

Lecture 95: The Universal Perspective of Mahayana Buddhism

Friends,

There's a very important Mahayana sutra called the *Gandhavyuha Sutra*, which means the Scripture of the Cosmic Array or the Cosmic Adornment, or if you like the Adornment of the Cosmos. And in this particular sutra, in this particular text, the Buddha gives a very well known and very important simile; and it's called the simile of Indra's net. Now Indra, according to the Hindu mythology which Buddhism, as it were, inherited from Hinduism, Indra is the King of the Gods. He's said to dwell in the Heaven of the Thirty Three Gods. And Indra, the King of the Gods, possesses a number of treasures. And amongst these treasures, we're told, according to tradition, there is a net. And this net is not an ordinary net. This net is made entirely of jewels. And this net, made entirely of jewels, and this net made entirely of jewels has a number of wonderful and extraordinary characteristics. And one of these characteristics is that each and every one of the jewels in the net reflects all the other jewels, in other words reflects the rest of the net; and all the other jewels reflect that individual jewel. So that, the Buddha says in this sutra, all the jewels shine in each, and each of them shines in all.

Now this is a simile; as a simile it has a meaning. So according to the Buddha in the *Gandhavyuha Sutra*, the whole universe with everything in it is just like this, is just like Indra's net of jewels. The universe consists of innumerable phenomena of various kinds, just as the net, just as Indra's net, consists of innumerable jewels of all shapes, all sizes, and all degrees of brilliance. We usually think of the phenomena that make up the universe as being separate, and distinct, irreducibly so in fact, from one another, as being mutually exclusive. We usually think of the universe as consisting of a number of particular things, and these things are all quite separate, all quite distinct from one another. This is how we in fact experience the universe, as consisting of innumerable different things. But in Reality, so the Buddha says, it is not like that at all. From the standpoint of the highest spiritual experience, the spiritual experience of the Buddha as revealed in the *Gandhavyuha Sutra*, all the phenomena of the universe, whether great or small, near or distant, all mutually reflect one another, mirror one another, in a sense even, we may say, contain one another. All contain each, and each contains all. And this applies throughout space, and throughout time, so that time and space are in effect transcended. Because everything that happens is happening now, and everything that is happening anywhere is happening here. So in this way all the categories of logical thought, all the categories of reason, are superseded. There's a very popular saying taken from the scriptures, which you find again and again quoted in the far East, in all the Mahayana Buddhist countries, which enters very deeply, very intimately, into their proverbial expressions, their literature, their poetry, even eventually into their everyday life. And the saying is that each and every single grain of dust in the universe contains all the Buddhafields, as they're technically called, all the Buddha worlds that is to say, of the ten directions of space and the three periods of time. They're all contained in a single grain of dust. Now this might seem at first sight a rather unfamiliar, a rather strange, a rather bizarre, a rather exotic insight, but we do have something rather like it a little nearer home. We may say, for example, that the English poet and painter and visionary William Blake had a glimpse of this sort of state, this sort of reality, when he says, or rather when he sings:

*To see a world in a grain of sand,
And Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold the universe in the palm of one's hand,
And eternity in an hour.*

These are very familiar lines, it's a very familiar verse, but people usually don't take it very seriously. They think, 'Oh well, it's just a flight of poetic fancy. After all, he didn't mean what he was saying. Surely Blake had never actually seen the world in a grain of sand, it's just a figure of speech, it's just something not to be taken very seriously at all. But Blake wasn't just a poet. Blake, as I've said, was also a visionary, a mystic, and these lines of his, this verse of his, surely springs, surely expresses, an insight and a realization, not perhaps in principle, in essence, very different from that of the *Gandhavyuha Sutra*, that of Indra's net of jewels.

Now this being the Buddha's position, as it were, this being the Buddha's teaching, it's perhaps not surprising that the Buddha's Dharma itself, the Buddha's teaching itself, should turn out to be like Indra's net. The Buddha's Dharma, the Buddha's teaching, consists of a number of different paths, consists of different individual teachings, different doctrines, practices, and so on. And all these paths, these teachings, these doctrines, these practices, all these parts are interconnected. We may say that they all reflect one another - each gives you a clue, as it were, to all the others. Each is contained in all the others; they all contain one another. So this means, and this is a rather important corollary, this means that one cannot fully understand, and I emphasise this word fully, one cannot fully understand any one part or aspect of the Dharma unless one understands the whole. Strictly speaking, a piecemeal understanding is impossible. It's impossible, for instance, to take up one particular teaching, one particular doctrine, understand that fully and completely, without reference to the total Dharma, and then pass on, as it were, to the next piece, the next teaching, the next doctrine. This is impossible; and for this reason we have to keep on going back. We may think, for instance, that we know Buddhism quite well. We've read a number of books on the subject, we're acquainted with all the principal teachings. But one day we come across a teaching, a doctrine, that we hadn't encountered before, so we go into this, we understand it and so on, and that's very good. But it isn't as though we add this particular teaching, this particular doctrine that we've newly understood, onto our previous stock of knowledge, like adding a pebble to a heap of pebbles- no. We have to go back and, as it were, revise the sum total of our previous knowledge in the light of that new teaching which we've just studied and we've just understood. In other words, every single insight that we have into Buddhism, or into the Truth, into the Dharma, modifies, at least subtly, all our previous insights. So it isn't as though we keep adding, as it were, one brick after another to the edifice of our understanding of the Buddha's teaching. It's much more subtle, much more, if you like, organic, than that. Now not only is this true of the Buddha's Dharma, but it's also true, we may say, in the case of the different series of lectures that we've been having in the course of the last three years in this place on different aspects of that Dharma. These too, we may say, are like Indra's net, because they reflect one another, they throw light on one another.

Today, as you've just heard, we begin a new series. We begin a series on *Parables, Myths and Legends of Mahayana Buddhism in the White Lotus Sutra*. Now the first two lectures in this series are more or less introductory. Today itself we're dealing with Mahayana Buddhism, dealing in fact with the universal perspective of the Mahayana. And next week we shall be dealing with the White Lotus Sutra itself in general terms under the title of *The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment*, because this is what it really is. And after that, week by week we shall be dealing with the parables and the myths and the symbols which we find in this great Buddhist classic, this great Buddhist scripture.

