the Four Gospels, understand everything, but to put even a little of all that into practice, to make it operative in our lives, this we find very very difficult indeed. You probably all know, you probably all remember, the famous exclamation in this connection of St. Paul, who in one of his epistles says succinctly, very much to the point, 'That which I would, that I do not. That which I would not, that I do'. So he knows what he ought to do but is unable to do it, and that which he knows he should not do, that he cannot help doing. So again we see this tremendous, this terrible disparity between understanding and practice.

And we may say that this is not exceptional, not just a question of the Chinese Emperor or St. Paul, we may say that all religious people find themselves, at some time or other, and sometimes even for years together, in this quite terrible and tragic predicament. They know the truth rationally. They know it from A to Z and from Z back to A. They can talk about it, they can write books about it, they can give lectures about it, but they are unable to put it into practice. And this can be for those who are sincere, a source of very great suffering. They feel as it were, 'Well, I know this, I know it very very well, I see it so clearly, but I'm unable to put it into practice, I'm unable to carry it out'. It's as though there was some blind spot in themselves, it's as though there was some X factor which was obstructing their efforts all the time. No sooner do they lift themselves up a few inches then they slip back, sometimes it seems a mile.

So this is what happens. So what is the reason for this situation? Why does this happen? Why this terrible gulf? Why this terrible chasm between our theory and our practice, our understanding and our operation? Why are we, most of the time, most of us, unable to act in accordance with what we know is true and what we know is right? Why do we fail so miserably again and again, and yet again? Now the answer to this question is to be sought, we may say, in the very depths of human nature. We say that we know something but how do we know it, in what way do we know it? We know it with the conscious mind, we know it with the rational part of ourselves. We know it theoretically, intellectually, abstractly, but then we must recollect that man is not just his conscious mind. He's not just reason. He may like to think that but he isn't just reason. There is another part of him - a part which is no less important than his reason and which is perhaps a much *larger* part of him than he cares to think and this other, this more important or no less important, this *larger* part, is made up of instinct, made up of emotion, made up of volition, and is, we may say, more unconscious than conscious; and this part, this wider, this deeper, this no less important part of ourselves, this is not touched at all by all our rational, our intellectual knowledge. This part as it were goes its own way, and usually it goes its own way dragging the mental part, still of course protesting, along with it. So this is what happens. It's obvious that we just cannot go against the emotions. The emotions are stronger than reason. So if we want to put into practice what we know to be right, what we know to be true, we have to enlist, in one way or another, the cooperation of the emotions. We have to be able to tap those deeper sources within ourselves and harness them also to the religious, to the spiritual life, so that we may implement what we know to be right and true. Only then shall we be able to put what we know into actual practice. And this we may say, in a sense, is the central problem for most people at least of the spiritual life: to find emotional equivalents for our intellectual understanding. Let me repeat that - *to find emotional equivalents for our intellectual understanding*. And until we do that, until we have done that, no further spiritual progress is possible.

Now this is why *samyak-samkalpa* comes as the second stage or second aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path - immediately after Perfect Vision. We've provisionally rendered *samyak-samkalpa* as Right Resolve just as we've provisionally rendered *samyak-drsti* as Right Understanding, but of course it's quite inadequate. There are a number of other renderings used by various translators. They sometimes render *samkalpa* as thought, sometimes as intention, sometimes as purpose, sometimes as plan, sometimes as aspiration. But none of these is really very satisfactory. *Samkalpa*, a word which exists in all the modern Indian languages, in the same form is really *will*. And *samyak-samkalpa* represents, we may say, the whole volitional and emotional side of our being. This is clear

incidentally from the traditional discussions of this particular stage or aspect of the Path. It's clear that they all refer to the emotional and volitional aspect of our nature. *Samyak*, as we saw last week, doesn't mean just Right but whole or perfect or if you like integral or complete. So *samyak-samkalpa* is not just right resolve, it's more like perfect will or integral emotion and it represents, we may say, the bringing of the whole emotional life, the bringing of the whole emotional and volitional side of our being into harmony with Perfect Vision, into harmony with our vision of the true nature of existence.

Last week we saw that the Noble Eightfold Path consists of two sections which I've already referred to this evening. First of all the Path of Vision and then the Path of Transformation. The Path of Vision corresponds to the first stage of the Eightfold Path, that is to say Perfect Vision - and the Path of Transformation corresponds, as I've already explained, to all the other seven stages. Now Perfect Emotion, *samyak-samkalpa* is the first stage of the Path of Transformation. And as I've said it represents the transformation of our emotional nature in accordance with Perfect Vision, and we may say that in a sense this Perfect Emotion mediates between Perfect Vision, the first step of the Eightfold Path, and the last six stages of the Eightfold Path. In other words we may say that we cannot practise the path, cannot follow the path, cannot really practise Right Speech or Right Action and so on, until we have first of all transformed our whole emotional nature - and in that way derived energy for the remaining stages of the path. And this is why the problem of reason and emotion is central in the whole spiritual life. In other words, to put it very simply, to reduce it to elementary terms, there's really no spiritual life until the heart also is involved. It doesn't matter how active the brain is, it doesn't matter how much we've understood, until the heart is involved, until we begin to *feel* what we've understood, until our *emotions* are engaged there's no spiritual life, properly speaking.

