

General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

Hidden Treasure

From the mid-seventies through to the mid-eighties, Urgyen Sangharakshita led many seminars on a wide range of texts for invited groups of [Order members](#) and [Mitrās](#). These seminars were highly formative for the FWBO/Triratna as Sangharakshita opened up for the still very young community what it might mean to live a life in the Dharma.

The seminars were all recorded and later transcribed. Some of these transcriptions have been carefully checked and edited and are [now available in book form](#). However, a great deal of material has so far remained unchecked and unedited and we want to make it available to people who wish to deepen their understanding of Sangharakshita's presentation of the Dharma.

How should one approach reading a seminar transcription from so long ago? Maybe the first thing to do is to vividly imagine the context. What year is it? Who is present? We then step into a world in which Sangharakshita is directly communicating the Dharma. Sometimes he is explaining a text, at other times he is responding to questions and we can see how the emergence of Dharma teachings in this context was a collaborative process, the teaching being drawn out by the questions people asked. Sometimes those questions were less to do with the text and arose more from the contemporary situation of the emerging new Buddhist movement.

Reading through the transcripts can be a bit like working as a miner, sifting through silt and rubble to find the real jewels. Sometimes the discussion is just a bit dull. Sometimes we see Sangharakshita trying to engage with the confusion of ideas many of us brought to Buddhism, confusion which can be reflected in the texts themselves. With brilliant flashes of clarity and understanding, we see him giving teachings in response that have since become an integral part of the Triratna Dharma landscape.

Not all Sangharakshita's ways of seeing things are palatable to modern tastes and outlook. At times some of the views captured in these transcripts express attitudes and ideas [Triratna has acknowledged as unhelpful](#) and which form no part of our teaching today. In encountering all of the ideas contained in over seventeen million words of Dharma investigation and exchange, we are each challenged to test what is said in the fire of our own practice and experience; and to talk over 'knotty points' with friends and teachers to better clarify our own understanding and, where we wish to, to decide to disagree.

We hope that over the next years more seminars will be checked and edited for a wider readership. In the meantime we hope that what you find here will inspire, stimulate, encourage - and challenge you in your practice of the Dharma and in understanding more deeply the approach of Urgyen Sangharakshita.

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team

SANGHARAKSHITA IN SEMINAR

SECOND ORDER CONVENTION (1975) DISCUSSIONS

Date: Ten Days in August 1975

Those Present: in order of 'appearance' in the completed transcript :

The Venerable Sangharakshita, Sanghamitta, Ananda, Siddhiratna, Ratnapani, Lokamitra, Dharmapala, Vajradaka, Manjuvajra, Subhuti, Asvajit, Bodhisri, Marichi, Devamitra, Abhaya, Mangala, Nagabodhi, Chintamani, Uttara, Aryamitra, Padmaraja, Sulocana, Buddhadasa, Padmapani, Vessantara, Vimalamitra, Sona, (Jinamata and Gotami are also referred to but could not be identified by either the transcriber or checker)

Not all of the above were present at every session

Please note that many of the speakers except for Bhante were either not close enough to the microphone, not speaking clearly or loudly enough, or outside noise was interfering, making transcription of their contributions difficult, or even impossible!

Sangharakshita: As everybody knows this is our second annual convention and perhaps I ought to start by welcoming everyone who has turned up. I'm certainly glad to see so many familiar faces sitting round in this circle, and no doubt in the course of the next few days, and certainly over the weekend quite a few more Order members will be joining us.

I think I'd like to say a few words first of all about the actual conduct of the proceedings. Especially over the weekend, there are going to be quite a lot of people, and I therefore suggest that we keep discussion to a minimum. And I suggest that when the various topics come up everybody has his say or her say, expresses his or her point of view fully, but that we don't enter into too much discussion among ourselves over the points of view expressed; otherwise I think perhaps not everybody will have time to express their particular point of view.

So, if you don't altogether agree with what somebody has said, you can always talk to them about it afterwards. But let them have their say fully, you have your say fully, but keep the discussion between different people present to a minimum, so that we can get through the whole of the business. We've got quite a lot of things to discuss, and no doubt there will be quite a few points of view expressed. And every day there's going to be a different reporter, and we hope that each reporter will be able to put down quite a full record of the day's proceedings - in any case we are being tape-recorded for reference also - so that everybody's point of view will be duly recorded and duly taken into consideration in the course of the coming year.

So the main thing is that people should say what they think on the different topics that we raise; give their own opinions, impressions, experience, but without trying to discuss anything, with everybody participating as it were in the discussion of every point raised. That would take us several months rather than several days.

So, as you see, or as you will have seen from the programme in the latest issue of *Shabda*, this session is devoted to the functioning of the Order, and we are going to talk about *Shabda*, about finances as regards the Order, the legal situation, and we're going to receive reports from the various Order officers. It has also been suggested that, before we go into all that, I should say a few words on the relationship between the FWBO and the WBO, because sometimes one finds that isn't altogether clear in the minds even of all Order members. So

perhaps it should be made clear yet again that the Order, the Western Buddhist Order, is a purely spiritual body. The Order is, of course, made up of the *upasakas*, *upasikas*, *maha-upasakas*, *maha-upasikas* and so on; no doubt there will be other ordinations in the future. And this Western Buddhist Order is a purely spiritual body, having no legal existence.

The FWBO, or rather the FWBOs, because we should really speak about them in the plural, are the different legal bodies - I'm speaking now of the full autonomous FWBO Centres - but these are the bodies through which those Order members who are engaged in teaching work function and operate. But these two are quite distinct, even though the same people in some cases may be involved in both. The Order, the spiritual body; and the various FWBOs, the legal entities, the structures, the set-ups, the organisations, through which different groups of Order members function both to make the Buddha's teaching and their own distinctive approach by meditation, by study, retreats and so on, available to as many people as possible, both in this country and other countries as well.

Is there any question anyone would like to ask about this, or is there anything not quite clear about the relationship between the Order on the one hand and the FWBO on the other? Tomorrow, incidentally, we'll be discussing the relationship between the individual Order member and his particular FWBO, if any; but today's discussion, if any, should be on the general relationship between the two. Is this clear or has this been clear, or not to everybody, about the Order and the FWBO? (*Silence.*)

All right, let's go on then, to *Shabda*. I believe a report has come in from Suvratta about *Shabda*, he having been the editor for quite a few months until Sanghamitta took over.

_____ : He didn't really have anything to editor, but he said he thought thought should be given to the editor,

Sanghamitta: the information officer (*mainly inaudible due to aircraft noise*) Any improvement purely and the time factor. And communication I mentioned the time factor. The last time, taking over, but it only just fitted in because it meant hours and hours of retyping; so if anyone concerned with paper and that try and keep it looking a little bit smarter This is the possibility of one or two people putting photographs in In fact, it seems highly improbable that we shall get our

S: With regard to this question of photographs, when I showed the slides of the New Zealand Order members, quite a number of people did mention that it made them feel that they were much more in contact with the New Zealand Order members, and some New Zealand Order members have expressed a wish to know what the Order members in England and elsewhere looked like. But if it could be done, if it is technically possible or feasible, it would be a good thing, I think, from time to time at least.

Ananda: There's actually no basic reason why we couldn't give quite a good quality.

Sanghamitta: Oh well,

Siddhiratna: But is it really necessary? We've got the *Newsletter* performing the same function *Newsletter* one after that was in *Shabda* duplicated. I could see that happening, especially with *Mitrata* as well.

S: What I'm thinking is that if it's a question of photographs of individual Order members, possibly with a little biographical note, this might be more appropriate for *Shabda* than for the *Newsletter*. In the *Newsletter* it's OK to have a photograph of an activity, a retreat, but I think photographs of individual Order members should be confined to *Shabda*. It is of interest within the Order, but perhaps not of all that much interest outside the Order.

Sanghamitta: It would be a good idea, but or could we, say, have a group at Aryatara?

S: I would leave it entirely to the editor's discretion. I don't think we can discuss that here. We are quite happy to leave it to you.

Sanghamitta: And then if everybody agrees about putting *Shabd*s into one envelope whenever possible or delivering them whenever possible to save the postage again, but still not actually certain of how to send them abroad air mail, so

S: I think it would be a good idea if one copy could go by air mail to each group of Order members -

Sanghamitta: Yes, I did that at the time.

S: One to Auckland, one to Christchurch, one to Helsinki.

Sanghamitta: Yes. I don't think the post..... but I did, when I was, send a copy to the two Centres in New Zealand.

Ananda: Sanghamitta, they automatically, I think, go airmail to Europe anyway.

Sanghamitta: Oh, do they? such bulk We have found that we can put them in wrappers at printed paper rate, but I'll have to wait and see whether or not.....

Ratnapani: to New Zealand it would take so long to go by surface mail I think it's quite important that all the *Shabd*s go by ...

Sanghamitta: Well, they are going out there anyway, I'm afraid this time - no fault of anybody in particular - they did go and

Lokamitra: But I think that should be our policy. They should go by the quickest possible route.

Vajradaka: The suggestion came up quite a long time ago - and I don't know if anything has ever been done about it - that at the end of a pile of paper on the printing machine a number on air mail paper be made so that maybe 10 or 20 or how many ever air mail copies are necessary are just done with all the other copies, so in fact you get air mail *Shabd*s, air mail *Newsletters*. And really even, if necessary, air mail *Mitrata*s. It wouldn't be difficult to do, just put them at the bottom or the top of the stack of ordinary paper, just working out how many you need and make sure you do it for each of the skins paper or - I don't think that that kind of paper is any more expensive and it would certainly cut down costs greatly and

_____: You'd have to check whether

_____: you could experiment

S: These are all matters of detail which I think could be left to the production team. (*Sanghamitta speaking over.*)

Subhuti: You said the cost was £3 per issue. Was that the total production of one issue?

_____: But in fact it's not really relevant (*Voices.*)

Sanghamitta: The postage has varied considerably, because the last one was £19(?) and

I think posting them individually each time The postage 29p each

S: Any further points you wanted to mention?

Sanghamitta: unless anybody else has any suggestions.

S: The main thing that we ought to express ourselves on is how we feel about *Shabda* as a whole - whether we do feel it is fulfilling its function; if not, why not, and so on. So has anybody got anything to say about this?

Asvajit: My impression so far is that it's been a bit woolly and a bit wordy. Many more words have been used to say what they mean to be saying than is really necessary. Perhaps some improvement could be made in that direction - with more people contributing but with less words.

Sanghamitta: This is what I made a point of, though, isn't it, in an editorial about and not such long

Ananda: If I may say so, though, I feel that sometimes a subject needs quite a lot of words in order to express on certain topics. I don't think we should make a policy of cutting down to the extent that people can't feel free to express themselves [on something] they feel strongly about.

S: I think the idea was that one shouldn't expend a lot of words expressing what can really, in fact, if one is writing more carefully, be expressed in fewer words. Not that the very complex subjects should be dealt with superficially. I think we ought to give quite a bit of consideration to the subject of *Shabda*, because it is the principal medium of communication within the Order, especially for those who are not in personal contact with one another. I am just wondering whether perhaps those who don't have as much contact with the Order as, say, many other Order members do would like to say how they experience *Shabda*; whether it does tell them what is going on, whether they find it useful, or whether it's dull.

_____: It's better having it than not having it.

S: Well, that's the least one could say! You'd rather have it even in its present form than not have it at all.

_____: a bit more contact with the rest of the world, like to know a bit more about people.

Sanghamitta: Again, I I hope people will respond to that, because I did say it needed a bit more

_____: I also feel that it could be more personal, - to give the whole thing a more personal note, rather than it being One does sometimes get the feeling that it's the organ of an organisation, and that the views expressed in *Shabda* are the views of 'the Order' in inverted commas. And I think in that way that sometimes it can be a bit messy; because you receive *Shabda*, you read something in it which seems to reflect let's say a kind of a mode of thinking, and you can't really feel with that person.

_____: Perhaps that's due to the fact that not many people as yet have put anything apparently highly personal views (etc.) small articles

Sanghamitta:

_____: How are you getting on with?

Sanghamitta: No, there hasn't been a contribution at all. But -
S: You mean just to this latest issue?

Sanghamitta: Yes.

S: When was it posted? I only saw mine when I got back.

Sanghamitta: Well, they

_____: Probably a lot of people haven't had time to go through it - I haven't.

Sanghamitta: I think also what deters people is the I did announce that there were going to be for the September issueand the reply was 'Oh well, it doesn't matter, we'll have time after the Convention', but we did ask for contributions to go on with the, but I haven't

S: How do you feel about *Shabda*, Bodhisri, when you get it?

Bodhisri: We are very happy about *Shabda*. Everything is very interesting - doesn't concern us very much, we find it very different.

Sanghamitta: It may be a small matter, but has anybody got any feelings about putting the name of the Order member at the bottom of an article or would you rather see it at the top? So that if it's a little longer than *Shabda* article - reading it. I know it's a small matter but it might be important for some people.

S: As a former editor of various things, I'd rather see the name at the top if it's of any length.

Sanghamitta: Yes. don't have to 'Who's written all this?'

_____:

S: Sometimes one can!

Lokamitra: I should like to say something. I think it's becoming a very positive organ of the Order, and it's a joy for me to read it, even though I'm in close contact. And I think it's really And I think another point is that it's very important that *everyone* makes a point of reading virtually every word of it; because often people who I'm meeting say, 'I didn't know that' and it's in *Shabda*!

_____: people have totally ignored the instructions about the Convention two months running. (?)

Ananda: I've got a slight feeling about *Shabda* that some people regard it as the voice of the London aspect of the Friends, and I think -

S: The Friends?

Ananda: Sorry, of the Order - the London branch of the Order - rather than a total voice, including all the centres. I think if we -

S: Centres? We're not discussing -

Ananda: Order members at the centres.

S: Or even at no centres. Even freelance Order members, who are not attached to centres.

Ananda: Yes - yes, people who aren't in London. I think it would be good to have a bit of feedback in *Shabda* from people that are on the periphery a bit more distributed.

_____: peripheral ?

Ananda: No, I mean purely I mean you are physically on the periphery.

S: But it has been made clear from the beginning that it is open to all Order members everywhere.

_____: It could be just a question of

_____: a particular point of view to that particular person, but if I sit down and say, 'I'll write to *Shabda*', there may be from individual letters

S: I must say that I'd thought of doing this myself also, before I went to New Zealand, but I had time since. But since then I've also thought that, inasmuch as I probably will be settled in Norfolk for upwards of a year now without going out and about much, I'll try to give a regular contribution to *Shabda*; because I know that there are various points which are still not clear to people, and about which people are sometimes in doubt as to what I actually think and feel. So I shall try to write a few contributions in future; especially as I feel like writing at the moment.

Marichi: Another point I'd like to make is that I feel that it would be really useful to *Shabda* if, say, you felt that continuity if you could overcome that it would be extremely useful. Could it be a matter of

_____:

_____: I've written quite a few letters, but I've never posted them.

Vajradaka: There are probably quite a few Order members who are doing a particular thing which other Order members aren't doing, and it might be useful if Order members could put down in writing what it feels like to be doing that particular thing - like say for example, many of us may not experience what it's like to paint *thangkas*; many of us may not know what it's like to be a wandering Order member, going from Centre to Centre. Things like this. Experiences within the context of the spiritual life which people don't usually experience, but is one's own way.

S: 'My first lecture'. [Laughter]

_____: There's one thing I'd like to raise, perhaps connected with this, if people are going to express their personal feelings, and that's the question of the secrecy or confidentiality of *Shabda*. There was a note about this some time ago, and I'd just like to hear what people think, whether they think it should be confidential or not.

_____: You mean Order members only?

_____: Yes.

S: This is what was understood from the beginning. Obviously there is a difference between confidential and secret.

_____: Yes, right.

Sanghamitta: Anybody who reads paper rate has a envelope which stops

them but at the same time you can't it would cost very much more. Is this all right to send them when there are more or less confidential things inside?

S: I would suggest that if by any chance you've been guilty of any criminal activity you don't mention that, even in your communication ...[Laughter] ... Just in case. You might well want to confess to other Order members, but I think keep it for an actual session of the Order rather than

Sanghamitta: In a past issue there was a report on the summer school, and a person's mentioned. I think there was something like that in it.

S: I think we should not publish, even in *Shabda*, anything that is or could be considered to be libellous in the actionable sense, but just frank comment which might not be pleasing to certain people there's no reason why we - well, if we can't put it in *Shabda* where can we put it? [Pause]

I'm just wondering whether anybody feels that there ought to be any additional feature or function for *Shabda*? I've been wondering whether this inclusion of material, even short extracts from study seminars, shouldn't be or couldn't be a regular feature. What do people feel about that? (*Voices:* Mm.) Because it means that someone's got to be responsible for doing it; but perhaps it would be good if we could include up-to-date material of that sort.

Ananda: Wouldn't it the work of *Mitrata*

_____: Not necessarily, *Shabda* -

S: *Mitrata*, as far as I know, is specialising more in transcripts of lectures. When I speak of extracts from study seminars, I mean those which would be of special interest to Order members. Because there's a vast amount of material in the study seminars, so obviously we would select that which was particularly to the needs or interests of Order members.

Ananda: Particularly the one that was in the last *Shabda*, it was very -

S: This current one?

Ananda: Yes, very valuable indeed.

_____: This is one thing in general that I felt would be better - material directly appertaining to the Dharma.

S: It seems to me that if we look at it in that way, the contents of *Shabda* seem to fall into three distinct categories which perhaps - and this is only a suggestion - could be kept a bit separate within *Shabda* itself: that is to say, personal communications, Order notices, and extracts from study seminars. When I say personal communications I mean contributions from individual Order members expressing their own views, whether in article form or note form or poem form or whatever.

Sanghamitta: This is a chance today, if anybody finds it impossible to make the deadline has to be done.

S: But is anybody in a position to undertake to provide material from the study seminars on a regular basis? (*Pause.*) I am carefully refraining from looking at Devamitra. [Laughter]

Devamitra: Well, I'm obviously in contact with what's being transcribed.

S: I'm quite prepared to do the final editing if someone just gives me the rough transcript.

Devamitra: OK, I'll do that.

S: OK.

_____ : If anybody comes across which has not been,

Sanghamitta: I think we'll have to allow for the emergencies that have to come in late. Yourself and perhaps those who are [Laughter]

S: I hope not to offend in future! (*Voices.*)

Sanghamitta: deadline day, At the same time, we don't want people to think oh well deadline day doesn't mean anything, because it's so important.

_____ : What is the deadline day again?

Sanghamitta: The fifteenth.

S: Fifteenth of each month.

_____ :

Sanghamitta: Well, yes, [Laughter]

S: Well, no doubt some expressions of opinion can be held over, because they are of general interest, not just for that particular month. Obviously changes of address have to go in immediately, things like that.

Sanghamitta: Yes, but there's stuff can't come in too late. You have to otherwise you'd never get it done.

S: The moral seems to be, remember that deadline and make every possible effort to get your material to the editor by the fifteenth of each month - and allow three or four days for posting.

Any other points about *Shabda*?

Abhaya: I think as far as personal issues, personal contributions, are concerned, I feel that a lot of response to these that people perhaps don't write a reply to *Shabda*, feeling that - well, maybe such-and-such an Order member is going to write one as usual. I feel it's important that, however short perhaps or however reluctant you may feel to - *we* may feel - to write what we feel about something that someone has written, I think we should do it, and then perhaps the editor could - if we don't mind this - select and choose or put snippets from each response. So that you have not just one person's response but you get a more balanced idea of how people have responded to a particular article. For example, recently there were two particular articles on different issues that I know a lot of people responded or reacted very strongly [to], but there was nothing in *Shabda*. Reading the next issue of *Shabda*, you would have thought everybody agreed with this.

Marichi:

Sanghamitta: !

S: Well, you should say then, 'Would you care to put that in writing and perhaps state the reasons why you felt it?' Obviously a purely emotional reaction isn't - maybe one of the difficulties is that people do have their responses or reactions but they're not prepared to sit down and think it out: 'Now why did I react in that way? Why don't I agree? Why do I disagree?' Maybe they just remain with the reaction or response.

Sanghamitta: but they ! (*Inaudible chat. Helicopter noise?*)

_____: But if an article inspires you into thoughts and working out your emotional responses to it, and in the end you get things sorted out, I still think it's worth while writing in and appreciating that the person has written an article, and saying what happened to you when you read it, even though it's

S: Anything more about *Shabda*, because I'm keeping an eye on the time? We've got a lot of topics to talk about. If anybody has got anything more to say about *Shabda* from any point of view, please do say.

Sanghamitta:from abroad from abroad,

S: Well, could you not perhaps insert an editorial note?

Sanghamitta: Well, I did put 'To Order members everywhere', hoping that it would -

S: Perhaps you should have underlined 'everywhere'.

Sanghamitta: put in capital letters

_____: Put a note saying you'd like to hear something from abroad.

S: I'll tell you what I'll do. When I got back from - er - I found I had a whole batch of letters from New Zealand. I think what I shall do, I shall hand those over to you, and you make some extracts, what you think is of interest.

Sanghamitta: Yes, that's a good idea.

S: There's four lengthy letters, so you can take snippets, I think, just 'Extracts from letters to Bhante from New Zealand'.

_____: (*laughter*)

S: They're not those sort of letters! Well just a minute though, one of them is! [Laughter] [You'll] have to be careful with that one.

All right, then, we're coming now to the question of Order finances, and I think Lokamitra has a few points to propose here.

Lokamitra: As the Order's growing, it seems that we need some kind of minimum organisation for finances, so I've got three suggestions. First of all, that FWBOs should take responsibility for paying for *Shabda*, kesa material, for the Registrar, perhaps for *Mitrata*, and other expenses like that that Order members have to pay - that Order members up to now have been expected to pay. I'll come back to that in a minute; I'll just go over the three.

Secondly, that the FWBO Treasurer (by FWBO I mean FWBO which is in Archway and will be in Bethnal Green), that's me at, take responsibility, at least until the next Convention, for the Western Buddhist Order finances; open a separate account.

And thirdly, that those things given to the Order should be deemed given to Bhante for the time being. This is quite a complicated matter, and I think it's probably best if for the next year or so we have this arrangement. So what would happen is that the Archivist should prepare a list of all these things -

S: Yes, those things which belong morally and spiritually to the Order, but not legally because the Order has no legal existence.

_____: Yes, so then in fact they belong to Bhante.

S: They are mainly things which I have myself given to the Order - images -

_____:

Lokamitra: Well, it would just be a sub-account - I would make an Order account, but -

S: 'for the benefit of'. The background of this thinking, to some extent, is that one of the functions of the FWBOs is to help us support Order members and to make it possible for them to carry on with their work, so therefore it does seem better that the FWBOs should shoulder the financial responsibilities for things like *Shabda*, which also saves collecting subscriptions individually from so many people.

Lokamitra: That first point, maybe I should go into

S: hear what people have to say.

Lokamitra: First of all, then, there are three - four basic expenses: *Shabda*, kesa material, *Mitrata*, and the Registrar.

_____: Oh dear, library as well.

Lokamitra: And the library. Now, without the library I estimated the cost to come to £7.50 for the next year - that's estimating cost of *Shabda* per person per year at £3; £3.50 for *Mitrata* (that's assuming that every Order member should receive *Mitrata* - that may be a separate issue); and then £1 for Registrar and kesa material. Now -

S: Does this include the cost of a possible new edition of the Order Register?

Lokamitra: Yes, it does.

Mangala: What about insurance of the Order -

Lokamitra: Could I just finish what I - ? - and then we could have these questions. There are quite a few Order members not in touch with any specific FWBO, so those Order members should be encouraged, if possible, to pay this £7.50 themselves. If they can't, then what I'm thinking is we up this figure from £7.50 to £10, that would cover all these extras.

(end of side one side two)

Tape 1, side 2

S: simplify the administration, because there are not so many individual things to collect any more.

Lokamitra_____: And then I would pay out from here to all the

S: The editor will not have to the collecting

_____: Well, this is

Lokamitra: Er - it will be kept within a main account. I'll just label it

S: Order *dana* account, something like that. (Voices.)

_____ : The people who are attached to Centres have their fees paid for by the Centre. People who aren't attached to Centres -

Lokamitra: I think there's this problem in thinking of it as a fee.

_____ : All I wanted to know is: I can see that if there's Order members working in and around Centres, that will pay for their -word. Now who pays for the people that aren't ?

S: That's covered by the because the Centres will be paying not exactly what it costs to supply their members with *Shabda* etc.; they'll be paying that plus £2 extra, the £2 extra which each Centre pays on each of *its* members will cover those members who do not belong to Centres and are unable to pay for themselves.

_____ : ?

S: No, no Order member will get any benefit.

_____ : If, on the other hand, (*Voices and laughter.*)

S: And there is the point also that most Order members give in other ways.

_____ : And for that reason (?), (*Voices.*)

S: I did have a thought cross my mind - this is no more than a thought - with regard to kesas. I saw one or two grubby ones recently. I wondered, well, how are they going to get new ones? And I thought it might be a good idea to have a day on which Mitras present their *kalyana mitras* with new kesas. (*voices. Inaudible comments.*)

Sanghamitta: They're very - they wash very well, and the watermarks don't come out.

S: Well, they won't go on washing indefinitely, so - And some Order members have had theirs for five or six years.

_____ : Would the kesas be presented to the Order through the *kalyana mitra*?

S: I hadn't got as far as that, but I'd envisaged the Mitras, at the end of a Puja on a certain day, for instance, if it was appropriate, just making little offerings.

Sanghamitta:support!

S: I hadn't got around to that, but by the time your kesa wears out, you should have got a few Mitras. Anyway, we haven't got to talk about it now.

Bodhisri: May I ask a question? Do Order members pay their own Centre, because we have now a third Order member to the Centre? a certain amount ?

Lokamitra: Obviously, I think this will be up to the individual conscience of each Order member concerned. If that Order member has the money, is working and so on, then I'd have thought automatically, yes, but again it's up to each person.

S: For instance, in the case of Helsinki, you'll all be getting three copies of everything. No one will ask you to pay for anything. There'll be no subscription. But if anybody is earning and feels willing to contribute to that particular fund, OK. But no request or reminder will be given. It'll be up to the individual conscience of each person.

Sanghamitta: It should be known to every Order member just how much it does cost per individual, I think, so that if they are working -

S: Well, this is obviously going to be recorded, and we hope that everybody will read it [!!] and And perhaps you could even mention it in *Shabda*, that from now onwards there will be no subscription - that is, if the Order agree. Is anybody not happy with this? For heaven's sake, speak up if you're not, rather than go and talk to Sanghamitta about it afterwards.

_____: think the indications are quite an important decision to make without thinking about it. I can't see any obvious drawbacks.

S: In a way, it gets back to the Buddhist tradition of *dana* rather than subscriptions and so on.

_____:

S: Yes, if they're interested in knowing what are the sources of expenditure, yes. It's a relatively minor item, but there's no reason why it shouldn't be mentioned.

Lokamitra: There's one query about that. Up to now, not all Order members have been receiving *Mitrata*.

_____: They haven't! We haven't had -

Lokamitra: I'm assuming that every Order member would receive one. If that's not a good thing, then -

S: I think we have to talk about that when we come to *Mitrata*, and when Padmaraja's here. It is quite an important issue.

_____:

Ananda: Maybe if Order members particularly would like it and ask for it, it would (*Voices.*)

_____: Lokamitra, this figure would be annual, won't it - £10?

Lokamitra: I think so, yes. We'll have to see what happens.

Ananda: rate of inflation

_____: Order members

Lokamitra: I think we will take it from the beginning of the year, take it from the beginning of the year starting on the Convention, so we take it from September. So -

S: An Order year. Or from the date of our foundation, recognise that, April

Lokamitra: But for the practical purpose, I think this would be - I think if we bring this in in September, and therefore it would be - you'd pay for Order members at your Centre at that time.

_____: (*noise.*)

_____: I think it would be useful if we're going to have to - recommending

rather than have in September or in January or - (*Voices.*)

_____:

_____: OK, let's do that. (*Voices.*)

_____: Except that the Convention is the time when we would actually discuss what the contribution should be.

_____: Well, now we're stuck with the contribution

S: Perhaps it could be *paid* in September this year, but backdated a bit and then when we have our next Convention In fact it is going to be suggested we have it next spring, this will come up later..... then we

Sanghamitta: (*Aircraft Noise persisting. Voices.*)

_____: One other point. We not quite sure £20 for two Order members..... £20 wouldn't perhaps

S: I think that's a good idea. I think it would make him realise that it was you who were doing something for them, it's only right that they should do something for you, I mean for their Order members.

_____:

_____: appreciate

S: Well it's not exactly paying *for*, it's the spirit of *dana*.

_____: scale, one side giving

S: Right. It's immoral to be taking all the time. There should be reciprocity.

_____: Maybe (*Voices.*)

_____: The Order

S: All right, I think we could probably pass on from that if everybody agrees to those proposals, unless there are left-over queries.

(*Inaudible comments.*)

S: All right, there's going to be something now about the legal situation, and I believe here Nagabodhi has some information for us.

Nagabodhi: I have in a way very little information, because the Order has no legal existence as an Order. An individual Order member doesn't differ from any other individual in the eyes of the law. The Church of England being the established church of this country, even vicars don't differ in the eyes of the law, much maybe a few goods at half price, they're still eligible for conscription and things like this; only when they're conscripted (supposing there is conscription), they're made chaplains. So if it would come to that we can either become conscientious objectors, as do Quakers, or make sure there are enough Buddhists around so you can be in the army and you can be a Buddhist chaplain.

S: Well, you could become a chaplain because if you didn't have any Buddhists, if they were all conscientious objectors, you'd have nothing to do.

Nagabodhi: Yes, and you'd get paid as well. (*laughter.*)

S: But you could then minister to those Buddhists who were conscientious objectors and not in the army. convert those who were in the army and without being Buddhists, I mean. Where did you get all this information, by the way?

Nagabodhi: All over the place. I recently, as I mentioned, was a friend at University and he was going to do a project or get something to do with a project which, but I've written to the National Council of Civil Liberties, I've been to the..... Festivals - I was asked specifically about Buddhist festivals, and getting time off, and it seems to be very much in the hands of the individual concerned and the individual employer. You may find you've got an employer who is kind enough to just give you the day off. At the BBC, where I work, it is simply a matter of well you've got your annual holiday, you can take a day from that, but there's no question of allowance - you can even quite a big national holidays off for granted. But you may find some employers will do this.

S: What about the Civil Service?

Nagabodhi: Well, the BBC is in a way -

S: Because they ought to have a uniform policy.

Nagabodhi: I imagine then that it's the same policy that operates within the BBC.

Ananda: Yes, because the External Services of the BBC are in the Civil Service and they have a very strict three weeks annual leave and that's it.

Nagabodhi: Yes, but they don't allow the people working But some employers, probably a smaller employer, may be more amenable to this sort of suggestion.

S: Inasmuch as there's more of a personal relationship.

Nagabodhi: Exactly, yes. Otherwise it's really up to the individual to sacrifice a day or half a day of his annual holiday if he feels the festival

.....: Christian holiday

Nagabodhi: Well, yes, you could work a Bank Holiday, and have Wesak off in lieu. Another thing: prison visiting. The information I've got is slightly different from the information that seems to have got, (*traffic noise*) myself much about them; they seem to be a organisation, catering for foreign nationals chaplain Home Office says that the existing channels are the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara.

S: Which isn't functioning.

Nagabodhi: Well, if we want to visit a prison, he simply suggested that we, off our own bat, contacted them, and he felt that they would probably be only too happy to share the burden with us. He had no objection to us going, so long as we had the blessing of the official channels, which was -

S: Can't we ask for the official channels to be widened?

Nagabodhi: Well, he seemed to be quite firm that for the time being it should be this way. He really was quite firm about that.

S: Why do you think that was?

Nagabodhi: I'd say two reasons: (1) bureaucratic simplicity and secondly because he was probably testing us.

S: To find out what?

Nagabodhi: To find out whether - well, if we didn't get the blessing of the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, from just a short conversation with me he wasn't going toto open the doors., and he would probably rather receive confirmation from the people he does know and approve.

S: In fact, he does know and deal with them?

Nagabodhi: Well, he certainly deals with them and he knows them. I think this area - and other areas - given the basic premise that we differ in no way from other individuals, and that we have no actual legal existence, as situations arise, probably what will have to happen is that we'll apply our own pressures to get the kind of recognition that is reasonable in that situation. But it's not any kind of blanket, at present, but it is something that as situations arise we may have to start

S: In connection with this whole legal business, there is a point that should be mentioned, and that is in connection with New Zealand; I think they are freer and easier than they are in this country. Akshobya did apply for recognition as a minister of religion by the Department of Justice. He didn't consult with me before doing that, because he didn't realise the implications, but he has been recognised and is therefore authorised to perform weddings, which are legal ceremonies. After I knew about this, I did point out to him that it would have been better if he had discussed it beforehand, because we have so far taken the view that we don't want any legal existence for the Order. But the situation is a bit different there.

_____:

S: Yes, but he gave as the reason that he was an ordained member of the Western Buddhist Order. But he had to show that he was an ordained person, within a Buddhist Order.

Asvajit: So we have in fact the anomalous situation that we are recognised legally by a subsidiary to the main legal body this country. Whether in New Zealand or in

S: I don't know. It would be only an autonomous body if there was no appeal from any decision thereto the Privy Council. I don't know about that, whether there are any appeals going before the Privy Council.

Marichi: Are we actually going to avoid legal recognition?

S: In a sense, yes. That was certainly my idea from the beginning - that the Order should be a purely spiritual body, should not become a legal entity.

Marichi: But

S: But it's *de facto* rather than *de jure*, as it were, yes.

_____: It's also one of the objects of the FWBO, to support members of the Western Buddhist Order

S: Yes, right. I think there would be a question for the recognition of the FWBO but not of the Order as such. I think it is quite important to keep the Order as a spiritual body, at least for as long as we possibly can, what one sees happening when spiritual bodies do become corporate entities.

_____: In other words, that the legal recognition for prison visiting, minister of religion, etc., is not as a member of the Western Buddhist Order but a member of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order - but -

S: Yes, you could put it that way, as a sort of official of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. I must say that I am very, very cautious, certainly as regards this country, about our being drawn within even the fringes of what, for want of a better term, we call the establishment. I think one has to be very, very careful about that; because you can start being influenced in very very subtle ways. You get a sort of status in the eyes of that establishment, and you become mildly identified with it.

Siddhiratna: The distinction between a member of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order and Western Buddhist Order, becomes blurred to me

Lokamitra: Bhante used the word 'official' which makes it a bit clearer. You become an official of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. We all know we are members of the Western Buddhist Order, but as far as the outside world is concerned, that isn't true. We're just officials of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.

S: Representatives, if you like. They deal with us because we belong to an organisation, which is the Friends.

_____: The Western Buddhist Order then becomes an offshoot of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, because nobody, as far as I, nobody else apart from Order members can

S: Quite, yes.

Lokamitra: That's not part of our constitution. I'd have thought that you could have legal recognition as the Order in that people can go prison visiting, but that the FWBO takes all that responsibility, takes all the administrative work.

Siddhiratna: Is the Head of the FWBO the Council?

Lokamitra: That's the governing body, yes.

Siddhiratna: I see, yes; and they would be the authority for the official of the FWBO, they would be the next one back,

Marichi: They would appoint that official.

Siddhiratna: Yes, that would be the Council.

Lokamitra: They are, if you like, the link between the Order and the legal framework, the organisational framework

S: And the world.

Lokamitra: And the world, yes. So in this way you find legal recognition is implied, in that there is an intermediary body already.

_____: I feel quite strongly about the fact that the Order shouldn't become, as Bhante just said here (?), a corporate body; and I think as soon as you start getting any legal recognition of some kind you start to become congealed. And also in this context, I would like us to perhaps consider that we've been using this phrase 'Order members' because it suggests first of all that there is some kind of Order that you can be a member of, and first of all that you are actually a member of it; it gives, to me and I know to other people I've talked with about this, it seems to give an idea of a corporate thing, a club that you belong to. And I would rather we practised the terms *upasika* or *upasika*.

Lokamitra: I don't think we can deny the law (?) the Western Buddhist Order. It's implicit in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. But what we have to do is minimise it, and keep all this administrative work and all the contacts with the outside world in the hands of the FWBO, and not to put any of this on to the Western Buddhist Order itself, therefore to bring organisation, bureaucracy, in with that. But I don't think we can deny the existence of the Western Buddhist Order at law, as it were.

S: The question so far hasn't arisen, but if you were in the witness box and you were asked, 'Are you a member of an Order known as the Western Buddhist Order?' then you would have to say yes.

Lokamitra: Or even from the point of view of, say, prison visiting, I think we'd have to say that we were ordained members, or members of the Western Buddhist Order.

_____: I don't think it's necessary.

_____: In this connection, can I say that filling in an application for my passport, what I should put under the word 'occupation'. So I wrote to them and asked them what I should put under it. They came back and suggested I put down 'ordained Buddhist teacher'; that was their suggestion, which I

S: I've got 'minister of religion, Buddhist Society(?)' I'm not all that happy about that.

_____: I think any question of religion you can always write to the official people. They're quite happy tax forms and things like this, 'occupation' can be a bit difficult. Some sort of indication is required

S: Yes, right. So that means that we have the same designation.

_____: What did you have to prison ?

Manjuvajra: I had quite a long session with the prison authorities. I tried to write to south-west region, and I wrote to the Regional Chaplain, who wrote back to me saying that they dealt purely with the Buddhist cultural associations, which we've talked about before, and he therefore said - he wrote to me and said that 'Therefore I have written to all the prisons in the south-west region, to say that under no circumstances should you be allowed in to see any inmate.' So I wrote back quite a heavy letter to him, and never had a reply. But then some time later I got a letter from someone in Dartmoor, and they allowed me in. So I'm going to visit him

Marichi: Are you visitinga member of the Western Buddhist Order, or as a member of the Friends?

Manjuvajra: I'm visiting him as a Buddhist.

_____:

Manjuvajra: No, I'm called Manjuvajra.

S: But do they admit simply fellow-religionists? Are you not supposed to be a sort of minister, for want of a better term?

Manjuvajra: Well, yes. I think that's how they do treat me, in a way. But you can't visit - you're not allowed to visit anyone in jail that didn't know you before they went in. In the same way, you're not allowed -

S: You can if you're a minister. I've done this.

Manjuvajra: Yes. I was going to say,

S: I've not known any of those that I've been to visit.

Nagabodhi: As regards ordinary prison visiting, you can register just to become a prison visitor, irrespective of religion. There again, the man at the Home Office said that if you've got any kind of - if you are a minister, you're probably out, so you could if you wanted out of compassion to visit a prisoner that's quite simple; you just register with the authorities, but you mustn't say, 'Oh, incidentally I'm a Buddhist, which will be quite helpful, won't it?' and they'll more or less shut up the book. This is to protect prisoners from -

S: Ah. Well perhaps that is a good idea, we just register as prison visitors. And then if, say, a Buddhist asks - if we know that someone is a Buddhist and he has written to us, then we just go and see him as a prison visitor, not as a Buddhist.

_____: ?

S: I don't know. (*Voices.*)

_____: My grandmother used to We could

_____: appropriate.

Vajradaka: It seems a bit limited, that way of doing it, really.

S: No, I understood that if you said that you wanted to be a prison visitor, that gave you as it were *entrée* to the prison if someone wanted to see you. But is that the case or not?

_____: No, I think it - (*Voices.*) - it's more likely the prison authorities have prisoner to you.

S: I think perhaps we ought to take a little firmer stand as Buddhists, and if someone writes to us and wants us to go and see them, insist that, whatever the channels or qualifications might be, we should be allowed to do that, otherwise we shall raise the issue quite vigorously with the appropriate authorities.

_____: write to the Hampstead Vihara and say

_____: do that

S: Well, if there's anyone there to do it.

_____: There are people there.

_____: I think it's still going. (*Voices.*)

Lokamitra: Eventually, then, the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order should have permission to appoint Buddhist prison visitors, and then there would be no question of

S: I think we also ought to consult with the Buddhist Society and know what they do, because I am sure people must be going from there; and ask them how they do it, or on what basis. That would be useful.

_____: And

S: But let us find out first.

_____: I would suspect, actually, that the Buddhist Society direct from the Home Office, not the Prison Department but a higher authority than that.

S: I remember when I was staying at the Hampstead Vihara, I just was asked every now and then to visit somebody, or someone wrote to me and then I contacted the chaplain of the prison, and just arranged to go and see them. There was no problem whatever.

_____:?

S: Well, they didn't know that till they saw me. They didn't ask any questions at all.

_____: Is your name on file there?

_____: official channels.

S: Well, what about - That question wasn't raised: where are you living or whatever.

_____:

S: But they weren't in my personal capacity.

_____: Yes, but

S: As far as I remember, in most cases I wrote to them, because somebody wrote to me from prison, and I just wrote and said that such-and-such person had written to me and I'd like to go and visit him, and

_____: Yes, but

S: Might have been.

_____: - because there were, when I was

S: I was a new arrival at that time.

Subhuti: What I wondered was - we've been going around and about it from the point of view of trying to get ourselves recognised as prison visitors in a vacuum. I think it may be more that when the situation arises and we want to visit somebody it would be probably quite easy, in fact.

_____:

Subhuti: But Manjuvajra actually was able to do this when it came down to it. (*Voices.*) In the first place, he was trying for blanket recognition, but when it actually came to the case it was quite easy.

Nagabodhi: people in prison, and in fact there were two reasons. One was throughout we've had our channels and the other one was that they refused this particular prisoner permission to designate himself as a Buddhist

S: I think what we ought to do is perhaps to deal with a few more cases individually, but keep a record and keep copies of correspondence, and if we have any difficulties we just go with our documents to the appropriate authority. We probably can't get sort of blanket recognition or permission before any actual cases arise.

Vajradaka: It seems to me that we're tackling the whole difficulty from the wrong angle. Last year, when we got talking about the Order going into prisons to see prisoners, Manjuvajra was asked by the Order to find out about prison visiting. But now we seem to be getting the idea more generally, it seems, with a few exceptions, that the FWBO should send officials - that Order members should be officials of the FWBO to do prison visiting. So why not then have finding out whether we can become an official channel or having requests for prison visitors not come to individual Order members but be dealt with by the Secretary of the FWBO Centre?

S: If any request came to any FWBO, that would happen. If a prisoner, say, wrote to FWBO London then obviously they would deal with that.

_____: So it becomes more a of the FWBO administration.

S: Yes, if they address the administration. If they write to an individual whom they know, obviously he will want to do that, and perhaps he will consult his own FWBO to help him in that way.

_____:

Vajradaka: It seems like there are two aspects: the aspect of people writing to us because of contact some time in the past, and us going out, taking the initiative, and simply getting ourselves officially recognised. If we are going to go out and get officially recognised, I think it has to be the FWBO.

_____: The FWBO gives Order members say what they need without having to refer at all to the Western Buddhist Order.

Lokamitra: No, I think the FWBO - what we're trying to get is the FWBO tries to get permission to appoint Buddhist visitors, and we that. But again

Subhuti: I think you'll find that we'll just find that after a while we will have official recognition.

S: Yes, because we'll just get more and more known.

Subhuti: But they're not going to give it to us

S: All right: on to the next item. According to the programme there'll then be a coffee break. If proceedings seem likely to go on until 1 o'clock - and they certainly do; it's not only

halfway through - then we have a coffee break at 11.30. So can we just have our coffee and then return to business rather promptly?