Now this whole series of lectures is related to all the series which have gone before as well as to the series that will come later on. Now how is that? Throughout all these series we've been concerned, and we shall continue to be concerned, with one sole topic. We've been concerned, and we shall be concerned with, the spiritual path, with what is known in Buddhism traditionally as the Path to Enlightenment, or the Path to Nirvana, or with what we've come to know in our own terms as the Path of the Higher Evolution of Man. Now our last two series of lectures have dealt directly with this topic of the Higher Evolution. The year before last we studied it in very general terms. We studied this subject of the Higher Evolution of Man in terms of biology, in terms of anthropology, in terms of history, in terms of comparative religion, in terms of the Hinayana and Mahayana forms of Buddhism, and also in terms of modern Western thought as represented especially by Nietzsche.

And last year, in fact last autumn, which isn't so very long ago, our scope, while we confined ourselves to the same topic, was somewhat more restrictive. We continued studying it but we studied it in terms of the Higher Evolution of the Individual. Our approach, if I may say so, was rather psychological, and we were in particular concerned with the problems, very practical concrete problems, that individuals encounter in the course of that Higher Evolution, in the course of that spiritual development.

Now in the course of these two whole series, especially in the course of the second of them, we operated so to speak with the help of three main concepts, three leading concepts. One, the concept of unconsciousness or unawareness; two, the concept of self-consciousness or awareness or individuality; and three, with the concept of universal consciousness or Buddhahood. And we saw that the Higher Evolution consists in what we may describe as a process of development from unconsciousness through self-consciousness to universal consciousness, or if you like from unawareness through awareness to Buddhahood.

But sooner or later we have to start operating with a fourth concept, with the concept of what Jung calls 'The Collective Unconscious', including the archetypes of the collective unconscious. And we shall have to try to understand what part they all play in the process of the Higher Evolution of Man, in the process of the Higher Evolution of the Individual. And this we shall be doing, probably, in our next series of lectures. In this series what we're going to start doing is familiarising ourselves, if we're not already familiar, with archetypal, for want of a better term, archetypal material in general. And this is why in this series, in this course of lectures, we're going to study the parables, myths, and symbols of Mahayana Buddhism as contained in this very important text, this very important scripture, the White Lotus sutra.

Now some of you I know did not attend the previous series of lectures, but there's no need to worry about that. It's much more important that we should allow ourselves simply to feel the impact, as it were, of the parables, and the myths, and the symbols of the White Lotus sutra, as in due course we come to them. And in any case the previous lectures are all on tape, and if we do want to become familiar with the overall pattern, the overall structure, of the Higher Evolution in all its aspects, we shall have, no doubt, opportunities of hearing those lectures some other time. We shall also be allowing some time for questions after the lecture.

Now to tonight's topic - the universal perspective of the Mahayana. What do we mean by *Mahayana*? Mahayana is a Sanskrit word. It consists of two parts - 'Maha' and 'Yana'. 'Maha' means 'great'; and 'Yana' means 'way' - it also means 'vehicle'. So 'Mahayana' means 'the great way' or the 'great vehicle'; and it's the great way or the great vehicle to Enlightenment. Now if you've read a little about Buddhism, if you've read books on Buddhism or articles on Buddhism, you might have got the impression that by the Mahayana, the great way or the great vehicle, was meant a particular sect or a particular school of Buddhism. Some writers even refer to 'The Mahayana School' or 'The Mahayana Sect'. But this is not really correct, as we shall see. The Mahayana isn't a sect or school as those terms are usually employed. We know that what we nowadays call Buddhism, but which in Buddhist countries is called the Dharma, we know that what we call Buddhism started in India some two thousand, five hundred years ago. The Buddha himself, Gautama the Buddha, Shakyamuni, was born and brought up in what is now southern Nepal, just over the border from India. But he travelled and taught after his Enlightenment, and for some time before even, he travelled and taught in what was known in those days to him and his disciples as the Majjhimapatipada, that is to say, the Middle Country or the Middle Region, a region comprising the two present day Indian states of Bihar and Uttarpradesh, an area roughly equivalent to England and Wales. And after the Buddha's death, after what Buddhists call the *Parinirvana* of the Buddha, Buddhism, the Dharma, lasted in India for about one thousand, five hundred years, and during that period it spread from the middle country, from northeastern India where it began, it spread all over the country or rather over the whole vast subcontinent. In fact not only that, crossing deserts and crossing seas, it spread, it penetrated over practically the whole of Asia. It even penetrated into the West, penetrated as far as Antioch and Alexandria - and this of course was long, long before the days of modern transport.

Now in India, during the one thousand, five hundred years of its existence there, its development there, Buddhism underwent many changes, not changes of essence, not changes as regards fundamental things, but changes of aspect, of appearance, of presentation, of interpretation. It passed, we may say, through three great phases of development, historical development, each lasting roughly five hundred years. First there's the phase, or the stage, of the Hinayana, secondly the phase, or the stage, of the Mahayana, and thirdly the phase or the stage of the Vajrayana. Now