Now what is this Perfect Emotion? What is *samyak-samkalpa*? Before going into this I want to clear up two possible misunderstandings. I've spoken of involving the emotions in the spiritual life but this is not to be understood in a purely negative and psychological sense. It doesn't mean the involvement of crude, untransformed emotions with irrational pseudo-religious concepts and attitudes. Let me just give you an example of the sort of thing I have in mind which *samyak-samkalpa* isn't. Suppose for instance - this is just an ordinary example, but it illustrates very well the sort of thing I have in mind - suppose somebody hears in some way or other from some source or other that church halls - you know every church has a hall attached to it - so someone hears that church halls are being used on Sunday evenings for dances. So what then happens? This person gets all hot under the collar, as they say, he's very upset that the Sabbath is being desecrated, the church hall is being used for a dance. So what does he do in his indignation and excitement? He writes a letter to *The Times*. Now you may say that his emotions are certainly involved, he's got all worked up about it, he really feels that the Sabbath is being desecrated and all these disreputable young people actually dancing in a church hall on a Sunday evening, and who knows what happens afterwards, he may get very worked up about that indeed and he may fire off one of these letters to *The Times* which are so famous denouncing the immorality of the younger generation and so on and predicting the downfall of - well I was going to say the British Empire but anyway you know the sort of thing I have in mind. His emotions are thoroughly involved, he's really worked up, and he really lets himself go - but there's no question here of Perfect Emotion. You may say his emotions are involved in a sort of religious issue but there's no Perfect Emotion in the Buddhist sense because there's no Perfect *Vision*. There's only a set, only a bundle of prejudices and rationalisations in the name of religion. So it's just the same with those famous institutions, the Inquisition, the Crusades - lots of emotion was involved there, some people think it's religious emotion but it's not Perfect Emotion from the Buddhist point of view; ostensibly connected with religion, yes, but not connected, not representing Perfect Emotion in the Buddhist sense at all. So this is the first sort of misunderstanding that we have to guard against.

Secondly, it's not possible to transform one's emotional nature by strength of intellectual or rational conviction - you can't as it were reason or *argue* yourself into a state of Perfect Emotion. One's emotions can be thoroughly transformed only by Perfect Vision - which as I explained last week is a spiritual insight or spiritual experience. They can't be transformed by intellectual understanding. So Perfect Vision therefore is the first step or first stage of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Now let's come on to Perfect Emotion proper. And as I've tried to make clear it represents the descent of Perfect Vision into our emotional nature in such a way as to transform it totally. Now Perfect Emotion has two aspects - there's a positive aspect and there's a negative aspect. And let us deal first of all with the negative aspect - and this consists of what we call in Pali *nekkhama*, *avyapada* and *avihimsa*. I'll explain what these terms mean.

Nekkhamma is non-desire or renunciation. Now this is extremely important. As we've already seen Perfect Emotion follows Perfect Vision - Vision into the true nature of things, the nature of existence. So one aspect of Perfect Vision, as we saw last week, is insight into the unsatisfactory nature of conditioned existence, mundane existence, or life as we usually live it. So this sort of insight should have some sort of practical result. And this practical result of this sort of insight is what we call *nekkhamma* - giving up or even giving away - it represents a decrease of craving within us, consequent upon our vision of the true nature of conditioned things. We see their inadequacy and because we see their inadequacy we become less attached to them, crave for them less. And our grip, as it were,

our grip which is usually so tight, so convulsive, on mundane things and worldly things, starts lessening. Craving is after all the basic, unwholesome, emotional state. So we should examine ourselves in this respect and we should ask ourselves a very pertinent question. We should ask ourselves, 'since I became interested in Buddhism or since I started considering myself to be a Buddhist what have I given up? If I have developed some sort of Insight, if I am really convinced, not just intellectually but spiritually, that this life, and the things of this life, the things of this world, are not everything, are not fully satisfactory, then my hold on them should have been loosened. So what have I given up since I've started taking Buddhism seriously?' There should be some difference. We shouldn't be going along just in the same old way that we *were* going along before. If there's no difference it means there hasn't been even a glimpse of Perfect Vision. We haven't really seen into the true nature of things. It means our interest so far, though it may be a genuine one, is still really an intellectual one, a theoretical one - even an academic one. Nothing more than that. Of course one must also say that there cannot be any one uniform pattern of renunciation. No one has the right to say 'Because you haven't given up this or that particular thing therefore you haven't any Perfect Vision, you're not a practising Buddhist.' Different people will give up different things. But the net result must be the same. The net result must be to make life simpler and less cluttered up. Most of us have got so many unnecessary things. If you were to take out a piece of paper just here and now and jot down all the things which you have, which you possess, which you own, which are not really necessary then it will probably be a rather long list. But you probably think many many times before actually giving any of them up. Sometimes people think in terms of sacrifice, they think with a great painful wrench you give something up. But it shouldn't be like that, there's really no such thing as giving up from a Buddhist point of view. It's not so much giving up as growing up. It's not a sacrifice to the adolescent to give up the child's toys. So it shouldn't be a sacrifice for the spiritually mature person or a person who is at least verging on spiritual maturity to give up the toys with which people usually amuse themselves. I don't suggest we should do it in a violent or dramatic fashion, not like the gentleman I heard about the other day on the radio who climbed up the Eiffel Tower and threw his television set off the viewing platform. He was protesting against the quality of French television programmes. In this country, of course, I understand television programmes are much better. We don't have to protest in this way, but at least his action indicated a certain degree of detachment from his television set which is perhaps quite admirable. But the point I'm trying to make is that if we really have some sort of vision, Perfect Vision, of the true nature of things, and if we have seen the inadequacy of material things and worldly things, we surely can expect that our hold upon some of these things will be relaxed, and that we shall be quite willing and quite happy to let some of them go. To have just one car - and so on, I need not go into any details.