(Break.)

S: Order officers and we're going to have reports from each of those officers in turn, at least those who are present. One or two, I think, are not present. Our Order officers, just to refresh your memories, are first of all the Order Convenor, then the Registrar, the Editor of *Shabda*, who might have already said whatever she had to say, the Master of Ceremonies, and the Archivist. So perhaps we could ask Manjuvajra for a few words first.

Manjuvajra: (*?JCB outside.*) Embarrassingly, I have little to say, because I I think the Order Convenor is very much in touch with what's going on all round the organisation

S: on the agenda for consideration for next stage - whether there should be changes or new office-bearers

All right - Suvratta; he's not here, but there is something from him.

(Letter read by Lokamitra:) "Dear Friends, I apologise for not being present, but report, and I hope this letter will suffice. I would be grateful if there are any suggestions or instructions arising from discussion they could be conveyed to me directly, Registrar.

The production of the first register in October 1974 and subsequent developments have convinced me that the barest requirements cannot be met satisfactorily by the annual or bi-annual production of a single register. My impression is that there should be at least three registers, as follows:

(1) an archival register giving details of all ordinations, like a parish register, kept in duplicate for security. This already exists in a card index form, but I think that a version in a hard-bound book would be better.

(2) a biographical register, rather more like a 'Who's Who', or in other words similar to the 1974 register. My personal opinion is that it should be just a little fuller than a biographical account. It should be updated and republished every two years.

(3) an effective register. This would be a list of Order members who have been in contact at some stage during the previous two years. Only Order members on the effective register receive Order publications and circulars. Defaulting Order members may be returned to the effective register simply by writing to the Registrar if they so wish. The effective register is essentially a list of names and addresses, and I suggest that in the present circumstances it be issued to all Order members quarterly.

In connection with the address list, I would like to say that Order members are not sending me details of changes of address, and I have to pick up this information indirectly. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs upon which I shall comment in a letter which

S: Could you read it again point by point, so we can consider each point that Suvratta makes separately?

Lokamitra: Yes. He talks about three registers. Firstly, 'an archival register giving details of all ordinations, like a parish register, kept in duplicate for security. This already exists in a card index form, but I think that a version in a hard-bound book would be better.'

S: Any comments about that?

Asvajit: It would be very nice to have the details of the name as well,

S: Do you mean the meaning of the name?

Asvajit: The meaning of the name, yes.

_____: full details,

_____:?

_____: Well, without giving the autobiography,

_____: would not be updated, it would be a one-off thing.

S: Presumably it would be a sort of chronological record; every time somebody was ordained, then the appropriate entries would be made.

_____: Ah, just one lot, yes.

S: And presumably also, as they receive any further ordination, that also would be entered in an appropriate column.

_____: good idea.....

_____: Just a diary/address book. We don't really need this

S: No.

_____: That's the one-off book,

_____: Annual..... Like a parish register.

_____:

S: Well, we'll leave that to Suvratta.

_____:

S: I think that is very sensible. If it was going to be typed, you might just as well make two carbon copies as one.

_____:

S: I don't - he doesn't actually say anything about the mode of keeping it.

_____: He does say 'a hard-back book'.

_____: 'A hard-bound book.'

_____: You can have a hard-bound loose-leaf (*Voices.*) A solid one.

_____: Yes, with clips. Punch holes and

_____: That has the disadvantage that sheets can also be taken out and -

_____: Numbering the sheets. (*Voices.*)

Subhuti: I think if people know anything about keeping records they should contact Suvratta.

S: Do people feel that this is a good idea, to have an archival register?

Voices: Yes.

Marichi: Would we supply the details of the names?

S: I can do that. It's going to be quite a job, to write out a neat little account of what each name means.

_____: Those are in *Shabda*.

S: Some are not very adequate. (*Voices*.)

Mangala: What about having a photograph of each person as well? (*Voices*.)

S: Well, there going to be perhaps from time to time photographs in *Shabda*.

_____:

S: OK.

(2) a biographical register, rather more like a 'Who's Who', or in other words similar to the 1974 register. My personal opinion is that it should be just a little fuller than a biographical account. It should be updated and republished every two years.

(end of tape one tape two)

S: I did feel before that some Order members were rather surprisingly reticent. I don't know why.

Vajradaka: I think that a lot of people gave a lot of details, but it wasn't published.

S: Some people didn't give - I saw myself all the things that people filled in; Suvratta sometimes instructed me what should be put in, what left out; but in the case of some people he didn't have any information at all. There was no response at all. I don't remember who, but -

_____: What sort of ?

Vajradaka: Well, like for example I've put a biographical in about five or six lines, and 'Buddhist teacher' came out.

_____: You didn't put anything about biographical

S: I think the main thing that we were interested in then was skills, so that other Order members wanting to get together with someone with a particular skill could refer to that register and find out who had that skill or qualification. I think this is what we were mainly interested in and why we called for that sort of information. (*Voices*.)

_____: exceptional skills employment

S: I think also Suvratta found that the whole thing was getting so unwieldy and he was having to spend such a lot of time on it, and he was more concerned that it should be out as soon as possible, after hanging fire for so long.

_____: qualifications

S: But I think that was drawn up by Ananda, wasn't it?

Ananda: No.

S: It wasn't drawn up by Suvratta, I remember that. Because I remember him saying he would have done it rather differently.

Ananda: It was based on the questionnaire which went out

S: Anyway, is this a good idea, do you think?

Marichi: every two years - a terrific number of new Order members coming in all the time.

S: There is a third list of addresses every - what? every three months.

Lokamitra: And also in *Shabda* you get, perhaps with the name of the ordinee you should have a little biographical account.

S: Perhaps that would be a good idea in future.

_____: you could add to your list.

Sanghamitta: I didn't have a list of members' names and addresses. Asvajit very kindly wrote one out. I didn't have a list at all.

S: Well every Order member should receive one on ordination. Any other new Order member didn't receive a list of - a register?

_____: I haven't

S: Ah. Anybody else?

_____: I haven't had one.

_____: I've not seen it (?).....

Sanghamitta: But I should have had one for *Shabda*.

S: Yes, because every person who becomes ordained should automatically get a copy, even though it isn't complete. Perhaps a note could be made of that.

_____:

S: So should we perhaps make some decision about that?

_____: Maybe Suvratta could make a new list, duplicate it and send it out with *Shabda* if it needs

S: When you say 'a new list', which of the three are you referring to?

_____: The one which has names and addresses and qualifications.

_____: ?

_____: No, in the booklet, we have names in the booklet. biographical
(Voices.) No.

S: Well, no.

_____: and qualifications.

Lokamitra: But this question is different from the one on qualifications? The biographical one which we are talking about is the one which is equivalent to the one we had before - booklet, yeah?

S: But bigger.

Lokamitra: A little bit fuller.

S: And then every three months there will be a revised list of names and addresses, simply. So what we want is, immediately, a full list of names and addresses, simply, and as soon as possible after that a new edition, expanded, of the 1974 register.

Sanghamitta: Could I I tried to write it so that new names coming in all the time

_____: Couldn't the new one be in loose-leaf? An ideal kind of situation, because then instead of having to reprint the whole thing every two years you could just add the new leaves as they come along, you could put them in the right place alphabetically, and if anybody feels that their own particular leaf is no longer descriptive they can send the information and have a new one.

_____: You mean one page per Order member?

_____: One page per person, yes.

_____: Your own one?

_____: Yes, alphabetical booklet.

_____: suggested in the first place.

Sanghamitta: I wasn't informed of the three new ordinees. Again, I had to find out for myself who - what

S: I think it was - originally the Registrar would get such information, and that the Registrar then was editor also, so the editor got it automatically. But now there must be an arrangement for the Registrar to pass on information

Sanghamitta:

Abhaya: Perhaps a new questionnaire should be made out so that people could give this fuller account which is needed or could it be done by tomorrow night.

_____: I think it has to be done because there were a few mistakes in the last transcript.

_____ : It should be a questionnaire.

Subhuti: Are you suggesting there should be a new edition of the biographical register as soon as possible. So Suvratta suggests that it comes out by -

S: Well, the last one came out in October. I think if this one could come out earlier than in another year's time, say, if it could come out by the beginning of next year. Because there have been so many more ordinations.

_____ : could that be done ... ?

S: Well, let's wait and see.

_____ : But if it is - we could afterwards consider Manjuvajra's idea that it be loose-leaf.

Mangala: Is it necessary for every Order member to have one of those and whether it wouldn't be enough for every Order members just to have the names and addresses, and if they needed more information they could get that from the Centre.

S: There is that point.

_____ : Maybe each Centre could have one.

Mangala: Yes, it could have a really well-kept fat biography of every member, so that it was all detailed -

S: But really, what it would mean is virtually that it might be an idea to get everybody to fill out a proper form, for want of a better word, giving all these details, then simply copies of that are typed out, and these are all for putting in the binders, and one supplied to every Centre.

Mangala: Maybe all that's needed is really perhaps one and that is kept by some Order Archivist. (*Voices.*)

_____ : But we've already got that one the first one. (*Voices.*)

Mangala: But perhaps that's all that's necessary, then; and then trust that everybody will add their names and addresses, and if you want any further information then you write to the Order Registrar and say I'm looking for a yoga teacher.

Lokamitra: I think we're getting much bigger. We'll be much more out of touch with things, and I think it's good that every Order member has this information. And it will be just as cheap to produce 60 copies at the moment, or not much more expensive, as to produce 10 copies for each Centre. we're having more Centres all the time

_____ : The biographical one should be fuller with members' skills and biographies , because as far as addresses go it doesn't serve its function that one.

Ananda: There's three quite distinct functions, aren't there? Quite important ... everyone would have access. (*Chat.*)

Mangala: information that people are going to want to be carrying around, then you know you've got a names and addresses of the Order members (*Voices.*) ... and

details of their centres.

Ananda: The Centre might be 100 miles away. (*Voices.*)

_____: people's qualifications might be a short paragraph in

Mangala: if you want the information you can get it from the Centre.

_____: No, because you've then got to write and they've got to do something for you, file (*Voices.*)

Lokamitra: We're getting into discussion. I think we've got a lot more to get through. I don't see that there's any point in

S: I think the main point is that you said that it was just as easy financially to produce 100 copies as to produce ten. I think that really settles it.

Mangala: Well, actually matter, all that extra paper

_____:

_____: Well, it does in a way, ...the cost would be really in typing it out and making the paper's very little cost compared to preparation.

Lokamitra: I think if you don't feel the need of the register then you write to the Registrar and say that you don't want one.

S: So what are we asking Suvratta to do?

_____: To consider the idea of a loose-leaf one, and to bring one out as soon as possible, preferably by the new year.

_____: One what?

_____: Register.

Voices: In revised form - biographical.

S: And then to let us have a complete list of names and addresses immediately.

_____: So when we get our new - *if* we get our new loose-leaf thing, we will be sent a bundle of pages.

_____: If we decide

_____: names and addresses?

_____: Yes.

S: And telephone numbers; names, addresses and telephone numbers.

_____: And that will come out every three months. Quarterly, yes.

_____: And names and addresses should be left off the biographical register to save a bit of time and expense. (*Voices.*)

Siddhiratna: If you have a small one which comes out quarterly, you're going round, say, to New Zealand through India, you've got Order members, you're not going to be wanting to carry a big loose leaf folder around with you. All the names and addresses would be very useful. Then arriving at the Centre and you want to get something going, you refer to the biographical one and see what skills are available.

_____:

Siddhiratna:all the names and addresses, yes. And, yes, and a biographical one as well.

Ananda: I think the biographical one should also include names and addresses.

S: It's only a couple of lines, say. (*Voices.*)

All right, let's go on, then. Next office bearer down is the Editor of *Shabda*. Have you anything further to add to whatever you said before?

Sanghamitta: Well, no, except someone to arrange that somebody should send me a full list of names and addresses.

_____: You should be

Sanghamitta: Yes, at some point Suvratna mentioned going to Canada. I didn't know where he was, and I expected at any time he'd be sending it to me.

Ananda: Sorry, can I just quickly recap? Have we actually agreed to the register idea? Everyone should have a copy of the biographical one and the list of names and addresses. The archive should have two copies.

S: Yes. Or, if it's typed, three.

_____: Did we agree how often we produce the biographical one?

_____: Every three months

S: The biographical one, every two years. I think we agreed to that. Except that, in view of the fact that so many Order members have been ordained, the next one should be by the end of the year, probably.

_____: Presumably this would be reviewed at every Convention, and therefore we don't really need to set a period.

_____: If we took up the idea of a loose-leaf thing, it wouldn't have to be reviewed. It could just be (*Voices.*)

_____: I think *Shabda* shouldn't be

Ananda: But it would be included in the form of a page of the addresses

_____: So we are asking Suvratna to produce a sort of hard- bound register for the archives as well. He could actually do it. (*Voices: Mm.*)

_____: I think his register I think is

S: All right, anything else, Sanghamitta?

Sanghamitta: No, I would just suggest that if the new names and addresses have been each time ... - new ordinees

_____: The whole picture you get in

_____: Biographical register.

Sanghamitta: The whole - every three months.

S: No, the every three months is the names and addresses.

Sanghamitta: Oh, I see, every three years.

S: No, no; every time someone is ordained, all that information about them which will be added to the biographical register should, on the occasion of their ordination, appear in *Shabda*.

Sanghamitta: Oh yes, well, that's has been

S: - more or less as has been done. (*Voices.*) Except possibly fuller.

Lokamitra: They should be supplied by Suvratta, and it should be on a page, presumably, at the same time as the register, and that shouldn't really be your responsibility.

Sanghamitta: No.

_____: When the biographical thing actually comes into operation,

Ananda: No, but the actual report of the ordinations and all the details will be in the *Shabda* which comes out near the time of ordination.

Sanghamitta: Who's going to give them to me for the next *Shabda*?

S: Well, I'm not clear about one thing - I think people have been talking about two different things - whether there will be a sheet appearing in *Shabda* giving the biographical details etc. on the occasion of the person's ordination, and this sheet will be then added to your own private biographical file, or whether that is distinct from the write-up about the ordination in *Shabda*.

Subhuti: I think we'll have to leave it to Suvratta to actually decide what form the register will take.

S: Yes, but in any case, when someone is ordained, in addition to saying that they have been ordained, *Shabda* in one form or another should carry a little bit about them. I think you will just have to gather that from wherever you can, and sort of ask Suvratta for information that comes to him, have someone

The next report was to be from the Master of Ceremonies, but he's not here at the moment. But we will be talking about ceremonies, pujas and so on later on in the week, so perhaps he will be here.

_____:

S: When are we dealing with ceremonies?

_____: Thursday.

S: Thursday, ah. Well, is there anything to be said under this head at present, even in the absence of any report from him?

_____: responsibility is..... supposed to provide kesas,

S: Oh yes. And to draw up a calendar.

_____: Do you think it would be a good idea to all the necessary ceremonies?

S: Yes, we're coming on to this with regard to all the office- bearers, their functions and whether any extensions and so on. But we just at present receive the reports.

_____: There's are two other officers which we haven't -

S: Yes. One there's the archivist; any other?

Lokamitra: We should just mention that Padmaraja is not Order, but he will be presenting a report on Friday. And I think that perhaps seminars are really an Order function, and that Devamitra is effectively looking after

S: You mean study seminars? That's true.

Lokamitra: Study seminars, yes. And therefore it should remain perhaps recognised as such.

S: We could go on to that when we speak about But perhaps we could have something from Ananda as archivist.

Ananda: In fact, I've got two reports, really, one on the Library as well, First of all I'll just mention the Library. There are over 700 volumes, plus the new, about 300, plus about 30 or so, and various Order members have recently given books - so we've got quite a large collection. And there are an uncounted number of periodicals, several hundred periodicals, that I'm not quite sure what to do with at this stage, but we've got quite a lot, and they're still coming in, a steady trickle from all directions. What we have been doing on the Library in the last few months, which Madeleine has been doing under my supervision, is producing a complete classification system for all the Library books, and we've now devised a system which we hope will be applicable to all future inclusions to the Library, so that no matter how big the Library gets we shall be able to include all new additions under the present classification system, and about 70% of this work has now been I've got a little bit more to do on that. Hopefully, the same system will be usable in all branches of Library: I mean, if a library belongs to the different Centres, in the future. And maybe I will try and issue a little sheet to send to secretaries with the information about the system that we are using, so that they can adopt it.

S: Is this as system that you devised by yourself?

Ananda: Well, it's based on the UDC system which is used in public libraries, but it's not exactly the same because obviously those libraries don't have many books on Buddhism and we've got to expand out enormously to incorporate all the different categories of Buddhism. It's based on the decimal system.

The other thing that we're doing now - we're just starting the work on this - is a card index system, a subject and author index to comprise the whole Library, so that eventually - this will be a long-term job, it's going to take a long time to do this - you'll be able to look up any subject on Buddhism or allied subjects, and find exactly where it refers to in any book in the whole Library. But this is an enormous job, and we're just beginning

S: Sounds just like the Abhidharma.

Ananda: Yes. Well, this is my aim, to produce a complete cross- reference system so that you'll be able to find any subject Library.

Vajradaka: Are you training someone to do that with you - you're not just doing it in isolation?

Ananda: Well, the situation so far has been that Madeleine has been doing work on this under my general supervision, but now she's left, so we really need someone else to take the job and work with me on it.

_____:

Ananda: Well, that's a possibility but not an immediate one. It won't affect the question arising.

S: Is that all about the Library?

Ananda: Er - yes, it is, really, yes. That's the report on it. Except there's one question which I'd like to ask you, and that is the question several people have asked me. What are we going to do with duplicate copies of books and periodicals? It's a very extensive(?) would like copies of books that we

S: Don't forget that this is the Order Library.

Ananda: Yes. But there will be presumably branches of the Order Library, residing at various Centres. Anyway,

S: That's all about the Library?

Ananda: Yes. Now I come on to the archives. If there are any questions about the report, I'll try to answer them. The archive now comprises four basic categories of information. Firstly, scrapbooks of newspaper articles and cuttings, newspaper photographs, which have been collected by various Friends over a period of - well, even before the formation of the Friends. I've got an enormous amount of newspaper material, published material, in those books. Secondly, the originals of Bhante's lectures on tape, mostly we've got the complete sets of originals there. Thirdly, the rupas, *thangkas*, and ritual objects, of which there is a complete inventory And fourthly, a photographic archive, and this comprises two sections, one of black and white prints and negatives in book form, of all Order activities, gradually building up a complete collection about; and secondly a collection of colour slides or transparencies. Most of them at present are those given by Dharmapala to the archive,

S: Does anyone know where my India slides are?

_____:

Ananda: The archive is divided into four categories, and they are all in the process of being

built up ...

S: Does that include film?

Ananda: We haven't got any film, apart from the transparencies.

S: We could perhaps get a copy of the film that was made by Dick

Ananda: Yes. And all those things are at Aryatara.

S: When you say the originals of my taped lectures, what do you mean?

Ananda: The original master tapes.

S: They're with you?

Ananda: They're with me at the moment, yes. But that is different from the master copies which Sagaramati has, which he uses for making the copies for sale.

S: Yours are the actual original originals?

Ananda: Yes.

S: That's good.

Asvajit: We always refer to them as originals, and the copies of the originals as masters,

S: I'm rather out of date.

_____: There's a tendency to get confused, the originals.

Ananda: That completes the report on the Library and the Archive.

Nagabodhi: Are you responsible for storing transcripts of lectures, seminars?

Ananda: Yes. I also have the Library, the Order Library.

_____: Not seminar material?copies of seminars?.

Ananda: No, not seminars, but the transcripts of lectures

Siddhiratna: What sort of - are you keeping or ?

Ananda: No, I haven't got any of that.

Siddhiratna: Nagabodhi's got some and I've got some

Ananda: Well, I haven't got any, (*Voices.*) If it's relevant material, if you think it's suitable for the archive on film

Siddhiratna: I think it could be, (*Voices.*) Vital records

S: There's one general point in connection with the Library which I think should be discussed, and that is whether it is at the moment in the best place, or whether the Order feels

that it shouldn't be more centrally located. Has anybody been having thoughts or ideas about this?

Ananda: It seems logical to me that it should be in central London, Bethnal Green

_____: (*Inaudible exchanges.*)

_____: it's not being used, and get a lot of stuff -

S: It also occurs to me that if Madeleine is willing to go on working on it, if it is located in London and if she is in London and if it is possible, she could perhaps continue her work and you could just sort of look in occasionally just to see how things were going, maybe once a month.

Ananda: I think she would like to continue work on it, but I'll talk to her about that later on. It would be good if she could, because it's the sort of job which you need to be really into, really know the system

S: Would there be room in Bethnal Green for the Order Library, if it was decided to ? (*Laughter.*) I'm just asking! I

Nagabodhi: Would it be possible for any part of the Library to be a lending library? Obviously there are some publications which we probably wouldn't want to let go, because they're rare or incredibly expensive or - . But I find it a bit limiting that one has to - 'No Book can Leave this Room'.

_____: Well, so far Bhante's made it a -

S: I feel very strongly about this, having lost so many books in the past, both in India and in this country, including my own bound volumes of *Stepping Stones*, so that I don't even have a complete set of that. And people, even with the best of intentions, are so incredibly careless and irresponsible about books.

_____: And things have been lost from my caravan recently, last year

_____: I think if one has got a room where one can study,

S: My own feeling is that if the Library, the Order Library, is shifted to Bethnal Green, that Library should be a library-cum-reading and study room, where even Order members can go and prepare their lectures, or just to browse through the books, or even can read steadily. And where there'll be a 'Silence' sign, there won't be any discussion or talk

Ananda: Also we're really rapidly running out of space in the Library at Aryatara. We can't really accommodate any more books

S: So if you're put in the position of saying how long it will be before it would be possible for the shift to take place. Would it be within a year?

_____: Er - it will be in a year.

S: So we need not really talk about it till our next Convention.

_____: There's one thing that comes up in this connection, is additions to the Library. No doubt a number of Order members have books which they don't actually use at this particular moment, which could be added to the Order Library.

S: (*aircraft noise*) publications whenever I can. Most of those will eventually to the Library.

.....:

.....:

S: I'm just collecting books for the Order Library,

.....:

S: All important publications like new translations of *The White Lotus Sutra*, and then there's this big new book about *The Cult of Tara*, and a few historical things, a new translation of the *Madhyamikakarika*. All very expensive, I'm afraid, but whatever I can to I've got about - since I left London, I've got probably about 60 quite important new books about Buddhism go into the Order Library. I can use them there, and

Ananda: complete edition of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, in 20 volumes.

.....: not so important magazines reference

S: I think - my own idea is that the Order Library should be as complete as possible; that we should have absolutely everything on Buddhism, good, bad and indifferent, that we can lay our hands on; including, first of all, editions of texts in all languages and all scripts. We may not be able to use them now, but there will, I hope, be people in future in the Order who will be able to. So editions of all the Buddhist scriptures in all languages and all scripts, whatever is available. We've got practically nothing And then translations of texts into different languages - and not only English; I think we should get whatever we can in French and German and other languages, too - other European languages as well. And then books about Buddhism, both ones being published now and also old ones. I'm especially always keeping my eye open for old books, even those which are only of historical interest; even those which are absurdly wrong about Buddhism. Let's have the whole lot in one collection.

.....:

S: I don't know whether we are - I think perhaps we should establish the Library at Bethnal Green, but I'll be doing my own freelance collecting in the meantime. But if I just come across any absolute bargain that we can't miss and I haven't got the money, I'll just have to have a quiet word with Lokamitra about it.

Nagabodhi: - you know, this is something we've only just begun. We can get in on the review -

S: That is true, yes.

Nagabodhi: write to every publisher.

S: Yes. That's very good. And also, once we get settled and we have a little time, we can start writing to people in the East for editions of texts in different languages; like the Thai Tipitaka, the Japanese edition of the Tibetan Tangyur, things like that.

Ananda: There are certain books which are very fundamental which the Library doesn't have at all, and one is a good dictionary.

S: Of?

Ananda: I think an English dictionary, I think is a very important aspect, and we don't have one. If anyone has one -

S: Several English grammars, too! Perhaps Abhaya would draw up a select list that he recommends. 'Teach Yourself' -

Ananda: At least a dictionary. Just a dictionary. A modern English dictionary And also -

S: Could I put in a word for Johnson's *Dictionary*, please?

_____: I've got that in Southend(?).

Ananda: And also we don't have two other very important books, which if anyone here has a copy of and would like to donate to the Library - one is the *Bodhicaryavatara* - we haven't got that - and the other is Govinda's *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*. essential books.

_____: You've got the *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*.

Ananda: Not in the Order Library, no.

S: You fight it out afterwards.

Ananda: My copy (*Voices*.)

_____: Have you got..... ?

Ananda: No.

S: That's a good idea, too.

_____: But the thingsto buy are to concentrate on Buddhist books rather than things like dictionaries.

Ananda: Really I think a dictionary is fundamental.

_____: But you can get hold of dictionaries

Ananda: Yes, if you've got the money.

_____:

S: We're not at the moment about spending any money at all.

_____: What about other books, books on other topics?

S: I am quite in favour that there should be a select section of Western philosophy, psychology, comparative religion. anthropology, biology, evolution, literature - but select.

_____: Who's going to do the selecting?

S: I don't mind doing that to begin with.

Lokamitra: Quite a few of us, for example, have studied and we have books on philosophy, on history, on whatever, which we don't want to get rid of entirely but they could be used

generally.

Sanghamitta: What is the best dictionary, Bhante, ?

S: The biggest. The 12-volume Oxford.

Sanghamitta: Yes, how much? Any idea? (*Voices.*)

Ananda: There is the *Shorter Oxford English*, in two volumes.

S: I think that would probably be good. (*Voices.*)

_____: I have a copy

Sanghamitta: Well, if the printing press turns out any good, and if there's any money left out of what we've got at home it could be donated towards that, got a dictionary,

S: I think also we ought to have, sooner or later, the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. And also, if we can get hold of one - it would be second-hand - Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. It's an absolutely standard work of reference - twelve volumes.

_____: There are lots of reasons why we can't (?)

S: I rather suggest, though, that we leave it for the time being. I'll continue my freelance collection. But I think we'd better leave this until the Order Library is shifted and things are a bit more organised at Bethnal Green, and we are in a position also to spend some money. Now is probably a bit confused.

Ananda: Also the question of periodicals,

S: I think, in the Order Library at Bethnal Green, all the Buddhist periodicals should be available. Or perhaps - you'll have to think about this in detail yourself - perhaps there could be a general reading room where they could be available, and then they are filed away in the Order Library - back issues.

Ananda: What is usually done in public libraries is that the latest issue available is on display, and all the back numbers are filed in the vaults

_____:

S: I must say I saw a beautiful system in the Technical University in Helsinki. It was rows and rows of sort of pigeonholes, little cupboards, like this - and each little cupboard had a rack in front with the latest issue of the periodical, but that was the little door, open it, and behind neatly stacked were all the back issues. Maybe we could do something like that.

_____: Have you ever looked into the cost of microfilming things?

Ananda: No.

_____: I think that it would be a good idea.

Ananda: finding out. I don't think on our present scale of work it would beable at all, because you need equipment, which I'm sure wouldn't be -

Nagabodhi: We're getting into an awful lot of paper, with seminars and.....

Lokamitra: Anyway, that should be investigated, yeah?

S: I think a good library, mainly of Buddhist books, is an indispensable working tool for Order members, especially for those who are engaged in study and teaching and giving lectures, leading study groups, writing articles. Even if you consult it to prevent you making a mistake.

_____: slightly more than

Ananda: Well, we have a complete

S: Great Britain or Norfolk or -

_____: England. Great Britain. Well - Norfolk. [Laughter]

S: anthology of Tittleshall.

_____: No. Western, pre-christian -

S: Yes, right. What about the other archival material? One question I was going to raise was the question of insurance of Order property. There are quite a few things which I've sort of mentally donated to the Order, as I have recently These have now been insured. I was wondering whether other things ought to be insured.

_____: This was raised, in fact; Mangala was

Mangala: Yes, Nothing at present has been insured. I did start checking around insurance companies a while back. I can't remember the reason that things had started, not actually - we hadn't actually gone ahead and insured it - but there was a point that we thought that perhaps a lot of the stuff should be moved to Bethnal Green, and also since it was Order property, it was felt that perhaps the Order ought to be responsible for insuring it rather than in this case Aryatara.....

Lokamitra: I think that's terrible!

_____: Terrible!

Lokamitra: Really bad! It came up at an Order meeting about six months ago, I've kept on about it, and you said it was in hand. (Voices.) Whether it's going to Bethnal Green - regardless of expense, we can sort that later. If they go there - (Voices.)

Sanghamitta: A fire could happen any time, isn't it? And they could be gone.

S: But it is quite easy to do, because when I got these particular things insured, it was all done in about two days, two visits to the office. And they even allowed us to insure or they insured the images etc. on our own provisional valuation, on condition that within three months we had them valued by an expert, which has not been done.

Ananda: Bhante, in whose name was it insured, in your name?

S: In my personal name.

_____: This was the problem, that you can't insure something in a group name.

S: Well, you surely can. (Voices.)

_____: Any Order member.

S: They insured it in my name.

_____: If you're a charity - (Voices.)

S: If it's Order property, or what I have given to the Order mentally, insure it in my name, value. I can't give it to the Order legally, because there is none. We'll sort that point out later, but it should be insured.

_____: Can we insure it in your name?

S: Oh well, Vajrakumara went and insured it all in my name.

Sanghamitta: Wasn't there some difficulty - I remember someone saying something about it when I was at Aryatara - because the doors aren't locked or something?

_____: Well, that's one difficulty.

S: They did simply ask whether there was someone always there, and this is why I was quite keen that there should be someone there while I was away in Holland, But we said yes, there would always be somebody there, that the house would not be left empty in the day.

Lokamitra: Anyway, that should be insured immediately. The money I think, for that could come from the funds which in my own care. Then everything the next Convention, when

S: There is also the point that if something that's insured has a certain address, you can't move it around. You can't for instance travel taking it with you. (Voices.) be insured as at Aryatara, and then when it's moved it has to be reinsured or some change made

Ananda: That was one reason that we didn't carry it through, because we thought (Voices.)

(end of side)

Tape 2, side 2

: It's been there for six months.

Ananda: moved at any time, you see.

: It's good idea to just take things insured (Voices.)

S: Anyway, so who is responsible for this being done?

_____: I suggest the Treasurer at Aryatara or the Archivist.

Mangala: Well, I was, and - and in fact it isn't as if I haven't been doing anything, believe me. I actually got a quotation from a company who'll do it for about £35 a year.

S: Yes, that's what it costs me.

Mangala: - but that was just taking my rough estimation of the value.

S: This included all my books. I insured all those.

Mangala: That includes the books, and rupas, and - and in fact all the contents at Aryatara.

Lokamitra: I don't think we need go into this yet, but someone from Aryatara should take it on, and they should Will someone take that on?

_____: Well, we'll get together and get back to you. (Voices.)

S: You'll get together over this?

_____: Yes.

_____: What will happen at Aryatara when Ananda comes up for the Convention, 'cause that's a few days?

Ananda: There'll be nobody there.

S: This is the sort of situation that won't be covered.

_____: a Mitra who would do it straight away with a phone call. He insured my house and there was an accident with my rupa -

_____: Without even coming to see it?

_____: He sent someone to come and see what had happened. He made inquiries and everything, and they paid the insurance.

S: There's no difficulty getting insurance. After all, people are selling it in fact. So they will give you - but you've got to give them the information, and tell them that you want to.

Sanghamitta: But this point of nobody being there is not complying with the insurance regulations, is it? (Voices.) happen, when it is insured, that -

S: It shouldn't happen.

Sanghamitta: It shouldn't happen, that's what I mean.

S: Now it's actually dangerous, because if anything is stolen, we don't get any insurance. And even if it is insured, someone should be there; that's a condition of the insurance.

Ananda: Is that an inevitable condition? In order to insure it there's got to be someone there all the time? (Voices.)

Sanghamitta: It's got to be locked, though, hasn't it, it's got to be secure, the property must be secure.

S: It must be secure. If for instance you go away and you leave things not properly locked up, windows open, if you lose something the insurance people are going to contest your claim.

Ananda: Yes, well, there's no problem about locking up and the place having been secured, but we can't guarantee there's

S: You'll have to go into that with your own individual insurance people. So we'll leave that with whoever We merely say that Order property must be insured, it's up to them how they do it.

Mangala: It comes under the Council at Aryatara

_____: This is a point I brought up quite a while ago. I've already seen Ananda about the general display of all a bit random, and what we would want And I tended to think that because it was Buddhist, the fact that the longer you leave obviously it's up to them.
(Voices.)

S: I made that point some time ago, The last time I went there I saw that the curtains were down (Voices.) I must say that the Tsong-kha-pa one was warped a bit when I got it originally. It might have warped more at Aryatara, but it was rather badly warped. It isn't very well stitched. It's a very difficult thing to stitch a painting into the brocade. Some tailors does it, they are quite expert, others are not so expert.

_____:

S: You iron them, usually. examine the thangkas

: Generally, the whole point is decide whether one should display something so people can look at it and admire it, or have it in its ritual function, for use

S: Or do you think maybe we should leave them till we come to Pujas or celebration. Well time actually is up. But make a note of it and bring it up when we talk about the Puja and ceremonies and so on.

Anything else about archives? There's one thing I wanted to say about Mitrata, Convenor of Mitras. That will be brought up later.

Subhuti: Yes. A point was raised about the condition of the thangkas ; we didn't actually resolve that. Is somebody actually going to do something about it?

:

Subhuti: Somebody should take it in hand, actually look into it.

S: Could someone at least examine the thangkas and see whether there is any actual degeneration?

Ananda: Well, I've looked at them fairly closely, and there is a certain amount of rippling in the -

S: Which one?

Ananda: I think all of them slightly -

S: Because the Tsong-kha-pa was definitely buckled from the very beginning of the time I've had it, that's 15 years now. So the only question is whether it's got definitely worse.

Ananda: I haven't noticed it getting definitely worse.

Lokamitra: you'll be responsible as the Archivist ...

Ananda: In my opinion, they're not - I haven't seen any degeneration.

Lokamitra: You should be responsible to the Order for their good condition.

Ananda: Well, as far as I'm concerned,

: Then you should get in contact with - on a friendly informal basis - a restorer of some kind. Whenever problems like this come up you can then say, look, I'm no expert, tell me what's happened with this, if you can do anything about it get advice

S: I think a point to inquire into is whether we would not be advised to put them under glass. I think that is a point to be

Ananda: Why do you think (loud traffic noise)

S: but at least perhaps we ought to have the information.

: Maybe if they're not really there to be looked at, they're covered up, they're not ever used, we might as well until they are being used find something to store them in, They're not really being used, are they?

:

: Well, I mean find out how from a museum. museum

S: It would be better keeping them rolled up. They are hung up in the temples and so on, but they always deteriorate badly. They are blackened by smoke. I've certainly been told by my Tibetan friends that people who collect thangkas, and certain aristocrats old ones, they always keep them wrapped up because of -

:

Lokamitra: There's no need to have them hanging up at all, really. I don't know why they're there. just be stored, until some time when people decide that the thangkas

Lokamitra: Could we ask Ananda to look into this and report to an Order Day, and to 'Shabda' within three months? - on the condition of the thangkas, and what -

S: There's only after all three of them there, as far as I remember. One of -

Ananda: What in practice do you want to know - whether they should be put under glass?

Lokamitra: What's the best way of preserving them, the best way of storing them and what you're going to do with them as a result of finding out about it. The best way of storing them.

S: Or keeping them; the best way

: Probably from museums

S: Richard could probably help, Richard Bancroft. He would put you in touch with someone. (Voices.)

: Although I have heard that looking at that most of them are kept in very bad conditions and not really looked after.

Sanghamitta: I should think under glass would be the best.....

S: Vajrakumara was framing some recently. He did say that the surface of the thangka shouldn't be touching the glass.

Sanghamitta: Because I've got that problem, that small one at home - that seems to be perfectly all right.

Ananda: It's probably only case of putting that under

Lokamitra: I don't see why we're going on - find out the best way of storing them.

.....: Is the November Order Day suggested? (Murmurs.)

S: Now to general questions, as to whether all the offices that we have at present are necessary, whether we need any more, whether any more duties need to be added to existing offices, and anything of that sort. (traffic noise) Perhaps we should go through the offices one by one, and we can talk about them from this point of view.

All right, first of all, Order Convenor. Do we feel that we still need an Order Convenor? If so, who, and so on.

: I think we do, someone, as Manjuvajra said, in London. I think it's not only him that's being - I think it's the nature of the job requires something to be considered. (?)

:

Abhaya: What precisely are his duties?

: Well, when they were originally drawn up, the Convenor's only duty was to deal with the Convention, to organise and arrange the Convention.

: Order retreats I'd have thought was the - (Voices.)

S: Do we know how long he'll be there?

: We don't, no. He'll probably get back

S: I just had a passing thought that maybe the retreat organiser might be the best person for that. Just because she's on the spot and organises things in her sleep by this time. [Laughter]

: We've all been convened.

: Can I have what I'm to do - what the job involves?

S: Well, the Convenor convenes. But anyway, that doesn't -

:

S: Well, let's consider this carefully, because it is quite important. Obviously, the main thing is to convene the annual Convention. I presume that before we conclude the week's proceedings we are going to fix roughly the date of the next one. That would mean arranging for the venue and making or seeing - either arranging oneself personally or seeing that arrangements were made for the commissariat and that information was given to Shabda and

that Order members had been informed. But it doesn't necessarily mean one does it oneself, but one is responsible for seeing that it has been done by somebody or other. This is how I see it; I don't know if anyone else has any other ideas?

: So is it just for the Convention, or other - ?

S: Well, to start with, for the Convention. I think it really applies to all functions which concern the Order as a whole; or all meetings of the Order as a whole, not any sections of the Order

: That would then include the monthly Order Days.

: Those are in sections, because those rarely include Scotland and -

: Well, theoretically, they include the Order as a whole.....

: They are open to the Order as a whole.

S: I don't see why the Order Convenor should have to look after things like that.

Lokamitra: I don't know; it does need somebody to look after Order Days.

S: Who is looking after them at the moment?

: Nobody.

S: Well, how do they occur?

Sanghamitta: That's the trouble, nobody

: They occur, but there are mishaps and confusions.
(Voices, chat.)

S: I should have thought that each chapter of the Order, meeting anywhere, decide where it's going to meet next and how, and looks after it itself. I shouldn't think there was a need for any central Convenor to be looking after all Order meetings everywhere.

: I thought Order Day was just an Order meeting; it was Order day just once a month. Order meetings might be

S: Yes, but each Order Day will surely decide about the next one: where it is going to be and who is going to do the catering and so on. It is self-perpetuating.

: something which I'd like to clarify. that the Order Day which is held at Aryatara once a month is a meeting of the complete Order. Is that so or not?

: Well, as many as possible as can make it, yes.

S: It's open. (Voices.)

Mangala: Order Days held elsewhere as well.... often we now have Order meetings

S: Well, there's been an Order Day in New Zealand.

Nagabodhi: The original idea behind Order Day was that people would come from a distance.

Ananda: Well, maybe the Order Day is a national gathering, and the Convention is an international gathering.

Lokamitra: The Order Day can't be a national gathering. You can't expect people to come from Glasgow. You'd expect to have your own Order Day for Scotland. (Voices.)

S: it's open

Sanghamitta: Well, will somebody let me know that Order Days are going to be elsewhere, because the last time nobody said there was going to be an Order Day instead of Archway.

S: What happened there?

: That should have been - Aryatara.

Sanghamitta: It should have been given out - Yes, but two people tried to do their best to see that I got but I didn't get the information when the Order Day would be at Archway, and I thought there was no Order day three months (?). I found out there was. And I think -

S: This must be the responsibility of each Order Day, that at the end of the Order Day it is decided where the next one is going to be, and who is going to be responsible for making any arrangements that need to be made, and who is going to be responsible for informing people if there is any change.

Lokamitra: I think that's a bit impractical, in a way, because it's too short-term. I think we need to have a programme for a year, and then if there are any changes let them so we have the arrangement for a year to have - we need to plan out the Order Days for a year.

S: If the Order Day decides that, fine. That must be of that particular meeting. I don't see any need for a central Convenor for all the different people.

Sanghamitta: Just to make sure that there was a communication about this, then - that

S: Well, sure, this is obviously very important.

Sanghamitta: Other people may not have turned up, thinking that it which is natural to someone else, isn't it?

: Maybe not another Convenor but - this may be getting a bit offside, but - we've got onto Order Day now instead of the Convenor, but Order Day does have an organiser.

S: Well, that is what the Order Day itself should decide. When you have an Order Day, at the end, just discuss this, how one is going to have the next one; and if necessary, appoint someone to be responsible for the arrangements. Or arrange for six or twelve monthly meetings, monthly Order Days, in a row. That's then up to the local monthly Order meeting.

: If you're not sure you can always ring someone else who might be.

Sanghamitta: Yes, but will somebody - it's like the insurance - be responsible for that, so that I will get the information?

S: It's the responsibility of those at the monthly Order Day to appoint someone for next time.

: Are you saying that you want Shabda that information?

Sanghamitta: Yes. Well, it doesn't matter whether it's getting out now that the next 12 months it will be

Subhuti: I think it has to be sorted out and I think it should be sorted out at the Order meeting. If you bring it up there, but we really should get on.

: What about seminars and those things?

S: Are you talking about study seminars? I'll just look after those myself. I think that's safest.

: But Devamitra is looking after the tapes of seminars and is in charge of the transcribing

Devamitra: In fact, I'm not looking after the tapes. Sagaramati's keeping the original, because I don't feel happy about hanging onto them in a squat.

:

S: But anyway, as regards Convenor - while we're grateful to Asvajit for his offer I feel that 10 or 12 would be the best answer.

:

S: As far as I know you're going to be - you're not around London.

:

S: I think that when - as and when or if and when we do have study seminars, I'll just have to contact the retreat organiser and say could you do whatever is necessary?

: I think I'm going to need an assistant if I'm doing seminars as well, because it

S: I'm not planning any study seminars for the time being.

: Mitra, I think.

: I think it would be good if it was an Order member. I had a Mitra but the results were somehow a bit out of touch with what's going on.

S: You're talking now about an assistant ? Leave it to the Council. We need not bother about it. So is that settled about the Convenor? And is the function of the Convenor understood? It seems quite straightforward. That means the Convenor is responsible for everything connected with the annual Convention, but does not have to do everything personally but only to see that it is done by somebody or other.

All right, what's the next officer? Registrar. Suvratta is willing to continue being Registrar. So how do we feel about that? Are we all happy with him? OK, let it be recorded. And Sanghamitta as Editor of Shabda if she's willing. Good. And Devaraja as Master of

Ceremonies? Can that be confirmed in his absence? I don't know whether he is willing to continue; I've no information.

:

S: Well, perhaps we should leave it till the end and then we should ask him if he is willing to continue.

: There's just a point I'd like to bring up about dates, but maybe that should be left till he's here.

S: Well, we can discuss it under Pujas, ceremonies and so on. All right, let's leave that. And is Ananda happy to go on being Librarian and Archivist? Good. We're quite happy that he should. All right. Any new office required? Any new function? I think there is this question of the material emerging from the study seminars.

: It is more specifically Order Devamitra's been (Voices.)

Devamitra: name, I just do it

S: Seminarian, or - ?

: transcriber or chief transcriber.