we've seen that 'Mahayana' means 'great way' or 'great vehicle', but what do the other terms mean? 'Hinayana' means 'little way', and 'Vajrayana' means 'diamond way' or 'adamantine way'. Now at present we are not concerned with the Vajrayana, the diamond way or the adamantine way. We're concerned only with the Hinayana and the Mahayana, that is to say with the little way to Enlightenment and the great way to Enlightenment. Now just consider these terms - great way, little way. Now obviously a contrast is intended by whosoever was responsible for coining these terms, a contrast between the great way and the little way. So the question arises, in what does this contrast consist? How do they differ from each other? Now there are many ways of explaining this, of looking at this, and it's often said that according to the Hinayana, the little way to Enlightenment, one should devote oneself simply to the attainment of one's own individual Enlightenment, without bothering about anybody else, ignoring, as it were, the needs of other beings; whereas, it is said, according to the Mahayana, one should, on the contrary, forget all about oneself and help other beings to gain Enlightenment, to tread the path leading to Enlightenment. So it's in these terms, or terms of this sort, that the contrast between the Hinayana and the Mahayana, the little way and the great way to Enlightenment, is usually presented in many books and articles. But this is much too crude. It can also be very very misleading. It's much more correct to say, it's much more true to say, that the Mahayana realises, and realises very deeply, very profoundly, that concern for the well being, the welfare, for the development, the spiritual development, of other people, is an integral part of one's own spiritual development itself. The Mahayana realises this, has, as it were, insight into this. It sees, as it were, that to be concerned with one's own development, one's own spiritual development, to the exclusion of interest in that of other people, is in the long run self-defeating. The Mahayana realises, as it were, that all forms of life in the universe on all levels, and perhaps above all on the human level, are interrelated, that they all mutually interact, again just like Indra's jewel net. Not only that, we can go a step further. We can say that the Mahayana realises that the net is not, as it were, static, the net is in motion, or rather, the individual jewels that make up the net are in motion, they are, as it were, all travelling on the same road, all heading in the same direction. Some jewels admittedly are a little further ahead than the others. Some are lagging rather far behind, because the net is after all a big one and very extensive. Admittedly some jewels are bigger and brighter than others, some are smaller and less lustrous, and we can even say that some jewels unfortunately are dragging in the dirt, in the mud, seem to have lost all their beauty, and look more like ordinary stones, ordinary pebbles, than jewels. But nevertheless they're all treading, as it were, the same path, all travelling towards the same goal, and they're all directly or indirectly in contact with one another. Now this great realisation of the Mahayana is embodied in what it calls *The Bodhisattva Ideal*, and the Bodhisattva Ideal is the highest spiritual ideal, the supreme ideal of the Mahayana. The highest spiritual ideal of the Hinayana is that of the Arahant, the sage or the saint who has destroyed all passions, who has reached Nirvana for himself, but who does not concern himself at any stage of his career with other beings. Now what does this word *Bodhisattva* mean? Bodhi means Enlightenment. It means awakening to the truth, awakening to Reality; and Sattva means being, in the sense of an individual being, a creature. A Bodhisattva therefore is a being, an individual, a person, who has dedicated himself to the attainment of Bodhi or Enlightenment. But he has dedicated himself to it not for his own sake merely but for the benefit of all living beings whatsoever. To make this clearer, we may say that the urge to Enlightenment, the urge, as it were, to something above and beyond the world, is imminent in all creation, but it is a blind urge. It's like the urge of the plant which is groping for the light. But the Bodhisattva, we may say, is one in whom this urge, this aspiration if you like of the whole creation, has become conscious, has become self-conscious. And it's for this reason that, as we've seen in previous lectures, the Bodhisattva may be spoken of as the embodiment of the Higher Evolution. We can of course also say that the urge to Enlightenment has become self-conscious in the Arahant, the ideal man of the Hinayana, but in his case there seems to be a limitation. He does not realise that what is actual in him, or what has become actual in him, is potential in all. And because he doesn't see that, doesn't realise that, he doesn't have the same sense of solidarity with all other forms of life. But the Bodhisattva does have this, he does realise this, he does have this solidarity with all other forms of life. So he cannot think in terms of his own individual Enlightenment, salvation, excluding, or at least ignoring, everybody else.

In the course of its development in India, in Asia, Buddhism developed among other things a very beautiful, a very wonderful, a very glorious art, of which many monuments still remain, developed architecture, painting, sculpture, and so on. And in Indian Buddhist art, the Bodhisattva is usually represented as a very beautiful young man with a graceful figure, with long flowing locks, and with many beautiful ornaments. And he usually is represented standing or sitting on a beautiful white or pink or red lotus flower. The Arahant, on the other hand, is usually represented as an elderly man, not to say as an old man, and he usually has a bald head and big bushy eyebrows, and he doesn't wear any ornaments at all. He is usually clad in a very shabby, patched, old, monastic robe, and he leans rather wearily on a knotted staff. He doesn't sit on a lotus flower of any colour, he usually stands or sits on the solid rock. Though sometimes he's represented as floating, for a change, on the waves of the ocean. So we can say that here in Indian Buddhist art the Bodhisattva, or the figure of the Bodhisattva, represents the ideal in all its perfection, in all its purity, the ideal itself, if you like the abstract ideal, not touched, not stained, by anything of the world, lifted up above the world, as it were. And perhaps one can also say that the Arahant represents the realisation of the ideal, under conditions, under limitations, under conditions of space and time and historical stress. So no wonder the Arahant as depicted especially in Chinese art often has a battered, a weatherbeaten and a worn look. We might even go a bit further afield, draw an interesting parallel. We may say that we can find the same sort of pictorial contrast in the West in the case of Christian art. Just as in Indian Buddhist art, and in Chinese Buddhist art, you've got this contrast between the figure of the Bodhisattva and the figure of the Arahant, in Christian art you've got the same sort of contrast, or a similar contrast, between the angels and the saints. And the angels and the saints are very often depicted together in one and the same picture. The angels, as we know very well, are usually represented as sleek, graceful, well groomed young men, with long curly hair and wings, and they have as we know very sweet, innocent, expressions, and it's clear that they've never sinned. They don't even know what sin is, they're as innocent as that! Very often in these pictures they play on beautiful musical instruments. The saints, on the other hand, are usually old and rather ugly, or at least if not ugly they're rather wrinkled and rather worn. And they certainly know what sin is, even if they have succeeded after many struggles in overcoming it or at least holding it down. And of course the saints, unlike the angels, have suffered. Well, they're usually being, in these paintings, either being crucified upsidedown or beheaded or shot full of arrows or skinned alive or roasted on a gridiron and so on. So perhaps the same sort of contrast is suggested here. On the one hand, the archetypal, the ideal; on the other, the realisation of the ideal under the concrete conditions of human historical existence.

Now the Bodhisattva, despite the rather beautiful way in which he's depicted in art, the Bodhisattva also really has rather a hard time of it, or at least not a very easy time of it. He has all sorts of things to practise, all sorts of things to cultivate and to develop. And especially he has to practise, he has to cultivate what are termed *The Six Paramitas*. These are usually rendered perfections or virtues, but neither of these renderings are very satisfactory. We can perhaps best render the term as disciplines for the attainment of Enlightenment.