Secondly, the second aspect of this negative Perfect Emotion is *avyapada* or non-hate. *Vyapada* is literally 'doing harm'; therefore hatred. Hatred as we all know is very strongly connected, very closely connected, with craving. And very often we find that hatred or antagonism in any of its numerous forms is at bottom frustrated craving. We see this very, very clearly in the case of children. If you don't give them something that they want very much they just fly into a rage, into a sort of tantrum. Adults don't usually do this, their reactions are not usually so simple and uncomplicated. Their cravings of course in any case are much more complex. They don't crave just for material things, but there's a craving for success, craving for recognition, craving for praise, and a craving for affection. And when these things are denied, especially when they've been denied for a long time then a mood of frustration sets in and settles in. And this produces in the case of many people a deep bitterness, fault-finding, indulgence in constant criticising of other people, all sorts of negative activities such as nagging and so on. But with the decrease of craving, with the loosening of our grip as it were, on many material things, hatred also decreases because the possibility of frustration becomes less and less and less. So another question we should ask ourselves is 'since I became a Buddhist' or 'since I started taking a real interest in Buddhism have I at least become a little better tempered?' It's sometimes quite remarkable what changes, what even - I was going to say what miracles - can be worked. I remember not so long ago, some months ago, I noticed one gentleman was coming along to our meditation class with absolute regularity - and one day I commented upon this, and I said, 'It is so nice to see you every week, you come along so regularly, you never miss.' He said, 'No, my wife won't let me.' I said, 'How is that?' 'She said since I started meditating well she says my temper has become so much better, she just doesn't let me miss.' So I was very pleased to hear this, and not surprised, but certainly pleased that meditation could work, in such a short time, such wonders. So this is the sort of question, as I say, we should ask ourselves, whether in the office, or at home, or with our friends, we've become better tempered. And certainly within the Buddhist circle itself, if the Buddhist circle itself becomes an arena of little misunderstandings and little tiffs and things like that, then it means that some people at least are not putting their Buddhism really into practice - don't have Perfect Vision, don't have Perfect Emotion.

Now lastly *avihimsa* or non-cruelty. *Himsa* is violence or harm and *vihimsa* is extreme deliberate infliction of pain and suffering. *Vihimsa* is a very strong word in Pali and Sanskrit, so we can best translate it as cruelty. Its connection with hatred is obvious but it's much worse than hatred because it generally connotes a wanton infliction of pain - or a positive pleasure in the infliction of pain. And in the Mahayana form of Buddhism at least cruelty, in this sense, is considered the greatest of all possible sins. Very often of course, especially in the case of children, it's due to simple thoughtlessness - they don't realise that other forms of life do suffer. So it is important that those of us who have dealings with children, whether as parents or as educators, should try to instill into children a sense of the fact that other living beings are *living* beings, they do feel, that they do suffer if you poke your finger into

their eye, or you stick a pin into them in a sensitive place - children don't always realise this. And sometimes if they see an animal that they'd just kicked, wriggling or howling they'd be quite amused because they don't realise that pain has been inflicted. So those who have anything to do with children should be very careful to see that they are brought up to understand that just as *they* feel suffering other forms of life too feel suffering.

There's a little incident in the life of the Buddha, illustrating this. Once, it is said, when the Buddha was going out of the monastery on his almsround he found a gang of boys tormenting a crow which had broken its wing. And they were tormenting it as boys usually do, and enjoying it. So the Buddha called to them and he just put a question, he said, 'If you're struck do you feel hurt?' They said, 'Yes.' So then the Buddha said, 'When you hit the crow the crow also feels hurt, so when you yourself feel pain and suffering why should you inflict it on another living being?' So a really simple lesson, but usually if you put it to the child in this way the child can understand and subsequently he can act upon that. And if this sort of thing is not checked at an early age, at an early stage of growth, it can get worse and worse and worse - culminating in even quite terrible atrocities.

I don't know whether any of you know them, some of you probably do, but I remember seeing some time ago, Hogarth's four rather terrible paintings of the four stages of cruelty. The first one showed a gang of boys tormenting a dog, and the boys progressed as their lives went on and in the fourth and last stage you saw one of them, now grown up, committing a murder. This is where it had led to. He'd started by tormenting a dog, he finished up by committing a murder. So we shouldn't make light of this sort of connection, and we shouldn't think when we see a child tormenting a dog, or even kicking a dog or a cat, that, oh, it doesn't matter, it'll grow out of it. We must be careful to explain, for it is here that the seeds of violence and cruelty are sown. So here's another question for us to ask ourselves: whether we, since we took up Buddhism or took up with Buddhism, have become less cruel - and cruelty, remember, is not just physical, it's also verbal, so many people indulge in very harsh, unkind, cutting, sarcastic speech - this is also a form of cruelty.

In the same way, we may say, it should be impossible for a Buddhist - that is to say one in whom Perfect Vision and Perfect Emotion have arisen - to indulge in things like blood sports. If you tell me that you know the Abhidharma very well, and at the same time you go off indulging or engaging in blood sports every Sunday, I shan't take your knowledge or your understanding of the Abhidharma very seriously. Now this is an extreme case, most people nowadays don't indulge in blood sports, though there are still some unfortunately who do, and who try not only to condone them but even defend them. But from a Buddhist point of view, from the point of view of Right Emotion or Perfect Emotion this is quite inadmissible on account of the very definite wanton cruelty involved.

Another connected point is of course this whole question of vegetarianism. Many people just feel that they cannot take meat or they cannot take fish because here again cruelty is involved, very often deliberate and wanton. There is no hard and fast rule in Buddhism that if you want to be Buddhist you must be a vegetarian, but certainly a sincere Buddhist - one who is trying to follow the Eightfold Path, in whom Perfect Vision has arisen, in whom Perfect Emotion is beginning to stir - will certainly make some sort of effort, some sort of move in this direction, because as he progresses on the spiritual path his own heart, his own feelings will become sensitive so that eventually things like eating meat just drop off of their own accord.