S: Scribe! [Laughter]

Devamitra: I refuse to be a scribe! [Laughter] (Voices.)

_____: Maha Scribe!

S: Scribe-in-chief. The Great Reciter. Wheel-turning monarch.

: Future generations to come will have their ritual
..... typewriter (Voices; laughter.)

S: Do we need any other office-bearer?

: What about an Order Secretary?

S: To do what?

: Er - I dunno. [Laughter] I didn't have very clear ideas about it.

: 'somebody should have told me' and it would have been the Secretary.

S: told you about what?

: That the Order Days

S: Well, that's the business of that particular meeting of the Order. (Voices.) No, I think we must insist upon each unit, as it were, being responsible for its own affairs and not looking to someone at the top with overall

: I think it could happen if have no secretary.

:

: It would just give you someone to blame if you had an Order Secretary! (Voices.)

: last year we were saying this was going to be the main function of Shabda for It's up to individuals

: You've been talking about an Order secretariat, but not yet. We've got

:

S: Well, is there anything as regards Order affairs which is not being attended to, not being done, which should be attended to or should be done? If there isn't, we don't need any more functions. If there is

Subhuti: an extension of the Registrar's function, the registry of FWBO Centres, recognise

S: We're going to talk about that tomorrow.

Mangala: Perhaps the matter of retreats ought to be considered more; that is, like who leads the retreat and then seeing that say several other Order members do go along. I'm not quite sure if organised but as far as I know -

S: suggestion FWBO to organise retreats. Are you talking about Order retreats.

: (noise)

S: Is there any feeling that there should be more Order retreats as such? Because if there is to be an Order retreat, then you need someone to be responsible for organising it. Is there a feeling that there should be more Order retreats?

: I don't we don't have the time.

S: Don't have the time.

: retreats

:

S: Well, an Order retreat, Order members physically go on retreat.

: Yes,

Sanghamitta: An Order retreat seems to ... - another one sometimes -

S: But do people feel the need of an Order retreat?

Sanghamitta: It would be very useful for people outside like myself who aren't with Order members quite so often.

: every year (Voices.)

: I really don't think it's possible.

Subhuti: I think that's the sort of thing that shouldn't be the collective responsibility of the Convention. It should be something that if Order members want to do could be arranged.

: Well, it is an Order - it would be an Order retreat,

Subhuti: It could be arranged by Order members in local chapters or whatever.

S: Yes, there's no reason why a particular Centre shouldn't, if Order members wish, organise an Order retreat for its own Order members, and other I think, though, what is under consideration really is whether there shouldn't be, in the course of the year, if there's time, a retreat to which as many Order members as possible, even all Order members, could come or should come. Is this a possibility, or would people like this, or not?

: You mean apart from ? I think that would be good. At least another one apart from the one after the Convention.

: One every six months.

Ananda: That would put a lot of strain on other activities, wouldn't it?

: I think the only chance you could have it would be six months after the previous one, which would have to be within the sessions(?) that Order members to be free to go on it, and that would mean having difficulty deciding what retreat is priority

: I feel one a year is sufficiently indulgent.

: What?

: Well, I think more than one a year would be in view of the fact that there are a lot of other activities going on.

Lokamitra: I think Bhante's suggestion of each chapter can organise Order retreats that are open and invite open to all Order members. And this communication they must be

S: It certainly doesn't seem that there's a general demand for a second annual Order retreat, centrally organised as it were. It doesn't seem that there's really very much demand, or even if there is a demand, the general feeling seems to be

Sanghamitta: response, whether it's my fault or lack of communication on somebody else's part, but I don't know of retreats at the weekend at Purley.

S: Probably

: You mean London retreats organised ?

Sanghamitta: Well, you know, it's just come to my ears every now and again that there's a retreat weekend at Aryatara and I've heard nothing about it.

: Oh I see, well, that's probably - we usually send publicity to Brighton, but we don't send - I mean

: you said it's your fault.

Sanghamitta: I'm asking if it's my fault.

: It's on the notice board at the Centre in Brighton. And very and well publicised throughout the class here. (Voices.)

Ananda: Our local retreats for Aryatara are always put on our notice board, fairly well in

advance.

: But these are Order events.

S: I think we have drawn to a close now for this morning, for today in fact. Other days there will be something on in the afternoon, specialised sessions, but today being the first day we're not having anything of that sort and no doubt people will be getting together with one another informally.

Any other points arising out of what we've just been discussing?

: Have we actually put down anything Convenor of Mitras?

S: Convenor of Mitras? I don't think we could have done, because we came into existence -

:

S: Well, what do people feel about it?

Voices: Yes.

S: I've got a title for you: Recorder. Seminar Recorder. OK? That'll do for the time being. Study seminar recorder. Or tape recorder, just for short. (laughter.)

Subhuti: You have to be overhauled by Sagaramati.

: On this point of retreats, does anyone feel that there's any necessity for a more specific place for people to go to do solitary or quiet retreats?

: organised.

: Something more specifically organised, yes.

: isn't it? (Voices.)

S: I understand it's heavily booked. Durangama has offered his place.

: a solitary

S: like any other.

: Could you say special session or
.....

S: That is in the programme. Specialised in the sense that not everybody will be concerned with it. There are some that I'm not concerned with.

: Well, are they open to all Order members or just

S: No, they are not. I believe's working out a list of the people who will be involved. For instance, tomorrow afternoon there's a meeting of office-bearers of FWBO councils to discuss administration and organisation.

: on a council

S: In that case, have a word with the chairman, who in this case is Lokamitra. And then the

special session on Thursday is those concerned with study classes and courses. They will prepare a report for the plenary session on the fifth day. If you're not sure about whether you're included, then see Subhuti. And then there's a special session on the fourth day, leaders of meditation classes; I'm in the chair there. It's all in the programme in Shabda.

: programmes available also in the house.

S: So the function of most of the special sessions is to discuss and prepare a report for presentation to the plenary sessions during the last three days, because that's when most Order members will be present. So we've been trying to do some of the preliminary work in these special afternoon sessions because we won't have very much time those last three days. At the same time, we want as many people as possible to participate in those proceedings.

Lokamitra: So if you're not actually involved in administration or in taking a meditation class or in study groups at the moment, then you should see the chairman of that meeting if you want to come along, but it's really to keep the numbers down first of all to those people who are involved at this present time in those activities.

S: So the fewer people there are the more discussion.

:

: Certainly if you feel you want to come along -

S: Or have a reason for coming along.

: Maybe we'll find out later report.

S: Yes,: But they're working sessions, so -

S: Any other points? OK, we'll close for the day, go on to the next item on the programme, which is - oh, lunch.

(End of session)

Session 2

S: Our topic for study and expression of views this morning is 'The Order and the Movement', and there are mainly four subjects to be considered: first of all, the relation of the Western Buddhist Order to the FWBO; then the relationship between individual Order members and FWBO Centres; different types of Centres; and then recognition of Centres, that is to say recognition of Centres by the Order.

So let me start off by saying just a few words on the first of these subjects, that is to say the relation of the Western Buddhist Order to the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. I did touch on this yesterday, you may remember, and I made the point that the Order is a purely spiritual body, having no legal existence. And the different FWBO Centres - I am thinking now especially of the full autonomous Centres - are the body through which different groups of Order members make available to the public at large such facilities as meditation classes, retreats, and so on.

One of the points that calls to be made is that at present most Order members are attached to a particular Centre, a particular FWBO Centre, and help in the running of that Centre. But

there may well be other Order members who are not attached in that sense to a Centre, who remain of course in full contact with the Order as such, but will function independently. I think in the past there's been a bit of a misunderstanding about that. At present of course, with so much to be done, most Order members are attached to, belong to, a Centre and function through that, but the possibility is certainly not excluded that some Order members may not be attached in that way, may not be functioning in that particular way. So perhaps we could spend a little time with this subject first, and get that clear. [Pause]

_____: I don't know what's unclear

S: I think in the past - I don't know about now, but certainly last year - there was some lack of clarity in at least some people's minds as to whether there was such a possibility as being a sort of freelance Order member, not functioning regularly through a Centre. Some people apparently were under the impression that everybody was expected to belong to a Centre and work in that way, but that is in fact not the case. So far, most Order members have been functioning in this way simply because there was an objective need for that; but the possibility is not excluded of there being, certainly in the future, perhaps even quite a few Order members who are functioning in another way - certainly in contact with one another and with the Order as a whole, but not necessarily functioning through an established FWBO Centre.

Manjuvajra: Could you give some idea of how you envisage the different kinds of ways that people might function?

S: Well, some might be, for instance, family people who are living at home with their families; they would have a regular job and they attend Order meetings, they attend functions of that kind and they are in contact with other Order members, but they may feel it to be their particular function to spread sweetness and light in their particular environment, within their family, within their office, and in society at large, wherever they come in contact with people. They may feel that to be their function. On the other hand, there may be Order members who not only are not attached to any particular Centre, don't have any particular base of their own. They feel perhaps like wandering from Centre to Centre and serving as a link, possibly even going to other countries and Centres in New Zealand and elsewhere, and just roaming as wanderers, but keeping in contact with the Order all the time. These are certainly two possibilities that I see.

Somebody else might be - these are just ideas that are coming to me as I speak - others might for instance be engaged in rather serious literary work, might be writing a book about Buddhism, so would remain in contact with the Order or be keeping up with individual spiritual practice, but might be spending the greater part of the time writing and studying. Somebody else might, of course, have a prolonged solitary retreat.

So the point that I was wanting to make when this was originally discussed was that even though at present the majority of Order members are functioning through a Centre, in for want of a better term an organised way, that is not necessarily the norm. There are other ways of functioning for the individual Order member. We are coming on in a minute to the question of different types of thing.

But if an Order member wants to take classes, wants to give lectures and so on and so forth, well the obvious way of doing that is through a local FWBO, and at present many Order members do want to function in that way.

And another point that has been, I know, touched upon if not separately discussed, is that, even though there is this possibility for independent functioning, those who do decide to

function in that way must be very careful that it doesn't in fact represent a sort of opting out, or going their own way in an individualistic way, rather than as an individual Order member. It doesn't represent a sort of resigning of commitment.

Lokamitra: Has there been anyone in your mind up to now who's actually fulfilled that or has to do that - functioning as it were?

S: Which way? Which of the two or three ways?

.....: In the functioning as an individual non-attached perhaps wandering around and so on.

S: Not really so far, though a few people have done it perhaps for a few weeks or a few months. I think, for instance, Dharmapala did look around, didn't you, and function in that way for a little while? But there may well be -

(end of side)

Tape 3, side 1

.... even years in that way.

Manjuvajra: Would you say that it was part of a development that first of all one would work in an organisation as such, and then later act in a more independent way, ?

S: I'm not quite happy with this of 'independent', solitary functioning. You're independent when you're working with us and interdependent of I certainly see the possibility of people, say, working attached to an FWBO Centre for a while and then be going off from Centre to Centre wandering for a while, even for a few years. I also see the possibility of them then coming back to a Centre and again having a spell of work. It depends on one's own individual feeling, one's objective spiritual needs, the objective needs of the situation or situations, all these factors have to be taken into consideration.

.....: *(long speech inaudible)*

S: Well, you could just say, in loud ringing tones, 'I'm going to get on with my painting. See you on Order Day.' Or 'I'm going to get on with my book - see you at Order Day.' Each person concerned must make his or her position clear, at an Order meeting preferably; and then you go off with everybody's blessing, as it were. Or even write a little note for *Shabda*, explaining what one is doing and how one is feeling.

Abhaya: I'm wondering about Order members who have resigned. They have officially resigned, How do we view that? Do we consider them as really still in the Order? Is it possible to leave the Order?

S: Well, so far as I am concerned - I mentioned this to when I had my last talk with her - that even if somebody resigns from the Order I don't personally sever my spiritual connection with them, but they as free individuals have the right to resign and consider themselves as no longer belonging if they wish. But I also have the right, if I wish, not to sever the spiritual connection, and still bear them in mind - be ready to welcome them back if ever they wish to do that. So we could say that, yes, from their point of view, if they've resigned - I can't speak for other people - but so far as I am concerned, I won't say they haven't resigned; yes, I accept their resignation; I can't do anything other than that; but I don't cut off from them as it were mentally or spiritually. But they are dropped, obviously, from the

register.

Ananda: There are quite a number of Order members who have not officially resigned but haven't been around for quite some time but are nominally still members. Could this situation be clarified?

S: What do you mean by clarified, or what ?

Ananda: Whether they are to be regarded as Order members and continued on the register.

S: I think we did talk about this at the last Convention. I think it was agreed then that people should be dropped from the Order register if there had been no communication whatever for two years. I don't know whether there is anybody in that category at present - who is on the register -

Sanghamitta: Aryadeva would be in that category. But when somebody, I think, said did he want to stop, he said 'No, I don't, that's something nobody can take from me, and I don't'

_____: That's a communication.

S: Certainly Order members have seen him, they visited him. There has been some contact.

Sanghamitta: Oh, I see, yes.

Ananda: I think there are a few in that category.

S: Well, let's deal with it briefly, since we're on the subject. Who are the ones that you are concerned about?

(Names mentioned: Devendra(?) and).

S: Well, Devendra - I had a little talk with Sagaramati about him. He was going to -

_____: Yeah, I

S: You are going to? And then let's see what comes of that. He came to the lecture -

_____: I had quite a long talk with him that night, and I got the feeling from him that he was quite interested. the next Order Day, so that's not quite a year

S: I did have a few words with just to say hello and 'How are you?' He seemed quite pleased. I think it would be good if Sagaramati went along, because they have certain matters of electronics and tape recording in common. That would be a good starting point, no doubt, before coming on to weightier matters.

I think when anybody does contact someone in this way who hasn't been in effective communication for a while, it's good to approach them rather tactfully and try to find out what has been getting in the way - whether they've lost interest, whether there's any practical difficulty, or whatever.

Anybody else, Ananda? Oh, you mentioned (). Has anybody heard anything of him? He's sort of disappeared, there's no address.

Ananda: I've not heard.

S: But his name is not on the Order register.

Ananda: I think that's so, but I'm a bit unclear as to whether that means he is no longer an Order member, or what.

S: There are two categories of people, one may say: those who've resigned - they are then dropped from the register; and those from whom we do not hear for two years, who are then dropped from the register. In the case of those from whom we haven't heard for two years and who are then dropped, if they reappear with a satisfactory explanation, they can just be readmitted without further fuss or bother. But if someone has resigned and wishes to rejoin, then that is a quite different matter. So far there has been no such case, so we haven't had to consider it.

Ananda: So if someone is just - if we've not heard from someone for a period of two years, they are no longer members of the Western Buddhist Order?

S: They are no longer on the register. But I don't personally regard anyone as 'no longer a member', however long out of contact, because you never know what people have been going through or what's been happening, unless they actually resign. Unless they actually resign, so far as I am concerned they are a member of the Order. But if they haven't been in contact for two years, they are not included in the register. If they reappear, they can make any explanation they wish and be reinstated on the register. But in the case of those who have resigned and would like to come back, that's a different matter, we have to consider that if any such case arises. But my general feeling is to give people as long a rope as possible, knowing how difficult things are for many people, how difficult it is to evolve and to develop; just make every allowance that we possibly can, and do everything that we can to keep in touch with those who for any reason appear to be drifting away or getting out of touch.

Lokamitra: When we take them off the register, should we write to them and say - if we have their address?

S: If we have their address, yes. But I think this sort of case will not very likely arise, because if we have their address surely someone will go knocking on their door saying, 'Hello, what's happened to you?'

Ananda: Perhaps we should also make - the cases I've been to see told them resigned,

S: Yes. we haven't heard from them for a very long time.
.....: Manjughosa?

S: Manjughosa has just been out of contact. I think you were going to go and see him? But perhaps you could. Because he's certainly never resigned, and I think it was you or somebody was going to call on him when they were in Cambridge, *[sudden drop in level. Inaudible passage.]* phone him, but it wasn't convenient but sooner or later My feeling is that

.....:

Sanghamitta: the Friends wouldn't listen, they couldn't be bothered We kept trying to get across to them, they wouldn't listen at that time.

S: About what?

Sanghamitta: About

Ananda:

S: Well, he certainly didn't try to get across to me about anything.

Sanghamitta: No, I suppose there was no communication.

Vajradaka: At one time Asvajit and I were going to go and see, and Asvajit actually rang him up, asking him whether we could come and see him. And, quite curtly, he said no, I don't want to see any

S: Anyway, I think we should try again.

_____: Stephen, who actually resigned, about a year ago and asked him whether he was interested in coming back into the Order.

S: But in that case He's a bit of a special case. I don't want to go into it now, but he should have - or more than a word -

_____: (*Voices.*)

_____: There's also Sudatta(?).

S: Sudatta? Has anyone seen him fairly recently? He came along for Wesak, I believe.

_____: I think that was the last thing

_____: Quite often, every month (*Voices.*)

_____:Carl something or other?

S: That's Taranatha whom we were talking about earlier. Yes, Carl Taylor.

_____:resignations.

S: Hm, I have been thinking about this. The main thing seems to be just - first of all, being physically out of contact, leading to feelings of separateness, perhaps leading to some feeling of uneasiness or guilt, leading to feelings of resentment and rejection. This is the very broad pattern, though not in all cases. For instance, Sumedha is quite an exception. But that seems to be the broad pattern So therefore the first danger signal is people just not coming along any more, or not quite so regularly, and people just letting that go as it were and not taking the initiative - why have they not been coming along? What's happened? But physical distance - I feel more and more strongly that no Order member should be out of regular contact with the Order as a whole until they've been three or four years in the Order, they shouldn't take that risk.

_____: There's also one other thing which is that they were all in that first crop of ordinations, Nobody since then has resigned. two or three years

Ananda: In a sense, because at that period of the Order there really wasn't an Order, in the sense that there is now. Nothing to really connect up to.

_____ : But there certainly has been

Ananda: No, as a social group, it satisfied certain needs

S: Or put it this way: at that time, it was much more difficult for those who were ordained to realise what the Order was, because it didn't come into existence, really, prior to their being ordained into it. We saw exactly the same thing in New Zealand, where before they were ordained people didn't know what the Order was, really, and they said afterwards that once they were in it they understood, they felt, they experienced; but not before. We talked about it even before the ordinations, but luckily the New Zealand people, comparatively, are more healthy and happy and also more trusting. And I said to them before ordination that you'll be just taking a step in the dark, you'll be ordained into something that doesn't exist here; that you don't really have an adequate idea about at all, that you can't really imagine, but you'll just have to take a leap in the dark. And they said, all right, we're prepared for that. So they took that leap in the dark and then as it were woke up to find themselves an Order, and they were quite amazed, it was quite an interesting experience.

But it was a bit like that in England in the early days, with the few who'd been ordained right at the beginning not able to give, say, the second or third batches that kind of support from the Order which people being ordained definitely do get now.

I think now I'd be very, very reluctant to give ordination to anybody who was going to go away after their ordination, back home, out of contact, out of easy contact with other Order members. I'd be very, very reluctant to do that, only in very exceptional circumstances.

_____ :

S: I even mentioned about it at the time, and I warned people, but that apparently was not enough.

Sanghamitta: At the beginning of the ordination

S: Right, yes.

Ananda: Bhante, it's just occurred to me there's another person Sarah Boin, Geneva(?), and she's apparently still using her ordained name.

S: Well, we can't stop people doing this. People can call themselves by any name that they wish. I think it would be better if people who resigned from the Order no longer used the name that they were given when they were ordained. For instance, I notice Sumedha, in his letter of resignation, signed himself Geoffrey, which is very proper. But others apparently are still using their ordained names, so I think perhaps we have to consider whether we should not write to them and ask them not to do this, so as to avoid confusion; otherwise people may be thinking that they still represent the Order when in fact they have resigned.

Ananda: people continue to do that and go out and maybe start a centre, like If they continue to use the name But under the guise of

Nagabodhi: to write to her..... I'm just wondering whether I should actually call her Dorothy.

S: Yes. Well, if I wrote to her now I certainly would, because I feel it represents an attitude, in a way, of you give up your commitment but you want to keep the corresponding rights or privileges that were originally consequent upon the commitment.

Ananda: It leads to a lot of deep confusion if people do set up any sort of organisation when they're ordained, people will start wondering who on earth

S: It's always open to them to take ordination from anybody else that they wish to seek it from. That's up to them.

Anyway, let's pass on. I'm going to be a little more mindful of the time today than yesterday, as there will be an afternoon session

But anything further about this? - about the individual Order member or individual *upasaka* and *upasika*?

Ananda: Would there be a time some time in the course of the agenda to talk about the higher ordinations ?

S: I think there will be.

Ananda: I'd like to clarify one or two points.

Nagabodhi: Are we still on the relations between individual Order members? I quite what the question is; I feel that maybe something is said about the notion of the objective needs of the situation, because I think that there are some people, say, in London or obviously in other Centres who do work according to what they see and what they feel is generally regarded as the objective needs of the situation. But I can certainly remember one Order meeting where I used that, and it was challenged quite strongly, 'who's to say what are the objective needs of the situation?' I personally feel that for the Movement as a whole, certainly in London, there are objective needs. Maybe that is I personally, although I can't the word (?) at the moment, I don't feel one has to strain very much to recognise them.

Chintamani: Presumably, if there are Order members who are not involved in an activity which demands living on their own, and not functioning through the centres, they don't have any boundary In fact, they might and thenof they're in contact, in regular contact, because that's what they want to do. If they want to work for a Centreand value it, they'll do it.

_____: Well, no, to clarify the

_____: The original point was who says what the objective needs of the situation are.

S: These are decided in diminishing degrees of generality. First of all, they are decided by the Movement as a whole. The fact that we have a Movement at all is in response to a certain need, an objective need, including a need which we ourselves feel and share. And then, coming as it were to lower degrees of generality, the objective need will be determined by the Order as a whole; and then, the objective need will be determined within a narrower sphere by a particular meeting of the Order, or a particular council. And to the extent that an individual *upasaka* or *upasika* is part of that particular meeting of the Order and sensitive to the needs of the sphere within which that Order functions, they will be aware of the objective needs and sensitive to them, and willing to respond to them if they are in a position to do so.

_____: You coined a phrase, 'coincidence of wills'.

S: I did, yes.

_____:

S: Well, if there is a sort of coincidence of understanding, based on a common awareness, there will be a coincidence of will; assuming that people's objective situation is roughly similar, roughly parallel. But there will be a coincidence of *wills* in any case.

Ratnapani: I think the difficulty that Nagabodhi was basing his on is the one where in his view and one's own view anyway is someone is confusing what they want with what they need, what they'd quite like or what some rationalisation fancies. sure what

S: Well, in the case of our activities through the Centres, we have to ask ourselves for whom are we doing this? And remind ourselves that usually it's for the benefit of the public, or Mitras, or regular Friends; not, in a sense, for us - not that we don't get anything out of it, but the activities of Centres are geared to the needs of the people who normally come along to the Centres. We might feel, for instance, a need for instance on Wesak Day for a great big bonfire, but it may be that that's just our need, not a need of the situation, not a need of the Wesak situation. Maybe the majority of people wouldn't be turned on by a bonfire at all, or particularly associate it with Buddhism or Wesak or the Friends. But somebody might conceivably feel that a great big bonfire as near as possible to the Archway Centre really met the objective needs of the situation, i.e. celebrating Wesak; and other Order members would have to convince him or her to the contrary.

I think this is really quite clear, but it may be a bit difficult in the case of individual *upasakas* or *upasikas* who have a particular blind spot, sometimes.

Vajradaka: Perhaps I could something that I mentioned yesterday, and that was the phrase 'Order members'. I feel this is a bad phrase, because for people outside there's a strong group called the Order which people can become members of, and I've found that people have quite often found it very difficult to deal with. They feel excluded, they feel that it's something that they have to fulfil all sorts of conditions to be able to get into - almost like the image of like a secret society that people are really having to find out what they'll have to do to be able to get into it. And in a way I can see that that might be useful, but in another way I think it's likely to and causes an awful lot of difficulty for them.

Now I feel that if we use the term '*upasaka*' or '*upasika*', this is much clearer, because it indicates that one if you're using the term 'Order member', what that indicated was belonging to something and the question is 'What do you belong to? How do I get to belong to it?' But if someone asks you if you are - what's *upasaka* and you explain that that is someone who has taken Refuge, it puts it on a much more individual basis, and people can then see it as something personal and individual, rather than a group thing that they have to try and get into.

S: But that's all very well, but what about the whole concept of Sangha? Aren't you going to try and communicate that to them?

_____: Well - I think - it's very difficult to try and do that. I feel I'm only really beginning to understand it myself within the last year or so. And it's very difficult for people who aren't in contact with it to understand that.

S: But is this a practical difficulty? Because most of the regular Friends, certainly the Mitras, are in contact with the Sangha, that is with their own *kalyana mitras* and other people.

_____: a lot of people in London find it difficult

S: But I'm still not quite clear, or not at all clear, what the difficulty is.

_____: Well, the difficulty is that many people are put off coming along to classes and coming along to because they have this feeling that - well, of a strong group thing that they have to get into.

_____: ?

_____: Yes, For example, someone may come into contact with us and they look at the various Order members [who] are there. They look at what the Order members are actually doing practically, they look at the kind of lifestyle, the kind of things they and they may feel, 'I'm not like that. I'm not really - I don't live like that. But that's an Order member, and that's how people live, so that's how I'm going to have to try and become if I want to follow the path of Buddhism.' And it seems to cause them an awful lot of difficulty.

S: But you don't think that they ask themselves why that particular person is living in that particular way?

_____: Um - I don't think they do. I think they see it more as a threat.

_____:

_____: Oh yes, sure. People

S: I'm not surprised if people, say, confuse the idea of a spiritual community with that of a group. I'm not surprised at all, because the idea of a spiritual community as distinct from a group is very difficult to understand, though it has been explained in various lectures. And I hope that individual *upasakas* and *upasikas* make it clear to people that the Sangha, the spiritual community, is not a group. But even if that is done, I think there may well be some residual misunderstanding which is quite impossible, perhaps, for people to overcome unless and until they make their own individual commitment.

_____: Well, Is this a particular West?

S: I think in the East, in many cases, they've lost sight of the distinction between what I call a group and what I call a spiritual community. I think they've lost sight of that.

_____: Going for Refuge

S: Well, you're born Going for Refuge, because your parents are Buddhists, you're a born Buddhist, which is going quite a long way from the Buddha's own teaching.

_____: And don't you think that the onus rests on us to try and ease that difficulty?

S: The onus rests on us to ease it, but I don't think we can always overcome it. In other words, I don't think we can always communicate to people even our own understanding of spiritual community, which of course falls short of the reality, and even our own understanding is not complete, is not perfect, is not full. But even our own understanding and experience of it we may find is very difficult to communicate to people, so I think it's inevitable that up to a point they will regard the Order as a group, and sometimes, in some

cases, react accordingly. But all that we can do is to minimise the misunderstanding as much as we possibly can, and not add to it in any way by our own unmindful behaviour or speech or action. Perhaps one could even consider what are the concrete ways which could be avoided which might give the impression of the Order being a special kind of group.

Sanghamitta: There have been misunderstandings in the past of people saying, 'Well, what's the difference? I can't'

S: But again, it's not such a simple matter as that, because you can't say -

Sanghamitta (*interrupting*) No, but this is how a well-known(?) person

S: That's true, but you obviously can't take just one instance of someone's behaviour, overlooking their life and commitment as a whole; but sometimes people do that. And when we are with Friends and Mitras, we have to be all the more careful and mindful, without at the same time putting on an act, because some people are quite quick to criticise that too. So you're not going to find any easy way out, and you're not going to be able to remove all misunderstanding. But certainly one shouldn't give rise to more misunderstanding than is actually inherent in the situation.

Ananda: You had this point, then, that the use of the term 'Order member' would in fact create a greater degree of misunderstanding?

S: I don't personally agree with this, inasmuch as I don't think you can as it were drop the Order and just speak of *upasakas* and *upasikas*. because this leaves out of account the whole dimension of the spiritual community. So you find another word for 'member' if you like, but I think it's going to be quite difficult.

_____: I would say that to use the term 'Order member' puts more emphasis on the spiritual community rather than on the other community (?).

S: This is true, it does But the Sangha is the community of those who aim at Enlightenment as personified by the Buddha and practise the path leading to that as embodied in his Dharma. This is what makes the Sangha. But if you are taking Buddhahood as your ideal, and if you're following the path of the Higher Evolution or Eightfold Path or whatever, then you are a pledged *upasaka*, the as it were 'social' dimension, 'social', inverted commas, of which is your being a member - there's no other word in English - of a spiritual community. How are we going to get round that? It's a defect of our language, unless we find another word. 'Member' incidentally means a limb, doesn't it? You can really be a member of a spiritual community, just as much as a member of a group, but the membership is of a rather different type.

Ananda: I do honestly feel that it's our behaviour and our example, our precepts, if you like, which determine people's attitude to the Order more than what we call ourselves, more than the words that we use. I think that's what we should aim at clarifying.

S: If you act in an overbearing and authoritative manner, of course people will take you as a member of a higher group in a purely group sense. Whatever you might say about a spiritual community being quite different from a group, if your behaviour is, as I said, overbearing and authoritative, well that's the message that will come across. But if your behaviour is not like that, but sort gentle and understanding and human, well then people may be more open to the idea of there being a spiritual community which you enter by virtue of your spiritual commitment at the time of your ordination.

What about other people's experience? Anybody else got anything to say about this within their experience of Friends and Mitras? Do you feel that people are being put off and whether this ought not to be considered and something done about it?

_____: There always seems to be some area resentment
Sometimes it comes in waves, in London,

S: I don't get this any more; I'm rather remote from things. I don't know, I'm just inquiring what the current situation is.

_____: Sometimes some people They

_____: Order members?

_____: Order members and non-Order members.

_____: Both, but particularly non-Order members background

S: Well, perhaps we are up against, to some extent, this idea of pseudo-democracy. (**Voices:** Mm.) But we just have to - in that case, if we do find ourselves up against it - just take our stand on the fact that in this particular respect we don't believe in democracy, not in that sort of way. But at the same time, people shouldn't use that very idea as an excuse for subtly(?) overbearing or inconsiderate behaviour.

Asvajit: When people present one with objections about the nature of the Order, one can help to disabuse them of those misconceptions to some extent if you have a clear understanding of what the words that you're using and saying really actually mean. If you know what the nature of democracy is, if you know what the nature of Buddhism is, so to some extent it's I think the responsibility of Order members to clarify their own minds as to what

_____: Yesterday Karen (?) got the word 'Order' as meaning 'order' - you know, when you order somebody to do something. I suppose that was a misunderstanding on her [Laughter] but it's got different meanings.

S: Well, perhaps we should remember that the Buddha himself said, according to the Pali scriptures, 'The Tathagata uses the words of conventional speech, but he is not misled by them.' Otherwise, if you followed Theravada teaching at least, you couldn't even have a name. There's no such person as Manjuvajra or Chintamani, you're just a collection of parts. So I shouldn't really say 'Manjuvajra', I should say such-and-such bones, bits, pieces, you know; [Laughter] and not use that conventional label, because it might be mistaken for a self, an ego, an I or a you. But we can't help it. We shouldn't even say 'you', in a sense. But we have to, but we mustn't be misled, not really. It's very easy to be misled, so it means we have to be constantly on our guard. I'm quite happy if someone can find an alternative expression for Order member, but I don't want to have to say every time 'an *upasaka* or *upasika* who has been ordained by me into the Western Buddhist Order'; this is the full meaning that is really conveyed by 'Order member' in our sense. Even '*upasaka* and *upasika*' will not do, because there are millions of *upasakas* and *upasikas* in the East who've got nothing to do with the Western Buddhist Order.

_____: What about 'ordinees'?

S: 'Ordinees'? I think that is generally used for those about to receive ordination.

_____: The trouble isn't the word, it's the meaning that is entirely new by the word. If one has a certain reaction to a certain situation, it doesn't matter what words you use, you still get that reaction, the thing is to sort out your own reaction and discover why you react.

S: I think one of the things that would help, if we stressed that entry into the Order - or if we even spoke of 'entering the Order', make it a verb rather than a noun - entering the Order rather than being a member of the Order, that entering the Order comes about through one's individual commitment - if we spoke much more strongly in those terms.

We have discussed this before at an Order Day a month ago, when the point was made quite strongly by a number of people, that we should speak much more in terms of becoming commitment or making your commitment, rather than being ordained.

Sanghamitta: people say, 'What's the difference?' They don't understand that their Going for Refuge isn't a commitment.(?)

_____: I've found a number of people who've actually said: 'I'm committed to Buddhism'. But

S: Well, perhaps they - one can't generalise too much without seeing the individual people - but perhaps they don't really know what commitment to Buddhism means.

_____: Is there any in Truro?

Sanghamitta: Well, you get the odd one like John Williams (?), don't you? say something like 'Oh, I'm ' and they don't really know what It's and yet

Tape 3, side 2

.....'committed to Buddhism'

S: I think both sides have to have an open mind about that. Whether someone who says he is committed is in fact -

Sanghamitta: Well, I mean he has taken up Right Livelihood, so in that sense, as far as he's able to see it, he feels that he has practised a Buddhist way of life. But I think he feels that the Buddha in a certain way

S: Well, the Buddha found his own way, and the Buddha eventually admitted people into a spiritual community, and encouraged them to enter that spiritual community.

Sanghamitta: I was thinking of the reaction of somebody that you know personally, who has -

S: Yes, but I think we have to bear in mind that this particular Friend is a rather elderly gentleman and rather set in his ways.

Sanghamitta: Yes, and he's many, many years, Bhante.

S: That's what I mean! [Laughter] I think really we all have to be careful not to become staid and settled in our ways. I've already started warning, in our own case, about this on retreats. Some of them are quite shocked to hear that I was wondering whether they hadn't become a

bit staid! I've met in the East some of these good old Buddhists who've been staunch Buddhists for years and years and years and years and can all be relied on to turn up at meetings, but sometimes they get into a real rut; they are very rigid and very limited. They are quite good people, in a way.

_____: never belong

S: I think it's very good to be able to expose oneself to a spiritual community.

Nagabodhi: I get the feeling that in London this rejection and resentment is general mood or current of thought (*Noise, passage inaudible.*) ourselves, but to be an Order member means letting yourself in for something, and I think that the more people in London see Order members living as Order members in this way, the less we have a problem of people who work unconsciously and mindlessly wishing that they were in the Order, for any other reason than commitment, active commitment.

S: Again, a lot depends on the way in which the individual *upasaka* or *upasika* relates to people who are around them. A great deal depends upon the individual manner, the individual behaviour, especially when relating to Friends and Mitras and visitors and -

Sanghamitta: I would have thought the Mitra system would have clarified a great deal on this point

S: I'm sure it has. For instance, when we had the study retreats, especially on the first two, a number of Mitras were included, and they were definitely in the minority, but as far as I know they certainly didn't feel excluded, or that there was any difference; Order members (to use that term) had no particular privileges except that they sometimes, when I didn't do it, led the evening Puja and chanting. But everybody shared the washing up and everybody shared the cooking, and everybody studied ...

Sanghamitta: (*interrupting*)..... Friends. Mitras preparing for ordination, I would have thought a lot of these difficulties would now have dropped away

S: Well, I'm sure a lot of them have. But some people are a little more difficult than others, let us say.

Lokamitra: A lot of it seems to be just coming up against yourself as a hindrance, and it's a very insidious poison, this, and it affects us all We're being almost dragged down by It does affect people like this, we sort of question ourselves. Very often, obviously we have to be aware - very often it's just that person being negative in the process of their development. And it seems very very common.

Ananda: I was just going to say I think another important aspect is the question of the effect or the image that people have of 'a spiritual organisation', in terms of like an ecclesiastical hierarchy, which people are very frightened of, and that's a shadow in the background. As soon as you mention an Order you've got this shadow of ecclesiastical People quite elderly people, quite rightly. (?)

S: This is part of a much larger difficulty that we can't help give the appearance of, for want of a better term (and this is a term I prefer to avoid), a religious movement. I really wish we could avoid that.

Ananda: People are frightened of that, and run away from it. I think it's right that they do, because it's a bad thing.

Lokamitra: But they've got nothing to run away from in our case, and we have to be sure of

ourselves; otherwise, again, it starts affecting us. If we're not sure of ourselves, then they're right.

S: But they are in contact with us personally.

Ananda: Yes, but they don't allow themselves that contact in the first place, so they don't see us, very often.

S: Where does that leave you?

_____: there are quite a few people *in* the Order

_____: I think contribution.

S: I know from my own experience when I was in India in my very early days, if somebody, especially someone in the monastic order older than, senior to, me, disagreed with me, I felt quite sort of - well, thoughtful about that; and I thought at first always that they must be right and I must be wrong. But after some years I started discovering that I was right and they were wrong, and then I got the confidence of that - that they're wrong, not me. So - I have mentioned this before - quite a few of our own members, for want of a better term, are too ready to think that they may be in the wrong, or that the Friends may be in the wrong, or the Movement may be in the wrong; but in fact a sometimes foolish or even stupid person who is questioning and being negative, sometimes just for the sake of being negative, in fact. So you shouldn't let that get you down. Just affirm your position and your feeling and your experience more firmly than ever. Project your confidence. Give your own lion roar. Or a little flower, if you consider that a better metaphor.[Laughter] But not a pathetic whimper when someone pulls your tail.

But any more, or anything connected with that? - the individual Order member and the Centre, or individual *upasaka* or *upasika*.

Chintamani: It occurs to me that there seems to be a bridge between the
.....

S: Well, this brings us practically on to the next subject, which is types of centres, and no doubt communities can be regarded as types of centres in a way. But is there anything more to be said on the individual *upasaka* or *upasika* and the Centres? Participating in the Centres, working from the Centres.

Lokamitra: One thing that it seems to me we should always bear in mind is that when whatever we're doing we it should be regarded in a way as worship of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, all the time.

S: Yes, right. I think we are moving quite steadily away from the old attitude that many people had of organisation work as somehow a bit disreputable, not very spiritual or even a bit of a chore. I think we are definitely moving away from that, and experiencing it much more as what in India is often called *karma yoga* - doing the work in a disinterested spirit for the sake of your own development and in order to help other people; and doing it with enthusiasm and energy, in a very positive spirit. I think there's been quite a remarkable improvement in that respect over the last few years.

Lokamitra: So if one has taken on something, then one should be prepared to give oneself fully to whatever one agrees to take on. Otherwise one shouldn't really take on something.

S: This involves a quite objective estimate of one's own capacity; not just of one's own willingness - one may be very willing - but of one's capacity, whether one has the time, the

energy, the knowhow, to discharge the particular responsibility that you took on, otherwise at a particular meeting, say a Council meeting, the question may be raised 'Who's willing to do so-and-so?' and someone at once, almost without thinking, says, 'I'll do that'. But then afterwards it's discovered that they are not able to do it and they didn't realise it or hadn't realised it. They discover it only slowly and painfully and perhaps feel a bit uneasy about it, and then maybe stay away from meetings, and the job doesn't get done. So I think one must avoid that sort of situation. And when one does volunteer for something one should make quite sure that one is able to do it, and will do it, and is going to do it.

There's another point, I think, which could be mentioned here - it's intermediate between this topic and the next one - and that is to say the setting up of new Centres. When I say new Centres I mean autonomous Centres. I think everybody understands that we've got basically three kinds of Centres, for want of a better term, organisationally speaking: there's the autonomous Centre - we'll be coming on to this in detail at the end of the session - the autonomous Centre which is an independent legal and financial entity run by at least five Order members. Then there's a branch of that which is affiliated to one of the autonomous Centres, run by one or two or three Order members. And then there's the individual Order representative, who functions representing the FWBO in a certain area, but not with any organisational structure.

So the question has arisen recently about the starting of new Centres, that is to say the full autonomous Centres, and the qualifications of the person going to start it. [*mechanical digger (JCB?) starts up!*]

Now the first point that I want to make here is that experience has shown that it's very, very difficult for one person, or even two people, to start up a Centre, especially well away from London, on their own. So the suggestion is that in future there should be teams of *upasakas* and *upasikas* going forth, three or four or even more, and settling in a particular spot where it has been decided that there should be a Centre, and doing it as a team; and preferably having had some experience of working as a team before, knowing one another quite well before the whole thing starts, rather than a solitary Order member going - especially when the Centre is going to be started a long way away. It's a bit different when it's quite near London and the Order members concerned can pop up or down to London quite quickly and easily. But I think if you're going away, maybe even out of the country, to start up a new Centre, it must be done by a team of people in future, not by individuals.

Ananda: Could you say what are the reasons behind that thinking? What have been the difficulties encountered by solitary people?

S: Well, I think they're obvious, really. Mainly, I think, two. One is that, especially if they are well away from London, they're on their own; they're out of contact with Sangha. If there was a team, they'd have their own Sangha on the spot. So individually they can't, because of the lack of spiritual community; because the people who come along to start it won't provide them with a spiritual community, not for several years. And secondly, even a small Centre takes a lot of running. And if you've got to be the main source of inspiration and at the same time you've got to do all the organising and arranging and so on and so forth, it could be just too much for you. But no doubt so far we've done quite well, and no doubt in some cases individual Order members will have to take on quite a bit of responsibility. But personally in a few cases I know that it's been a bit too heavy, and in future I think we should try to avoid that sort of situation.

For instance, there is a suggestion that we should have a Centre in Birmingham. How do I see that developing? Not by some solitary Order member going off there, disappearing - you don't hear from him often - and after a year or two he cries for help. Not that. But a team of people, say four or five people, going off, that is all members of the Order, going off, settling there, getting a place, finding their way about, having their regular Order meetings, and then

maybe two of them finding jobs and working, earning money, the other three looking after the Centre, the activities, holding the classes - I think developing more in this way.

Manjuvajra: I think that distinction The main one, I think, is that it's impossible for people to get any idea of what Sangha is, and the only kind of impression they get is of some kind of central offices far away in London, just sending down memos to you and they haven't got a chance. People who come along haven't got a hope of understanding what Buddhism is about. And also they place much too much emphasis on the personality of the person taking a class. You've got a certain way of living, or at least certain characteristics, then they look at you and say 'Ah, this is what Buddhism is, and I'm going to have to develop those. I'm going to have to go in that direction. And it's very difficult to explain to people that they don't have to do that. When I first went down to Cornwall, lots of people would come along who were married, middle class in fairly successful professions, and I was a kind of drop-out bum. They all thought that they were going to have to leave their nice houses and their nice wives and their nice husbands and their nice children, and go and get a grotty old caravan [Laughter] And even now, after a year, I find it very difficult to explain that it's not absolutely necessary to do that.

S: grotty old caravan. (*laughter.*)

Manjuvajra: It's amazingly desirable, because I And these things needn't happen - four or five people with different personalities, and preferably different lifestyles; then it would be much easier.

Lokamitra: You didn't - recognition of Centres, does that come up here?

S: That comes up here, yes. Not

Manjuvajra: on the other side of the coin, that's the danger of a particular Because you can be aware of the kind of situation you're liable to get pushed into. You start up a meditation class. All of us are probably aware that you have to be very careful not to get inflated. But none the less when you start doing it it still starts to happen, and you could miss it. It's almost as though there was a process deep underground that worms its way along, and then pops up in you, and you don't realise it. And it's a continual sort of strain and

S: All the more reason why there should be other *upasakas* around to point out to you, or to one another, if they see any such thing happening. [Pause]

All right: different kinds of Centre. Here I'm not thinking in terms of autonomous Centre branches and so on, but of a much bigger difference. I don't know quite how to get into this, how to approach it. But let's for instance make the point that at present we've got what might be called organisational Centres. You know what I mean by organisational Centres? Centres where classes are held, lectures are delivered. There's another kind of centre, of course, which is the community, which is where people actually live together as a spiritual community under one roof, with or without activities. They may at the same time be a Centre, as, for instance, Aryatara is, as well as being a community. Or they may just be a community, like some of the communities that we have at Archway, connected with the Centre. So those are other possibilities. But I'm also thinking that in future we may need to have Centres in the sense of units of, say, five Order members working together for a common purpose, which is not the holding of classes and giving of lectures and so on.