The first paramita, the first discipline, is that of *Dana*, giving, generosity. It's of many kinds according to the Mahayana tradition, some of them comparatively gross, others comparatively refined, subtle. There's the giving of material things: food, clothing, shelter, and so on. There's the giving of education and culture - this is also included in the duty, we may say, of the Bodhisattva. And then there's the very important psychological gift, the gift of fearlessness, the gift of freedom from fear, of psychological, even spiritual security. So many people nowadays suffer from very profound feelings of insecurity. The Bodhisattva should resolve those feelings. It seems as though the Bodhisattva has to be, among other things, a sort of psychotherapist on the Transcendental plane. And then the Bodhisattva has to give the gift of the Dharma, the Truth, the teaching, which doesn't mean just handing people a little tract, but it means sharing with other people your own understanding, your own experience, of the truth of things so far as it goes, and pointing perhaps to the understanding and experience of others more extensive than your own. And lastly, we might even say all-inclusively, the Bodhisattva gives himself in his relationships with other people. He doesn't, as it were, just give a part of himself, and hold the rest back, he

gives all of himself all the time. As Walt Whitman says in one of his poems: '*When I give, I give myself.*' And this is just what the Bodhisattva does.

Now as many of you know, I have myself lived in the East, in Buddhist countries, and in India, which is mainly a Hindu country, for many many years, and I must say that one of the most attractive and one of the most pleasing features of life in the East, especially the Buddhist East, is people's wonderful generosity. If the Buddhists of the East have not really learned any other teaching of the Buddha, at least they have learned this, at least they have learned to be not just generous, but even, one may say, overwhelmingly generous. And they usually practise some form of Dana, some form of giving, some form of generosity, even every day. And some of you know that I like, sometimes, to reminisce and I like to recall occasions on which I myself came down, say to Calcutta, from my own hermitage in Kalimpong, came down to Calcutta, met lots of my old Buddhist friends, especially Buddhist monks coming from Ceylon, coming from Thailand, coming from Vietnam, coming from Japan, and we'd always have a very happy and fruitful time together. And I remember that as soon as I entered the door, two or three monks would say: 'What do you need? What do you want? Do you need a fountain pen? - well, here is one. Do you need some paper? Here is some paper. Do you need a typewriter? Do you want some money? Are you short of anything?' At once they would want to give. This is a very general, one might even say a universal impulse in the Buddhist countries of Asia. I remember again I was staying in my very early days with a Burmese Buddhist, when I was first settling in Kalimpong, a Burmese Buddhist and his wife, and one had to be very very careful, because if you looked at anything and said it was nice, at once you were given it, and you could not refuse. Because apparently it was their Burmese Buddhist tradition that if a guest looked at something and liked it, well, of course he should have it. And I remember that Doctor Ambedkar, the Law Minister of the Government of India, when he went to a Buddhist conference in Burma, was shown a site where they were going to build a new temple, and he said: 'But look, the site seems to run across the property of so many people, so what about that? Won't they object?' So he was told: 'Well, why should they object? If we want the land, we'll just take it, they'll be very happy to give it.' And Doctor Ambedkar shook his head and said: 'Well, even in India, it isn't quite like that. People aren't quite so openhanded, and quite so generous.' I'm quite sure if we went to the City of London and staked out an acre or two that we would like for our new centre, I'm quite sure the people there wouldn't say: 'Take it, you can have it.' They'd probably prosecute us or do something of that sort. But this is very much the attitude, very much the feeling in Buddhist countries in the East, to give. And I'm hoping that Buddhists in the West will gradually imbibe something of that same spirit. We shall very soon be having an opportunity of seeing to what extent they so far have imbibed that spirit, because as you know, we shall soon have to leave our present premises, which are due for demolition, and move to new premises, and we need much bigger premises. And when you need much bigger premises in a place like London, which is not conducted on spiritual principles, you need that very tangible substantial thing called money, or filthy lucre. So we shall be seeing to what extent people are prepared to dig in their pockets and fork out, as it were, that very necessary thing, so that we can all have a bigger and better centre, a new *Sakura*, as we're calling it, in the heart of London, from which we hope more and more people will derive benefit.

So that's the first of the disciplines leading to Enlightenment, the discipline of generosity, the discipline of giving. And it's sometimes said in Mahayana countries, well, if you can't do this, you can't do anything. Never mind if you can't meditate, never mind if you can't read and understand the scriptures. But at least you can give. If you can't do that, well you're not on the path to Enlightenment in any sense.

Secondly comes *Sila*, literally uprightness, often translated as morality, though this isn't a very fortunate translation. The Bodhisattva in the first place abstains from taking life. He's very careful not to injure other living beings, even the humblest. He cultivates, putting it more positively, using Albert Schweitzer's phrase, he cultivates reverence for life; he feels the value of life, the uniqueness of life. He feels: 'I haven't called it into being, I haven't created it. I can't replace it when it's destroyed, so I've no right to take, no right to harm, no right to injure in any way.

And among other things therefore the Bodhisattva tries to be, to the extent that he can, tries to be a vegetarian.

He also abstains, in traditional Buddhist phrase, from taking the not given. He abstains from theft, abstains from fraud.

He also abstains, another precept as we call them, abstains from sexual misconduct, which traditionally includes adultery, rape, and abduction.

And he also practises right speech. He speaks always truthfully, and he speaks always with love. Some people, when they speak the truth, speak it rather harshly, rather unfeelingly. But the Bodhisattva not only speaks the truth, but he speaks it with great love and affection, with feeling for the person to whom he is speaking. And he also speaks in accordance with the needs of the person to whom he is speaking. He speaks with awareness of them. And he also speaks, whether speaking to one person or to many people, speaks in such a way as to promote harmony and concord and unity. In other words, the Bodhisattva practises real communication.

He also abstains from whatever is inimical to mindfulness, and this is usually understood to refer to overindulgence in alcohol, in drinks and drugs. One could of course extend this precept to cover many other things.