Now so much for the negative aspect of Perfect Emotion. We come now to the positive aspect, and this consists of a number of wholesome emotions all connected. First of all come the positive counterparts of renunciation, non-hatred and cruelty, which are known in Pali as *dana*, *maitri* and *karuna*, that is to say giving, love, and compassion. Then comes sympathetic joy and tranquillity, *mudita* and *upeksa*, which are the remaining two *brahma-viharas*. And finally *sraddha* - faith and devotion. So I want to say just a few words about each of these.

First of all *dana*, or giving or generosity. In a sense, we may say, this is the basic Buddhist virtue. If you don't exhibit this virtue you can hardly call yourselves Buddhist. *Dana* consists not so much in the *act* of giving, much less so in the quantity of what you give, so much as in the will to give, the feeling to give, the feeling to share, the feeling that you want to give something to somebody sometimes. And very often this feeling to give, to share, is the first manifestation of the spiritual life, the first sign that craving and attachment have decreased at last, at least to some extent. Now *dana* is discussed at great length and very technically in Buddhist literature, whole volumes have been written about *dana*, but we've no time to go into details. There are many different forms of *dana* or giving and the Buddhist scriptures, the Buddhist texts, enumerate them all. First of all there's the giving of material things, sharing what you have of the good things of life, sharing food clothing and so on. In ancient times this aspect of *dana* was very, very important indeed. It's not so important now, though it's still an aspect which we shouldn't neglect. Some people in the East try to give something of a material nature every day, try to give either a quantity of food to a beggar - and there are many beggars in the East - or a small sum of money, or at least a cup of tea, and so on. So that every day they have the practice of giving something, sharing something on the material plane. Some people in this country like to feed the birds every day; this is another manifestation of the same thing.

Then we can give time, we can give energy, we can give thought. These are also very important. Time is very precious. and if we give some of our time for the sake of others, to help other people, then this also is a form of *dana*, generosity or giving. Then there's the giving of knowledge in the sense of the giving of culture, education. This is always ranked very high in all the Buddhist countries. Intellectual gifts shouldn't be kept to oneself, should be shared, as it were, with all. All should be able to derive benefit from them. This was emphasised all the more in Buddhist India inasmuch as the Brahmin caste, the priest caste of Hinduism always tried to create a monopoly of knowledge and keep it to themselves, to keep the other castes in comparative ignorance and darkness and subservience. So Buddhism always stressed that knowledge, even secular knowledge, secular culture, shouldn't be a monopoly of any particular caste or class of people, but should be disseminated amongst the whole community. Another important kind of giving in Buddhist literature is fearlessness. This might strike you as a rather strange sort of gift. You can't of course hand around fearlessness on a plate or wrapped up in a little parcel with ribbon, but you can share with other people your own confidence. You can create among other people a feeling of fearlessness, or, as it were, security by your own very presence, your own very attitude. And Buddhism attaches very great importance to this - that you should be able to reassure people by your very presence, and this is a form of giving, this is a form of *dana*, a very important contribution, according to Buddhism, to the life of the community.

Then other forms of *dana* or giving which are mentioned include even life and limb itself - that one should be prepared to sacrifice, if necessary, for the sake of other people, for the sake of the Dharma, for the sake of the teaching, even if one is called upon to do so, one's own limbs, even one's own life. *Dana* or giving or generosity can go as far as this. And finally of course, transcending or surpassing even the gift of one's life and limbs, is what we call in Buddhism the gift of the Dharma, the gift of truth itself, the gift of the knowledge or the understanding of the way to Enlightenment, the way to emancipation, or the way to Buddhahood, the way to *nirvana*. This sort of knowledge, and the gift of this sort of knowledge, surpasses all other possible gifts.

So these are just some of the things which one can give, some of the ways in which one can give. And one can begin to see how vast, how comprehensive, the whole field is, and according to the Buddhist teaching one should be giving in some way or other, on some level or other, all the time. In the Buddhist East, in the Buddhist countries of the East, we may say, *dana*, or giving or generosity penetrates and permeates all aspects of social and religious life. If you go along to a temple to worship you don't go empty-handed. You go taking along flowers, you go taking along candles, taking along sticks of incense which you offer there. In the same way if you go to see a friend, even if it's only for a casual visit, you always take a present. I found myself when I was staying in Kalimpong and mixing much with Tibetan people that this was absolutely compulsory. A friend wouldn't think of appearing on your doorstep without a box of biscuits under his arm or something of that sort. So in this way this spirit or this feeling of giving, of sharing, penetrates, permeates all aspects of life in the East, in many of the Buddhist countries. No doubt all this does tend to become sometimes just a custom. And very often one may say there isn't very much feeling attached to it, but all the same when you're doing this sort of thing because you're expected to do it, all the time, sometimes every day in some form or other, then it does have some influence upon the mind, you get into the habit of giving. You get into the habit of sharing. You get into the habit of thinking a little bit about other people instead of all the time about yourself. So, so much for *dana* or giving or generosity.