I'm thinking, for instance, of something like publications. It could be a separate body - maybe body is the neutral word - a separate *body* run by five Order members, and it would be independent financially and so on, to look after all FWBO publications, whether in book form, magazine form, and so on.

Also, of course, there could even be - and here is a real flight of fancy - an FWBO industry; that is to say, something run by *upasakas* and *upasikas* as a means of Right Livelihood and

also possibly a source of income for the Movement. I've been thinking about, for instance, things like the manufacture of paper - recycled paper. I've been talking with Nagabodhi about that, and we're going to have another little talk later on. Aren't we, Nagabodhi? [Laughter] So I was thinking, to recycle things, recycle paper, is in accordance with the right use of the resources of the planet. It would give perhaps employment, Right Livelihood, to a few of our own members and Friends, much as the Press, we hope, will and does in a very small way even now. And at the same time it will ensure for ourselves a source of supply as regards paper for our own publications.

And then again I'm thinking there should be farming communities, which would be centres producing food, organically grown food, for the Movement as a whole. If we think in this way, there's no end. So a Centre is a functioning unit run by Order members, it's not necessarily one of these organisational Centres conducting classes and giving lectures and so on and so forth. We may be able in the future to function in many more kinds of ways. Do you see what I'm getting at? We might conceivably - this is just to illustrate, I'm not saying this with any particular idea at present - but we might conceivably say have a group of Order members working as an Order through an organisation of their own, say, doing a particular kind of social work, which we felt was in accordance with our overall aims and objects; and with or without any explicit or overt mention of Buddhism.

There's also the idea that after a little while there should be a centre, a body, for yoga activities, so that we can reach more and more people through those, again without overt mention of Buddhism; but all run by Order members and along Buddhist lines, and for the ultimate purpose of our own. So do you begin to see a bit of the picture? (Voices: Mm.) So this is what I mean by different kinds of centres, using the word centre very loosely - just a particular body through which groups of Order members function for the purpose of our own objectives in different fields. Set-ups which seem to be feasible for the fairly near future are, say, a body to be responsible for publications and perhaps a body to be responsible for yoga class activities; certainly these two. When I say publications, that also includes printing.

_____:

S: Mm, that's true. We haven't unfortunately existence yet but we're hoping.

_____: I heard some talk, Bhante, about a country monastic centre where presumably this would be ... function

S: Well, if we are able to have a semi-monastic Centre, it will no doubt also function as a retreat Centre for at least an interim period, until we get a very big place simply as a retreat centre, then the first place will be simply a semi-monastic centre for more intensive meditation and study.

_____: Could you define the term 'semi-monastic'?

S: Several people have tried to in various ways, both serious and facetious. [Laughter] By semi-monastic I mean sort of informally monastic; not that you necessarily take any extra rules or vows, or that you're trying to live in a strict way, but you just are leading a much more simple life, and are concerning yourself mainly with study and meditation, perhaps with running a few retreats, or maybe with painting of icons or something like that, writing of books. And not earning a living in the usual way - or at least, doing no more than a bit of part-time work

_____: single sex ..

S: I think it would in practice. We haven't talked about it in detail, because that would be premature, but I incline to think at the moment that this would imply it being a single-sex

type of community.

_____:

S: I wonder about this. This is the question of whether we think in terms of reproducing the Eastern ordination and so on. At present I incline to think not, just because in the East it has become associated with certain excessive amounts of formalism, with which we just want to have nothing to do. But there may well be a definite recognised body of people who are leading this as it were semi-monastic life and are known to be doing so, and there may well be just a separate or extra little ceremony for them; but not amounting to what would be regarded in the East as monastic ordination. But certainly in that spirit, or in the spirit that that was originally, but which isn't now in many instances.

Ratnapani: I can quite easily see how a simple life could very easily become simpler, and gradually to slip into a state where there would be no difference between one's lifestyle and monasticism in theory. I can imagine things happening in that way, so that perhaps there is something starting in Norfolk, a community just being what we have so far called semi-monastic, I can imagine at the back of my mind that having been established and functioning, which leads to perhaps something geographically more remote when people are ready for more intense meditation. I can imagine it growing very easily in time.

S: I think we should go very much step by step, and you can't very well have a semi-monastic Centre before you've got your semi-monks, as it were, or demi-monks or whatever we call them. But I know there are two or three people at least who are interested in living in that way, so that sort of centre as it were grows up around them as they decide to live in that way, and actually start living in that way. But I certainly want to avoid the sort of situation that you so often get in the East where someone says he is a monk, he expects to be treated as such, he has received a monastic ordination, but there's nothing monklike in his lifestyle at all. He might be holding down a full-time job.

Is there anything more about different kinds of centre? Or different structures through which groups of Order members can function - or team, if you want to avoid the word group - different kinds of organisational structure in which teams of Order members can function within certain fields for certain purposes within our overall aims and objects.

_____: Have you thought about education

S: I have, as a matter of fact, though I haven't thought about them for several months, that's why I didn't mention them just now. But a year or so ago I thought quite a lot, especially in the case of those Order members, for want of a better term, who do have children. I think it would be very good if educational centres can be provided. I've no idea at present how it could be done, and I've no concrete plans, but I just have this feeling that for children of *upasakas* and *upasikas*, it would be a really good thing if there was some educational centre, whether school or anything else.

_____: what

S: I was thinking in terms of a smallto begin with. But it's not that we've got such a large number of children of Order members, there are not very many, some of them are not even old enough to go to school. I don't know whether the few parents present would care to raise their voices to say how they feel about it. It's rather hypothetical for the rest of us.

Srimala: I think it would be a lovely idea. at the moment, nearby, and I find it quite for myself

S: If there were, say, a number of *upasakas* and *upasikas* in Norfolk with children, even if it

wasn't possible to have, say, a school, at least there could be a playgroup for all those children. Something like that. Perhaps we ought to encourage those who are having, intend to have, to move to Norfolk, so that we have them all in one area. [Laughter]

Just something passes through my mind. It's only association of ideas, it's something I've not actually spoken about in any detail before, but maybe I'll just mention it now, on the topic of children. Have any Order members ever thought in terms of adoption, rather than having children of their biological own?

_____: I think that's very tricky, unless you're married. [Laughter]

S: Well, I'm assuming that you're a couple together (*laughter, chat.*) It's not anything that I suggest we discuss very seriously, but it did just occur to me that Buddhists - *upasakas* and *upasikas* who were thinking in terms of having a child of their own might think instead of adopting a child, someone who has already come into the world but doesn't have effective parents. Anyway, I'm not suggesting we discuss it here.

Vajradaka: There is something else if we're thinking in terms of a school: although there aren't many *upasakas* and *upasikas* with children, but there are a lot of people who aren't Buddhists, but who'd much rather send their children to an alternative school, and I think it would be quite easy really to set up a school if there were suitable teachers. I don't think there'd be any difficulty in finding enough children to take on. And it would be a means of getting to - meeting other people too.

S: Perhaps we should make a modest start with a playgroup, something like that. (*Chat.*) I think about a year or so ago we did talk about a Buddhist school quite a bit, but it got dropped amongst other things. But perhaps we should start thinking about it again. There's no harm to start thinking and then to talk some suggestions, even possibilities concretely, may come up. How many - let's make a quick census - how many *upasakas* and *upasikas* both present and absent of the Western Buddhist Order do have children? How many children are there actually? Leaving aside grown-up ones who are quite independent. Of, say, school-going age.

_____: Ratnakuta's got two.

S: Ratnakuta's got two. (*Voices.*)

_____: got one and a half.

S: Call it two. (*Counting.*) Fifteen. (*Voices. Aircraft noise.*)

..... but making it clear that it was an alternative school, for want of a better term. I'm sure we've enough teachers, people qualified as teachers. (*Voices.*)

S: That's true, that would be a very good reason for going to see him. (*Voices.*) That's a very good idea, yes. I think we should make, if anyone is interested, make a renewed approach to him to discuss that question.

_____: Whether or not he

S: Right. That's a different matter. Just meet him over that issue. If anything further comes from it, so much the better. That's a very good idea. Do you think anyone should actually be asked to do this, or volunteer to do this? Just to talk and find out. (*Voices.*) Do you feel like trying to contact Manjughosa?

_____: I have some personal difficulties with him.

S: You did.

Ananda: I feel I haven't I don't feel

_____: He was very helpful when I contacted him about the education of one child individually at home over the legal side, and was very helpful, and he was interested in education

S: Well, perhaps it would be a good idea if Sona and Srimala just paid a social call and presented themselves as young Buddhist parents interested in alternative educational possibilities for their children when they are old enough to go to school. Just have a talk on that basis. OK, well, maybe we'll just leave it there for the time being. I think it's coffee time now.

_____ (Break.)

S: Is there anything more that anyone wants to say about types of Centres, or have we finished with that?

Uttara:

S: I don't know. It's always a possibility. (*Voices.*) That's a possibility. It's not anything I've actually thought about. I don't see why not if there is a need for that kind of thing.

_____:communities

S: Are you thinking in terms of communities of *upasakas* and *upasikas* or mixed or just Friends?

_____:

_____: Define them.

_____: Mitras and

Lokamitra: Something that came out after last year's, I felt that I don't know if it is general from experience, but I feel that Order members and Mitras, especially their own Mitras, shouldn't live under the same roof. I don't think this works. It seems that - I feel that the relationship works much better if you don't have that sort of contact, become too familiar

Mangala: It depends on the Order member

Lokamitra: I'm not even quite sure of that.

(end of side)

Tape 4, side 1

_____: I live with one of my Mitras and I would relish the opportunity to live with the other one.

_____: Yeah?

_____: Yeah. I disagree entirely.

_____: I wonder about things like the relative proportions of Order members and

Mitras -

S: I must say I've no thoughts, no ideas. I'd just like to hear what people have to say who have lived or who are living in communities, what their experience has been.

Ratnapani: individual circumstances, whatever the type of community, that a community should be set up and not just fall together because such-and-such and so-and-so need somewhere to live, which has been an unfortunate in London I think the people who should be able to get together and find out what they want, and why, and how they intend to go about it, and arrange accordingly.

S: In other words, much less haphazard.

Lokamitra: And not allowed to just drift on, sink down to a steady - rut?

S: Well, they just sink down.

Ananda: Well, the distinction has been made between the terms 'commune' and 'community', the commune being a sort of slightly more haphazard arrangement of people who just come together for, and the community spiritual, more directed, more concentrated.

Lokamitra: I would have thought that we will be having communes, then as we've suggested. I see it, in our sense, as being, say - you have one or two people in the community working, one or two people teaching, one person, say, doing the cleaning and washing up and cooking and so on; and this would seem to me a Buddhistic commune. And I think we haven't yet reached that stage.

_____: commune community somehow, more like a village, and

Lokamitra: At the moment - I'm talking about the communities around just say Archway.....

Ananda: That's a slightly different use of the term, You've got to be very careful to define exactly what is meant by community.

_____: movement, you have to be careful

Lokamitra: It seems to me that something like Archway is - there are a number of communities, I think up to seven, which are associated very much with the Centre, and there's an Order member or more living in most of them. So they have a lot of bearing on what happens, and what happens has a lot of bearing on them. Therefore should they just be allowed to happen haphazardly, or should they perhaps be more of a concern of the Order?

_____:

S: Well, put it this way: I think the least that can be said is that those who are *upasakas* or *upasikas*, and those who are Mitras, should be very careful and mindful what sort of community they join. Obviously, you can't influence very much people who are not within the Movement.

_____: Most of these communities are mainly Order members and Mitras,

S: Well, in that case they certainly shouldn't happen haphazardly.

Siddhiratna: They don't happen haphazardly. It's usually two or three people come along to

the Centre, get interested as it were, know that there are communities around, and want to start one on similar lines.

_____: No, this is not what is talking about, we're talking about Order members and Mitras, which have happened haphazardly. For instance Barbara who needed somewhere to live well over a year ago, became a Mitra community. That's haphazard; that happened. (*Voices.*)

Lokamitra: I think we can't go very much into this at the moment. I think it really concerns more the Order in that particular area, but it seems to me we should recognise that if communities aren't really doing well, and they are made up mainly of Order members and Mitras, then it's the concern of the Order, and it could perhaps be discussed

S: Well, I certainly remember in the past - say, one year or two years ago - that certain people staying in certain communities have spoken to me very negatively about their community and not feeling happy that they were in the community, but apparently not doing very much about it. But perhaps there should be a general keeping of an eye by the Order - at least the local Order - on the communities to make sure that they really are functioning in the way in which a spiritual community should, and that the people belonging to that community are in fact getting real benefit from them.

Ananda: I'm just wondering at this stage, it's just occurred to me, to what extent does the Order feel that membership of communities and who lives where and why and what, and so forth, is determined by the Order..... rather than just people saying 'I'd like to live there for a bit',

S: I think it should always be open to other Order members to speak their mind about somebody's membership of a community.

_____: Whether they're in that community or not?

S: Yes. Sometimes people who are not in the community can see more clearly what's going on.

Lokamitra: Also if they are trying to establish spiritual communities in the more physical sense too, then obviously there should be concern over what's happening if we're going to try and achieve that.

S: Also if, for instance, a particular *upasaka* or *upasika* is thinking of joining a certain community, i.e. setting up a certain community with certain other people, let them bring it up in an Order meeting and say to others, 'Well how do you feel about this? This is the idea that we've got, I'm thinking of being part and parcel of that. Has anybody got anything to say - any suggestion, or has anyone anything against it, anyone foresee any difficulty?'

Ananda: This is what I was really getting at, that it would be good to establish more communication through the vehicle of the Order meeting.

S: I don't think the Order can take responsibility for setting up communities, but at least keep the Order informed so that everybody has an opportunity of saying something. For instance, you might be setting up a community with someone you don't know. Other Order members may know that person and may feel either that they are very good for that community with you in it, or otherwise. They might say, 'This is what I feel about that particular person in the community', then at least you've got a bit more information.

Ananda: I feel a lot goes on - in a way quite good things go on - but without the general knowledge of the Order,

S: Well, at least the local chapter of the Order should know. If you're thinking of taking a serious step, like joining or setting up a community, well why not consult your other Order members who are around? There's a greater chance then of the community being a success.

_____:

S: It's certainly convenient in many ways, but some people, whether Order members or Mitras, might quite rightly feel that it would be best for them to live alone.

Lokamitra: But I don't think that includes supervision - well, in fact not that way so much as there being openings between the community and the Order, then the spirit of the Order will flow into the community.

S: This is true, yes. Or if an Order member who is in a community is experiencing any difficulties within the community or with the community as a whole, it would be very helpful if he could bring these up at an Order meeting and ask other people what they feel, whether they have any advice or suggestions. But not that a community is a sort of closed-off little area, as it were. [Pause]

Can we get on to the last subject now, or what may well be the last, so that we can be sure of finishing by one o'clock? This is something in a way a bit new, and this is something I've been thinking about since the last Convention. For want of a better term, I've called it 'Formal Recognition of Centres', and I think here we need to emphasise that the Order is as it were the ultimate body, spiritually speaking; and the different FWBOs are as it were answerable to the Order as a whole, because the FWBOs are instruments for the functioning of individual Order members, and also sources of facilities for individual Order members. So I think it is incumbent on the Order as a whole to consider in a very general way the workings of all the different Centres, especially the autonomous Centres, and to express whether they are satisfied or not satisfied, in a very general way, without going down to matters of detail, with the workings or the spirit of the different Centres, to the extent that they are known to us.

And also whether the Order gives as it were its formal recognition to the existing Centres as Centres which are functioning according to the spirit of the Order and the Movement as a whole. This question may well arise more acutely in the future when we've many more Centres, possibly some in distant parts of the world without much contact, and I think it must be made clear that it is for the Order to say that that is a Centre of the FWBO or not. Do you see what I'm getting at? Is this clear? Because we don't have a headquarters for the whole FWBO, quite deliberately, but we need a sort of spiritual check-up, and I think the Order in the course of the Convention should take a look, a very broad and deep look also, at the different Centres known to it, and how they are functioning; and whether, as an Order, we are satisfied with the functioning of those FWBOs which are after all our structures through which we function in the world; whether we regard them as being up to scratch or not; whether we would like to see any changes - I'm thinking in general of major rather than of minor changes; and so on.

Lokamitra: It seems that in the future, though - even now we haven't got representatives from New Zealand, and say with other Centres - when a Convention happens, will it *be* representative of the whole Order or all Centres?

S: Well, we would like it to be. This is something that we have to discuss. Obviously it's very difficult for people to get here from New Zealand, but we will be having people from New Zealand, at least sometimes. There's at least one New Zealand Order member who will be coming here, and then we shall hear from him directly. In the meanwhile, I've been to New Zealand, Asvajit has been to New Zealand, Gotami has been to New Zealand, so there's at least a few of us who have got some personal contact there.

Lokamitra: Thinking about the future, it seems the future that with the rate of expansion - I can't see that we'll be able to have Conventions like this.

S: This is true. I've not thought about it in detail, but I see that in future we'll have to have a truly international Convention, say, every five years, with people making a definite effort to come from all parts of the world; and then an annual Convention every year, but even the annual Convention open to those who can come. And then maybe a regional meeting or retreat every three months; and then, of course, the monthly Order Day and the weekly Order meeting. That's the sort of pattern. (*Laughter.*)

_____: Sounds really

S: Good! But at present we're a bit in an intermediate phase.

_____: It's only five months since we have one Order meeting I don't think it would be too difficult for people at least to send one

Lokamitra: Yes, sure, that seems quite possible. I think in the future, where we won't be able to have a little hall like this, but maybe there might be 300 or 400, and

S: Well, the Convenor will look after that. (*Voices. Chat.*)
I don't think that we need bother about the practical details. Those will be -

_____: I'm not thinking about the practical details, I'm thinking on the organisational level: is there a limit? Can one go on, and does it - do you perceive that what has to happen is that maybe like different schools of Buddhism will develop? Do you see that something like this might happen?

S: I'm not thinking about it at the moment. I'm not thinking more than five years ahead at the moment. But I do, as I said, see that the time may well come when every five years there is a truly international gathering of the Order, and in between annual Conventions within the country or within the continent - maybe we'll have to talk about that at the next Convention, or the one after. But obviously you can't have a real Convention, as we understand it, of an indefinite number of people - put it that way; and plan the programme accordingly.

Vajradaka: Did you have any kind of practical suggestion for how we should look at each Centre? Do you suggest that we do that on this Convention?

S: Yes, I mean now. My idea is that we just mention - I think at least start off with the autonomous Centres, of which there are in the British Isles only three, aren't there? So there's the Archway Centre, for want of a better term, there's the Aryatara community and FWBO Surrey, and then there's the FWBO Glasgow. So perhaps I will say a bit about Centres I've visited outside Britain, but I think most people have seen or visited at least two of these Centres, and possibly three, and I just wonder whether there first of all is any sort of general observation about the function of all these Centres, and then whether there is anything specific about any particular Centre.

Lokamitra: I'd like to make one general point before we come to the Centres.

S: Yes, let's make general points first.

Lokamitra: That was - you said the Order was the ultimate body. Supposing an Order meeting, perhaps as this, decided that a certain Centre wasn't functioning properly, and that people in that Centre really considered that it was functioning -

S: When you say the people in that Centre, who do you mean?

Lokamitra: Well, the Order members working in the Centre. And there was disagreement between the Centre and the Order as a whole.

S: Well, it wouldn't be a disagreement between the Centre - because the Order members concerned would presumably be present, and it would be other individual Order members saying that 'We are not happy with the way in which you particular Order members are running that particular Centre', then it would have to be discussed. And one can't generalise about the possible outcome.

Lokamitra: You can't define an organisation as the authority?

S: I don't see why this comes up.

_____: Oh, ?

S: No, not that; I mean why one should think of the Order in terms of organisational authority.

Lokamitra: Well, because, as I understand it, we're talking about the functioning of the FWBOs. Now if a certain question is raised on the functioning in one of the Centres, and the people who are doing the functioning at the Centre think that it should be done in this way, but there's a general disagreement the Order as a whole.

S: Well, I think the average Order member, if he finds the Order as a whole seriously questioning his way of doing things, will take that very seriously indeed and really think about it. This is what I think will happen at present. And I think even if a group of four or five Order members were told, or it was suggested to them at a Convention, that 'Look, your Centre is not functioning in the right way, not really in accordance with the spirit of the Movement', I think they'd probably have quite a shock to begin with but I think they would take it very seriously. And then they'd say, 'What makes you say that? What's happened?' And then it could be discussed and a consensus would be arrived at in the end, in the way that we usually do arrive at a consensus. But I really can't, in practical terms, foresee the possibility with present Order members, of a whole group of them taking a very stubborn and obstinate stand in the face of criticism of the whole Order. There is the possibility that the whole Order may be mistaken, but then in that case I am quite sure that those four or five could show them, could convince the Order, that they have misunderstood the situation, probably through not being actually on the spot.

Ananda: This brings to my mind another general point, the question of consensus, and to what extent consensus is necessary by means of agreement. Presumably, what I think would be the ideal way if there's been any matter like this, would be that all the people concerned could say what they really feel about the situation, and then if an agreement cannot be reached there should be no decision forced on those people, but it should be allowed to rest until such time as everybody can come to a -

S: Well, isn't this what we usually do? This is what we usually do.

Ananda: Yes, I was just wondering it should be a consensus, but a natural consensus.

S: But this is what we always have done, to the best of my knowledge. I think usually with regard to practical matters, if the majority of people at a particular meeting, whether a Council meeting of the FWBO, an Order meeting, are agreed that even someone who doesn't quite see eye to eye usually says, 'All right, if everybody's happy about it, all right, I accept it. Even though I might not be individually quite happy.'

Ananda: Well, that's what I mean.

S: But again I don't see really why the question comes up.

Ananda: I feel it has come up in a minor way in the past.

S: You can't ever obtain absolute agreement, but I think most Order members - I hope in fact all Order members - are reasonable enough to give way in the face of - not exactly majority feeling, but the feeling of the greater number of Order members present, unless it is something of really great importance; but to the best of my knowledge no question of that sort has so far arisen. I'd be very surprised if it did, by virtue of the basis of the whole thing, the common basis; you've got something very common to appeal to.

Lokamitra: It comes from looking at the Order, as I said, as an outside authority, that then one might have a fear that the Order, as an outside authority, is going to impinge on you or the Centre or something like that, in some way.

S: You are *part* of the Order. You, members, people who are running the Centre, they're part of the Order.

Ananda: This is an ideal discussion. (?)

Lokamitra: That's what it is. No, it's not the ideal, it's what it is, that's the actual fact. But because you slip into feelings that the Order is some authority that's telling us as if we are outside the Order what we are supposed to be doing -

S: Or we're naughty boys being taken to task. But it's not that.

_____: It's only from that attitude that the question arises.

S: For instance - just to take a little example - on the study retreats I was quite horrified by everybody's chanting. Quite clearly, the way of chanting has got quite off the rails. So I spoke to people about that, and at first some of them couldn't see that or appreciate that their chanting had gone all wrong, the spirit of it, the feeling of it. But after a while, yes, they saw it, we rehearsed and practised, and it was all right. So in, say, that sort of way, there might be, say, a group of four or five Order members running a Centre, running it quite well, but there might be something wrong; and visiting Order members might notice that, and then bring it up at the Convention: 'This is what we've noticed.' They might even notice about the chanting. 'The chanting at that Centre is all wrong; the spirit of it is wrong; what's happened?' And then bring it to the notice of those Order members who are present, and then they can consider it. This is the sort of thing that I have in mind, or even matters affecting the whole spirit and feeling of a particular Centre. Visiting Order members might feel that that Centre is really stagnant - there's a whole lot of people there, a whole lot of Order members, but there's no life. They should be free to say that in the Convention, and even say to certain people present, 'The Centre which you are running is not alive; what's happened? Are you tired? Do you want more help? Do you need more people there, or have you somehow got into a rut? What is happening?' We should have the freedom to speak in this way at Conventions, among ourselves. It's not *the Order* taking a Centre to task, it's not like that.

Otherwise, if a Centre does go downhill, a whole big Centre, and they can't see it themselves, and visitors may be not very many, and the odd Order member visiting doesn't like to pipe up when there's so many of them - well, where are we going to deal with it? We can only deal with it in the Convention. Or possibly an Order Day, but certainly in the Convention.

_____: It reminds me and they had their meeting, and there was one wrong

S: So anyway, would anybody like to say anything about the actual functioning of Centres, in a very broad sense? Is there anything that anybody feels not happy about, or do they feel that the different FWBOs are functioning in the way that they should? Taking them all collectively, to begin with. And after that, we come on to individual ones.

Asvajit: It's very difficult to say whether they are functioning as they should, they all seem to have, in my experience so far, a rather different flavour, a rather different character. And one can see that some Centres have more energy than others, more vitality. But to what extent that depends upon the conditions, the number of Order members, the environment, people around, Mitras, buildings, it's very difficult to say.

S: As I've been getting around over the last year, I've certainly seen a lot of difference from Centre to Centre, and some of it is difference of level, quite definitely, but there are also differences of style, different styles being all equally valid and equally useful.

_____: Did you say difference of level?

S: Yes, some Centres are functioning as it were better than others. But that is distinct from the question of the particular style of a Centre. Styles can be very different, as I mentioned in the case of the two New Zealand centres; both functioning equally well, but with very different styles. Incidentally, they are swapping their secretaries. It just happened like this. One Secretary has to go and live in the other city, to complete a course, so the two secretaries are just swapping for a year.

_____: That sort of thing could be put into practice - we have a lot of switching round,

S: Well, that's another point.

_____: We could have Lokamitra come down to Aryatara. (*Laughter.*)

_____: Not big enough for him.

_____: Make it bigger!

S: This is something that can be considered. This is the sort of thing we should talk about: whether there should be, even on principle, a swapping around. Not after too short a time, but after two or three years, maybe, two secretaries or a secretary and a treasurer of different Centres would like to do a swap. That's assuming they don't want to go off on a solitary retreat or go away and write a book, or just do nothing for a while. But why not?

_____:

S: It's very difficult to generalise.

_____: figures,

S: What I see? I see all the Centres following broadly the same pattern, which is good. Meditation classes are going on everywhere, the same basic mindfulness of breathing, *metta bhavana*, leading on to in the case of Order members visualisation; communication exercises are used practically everywhere; there are retreats. The main difference seems to be in the nature of the local difficulties, where difficulties do exist; the particular obstacles that the Order members in that particular Centre are up against. This seems to be quite an important factor.

But I see a lot of similarity among the Centres, even though they are quite widely separated, that one feels in a way spiritually very much at home going from one Centre to another, even right at the opposite corner of the world. It's definitely the old FWBO, it is quite amazing, in a way. I don't know whether Asvajit felt anything like this, did you?

Asvajit: Yes, I did in Auckland. Christchurch was a bit different, refreshingly so.
Auckland [Pause]

S: But one thing that one is aware of, going to the different countries, is that the set-ups and the culture, even the social and economic situation in different countries, is very different from what it is in Britain, and I think those Order members who live and work in Britain should not take it for granted that conditions elsewhere are even similar to those here. It may be the same FWBO, but you have to function there under very different circumstances, and facing sometimes different difficulties.

Ananda: This is what makes it very difficult -

S: I won't say it makes it difficult, but you have to bear in mind these differences.

Ananda: Yes, and you can't assume your own standpoint, like, say, the organisation is very loose, and if it

S: You can't assume your own structural standpoint. You can't assume any standpoint at one particular kind of Centre. You certainly take your stand upon the common spirit of the whole Movement, whether it's here or whether it's at the North Pole; you take your stand on that. But I think it would be quite useful for different people attached to different Centres to visit other Centres abroad if they got the opportunity. I think it would be very very educational.

_____: And different Centres in England.

S: Even different Centres in the UK, yes.

Aryamitra: I suppose it's probably more important to see the differences. I think there might be a danger - although you said it's like the same old FWBO - I know you meant that positively - I feel a danger myself, being that, say, Purley has to run [at a] similar level to London, which I know it can't do because it's in a different environment, different type of person. And maybe it's more important to in fact see the differences at the moment rather than the similarities - the difference of immediate environment.

S: Well, when making any assessment about the successful functioning or otherwise of a Centre, all these factors have to be taken into consideration. But that shouldn't prevent us from saying that something is wrong if in fact something is wrong, at a fundamental level.

Lokamitra: Well, what are we going to do? Are we going to take each centre in detail or are we going to just, if there are any very special points about ?

S: I think, since we have now talked about Centres in general, if anyone wants to say anything about any individual Centre then it should be open to them to do so. And very likely that people who don't normally belong to a particular Centre will see in certain respects more of that Centre than those who are living and working there all the time. Or at least working there all the time.

Asvajit: Something that I noticed about Archway was the remarkable energy in the place. I that this might make it a bit difficult for some newcomers, in that the tranquillity aspect of things seems to be an important factor in meditation, to be tranquil. Where there's a lot of energy around, a lot of activity, one's almost missed it or you can get caught up in the

activities. But perhaps that needs some consideration.

Lokamitra: Don't you see that energy and tranquillity can go - in fact, do go - side by side? I'm not saying that it has in Archway, but at the moment I think it probably is much more so.

Asvajit: I think they do, ideally, of course; but in fact unless one is very careful, unless the interaction between members of a particular Centre with that amount of energy is very aware, very in a sense very free, then that can get a bit sort of jarring -

S: And you were speaking of the effect on the newcomer?

Asvajit: Yes.

_____: Perhaps it would be interesting, then, if we hold one of the beginners' classes on a Sunday Archway quiet, tranquil day. The Centre's empty during the day, and it's really quite a tranquil, relaxed atmosphere, quite informal but serious. come along to it.

S: Well, perhaps there is a bit of an argument for using Sundays more, the whole of Sunday. It is quiet, even traffic quieter, you get less traffic.--

----- : I don't think newcomers

_____: There's definitely a difference.

S: No, I think what probably Asvajit is meaning is that the newcomer, especially the person who comes along to learn and to practise meditation, thinks of going to a quiet place. His office may be noisy and busy, his home may be a bit crowded and over-lively, but when he comes to a Buddhist Centre he likes to feel, rightly or wrongly, he's going to a place where it's very quiet and calm, where he can be peaceful and get into meditation. I think this is more what you were getting at?

Asvajit: Yes.

S: But if he comes along and finds people bustling around and very active and busy, even though that's fully justified, he can be put off if he has come more for the meditative side of things.

_____: I think it's a bit more difficult at Archway, because the offices are in the same place as the Centre.

S: Well, that will be remedied, I understand, at Bethnal Green.

Lokamitra: I think this is - the evening classes - we have to watch it, that the evening classes, there should be no activity in the office. There is occasionally and that stops usually at five o'clock or so. So -

S: There's also the question of the whole Centre. If people drop in during the day, there should be a peaceful atmosphere.

Ratnapani: Atmospheres do build up. If you've got a shrine room, a tea-drinking room and an office so closely packed, you obviously get a confusion of atmospheres. It has an unfortunate physical

Lokamitra: I'm a bit unsure about this, actually, because Archway has felt more peaceful in

the last several months than any other Centre almost that I've been to. It's been -

Devamitra: That may be because you're in tune with that kind of energy, too. But a newcomer just might not experience that, might -

_____: Oh no, I think quite - I've experienced it subjectively, if you like.

S: If you're moving with the energy, it's all nice and calm, isn't it? It's like flying in an aeroplane at high altitude, you feel very calm and peaceful. But supposing that energy has hit you as you opened the door - you don't feel so calm and peaceful. But anyway, I think Asvajit was expressing concern for the newcomer, and that when he enters the Buddhist Centre, or meditation centre, as it's sometimes called, he should if possible immediately feel a different meditative atmosphere; and no doubt at Bethnal Green that will be possible.

There's a general point that I noticed at Glasgow, and it may apply elsewhere in the future if not now. It seems to be a little difficult for Order members to work together as a team if they belong as it were to two different intakes. In other words, if we've got, say, one who was ordained a few months ago, one who was ordained five years ago, one ordained three years ago, with different backgrounds and histories even within the Order, it seems much more difficult to function as a team than if you're all more or less at the same sort of stage, or even at, say just two different stages. So I think probably in setting up Centres in the future this has to be watched.

_____: Why do you think that is?

S: I'm not quite sure why it is, other than perhaps that it is just the fact of people not having been together when they were ordained or in the same batch or very nearly the same batch, to use that word. It seems to make a difference. Unless it's due to some different factor altogether. But I did feel that in Glasgow, that the Order members there didn't cohere. Perhaps those from Glasgow will have something to say about this for themselves.

Aryamitra: I did notice this in just the Order communicating generally. I see that people that have been ordained at the same time generally tend to communicate more with each other, they seem to have a deeper communication, than those ordained at different times. And it's quite obvious.

S: So perhaps this should be borne in mind when setting up new Centres, or, if we decide for any reason to set up a Centre with a team of Order members who are a bit different in this respect, care should be taken to overcome it and fully integrate that group of Order members - perhaps, preferably before they go and set up the new Centre.

_____:

_____: different area

S: Also I think we have to realise that the Order as a whole is developing all the time. People tend to get ordained in little batches, don't they? And they do tend to get ordained on the crest of a wave, and it isn't always quite the same wave, or the same kind of wave.

Dharmapala: I think what you said earlier about setting up new Centres that the team should be a team that's already worked together

S: Those of you who are either from Glasgow or have some experience of Glasgow - do you know what I'm talking about, or referring to? (*Voices:* Yes.) Have you felt this, or do you feel it is a valid point?

_____: Yes, I think it's very valid. I think it is changing,

S: Well, obviously it will -

_____: overcome but it's still quite new. coming together. I think it might not necessarily be personal difficulties with other Order members or outside the Order

Lokamitra: It's very much to do with having recognised, in each Centre, one person who -

S: Leads?

Lokamitra: Who leads, who's running the show. And that person being recognised by the others. The danger I see is of it getting into a sort of authority thing, but how do we get over - maybe we could just use say 'senior Order member' - I don't think that will always work -

S: I think it's a question of being quite objective and not allowing oneself to react. I think the ideal situation is when the Order members who are functioning as a team are all quite mature people and can function as it were collectively and a leader isn't necessary. That is the best situation. But I think it will be possible team in the future. I don't think it's actually happening at present, but that is the ideal situation. The next best is that there should be within each team a quite objective recognition of where you stand and where others stand. 'I am not so capable. I don't have those qualities of leadership and initiative and vigour that a few others have; all right, I shall give them my loyal backing up. In that sense, I accept their leadership - not blindly, but I recognise that they are more capable or more qualified than I am to take the lead and the initiative.' But at the same time, those who are endowed in that way have the responsibility of taking all the others into their full confidence, and not just doing things off their own bat and expecting others to fall in, as it were. So we don't want a leader in the ordinary sense, but at the same time we don't want democracy in the ordinary sense. We want the initiative and superior qualities of those who possess them quite objectively and happily recognised by others, who don't perhaps possess those qualities, at least not for the present. So a natural leader should emerge, and should be allowed to emerge and backed up, but he also should recognise that he's not the boss, he's just *primus inter pares*, the first among equals.

Ananda: Would you spell that? [Laughter] *Primus* what?

(end of side)

Tape 4, side 2

S: P.r.i.m.u.s., one word; then *inter*, as usual; *pares*, p.a.r.e.s. You see what I mean? It's not easy to achieve, even

_____: I think this is where most of the difficulty arises.

S: You don't *have* to be all equal, if you're not. And don't pretend that you are when you're not, when you have got, say, amongst you an Order member who is definitely more capable than the rest of you - well, follow him; let him take the lead, let him take the initiative. Give him your trust and your support, which doesn't mean that you blindly follow him. Incidentally, they are experiencing a bit of this difficulty at present in Auckland with ***** [name removed during transcription] who is of course a *maha-upasaka*; but the difficulty is - and I had several letters about this recently - that he is neither leading nor not leading. So other Order members are not quite sure where they stand, so this is something I have to sort out by correspondence.

Lokamitra: I think it's very important also for the actual person who is taking initiative, the natural leader, to recognise that himself. I've seen that happen, where they don't, and don't in fact take it on, don't take responsibility.

S: I think this is quite important - that you recognise yourself that you are more capable, and therefore you have a greater responsibility, especially when it comes to taking initiative, getting things going, getting energy flowing. And it's also important that the others recognise what is being done, as it were for them, and back the person up, giving their loyal support; but not blindly.

Vajradaka: It sometimes can be that the person who is likely, the higher-up (hierarchy?) - to kind of naturally do - is the person who is basically just more committed; he is just more prepared to do whatever is necessary in the situation, and give themselves completely to the situation rather than, say for example, spend more time working out their own problems, having a job, doing something else.

Ananda: I noticed in that connection it's very very different from what I've seen in so-called democratic communities Friends, communities functioning without any leadership, and there was a which have a very definite leader and a completely different quality. I'm really not sure which is the best set-up. Obviously,

S: As I've said, if the team of *upasakas* and *upasikas* consists of people who are all mature, then they can take collective decisions by consensus without there even being a leader, or they can take it in turns to be leader; if someone is needed, it doesn't matter. But I don't think that situation exists anywhere at present. I don't think it does. So therefore, recognise the leaders you have. If you're all at the same dead level, well, for heaven's sake invite an Order member who is a leader; or maybe an Order member will have to come and live among you, taking the initiative himself. Say, 'What a dull lot of people. They're not much of a team. All right, I'll go and stay there.' And tell them, 'I'm coming, I'm not satisfied with the way in which you're all functioning.' And convince them of that: say, 'I'm coming to stay among you.'

Ananda: Presumably this will be a case in point which you referred to an individual person to go and do

S: Yes, certainly, right.

Sanghamitta: It would be a very good Buddhists. I mean that in a very spiritual sense, have suffered from attachment to certain things, even if it's only to the shrine or what they set up or something. And have had to be told it or recognise this, if they can't it (?)self, it's probably been happening for years and years. They've just had to drop everything, leave everything, and go.

S: Sometimes other Order members may feel, with regard to a particular Order member, 'Well look, you've been in that place long enough. You're getting a bit attached. Why not have a change? Put

Sanghamitta: Originally, this happened very much in Brighton before got going, one would say 'The other one won't let me do the shrine' - and this attachment grows in all sorts of ways: either to the shrine, or the Centre, or something. So that in the end, each of those persons has to completely let go, let find out if they're not fully aware

S: I don't think we'll allow anyone to go on in that way for years and years; [Laughter] not more than a few months at the most. But, as you say, it is a danger.

Ananda: Bhante, there's something I'm afraid is still in my mind question of leadership expressed. myself that on one level a spiritual group - community - functions

very much more efficiently and dynamically with a recognised leader. At the same time, contact very dynamic and very powerful and a lot has been done and apparently people are developing, a lot of activity, a very tight structured situation. At the same time, the other side of that, is that it may encourage a lot of people who need to look up to an authority figure to tell them what to do - might not be developing,

S: We're talking about Order members at the moment.

Ananda: Yes, sure, but I'm relating that to a possible structure within the Order

Ratnapani: I think you can assume we're not going to make the sort of mistakes, if any, that are made where you've got a father or a mother or an aunt - an authority figure. I think you can just assume that we're not going to make them, and if you do I think someone will spot them pretty quick.

Ananda: I just wondered what Bhante's general views were on that situation, like having a community with a very definite leader -

S: Do you mean a community within the Friends or within the Order?

Ananda: Er -

S: I've really nothing to add to what I've said - that if everybody is mature you don't need a leader, but that isn't the situation anywhere; all right, just recognise the most capable person among you as your leader, back him up, but don't be uncritical, don't be blind.

_____: [*Plane taking off.*]

S: I don't see any Order members with a lust for leadership. I also don't see any Order members with a lust for dependence on a leader. I think most are pretty much middle of the way.

Ananda: don't see any particular merit in that kind of got a leader with his authority actually telling people in a community how to run it.

S: Well, I'm not quite sure what you're talking about.

Ananda: The situation in which -

S: And I have seen Throssel Hole, but I can't make any comment on it.

_____: That sort of situation is fundamentally degrading.

Ananda: Well, that's what I'm asking: does it usually arise? (?)

S: If there is a situation anywhere where there is a very definite leader, even with a somewhat authoritarian position, and others are definitely followers, and a bit submissive, I wouldn't be happy with that sort of set-up, and I certainly don't see us as having that sort of set-up in any way, or as of being in danger of it.

Ananda: You don't see it as either desirable or (?)

S: I don't think it's desirable when it does exist, but I don't see that it is likely to exist among ourselves. I remember when, for instance, Daiji(?) turned up at a meeting at Centre House, when I was giving a lecture, and he mentioned to me that he hadn't come along before

wearing his robes - he wore them on that occasion - because he said he realised that people would be so completely bowled over when he wore his robes he thought it better not to come. But actually no one was bowled over at all. But he quite clearly expected, and he expressed this, that everybody would be really bowled over seeing him wearing these black robes. But, being our people, even at that early stage, they weren't. They just said, 'Oh, hello, Daiji', and 'glad you got ordained' and then went back to their homes. But he clearly expected that they would be very, very impressed. But that is not our way of doing things. But this is the way of doing things of at least some forms of Zen; but I personally don't agree with that.

Ananda: That's what I

_____: I'm quite sure we should ... what is actually happening

_____: Well, it's not entirely

Asvajit: It seems to me that we need to develop the qualities of leadership more, both individually and collectively, not to try and dissolve them away before they've even become

S: Yes, I would say that if individual Order members have been deficient, it is with regard to their reluctance to assume leadership when it has been necessary and even in some cases where they have been quite qualified to assume it.

Vajradaka: I think there's a general kind of view that the only kind of group possible, feasible group structure, is a structure with a leader. I don't think that this is prevalent in the Friends, or in the Order. I think that this is mainly prevalent outside of the Friends and the Order, and that a number of people do see group dynamics in terms of a constant battle for power.

S: Well, some people I was talking to recently were quite surprised that within the Friends we've never had a battle for power, and they seemed to think that there might be various up-and-coming young Order members who were very keen to oust Bhante and take over (*laughter*) - I said 'We just don't have all these things. Not even a murmur!' They found it quite difficult to believe. [*Laughter*]

_____: that's what the world consists of, groups

S: Yes, exactly. This is why in the Buddhist tradition there's quite a lot of talk about teachers, but no talk at all about leaders. And the Buddha himself said - I've mentioned this before - 'I do not think that I lead the Sangha. If anyone thinks that he leads the Sangha,' he said, 'let him step forward.' And of course nobody did.

Asvajit: Perhaps for leadership we should just substitute the idea or the attitude of initiative, taking the initiative.

S: Or responsibility.

_____: Taking responsibility is what happens when you develop, as it were.

S: Or accepting, even, better than taking: accepting responsibility. Or accepting initiative.

_____: Being able to respond.

S: Yes, right. Able to respond to the situation.

_____: focalise [focus?] on something and perhaps the initiative and then in order to co-ordinate

_____: Very much in the way of similar to in

Lokamitra: Can I suggest that we move on to recognition of Centres?