Thirdly, he practises what is called *Ksanti*. It is very difficult to translate this by any one word. It means a number of things. It means patience, patience with people, longsuffering, patience when things don't go your way. It also means tolerance, allowing other people to have their own thoughts, their own ideas, their own beliefs, even their own prejudices. It also means love, kindness; and it also means receptivity, openness, ability to take things in, and especially it means receptivity to higher spiritual truths. It's very difficult to be really and truly receptive, really and truly to take in. We hear something, or we're told something very very important, important from the spiritual point of view, but it doesn't go right in. There are so many barriers, there are so many obstacles. Maybe the mind receives it and starts playing around with it, doesn't let it really sink in, or sink in to the deepest part of one's being. The mind, as it were, stops it halfway, or prejudices stop it halfway, or negative emotions stop it halfway. But we're not able really and truly to receive it. We'll be saying something more about this in next week's lecture, by the way. So this is *ksanti*, the third of these disciplines leading to Enlightenment, consisting of patience and tolerance and love and receptivity.

And fourthly there's *Virya* or energy or vigour. It consists mainly of the effort to eradicate negative emotions, and the effort to cultivate positive emotions - love, compassion, joy, peace, and so on. But energy is also necessary for the practice of all the disciplines leading to the attainment of Enlightenment. Without energy we can do nothing.

Fifthly there's *Samadhi*. This is another untranslatable term, and it has three distinct levels of meaning. First of all there's the level of meaning which is concentration, that is to say unification of all one's psychic energies, the bridging, the overcoming, of all the schisms as it were in one's being. And then there's *samadhi* in the sense of the experience, the personal experience, of higher and ever higher levels of consciousness, as when we formally meditate. And this includes the development of what are known in the Buddhist tradition as the supernormal powers, those of telepathy, of clairaudience, of clairvoyance and so on. So this is *samadhi* in its second level of meaning. And then there's *samadhi* in the third and the highest sense, which is experience of Reality itself, or at least receptivity to the direct influence of Reality. And this of course begins in small ways, it begins in the form of flashes of Insight, like perhaps that flash of Insight which Blake must have had when he wrote that verse which I quoted earlier on. So these are the three levels of *samadhi*, concentration, meditation in the sense of experience of higher levels of consciousness, and experience of Reality itself, beginning with flashes and then fully.

Sixthly and lastly there's the paramita, the discipline, of *Prajna* or Wisdom. There are three kinds

of wisdom in Buddhist tradition: wisdom from learning, that is to say hearing, as the text says - wisdom we gain by study, at secondhand as it were; then wisdom gained by way of personal reflection, and one's own original individual thought; and the wisdom that comes from meditational experience. These three. And the Wisdom that comes from meditational experience coincides with samadhi in the third and the highest sense. And here, Wisdom in this sense, is of four kinds. There's first of all seeing conditioned existence as dukkha, that is to say essentially painful, as anitya, as impermanent, and as anatman, devoid of true selfhood. And secondly, the second kind of Wisdom, seeing the Unconditioned, that is to say seeing Nirvana as empty of dukkha, empty of suffering, empty of anitya, of impermanence, and empty of anatma, or no true selfhood; and as possessing the opposite characteristics, as possessing the characteristics of absolute bliss and happiness, of permanence or eternity if you like, and true being, true selfhood. The third kind of Wisdom consists in seeing that the very distinction between the conditioned and the Unconditioned, or between conditioned things and the Unconditioned, is only provisional, part of the structure of thought and not ultimately valid. In other words, this third kind of wisdom consists in seeing the emptiness of the distinction between conditioned and Unconditioned. Then fourthly and lastly there's wisdom in the sense of seeing the emptiness of the concept of emptiness itself, seeing in fact the emptiness, the relativity if you like, of all concepts, including those of Buddhism itself. This is an aspect of course which is stressed and developed very much by Zen.

Now these six disciplines which the Bodhisattva has to practise comprise a balanced, a comprehensive scheme, of spiritual development, and we may even claim that they represent the noblest way of life ever proposed to man. In Dana and Sila, giving and uprightness, we see that provision is made for both the other-regarding and the self-regarding aspects of the spiritual life, for both altruism and individualism. In ksanti and Virya, patience and vigour, provision is made for the cultivation of the so-called 'masculine' and the so-called 'feminine' virtues. And finally in samadhi and Prajna or meditation and wisdom, provision is made for what I have called the internal and the external dimensions, or if you like the subjective and objective aspects, of the Enlightenment experience.

Now it's sometimes said that the Hinayana or Little Way is so called because it's addressed to a small number of people, even to an élite; whereas the Mahayana, it is said, the Great Way, is addressed to a large number of people, if not to the masses. The first, the Hinayana, so it is claimed, is meant for those who are prepared to make an effort to help themselves; whereas the second, the Mahayana, it is claimed, is intended for those who want everything to be done for them by the Bodhisattvas. But once again it must be observed that the distinction is much too crude, and even misleading. As we've seen on previous occasions, Buddhism is a universal religion, it's not addressed to any particular group or community, it's addressed potentially to each and every individual human being as an individual. And the Hinayana and the Mahayana are both forms of Buddhism; they're both stages in the development of Buddhism. And both, therefore, are universal, both are addressed to all individuals, both the Hinayana and the Mahayana. So we cannot distinguish between them in this respect. At the same time there is a difference - so what is this difference?

Perhaps I can make it clear with the help of a simile, not to say a parable. Let's suppose that there is a great famine somewhere - the sort of terrible famine that you still get even now sometimes in India. There's no food. Everybody is starving. Everybody is gaunt, famished, skeleton-like. And there's terrible suffering. Now in a certain town in the country where this famine has occurred there happen to be two men who have an enormous quantity of grain, quite enough to feed all of the people. One of the men is old, the other is young. Now, what does the old man do? He puts up a notice outside his front door. And the notice reads: *'Whoever comes will be given food.'* But after that statement comes a long list of conditions and rules. If people want food, they must come at a certain time, at a certain hour of the day, on the very minute, and they must bring with them receptacles of a certain shape and a certain size, and they must hold these receptacles in a certain way, and they must ask the old man for food in certain set phrases, in fact in an archaic language, and so on - there are all these rules, all these conditions. Now, not many people

see the notice, because not many people happened to pass that way. But some of those who do see it, they come for food and they get food, but others don't come. They may see the notice, but they're rather put off by the long list of rules, and they say that if the food is only available under those conditions, on those terms, then they'd rather go without. It seems, so they think, less troublesome to starve. And the old man is perhaps asked about those rules, and he says: 'Well, that's how it was in my grandfather's time, whenever there was a famine; and what was good enough for him is certainly good enough for me. Who am I to change things?' And he further says that if people really want food, they'll observe any number of rules in order to get it. If they won't observe the rules, it means they just aren't really hungry enough.