Then secondly, *maitri* or love. The Sanskrit word *maitri* is derived from *mitra* which means a friend. And it's the kind of love, according to the Buddhist texts, which one feels for our very near and very dear intimate friend. In this country we may say the word friend and the word friendship have a rather tepid sort of connotation - they're rather feeble emotions - but it isn't like that in the East. In the East one may say *maitri* or friendship is a very powerful and a very positive emotion, and *maitri* is very often, in fact *usually*, defined as an overwhelming desire for the happiness, for the well-being of the other person. Not just the temporal well-being, not just the material happiness, but the spiritual well-being and spiritual happiness too. And one is exhorted in Buddhist literature, in Buddhist teaching, again and again, to develop this feeling of friendship - the sort of feeling which you have towards a near and dear friend - towards all living beings whatsoever. And we may say the phrase which sums up this - *sabbe satta sukhi hontu* - which we recite sometimes, at our meetings - may all beings be happy. This is, I won't say, the prayer but certainly the aspiration and the heartfelt wish of Buddhism and of all Buddhists - '*May all beings be happy*'. If one really has this in a heartfelt way, if you can really sincerely *feel* it, not just think about it but feel it then you have *maitri*. And in Buddhism, as we know, the development of *maitri* is not just left to chance. Sometimes people think, either you've got love for others or you haven't, and if you haven't got it that's just too bad, there's nothing you can do about it. But Buddhism doesn't look at it like this. In Buddhism there are definite exercises, definite practices for the development of *maitri*, for the development of love, what we call *maitri-bhavana*, and of course as some at least of you who have practised them know, they are not very easy - we don't find it very easy to develop love. But if we persist, if we succeed, then we find it very rewarding indeed.

Then thirdly, the third positive emotion - *karuna* or compassion. And compassion of course is closely connected with love. Love, we are told, changes into compassion, or is transformed into compassion when it's confronted by the suffering of someone who is loved. If you love someone, then if you suddenly see them suffering, at once your love is transformed into an overwhelming compassion. And compassion, *karuna*, according to Buddhism, is the

most spiritual of all the emotions. Compassion is characteristic of, above all, the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, all the enlightened ones, and certain Bodhisattvas in fact especially embody compassion, for instance Avalokitesvara which means 'the Lord who looks down in compassion'. He among the Bodhisattvas especially represents or incarnates compassion, a sort of compassion archetype. There are many forms of Avalokitesvara, but one of the most interesting is a form which may look rather bizarre to us but which is very expressive from a symbolical point of view, and this is the eleven-headed and thousand-armed form of Avalokitesvara. There are eleven heads at the centre, representing of course the cardinal points, that is to say North, South, East and West, four, the intermediate points - eight, then up and down - ten, and the central point, eleven. This represents compassion looking in all possible directions. And then a thousand arms because compassion can't do *too* much to help people. There's an interesting story how this developed, how this particular form arose - and one may say it isn't just mythology but it is based in a way on the facts of spiritual psychology. It is said that once upon a time the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was just contemplating the sorrows of sentient beings. He looked out over the world and he saw people suffering in so many ways, saw some dying untimely deaths, by fire, by shipwreck, by execution; saw others suffering from the pangs of bereavement, from loss, from misery of various kinds, hunger, thirst, starvation. So it says a tremendous compassion welled up in his heart, became so unbearably intense, as it were, that his whole head shattered into pieces, shattered into eleven pieces, shattered into eleven heads, looking in these eleven directions. And then his thousand arms were manifested to help all those beings in suffering. So this very beautiful conception of the eleven-headed and thousand-armed Avalokitesvara tries to express in this way the essence of compassion, how the compassionate heart feels for the sorrows and the sufferings of the world.

Another very beautiful Bodhisattva figure embodying compassion, this time a feminine form, is Tara. Tara means the saviouress or the star. And a very beautiful legend relates that she was born, as it were, out of the tears of Avalokitesvara as on another occasion he wept over the sorrows and miseries of the world. Now one may think that these are just stories and the sophisticated may smile a little at them. But they're not just stories, they're not even just illustrative stories, they have very deep symbolical - one might even say archetypal - significance, and represent, by embodying in very concrete form, the nature of compassion - which is so important. And in the Mahayana form of Buddhism, we may say, in the teaching of the Great Way, the very greatest possible importance is attached to compassion. In one of the sutras in fact the Buddha is represented as saying the Bodhisattva, that is to say one who aspires to be a Buddha, should not be taught too many things. Then the Buddha goes on to say, if he is taught only compassion, if he learns only compassion, this is quite enough. No need to know about Conditioned Co-production, no need to know about even the Eightfold Path. No need to know about *Madhyamika*, *Yogacara*, *Abhidharma*; if the Bodhisattva knows only compassion, if his heart is filled with compassion and nothing else, that is enough. And in many other texts the Buddha says if one has only compassion everything else will follow, all other virtues, all other spiritual qualities, all other spiritual acquisitions, if one has only compassion for the sufferings of other living beings, in due course everything else will follow - even Enlightenment will be attained.

This is illustrated by a very moving Zen story from modern Japan. We are told that there was a young man, who was a great wastrel, ran through all his money, having had a good time, became thoroughly disgusted and fed up with everything including himself. So in the end he thought, 'All right, what can I do? - there's nothing left for it - go to the monastery, go to the Zen monastery, become a monk.' That was the last resort. He didn't *want* to become a monk but there was nothing else to do. So he went along, I suppose he knelt in the snow outside the gate for three days. That's what we're told these people have to do - but anyway in the end he saw the abbot. The abbot was a grim old soul. So he listened to what the young man had to say. '...Hmm...' didn't say very much, but when the young man had told him everything he said, 'Hmmm, well, is there *anything* that you're any good at?' So the young man thought and thought and he said in the end 'Yes I'm not so bad at chess'. So the abbot said, 'all right', so he called for his attendant and he said, 'Go and call such and such a monk'. So the monk came. He was an old monk, been a monk for many years. Then the abbot said to the attendant, 'Bring my sword', so the sword was brought and it was put in front of the abbot. So then the abbot said to the young man and the old monk, 'You two will now play a game of chess and whoever loses I shall cut off his head with this sword.' So that surprised them, especially the young man. They looked at him and they saw that he *meant* it. So the young man made his first move. The old monk, who wasn't a bad player, made his move. The young man made his. The old monk made his. And after a little while the young man felt the perspiration pouring down his back and trickling over his heels. So he concentrated, put everything he had into that game, *concentrated*. And he managed to beat back that other old monk. So he drew a great breath of relief - 'Ah, the game isn't going too badly.'