S: Perhaps we'd better. Does anyone want to finish what they were saying first? Or is that finished? All right, as regards recognition of Centres, we've got in Great Britain three autonomous Centres: we've got the original London or Archway Centre, and we've got the FWBO Surrey; we've also got FWBO Glasgow. Then overseas we have the two autonomous Centres in New Zealand, one in Christchurch which has just been registered as a charity, one in Auckland which is in the process of being registered. And we have the FWBO Helsinki. We also have a few representatives: we have a Norfolk representative, Sulocana; and there is also now the question of Vajrayogini being our representative for the Netherlands. Quite a lot of interest in the FWBO emerged from the retreat that we had there recently, Vajradaka, Mangala, Vajrayogini and myself. It wasn't altogether smooth sailing, but in the end it was very positive, and people were even hoping that there would be a Centre for the Friends in the Netherlands. But obviously that isn't possible at the moment, so for the time being Vajrayogini will act as our representative and channel information as a centre for the dissemination of information about the Friends, assisted by other people.

So what this Convention has to do in this session is as it were formally to adopt and recognise these Centres, with their branches, as Centres of the FWBO.

_____: Can I ask where Brighton comes in?

S: Brighton is, as far as I understand, a branch still of London, but when it has sufficient Order members it will become an autonomous Centre.

_____: What about Cornwall? branch

S: What *is* the position of Cornwall, of Truro?

Manjuvajra: I don't know.

S: Or have we any ideas about it? How do *you* feel about it, or what it should be,?

Manjuvajra: Well, I don't think it would be right to call it a Centre, it's certainly not that. And yet it's a little bit more than perhaps just a representative. It's effectively a branch without being a branch of anything.

S: Ah, right.

Manjuvajra: I mean it functions as a branch.

S: Well, do you think it *should* be a branch of somewhere?

Manjuvajra: I think I really see it almost as a branch of Archway.

S: Inasmuch as your own close connections were with Archway. Yes.

Manjuvajra: I don't know what ? I think that would probably be best, Archway.

_____:

Manjuvajra: Well, as I said, perhaps it's a bit difficult to, just at sort of emerging group level. That's how we've always referred to it. And it's still

Subhuti: Perhaps it would help if it wasn't still considered as an emerging group, and considered very differently as a branch.

Manjuvajra: True, yes.

_____: The branch is running itself..... (*Voices.*)

Manjuvajra: The thing that would be a vitally important factor is that people from the Centre they connected with spent quite a bit of time with the branch. By that I mean that the people that come to thein Cornwall will have some contact with what after all will be their head office.

Lokamitra: I don't think we should see it too much in those terms. It's an organisational structure. It's not a spiritual structure,

_____:

Lokamitra: Well they need to see if there's anything different, really, you just call yourself Truro branch of the FWBO, as you've called yourself up to now. It's that other people outside the Order members there and those involved in the administration there need

S: At the same time, I think, quite apart from that it is important that as many Order members, and Mitras, even, pay visits, even long visits, as is possible. I think probably this is the great need there I imagine.

Vajradaka: What do you see that branch really changing into in the immediate future? Can you see it turning into anything, can you see it evolving into something really positive?

Manjuvajra: Er - no. Not really at the moment. I can't see There's a few people there who are quite positive and are sort of interested, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of material for anything really

Padmaraja: Do you see continuing to exist? (*Pause; laughter.*) fulfilling a particular function. (?)

Manjuvajra: Well, I thought about this quite seriously a few months ago, and I decided that well, really, perhaps there wasn't there wasn't the But then I left it for a while, a couple of weeks, and I felt a lot better about it. I felt that so why not and and I was undertaking to tackle the thing in a much more solid way - not try and do as much but to try and do things more steadily and more And so really I suppose you could say I feel - I feel that there's a lot of changes going on in Cornwall at the moment, we've had a lot of storms this summer, and the weather's completely changed; and I think there's going to be a lot of new developments within probably the next three or four months.

Lokamitra: If, say, you do get more things going within the next few months, then would you still consider leaving because it seems to me that if things do start moving, if you do get things moving, then you plan to leave....

Manjuvajra: Well, there'd be no point in leaving.

Lokamitra: Ah, right, I see. You're not planning any

Manjuvajra: No. My position is I have to be in Cornwall for another year -

S: At least.

Manjuvajra: At least. If nothing happens after the end of the year, then there's no reason for me to stay. And

Sanghamitta: I was wondering if

S: Sulocana made a suggestion which was overlooked.

Sulocana: I'm sorry, I said it at the same time someone else was talking to you, but I was just wondering if a lot of Order members came and you organised a retreat down in Cornwall - or Devon, where you live - and had a retreat there, the people, the group that you're working with, could see other Buddhists also working and different kinds of people - as you said, it's difficult to give them some idea of what it's about.

Manjuvajra: We had one weekend retreat which Sulocana and came to and that was very positive.

_____: How many people came to that?

Manjuvajra: five?

_____: How many people was that apart from Order members?

Manjuvajra: Er -

S: It was during the holiday period, I think.

Manjuvajra: Yes, there was, I think - when we originally asked people about ten people said they wanted to come along, but for one reason or another they couldn't make it. I think we could probably gather a retreat if we could get four or five Order members and six or seven people from Cornwall. That would be quite -

S: I think you have to try to lay it on in consultation with those in Archway and Aryatara and elsewhere, even, to make sure you could get them. That would surely be a boost

Manjuvajra: I think that's really likely

S: No doubt it is a bit far away, but I'm sure Order members who understood the situation would make a special effort.

Asvajit: Having paid a visit there a week or so ago, I feel it would be a great pity just to leave that part of the country. It's very beautiful, and a very lovely atmosphere there, and if only you could put a bit of your effort, a bit of your energy into expansion, communicating with the people around you about what you're doing, about the Order, about the Sangha, things would really begin to blossom.

_____: Do you advertise? - outside the local paper?

Manjuvajra: We did - we did at one stage. period. This mainly came from the fact that we kept local council we put in our application Christmas we hadn't heard by the end of July, and so all that period we were just marking time,

.....

S: I think the moral is we should never mark time. We realised that at Archway, when I noticed I think it was last year that the Centre was getting a bit shabby. I think one or two people had felt without maybe thinking consciously - 'We're going to leave here soon, what does it matter?' so I raised this question, and then things were spruced up and then everybody realised that even if we are leaving tomorrow, today the place must be spick and span. So it's the same sort of picture.

Anyway, time is marching on, I'm sorry to say. I think we'll have to bring the proceedings to a conclusion for the present. Can I take it that the different Centres that I have mentioned are recognised by the Order as Centres which are functioning in the spirit of the whole Movement, and that we therefore list them as official Centres, ?

_____: Does this apply to the FWBO branch at Ealing? I haven't heard that one mentioned.

S: Yes, I said Centres and branches, Centres with their branches. You wanted to say something?

Bodhisri:

S: You have to be autonomous, because Finnish law requires it. You can't be affiliated anywhere else. So you are really - you would have been a branch, had Finnish law permitted you to be a branch, but it doesn't permit you to be a branch of something outside Finland, so therefore we recognise you as a Centre, really, even though there are only three members. But it will be regularised when you get two more.

Ananda: There's the question of the figure of five Order members. This implies, you mean by this, that there must be five resident Order members, five members of the Council, at Centres?

S: No, there must be five members.

Ananda: Of the Council?

S: No, five members. They may not all be Council members.

Ananda: I don't really follow. (*Voices.*)

_____: Five Order members?

S: If you set up - leaving aside anomalies like Finland, because of Finnish law - if you set up an FWBO there must be an autonomous independent FWBO - there must be at least five Order members.

_____: Five Order members - ?

S: As members of that.

_____: In other words, five resident Order members.

S: I said nothing about resident - five members. (*Voices.*)

Subhuti: They must be members of the charity.

Ananda: Members of the Council. (*Voices: NO!*)

S: Members.

_____: members.

S: members of the FWBO, FWBO X, Y or Z, paying their subscription, and they are eligible for election to a Council.

Vajradaka: In other words, the FWBO is the legally recognised body, the body which is recognised by the tax, the Charity Commissioners and everything like that; to have a body like that you have to have members. And the members are made up by the Order. And they have to be -

S: Though in some cases we add a Mitra or two to make up the number, (*noise.*) but there must be at least five Order members

Vajradaka: it hasn't got five Order members.

S: It did have at one stage.

_____:

Ananda: Neither has Aryatara.

Mangala: I think you are confusing community with Centre.

S: But as far as I know, Padmaraja is still a member, even though you are not residing, so that makes up the numbers.

_____: He's a member of the Council.

S: *He is a member of the FWBO Surrey!* It doesn't matter whether he is a member of the Council or not. And you need five Order members to be members of your local FWBO.

_____: clarify point

S: Right, I hand over to you. (*Voices.*)

(*end of side*)

Tape 4, side 2 (contd.)

Session 3

S: This morning, this being the fourth plenary session, we'll be dealing with devotional and artistic activities, and there are a number of headings and we'll discuss the subject under these headings one by one. First of all, Puja; then ceremonies; festivals; the fine arts and spiritual life; and then handicrafts. So we should have quite a lot to talk about.

All right, first of all, Puja. I think that I'd like to take for the starting point something that I noticed and something I spoke about in the course of the study seminars that we had recently at Nash, which many of you did attend. Those of you who did attend will remember that I didn't feel very happy about the Puja, the chanting especially. Do you remember that? (*Voices:* Mm.) - those who were present. I hadn't heard large numbers of Order members chanting together for quite a while, and especially I hadn't heard the chanting of the Padmasambhava mantra in England; and I'd come straight from Finland, from Helsinki, where the Puja seems to be going all right, including the Padmasambhava mantra. But when I got to England, and when we had those study retreats, I wasn't at all happy with the general feel of the Puja, and especially the chanting of the mantras. And it seemed to me that there was a certain lack of feeling, particularly devotional feeling. It seemed as though there was a lot of forcing, and though there was quite a lot of energy in the chanting and in the Puja generally, it wasn't flowing smoothly, it wasn't harmonious, it wasn't gentle, it wasn't very sensitive.

So perhaps we could take that as our point of departure. I wonder if anybody else has any observations or reflections about the Puja in this way?

Lokamitra: I found that when you did it, it seemed much slower, and in this way felt able to get in touch with feelings. Quite often it's the speed of it, gallops along and it becomes more mechanical.

S: I did notice the Padmasambhava mantra, I think either the first or the second time it was chanted, it was very fast. And when I pointed this out, it seemed to go very slow the next time, as though people were finding it very difficult to achieve a happy medium.

: Last night's Puja was still quite fast

_____ :

_____ : It's something that is talked about from time to time at Order meetings and Order Days, and it's something very, very difficult to actually discuss, for some reason - I'm not sure what the reason is. It's as though we've all got some kind of different approach or attitude or idea(*noise*).....

S: I think everybody agrees that there should be feeling in the Puja. I don't think there's any difference of view about that - that there should be devotional feeling and this should come as it were naturally; and that whatever energy is put into the Puja, the chanting should not be forced. I think this is common ground.

Ratnapani: I haven't yet heard anything which convinces me of the cause of people putting artificial feeling in, as it were noise as opposed to feeling. And it also - other things can creep in, underneath as it were, but that's a slightly different case.

S: The very first Puja that we had on the first of those retreats was really quite painful, because it was so loud, and it was - in the case of a few people - just a question of shouting. It could hardly be called chanting It was just shouting, and it was really quite terrible.

Lokamitra: But when one is out of touch with one's feelings, one operates in a different way. One operates in terms of quantity of energy rather than quality.

_____ : This indicates the fact that we have enough actual feeling

S: But also it must be pointed out that, after three or four days, in the case of each study retreat, people got back, it seemed, at least to some extent, into contact. Some people mentioned that it might be due to the strenuous nature of life in the big city, that a lot of forcing was sometimes necessary, just to resist the surrounding influences; you had to force your way through those influences, as it were, all the time. This was mentioned as one possible explanation.

Lokamitra: I thought you said, when this was brought up on the

seminar I was on, that you'd noticed this coming from people outside the big city and also that you'd noticed some people from the big city, as being very much in touch with it.

S: Yes, that is also true.

Ratnapani: I think Lokamitra's point about people who are not in touch with their feelings and feel they should be. 'The Puja or the chanting is devotional; right, I shall feel devotional.'

S: Which means, 'I shall shout'.

Ratnapani: Which means 'I shall shout', or 'I shall whisper' - it could go that way,

S: I didn't notice any whispering.

Ratnapani: It wouldn't show!

S: I was listening to everybody individually, because there were only 12 or 14 on the study retreats at a time.

Ratnapani: On other occasions I've seen some more of a whispering-grovelling attitude. I think that does occur quite a bit. I'm afraid shouting is the more common

S: I mentioned this just to draw general attention to the fact that in any Puja or any such celebration, the quality of feeling is very important - in fact, of overriding importance - and that we must be in contact with our feelings on those occasions. And, if we are not, and if a large number of us are not especially, then we have to ask why this is and do something about it. But I was a bit amazed, I must say frankly, that so many people on these retreats seemed totally unaware of what had happened, though they could see it, albeit in some cases with difficulty, once it was pointed out.

Lokamitra: But they saw it with difficulty when you pointed it out - so when things like that are pointed out in just an ordinary Order meeting, without you, it's very difficult to get things across.

S: There were several people with whom I had to argue quite vigorously.

Lokamitra: And if you have to argue, then what about -

_____ : Lokamitras!

S: Well, anybody.

Lokamitra: So it's like the gravitational pull.

_____ : For instance, the other day when mentioned to me that they didn't feel that there was enough devotional feeling coming through in the Pujas, it was really surprising to me, it was not in accordance with my own feeling, It's quite difficult to see it from the other side,

Aryamitra: It's very much to do with, I just think very much to do with us being out of touch with our feelings, and even - out of touch with our feelings, we end up thinking that we're feeling, and get into this, and make a habit of it. So we're thinking of the feeling a lot of the time; and maybe it did get better because there has been an emphasis on *metta bhavana* practice quite a bit.

S: Ah.

Dharmapala: I think one of the difficulties, too, is people are out of touch with their feelings to go through the Puja that's done at a certain pace, very often the individual just can't get in touch with those different feelings while it's moving at that pace.

Buddhadasa: I'm not quite sure whether we are out of touch with our feeling or we haven't developed our feeling. I think as an Order in general, it's very low - having developed devotion. In fact there's very little devotion in the Order generally. I think this is quite striking. There seems a rather mechanical approach to the shrine, and this is manifested in the attitude that we generally have to our shrines throughout the Movement. And if you like I'll go through what we do in Brighton, because I think it's quite significant what's happening down there at the moment. It follows on from the suggestion that Bhante made when he remarked upon how nice it was to have the 'Om Mani Padme Hum' mantra chanted as he found it in Finland. So I took this up in Brighton, and I'd been unhappy for some time with the break between the end of a lecture and the start of the Puja - it was a violent jar; and I've always been keen to try and get this feeling of

devotion going. So what I do now in Brighton - and I brought this up in an Order meeting not so long ago - is to have the 'Om Mani Padme Hum' mantra chanted, during which time individual members and Friends in the shrine room can come forward and make an offering to the shrine, just putting a stick of incense in the Puja bowl and bow, and then return to their place while the chanting is going on. The first day about four people came, and now practically everybody in that shrine room comes up and makes an offering to the shrine. And the quality of the Puja has just increased about three or four hundred per cent.

And I think we should do something like this in the Order, for Order Pujas, something of a specific devotional nature. I know the whole Puja is meant to be devotional, but something to do with individual, individual action - it has (*Voices*)

_____: - to the Buddha.

Buddhadasa: I think for a start we'd have to tidy up shrines that - generally very dissatisfied with, I think they're tatty bits of rubbish for the most part.

_____: You do this before the Puja starts, or - ?

Buddhadasa: Yes. The idea is very informally, if you like, very casually, you just begin chanting the 'Om Mani Padme Hum' mantra. You can even chant it while people are still moving into their places.

S: To that little tune, you mean?

Buddhadasa: Yes, a very melodious little tune -

S: Probably not everybody knows it or has heard it,

Buddhadasa: Maybe they haven't. (*Voices.*) Maybe we could do it at a Puja some evening, while people are maybe moving their cushions around, just chanting it so it's building up and people are coming forward, putting a stick of incense in the Puja bowl in the shrine room. And this does seem to bridge that gap between the end of a lecture and the Puja, and does set the tone, a devotional tone, for the remaining Puja.

S: I must - I've been - while we're on the subject of chanting mantras, I've gathered over the last year or so that the chanting of the Padmasambhava mantra to the tune has been more or less discontinued; and I've mentioned this once or twice, but there seems to me to be a bit of resistance to starting it up.

Buddhadasa: Oh, we do it in Brighton, it's very popular.

S: But on the study seminars I came to realise why this was, and it was because, I think, it has become so mechanical and forced, and quite a few people were really put off the whole thing just by the way in which it was being chanted. And in fact it was so bad the first evening of the first seminar, I just stopped half way through; I just didn't want to join in. It was so very bad. So this is quite a serious matter. But it's a pity that things are just dropped in this way rather than asking what's happened. I think we have to make a conscious effort now in the other direction, so we have a bit more chanting to some of these tunes, and to maybe slow everything down; give ourselves a bit more time and more individual participation and involvement.

Ananda: I'm just wondering, Bhante, how much this quality, or lack of a quality, is due to the fact that we do the mantra without doing the practice,

S: I don't think that has anything to do with it at all, actually. Because, for instance, in Helsinki the Padmasambhava chanting was really beautiful; but as far as I know not a single person was doing the practice.

Ananda: It doesn't really mean much to me personally, the Avalokitesvara mantra, whereas the Tara mantra means very much more.

S: I don't think that makes really any difference.

Ananda: I feel a difference in the way it comes.

_____: Perhaps we should do more chanting in Order, just as an Order.

S: I think get it right within the Order first; and possibly more *metta*

bhavana.

_____: Within the Order?

S: Yes.

Sanghamitta: I find it easier to feel the devotion to my own shrine more than I do to other shrines. I have to be with them a time before I can have that feeling of devotion, before -

S: I personally think it makes some difference if you've contributed to the arrangement of the shrine -

Sanghamitta: Yes, it does.

S: - if you've helped build it up. Even if you've just put the flowers on the altar or arranged them there. I think it makes a difference -

(end of tape four)

Tape 5, side 1

and I think it draws attention to this whole aspect of ritual and act. And I think it's the action which is very important.

Sanghamitta: I think the first time it ever meant anything really deep to me was when we did the very long Puja last year at the Order Retreat. and it really made me feel something, and I have tried to carry that over, building the shrine. But I have a very devotional feeling towards my rupa, which I'm afraid I don't have towards all rupas.

S: Ah, now this is another quite important point. Buddhadasa referred to tacky shrines, but fortunately or unfortunately most of us, I think, can't feel genuine devotion to an image that our aesthetic sense tells us is ugly. And I think this has to be considered very much.

Sanghamitta: Our image, it's not an expensive one, but it means more to me than somebody

Aryamitra: Sanghamitta's saying you build up a certain relationship a certain kind, build up a relationship with the image. I've found this myself when I go to another shrine, it takes me a while to build up a relationship with shrine.

S: I must say, I think it was on the third of the three study seminars I noticed the shrine was particularly well looked after, and flowers seemed to be placed there and arranged and rearranged every day, and this seems to make some difference.

Chintamani: It's just occurred to me that Puja is something in which one verbally expresses something, and if one isn't putting all of oneself into the Puja, those bits that one isn't putting all of oneself into, that therefore one isn't giving recognition to, will express themselves, but negatively, so it will come over in a negative

S: Yes. I did notice, in the case of a few people in the course of the Puja and chanting on the study seminars, that they seemed to be almost deliberately pumping into their chanting what I can only describe as a very cold, black, negative energy, as though they were dumping it into the Puja - yes, quite literally. I don't exaggerate at all.

Chintamani: I know from my own experience of personal Pujas that I discovered recently that I had been, in fact, every time I started a Puja I was censoring part of myself, saying that's not acceptable to the Puja, and so it was coming over, as you said in the lecture, the repressed god becomes the devil.

S: But this really suggests that you can't get your Puja right and your devotional feelings right unless, in a way, or at least to a certain extent, you've put your whole emotional life right.

Ratnapani: And I think until that happens one should be careful to just say the Puja.

S: Ah. I think you're much better off just saying it. Don't try to put a throb into your voice, especially if you're leading; just say it. That is much better. Take it in a very low key.

Sanghamitta: Having recently listened to your tape about, and it seems to me that to hear the tape over again and try and realise the presence of the Buddha, or even This might encourage devotion

_____: I noticed on the Mitra retreat on the Bodhisattva ideal series was very inspirational, Puja

S: Well, perhaps there is a point that we should pay more attention to the life of the Buddha.

Lokamitra: Certainly I've been thinking that sometimes the Sakyamuni visualisation on retreats would help this.

Vajradaka: What Buddhadasa said about doing the chanting and the offering - what I took out of that as being one the most essential things was the act of offering, because on the European retreat, when we gave everybody the opportunity to offer incense, it made a tremendous difference, a noticeable difference, to the Puja - that everyone could participate in their own way, their own ideas, their own feelings, even; and so in a sense it made the whole proceedings part of their way of life.

Buddhadasa: I've actually emphasised this in the shrine construction, because I think so devotional attitudes will stem from the correct attitude to the shrine, and I find it a bit sad when I (a sort of general cast off) tablecloth used as a shrine cloth. To me a shrine should be specially constructed. Quite a large proportion of one's Centre income I think can be devoted to this very thing, constructing the shrine specifically as a shrine, not use a table with sawn off legs and things - and really get something done, well finished, well hemmed pieces of cloth. It does pay to appoint a keeper of the shrine - not somebody who takes the responsibility of looking after the shrine, but somebody who can ginger other people up and say, 'Come on, come and put some flowers some time. What's this, and why is this?' And our people in the shrine room in Brighton - It's very good in this respect. Friends who have only been coming along a few weeks are already bringing flowers; maybe each week five, six, seven people bring along a bunch of flowers - they know where the pots are, they know where the tap is, and they go upstairs before the shrine before the meditation, and they put their bunches of flowers on the shrine. And all this helps. It is quite essential, in fact I'd like to see this much more throughout

Don't be frightened to spend money on the shrine. Again, it's a devotional act. And if you can't get your shrine in order, nothing else will come together.

S: But there is none the less this still wider question of people's emotional life and emotional state.

Buddhadasa: I see it as a specific Order problem, because in Brighton it doesn't seem to be the case, and I think we should recognise that this is an Order difficulty and not a widespread thing.

Sanghamitta: It can sometimes I still find it It *is* a beautiful shrine in Brighton and I feel really devotional when I go but I find it much easier to sit on my own, in my own room with my shrine than I do in It may be because again the rupa in Brighton does not appeal to me as my own rupa does, because I have a relationship with that rupa. And even when I'm not very devotional sometimes I almost turn round the figure of the Buddha. So I can't Well, it happens spontaneously One can't build up that relationship in a short time I can't get that ... - you can't force it. It comes up spontaneously.

Aryamitra: Like Buddhadasa said, by making things and so forth you create this feeling -

: When you say you've got to get your emotional life right before Puja, you mean a generally positive state most of the time.

S: Because after all the basic positive emotion is metta, and if you have that metta, then when you come in contact with something like a shrine or an image, spontaneously the metta becomes faith and devotion, just as when you come in contact with people who are in difficulties the metta spontaneously becomes compassion; and when you come in contact with people who are happy and joyful, it spontaneously becomes sympathetic joy.

Chintamani: You can't feel that if you are fighting yourself, punishing yourself, and therefore not feeling metta towards yourself,

S: Yes. So I think, in addition to your efforts within the actual context of the shrine and the Puja, there must at the same time be a general working on your emotional state, an increasing emotional positivity. Otherwise, by the time you get to the shrine it may be too late. I really felt this in the course of the study seminars.

Aryamitra: I think also when you're in a situation where maybe you're supposed to be feeling devotional, you come in fact in contact with all your negativity because you haven't been doing *metta* or it becomes ten times worse, and maybe the shouting comes from almost like out of pain -

S: Yes, quite. At one time, during - I don't want to rub it in too much [Laughter] - during one of the Pujas, I forget on which particular study retreat, I was reminded of occasions in Kalimpong when I'd heard, in the middle of the night, a woman, a Nepali woman in a hut way up the hillside, shrieking out incantations to various demons to cure her children of various illnesses, and she would shriek and howl the whole night; and some of the chanting sounded rather like that, at least it reminded me of that. (*Voices.*)

Bodhisri: Bhante, how would you define that feeling of holiness very strange feeling of forced holiness. the Christian

S: Forced holiness? I'm not quite sure, because - maybe you could say a bit more clearly what you mean.

Bodhisri: A sort of Christian - a bit sad, and holy.

Vajradaka: Is that recently?

Bodhisri: Well, it doesn't apply to many but to some people.

Sanghamitta: They may be going through some particular at that time.

S: Or it may be just this lack of positive emotion. You're doing all the right things but there's no joy in it.

Ananda:I said before, that if you're not feeling devotional because you're not really feeling anything very deep.

Ratnapani: Sounds like there's such an inflation of your

_____: I wonder how many of us sit through a whole Puja with our eyes closed? I wonder if this is -

S: Even during the chanting?

_____: Yeah, like the shrine is there and sometimes the whole proceedings can be very beautiful and colourful, and there can be sort of visual beauty -

S: Oh yes, there's another point in this connection I'd like to bring up. I've noticed sometimes that people seem to prefer the Puja in virtual darkness, they have to turn out all the lights except just one or two candles; whereas personally I prefer to have all the lights on and to have everything bright. I wonder whether this is a contributing factor, this semi-darkness or almost total darkness sometimes? - to a feeling of relative gloom?

_____: And right at the end we are in the habit - maybe it is a habit - of blowing the candle out when we do the mantras, so the candle by this time I recall that [when] you, Bhante, used to do the mantras at Archway Centre you used to turn round and

S: At Centre House we used to do that. That's been quite effective. But with the lights full on, all during the Puja. But the tendency seems to be quite often nowadays, and not only in one Centre, to have as many lights as possible out, and to have the place as dark as possible, apparently, during the whole Puja.

Aryamitra: I think it's more because if you've got the shrine lit up with lots of candles it gives more of a -

S: But you don't, you usually have just one or two, and so you can hardly see even the whole shrine from the back, sometimes. It isn't as though the shrine is blazing with light; that I can understand, but it isn't like that.

Ananda: I think this is a consequence of the sort of feeling that one should simplify the shrine and not have too many things on it.

S: No, I'm referring to turning off the electric light, for instance.

Ananda: Yes, but if you turn the electric lights off you do need a lot of light on the shrine, don't you?

S: I would say it would be rather better, in view of people's present mental state and relative lack of positivity, during the Puja to have all the lights on, I mean the electric lights, and have the place brightly lit up for the Puja. I think this creates a different atmosphere. And I think our association of gloom and semi-gloom with Puja and worship might go back to some sort of Christian conditioning, even - the 'dim religious light'. You certainly don't find this in

Buddhist temples, except, say, in Tibet where there *is* very little light, sometimes, for purely natural reasons. Otherwise shrines are always well lit, with lots of big windows and the door wide open and the sunlight streaming in. Whereas it seems we've developed, in some quarters, a tendency to close the windows and turn out the lights, just have a couple of candles, and it's all very gloomy when you start your Puja. I'm sure this has some effect. I don't say that there's to be an invariable rule; it may well be that for some people, yes, you could have a Puja in semi-darkness with one or two candles, very effectively with deep devotion; but I think probably, in view of what we've been saying about lack of devotion, more light would help.

Manjuvajra: I think one thing we do in Cornwall is we turn the lights out in the place where we are, because they're neon strip lights, which are very cold. And we have a lot of candles on the shrine, and we have candles all around the room as well, which is quite -

S: Right, that's very good, too.

_____: the mantras - should there be a during the mantras or the same light all through?

S: Not necessarily. I used to turn out the light - have the lights turned out at Centre House because we had had them all on during the Puja, and just to make a contrast while we chanted the mantras, and then we had a five minutes' or ten minutes' Just Sitting at the end, and it seemed more appropriate to have that in darkness and to have it in a more meditative mood. But that isn't meant to be an invariable standard for the whole Movement ever afterwards.

: contrast to the Puja mantras contrast to the lecture

S: Well, I just wanted to end on a meditative note, or if you like a deeply meditative note, a very calm note.

:

S: But if it isn't producing that effect you should do things in a different way.

: in New Zealand Akshobya the dedication ceremony, and that they did the dedication ceremony before Puja

S: Yes, I must say this does raise a point. I've had thoughts recently that it would be a good idea if every time we have a retreat we actually dedicate the shrine. Have I mentioned this to anyone before? (*Voices.*) That is very good.

Lokamitra: It's good to do that on solitary retreats.

S: But we could consider doing it more frequently at our regular shrine, possibly once a year. Have an annual rededication of the shrine.

_____: Or maybe at the beginning of each session, -

S: Beginning of each session, that's a good idea.

Dharmapala: I'm one of the people who for the time being prefers to do the Puja with his eyes closed, as much to visualise Sakyamuni than most of the ones you see on the shrine. And I find I can be more creative with that.

S: Well, this is in a way the distinction of the material Puja and the mental Puja. If you find

that you can do the Puja mentally, well that's even better. But the main thing is that whether you do it with eyes open materially, or with eyes closed and mentally, there must be the devotional feeling.

Uttara: I think there's a tendency talking about eyes closed - that we do tend to forget, we're so involved in trying to get our own devotion ... we forget about doing it with other people, and there's a tendency we're not so aware of what they're saying and the harmony of the thing

S: Yes, I must say that when I was leading these Pujas at the study retreats I sometimes felt that people weren't in a sense aware of how I was leading, and were not responding. I might vary, quite deliberately, my chanting, sometimes lowering it a bit or being a bit softer, a bit gentler, sometimes a bit more forcible; but that wasn't reflected in the responses at all, they just went chanting on in their own way. So if someone is leading, you must be very sensitive and responsive to the way in which he or she is leading.

_____: Sort of following tones and inflections and rise and fall - ?

S: Yes, but just in an instinctive way, if you like, just because you are listening and you are sensitive. For instance, just to give you an example. I usually chant the Tara mantra in a rather different way, but on several occasions, even though I chanted it very softly and gently, I got a very loud and vigorous chant back, which showed that people weren't listening, not really listening. It almost came thundering back on some occasions.

Ananda: Isn't it that the real - what we were saying before, not so much that they weren't listening to you as they were listening to themselves? their own feelings about it.

S: Perhaps they weren't aware of how loudly they were chanting.

Sanghamitta: Bhante, could - when I do it on my own, I try, when I light the candles, to think I'm lighting the Lamp of Wisdom and the joss stick - even if some candles are lit, couldn't this be done when everybody's assembled, so that other people could think of these things?

S: Well, this is also connected with the question of your own individual offerings. Certainly on special occasions you can have everybody coming up and offering a candle, lighting a candle.

Sanghamitta: If some of the candles were lit when everyone was assembled, say the lower ones rather than the higher ones, then perhaps everybody would notice, attention would be on the shrine, and they could be saying in their own heart, 'May I light this' - which will help to bring about the devotion, if they're not feeling devotional, and even the same, when people light the joss stick, if that's done when everybody's assembled at the start of the

S: Yes, I see what you mean. In other words, if the shrine isn't got ready for you and everything done, but that you assemble and you do it.

_____: All the festivals

_____: sounds quite good.

Sanghamitta: But I think, you know, offerings and it's tremendously helpful, tremendously important to really feel the Buddha's presence, if you can, and the qualities.

S: There is something that we've also done, though it can't be done when there are too many people, or when the place is too small, and that is that everybody forms a circle round the

room and the offerings are kept ready at the side of the shrine, and then passed from hand to hand round, so that everybody shares in the offering; and then they come round to the front, where the person leading the chanting or the Puja is, and then he actually places it on the altar.

Sanghamitta: Yes, we have done that.

S: We had this at some of the early retreats.

_____: I remember once in Birmingham ... the whole shrine was built up that way, except the rupas, but everything else was to the shrine.

S: It goes round clockwise, of course.

_____: How many candles, actually ?

S: As many as you want to offer. All the offerings, all the candles, the incense sticks, vases of flowers, everything, goes round. You have, for instance, a special table to one side of the altar, where everything is kept ready, that is to say that would be on the right of the altar as you face it, and then you have a person in charge of those offerings, and when the leader of the Puja gives a little signal, then he just picks up the first offering, gives it to the person nearest him, and then he or she passes it to the next person and all the way round, till it comes to the leader, and he puts it in the correct position on the altar.

_____: Seems quite a good way to start a retreat.

: building a shrine like that and Puja.

S: Perhaps we'll have to experiment a little more in this way.

Sanghamitta: There's not enough participation of each member, and it might even help them to come together with their own feelings at the retreat itself.

Lokamitra: I can't help feeling we're getting a little bit away from the point, in a way. I think Buddhadasa's right that we've got to concentrate much more in the Order on sorting out the difficulties people have with the Puja. Then it will carry across. And although there are experiments we can do, in a way when we're emotionally right we've got everything we need, in a way, we don't need anything else. So I wonder if we could - sometimes I've got the feeling, Bhante, when you were talking about the seminars, that you were talking mainly about one or two people.

S: Well, there were certainly two or three who were far worse than everybody else. But at least three-quarters of the people on all the seminars were seriously afflicted by what I have been describing, at least three-quarters.

_____: Seems that we don't really need to know who they were, because it does affect us all -

S: I think there's no point. It's a question of -

Lokamitra: I wasn't going to suggest that, but it's a way of coping with that situation.

_____: It occurred to me this morning, we could incorporate the positive precepts into the Puja,

S: That's a good idea. (*Voices.*)

_____: I must say the passing round of the objects that one is to offer to the shrine gives you an idea also that one isn't clearly offering what one has, but it comes from somewhere -

S: Right, and goes and you just pass it on.

_____: many of them you've grown(?) or pass it on and then offer it.

S: Yes, you're not just hanging on to the things that come your way, you receive them and then you pass them on. You can apply that to everything: even the house in which you live, you receive it and after a while you pass it on. Even your children, they come along, and when they're grown up you just pass them on. You just pass everything on. (*Laughter.*)

Nagabodhi: I think a difficulty that I have had is that the words of the Puja take me by surprise (*laughter*) unless I've done some forethought. I talked on the seminar I was on about preparation I needed to do on my solitary retreat for the Confession of Faults, which was to spend time thinking of the things I wanted to confess, and actually noting them down and offering them to the shrine during the Confession. But I think in all stages if one takes some time before the Puja, just contemplating one's own language in one's own experience, the feeling of each section of the Puja, when one comes to recite it one is not going to be simply suddenly finding the words there and trying to contact that feeling in oneself, but one's already prepared it. I think that's something one can -

S: This applies to each section, doesn't it?

Aryamitra: That's probably why the Pujas are better after a discussion about Pujas or a lecture on them. I always find Pujas are much better after -

S: I was also going to suggest that perhaps we need to take more care about the selection of readings - those readings which are part of the Puja, immediately before the Heart Sutra. Be careful to have every time a really good, inspiring reading, and to have it really well read. And sometimes perhaps a poem, suitably chosen.

_____: When you say a poem - would this perhaps be - could be any poem?

S: No, I wasn't thinking of simply a good poem. I was thinking, for instance, of something like a Song of Milarepa or a Zen poem, or something of that kind.

_____:

S: Yes, right. It may well be that there are other poems which technically have nothing to do with Buddhism which would fit in. That may well be, but one has to select rather carefully.

Chintamani: This is only a suggestion off the top of my head, but it might be quite interesting for those of us who do Pujas on our own privately to either actually do it naked or to imagine yourself doing it naked, without any clothes on.

_____: Why?

Chintamani: Nothing to hide, at all.

_____: giving up even your flesh and bone, too. (*Voices.*)

S: This is occasionally done, of course, in some traditions, mainly Tantric, and climate

permitting.

_____: myself, I used to do the Puja from the shoulders upwards.

_____: Maybe you should do it standing up, too.

Chintamani: Well, whatever. These things can be

S: Even things like this should be considered, because I was reading somewhere some months ago that for the early Christians the posture of prayer was standing; for the ancient Greeks, the posture of prayer was standing. And the ancient Christians, or primitive Christians, used to pray standing and with arms outstretched, not kneeling.

_____: much more open

_____: Was this in a collective practice?

S: I don't think it was a collective practice, but certainly the Desert Fathers and others of that kind would pray in this way.

_____: pictures

Lokamitra: I would have thought a very good practice for all of us but especially for those who are very much out of touch with the Puja - the Puja is taken from *Bodhicarya*. We've studied the *Bodhicarya*, it's a wealth of - it should inspire most people with very strong devotional feelings, especially if you study it carefully. And I'd have thought this could be recommended quite widely among the Order.

S: This links up with other things which we have to discuss, including the arts, and perhaps one of the ways in which we could stimulate our sluggish devotional feelings is by more of devotional reading - not so much doctrinal things and philosophy, but the life of the Buddha in poetic form, like *The Light of Asia*, and some of the more mythic and symbolical and imaginative material, poetic material.

_____: We've been doing this more in the festivals, readings

S: Right, good. I do remember, though, one very long reading, two or three years ago, at a celebration that was really a complete failure. It was too long in the way it was read, so one must be very careful.

_____: What was that?

S: That was the reading of the *Sukhavativyuha Sutra*, which didn't come across at all well, even though it was read by Vangisa and read in a sense well, but it didn't work. Not on that occasion, anyway. Before your time? Must have been about four years ago, perhaps, or more.

Uttara: I had thought of doing a Puja similar to -people situated like praying like a choir - baritones and whatever, situation deep voices and so on, more or less a harmony

Ananda: That brings up the point of music in devotional activities.

S: Yes, anyway, we're going to come on to all that a little bit later. I think now we ought to move on to the next topic, which is Ceremonies, and then Festivals. So let's take ceremonies

first. Ceremonies other than the Sevenfold Puja. If ceremonies overlap with festivals, never mind.

I think one of our most important ceremonies is, of course, the ordination ceremony, isn't it? And those, I think, usually go off very well because after all it's a very special occasion for somebody, at least, and usually the shrine is specially decorated, and there are more flowers around than usual, and a quite happy and festive atmosphere. In a way, we ought to try and make all our Pujas like that.

Lokamitra: It would seem that, just from what you said, people only allow themselves to be happy, even jolly, on the ordination ceremony when it's supposed to be good fun. Other times it's supposed to be something else, it's supposed to be -

S: But why?

Lokamitra: I think it's just that we have yet to associate all the range of positive emotions with the spiritual life.

S: Or the spiritual life with the whole range of positive emotions. Maybe it's still some conditioning.

Manjuvajra: I think it's more than that conditioning, because in a lot of other spiritual groups you get a far more positive emotional attitude than you do in the Friends. I don't know why.

_____: Do you?

_____: I disagree.

_____: I don't know.

_____: Might have some time ago, but I don't think it does - I don't think

_____: Well, maybe Manjuvajra can.

Manjuvajra: Well, I'm just talking about various other groups like TM people, Guru Maharaji people, some other Buddhist groups, just generally people who are perhaps involved in a kind of - you might even call it pseudo-spiritual thing, but they seem more positive generally.

_____: If you call infatuation positive, you won't be positive.

_____: It produces strong devotional feeling which

Chintamani: I think that is very suspect. All the circle of very devotional movements, like Sri Chinmoy and Guru Maharaji, all that sort of

Manjuvajra: But the important point is that there is a very positive atmosphere. If you go to near where I live in Cornwall, there's a place called Paradise Farm which is run by Guru Maharaji priests, and you go there and there's a vibrant atmosphere in the place, very positive, it's fabulous. Now maybe the root of it isn't as strong as the root of Buddhism, but none the less it's still there, and it draws people, people find it a very positive area to work in. And also the people that are there, they develop in a sort of a sensible way from that positive attitude. I don't think you can disregard it.

Chintamani: I went to a Divine Light meeting in London and I went to the Guru Puja at Alexandra Palace, and there was a lot of fervour, but I found it intensely negative, a sort of mass - there was no individual positivity.

_____: particularly positive people, positive instead. Nevertheless, they do feel positive positivity that you don't have certainly in the ordinary way.

Asvajit: I would say they have enthusiasm, they put out enthusiasm, and talking about these things I noticed just now the past few minutes it occurred to me that the general tone of our voices and what we're saying is a bit negative, actually. (*Voices agreeing.*) Instead of being enthusiastic - 'What can we do? How can we improve?' - sort of a bit slow, a bit heavy, a bit negative.

Manjuvajra: I would suggest that one of the difficulties is the fact that we take our spiritual life too seriously, in a heavy, serious sort of way. Obviously, I'm not saying you shouldn't take it seriously -

Lokamitra: I don't think we take it seriously enough.

Mangala: question of Puja like we've talked about it so so many times and yet we seem to keep coming back to it every year, every meeting, every couple of months, and we still -

S: But it's clear that the potentiality is there, from the bare fact that every single ordination ceremony that we have is a happy and jolly and light, and at the same time very serious, affair. So why doesn't it happen on other occasions? Why doesn't it happen all the time?

Asvajit: People allow themselves to sink into negative states, emotionally. They don't notice it when they're speaking, they don't notice it when they are communicating with other people. There isn't a sense of positivity, lightness, enjoyment in that way. So that there isn't an awareness of the mantric quality of sound, that it conveys emotion, feeling, all the time.

Aryamitra: At ordination, you're very much in touch with just what we are and what we're doing, the Order - exactly what's happening. I myself feel incredible sympathetic joy at an ordination, whereas other times, quite often, quite the reverse. [Laughter] And -

S: On the occasion of the ordination, you're getting ordained into the Order, but other times there you are *in* the Order, so you should be even more happy -

Aryamitra: No, I'm not talking about other people's ordinations. But it's like at times like this, we're very much in touch with just what we're doing, in respect of our commitment, what we are, what we're doing, and we can feel more positive. Quite often what happens is we get stuck into ruts, or get bogged down with work and so forth, and I think this makes quite a bit of difference.

Dharmapala: I think that from what Buddhadasa and Manjuvajra have said - I agree with them contact with other groups that there is more positivity - it's something to do with how they do things together, in a harmonious way. It's very much an outgoing, sharing, and therefore really ritual sense. I think that generally it's a lot of positive

_____: I think it has something to do with our different practice - our practice is to try to keep the thing as though *we* Their practice is not to see the negative side at all, everything is just nice. They have a different practice, and they're blind to all the negative in life, on the whole.

_____: We blind to the positive more

Padmaraja: It's a very nice feeling, I've found. But there's a difference between that and a Puja, when it's truly effective, which is more than just group people but more spiritual, for want of a better word.

S: I've had recently very little contact with other groups, very little contact outside the Friends, but I can think back to my own early days, and I can remember when I was going along, say, to a Baptist church, when I was in my early teens, and certainly you might say there was a positive atmosphere there or a positive feeling. Everyone was very friendly and jolly, and they sang the well-known hymns really cheerfully. But I wouldn't say that there was a devotional feeling or sense in the sense of the word that we've been discussing. Certainly they were positive - yes, you can't deny that - but it was in a cheery way, not in any sort of deeply spiritual way. A more social way; it was certainly quite healthy and quite good, but not what we are trying to develop.

Ananda: Don't you think, Bhante, that can be regarded - the social group's positivity in that sense - as a means of getting a little bit further on, even though it might not be rooted in reality one can perhaps use it as a tool to get a bit of positivity generated?