So this is what the old man says and does. Now what about the young man - what does he do? The young man takes a great sack of grain on his back, and he goes from door to door distributing the grain, and when one sack becomes empty, he rushes back home and gets another one. And in this way distributes a great deal of grain all over the town. He gives the grain away to whoever asks. And he's so keen on getting the grain to the people that he doesn't mind going into the poorest and the dirtiest and the darkest of hovels. He doesn't even mind going into places where respectable people don't usually venture. Because there's only one idea in his mind, and the idea is that everybody must be fed, nobody should be allowed to starve. Of course, quite a lot of people find fault with the young man. They say he's a busybody. They say he takes too much on himself. And some even say he's interfering with the law of karma. Again, others say that quite a lot of grain is being wasted because some people take more than they really need. But the young man doesn't care. He says, 'never mind, it's better that some of the grain should be wasted than that anybody should starve to death'. We can even continue our parable a little further. The young man happens to pass the house of the old man. The old man is sitting peacefully beside the door of his house smoking his pipe, because it isn't yet time to distribute grain. And the old man says to the young man, as the young man passes by, 'You look tired. Why don't you take it easy?' But the young man replies, 'But there are lots of people who still haven't been fed'. But the old man still isn't very impressed by that, and he says: 'Well, let them come to you. Why should you go dashing off to them?' And the young man says: 'But the position is that they're too weak to come to me, they can't even walk. I've got to go to them, otherwise they will die.' So the old man says: 'Tut tut, that's too bad. They should have come to you earlier when they were stronger. If they didn't think ahead, that's their responsibility. Why should you bother? If they die, it's not your fault.' But the young man doesn't listen - he's already on his way home for another sack. So the old man rises, he pins another notice beside the first one, and the second notice reads: 'Rules for reading the rules.'

So no doubt you've already guessed the meaning of the parable. The old man represents the Hinayana, or if you like the old man is the Arahant. And the young man represents the Mahayana, so he is, we may say, the Bodhisattva. And the famine represents the human predicament, about which we shall be hearing in lecture number three. And the people of the town represent all living beings, and the grain is of course the Dharma, the Teaching.

Now in principle both the old man and the young man are willing to distribute grain to everybody. In principle both the Hinayana and the Mahayana are universal, they are for all. But in practice we find that the Hinayana imposes certain conditions. For instance the Hinayana, even today, says that if you want to practise the Dharma at all seriously, you must leave home, you must become a monk, and you must live exactly as the monks lived in India two thousand, five hundred years ago, in the Buddha's time. And you mustn't change anything. Now the Mahayana doesn't impose any such conditions. The Mahayana makes the Dharma available to people as and where they are. Because the Mahayana is concerned with essentials and not with inessentials. It's concerned with getting the grain, as it were, to the people; it's not concerned with any particular manner in which this is to be done. The Hinayana expects, as it were, people to come to it; but the Mahayana goes out to people. Now, why is this? why this difference? The reason is that the Mahayana attaches very great importance to Compassion. The Mahayana says: Wisdom is not enough. Or rather, it says: True Wisdom will naturally give rise, will naturally give birth to Compassion. The Hinayana stands for Wisdom. The Mahayana stands for Wisdom plus

Compassion. This is not to say there's no Compassion at all in the Hinayana. That would be going too far. But it is true to say that in the Hinayana Compassion is very rarely mentioned, and it is certainly not given equal place with Wisdom. In the Mahayana, however, Wisdom and Compassion are equal and coordinate. Suzuki says: The Great Wisdom and the Great Compassion are the twin pillars of the Mahayana. And the Mahayana scriptures say: Wisdom and Compassion are the two wings of the bird of Enlightenment, and with one wing only it cannot fly.

Now there's a definite historical reason for this difference between the Hinayana and the Mahayana. I don't want to get bogged down in historical detail, so I shall keep the matter as brief as possible. About a hundred years after the Buddha's death, after his Parinirvana, there occurred a split among his disciples, for various reasons. Among others, there was a difference of opinion over the very nature of Buddhism itself. One group of disciples, one party, said: Buddhism is simply the teaching of the Buddha - what the Buddha has taught, what the Buddha has said in so many words. That's Buddhism - the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Twelve Links and the chain of Conditioned Coproduction, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness - this is Buddhism. But the other party said: 'No'. The other group of disciples said: Buddhism is the teaching of the Buddha, yes, plus the living example of the Buddha, plus the example of his own life. The other party said as it were: The teaching reveals the Wisdom of the Buddha, yes, but his life reveals his Compassion. Both together make up Buddhism. The Buddha never waited for people to come to him. He didn't even remain sitting under that Bodhi tree for more than a few days before he went out to seek and to meet people, to teach them. And we find that all during his five and forty years, his five and forty years after his Enlightenment, he travelled from place to place meeting and teaching people. I remember a friend of mine, a very well known translator of Buddhist texts, and writer on Buddhism, Mrs A. A. G. Bennett, she once wrote a very interesting article on a little phrase which, as she pointed out, occurred again and again in the Buddhist scriptures. She points out that the Buddha says of himself: 'I went to them and said'. I went to them and said, such a short simple phrase, but she says it comes again and again. The Buddha didn't wait for people to come to him. He went to them. And he'd afterwards tell his disciples, those who lived more permanently with him, I went to them and said. I went to such and such group of merchants, or such and such group of princes or such and such group of goatherds or such and such group of flowersellers - I went to them and said. I didn't wait for them to come to me, I went out to them, I took the initiative. And again we're also told time and time again in the scriptures, if anyone came to see the Buddha, the Buddha himself would take the initiative in the conversation, in the discussion. He would be the first to speak, the first to greet the newcomer. He wouldn't wait for them to speak, he would speak first, so that they felt welcome, so that they felt happy and pleased, and at ease. So this was the living example of the Buddha.