But just then when he was feeling he was going to win, he looked up, and he saw the face of that old monk. So, as I've said he was an old man, an old monk. He'd been a monk maybe for twenty, thirty, forty years. He'd undergone much suffering, many austerities, he'd meditated very much. So his face was thin and worn and austere. So the young man thought. 'I've been an absolute wastrel, my life is no good to anybody. And this monk, he's led such a good life, and now he's going to have to die.' So a great *wave* of compassion came up. He felt so sorry for this old monk, cause he saw him just sitting there, playing this game, in obedience to the abbot's command, and now being beaten, and so he was going to have to die. So a tremendous compassion welled up in this young man's heart, and he thought 'I can't allow this.' So he deliberately made a false move. The monk made a move. The young

man deliberately made another false move. And it was clear he was losing, he couldn't retrieve his position. And suddenly the abbot upset the board. He said, 'No one has won and no one has lost.' He said to the young man, 'You've learned two things today - concentration and compassion'. He said, 'since you've learned compassion, you'll do!' So this story illustrates also that if you only have compassion - the young man he'd led such a wretched, such a wasted life, but he was capable of compassion - there was hope for him. He was even ready to give up his own life rather than let the monk sacrifice his - there was such compassion deep down in the heart of this apparently worthless young man. And the abbot saw all this and thought no, we've got a budding Bodhisattva here. So this is how he dealt with him. So this is compassion.

Then *mudita* or sympathetic joy. This is the happiness that we feel in other people's happiness. If we see other people happy we should feel happy too. But unfortunately this isn't the case. Usually, very often, in fact, it has been said by some cynic that we feel a secret satisfaction in the misfortunes of our friends. And this is only too true. So next time someone tells you about some stroke of bad luck that they've had just watch your own reactions. You'll usually see just for an instant, just for a flash, that little quiver of satisfaction and then of course the conventional reactions come and smother out your first real reaction. This is what happens. So you have to try to eliminate this sort of thing, by awareness, and also by a sort of positive effort to share other people's happiness. In a general way we may say that joy or happiness is a characteristic Buddhist emotion. If you're not really happy, if you're not joyful at least on some occasions, again you can hardly be a Buddhist. In the East, you might find it rather strange to hear this, but in the East there's no association of religion with gloom. In this country, at least in the old days, people tended to associate religion with gloom. And they tended to think that the more serious and more solemn and the more sad you looked, the more religious you were. But if you went around happily and joyfully, especially on the Sabbath you were an irreligious, impious, pagan sort of person. I even heard, I don't know whether this is an exaggeration or not but in the old days in Scotland you could be prosecuted for laughing on the Sabbath. Well don't laugh at the Scots, it's almost as bad down here in England, and almost as bad among Buddhists, or at least it was. I remember the first time I attended a *Wesak* celebration in London I was appalled - people all sat there looking as though they'd come to a funeral. Their parents' funeral probably. And in the course of my own talk I made a few jokes and humorous references and people were in a way quite startled, some of them, and one or two of them did venture to smile or even to laugh but it was quite clear they weren't accustomed to that sort of thing. And I even went so far as to say in my talk: 'Well this is very strange. I've celebrated *Wesak* all over the Buddhist world. I've celebrated it in Singapore, Ceylon, in Nepal, in Kalimpong, with Tibetans, with Sikkimese, with Sinhalese, with Burmese, Thais, Chinese, Japanese, and I always find them happy on *Wesak* day. But everybody here today seems so sad. It's as though they weren't happy that the Buddha had gained Enlightenment.' So eventually they saw the point and I must say that since those days, this is three years ago, of course people, even Buddhists, in this country, have improved. And I must say that nowadays we do enjoy our *Wesak* celebrations and we don't regard the celebration of *Wesak* as a sort of penance, we do understand it's something to rejoice over, and perhaps we may say that the whole Buddhist movement even, in comparatively recent times, has assumed a more cheerful and joyful aspect compared with before. All right, so much for joy or happiness.

Now fifthly, *upeksa* or tranquillity, or more simply we may say peace. Peace, which is so rare, so difficult to get. The peace that passeth understanding, peace of mind. This is the fourth or last of the *brahma-viharas* or sublime states. And we usually again think of peace as something negative - we say, 'Oh leave me in peace' meaning 'Just let me alone'. We usually think that peace is just absence of noise, no disturbance. But really peace is something very, very, positive. It's no less positive than love, no less positive than compassion, no less positive than joy, or even more so according to Buddhist tradition. So peace is something, not just where something else isn't, but peace is a quality, a state of its own. We may say a state of positive - even dynamic - thrilling peace, which is nearer bliss than our usual conception of peace. So this also is a very important aspect of *samyak-samkalpa*, Perfect Emotion.

Now sixthly and lastly *sraddha*, which is faith and devotion. It isn't *belief* by the way. We may say that it's the emotional aspect of our total response to the truth, especially to the truth as embodied in certain symbols. And in Buddhism faith, devotion, is directed especially towards the *Three Jewels*, as we call them, the three most precious things - the Buddha, the enlightened teacher, the Dharma or the teaching of the way to Enlightenment, and the Sangha, the community of disciples treading the way to Enlightenment. And these three jewels have their appropriate symbols. The Buddha is symbolised by the Buddha image, the Dharma, the teaching, is symbolised by the scriptures, and the Sangha is symbolised by the members of the monastic order. And throughout the Buddhist East in all Buddhist countries these three symbols, these three representatives of the Three Jewels - the image, the scriptures, the monks - are treated with very great reverence indeed, not on their own account but on account of what they represent, what they symbolise.