S: Well, the coarse must come before the fine. (*Repeats it. Baffled silence.*) [Laughter] Well, that is the natural process of development, from the less refined to the more refined. (*Illumination!*) [Laughter] I think that's obvious, I think everybody agrees with that.

Asvajit: I've felt so far with this Convention - I'm being a bit negative again, I'm afraid - a lot of very coarse energy, as if people are actually rather coarse, and they haven't recognised it, or haven't accepted it, and haven't made any attempt to become a bit more refined in their practice, in their expression, in their movements.

Lokamitra: You can't be refined until you realise how wonderfully coarse you are! [Laughter]

Asvajit: Sure, yes, you have to learn to be really heavy, really strong. Why not?

Lokamitra: Strong and coarse

Abhaya(?): I feel this is one of the faults of all of us here. I feel that we just will not recognise that we have to be coarse before we are fine, and everybody - not all the time, but a lot of the time - sitting around, pretending to be a much more refined set of beings than in fact they actually are. This is what's happening. And I think part of it is because some of us have to be teachers, some of us have to give classes and lead Pujas and teach the Dharma and lead meditations, and this leads to a very dangerous position of feeling that we are in fact more refined than we are. And when we all get together, just Order members, no one from outside, [Laughter] there is this sort of feeling - well, yes, we've got to be refined, we are refined people. We've got to be much more honest and go through this coarseness, and then we can get to a better state. But I do really feel that there is a lot of this still to be expressed. I don't know whether other people -

S: Yes, in the right - not in the Puja.

_____: When we get together - that's why they're so chaotic sometimes.

Ananda: This raises quite a serious difficulty in my mind. (*General hilarity.*)

S: Just a minute, we're getting rather on with time.

(end of side one, side two)

We don't want to squash anything spontaneous, but at the same time we have to get through quite a lot of work, so make your point by all means, but I think we mustn't get into a sort of general discussion.

Ananda: if a coarse energy must be recognised, and I agree wholeheartedly with that, and then you say not in the Puja, that seems to me to create a split, and that certain energies are not going to be involved in the Puja, and that seems to be why a lot of Pujas are a little bit watery, and rather coarse.

S: I mentioned a little while ago about people pumping their black, cold, negative energy into the Puja; it's better not to do the Puja at all, and to go away and work on that.

_____: That's not the same as coarseness.

S: No; that is not the same as coarseness.

_____: Coarseness can be very positive. You can have coarse negative

S: Yes, surely, yes.

Ananda: But that's to be kept out of the Puja, you say?

S: It's harsh; it's harsh, negative energy, it's to be kept out, yes. It isn't appropriate there at all.

Ananda: I feel a bit of confusion of terms here, exactly what we mean by coarseness.

Chintamani: Well, harsh, negative energy is simply unrecognised coarseness.

S: No - no, I felt two things in these particular cases. I felt actually a lack of vitality; there is a lack of natural vitality. So things were having to be forced, because there was no flow. And also I felt - and I'm speaking now with reference to those whom I considered the worst offenders - I felt a lot of resentment, of a general nature, not specifically connected with the Puja, which had not been dealt with. So if you do the Puja with coarse energy, well that is a natural sort of energy; but in this case there was no energy, really, so therefore there had to be this forcing and pumping of energy, with great difficulty, into the Puja.

Ananda: I'm a bit surprised, Bhante, that you say in that case don't do the Puja, because that seems to be the main vehicle of transforming one's energies.

S: From coarse to fine, yes; but not if it's got so perverted and twisted as that. You need to work in a much more general way. If so many people are doing Puja and chanting in that way, it isn't a Puja; it's a sort of travesty of a Puja.

:

S: Right. You have to play entirely by ear, I think.

_____: I've felt this very strongly at some festivals, that it's been open to anybody to come along, people who were committed to be involved

S: Let's just come on to this, then, for a minute, because we're going to stop for coffee in ten minutes' time - this question of festivals, since it has come up, and I have one or two thoughts

about this. It has seemed to me more and more that festivals in this country, which is a non-Buddhist country, can't be public, in the way that they are in the East. In an Eastern Buddhist country that's got a nominally Buddhist population, which has got some devotion for Buddhism but which doesn't really concern itself with Buddhism very much most of the time, but they feel very happy to go along once or twice a year to a really big do, a big festival, and bring flowers and light candles, and they do feel genuine devotion. So you've got hundreds and thousands of them flocking in, and you can have a very positive atmosphere. But that is not the case in this country, so I think we ought to consider whether festivals should not be confined to the Order and Mitras and perhaps a few invited Friends; and not expect the general public to come, have something else for the general public if you want to involve them, if you want to involve the general public in your neighbourhood, have something entirely different on some other occasion which will be much more suitable.

Subhuti: What we found at Archway recently is that - well, we just haven't had room to open it to the public, in a way. We started with an Order celebration, then the Mitras have come in, then in the evening there's a general celebration for Friends who regularly attend the Centre. But a lot of other people do - I don't know where they come from, how they hear about it - they come, but they seem to be people who really want to come to a festival and get a great deal from it. And that seems to be quite a good arrangement.

Manjuvajra: I remember that occasion when you gave your talk. Over half had never been before.

_____: What day was that?

Manjuvajra: Dharmachakra.

Padmaraja: They're not publicly advertised?

_____: They're not advertised at all.

S: Well, if people come along spontaneously, scenting a festival in the air, fair enough.

:

S: I don't know - my mind keeps going back to those dreadful Wesaks at Caxton Hall, under the auspices of the Buddhist Society. They were well advertised, and people came along if they were connected with the society - but they were really *awful*, not a spark of joy.

_____: I think all those I've been to recently have been really good. A lot of people happen to hear about it, and they do come along - really very, very positive, and that kind of positivity is what I was talking about when I was answering Manjuvajra - there are occasions when people - it can be sensitive, it can be something in the air that's really good, and it does on festival days, sometimes it's really good if the public can just come.

_____: This started happening advertising.

S: And also it's been presumably, a neighbourhood thing.

_____: No.

S: No?

Subhuti: Well, in that there are certain communities round there, yes.

_____: we had an open day, and two people outside the Friends, from the neighbourhood, came. (*Voices.*)

S: Good. But mainly with Order members and Mitras and Friends.

Subhuti: That's the basis. And it builds up to maybe half the people we've never seen before. But they were really getting into it.

_____: And it's much better now we've restored the instead of just

S: Well, perhaps if you have a festival for yourselves, you'll start enjoying it, and because you're enjoying it other people will be attracted; but if you're laying on a festival for the public, perhaps not the same thing happens. If you have a good time yourselves, others may be attracted, because they feel that you're having a good time.

Manjuvajra: That seemed to be very prominent on Padmasambhava Day, where it's recognised that a lot of people had a connection with Padmasambhava, spiritual life in general, These things do draw a lot of Order members in, and in the evening there were a lot more people than usually came to that class that evening. There were quite a lot of people, it wasn't advertised at all. It wasn't even advertised, I believe, actually inside the Friends, to the people who normally come along. But a lot more people did come along.

S: So the moral seems pretty obvious, doesn't it? If you're positive yourself you'll draw in other people.

_____: My first contact with the Friends was through a festival, through Wesak.

S: The one at Napier Hall? Yes, I remember that. But there were criticisms afterwards from within the Friends that the chanting went on too long, and so on and so forth.

_____: Oh, it was about an hour and a half long, walking and chanting, I seem to remember. And then a Puja, really into it.

S: No time for my talk, even! (*Laughter, voices.*)

S: Anything more about festivals? - and then we can come back to ceremonies again after the coffee break.

_____: Which ones do we celebrate?

S: Well, there is a list in *Shabda* which Devaraja prepared. I have all the *Shabdas* here.

_____: That includes Padmapani's release, and -

S: Does anyone remember which (*Voices.*) - which *Shabda* it was in?

_____: February or March last year.

S: *Last year?*

_____: January of this year. (*Voices.*)

S: Yes, dead right. The calendar of festivals for 1975: Wednesday, February 26, the Buddha's Mahaparinirvana. Then April 6, Eighth Anniversary of the Founding of the FWBO. April 7, anniversary of the Founding of the WB.O. April 8, Buddha's Birthday. May 25,

Wesak, Bodhi Day. July 23, Dharmachakra Day. August 12, Padmasambhava Day. October 20, Sangha Day. And then January 7, Bodhidharma Day. And then there were additional days of importance: May 20, Tara's birth. July 13, Manjusri's Liberation. November 24, Avalokitesvara's Liberation. October 17, Vajrapani's Liberation. December 24, Bodhidharma arrives in China! (*Laughter.*)

_____: celebrating or recognition of something that I felt to be of great importance - and other people have expressed this as well - and that is the moment of leaving home, and in terms of the way, our approach to -

S: Whose moment of leaving home? The Buddha's, yes.

_____: the moment of the Buddha - Siddhartha Gautama - leaving home. It had been suggested that this should be - that it would be a good idea to celebrate that moment.

Nagabodhi: That's a very good idea.

S: It is on a full-moon day, I don't remember which one it is. It may overlap with another, later full-moon event, but we can certainly quite easily find out which full moon it was.

Lokamitra: Can we just go through these a bit? At the last Convention I think we agreed to celebrate the FWBO, the WBO Day, the Buddha's birthday, Wesak, Dharmachakra Day, and Sangha Day publicly; and then perhaps a Chinese celebration, which Bodhidharma Day was chosen, I think, after consultation with Mr. Chen. But -

S: As regards the date, you mean?

Lokamitra: Yes. I'm not quite sure, exactly. But I don't think we agreed to celebrate the Parinirvana Day, but it seems to me it's a very good thing that we do, although perhaps not as a major festival.

S: What has occurred to me is that on the Parinirvana Day we could well - though this question hasn't quite arisen yet - we could well perhaps remember Order members and Friends who are no longer with us in this world. It might be good to combine it with that.

Lokamitra: The point I was going to make was that I wonder - I think we ought to cut or we oughtn't to enlarge too much on our main festivals, like day-long festivals, because otherwise we'll have too many. And at the moment some aren't being celebrated that well, for example WBO Day was celebrated very poorly.

_____: Where?

Lokamitra: In Archway. Sorry, I should be more specific. I think there were about seven - eight of us the whole day. That was the WBO Day. So if we choose to celebrate something, we should really celebrate it, and we should decide which ones we're going to really celebrate, so that everyone is clear in their own minds -

_____: And they don't clash with retreats. (*Voices.*)

Lokamitra: And then others - perhaps Padmasambhava Day would be a specifically Order Day, usually, and Parinirvana perhaps we won't celebrate it for the whole day.

Aryamitra: The important one are the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha Days, Wesak, and the Friends and WBO Days.

Subhuti: WBO Day is Order.

Vajradaka: As far as the FWBO Day goes, there was an intimation, a movement up in Scotland, that celebration of FWBO was FWBO London, and that they wanted to celebrate FWBO Glasgow. The FWBO was founded *in* Glasgow.

Lokamitra: It wasn't the foundation of FWBO London, though, it was the foundation of *FWBO*, full stop.

_____: It happened to be in London.

_____:

S: I must add, though, that the same feeling was expressed in New Zealand.

Sanghamitta: I think it's necessary to of celebrations

Aryamitra: Well, that would be, if you're connected with a Centre, activities

Sanghamitta: Yes, but somebody might want to come up to Archway special arrangements (*Voices.*)

Subhuti: What festivals have we decided?

S: Well, let's take Wesak first, I think that's agreed upon, isn't it? May 25th.

Lokamitra: Do we call it Bodhi Day or Wesak?

Subhuti: I suggest we call it Wesak.

S: Well, what about Buddha Day? It's often called Buddha Day in India now.

_____: Vaishakha's the second best ... (*Voices.*) Better than Wesak.

S: If you think it necessary, you can put Vaishakha in in brackets, Vaishakha Purnima. Vaishakha is the Sanskrit word for the name of that month. Vesakha is the Pali form, and Wesak is the Sinhalese form. It's the full moon day of that Vaishakha, Vissakha or Wesak month.

_____: I think Buddha Day would be an English version, it's more

S: I think it's generally agreed we celebrate, and really celebrate, that. All right, let's pass on, then, rather quickly. Dharma Day, which is Dharmachakra Day.

_____: Call it Dharma Day.

S: Well, it *is* really Dharma Day.

_____: I like Dharmachakra. (*Voices.*)

S: Well, we are celebrating the Dharma, and especially the Buddha's first teaching of the Dharma, but there are doubts, as you know, about the *Dharmachakrapravartana Sutra*. We don't really know what the Buddha did say. We only know that he said something, and that something was the Dharma; and that everything else that he said subsequently was the Dharma.

_____:

S: Yes, in a very broad sense, yes; it's the teaching that he gave out, whatever that might have been.

_____: It's nice to have three days, one called Buddha Day, one called Dharma Day and one called Sangha Day.

S: Yes, that is the main consideration. (*Voices considering.*)

Mangala: I think it easier a little bit confused as to what Dharmachakra Day is, you might think

S: Well, the idea actually is that in the course of the year we have - our three main festivals are dedicated to the Three Jewels. I think this is the main thing to be stressed.

_____:

_____: What about celebrating our ordination - ?

_____: Should we finish this - ?

_____: Oh, I thought we had finished.

S: No. And then Sangha Day, which is October 20th. I may not - I'll have to look into that, I rather suspect it should be in November. I think it's best to have it four months - does that make any difference, from other practical points of view, whether we have it in October or November? I think it would be more correct to have it in November - four months -

_____: Does Dharmachakra follow close on the heels of Buddha Day?

S: Well, it has to, because it's two months after, two full-moon days after. Whereas I think it would be better if the Sangha Day was at the end of the four-month rainy season retreat rather than the three-month one, the four month one being the full one.

_____: Why is that, Bhante?

S: Well, you could either stay three months in your rains retreat or four, but four was considered, in a way, better. Then the giving of the new robes took place at the end of four months, which brings me to, which is November, roughly. That's how it's usually celebrated in India.

Lokamitra: We usually take the full moon day of October-November, so sometimes we do have it in November.

S: Hm. Well, in that case it will be all right. But we'll have to look into it a bit more closely.

Subhuti: So what are we actually saying? - that it should be four months from -

S: Well, it should be four months -

Subhuti: Four moon months.

S: Four lunar months from Dharmachakra Day.

Subhuti: And would that apply to this year? Because we have already agreed -

S: No, since we've already agreed, let it be as it is.

Asvajit: How was Padmasambhava Day decided, Bhante?

S: I think mainly because we felt him to be a generally appealing spiritual figure, and also because the majority of my own teachers belonged to that particular lineage.

Asvajit: Oh yes, I'm aware of all that; I mean that particular date.

S: Yes, that is the traditional Tibetan day for Padmasambhava, fifth day of fifth month (?).

So we've got this group, first of all, of three: Buddha Day, Dharma Day, Sangha Day, which are the three great celebrations of our year, public celebrations. Then Padmasambhava Day is also a public celebration, isn't it?

_____: No, it's been just the Order.

Subhuti: It's been somewhere between the two. Order most of the day and then in the evening it's open. Quite quiet, for some reason.

S: Fair enough. And then what about the Buddha's birthday and the Parinirvana Day, which are according to the Far Eastern calendar?

Subhuti: I think they should be a bit the same as Padmasambhava Day, during the day it should be Order and Mitras and quite quiet. On Parinirvana Day this year we played a tape, and then had a slightly more elaborate Puja. It was quite successful.

S: Good. And, of course, leading up the Buddha's birthday, we've got the anniversary of the FWBO and the anniversary of the WBO.

Subhuti: What we have been doing so far for the FWBO celebrations - well, this year

Lokamitra: It took place on Mitra Day.

S: I arrived in London that weekend, and I was there for the Order anniversary, and apparently arrangements had rather fallen through, and Lokamitra and I just hastily improvised something; and that was rather a pity, that no thought or preparation apparently had been made for the celebration of the Order anniversary.

_____:

S: Yes, but that wasn't enough. That was good enough for the retreat.

_____:

_____: Perhaps we ought to make that a major festival.

Lokamitra: Well, it is a major festival. (*Voices ruminating.*)

S: 6th April is the anniversary of the founding of the FWBO, the eighth anniversary this year, and April 7th the seventh anniversary of the WBO.

_____:

S: I think next year there has to be more discussion. It also has occurred to me that we could have those three days next year as an Order Convention, or include that time; my idea being that we should have the Order Convention around our anniversary, and next year just have three or four days, and then the year after that again have a big one like this.

Ananda: It would make it rather soon after this one, though, wouldn't it, barely six months?

S: Oh yes, that's why we're going to have a shorter one. Because this one is late; it's six months late ...

_____:

S: I'm also thinking in terms of - just as we had (time is getting on, maybe we ought to stop soon and carry on again) - but what I was thinking - that I'd like to develop a sort of pattern whereby there's a sort of concentration of study retreats, August and September, even October, which would mean that we couldn't meet at this time for an Order Convention, and have the Order Convention in the spring, say Convention in the spring and then six months later study retreats in the autumn, which means half way through the year we'd be getting together in one way or another, at least some of us. This is my rough idea.

_____: Sounds as though, season-wise, study ...

S: Anyway, perhaps we'll stop now and we can think about this during the coffee break and then express our ideas afterwards.

(Break)

S: We'd got a little bit off festivals but on to something quite important, which was the suggestion I put forward that we have our next Convention, a short one, in the early spring, about Easter, and then keep the autumn hopefully for study seminars. So could we hear how people feel about that to begin with, as briefly as possible, as a suggestion?

Manjuvajra: I've got one rather selfish point, and that is that because of the nature of the work I'm doing I have to have my holidays at certain times in the year, and I think there are quite a few Order members who are doing the same work, and if that could be borne in mind it would be greatly appreciated.

_____: Easter holidays?

Manjuvajra: Yes, we have Easter holidays, but quite often things occur just after, for example, the Order retreat after this which I would have like to have stayed to, but it goes into the beginning of term.

Lokamitra: Just one point that comes to mind is that it does if necessary and there may well be many more members or three or four members of the Order next year. If we can't use Tittleshall it'll be much, much more expensive and most of us, devoting more and more time to the work we do, can't afford very much; so cost is important to consider

Manjuvajra: There's one way that you could get round that, and this is what I was thinking of when I was thinking about organising the Convention, and that was to put up a tent, like it would be very easy

_____: You can't do it at Easter very easily, not necessarily

_____: ... three-day Convention.

Lokamitra: It's not that. You can't rely on the weather at Easter, mate.

_____: You can't rely on the weather at any time.

_____: three days -

S: No, I think we have not to get involved in discussion about the practical arrangements. I think those will have to be left to the Order Convenor. I think at the moment let's just think in terms of whether we do like that idea of the sort of distribution of the Order year, as it were, with the Convention - with next year a short one at Easter and if possible during the school holiday - with study seminars organised, as and when we do have them, in the course of the autumn.

Asvajit: Seems a natural sort of order.

Ananda: Good in principle, but I do feel it's important to bear in mind that the Convention achieves its purpose if as many people as possible are able to come on it. I think that must be the priority - the time must be chosen when most people can come.

S: Well, possibly no time of year, then, would be better than Easter.

_____: Should it be definitely Easter rather than

S: Doesn't that come during that period?

_____: No, it doesn't. (*Voices.*)

S: When is Easter next year?

_____: Easter is April 18th. (*Voices.*)

Ananda: I don't see any overriding need for it to coincide with the Buddha Day anniversary.

S: No, I wasn't suggesting Buddha Day, but the Order anniversary.

_____: I think that would be quite difficult, but maybe and may be impossible to get

S: Right, yes. Perhaps we can leave it simply at this, that we have it at Easter or early in the spring, and we can only decide exactly when when the accommodation position has been investigated; and no doubt Khema as Order Convenor or Convention Convenor will then put up a proposal.

_____:

_____: Wouldn't that be an advantage of having it in the summer different time for the retreat and the Convention?

Lokamitra: It's also a very important period, really, for retreats to happen, at the end of that term; so you'd have to have it at one end of the Easter school holidays.

Manjuvajra: I think it's very good to have it in spring, especially if it's after the winter, when you've spent a period of incubation (?) it's nice to come together

_____:

_____ : seminars ?

S: Hopefully; I'm not making any definite promise. I'm just thinking in this way that that would be a good way of distributing Order activities.

: good weather, it isn't too hot

S: All right, I think details will have to be worked out at a later stage, and people will be informed accordingly, bearing in mind all these various points that have been mentioned, and trying to ensure as many people as possible being able to gather together for the Convention.

Subhuti: I'd like to go back to a couple of points on the Puja. They are interrelated. The first one is that at least an issue when we were first investigating, trying to be quite careful about what image we were giving and the impression people were getting of the way in which ourselves and so forth. We thought that maybe it wouldn't be appropriate to use our Order names and perhaps even consider not using kesas. I have actually since changed my mind about this, but I want to raise it because several people were involved in the earlier discussion about it. Perhaps just a general principle is it's not always going to be appropriate to use those things. People do react

Ananda: You mean in a specifically teaching situation?

Subhuti: Well, just in general. We thought what the problem people would be very sensitive about anything foreign, you know, from outside, and not English.

_____ : ?

Chintamani: Yes. I'd be very - changing mind, but I'd be very cautious about anything like this, about dropping the names and dropping the use of the kesa. I think we should be thinking much more in the other direction, using the kesas more often and insisting that we use our names more often.

Subhuti: What I've since felt is that people will respond more to that than to It's a tremendous opening (?) - people asking why we changed our names and so on, why we wear kesas. It's a good excuse to

S: What about Order members in Norfolk? Have they had any experience in this connection?

Devamitra: Well, I teach my own class under my Christian name. I've never even thought of using my Order name..... any events other than Pujas and the festivals.

S: Didn't you say something once about the postman knowing that - ?

Devamitra: Oh, yes!

S: And local people knowing that you had Buddhist names and that you had made that clear?

Devamitra: We've certainly made that clear and we gave the Post Office our Christian names and our Buddhist names.

S: What reaction did you encounter?

Devamitra: Interest. Certainly not a negative reaction.

Ratnapani: I just can't imagine not using my ordained name now, I just don't answer to the other one. If the neighbours hear Devamitra yelling across the garden, 'Ratnapani, the tea's ready', I don't think they bat an eyelid. I think they just accept that that's us.

S: What I feel is that the greatest importance psychologically, especially with, for want of a better term, ordinary people, is that you yourself are full of confidence. That if you say, 'That's my name,' they don't bat an eyelid, that's your name. But if you say, 'I do have - er - a Buddhist name (*laughter*) - actually, though, if you like you can call me - George', they won't know where they are, but if you say, 'My name's Ratnapani' or 'My name's Devamitra' or 'My name's Subhuti', that's that. It's your positiveness which communicates far more.

Ratnapani: And that *is* your name, it's not an added thing which you've got, it is your name.

Ananda:, I feel that I've personally encountered not negativity but awe - the fact that this name has very definite Eastern connotations. People think, we're Indian with Indian connections or an Indian background

S: Well, so we do, in a way.

Ananda: Yes, but - and then I feel that I've got to explain, 'We're Westerners, but we're simply bringing Buddhism to the West.'

S: Well, that's good, because you've got a chance then to talk about the whole Movement.

Ananda: You don't think it's an impediment that people have this association with India and the East?

S: Well, in a sense it is, but it's absolutely unavoidable, at present. Because if you mention Buddhism - well, it's a teaching of Indian origin in a sense. But I think if they're in contact with you and they can see that you're English - as much English as they are, if not more so - they're not going to bother about the name sounding a bit oriental. There's lots of odd names around, especially in London, all sorts of names. You don't know where they come from, sometimes. They're much more odd than Ananda or Subhuti; some of them much more difficult to pronounce.

Sanghamitta: [I was] in contact recently, though, with somebody I was training. She thought that it was Indian, and Indian !

S: Well, you can't help all that sort of thing, you just have to deal with it -

Padmaraja: Subhuti, you say you recently found it more fruitful to use your Buddhist name down in Bethnal Green?

Subhuti: I think people there are quite responsive to something structured and formal and definite.

S: One thing that occurs to me is that - don't forget there you're dealing with, inverted commas, 'working-class' people, and their reactions are quite different from those of middle-class people, and it's mainly middle-class people that we've encountered so far. For instance, what about the approach of quite ordinary working-class boys and men to karate, and the strictness, the discipline, the names, the Japanese terms, the bowing? They take it absolutely in their stride. They like it. It's definite, it's positive.

Lokamitra: But you haven't used your ordained name, have you?

Subhuti: To some extent, yes, with one or two people.

Lokamitra: In what sort of situations?

Subhuti: I use it for karate..... . And I shall certainly use it more; well, I shall use it completely.

Vajradaka: So do you use it with at Bethnal Green?

Subhuti: No.

S: We had to make our initial approach - and we were very cautious about that - before they even met us, when we were corresponding.

Ratnapani: It's been the same in my contact with officials in Norfolk, it's just been obvious that I use my ordinary name.

_____: I wondered whether, when we were sending out these letters for the - what is it? these fund-raising letters, if the foreign- sounding names will have a detrimental effect on the fund-raising scene.

Lokamitra: I think there we play it by ear, so that some of us use our ordained name, some of us use our main (?maiden!) name.

S: Anyway, one more point connected with use of names, before we get back to the beaten track: the use of Order names within the Order. I think there has been a bit of criticism recently that not all Order members use their Order names within the Order. (*Voices in concern.*) Yes, this is what I have been told - that Order members talking to one another sometimes are still heard to use the old names. I've overheard this once or twice myself, I must say - Order members addressing one another by their old names. (*Murmurs.*) Well, your guess is as good as mine.

Lokamitra: I don't think it does now. It used to, and then it became just a slip of the tongue, and I don't, personally I don't find it now.

S: But has anyone noticed this happening at all? (*Voices.*)

Sanghamitta: myself because I always why I did it.

Buddhadasa: A little bit more insidious is - it's OK for a slip of the tongue - but the shortening of names. For example, one is, I know some people call you 'Dad'; the other is Vajrakumara sometimes people call Vajra. (*Laughter.*)

_____: I think more often than not, in my experience, that's like an affectionate -

Buddhadasa: Well, you can call me Buddha any time you like! (*Remarks; laughter.*)

Jitari: You call me 'jittery' and you see what happens. [*Laughter*]

_____: something that has a relationship to the original word - name.

Ratnapani: I put this to Bhante some months ago, Devamitra and I spoke to him and he said (if one may use your words) more or less that it's OK if the abbreviation makes up a complete word, like 'Vajra' is a word - 'Vajji' actually is a bit different. a complete term -

S: I do think at the same time that the complete name is better, but if the abbreviation is a complete word it isn't so objectionable.

Sanghamitta: And if you don't mind, I'd like to hear Bhante called Bhante and not 'Bunty'!

S: If you want to be very correct, it's (*pronouncing very distinctly*) B H A N T E . Almost everybody misses that aspirate.

Sanghamitta: I think you used to get 'Bunty', comic

Bodhisri: so you have to stop that and But if you could sort of abbreviate or make them indistinguishable it would be all right.

S: You could possibly do what the Tibetans have done and translate the name. For instance, the Tibetans wouldn't call someone Vajra, they'd call him Dorje - *dorje* is the Tibetan translation for Vajra.

Bodhisri: There is a Finnish word for - very similar to *vajra* that means hammer. It's

S: I don't think we'd better call Vajrabodhi that. Somebody else might be the nail!
[Laughter]

_____: It goes very deep, though, the hammer of Thor

S: I've even been wondering about Celtic names. But I've been looking through Celtic myth and legend, but names of most Celtic heroes and heroines have got most unfortunate associations; they do all sorts of horrific things in these legends, so the associations aren't always very positive.

Ananda: In the future, Bhante, do you think the Indian associations of the Order will continue to be significant in terms of names and things like that?

S: I'm not sure what you mean by significant.

Ananda: Well, do you think we'll continue to - that you, as a specific, will continue to give people Indian names?

S: Well, I've only got another 20 or 30 years to go. It'll be decided maybe hundreds of years after that; I don't know. It will be up to you or the generation after you.

Ananda: Have you any particular feeling about what the trend should be?

S: I think it's much more likely that Indian names will become naturalised. What about the so-called Christian names? Nobody feels George and John as foreign any more, but they're not British. What is British, anyway?

Anyway, a few words perhaps on the question of kesas. Has anyone observed any irregularity in the matter of kesas?

Sanghamitta: They're still dirty sometimes.

S: I think the main point that I made originally was that kesas should always be worn for Pujas, and on those occasions where Order members need to be identified by members of the public, and if people feel like wearing their kesas for their own personal meditation and Puja that's up to them. And also when they as it were represent the Order, when they hold the

Convention, when they (*noise*)

(*end of tape 5*)

Tape 6, side 1

if they are giving public and are speaking as a member of the Order, then they should wear their kesa.

Sanghamitta: I think it's very important, if they are wearing it as members of the Order, that they should be clean, because if somebody asks you what it is,it's not very
(*laughter*)

_____ : I think that should apply whether you're outside the Movement or within it.

Sanghamitta: Yes, especially outside, because we can tell one another off inside, it's rather difficult outside, isn't it? It gives a sort of hippy impression or something.

Asvajit: if you see a Order member wearing a really filthy kesa and lots of other -

S: I think the point is taken that the kesa should be clean. And if your kesa is grubby and can't be washed, then replace it.

Dharmapala: The kesa itself has been drawn from an Eastern tradition as far as I know, and I presume everything about it has a significance. What I often see is the cord that's on the bottom of it - this is very often plaited and people tie little knots in it, things like that, do you feel that that is ?

S: No, I think it should be uniform. Gotami made a standard pattern originally, and as far as I know that is the one that we are following, or should be following. That's the one I took to Zena(?)'s? copy

_____ : embroidery, it's gold thread or something like that, is that ?

S: We experimented with that gold, metallic thread in the early days. It was found very difficult to manipulate, so therefore we got the nearest that we could in silk thread, and you can't always get exactly the same shade, unfortunately. But this is why the colour of that yellow silk does vary a bit from kesa to kesa sometimes.

Sanghamitta: I think the knots in the cord somewhere right down here, two knots in it -

S: I was given one in New Zealand, one I took up, that the cord hung right down to somebody's knees! [Laughter] - just that one, so I got somebody in Auckland to shorten it. I don't know who made that one.

Sanghamitta No, well, mine's like that, I had to put two knots in -

: mine

Sanghamitta: Oughtn't we to make it a standard size?

S: Well, yes, Gotami has worked out or given the standard specifications, and those are the ones which should be followed. Are copies of those specifications in circulation? Well, we

should just follow those carefully.

Asvajit: You can also get exactly the same colour, even in New Zealand. (*Voices.*)

_____: Maybe the whole should be published in *Shabda* again so you can circulate
.....

S: That's a good idea, yes.

_____: So there's no question about it.

_____:instituted a kind of practice, almost -

S: Right, yes.

Ananda: Well, why not issue complete instructions for making the kesa in *Shabda*?

S: I think that's a good idea. (*Voices.*) Well, that pattern must be communicated to them, and they shouldn't be allowed to make kesas without the proper pattern.

Marichi: People put knots in them because they're different heights. Tall people don't need to put as many knots in them as short people.

Subhuti: No, I think that's because kesas have increased in width, for instance, by about an inch since - my kesa's very narrow. They're gradually getting wider and wider.

S: Well, let the original standard specifications be printed in *Shabda*, and let's make sure that we stick to those. Anyway, let's not spend any more time on that. We have to get back to festivals and to Bodhidharma Day. What do we say about that?

Subhuti: I've still got one more point arising out of this, which is the Puja itself. It's often seemed to me that without quite a bit of explanation or quite a bit of uncritical openness on the part of those partaking in the Puja, it's not very explicit. There are things in it which aren't very clear, and even quite misleading, and for all that we say -

S: You mean the words of the Puja?

Subhuti: The words of the Puja. For all that we say we're not worshipping an external deity and there's no evil in Buddhism and so forth, this can come across if you don't understand the Puja. I think it time that we really thought about having a much more explicit simplified version of the Puja, and I am thinking in particular Bethnal Green.

S: As a matter of fact, we did have a discussion about this in Helsinki, didn't we? And some of the Friends who were attending there, one in particular, felt that the Sevenfold Puja should not just be available to the public: from his point of view, more particularly because certain sentiments were expressed which could not genuinely be the sentiments of someone who was not really devoted or even committed to Buddhism. So I thought about it, and I said I thought that very likely there should be a sort of very simple Puja for more general and public use, which didn't contain any problematical material, just express simple devotion.

_____: Would you include the Heart Sutra?

S: I think so, yes; I mean I think that I'd include it in those reservations - that it is in a sense nonsense to the average person who just comes along for the first time, or even the tenth time.

_____: What about Going for Refuge?

S: This again is the path of regular steps that I've been thinking about quite a lot. I have been - there's much to be said about this, from several points of view, but I have been thinking we must apply the path of regular steps more strictly, and perhaps have, for more general use when there'll be newcomers around, a Puja which simply expresses respect for the Buddha as teacher explicitly, and then (*aircraft noise*)

Sanghamitta:?

S: Well, I'm thinking especially of a new Puja for more general public use, keeping the Sevenfold Puja within the Order, mainly, and having -

_____: the things that you suggest ?

S: For instance, my idea is - these are just tentative, but my idea is that when people assemble those who wish should have the opportunity of offering a stick of incense, lighting a candle, and maybe giving a flower. And then there should be simple verses recited by the leader - first of all, expressing general devotion to or respect for the Buddha as Enlightened human teacher, and then saying that we offer these flowers which remind us of the impermanence of all mundane things, and therefore remind us to fix our minds on higher things - something of this nature. And then we offer the light which symbolises the Light of Truth which we aspire to kindle in our own hearts; and then that we light this stick of incense or offer this stick of incense, which represents the fragrance of the positive life expanding in all directions. And then after that there can be a suitable reading, perhaps even a quite lengthy one, and then the chanting, to a musical tune, of, say, the Avalokitesvara mantra. I think for general use something like this.

Bodhisri: translate

S: Yes, I think I'd have to think about it myself and talk to a few other people. There are traditional Pali verses which could be adapted, which express exactly these sort of things. So what do you think of this? (*Murmurs of approval.*)

Sanghamitta: I think it would make it more meaningful to the public. I'm sure a lot of it they don't understand, and -

S: And it would, of course, all be in English.

_____: It would lead on to -

S: But if anybody feels like writing some verses of this kind, by all means do so, and just send them along to me and then we'll all discuss them.

_____: I think Gotami's been producing some

S: Well, if she has I'm sure she'll let us know in due course.

_____: But I don't think would be suitable

S: That's different, that's a place for the Sevenfold Puja.

_____: Could you just which Pali verses..... did you have in mind?

S: Let me just think. *Puja*(*chants briefly in Pali*) - verses like that, I'm not going to recite them all but I can tell you where to find them. There is a little book called *The Mirror of the Dharma*, which is published in Ceylon. I think you can get copies from the Vihara. We've got copies, I think, at Aryatara, or did have. *The Mirror of the Dharma* They can be very freely adapted, and the words must be suitable and poetic in way.

Vajradaka: Does *The Mirror of the Dharma* contain verses in English?

S: The verses are all in Pali, with an English translation. But the English translation will need adaptation. Even if one produces verses of one's own of the same kind, that's fine. These particular verses aren't sacrosanct. They were composed by monks at different times.

_____: Do you think lines like 'The evil which I have heaped up' - do you think it would be more appropriate to have 'The faults which I have heaped up', bearing in mind that the title of that particular section is the Confession of Faults?

S: I think 'the evil which you have heaped up' is unskilfulness of body, speech and mind which is now catching up with you.

_____: The actual term 'evil' the actual word 'evil'.

_____: It's a bit like - I was wondering if it was a bit like 'the mistakes I've'

S: The difficulty with English is either the word is too strong or it's too weak. 'Faults' is a bit weak, actually, really; 'Confession of Faults' - you're really confessing much more than your faults. If you only had faults, you'd be a pretty advanced sort of person, but it's much worse than that, really.

Ratnapani: The new Puja would take care of that, wouldn't it, if there is a new Puja, because we understand 'evil'?

S: Yes, we understand, yes, right.

_____:

S: I'm sure we do. By long acquaintance.

Manjuvajra: Yes, indeed. It's a good opportunity to use the Puja as a sort of basis for a study group. I've done that in Truro and found it really useful, and maybe even just one section a week.

S: Is that all about Puja?

Uttara: I think there should be a morning - a morning Puja, not the Sevenfold Puja but an actual something different.

_____: There's the *Tiratana Vandana* English version.

_____: We finish morning meditations at the Centre with the Puja, and that's -

S: I think there is something to be said for a morning Puja in the sense of a Puja which is recited only in the morning, and utilises the symbolical associations of morning and the rising of the sun and the spreading of light. There are some verses of this nature; I'll try to look them up and see if I can produce anything.

Dharmapala: Did you say it neutralises the symbolical associations?

S: Utilises. (*Voices:* Utilises. Utilises.) Makes use of.

_____: Are we talking about ceremonies at the moment?

S: At the moment, we are, though we've got to come back to festivals quite quickly.

_____: There's something that has not yet as far as I'm aware happened in the Order yet, but there seems to be in process to some of those whom we know, and that is a death. I was wondering whether or not we had any - I know I don't have any real clear idea of the procedure that we have to set up for that. I was thinking maybe some -

S: I have explained this and I'm going to explain it again to Jinamata, because there has been a death, not within the Order but certainly of a Friend, someone known to quite a few people, it seems, and there is going to be, I believe, a ceremony for that person. And Jinamata, I believe - I'm not completely certain - is going to conduct it I understand she wants to get together with me about it. I did give a few notes to Lokamitra, but she wants even further clarification. There is a standard procedure. I think I just can't go into it now, because there isn't simply time, but perhaps - what we really need, I think, is - this question has been raised before - an Order Puja book, containing all ceremonies that an Order member may be called upon to perform, the text of them, with directions.

_____: I was wondering whether or not - what the law is regarding a dead person, whether there could be any kind of ceremony with the deceased there.

S: The law is, as far as I know, that the last word as regards the kind of ceremonies rests with the next of kin - unfortunately, but this is the law. If the next of kin want you, even though you're an Order member, or have been, to be buried with full Church of England rites, there's nothing that the Order can do about it. But there's nothing to prevent the Order after, say, seven days, or whatever the period might be, from having its own memorial service; but the disposal of the body will be in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin, so even if you leave written instructions, these can be disregarded.

_____: Could an agreement be reached with one's next of kin? I mean, for example, can one say who one's next of kin is?

S: As far as I know in law it has to be either husband or wife or close blood relations like mother, father, brother, sister.

Sanghamitta: Or they have to state in their will something that they want, don't they?

S: That can be set aside by the next of kin. The only way you can get round it is by making it conditional, say, in this way, that you leave them such-and-such sum of money but on condition that they dispose of you in such-and-such a way. But if you haven't got anything to leave, well.

_____: I've already asked my brother if he would ask a real Buddhist

S: But whatever request one may leave, it can be set aside, because there was an instance of this in the case of a friend of mine, who left written instructions that he should have a Buddhist funeral and that I should conduct it, and that was set aside by his parents, who gave him a Church of England funeral and buried him.

_____ : It seems that what may happen is that in one of our Buddhist communities, one of the Order communities, even, someone may die, maybe even in the community, and very quickly rushes off to the morgue, with all sorts of things go on there, I've heard, that are just quite horrible - you know, there's no reverence shown to the deceased, it's really treating them in an awful way, just like so much rubbish.

S: Well, you can delay your notification - I'm not quite sure what the law is, but I think you have to notify the police, in the case of a death quite -

_____ : Perhaps these are things that the communities themselves, or certain Centres themselves, certain communities, important point because it's something that can really be a very enriching thing -

S: But I think from the legal point of view we'd have to ask someone to look into this.

Sanghamitta: Can I just clarify something? I felt very strongly about when Ali died, I'd just like to have five minutes to explain that we're making an offering for a friend of the Western Buddhist Order, so that other people know that we are allowed to just what we do in

S: I'm not quite sure what you're referring to.

Sanghamitta: Well, when Ali died,

S: Ali is the Friend who died in India?

Sanghamitta: Yes, that's right. And I wanted to I rang up and said I wanted to make an offering stop them doing that, but I wanted the people of Brighton to know why we are doing it -

S: Why it was being done in Archway, you mean?

Sanghamitta: No, at Archway, but also we could think about Ali in Brighton. And all then is giving more power of thought and sending out metta to Ali,lost contact and didn't agree with it, and I think they didn't also appreciate that I had got quite a deep affection for Ali, and I would have liked to have done this, and I think there should be room for spontaneous gestures of this kind People come into the Friends know what we do

S: I'm not quite sure what you're trying to say or to ask.

Sanghamitta: Well, you know, the people who come to the Brighton meetings, nobody's ever died there, and nothing has therefore been done. If I had just explained that we were making an offering for a Friend of mine who was a Friend of the Western Buddhist Order.

S: Well, I don't see why you shouldn't have been able to do so, or if you wanted to.

Sanghamitta: Yes, but their powers of thought going as well.

S: Well, why didn't you arrange it in Brighton, then?

Sanghamitta: Well, I wanted to, but I was - you know - stopped from doing it.

S: But who stopped you?

Sanghamitta: Well, Buddhadasa got on the phone, and apparently London, and they said no.

S: But London's got nothing to do with it.

Sanghamitta: Archway said it was enough we were doing a memorial service.

S: OK, well you just find out the time and you do what you want to do at the same time. Meditate.

_____: There's nothing to stop you doing it on your own.

Sanghamitta: Yes,(noise) Brighton.

Buddhadasa: I told her it was something that we couldn't introduce at the normal regular business, because this would set a precedent. Nobody invited you - Ali ? Nobody [I said] I'll ring up London and see what they think. I talked to Subhuti on the phone, he said it's not really that important that you do it in Brighton, because we're doing one up here in London, a proper one, to celebrate If we have somebody popping off in Brighton we'll give them the full treatment. But until that happens - you know - But there's nothing to stop you making a personal offering to the shrine.

Sanghamitta: Yes, I did that, but I also said something to let the people know that *their* power of thought could go out -

S: Yes, but I don't think that would be very meaningful when they didn't know her.

_____: And also you might encourage a sort of indulgence there, which

_____: people in hospitals in Brighton are dying, or -

Sanghamitta: Well, no, it was a Friend of the Western Buddhist Order.

S: No, it was not as though it was a friend of somebody - I didn't even know her myself, I'd never met her. But those who knew her in London I know very much wanted to do something, so therefore they did it. But I don't know whether it would have been very meaningful to ask people in Brighton who'd never heard of her before to suddenly do that. In your case, it's fine that you did it, because you knew her and you felt something, but I think that's quite enough.

Sanghamitta: Well, I was going to, as I say, in a very short time explain that she had gone out to India and -

S: I don't see the point of it, for people who didn't know her.

Sanghamitta: I was going to get their thoughts going -

S: But they didn't know her, so I don't think there would have been much point in it.

Sanghamitta: Do we have to know anybody - it's a difficult field(?), I

S: Well, if you feel you can do something, even without knowing the person, fine, but I think the majority of people, being asked to direct their thoughts to someone they'd never seen and never heard of before, they wouldn't have known where they were, sort of thing; they'd have

felt it all rather unreal.

Sanghamitta: Yes, I suppose I was wanting them to know that we have a way of recognising this in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.

S: It's good that they should know that, but I think the time and place to explain it has to be chosen quite carefully.