So the Hinayana, historically speaking, is descended from the first group of disciples in that split, those who said Buddhism is just the teaching of the Buddha. But the Mahayana is descended from the second group of disciples, those who said that Buddhism is not just the teaching of the Buddha, it's the living example of the Buddha's own personal life, his example; all the things that he did, not just what he said. And this is why the Mahayana stresses Wisdom certainly, but Wisdom and Compassion. This is why it derives its inspiration not only from the teaching of the Buddha but from his noble personal example. So just as the Buddha went out to meet people, went to them and said, in the same way the Mahayana goes out to meet people. Take for instance the example of the scriptures. We find if we look around the Mahayana Buddhist world, that in all the Mahayana Buddhist countries, hundreds and hundreds of years ago even, the scriptures were translated into the local language. In China all the Buddhist scriptures - in Sanskrit, Apabramsa, Pali and so on - were translated into Chinese, so the Chinese people could read them in their own language. In Tibet the scriptures were translated into Tibetan. When Buddhism went to Tibet the Tibetans didn't even have a written alphabet, they had no literature. But they created an alphabet, they created a literary language, created a literature, so that they could translate the Buddhist texts, so that the Tibetan people could read them and understand them for themselves. The same in Japan. The texts which had been translated into Chinese were translated from

Chinese again into Japanese. The same in a comparatively small area like Mongolia. The Tibetan scriptures were translated from Tibetan into Mongolian - we still have that version. But in the Theravada countries of Asia, of South East Asia, the Theravada being one form of Hinayana, the scriptures all remained in the original Pali, in the original Indian language, ancient Indian language. If you wanted to study the scriptures, you couldn't read them in your own language, in Sinhalese or Burmese and so on, you had to become a monk, go and stay in a monastery, learn Pali, which is a dead language, and then after that read the scriptures. And this was the position until very very recently. It's only now, under we may say Western influence, that the Buddhist scriptures, the Pali Buddhist scriptures, have begun to be translated into the languages of those countries - Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and so on. I was astonished some years ago when a Sinhalese monk said to me: How lucky you English Buddhists are. He said: Because practically all the Pali texts have been translated into English whereas, he said, we've only just started translating them into Sinhalese, - and that was about ten years ago.

Now this word 'language' can be used in two senses - a literal sense and a metaphorical sense. We say, or some of our friends say, friends from abroad, English is a very difficult language. So here the word is used in the literal sense. But we also say: I don't get on with him very well. He doesn't seem to speak my language. So here the word language is used metaphorically. Now, the Mahayana tries to speak different languages, not only in the literal sense, but also in the metaphorical sense. And with this consideration we start passing from this week's lecture to next week's lecture, from the universal perspective of the Mahayana to the Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment.

Now in the course of our communication with one another, in the course of human communication, we have recourse principally to two languages. First of all, there's the language of concepts, of abstract ideas. And secondly there's the language of images. The first language, the language of concepts, is the language of the intellect, of rational thought and rational discourse. It's the language of science and philosophy. But the second, the language of images, is the language of the imagination, the language of the emotions. It's the language of poetry. It's the language of myth, symbolism, parable, simile, metaphor and so on. The first, the language of concepts, is addressed to the conscious mind; but the second, the language of images, addresses itself, appeals to the unconscious depths that are within us all and to which modern psychology calls attention.

Now the Buddha himself spoke, as it were, both languages. Sometimes he expounded his Dharma, his teaching, in a highly abstract, rigidly intellectual fashion. And sometimes again he spoke in beautiful parables and similes and metaphors. We've got the parable of the raft, the parable of the blind men and the elephant, the parable of the ever-smouldering ant hill, and a hundred others. Now the Hinayana, in the course of its development, in the course of its history, tended to speak more and more exclusively in the language of concepts. It adopted a sort of scientific language, we may say, and it dropped the language of images. It banished poetry, and it eschewed metaphor. Take, for example, the Abidharma literature of the Theravadins - seven massive works, some of them in many volumes - psychological analysis, classification of mental states, description of mental functions, and so on, all in severely technical conceptual style. And it's the proud boast of the Abidharma that in all those thousands of pages of literature there's not a single figure of speech. They've banished every single one.

But the Mahayana, on the other hand, the Mahayana continued to speak both languages - the language of concepts, the language of images - and it spoke them ever more and more effectively. And this is exemplified by the Mahayana sutras, in other words the scriptures of the Mahayana. There are many hundreds of these scriptures, and as we only have a few minutes left, I'm going to mention only a few of the most important, and then conclude.

First, the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures. There are altogether more than thirty of these. Some are very long, many many hundreds of pages; others are comparatively short. These all speak the language of concepts; they speak it almost exclusively. The oldest, and most important of these

Wisdom scriptures, is probably the *Astasahasrika* or Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines, or 8000 verses. And then the *Hridaya* sutra, the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom, and the *Vajracchedika*, the Diamond Cutter of the Perfection of Wisdom, are both very well known, and very often recited in Mahayana monasteries in the far East. And all these Perfection of Wisdom scriptures, large and small, are concerned with one topic, or mainly with one topic, which is *Sunyata*, the Voidness, Reality, concerned with it not as a concept but as the absence of all concepts. In fact we may say that this Perfection of Wisdom literature speaks the language of concepts in such a way as to enable one to transcend all concepts whatsoever. And according to tradition it was the great Mahayana teacher and sage Nagarjuna who lived maybe in the first century of the Christian era who retrieved the original Perfection of Wisdom texts from the depths, we are told, of the ocean, where it had been kept secret from the days of the Buddha by the Naga kings. Obviously there's a symbolical significance here, we can't go into that. But the episode is very often depicted in Buddhist art. You get Nagarjuna floating on a little raft in the middle of the ocean, and you get the sort of mermaid like creature emerging from the depths of the sea with long flowing green hair and a great big heavy book in her hands, and this is the daughter, the beautiful daughter, of the Naga kings who live in the depths of the sea, handing over this treasured text, this long treasured text, to the great teacher Nagarjuna, who then triumphantly bears it back to dry land, writes commentaries on it, and makes it more and more widely known; and this was a factor, by the way, in the rise of the Mahayana.