Now we've seen a little earlier on that there are practices, there are exercises, for developing love, for developing *maitri*. And in the same way there are practices in Buddhism, as in other religions too, for developing faith and devotion. And these are what we call the devotional exercises such as our Sevenfold Puja with which we are concluding our Friday meeting each week, after we've had an interval for the light refreshments.

So I want to conclude this evening with just a few words on *the Sevenfold Puja*. As its name suggests and implies, it consists of seven parts, and these parts represent as it were a sequence of devotional moods and attitudes accompanied, where necessary, with appropriate ritual actions. First of all, *puja* or worship. This consists in the making of offerings. This is its essential feature. And in its simplest form the making of offerings consists simply of offering flowers, lights - whether lighted candles or lamps - and sticks of burning incense. There are other offerings also, such as what are known as the seven ordinary offerings, consisting of water for drinking, water for washing the feet, flowers, incense, light, perfume, food and sometimes also, eighthly, music. These are incidentally the ancient Indian offerings to the honoured guest. In fact, even today in India, if you visit anyone's house as an honoured guest they'll at once give you a glass of water to drink, because it's very hot usually in India and you're thirsty. And then they'll give you water for washing the feet, very often they'll come and wash your feet themselves, especially if you're a monk; because you've come over the dusty roads of India your feet are dirty, so they have to be washed. And then after that they present you with a garland of flowers as you must have seen in some of our slides. Whenever we had a Buddhist meeting or whenever we went to a Buddhist meeting among the ex-untouchables, a garland of flowers was offered. And then they light incense sticks to create a pleasant atmosphere, keep away flies and mosquitoes. Then light a lamp especially if it's evening time; then they offer perfume to sprinkle the body with, and of course a meal, food. And sometimes after the food a little music. So this is the way in India you entertain an honoured guest. So these seven or eight offerings to the honoured guest become in Buddhism the seven or eight religious offerings. And they're offered to the Buddha because the Buddha comes, as it were, as a guest into the world. He represents an irruption into the world from some higher plane. He represents in this mundane world something transcendental. So he's a sort of guest, he's treated and honoured as a sort of guest. And the offerings therefore assume these forms. Sometimes the seven or eight offerings are offered in kind on the altar. You've actually got water and perfume and flowers and incense and food. But more often, especially in Tibet, instead of the seven or eight offerings in kind they have seven bowls of water, just as we have on our own shrine here this evening. And this is what they represent: the seven or eight offerings to the honoured guest. The Buddha himself being conceived of in that way. So this is *puja* or worship - the making of offerings.

And then secondly *vandana*, which means obeisance or salutation, and this consists in paying respect with the body. Showing your respect in a bodily manner. Some people say it's enough to keep it all in the mind. They say it's enough to feel respect, to feel reverence for the Buddha in the mind. Now this is true, but if you feel it strongly enough you want to express it externally. If you like someone you don't want to keep it all in your mind, you express it externally. Because you're a totality, you're not just mind, you're body and speech too. So if you feel true veneration for the Buddha you won't want just to keep it within the mind. You'll spontaneously express it with your body, with your hands. So there are many forms of *vandana* or obeisance - from just joining the hands in salutation, as we do when we chant the Puja, to the full prostration, going right down on the floor which is done on ceremonial occasions. But whether we just put the hands together or just touch the finger tips together, or whether we go right down on the floor full length, all these things, all these attitudes, represent a humble and receptive attitude on our part - express our openness to the spiritual inspiration coming from the Buddha.

And then thirdly Going for Refuge. Going for Refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha which of course marks a sort of turning point in our spiritual life, represents a sort of committing of ourselves, taking the Buddha as the spiritual Ideal, the Dharma as the way to realise that, the Sangha as the community of those in whose company we shall realise that ideal. Going for Refuge represents, we may say, a total orientation of our whole life. Formal taking of the Refuges or formal Going for Refuge is done by repeating them after a monk plus certain *silas* or precepts, and this makes one what we call an *upasaka*, a lay brother or lay sister, which is the first grade or first level of the Buddhist Order. And we hope ourselves, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, to arrange fairly shortly for the first ordinations under our auspices to this level or this grade of the Buddhist order - lay brother or lay sister who goes for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Then fourthly, confession of faults. This is very important in all forms of Buddhism, its significance is psychological rather than theological. Many people, we know, suffer from repressed feelings of guilt. And because of these repressed feelings of guilt leading very often to self-hatred, they cannot develop love or *maitri*, at least not in its fullness. Now Buddhist monks, if they're conscious of any fault or shortcoming, confess among themselves, especially to their own teacher, their own guru; the lay people confess to their own people, or to the Buddha - not only confess but it is the custom, if one is conscious of any fault or shortcoming, to burn incense in front of the image of the Buddha and recite *sutras*. And to go on doing this until you feel free from the sense of guilt. This is very important psychologically. But it is pointed out that these practices do not absolve one from the consequences of the fault you've committed. You have to bear, you have to suffer the consequences, but you are free subjectively from the feeling of remorse and guilt and that is very important, because sometimes it poisons or vitiates one's whole spiritual life.

Fifthly, rejoicing in merit. This is complementary to the previous practice. If you think about your faults, if you contemplate your shortcomings and numerous backslidings too much or too often you may become a bit downhearted, a bit disheartened. So you should inspire yourself after that by recollecting the virtues of others. Thinking of the Buddhas, thinking of the Bodhisattvas, thinking of the lives they have led. Thinking of the

perfections which they have practised. Think, say, of Milarepa, his inspiring example, think of Hui Neng, think of Han Shan think of Hakuin, think if you like of various secular heroes and heroines whose lives have been an inspiration, who've lived for the benefit of others - people like Florence Nightingale or Elizabeth Fry, great humanitarians, great social reformers and so on. And think even of the virtues of ordinary people, just think over all your friends. Think sometimes how well they do act, how unselfish, how kind they are on occasions. And dwell on this side of their natures, and in this way learn to appreciate, learn to rejoice in the merits of all other living beings, from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas right down to ordinary people who happen to be your friends and neighbours. And this will give you a feeling of exhilaration, a feeling of, as it were, support, that you're not alone in the world, spiritually speaking, you're treading the same path that others have trodden, that others *are* treading successfully. And you'll feel buoyed up, as it were, in your own spiritual life, your own spiritual endeavour.