Lokamitra: It will come sooner or later.

S: Yes, it will come sooner or later. I certainly feel that we should do whatever is needed for everybody who dies, but I think - I'm not even sure whether this has been held now already in - (*Voices.*)

Sanghamitta: I didn't know about that and I felt that something might be done about people who are interested, what it is that we think of

S: I think if it isn't someone who was known to the people in Brighton there's not really much point in asking them to participate.

Sanghamitta: Right, thank you.

S: Can we come back to Bodhidharma? I'm afraid we're not even half way through our subjects.

: (*murmuring*)..... we could leave for Saturday,

S: Let's see how we get on. We can only do a bit at a time. All right, Bodhidharma Day; have we celebrated it, or did we celebrate it? (*Voices.*)

_____: Vessantara gave a short talk.

_____: On Bodhidharma?

Lokamitra: About 20 minutes long. (*Voices.*)

S: Was that a public celebration?

Lokamitra: It was on a Tuesday night, it wasn't advertised specially; it was our regular main night of the week.

_____: He just gave a short talk and we did a Puja, and that was it.

S: Well, Bodhidharma's association is definitely with the Ch'an or Zen tradition, so I think if we celebrate Bodhidharma Day, presumably it is with the intention of drawing some attention to that particular tradition and its importance historically, and presumably to some extent for us also. Was anything like that done, does anyone remember?

_____: He did in his talk about Bodhidharma ... Chinese It wasn't so much a celebration

S: Do you think people have as strong a feeling for Bodhidharma as, say, many of them have for Padmasambhava - or perhaps Hotei, even?

Voices: No.

Dharmapala: more in karate circles and things like that there'd be more feeling for him (*Voices.*)

Subhuti: He's one of the leading figures of Buddhism, I think he ought to become somebody we have strong feelings for.

_____: There are lots of leading figures in Buddhism, though. Hundreds, say.

Ratnapani: He is particularly significant to us, inasmuch as there seem to be parallels between what happened in China and what is happening here.

_____: He kept China and Japan quiet - tremendous

Lokamitra: Yes, but so did lots of other people.

_____: Who?

Lokamitra: Well, there was - er - (*laughter*)

S: Well, no, the general principle is: how do we select leading figures from Buddhist history whom we want to celebrate? Well, we could celebrate Ashoka; what about Yuan Chuan? What about Nagarjuna? What about Milarepa? What about Dogen? You see - we'd like to celebrate them all, but it is rather difficult.

_____: doesn't concern us very much we can't practise

_____: Certainly doesn't have the impact that Padmasambhava does.

Asvajit: I think, on the other hand, it would be a very good thing if somehow or other we incorporated into our Movement recognition of the East. We've got recognition of as it were the West.

Lokamitra: This will come up in our three main festivals, surely. There will be references to the East all the time: the Buddha, his life, his teaching; the Sangha.

S: Padmasambhava.

Asvajit: Yes. I associate this all very much with the West, strange to say. Whereas Bodhidharma I think of as particularly Eastern.

S: Well, Bodhidharma was an Indian.

Asvajit: Yes, but then he went eastwards.

Uttara: like if we're celebrating the three main festivals, and we're celebrating Padmasambhava, so I think that gives the Friends a flavour of the Tibetan, but if you celebrate Bodhidharma then you're bringing up also

S: Yes, I think this is also important. Though I would personally say that if we celebrated any figure from the Far East, from China, I personally think it should be Chih-i, the T'ien-t'ai patriarch, who is of much more general importance and significance, and whose tradition is much closer to everything that we're trying to do. I think that the main idea seems to be that

we celebrate the festivals of those figures who are not only very important in their own right in the East, but also stand for the major traditions of Buddhism. In the case of Padmasambhava, it's not only Tibetan Buddhism, it's definitely the whole Tantric component. In the case of Chi-i, it's very definitely Chinese Mahayana, and he is of the greatest importance for the whole of Far Eastern Buddhism, including even Ch'an or Zen, because a great deal of Ch'an teaching and instruction was given at T'ien-t'ai monasteries.

But the whole thing requires very careful study. There are some very heroic Buddhists, very historical characters like Yuan Chuan, whose lives are very inspiring. There's Atisha also.

Ratnapani: Bodhidharma seems to have been a bit of a myth, as far as one can make out.

S: According to some scholars, he is a myth. We know hardly anything about him; we've got hardly any detail.

Ratnapani: There's no material for celebration

S: Well, Padmasambhava seems to have assumed a sort of archetypal significance in a way that Bodhidharma apparently hasn't.

Subhuti: As it is, though, we've got - the festivals we do celebrate cover the Four Refuges.

S: That's true, Padmasambhava is the guru.

Lokamitra: But I wonder what relevance there is to the Friends, certainly, for celebrating other teachers. Certainly we try and keep Padmasambhava to the Order. And maybe we should celebrate great figures within the Order, but personally I don't feel myself drawn to do that yet, until I've got much more understanding of their place in Buddhism. But at general festivals, I just don't see the point at all. Let's establish the main festivals, and get people celebrating those first.

_____: The main thing is Mitras. (?)

S: Week? (?) (*Laughter.*)

_____: I'd like to that we put more into less.

Ratnapani: In the meantime, though, it seems as though your choice of Chih-i is something could be - I don't know, it's Devaraja's department - if could be sorted out so that we have got something to work on when we do wish to expand and do wish to include further implications for

S: Perhaps a bit of study has to precede all this. I have located recently a Life of Ch'i-I published in some oriental magazine quite long ago, and I'm trying to get hold of a copy of this. But he is a historical personage. But perhaps you'd better leave that now. We haven't said anything about those additional days.

Lokamitra: Just before we get on to those, Bhante, it was suggested that we celebrate the Buddha's leaving home. Nothing was decided on that.

S: Ah. We have to try to find out on which particular full-moon day that was.

Lokamitra: And then we should do it perhaps on the scale of the Parinirvana and the Buddha's birthday - like, say, a lecture or something like this which is relevant or -

_____: (Voices.)

S: Anyway, I think Devaraja's idea in selecting these other additional dates is, inasmuch as the four - Tara, Manjusri, Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, are the four great Bodhisattvas, and many people are doing their particular practice. But I think this should be left as a more private sort of thing.

_____: I'd like to still have those envisaged

Lokamitra: Can we get - I understood that these dates are taken from the nearest equivalent in the Chinese calendar, and if we're going to have them let's have them from the Tibetan calendar, surely?

S: Well, we could have quite a number of anniversaries just for Order members' individual information, in addition to those that are going to be publicly celebrated, or celebrated within the Order. There's no reason why we shouldn't have as much information as possible.

Lokamitra: One other short one on festivals, Bhante: just something you said at the last Convention - we should all of us encourage each other to take days off for them, days off work. Sometimes this really isn't possible, but it's not happening very much - at the moment. (*laughter.*)

_____: A few months off!

Lokamitra: Well at festivals; it doesn't happen on even the main festivals, Wesak Day, Dharmachakra Day and Sangha Day.

Dharmapala: This was quite covered when we were talking about the legal situation, in that it does seem that it's a matter for the individual and his employer.

Subhuti: point Lokamitra's making here is that individuals ought to go to their employer and ask for the day off. It's not a matter of legality or how you arrange it, but simply one should go on and do it.

Manjuvajra: I don't think you should adopt that attitude. Surely it's up to the individual Order members to choose whether they should do -

Subhuti: A reminder is in order,

Vajradaka: Right, because people just may not think of it themselves.

_____:

Vajradaka: But at least you have thought it out.

Ananda: You've also got to give consideration if you're in this sort of situation in a job, where other people might be inconvenienced. You've got to give that You can't just say 'I'm a Buddhist, I've got to celebrate my festival.'

Marichi:that particular time you can make preparation for it, and make that part of the preparation,

Lokamitra: I would encourage everyone to take off Wesak! It's the most important day in our calendar, it's a time when all of us should come together wherever we are. You know when it is - at the beginning of the year you have three or four months' notice, so you can save

any trouble at work or anything then, and you miss a day's pay, maybe; but I'd encourage every Buddhist, every member of the Order, to take the day off and celebrate it with other Order members, and I think it's a pretty bad show that lots of people don't!

Asvajit: Hear, hear.

S: Hear, hear. (*Talk, laughter.*) All right, can we now get back if necessary - if anyone has anything further to say about ceremonies? This is a quite important aspect of the Order's functions.

Vajradaka: I think that someone should say that they are going to put together an Order Puja book, certainly just chants, with the cremation ceremony, the memorial cremation ceremony, the blessing, the , and things like that.

S: A few select readings, so that one doesn't always have to go searching through books.

Lokamitra: Could we have, like the Register, a loose-leaf book so that any new information could be added, any relevant stuff could be added quite easily? And then it doesn't all have to be done at one time; when something comes up or when someone does something, it can then be distributed -

Subhuti: This is quite an important point, but rather than just one person take responsibility for it then discuss it with others

S: I think it will have to be done by two people; I think the best way might be for Devamitra and me to do it together. What do you say? Because I think I have to give my attention to this, but at the same time I think I'll need quite a bit of help, gathering the material and getting it typed and all that; so I think it might be best if we produced something.

Any further points anyone would like to make about the actual performance of ceremonies, any difficulty encountered, any comments?

Subhuti: There's a thought - I should like to see the five lay precepts introduced at Mitra ceremonies. We don't really seem to have anything official where they are introduced. You go straight from just reciting them at the Puja to the Ten Precepts.

S: The great doubt in my mind is about the Refuges, that is to say having the Refuges recited by those who don't actually commit themselves. And usually Precepts go with Refuges.

Ananda: Is that fundamental? Could one not take it upon oneself as a preparation for Taking Refuge?

S: One could do that, yes. It isn't usual in the Buddhist world, simply because everybody is Buddhist, so everyone recites the Refuges. But certainly in many passages in the scriptures precepts are mentioned as being propagated by pious kings, without any reference to the Refuges. So it might well be that we could introduce the Precepts without the Refuges, as a sort of general preparation. But they'd have to be - one of the things I feel very strongly about is that whatever we take upon ourselves within the Western Buddhist Order, we must really observe it. We don't want to get into a situation which they have got into in the East where they've got lots and lots of rules and precepts which nobody ever observes, or very few people ever observe. So, for instance, the Five Precepts include abstention from intoxicants: are you going to ask all Mitras to give up intoxicants? Otherwise there's no point in asking them to take that precept. And then, if you are going to ask your Mitras to give up intoxicants, what about you, as an *upasaka*, because that is not part of the Ten Precepts and you are not required as an *upasaka* or *upasika* to be a total abstainer; so are you going to ask your Mitras

to be total abstainers? So what do we do about the Five Precepts?

_____: Does it *mean* total abstention? Because it says awareness

S: Yes, the general interpretation always has been total abstention; but the Sarvastivadins, or at least a section of the Sarvastivadins, did not agree with that, and they held that the precept ... abstention from that amount of liquor which you found from experience disturbed your mental state and your mantra.

_____: So how are Order members ?

S: So as regards Order members, without there actually being a precept that we actually take, we don't ask people to be total abstainers, but we certainly do ask them not to take more than they know they really can. But I think also we find that as people become more sensitive and more experienced in meditation it becomes quite difficult to take very much

Sanghamitta: If the Refuges shouldn't be recited by Mitras, should they then be at ordinary meetings, ... ?

S: Well, this is the point. If we don't have the Sevenfold Puja, if we have this new simplified Puja, the question won't arise.

_____: Except we do them at the beginning of our class.

Sanghamitta: Yes, we

S: No, that is not Going for Refuge, that is Salutation. And you can certainly salute the Buddha and respect the Buddha, you're not Going for Refuge.

_____: You mean the *Ti Ratana Vandana*?

S: Ah, no, sorry, I thought you meant the *Namo Buddhaya, Namō Dharmaya* -

_____: Then the precepts after that - (*Chat.*)

Chintamani: Otherwise, someone outside of the Order won't as it were technically be able to say that they've Gone for Refuge to it because they recite the Puja, and that's what they can say now, so that someone outside of the Order, a Mitra or a Friend, can do the Puja and they can say they've Gone for Refuge -

S: Yes. But there is a difference between just joining in a general chanting, even of the Refuges, and as an individual on a certain occasion repeating the Refuges after a teacher for you individually, with the full intention of you Going for Refuge and committing yourself in that particular way.

(*end of side one side two*)

That is rather different. I think it's not easy to draw a line of distinction; I'm still wondering about it, but I feel the general tendency should be upgrading and Path of Regular Steps.

Dharmapala: (*noise*) come across the Precepts Five Precepts. Why is it that we no longer include that in precepts, ?

S: I don't quite follow.

Dharmapala: Well, why do we drop that if it's one of the Five Precepts?

S: When?

Dharmapala: When we take our Refuges properly and get the Ten Precepts.

S: It isn't anything dropped. It is the tradition that the ten *kusaladhammas*, or Ten Precepts as we say, did not include the fifth precept of the Five. This is quite traditional from the beginning.

Ananda: In a sense, Bhante, in that they include the mental states -

S: Well, no, a precept as a precept is explicit, it refers to an actual action.

Ananda: Yes, but if you take the Ten Precepts, you are taking upon yourself skilful mental states which would be disrupted by -

S: Well, in that case you could just take one precept and regard everything as included in that. No, what it seems happened was there was a group of four originally, the first four precepts, and there were two developments - adding a fifth one, and then extending to ten to cover body, speech and mind. And in the Suttas we mostly find the Ten rather than the Five. Anyway, let's not go too much into detail, because we are already over time.

I think what we have to do is, we have to get out - for the time being we have to continue as we have been going on, but I think when we get out this simplified Puja we gradually start introducing this at more general functions, when there are members of the public present and just ordinary Friends, and gradually reserve the Sevenfold Puja, including the Refuges and Ten Precepts, for specifically Order occasions. If some Mitras are there, well, no harm; I don't think we can be absolutely strict and rigid, in fact shouldn't be. If some Mitras are there also, even join in, OK, they do it as it were by anticipation; they are not actually Going for Refuge, but they are as it were just flexing their muscles, as regards the Going for Refuge.

_____: ?

S: Oh yes, you can't avoid that. But it should be perhaps more clearly understood that you Go for Refuge in the full and real sense only when it is as it were - I don't like the word official, but when it's done ritually, and when a particular teacher accepts you or recognises you as Going for Refuge, and you do it with that full and complete intention in that open and public manner.

_____: In the meantime, is there any value that we gain from dropping the what are at present the concluding mantras?

S: For the present, carry on, and we'll think about that later. But I think the general principle will be that we gradually apply the Path of Regular Steps more and more. There will, I think, never be any objection to the singing as it were of the Avalokitesvara mantra and so on, even quite publicly, inasmuch as this is the mantra of the Bodhisattva of Compassion and no restriction at all need be observed, whether people are Buddhists or non-Buddhists and so on. If they like to join in the chanting and singing, that's fine.

_____: And Sakyamuni?

S: And Sakyamuni as well. And Padmasambhava.

Lokamitra: You're suggesting that even eventually we keep the Puja away from Mitras, as it were?

S: I think with Mitras we need not be too bothered, because they are on their way already.

_____: It's part of their preparation

Devamitra: In that case, would there be any objection to, say, a gathering of the Order with one or two Mitras present Puja?

S: I feel we're getting a bit technical, but probably we have to. I would prefer that that situation was avoided.

: Order Puja book, which are the things which are vital and , and which are the variables, and what is the area between which necessary and certainly quite a lot of us -

S: I myself in the past have sometimes varied things a bit, almost deliberately, just to suggest there isn't just one rigid, 'right' way of doing it and all the other ways wrong. At the same time, we don't want to vary it to such an extent or in so haphazard a manner that people just get confused.

_____: include suggestions for readings, say,

S: Suggestions for - ?

_____: Readings

S: Readings - yes, yes, I think that would be quite useful.

_____: Perhaps we could also include a commentary by you.

S: On - ?

_____: On the contents.

S: No, not at present. Maybe some time later on, but I won't think about doing that now.

All right, I think we'll have to make quite a big leap now. We were supposed to be talking about the fine arts and spiritual life, and handicrafts. It's a huge topic, and we're already over time. I think let's go on for a few more minutes, anyway, and perhaps take it up again later on in the week.

Ananda: Actually, we have a day reserved for questions, a whole day. Could it be incorporated into that?

S: Well, if you like to ask questions.

_____: Well, could we have the discussion on fine arts and so on instead of questions? Have a discussion instead of one of the question periods, what we would be discussing (*Talk.*)

Ananda: There will be people there who haven't been here during the week. (*Talk.*)

S: Could we not go on a little bit later now? I don't mind, I'm quite happy; have lunch a bit

later, start that next session a bit later. (*Voices agreeing.*)

_____: might take the cushions I don't think we'll even take the cushions .

S: Let's just carry on a bit. This whole question of the fine arts and spiritual life: I think the fine arts are very important here inasmuch as they do develop the emotions, the imagination, do refine the emotions also. So I think that artistic activities are quite important for all Order members, either as creators or participants and enjoyers or just witnesses. Anybody got any thoughts about this? I think also there should be perhaps more of an association of the arts with our ceremonies and rites and festivals, celebrations and so on.

Asvajit: I've certainly noticed the other way around, when occasionally I involve myself in more or less crude activities, that my whole emotional feeling changes accordingly. One certainly feels it that way, and conversely if one involves oneself with some activity that is more refined, that is more artistic, more delicate, one's emotions change accordingly.

Manjuvajra: I'd quite like to see the ceremonies a bit more theatrical, a bit more -

S: Dramatic.

Manjuvajra: Dramatic, yes. I noticed last time there was the subject of robes, and -

S: Well, on the question of robes, there was a disagreement, though not a very strong one, with 50% of Order members not particularly wanting robes, and others rather liking the idea but not feeling very strongly about it, so we just dropped it. I don't know if there's been any change of opinion since, or feeling

Manjuvajra: I have changed my view.

S: From - ?

Manjuvajra: I was anti, I'm now pro.

S: Ah! Anybody changed from being pro to anti?

_____:

_____: I don't quite understand the situation.

S: Well, the original suggestion was, or the idea was, that there might be something to be said for there being a special robe for Order members which they wore when conducting a Puja or leading a meditation or possibly even giving a lecture. But feeling was pretty lukewarm on both sides. Those who were against it weren't very strongly against, and those who were for weren't very strongly for; and opinion divided within the Order fairly evenly. So it was just dropped.

Ananda: I think I'm becoming more anti than pro,

Chintamani: I wrote to Manjuvajra recently correspondence about robes, and I made the point that anti or pro robes depends very much on the whole.....(*?NATO busy in the air*) - *very loud planes*) retreats it's recognised that the shrine is temporary, and a retreat something like robes would be totally inappropriate. If we're going to have our rupa, then ordinary clothes would be out of place, possibly. So I don't think, as far as I can see, that there's a hard and fast rule.

S: In other words, you see a situation, perhaps, in which you've got a beautiful image and beautifully decorated shrine and beautiful lamps, and beautifully arranged flowers, and the person who is leading that is wearing a pair of tatty jeans, which just looks out of place, as it were, or out of harmony.

_____: There was an article about colour and about robes,

_____: Perhaps wouldn't need to be anything very elaborate, like a complete robe,

_____:

_____: - more people usually think of could perhaps be just a kind of Western dress of a particular colour.

_____: I think the problem is that if you had a robe, people would still wear them very dirtily and very tattily, the case of kesas, that's not going to solve anything. (*Voices.*)

Chintamani: Unless, if you have your elaborate shrine room, you have one robe that's kept in the (*Voices; laughter*)

_____: probably be a laundry - (*Voices*)

_____: transforms you into a -

S: Don't you think ladies can get away with it more easily?

_____: - and it does look a lot nicer than dirty jeans, which reduces it, actually,

_____: The question is the way they said they did it in New Zealand.

S: Yes, in New Zealand they dress up for their weekly Puja, which is the highlight of the week. They dress up not in any - there's no standard robe. Several Friends and Order members there have got rather colourful cotton kaftans which they put on and others have got sort of Indian dress, which I must say they wear very well and which suits them - the white sarongs and long white shirts, with lots of nice embroidery here, as you might have noticed in some of the slides. And there's certainly no uniform in the strict sense of everyone in the same kind of dress, but it's definitely not their ordinary dress; it's usually rather long and flowing and comfortable to sit in cross-legged, and colourful. And it seems also to suit the New Zealand climate, which is a consideration.

_____: giving them to one another on Sangha Day as well., giving robes

Sanghamitta: This seems a better idea, because if it's spread about that we're expected to dress up - and they did in Brighton, too - I think -

S: I think I rather like the idea of dressing up for the Puja.

Sanghamitta: Yes, and also they'd be fresher-looking, and be tatty again, keep it nice, and therefore it'd be better if they make a special occasion and dress up more.

S: Of course, you have the kesa to wear over whatever else you are wearing. (*Agreement.*)

_____: And uniform, which could look absolutely (*Voices.*)

S: Certainly in New Zealand practically everybody was different on these occasions, but it certainly all blended in and harmonised, no doubt about that. But they weren't scruffy. I think Akshobya has been quite an influence here; he's a little bit dressy, as it were, and certainly even those who are normally scruffy they dress up, in a pleasant way, for the weekly Puja. And they quite enjoy putting on their kaftans and being more colourful and bright than usual.

_____: When you say the weekly Puja, do you mean the Order meeting or - ?

S: No, it's - I don't know whether they still have it, but when I was there they had a Wednesday lengthy meditation and Puja, and it was the big night of the week for the regulars. They'd been having it before they were ordained. So there's a longer than usual meditation, followed by a Sevenfold Puja which they only had once a week, and a nicely decorated shrine, to they took that as the highlight of the week, and they all dressed up for it. But not in the sort of way as dressing up to go to church; it was quite different from that. I hope I'm not conveying any wrong impression. They were certainly not dressed up in any conventional way, and the things they were wearing were very cheap, cotton things, but clean and colourful.

_____: Indian

S: Well, maybe, but who would know? What do you feel about that, Buddhadasa?

Buddhadasa: Long johns? (*laughter*)

S: No, anything like that I mean the dressing up for the Puja, uniform -

Buddhadasa: individuals

S: If, for instance, you know that you're going to lead the Puja, just think to yourself 'What could I wear?' Just think what would be nice and attractive, comfortable for you.

Sanghamitta: They do this in Brighton, Buddhadasa

_____:

S: No, I don't think this idea of dressing up was mentioned.

_____: People *should* make sure that

S: Ah, I think just neat and tidy was mentioned, but not this dressing up.

_____:

S: I wouldn't know. (*Voices. Chat.*) I don't remember that anyone in Auckland wore a suit. It was always long and flowing, either a kaftan or it was Indian sarong and long white shirt, but certainly very smart and very pleasant. It seemed very relaxed and flowing,

_____: It would be very un-English, wouldn't it?.

S: The funny thing is they were all English, but it seemed to fit in there.

_____: I think it's partly climate, but it's a lot more appropriate there.

S: It seemed very sensible there. I think this helps to create a more positive and happy and joyous atmosphere. You're celebrating.

Did you want to say anything more about this yet? - because -

Manjuvajra: Well - the idea was really that much more could be done with ceremonies if there was a lot more attention paid to clothing, the sort of music that could be played, and the kind of incense that was used, where the lights were placed, and you could really create an atmosphere that even an idiot could walk into and not have -

S: I think something like this may well be done at Bethnal Green, and hopefully serve as a model. (*Some laughter.*)

_____: have to get them in somehow!

Manjuvajra: I think we could - things can - maybe I didn't say it quite clearly, but I am convinced of the power in things like that. And I think you can - we were talking about lack of positive atmosphere, and I think even somebody taking a ceremony within that kind of framework, it wouldn't depend so much on our own personal state, it would be carried a lot more by the general atmosphere.

S: What about music? I am thinking just at the moment of music as an adjunct [to], as a part of, the Puja or ritual, ceremony.

_____:

_____: difficulty of having music

S: But Roger did compose music for the four quartets and perhaps he could be encouraged to compose.

_____: He does want to provide music to be chanted, Puja and mantras, to develop that

S: Has anyone had any thoughts about dance?

Chintamani: Yes. Very, very, very vague. Not so much to do with Puja as such, but just to somehow ritualise - I don't know how to put it - ritualise certain - certain psychological

S: Rites of passage?

Chintamani: Rites of passage, yes, so that you could at various stages of one's life you could perform various ritual dances which would rather than sort of rushing up the mountain and putting up you kind of *do* it and *feel* it. And then you could - in other words, being pagan. And steering that towards the Dharma somehow. I suppose that -

_____: and then ritualising it more and more.

S: The only ritual that we have of this kind, though without dance at present, is the Ordination - because when I was in New Zealand I felt this aspect of it very much, simply because the private ordinations were out in the open. And I wrote about this to some people, didn't I? And I described how the private ordinations took place under a tree, right away from

the camp; and it was in the evening time, and there was quite a lot of mist. And Asvajit had put lighted candles along this very rugged path, and people came down through the mist to the edge of the forest for their private ordination; and there was a quite different feeling to the whole thing, much more like a real initiation. This was just doing it in the open at the edge of the forest under a tree, in the midst of nature, and with the little improvised shrine on a great boulder; and little animals, even, coming to watch it all, little hedgehogs and things.

_____: early retreats walking and chanting, some people felt they wanted to almost dance around rather than just walk, and put a bit more movement into walking.

S: I think that we have to investigate this quite a bit. And I think it shouldn't be just a question of expressive movement or something of this sort, it must be definitely integrated with the whole spiritual approach and symbolism. And this can only grow; we can't artificially invent it or devise it.

_____:

S: Well, one can only see. It may be that at least some of the techniques that they learn they can employ to express something more akin to what we are doing later on. I wouldn't discourage anybody, there is a possibility.

_____: In Barbara's case - were you thinking of Barbara? - I think there is a desire generally to express something akin to spiritual development and movement and growth.

_____: I'm not doubting that, I'm just wondering and what sort of dancing one can learn (*Voices.*)

_____: how we can use it in our way. You can always gain by learning general techniques.

S: I think there is also something to be said for experimenting a bit with masked dances, and even masked theatrical happenings. I think there is a great deal of room for exploration and experimentation here. But it's going to take a long time.

_____: There's a great deal of room for experimentation in this area. In terms of the immediate objective needs and

S: What objective needs are you thinking of?

_____: Well, er - our most immediate needs. How do you see this kind of work, this kind of development, just even these kinds of *needs* that seem to be coming up? How do you see them in relationship to other obviously very pressing needs at the moment, like for example Bethnal Green, other centres, and developing of all sorts of other kinds as well?

S: I think there are certain people who have a special interest in these things and a special aptitude, and I think they will just have to get together in small groups, that is of Order members and Mitras and Friends, and just experiment, and let the rest of us know the results, or even show us the results. But I think for the time being that will be relatively peripheral so far as London is concerned. Later on it may well move into a more central position.

_____: It seems to create quite a lot of difficulty, because there are some Order members and Mitras who feel that it is perhaps their main interests lie [*break in recording*]

Abhaya: - and that's why point about professionalism. It's nothing to do with professionalism, it's the creativity that matters, and developing whatever creative

S: But professionalism gives an edge to the creativity, makes it more confident and capable, and helps you to do what you want to do.

_____: You need the technique to

_____: You can develop your creativity in any situation.

S: Some forms of creativity more than others, obviously. For instance, suppose you want to write an article; well you know the English language and you've got the rudiments of grammar, you can do it. But suppose you want to compose a symphony; then you've got to learn musical notation, orchestration and so many other things, before you can express that sort of creativity.

Bodhisri: I think the antithesis [between] professionalism and expressing creativity without it is also false, and probably as a result of the fact that what we have mainly in our theatres and concert halls is just professionalism, with little creativity. And as a rebellion against it - 'let's have just creativity, you know, we don't care about professionalism.' That's an extreme

Abhaya: Perhaps it's the association of the word professionalism.

Bodhisri: You have to learn your harmony if you want to write a symphony. You have to have certain techniques. I think the whole antithesis is false.

Chintamani: This whole word 'creativity' is so woolly. In most people's minds it's sort of - somehow the arts seem to have become associated with refined and delicate, not of this world, gutless. Ugh! It's become an excuse as far as I can see, in many people's minds, to avoid things, this kind of - I mean - (*exasperated sigh*)

S: Well, perhaps we should think in terms of work to be done. We need a shrine, someone's going to build it. We need an image, someone's going to make it. We need music, someone's going to compose it. There's no question of creativity, it's something that's going to be done! There's a wall needs painting, someone's going to paint it.

Bodhisri: When Bach was asked why he wrote music, he said like other people chop wood; that was a job just a job.

S: Someone ordered a set of dances, he wrote them.

Lokamitra: If you go courting creativity you'll never get it; you just do something, and it comes. Genius - if I can get the quote right - is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.

S: Also, 'an infinite capacity for taking pain'!

Dharmapala: I think you can court it by learning how to use a tool in whatever way you can so that means that you have to have access to the professional or the standard as it were of a person who knows how to use this tool. But I think you can court it by training to use the tool and I think you can't really be creative until you know the tool and how to use it.

Ratnapani: by sweat, that's what you call -

_____: - and 99% perspiration.

_____: You can acquire a technique without professionally

_____: Yes, but you've got to aim towards professional standards.

_____: Yes, well, if one knows the technique and can apply it,

_____: Well,

S: In other words, you're so good that people are prepared to pay money to see you do whatever you're able to do.

_____: You just

_____: Maybe we should use 'perfection' rather than 'professionalism'. I think we're getting in a muddle about the word professionalism, all kinds of things that are -

S: Right, yes. And also see that as a spiritual movement, again for want of a better term, we are engaged in doing certain things, providing certain facilities, and these call for the exercise of certain skills and capacities. And in this way our creative activities and energies are integrated into the overall pattern. We've spoken about music in connection with our ceremonies and our rituals: all right, ask someone to compose some music. Or we need icons on which to practise our visualisation: right, we ask someone to paint some icons. It's really as simple as that. All the creative activities, as you might call them, are directly related to the objective spiritual needs of the Movement. In this way, you have a real living cultural and creative tradition.

_____: Are we going to talk about handicrafts in the sense of what crafts we've got in the Order, or what resources we've got?

S: We could do. We haven't got much time, but we could spend a few minutes on it.

Padmapani: Does anybody know - has anybody got any resources that they could give towards the Order, in the sense?

_____: You mean tools, or talents?

_____: Both.

Padmapani: Well, no, I mean in the sense of equipment - which people can - I'm talking about handicrafts as a craft, you know?

_____: We can provide the in Brighton.

_____: optimistic

Ananda: We've got a lovely printing press at Aryatara.

Padmapani: Does this come up later on, or are we seriously discussing this?

_____: This is it.

_____: Why do you want to discuss it? What ?

Padmapani: I'd like to know what resources the Friends have got when it comes down to crafts. Have you got candle-making equipment, have you got -

S: Looms. Kilns.

Ananda: Silkscreen workshop.

S: Well, perhaps this could be done through *Shabda*. Perhaps people could be asked through *Shabda* to send in information about the craft equipment which they have.

: enormous scope we could create all our own things.

S: Embroidery. (*Voices.*)

Padmapani: Not only for the Order, but for a sense of livelihood

.....: This will come up in terms of industries crafts

S: I think perhaps we could leave it until then. Which day is this? Ah, right. That's Day 7. That's the day after tomorrow, isn't it, is it? No, the day after the day after tomorrow. But we could deal with it then in more detail, because it is 2 o'clock now.

Would anyone like to have a final word about any of these things?

Ananda: Just a very quick one, several things have been recommended for inclusion in *Shabda*. I'd just like to make sure that they actually get into *Shabda*. Has anyone undertaken to write to - oh, sorry, it's you now, isn't it? The kesa instructions, and this thing that we've been talking about.

.....: (*noise*)

Sanghamitta: I have made

S: *upasakas* and *upasikas* to write in to *Shabda* giving details of craft equipment which they have and which they could make available to the Friends: kilns, looms for weaving, candle-making equipment -

Dharmapala: Can I suggest - that this goes on the questionnaire thing that we've talked about earlier, the skills, and say what equipment you've also got to back them up,

S: Yes, it could go there too.

.....: It appears to me that some time ago it was the whole movement, that's the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order - it was something of a sort of heavy, very introverted experience, head on the ground kind of thing. And it seems to me that through these kind of reviews(?) and the whole thing is just becoming more and more alive and more and more colourful. I think it's very, very important, and I think that there has been a kind of, as Padmapani said, especially in the London area, that being the heart of the Movement at the moment, there have been certain kind of frictions because of a kind of imbalance in the Movement, and I sort of feel you know that it's beginning to - I personally feel this balance is somewhat being resolved.

Lokamitra: I disagree quite a lot there. I think the lightness of the Movement is not due to these sort of things but due to everyone putting much more energy into things, and most of

that energy is not going into the arts and things, it's going into - well, it's going into - (*Voices*)

_____: What I mean by that is I feel that certain people are being and there are things being done, but a lot of the energy is separate from perhaps areas in which people in the future will really be devoting their full time to. Do you see what I mean?

S: I remember something which a friend of mine said to me in Bombay years and years ago. He said, 'Whatever we love, we want to embellish.' Whatever we love, we want to embellish. So I think we can apply that to all our activities and institutions, especially now the new London Centre at Bethnal Green - if we really love the Centre we want to embellish it and make it as beautiful as possible, and that will call in all our creativity and all our talent.

_____: That includes people culture as a whole

S: Well, you yourself must be an ornament to the Centre, not just create an ornament.

_____: But there has been friction, and the fact that Lokamitra says right there and then he doesn't agree with me is indicative of that, and yet -

S: I wouldn't say that there had been an imbalance. I would say that originally there was a deficiency all round. There wasn't enough practicality, there also wasn't enough creativity. But the practicality has taken an upward surge now with the result that we've got the new London Centre, but that gives scope now to the creativity, working on that Centre to make it beautiful.

Marichi: There's certain to be an awful lot of talk about this doesn't seem to be so necessary, you just go in and do it. if we really want to do it, we do it.

Chintamani: I think the friction is caused by a bad name - that's the arts - an expression like this, given by dabblers. By dabblers. I think there's nothing that do a disservice to 'art', inverted commas, than dabblers.

_____: Well, if that is the case, 'art' in inverted commas maybe we aren't ready for it. Maybe that's why it hasn't happened; and when we are ready, it happens. (*Voices.*)

S: Well, just think in terms of a job to be done. I think that's all.

Well, what's the next job? Lunch.

(*end of session*)

Session 4

S: I'm going to read a letter I got this morning from New Zealand, from Padmasri; at least, I'm going to read part of it which is of some general interest. She says, *inter alia*:

'You will probably hear from Akshobya within a few days. He has been planning to take a short trip to England, and an opportunity arose to work his passage as a steward on a ship which left Auckland last Saturday. It means very hard work, but it suited him financially especially. He is due in London about October 7th, and regrets that he will miss the Order Convention. He is wishing to talk with you and the Order about aspects of functioning within the Order.'

*The organ **Shabda** has arrived just this week, and I see that you will, during the Convention, be discussing many of the matters that concern us directly at present in*

our trying to find guidelines for action as a newly- established group of Order members. So although we cannot be present at the Convention, through Akshobya's personal contact with you we should share more directly in its benefits. I would love to be there, and send my thoughts for a very successful and enjoyable meeting of Order members.

We have booked the camp at Waikenai to hold a 10-day retreat Convention in December-January. We considered other places, but most wished to return to the same setting as our ordination retreat, and although without your presence, hopefully with the same beautiful weather.

Much of our general news will have been conveyed to you by others, and you will hear in detail from Akshobya. We have been settled into our new Centre' - that is, in Auckland - 'for four or so weeks now, and it is still a little too early to tell of its effects, although attendance has remained fairly constant, with a few completely newcomers finding their way there. A great advantage of this suburban Centre is having Gunaprabha, Purna and Dennis resident and starting to lead a semi-monastic life. They do give a strong feeling of dedication to this Centre.

*As an Order, we are holding two one-hour meetings a week, one Council and the other, before the Wednesday Puja, given to spiritual practice together or discussion related to the Sangha. Once a month there is a one- day Order day for three hours of which the Mitras join us for meditation, discussion and study. **Mitrata** study will be included at this time rather than on a weekly basis, for which we found that attendance was low. One Order member will lead these meetings for a month, in which way we hope to share more equally the feeling of responsibility for the growth of the WBO.*

In general, energy has been low over the winter months, but I think a lot of this has been due to the unexpectedly cold weather and the very bad flu epidemic which most of us have suffered, but with the evenings growing longer and the spring flowers appearing, that should be behind us. After a very tiring winter term, I start a two-week holiday this Friday, and will retire quietly to the country with my dog and a few books. Some of that time will be spent with Bonnie and Bill Quirke on Waiheke, when we will have meditation, Puja, and continue the Bodhisattva series.

(end of side)

Tape 7, side 1

As in Auckland, cold, wet weather and flu have interrupted the continuity of their group getting together, but the feeling for contact with us remains strong.

In mid-July, five Order members, Dennis, and Geoffrey, spent the weekend on the island and joined in the meetings, which were led by Megha during her stay, an occasion which we all hope to repeat often in the summer. We were very happy that Sadhumati was able to join us for the weekend.

Of my Mitras, there is nothing of outstanding importance to say. We keep in fairly regular contact. Dennis seems to be having a very stabilising and positive effect on Geoffrey, and of course can communicate more easily with Geoff than I can.' Etc.

So that's from Padmasri, for the benefit of those who just came in - from New Zealand.

All right, this is Plenary Session 5, and it's on the *kalyana mitra* system; and the different aspects covered will be present extent, preparation for commitment, resolution of difficulties,

the alleged waiting list, and *Mitrata*. I believe there also was a question of a report from Padmaraja as Convenor of Mitras, so I'm wondering whether it might not be a good idea to start off with that. What does everybody feel? (*Murmurs of assent.*) So can I then call on Padmaraja for his report?

Padmaraja: (reads)

"There are at present 35 Mitras and 32 *kalyana mitras*. There are 24 Mitras and 21 *kalyana mitras* in England. There are, as far as I can ascertain, 10 Mitras and 9 *kalyana mitras* in New Zealand. There is one Mitra and 2 *kalyana mitras* in Finland. Since the start of the Mitra system, 9 Mitras have been ordained.

The Mitra system was introduced for the benefit of those Friends who were considering ordination. Broadly speaking, it was to replace the loss of personal contact with Bhante. However, all of the first generation of Mitras, so to speak, now ordained, had the advantage of quite regular contact with Bhante. The situation now is quite different. We now have a second generation of Mitras, some of whom are almost ready, if not ready now, for ordination, and these Mitras have had very little contact with Bhante. These are the first children of the system proper.

I was appointed Mitra Convenor at the end of 1974, a post which was created to consider the needs of the Mitras as a whole. It was outlined that the Mitra Convenor was to be responsible in a general way to supply Mitras with the necessary information for their activities, training(?), and for arranging their studies.

Four Mitra study groups were formed to function from the start of the first session of 1975. Three of these groups were to function in the Archway area, and one at the Aryatara community in Surrey. Also, to coincide with the start of the first session of 1975, *Mitrata*, a monthly publication for Mitras and *kalyana mitras*, was established.

Now a little bit about the Mitra study groups. In the first two sessions of 1975 - that's the past two - for a period of 24 weeks, all four Mitra study groups used as the basis of their study Chapter 1 of the *Survey of Buddhism*. Because of its definitive nature, its necessarily complex and precise language proved to be quite difficult for study group purposes, especially the early sections of the book. The groups can be considered successful to the degree that the group leaders were able to grasp its underlying ideas and to represent them more simply, if less precisely, and to draw precepts or training principles from them. Since the groups academic situation, groups could be considered successful to the degree that the group leaders were able to communicate their own sense of commitment and enthusiasm

The study group situation has proved to be an excellent situation for Mitras and *kalyana mitras* to come together to clear up doubts and difficulties and gain a clearer understanding of the Dharma. I would like to extend my thanks to Upasakas Ananda, Devaraja, Jinamata, Kamalashila, Jitari, Nagabodhi, and Sagaramati for all their hard work and conscientious efforts in leading their groups for the past two sessions.

The groups have now been re-formed. Next session there will be an all-women's group, which will be led by Dhammadinna assisted by Marichi. There will be a mixed group which will be led by Lokamitra, and who will be assisted by Suvratta. These will both be meeting in London. There will be a third group comprised partly of Mitras and partly of inmates of the Bethnal Green centre. (*laughter*). This of course will be led by Subhuti [Laughter] and will be held at Bethnal Green. The Aryatara Mitra study group will now become a pre-ordination-type study group. This will probably be led by Ananda, but that is yet to be finalised. It will be my function to

move from group to group week by week to keep my eye on the overall situation.

Mitrata. Month by month, *Mitrata* will serve to comprise a body of easy-to-digest practical Buddhism, suitable for use in study groups and private study etc. *Mitrata* is mainly concerned with transcribing, editing and publishing Bhante's hitherto unpublished lectures and various seminar material, and making it available in a systematic, attractive and digestible form. *Mitrata* is now covering such basic material as morality, meditation and wisdom, Buddha-Dharma-Sangha, Noble Eightfold Path, eventually the Bodhisattva Ideal. Next session the Mitra study groups in London will be using *Mitrata* as the basis for their study. This, I hope, amongst other things, will help Mitras use *Mitrata* creatively as a practical guide, as a manual, and not just as yet another publication, a luxury product.

Mitrata is also being used as a basis of study in Mitra study groups in New Zealand, and will be used in the pre-ordination-type groups in Glasgow next session. Since the start of the year, six editions of *Mitrata* have been published. It has a circulation of just under 100, and *Mitrata* is sent automatically to all Mitras and *kalyana mitras*, and is available to all Order members and members of pre-ordination-type groups on request. Apart from the British Isles and New Zealand, *Mitrata* is now being sent to Holland and Finland.

Apart from the monthly Mitra days, usually held at the Aryatara community, there have been two full-scale residential retreats for Mitras and *kalyana mitras*. Four Mitras were also privileged to attend various of the recent seminars held by Bhante.

Over and above the general Mitra activities, we have all of us come to understand that the crux of the whole system lies in the regular, preferably personal, contacts between Mitra and *kalyana mitra*, and between *kalyana mitra* and the Order as a whole. For the Mitra, the *kalyana mitra* serves as the function of relationship to the Order as a whole; therefore, it is absolutely vital that the *kalyana mitra* be in touch with the Order as a whole, to Order meetings etc., in order to fulfil that function. Without this regular contact between Mitra and *kalyana mitra*, and *kalyana mitra* and the Order as a whole, the system itself cannot function properly. This is the bedrock or, to change the metaphor, the creative wellspring of the whole Mitra system. Until recently, many *kalyana mitras* expected the general Mitra activities to fulfil this personal function for them, but less and less now.

Incidentally, I think that the general meetings between *kalyana mitras* will be instrumental in helping *kalyana mitras* to understand their responsibilities.

Bhante has often laid stress upon the point that no one, in this country at least, can handle more than four Mitras, and that most of us are not able to take on that many. In the early days of the Mitra system, in our innocence or ignorance of what the Mitra-*kalyana mitra* relationship really entailed, many of us took on many Mitras willy-nilly, the more the better. We thought in terms of spare places, the maximum quota of Mitras being four. Most of us were completely oblivious to the implicit demands of the situation. As the situation and its demands became clearer and more pressing, some if not most *kalyana mitras* were to find themselves, initially at least, in the somewhat false position of being *kalyana mitras* yet unable or even unsuitable to fulfil that function. This raises the important point that I hope we can discuss this morning, which is what to do when *kalyana mitras* are unable to fulfil their responsibilities, what to do when difficulties, sometimes insurmountable difficulties, arise between Mitras and *kalyana mitras*; then again, what are the requirements to be expected from Order members who wish to become *kalyana mitras*, bearing in mind that ideally all *kalyana mitras* should be *maha-upasakas*.