Secondly, there's the *Lankavatara* Sutra. Its full title is the *Saddharma-Lankavatara* Sutra, which means the Entry of the Good Dharma, the Good Teaching, into Lanka. Lanka is an island in the sea, and the Buddha goes there and preaches to the king of the rakshasas. Now the language of this sutra too is almost exclusively conceptual, and it was very popular in medieval times with Chinese Buddhist intellectuals. It's one of the most difficult of all the sutras, because it contains very abstruse psychological and metaphysical teachings. Incidentally, it's been translated by Dr Suzuki.

Thirdly we've got the *Lalitavistara*, which means, translating literally, the Extended Account of the Sports or Games. Now, you'll be wondering what on earth this can be. Well, the sports or the games are those of the Buddha. It might be rather surprising to you to hear that the Buddha was of, as it were, playful nature. So what does this mean? The *Lalitavistara* recounts the different incidents of the Buddha's career which were as it were to him child's play. He did them easily, freely, naturally, spontaneously; in other words, in a truly spiritual manner. So this sutra is a sort of biography of the Buddha. But it's not biography as we would understand the term, because it contains a great deal of what scholars like to call 'legendary material' - and by legendary material one doesn't mean, or at least I don't mean, just false history, because it has a symbolical significance. We've dealt with the significance of some of the incidents in the Buddha's biography in the lecture on 'Archetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha', and this is by the way on tape and available. So the *Lalitavistara*, we may say, tends very much to speak the language of images.

Then fourthly there's the *Gandhavyuha* Sutra, or Scripture of the Cosmic Array. This describes a pilgrimage of a young man called Sudhana. It describes how he visits more than fifty people - men, women, old, young, holy, not so holy - in the course of his search for Wisdom and Enlightenment. And he learns something, we are told, from them all. And eventually he comes to the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who is living in the iron tower, the Vairocana tower, in South India. And here Sudhana receives his final instruction, his final initiation. The sutra describes how Sudhana is admitted to the tower, the Vairocana tower, by Maitreya, and inside the tower he has a wonderful vision. He sees that everything in the universe, all the phenomena of the universe, are contained in the tower; and the tower is contained in, or reflected in, every single thing in the universe. Once again it's Indra's jewel net. Now the form of the *Gandhavyuha* is clearly symbolical, a matter of images. The *Gandhavyuha* is a sort of Buddhist 'Pilgrim's Progress'. And its content is mainly conceptual, though in part symbolical. The *Gandhavyuha* sutra itself is a part of the *Avatamsaka* sutra, or Flower Ornament sutra. This is a very large work indeed, and according to Suzuki it's the greatest of all the sutras. It's traditionally known as the king of the

sutras. There's no time to describe it now.

Fifthly we've got the Pure Land sutras. There are three of these. They consist entirely of strings of images. There's hardly any conceptual material at all. They all describe in one way or another the Happy Land of the Buddha Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Eternal Life. They describe how it's intersected by golden cords, how wonderful jewel trees grow there. And they describe the jewel trees, as it were, branch by branch and flower by flower, and even petal by petal. And one of these three Pure Land sutras is used for purposes of meditation, or visualization and then meditation on what you visualize, in this case the Happy Land. And all three works are the basis of the Shinshu or Pure Land schools of China and Japan, which all aspire to rebirth in this archetypal Happy Land. The Chinese Communists, by the way, say that Chairman Mao's China is the true Happy Land, that's their current line.

Sixthly, *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa* sutra, scripture of the exposition of Vimalakirti. This contains the highly dramatic story of the meeting between Manjusri and Vimalakirti. Manjusri is the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, he's the incarnation of Wisdom. And Vimalakirti is a wise old man, a wise old householder of Vaisali in North Eastern India. And the two come together and they have a terrific debate, the sound of which, as it were, echoes all down through Buddhist history. And the scene, with these two seated dramatically opposite each other, challenging each other, and debating and discussing Buddhism, is often depicted in Chinese Buddhist art. And this sutra, we may say, speaks the language of both concepts and images; in fact the two are beautifully balanced and blended in the work.

Now seventhly and lastly we come to the *Saddharma Pundarika* Sutra, the scripture of the White Lotus of the Good Dharma, the Good Law, the Good Teaching, the Good Doctrine. And this is of course the work with which we are concerned in the present series. And the language of this sutra, the White Lotus of the Good Law sutra, or Good Dharma sutra, is almost exclusively the language of images. The conceptual content in this sutra, though it's a very large one, is absolutely minimal. And this sutra, we may therefore say, appeals not to the head but to the heart, not to the intellect but to the imagination. It contains a truly magnificent series of parables, parables which are famous all over the Buddhist far east. Perhaps these parables are the most significant in the entire range of Buddhist canonical literature. The White Lotus is also replete with myths and symbols. And in form, interestingly enough, the sutra is a sort of drama, or even, we may say, a sort of mystery play. It's a drama, a mystery play, which has for its stage the entire universe, the entire cosmos, and it lasts, the action lasts, for millions of ages. And the *dramatis personae* consists of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas and the Arahants and gods and demons and men - in fact, all sentient beings whatsoever. And the atmosphere of the sutra is very strange. The atmosphere is one of miracle and marvel and all sorts of wonderful phantasmagoria. In fact what we see as the sutra unfolds is a sort of Transcendental sound and light show. I can only describe it in those terms. And the theme of the drama is a very great one indeed, the theme is Enlightenment - not just his Enlightenment, or her Enlightenment, or just the Buddha's Enlightenment, or the disciples' Enlightenment, but the Enlightenment of all sentient beings whatsoever. So in view of all these facts we have therefore entitled the sutra 'The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment', and we shall be ringing up the curtain as it were on that great drama next week.