Then sixthly, entreaty and supplication. Now this is based on an episode in the Buddha's life according to legend when after his Enlightenment Brahma Sahampati, a certain deity, appeared before him and requested him to preach out of compassion for all living beings, to make known the truth he had discovered. Now we must understand the significance of this. It doesn't mean that the Buddha has to be reminded of what he has to do. The Buddha didn't really need Brahma Sahampati to come and tell him or advise him that he ought to preach. What it signifies - this episode and this part of the puja - is that the disciple must be ready, the disciple must really *want* the teaching, must entreat as it were the teacher, the Buddha, to give the teaching. It's said sometimes that when the disciple is ready the master will appear. So this particular part of the Puja, this episode, represents that readiness and that willingness to receive the teaching.

Now seventhly and lastly, the transference or dedication of merits and self-surrender. This consists in wishing or aspiring that whatever merit, whatever benefit, one has gained or derived from celebrating this Sevenfold Puja or any other religious act, whether it's observing the precepts, Going for Refuge, studying Buddhist philosophy, practising meditation, it means one wants to share the benefits of that with all other living beings. One isn't concerned just with one's own salvation. One hasn't just got one's eye on nirvana for one's own sake. One wants to gather up as it were the whole of humanity, all living beings, and help them also, contribute to their evolution in the direction of the goal of *nirvana*. There's no religious individualism. When you practise any religious exercise you should feel, as it were, that all other living beings are practising with you. There's a particular exercise in the Mahayana for this. When you do a religious exercise, you should feel, you should visualise that everybody else is doing it with you and sharing in the benefits with you. If you sit to meditate think everybody else is meditating. When you chant the Buddha's praises think everybody else is chanting. When you recite a mantra think everybody else is reciting. And in this way have the feeling of sharing whatever benefits you derive from your own spiritual exercises with all other people. And this of course paves the way for what we call the Bodhisattva vow, the vow whereby one takes upon oneself a resolution that one will not gain Enlightenment for one's own self, one's own sake only, but that one will take with one, carry with one, all living beings whatsoever so that all enter Enlightenment, all gain *nirvana*, all achieve Supreme Buddhahood.

So this is the Sevenfold Puja. A sequence, a very beautiful sequence of emotional, devotional, attitudes, to which we give expression in appropriate forms of words, as you'll hear later on this evening if you care to stay and participate in our Sevenfold Puja when we celebrate it. On special occasions the Sevenfold Puja can be celebrated on a very grand scale as it were, with magnificent offerings and so on. But for daily use we have a simplified version and so far as we're concerned in our public meetings and meetings among ourselves we follow a middle way - we don't have anything very grand, at the same time it's not as starkly simple as it might be if we were doing it just on our own.

Now time is getting on, we've covered quite a lot of ground tonight. We've been studying, of course, Perfect Emotion. We've been concerned all this time with Perfect Emotion, and we've seen that Perfect Emotion, the second step, the second stage or second aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path, represents the transformation by Perfect Vision, by our insight into experience of the true nature of things, of our whole emotional and volitional nature and attitude. And we saw that this Right, this Perfect Emotion has got two aspects, a positive one and a negative one: the negative one consisting of freedom from craving, freedom from hatred, freedom from cruelty, and the positive one consisting in the very positive emotions of generosity, the impulse to give, love, compassion, joy, peace, and finally faith and devotion. As our vision, as our Perfect Vision soaks and penetrates, as it were, into our emotional nature, these are the fruits which will gradually one by one come forth.

Now one last word before we close. Most of the positive emotions which I've just mentioned, are what are also called social emotions. In other words they are emotions which refer to other people, emotions which arise in the course of our relationships, with our intercourse with other people. We don't just feel them alone, they spring up as it were between us and other people, spring up as it were in the group. So these emotions love, compassion, joy and so on, these are much more easily cultivated in the group. If we just stay on our own, if we just sit at home trying to be all loving and compassionate and joyous, it won't be so easy. It's much more easy doing it in the group, when you've got other people around you, at least sometimes with friendly and happy faces, and this is one of the reasons why we have in Buddhism a spiritual community, a spiritual group if you like. Otherwise you might just

as well stay at home reading Miss Horner's or Dr Conze's excellent translation [short gap in original recording].....

We can't really develop these social emotions, these positive emotions, this Perfect Emotion by ourselves. I don't say it's impossible but for 99.9% of people it is practically impossible. So this is why as I say we have a spiritual community, a Sangha, an Order, because it makes the transformation of our emotional nature so much easier. And unless we transform that emotional nature, as I said earlier, there is for us, at least most of us, no spiritual life at all. And this is why it's so important that in the group, in the community, in the Sangha, when we have one, we cultivate all the time the right spirit. A spiritual community, we may say, is not a spiritual community unless people are actually developing in it, and finding it *easier* to develop in it, these positive emotions of love, compassion, generosity, peace, faith, devotion. It's for the sake of the development of *such* emotions, the transformation of our emotional nature, that we have this spiritual community. And if the spiritual community doesn't function in this way then it's better not to have a group or a community at all.

Now it's time I think that we showed our group spirit in the form of light refreshments, so I think I'd better close here for today.

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