Being a Mitra, for the better and the worse, is coming to be regarded more and more as a preparation for ordination and not just as an end in itself, as it was in the early days of the Movement. The whole Movement is constantly being upgraded. The implicit demands of ordination are continually being raised, and inevitably so are those of becoming a Mitra. What was expected a few years ago from an *upasaka* is now being expected from a Mitra. Yet, if more and more is being expected from Mitras, more and more is being done with them and for them. There are many Friends who wish to become Mitras yet can't, because of the unavailability of *kalyana mitras*, and the question arises also what to do with some of these. I think we will have to look into this whole matter of the procedure for adoption of Mitras. That, very generally, is the situation."

S: Well, that certainly is a very comprehensive report, and it certainly gives me a rather clearer picture of the workings of the *kalyana mitra* system than I had before. There's quite a lot of material there. I think perhaps what we'd better do now is to invite people to raise questions on, or comment on, the report as a whole or any particular matter of a more general nature within it, especially in the earlier part, after which I think we'd better come on to the discussion of the specific points which Padmaraja has raised as actual questions to be settled.

So any more general comment first - or inquiry - if there's any point which is not clear, especially in the earlier part of the report? Perhaps Padmaraja wouldn't mind reading a paragraph at a time, to refresh people's memories. That might be better.

Padmaraja: Whereabouts?

S: Just start right from the beginning.

Padmaraja: 'There are at present 35 Mitras and 32 *kalyana mitras*.'

_____: In England?

S: In the whole world.

Padmaraja: 'There are 24 Mitras and 21 *kalyana mitras* in England. There are, as far as I can ascertain, 10 Mitras and 9 *kalyana mitras* in New Zealand. There is one Mitra and 2 *kalyana mitras* in Finland. Since the start of the system, 9 Mitras have been ordained.'

S: Right, any query or comment on that?

_____: What was the date of the actual starting of the system?

Padmaraja: I think it was the beginning of last year. (*Voices.*)

_____: That's March 1974.

S: And how many did you say had been ordained?

Padmaraja: Nine.

_____: Altogether, there'd be 35 plus 9 Mitras.

S: The total of 35, is it? -

Padmaraja: At present.

S: - represents the present figure, so that the total number of Mitras since the system started is that 35 plus 9, so that means 44. That's a pretty good figure. I had no idea there were so many, in fact.

_____:

S: Yes. That's well over half the strength of the Order.

_____: We'd better watch it! [Laughter]

S: All right, let's pass on, then, to the next paragraph.

Padmaraja: 'The Mitra system was introduced for the benefit of those Friends who were considering ordination. Broadly speaking, it was to replace the loss of personal contact with Bhante. However, all of the first generation of Mitras, now ordained, had the advantage of quite regular contact with Bhante. The situation now is quite different. We have a second generation of Mitras, some of whom are almost ready, if not ready, for ordination, and these Mitras have had very little contact with Bhante. These are the first children of the system proper.'

S: All right, any comment on that, or any inquiry about that?

Ananda: A point occurs to me, Bhante, said about the original cause for setting up the system being people who are considering ordination. As far as I remember, that's not quite the case, because I thought originally a very large part of the of people who didn't really weren't at the stage of considering even such a lifetime commitment as ordination, but were wanting just simple contact with the Order, to feel out what it felt like and have a bit more contact.

S: As far as I remember, what I actually said was that the *kalyana mitra* system was in the first place for those who were definitely thinking in terms of ordination, and those who wanted to find out more about what ordination meant before making up their minds one way or the other.

Subhuti: The way you put it was 'thinking about thinking about it'.

Bodhisri: You said about Finland, that there's only one *kalyana mitra*; actually we have three other people who are thinking about ordination -

S: Only one Mitra.

Bodhisri: Yes, sorry, only one Mitra and two *kalyana mitras*; but three other people are thinking about ordination, but they are in our so-called pre-ordination groups.

S: Yes. Well, in several Centres we still do have the old pre-ordination class system; in some cases because there are just so few Order members.

Bodhisri: Yes, but it's - I think these three other people would very much like to be in contact with a *kalyana mitra*, and would like to read these magazines

S: I think there is a provision for that. The same situation has arisen quite recently in Holland, where there are certainly people who are at the very least thinking about thinking about ordination; perhaps even thinking about it. And we discussed it when we were over there, and I think it has been agreed that some of them should receive *Mitrata* to help keep

them more in touch.

Bodhisri: Could they take part in these Mitra-*kalyana mitra* retreats and things like that?

S: As far as I know, the practice in London has been that where there have been Friends who for any reason were not able to be Mitras due to no fault of their own, they were on occasion invited along to the Mitra and *kalyana mitra* retreats.

_____: I think we've made a ruling, in fact, Bhante, that only Mitras could go on Mitra retreats and Mitra functions, with no exceptions.

S: There were some exceptions. There have been exceptions.

_____: It was agreed that non-Mitras should not be accepted.

Padmaraja: Perhaps there could be exceptions for things like Mitra Day, but it was felt in the case of the full-scale retreats that there isn't enough room for all the Mitras, so they would have to have priority. But for other events there could be exceptional circumstances.

S: So where does that leave you in Finland? Because you've only got one Mitra anyway.

Bodhisri: We have this one Mitra.

S: So you wouldn't normally lay on a special Mitra-*kalyana mitra* retreat, anyway, would you?

Bodhisri: No, but I was thinking of people who wanted to spend their holidays in England, and these three people who have thought about ordination would like to see other people who have thought about ordination, yes.

S: This puts a new aspect on the whole question, if they are wondering, or if you are wondering, whether they could come and participate in Mitra-*kalyana mitra* activities here, even though they are not technically Mitras.

Manjuvajra: That also applies to Cornwall, in that probably there won't be any Mitras down there but there may some people who are considering ordination,

S: Has Padmaraja any views on this? - since you have an overall picture of the facilities and possibilities.

Padmaraja: It's more than anything, a question of space.

Subhuti: It seems to be very important that we did provide some facilities for people like from Finland and from Cornwall - I think we should.

S: But maybe we don't have it at present.

_____: Yes, I think it would be very good for them to mix, too,

Subhuti: a bit cramped

Devamitra: Maybe some special kind of retreat could be arranged, as has been done in the past with Norwich.

Aryamitra: But I'm sure if they go on retreats they meet Mitras, Friends and Mitras, anyway.

_____: on retreat, now sort of people thinking very definitely in terms of ordination.

S: I think it is - different, obviously, from the question of people from abroad attending retreats in England - there is also this more specialised question of people abroad who under other circumstances would have been Mitras, being able to attend *Mitra-kalyana mitra* retreats specifically in England. I think that is really the question. So if there's any question of, say, lack of space, perhaps we'll just have to lay on something special, for some of the English Mitras and *kalyana mitras* plus people of this kind from other countries. You'd certainly get a few from Holland.

Bodhisri: I think considering that those people from other countries have so little contact with Mitras here and Order members, we should try and make space for them. And maybe our people who have the contact anyway could wait.

_____: It applies Archway. (*Voices.*)

S: Would it be possible to expand the facilities which are organised from London?

_____: It would be pretty hard. It's very tight as it is. There's a limit to what we can do without planning (*Voices.*)

Bodhisri: Couldn't we say, for instance, with the next *kalyana mitra* retreat, that we have a specific number of places reserved for people from Holland and Finland, and let those people who are interested and want to come over for their holiday for that know in advance, and just reserve a few places? And if they want to spend their holiday that way, we let them know that this is happening, and then they can -

_____: There is the point that it's not only Holland and Finland, but Cornwall, Glasgow, and which would take up a whole retreat.

Bodhisri: Is it that many?

_____: Oh yes.

Lokamitra: It brings up the whole point of what to do as we have new Centres, we're going to have people thinking very definitely in terms of ordination, and yet because the *kalyana mitra* system, because there may not be two suitable Order members down there, or because for other reasons it may not be able to operate down there, what to do in that case? So it seems quite important that they can be recognised in some way as Mitras, although perhaps not in the same way.

Aryamitra: I think one way could be if they could be put on to the mailing list of *Mitrata*. They'd understand that they're not Mitras officially, because for the reasons they haven't got *kalyana mitras*, but at least they would have some kind of feeling of participation or the fact that they are looked upon as being people that are thinking about ordination.

Lokamitra: I would have thought we need something more than the fact that they're thinking. Because it's unfortunate that those people outside London, or a Centre where the Mitra system operates properly, they'll be just as keen, just as concerned for ordination, but they'll be second-class Mitras, as it were. So I'd have thought we need something which goes

hand in hand with the Mitra system as it exists in London, - it will be a measure which will have to operate in new Centres for some time, but after that it will no longer - it will be able to come up to the London, if you like, standard of - and ritual, as Bhante said, is very important here, so I think we need to introduce some kind of ritual something, but maybe without the strict qualifications or whatever that are needed in London, or strict conditions, like possibly even doing away with two *kalyana mitras* in some cases; possibly extending the number of Mitras that someone can have in other cases. But it really brings up all of this.

Aryamitra: I don't see that - I think we could be a bit patient about that. I don't think they have necessarily to be called Mitras, *kalyana mitras*, the same system, but we could, say, the Centres that have pre-ordination class and 'pre-ordinationees?', could get together and have a retreat, especially for pre-ordination people, or have get-togethers in some way - in the same way. In other words, lay on special facilities.

Lokamitra: But you've got a situation where you've got, say, in Glasgow, you have Vajradaka for some time who's acting in every way as *kalyana mitra* to certain people considering ordination. So I feel it would be good if we could sort out this situation, and try and cater for it, because it's something which is going to be happening much, much more in the next year, and increasingly so.

Vajradaka: Do you mean regularise that?

Lokamitra: Yes, make some kind of provision for it, so that these people don't feel that they're second-class Mitras or something like this.

Aryamitra: Why should they feel that?

Lokamitra: Well, the ceremony is important, for one thing. And so put them on the mailing list, but don't give them the actual -

Subhuti: It can't be a Mitra ceremony, because there's not the availability of *kalyana mitras*, but it could be something like mainly taking the Precepts, or -

Lokamitra: It could be something else, perhaps. I don't know.

Aryamitra: I think we've got to be careful, because at the moment the Mitra system itself isn't functioning as idealised, in other words, idealised that *kalyana mitras* are ordained at least five years, and various other things. In fact, even within the Mitras now, *kalyana mitras* aren't keeping in that much regular contact. There's all sorts of slips. I don't think we are really fulfilling to the extent we could with the present system.

Lokamitra: Yes, but we're not all living in London and Aryatara, yeah.

Aryamitra: But I think what we could do is just increase the Centres that have the pre-ordination facilities, just increase - sorry, pre-ordination class - increase the facilities for them. Maybe even have the pre-ordination class newsletter or news sheet.

Subhuti: Buddhadasa, I know you've been coming up against this Could you speak ?

Buddhadasa: Well, to the Mitra system is when people are talking about a pre-ordination classes. In Brighton pre-ordination classes, because if you do have a pre-ordination class this implies that somebody is due for ordination. This is setting yourselves up for ordination, and in that respect they are in a sense equivalent to Mitras. That's the uncertainty. In other words, what people do in the pre-ordination class at this level is

duplicating an existing system, which is the Mitra system, but without having the benefit, as Lokamitra pointed out, of the very important aspect of ritual.

The second question, equally important, is that those people who go through the pre-ordination system do not experience what it's like to be a Mitra, and this is very important. And this is something the early ordinees like myself have not experienced, and in a sense we found it a bit wanting; it would have been quite good to have experienced this. So I think it's quite important that people should experience what it's like to be a Mitra, even though maybe it's not quite in the sense of one Mitra and two *kalyana mitras*. There's something where they can look at themselves and refer to themselves as Mitras, and not feel different from somebody else.

Bodhisri: We used to call Maitreya a provisional Mitra.

S: I don't really remember, but -

Bodhisri: Yes, officially call him that, and he called himself that, and he said that he felt much better after that. He had got an identity. He just made some offerings and pronounced himself accordingly..... (?)

_____: There was a ceremony?

Bodhisri: It was a sort of a festival. I think it was Sangha Day or something, and then he made offerings, and that was that, and he felt quite different after that, because he'd got an identity and he sort of belonged to the whole thing, in another way.

Lokamitra: The other alternative, although this doesn't really fit the present situation very much, is not to have anyone starting a new Centre until they have received a *kalyana mitra* or *maha-upasaka* ordination, and therefore you could have, perhaps, some kind of ceremony between the *kalyana mitra* or the *maha-upasaka* and those considering ordination very definitely, but we have got that situation at present, and so we've got to think of something -

Aryamitra: I think what we've got to do - I think we've jumped a stage. I think what we've got to look at, if you like, is the present Mitra system, because we are already starting to talk about the possibilities of those smaller Centres will take on Mitras for, say, without fulfilling all the requirements that have been stated up to now. But I think we've got to - if you like, look at how the requirements are being fulfilled now, first of all, really. I mean are the present requirements being fulfilled, before we start thinking about

Lokamitra: question about Finland, and Manjuvajra about Cornwall. I don't think we really have to consider London at the moment, but we have to consider what provision can be made for those outside London. And it doesn't really have anything to do with how it's been going in London, very much.

S: But that is if it's limited to two matters, that is to say *Mitrata* can certainly be sent to all the people who, had circumstances been more favourable, might well have been Mitras; so that is one thing that can very definitely be done. So all these people are in touch through that. And, two, that as far as possible we expand our Mitra-*kalyana-mitra* retreat and other facilities to include some of these people from time to time. These are the two things that we can very definitely do at present. But I think the details of the second will have to be left to smaller gatherings; I don't think we can work out any details here and now.

Aryamitra: The other point that seems to come up is this thing about them feeling - what was the term? - second-class Mitras.

Manjuvajra: I don't think that arises. It only arises if there's some confusion about how far the Mitra system extends. In Cornwall, after a bad experience, I now make it very clear that nobody in Cornwall can be a Mitra, because the system doesn't extend that far. And once people know that, they don't feel second-class, they just say, well, this is the system -

S: Yes, if it's made clear that it's due to no fault of theirs, it's simply that as you say the Mitra system hasn't extended that far. Obviously, because for the Mitra system to work you need quite a number of Order members, present on the spot. So those who are unable to be Mitras and who have to join a pre-ordination class are simply in the same position as the very first Order members in London; and no doubt, when momentum gathers in these at present smaller Centres, they'll go through the same stages that people have gone through in London, with a fully-fledged Mitra system and lots of Order members.

Buddhadasa: This is not quite true, because in Brighton Peter Deadman is now due to become a Mitra, has requested to become a Mitra. So in a sense we have one Mitra in Brighton. All we have to do now is to finalise it with a ceremony.

S: I think Brighton is in a bit of a special position, just because it's so near London, and Order members can pop down so quickly and there can be quite a bit of contact.

Vessantara: There's lots of cross-fertilisation, a lot of people go from Brighton and mix with a lot of Mitras in London and Aryatara, and therefore they feel the absence of that possibility of committing themselves to that extent, much more than people in Cornwall who don't have that contact with Mitras.

Buddhadasa: This cross-fertilisation is very important, and already has taken place, and Peter Deadman has asked to be a Mitra. But -

_____: He's not the only one ?

Buddhadasa: He's not the only one; there are two or three others who have specifically asked. And many others who are expressing sincere interest in the system. And these are people who have in a sense contributed more to the Movement, certainly more to the Brighton Friends, than, say, Peter Deadman has himself. It's only by virtue of Peter Deadman's long association with the Friends that we are considering him. But there are others down there who are working for the Friends, dare I say it, possibly with a bit more responsibility than some Order members: retreat organisers, treasurers, shopkeepers, etc., etc. And these people, in my opinion, are well worthy of becoming Mitras. The stumbling block is the limitation that we have imposed upon ourselves of two *kalyana mitras* to each Mitra. I am personally wondering whether or not one Order member can take on maybe more Mitras during the time that the specific Centre can develop its own strength, so as to come in line with the existing procedure as laid down. But I think at first there will have to be exceptions, and I'd like to hear what people have to say about this.

Vimalamitra: Couldn't there be just a ceremony, even if there aren't enough Order members for *kalyana mitras*, couldn't there be a formal ceremony so that people can feel that they *are* Mitras, knowing the limitations of what the conditions are?

Ananda: What limits that is the actual reality of the relationship between the potential *kalyana mitra* and the Mitra.

S: What you're almost suggesting is that there should be a third grade of Friend, and that there should be a ceremony for becoming a Friend, which is the first step as it were, and after that the ceremony for becoming a Mitra with two *kalyana mitras*.

Vimalamitra: Well, you know, maybe if people understood that it was just a matter of there aren't any Order members available, that they'd actually taken a formal kind of ceremony, it's just a matter of how much is there and what the situation is - it is more realistic, that equals the situation, there isn't anything else.

Buddhadasa: Speaking from a personal point of view with regard to Brighton, I see Bodhisri has a similar sort of problem - we're talking in terms of special relationships with these people; but these already exist by very definition in the work we're doing now with them. This has already long been established and in a sense they wouldn't be doing what they are unless they did have this particular personal relationship. All we want - and all I personally want - is for them to have some physical manifestation of this, something tangible, and the obvious thing for me, it seems, is to use the existing thing, which is a Mitra, and become officially a Mitra, entitled to come on Mitra retreats, receive *Mitrata*, experience the comradeship, if you like, if that's the right word, the fellowship that's building up in the existing Mitra system in London, feel part of that, but at the same time realise that in a sense they are unique and they are contributing to the Mitra system in a place like Brighton and Finland.

Bodhisri: Do you have two Order members in Brighton?

Buddhadasa: Yes, we've got two Order members. And Sanghamitta as well.

Bodhisri: Could they act for those people as *kalyana mitras*?

Buddhadasa: Well, I'd feel personally very happy about taking on the numbers that I have in mind. Those people who have expressed interest in becoming Mitras. I don't think that -

Subhuti: How many is that?

Buddhadasa: At least eight. I don't feel at all overwhelmed by the prospect at all. (*Voices.*) It's just a continuation of what I'm doing already.

S: There is a precedent in New Zealand, by the way. I think there are one or two Order members there who have seven or eight Mitras.

Ananda: It seems to me that a critical factor is the existing relationship, and if Buddhadasa, I feel, has that relationship anyway and is fairly closely in contact with those people, I don't see any harm in giving it a formal statement and making them feel that they've got that - the blessing of the Order.

S: The only question is whether the *kalyana mitras* concerned feel ready for that responsibility. If they are, then that is of course a positive factor.

Ananda: Presumably that relationship in a sense exists already, then that implies responsibility or readiness for responsibility.

Buddhadasa: Well, it certainly exists in my case. Vessantara's a new arrival, so we'll have to ask Vessantara how he feels about this.

Bodhisri: Our Friends in Finland, they would accept Vajrabodhi and me. They said that we are to them.

Sanghamitta: Well, I wouldn't say there was any difficulty in Brighton with Buddhadasa accepting those because they're in and out all the time, aren't they? (*laughter*) in that

sense with them all participating all the time, isn't it? And then It's a unique situation.

S: It seems as though Brighton is a bit exceptional, partly also as I said on account of its closeness to London.

Dharmapala: Is it not the case, though, that all *kalyana mitras* have this sort of relationship before they become that formally?

_____: Not in every case.

Sanghamitta: I don't think it should be made a general rule. I think it should be exceptions to the rule, and passed by other Order members - you know, they see the situation as it is, and other Order members who are also seeing the situation from both sides and accept that situation. I don't think it should by any means become a general rule,

Aryamitra: I must say from my experience of being down in Brighton I see that it's almost already - without the name and ceremony there's Mitra-*kalyana mitras* there. Buddhadasa's *kalyana mitra* to a few people there, and it's just working contact and communication.

Lokamitra: First of all, if you want to really discuss this, we have to see whether Vessantara and perhaps Sanghamitta would be prepared, and whether we would accept them as taking on those people, or we'd have to see an alternative. We'd have to find an alternative situation.

Subhuti: To start with, Padmaraja has accepted Peter Deadman.

Padmaraja: It hasn't been officially agreed at an Order meeting yet.

S: I think we're getting into a bit matters of detail. I think we ought to leave questions of this sort to smaller meetings of the Order, because time is going on, and we've got quite a lot to discuss -

Lokamitra: Can I - it's just a matter of general principle here, Bhante? I think it's unlikely that people will agree to Vessantara and Sanghamitta taking on so many people immediately, and I would like to suggest that an exception is made here, and perhaps used in certain other cases where there is only one Order member who knows the people well, and that is that some sort of relationship be recognised, perhaps by the tying of a thread and through a ritual with you, and through perhaps the verses that are used in the Mitra relationship, but just with one person. In these cases, that person looking after that Centre obviously has to be very strong and very capable, otherwise they wouldn't be looking after that Centre or branch or whatever the case is. And -

Sanghamitta: Sanghamitta's not capable.

_____: I don't think it should be just one person looking after I think it should be two, I think it's quite important.

Lokamitra: Well, I do too, but it would be -

_____: - even for.....

Lokamitra: It would be something -

Marichi: In a way, it would be connected with that person

Lokamitra: I can't understand what the problem is. It seems to me that if you've got a Centre or a branch or whatever, where the Mitra system can't work, then you say quite clearly the Mitra system doesn't work here, and you wait until the system is capable of working at that Centre. When you can make it work at that Centre, you start having Mitras; before that, you don't.

Nagabodhi: I suggest generally something like this, that assuming perhaps that talking about Pujas we're going to perhaps drop the Refuges and Precepts from the Puja, so the element of commitment is in a way explicitly going to fade out of use for general Friends; I would have thought that the first stage for a Friend is to make a kind of personal declaration of commitment which could be perhaps the Precepts - obviously not the Refuges. Then the next stage would be when it's really getting quite close to ordination - that is the time when he looks for the *kalyana mitra* relationship as it were, for the -

S: This is virtually what I referred to before as a ceremony for becoming a Friend.

Nagabodhi: Something like that, yes.

S: This is really what you're suggesting.

Nagabodhi: It takes the emphasis in the early stage off the relationship, which doesn't mean to say there isn't one, but it provides for the individual the important, the ritual expression of a deepening commitment, from being somebody interested

_____: (*Voices.*)

Bodhisri: people.... ask for talking about it, it's gone past that stage of being a Friend.

S: Which isn't to say that there isn't a case for having a stage of being a Friend in a quite general sense, yes.

(*end of side one, side two*)

Subhuti: But whatever solution we do find to this specific situation existing in Brighton and Finland and so forth, it's going to be in the nature of a stopgap. It's not going to be a full *kalyana mitra* system. Do you see what I mean?

_____: provisional until such time as you get the Mitra system working in these different Centres.

Subhuti: Yes, but if we do, say, have a ceremony for becoming a Friend, that will to some extent fill the need that is felt in Brighton for some sort of formal -

Buddhadasa: I doubt it very much, because they are very familiar with the Mitra system, they know about it -

Subhuti: They're not going to be able to get the Mitra system as it really should be.

Marichi: They'd at least have some official recognition for their deepening commitment. (*Voices.*)

Buddhadasa: But people will not have experienced the Mitra system. (*Voices.*)

Bodhisri: only one *kalyana mitra* - I really think it is important that they have contact

with two *kalyana mitras*, a close relationship. (Voices.)

Ananda: Then you'd end up with the concept of the second-class Mitras

Aryamitra: They are going to be, if you like, second-class Mitras

S: I think it's mainly a question, in the case of Brighton, [of] whether in view of the general situation we can stretch things a bit or not, and whether they can be stretched or not depends mainly on the potential *kalyana mitras*. They have been stretched a little bit in New Zealand, and it seems to be working all right.

Mangala: In the case of Brighton, I feel resentment for example about Padmaraja to be as Mitras.

Bodhisri: Would Vessantara and Sanghamitta have to take on eight

Sanghamitta: No, I must make it quite clear I've no intention at the moment of taking on any Friends, so that would leave Vessantara. (Voices.)

Padmaraja: mean that we haven't agreed even that Vessantara can take on

Sanghamitta: in that sense, Buddhadasa is more able at the moment to take on outside the usual number than I am to take on the others, because I'm not on the spot all the time, and I don't consider that I've been quite into the Order long enough, and fit enough in myself to do this job yet, with taking on *Shabda*. I just want to feel my way in and be ready for it, because I don't think it's fair to the Mitra and myself.

Buddhadasa: I'd like to emphasise that, in the case of Vessantara and myself, if we do take on these eight people, at least eight, possibly one or two more, it's not a question of taking them on. They are already on, we've already got them. What we want is for this to be recognised by the Order and that the title Mitra be given to these people. It's quite important that it should be done at a particular time, certainly over the next two or three months, because we have a tremendous surge of interest at the moment, and we're ready to move ahead, there's a solid body of people there who are already in a sense committed, and it's quite important just to give them this little recognition, so we can move ahead and we can move out from Brighton and go into places like, Lewes - we're not going to stop. But we must keep moving, and if we hold up the Mitra system now we're holding up development.

Lokamitra: I don't think that's necessarily so. I don't think you can lay that down as a -

_____: No, I don't think so either.

Vajradaka: I'd like to say something here, and that is that a natural kind of *kalyana mitra*-Mitra relationship does usually grow in a Centre where one person starts that Centre, or goes to that Centre; it showed itself in Brighton and it showed itself in Glasgow. So you get a situation like in Brighton and in Glasgow where you have eight - well, in the case of Glasgow, eight people who originally came into a pre-ordination class because they were interested in discovering about the Dharma, about the Friends and about ordination; and in the course of that time getting a closer relationship with myself in Glasgow and Buddhadasa in Brighton, and a sort of natural *kalyana mitrata* developed. Now Buddhadasa feels that it's necessary to regularise it in Brighton. Well, that's a particular thing for Brighton; I don't particularly feel it's necessary in Glasgow at the moment. But if he feels that it's a necessary development for Brighton, then maybe he should be allowed to do that.

Nagabodhi: It's a matter of asking what is he in fact being allowed to do that isn't what he's

doing already?

Vajradaka: Well, say for example, he is a lone *kalyana mitra* to certain people, or that he can just formalise that, he can become a lone *kalyana mitra* to certain people.

_____: There's Vessantara as well.

S: And also Padmaraja in the case of at least one of those Mitras.

Vajradaka: OK, so then the situation can be quite irregular: that one person can have one *kalyana mitra*, another person can have two *kalyana mitras*.

Sanghamitta: In exceptional circumstances, to be put before the Order

S: I must say I don't feel happy at all about just one *kalyana mitra*. I think this goes against the whole basic system. (*Voices.*)

Asvajit:suggested that we should have just one *kalyana mitra*. I don't think that's what Buddhadasa has suggested.

S: No, this isn't what Buddhadasa has suggested, no.

_____: What about formalising the element of the Friend? It seems that - this may be some kind of digression, I don't know, I don't think so - looking at it generally, a sort of total picture, that there are at the moment within the whole Movement, Friends, Mitras, Order members of various kinds, and perhaps the Friends have not as it were received any sort of formal recognition of their Friendship, of that special kind of relationship that *they* have that is not really recognised in any particular way, they are just Friends, and that's that. But in many cases they are far from as it were ordinary people. They are Friends with a big capital F, and perhaps that does mean sort of - well, not sort of, but perhaps it does need formalising in some kind of way. Because they do feel that they are - well, they're not Mitras, the Mitra system can't extend to them in their particular case for various reasons, but that they are very, very much Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.

_____: Brighton as soon as possible, that there are people who fit that category, possibly, of Friends, but there is also this other category of Mitras.

_____: because we had a very clear definition between those people who were in the ordination training group, because and all the people had only had contact with me and they had to come to special meetings, and it was made very clear that it was a very special group of people, that they all thought very carefully before they were accepted, that it was discussed with the already existing group before anyone else was taken into the group, it was a closed group and they communicated with the group when they were not able to come to meetings and so on, they had this basic system of discussion and study and as far as I remember they all seemed to feel that they were very special, and they were definitely in training

S: But that was before the *kalyana mitra* system was introduced or known about.

_____: even when no possibility of them, in fact it was even before the time But we all felt perfectly -

S: But then the possibility in that case was ordination. But since then we've introduced the intermediate step. So it seems to me that we must -

_____:(going on non-stop) *kalyana mitra* system I presume can still be ordained, like Maitreya in Finland.

S: Oh yes. But what I feel is that we must be careful we don't as it were change horses in midstream. We talked a few days ago about new Centres, and I emphasised that in future new Centres should be started by teams of Order members. So if there were teams of Order members - say there were five Order members - supposing there had been five Order members in Brighton, there would have been no question at all. But if we have already as it were allowed, say, two or three Order members to start a Centre, then obviously the people who come along are going to be drawn into relationship with those two or three Order members; it would seem to logically follow that inasmuch as we've allowed these two or three to set up that Centre, we have also to allow those two or three between them to take on whoever wants to be Mitras. Admittedly, it isn't a perfect situation, but it is because the whole system is imperfect in certain respects.

Lokamitra: If there are five Order members it's unlikely that for some time five Order members will be able to go *en bloc* somewhere, that you have also thought in terms of two or three Order members and two or three Mitras, in which case the system would be the same as in Brighton or in Glasgow.

S: But I think the point is that you've got your two or three Order members in a particular place, and people are coming to them anyway and forming relationships with them; there seems to me very little point in not regularising that. Even though admitting that it is an intermediate position and not a perfect situation, but we've invited that situation by actually allowing two or three people to set up a Centre. So this is the logical consequence.

Nagabodhi: if you start making modifications within the Mitra system, the existing structure, we have for example in London at least nine people, I think, who definitely would be Mitras if there were *kalyana mitras* available. They're going to hear about Brighton, they're going to say 'Can't we start?'

S: But in the case of Buddhadasa, he feels perfectly able to take this on; not simply to take it on but to continue. Whereas I think, from all that I hear, *kalyana mitras* in London feel they just can't take on any more people.

Nagabodhi: What I'm saying is slightly different from that, in a way. I feel that once Buddhadasa is people in Brighton who have heard about the *kalyana mitras*, I just feel that people in London who the only reason they can't be Mitras is almost for exactly the same reason, because there aren't any *kalyana mitras* available.

Buddhadasa: It's not only that they've heard about the Mitra system; they need the Mitra system. (*Voices.*)

_____: if we hadn't heard about the Mitra system - thinking about

_____: But people in London need that too, that's what (*Voices.*)

S: The point is - it's not just a question of people's need, but whether the need can be met. If it can be met in Brighton, it doesn't mean that it has to be met in London when conditions are quite different, and it can't be met in London.

Nagabodhi: This is, in a way, a reversal of what we've been saying. If it can be met in London, -

S: No, there's the question of whether it's psychologically and spiritually possible. If

Buddhadasa was to say, 'I can't possibly take on seven or eight Mitras', well then the matter ends: Brighton people just have to wait. And I gather that this is what *kalyana mitras* say in London: we just can't take on any more. But Buddhadasa is not saying that.

Lokamitra: But he's got now eight or ten people. Now these are the people most involved in the Brighton group, and Brighton's only been going a year. Now the people who are going to commit themselves in the way that these ten people - is going to increase at more than 10 a year, because as more come more will come along. So he's going to feel the need to extend this very quickly to more and more people -

Buddhadasa: No, that's not true.

Lokamitra: - which is going to make - (*Voices*) Yes, but they won't be ordained for a year or two.

Buddhadasa: That's right.

Lokamitra: So in that year or two, what are you going to do with all those other people, maybe another 40 at this rate, who come along?

Buddhadasa: Well, it will be very practical that we can't absorb them as Mitras bearing in mind that other Order members may percolate down to Brighton, having quite prepared to take them on, on the old basis of one -

Lokamitra: They may do, but they may not. They may go off to Newcastle or they may go off to Birmingham.

Buddhadasa: This is perfectly true. You are talking in terms of possibilities, so am I.

Lokamitra: The *probabilities*, I'm talking about.

Buddhadasa: But if -

S: No, just a - I think we're getting far too much into detail. And I think we have to, or I have to, call a moratorium here. I think also there's another point that we haven't mentioned before, which is: here we're discussing, in a Convention, matters which really belong to a smaller meeting of the Order, especially of those more immediately concerned. For instance, when we did it in New Zealand, nobody was consulted at all, it just seemed to me that that was the only way to do things, as I was going to be away for a year and a half from New Zealand; so we just set up the whole system there, and no one here was consulted. So it seems to me that, having heard what everybody has to say, the best thing will be that if in the fairly near future I get together with those in and around Brighton who are immediately concerned, and just myself decide what is best to be done, since I've heard now what everybody, practically, has to say, and I think otherwise the discussion just can be endless. (*Murmurs of agreement.*)

Bodhisri: Can I just say before I think only three people

S: Three people ready to be Mitras? Yes.

Bodhisri: Yes. And we would be four Order members.

S: Well, let's think about it.

Padmaraja: More to the point: even if Buddhadasa is capable of taking on eight Mitras - which I'm sure he is - there's got to be another *kalyana mitra* in Brighton, and at the moment there isn't, who can also share that responsibility.

S: There's also a factor which hasn't been mentioned yet, which is the extent to which I may myself be personally involved. Because originally, obviously, I was involved in London, so the possibility is that if I feel any particular weakness in the workings of the *kalyana mitra* system in any particular Centre, it's open to me to take a more active involvement there, so as to make up that lack of whatever might be lacking. So this also must not be forgotten.

_____: That brings me on to a different point. That was, Padmaraja said that one of the reasons for the system was to replace personal contact with you.

S: As regards London. But I may have to do a London elsewhere.

_____: OK; but I want else now. -

S: It doesn't mean that I've vowed never again to concern myself. I reserve my right to interfere in (*laughter.*)

_____: That wasn't my point. My point is: do the Mitras really feel that their *kalyana mitras* do in any way replace the contact with you? Because I've often heard Mitras saying, 'How are we meant to develop any kind of relation? We don't know Bhante.' I wondered what everybody else

S: You see, when I spoke of replacing contact, I didn't mean that the Mitra in future would never have any contact with me, but that the as it were day-to-day arrangements for their study and their practice would be in the hands of their *kalyana mitras* and the Order generally, not in my hands as they had been formerly, in the case of the first Order members.

_____: But it does seem to me to be very important that they should feel a contact with you.

_____: I think most Mitras obviously want to meet Bhante at some point if they haven't,

S: Well, one of the things I thought of was, as I have done recently, inviting a few Mitras to study retreats; and that seems to work very well, and to be very fruitful.

_____: I think an important point that follows, and I think it comes up later in Padmaraja's report, about *kalyana mitras* should be in contact with the Order. I think what that means, in more specific terms, is a regular personal contact with the Order,, a quite positive contact with the Order and with you - a positive feeling, and I think that that is lacking at any particular time, Mitra concerned

S: Well, this brings us to the difficulties in the working of the existing system. This is one of the things that we were going to talk about. So perhaps we should get on to this, it's No. 3 actually. We have really covered 'present extent', and then we got on to various other things. The second is 'preparation for commitment'. Perhaps we could leave that for the moment. And the third is 'resolution of difficulties'. Perhaps we should then take up that. I know there have been instances where *kalyana mitras* were very much out of contact with the Order, and with me too; including one who had quite a number of Mitras. I'm thinking at the moment of Mamaki, who was out of contact for about six months or more.

_____: We're talking in terms of the system, individual relationship, a few misplaced words *kalyana mitra* out of contact can do a great deal of harm to the relationship.

_____: I think one of the safeguards, perhaps, which that we have at present is the fact that when the Mitra becomes a Mitra it brings them very much in much more contact with a lot of other Order members.

Abhaya: What did you say brings them in a lot of contact?

_____: Well, the mere fact that they are a Mitra brings the Mitra in far more contact, a lot of closer contact with other Order members, very much so. And I think that's a kind of a bit of a safeguard against a Mitra - I think, to use a phrase of Bhante's - kind of a weak reed or even a sort of broken reed, rather than an Order member being strong - if only the Mitra gets a weak Order member - someone who's got psychological problems and all sorts of difficulties and things like that, then well OK, then they've got that in that Order member. But nevertheless they are by the mere nature of their relationship, in far more contact with other Order members.

_____: I think that's true, Mitra concerned, relationship with their *kalyana mitras* is the really important thing, and people would be quite shaken. even if they had day-to-day contact with a lot of other Order members, that relationship. I don't think that - the contact with other Order members does offset to a certain extent but -

S: It's like, in a way, having a good relationship with uncle and auntie, but it doesn't really make up for a bad relationship with your own parents.

Nagabodhi: What we do - all we can do, in a way - is to try and talk to the *kalyana mitras* concerned, and remind them of their responsibilities, and - But I just wonder sometimes whether there is a case for going further than that; suggesting maybe within an Order meeting that relationship doesn't continue.

S: Has anybody ever felt, in any particular instance, that this might have to be considered?

Nagabodhi: I'm beginning to think so. (*Murmurs of agreement.*)

_____: the Mitras sometimes feel that their *kalyana mitras* aren't fulfilling their function. I think sometimes that can be a mistaken view, but I think sometimes it's true.

_____: A Mitra obviously doesn't understand the way the Order works, and they may feel that they're in contact with other Order members if their relationship with their *kalyana mitra* is not completely good, and not working. But their chances of illumination(?)
..... It may be a bit reactive and a bit subjective, but there also might be an objective
.....

S: I think we have to be very careful from the Mitra's point of view about withdrawing or changing a *kalyana mitra*.

_____:

S: Because it's a sort of open criticism of the *kalyana mitra*, virtually, and in a way indirectly of the Order itself for agreeing that that particular *kalyana mitra* should ever *be* a *kalyana mitra*.

Dharmapala: This comes up a lot, I think, because perhaps there hasn't been the natural

relationship before they are made a formal relationship. I think that's a point we must bear in mind.

S: Has that actually happened in these particular cases that we might be considering?

_____: Yes, in one

Lokamitra: Seems to me that the strongest thing is that we should insist, before someone becomes a *kalyana mitra*, that they do accept, and they're expected to accept this upon ordination, that they come to Order meetings *every* time possible; no pet excuses. And we can't expect people, or we can't demand it of people who are already out of contact with other *kalyana mitras*; we can say that they should come, but we can't - But in future, there should just be the safeguard, it should be made absolutely clear.

Abhaya: You're insisting that *kalyana mitras* should attend Order meetings?

Lokamitra: Always! I mean every *upasaka* should, anyway, but -

S: In a way this throws a little light on what we were talking about previously. It's better to be, say, the tenth Mitra of a really good *kalyana mitra* that you're in contact with than the single Mitra of a *kalyana mitra* who is not really able to fulfil his or her function. (*Agreement.*) So there's not only the question of a definite number to be taken into consideration, but the actual quality of the individual *kalyana mitra*. One *kalyana mitra* might cope just as easily with ten or with five or with four as somebody else with one. When I mentioned four originally, this was not intending to quantify anything, but from what I knew of the majority of Order members in London who might qualify for being *kalyana mitras*, it seems to me that they couldn't take on more than four.

Lokamitra: Also, there's the case that there's so much work to be done that effectively a lot of people are *kalyana mitras* to many more people; so they can't take on more because they've got so many others, basically.

Sona: As the system grows and the *maha-upasakas* take on *kalyana mitras*, it seems as though that will probably become their main function.

S: Yes, yes.

Sona: Will they then have a lot of Mitras?

S: It might well be so. If they were people who were as it were making it their special function within the Movement, to help Mitras, yes. We might well have some people doing nothing else except work with Mitras, yes.

Are there any other difficulties which have arisen in the actual workings of the system?

Vajradaka: One that I can think of, and that was Brighton in the very first *kalyana mitra*-Mitra relationships - there was like for example Asvajit and myself became the *kalyana mitras* of Ray Drew, and then shortly after that - we didn't know that we were going to move - then both of us did move out of London, leaving as it were Ray on his own; and even though I go and see Ray every time I'm in London I do see that it isn't enough.

_____: Mitra very difficult to keep up contact.

S: Though, of course, you did take on that difficult assignment knowingly, and just intending

to do the best you could. (*Inaudible talk.*)

_____:lifelong mitra, you take the Mitra with you if you go somewhere else.

S: Maybe you do. Depends on the mobility of the Mitra.

_____: It's obviously going to occur quite a lot,

S: Well, this is one of the factors that have to be taken into consideration, because the team can well consist of Order members and Mitras, and will be all the better for you having your seasoned Mitra with you, who you know is fairly near to ordination anyway. It's much easier to work with a person like that.

_____: is talking in terms of Mitras who never become Order members

_____: It's a possibility, isn't it?

Ananda: This brings up the question in my mind, Bhante, in connection with that, of the termination of the Mitra relationship, request.

S: Well, presumably it's by mutual consent, and then - if someone, for instance, loses interest in the faith, well then presumably he lets his *kalyana mitra* know, and the *kalyana mitra* passes the information on to the Order.

Ananda: So there's no need to have any resignation apart from ... ?

S: I don't think so. He or she will cease to get *Mitrata*; that's about all there is to it.

Ananda: In a sense we shouldn't regard this as a particular failure of the system. In a way, it's not intended that every Mitra has to eventually end up ordained.

S: Systems neither succeed or fail. It's just a piece of machinery.

Ananda: Succeed in accordance with an objective.

S: The objective is to provide facilities, not to process people into *upasakas*. [Laughter] We provide the facilities, it's entirely up to individuals whether they make use of those or not. If they don't make use of the facilities, the system hasn't failed; only in such cases where we haven't provided the facilities adequately, but that is a quite different thing.

_____: How long is a relationship to run before [it is] considered as failed?

S: Mere length doesn't render it more and more near to failure. Someone might be quite happy just to be a Mitra indefinitely, but then if you want to be a Mitra indefinitely you mustn't be surprised if your *kalyana mitra* goes elsewhere and does other things after a few years. Because you, in a way, remain stationary; you don't want to move on to ordination; so you don't really need your *kalyana mitra* very much if you just want to remain where you are.

Ananda: In a sense, it's better if you do have a very long, even stationary relationship, than no contact at all.

S: I don't know. I'm not prepared to generalise.

Nagabodhi: I think also if there was some kind of intermediary state like recognition of

being a Friend, people would probably only be I would see Mitraship upgraded indefinitely ordination and so far it's very unlikely to become a Mitra with the idea that they might be a Mitra for ever. Probably with a very definite idea that it's their training for ordination.

S: Well, perhaps then we could come back to this topic of preparation for commitment. At present, the preparation as regards facilities seems to be fairly thorough. There's *Mitrata*, there's study groups, there are Mitra and *kalyana mitra* retreats. And there's the individual contact, maybe most important of all, between the *kalyana mitras* and the Mitras.

_____: people who are involved are very different, expect them to conform to a standard pattern, and lose sight of people's individual characters. Even another idea of what a 'good' Mitra is and what a 'bad' Mitra is.

S: Yes, right!

_____: Which in fact is a false distinction. There are many ways I think we have to bear that in mind.

Bodhisri: I think I've got that impression too from my Mitras, that there is this idea that people have that one does things in the right way and in the wrong way. And I answer to that that really being a Mitra is preparing oneself for ordination, it's not a question of doing the right thing and not doing the wrong thing. I think we do have to bear this in mind.

S: And the basic thing, after all, is to remain in contact with your *kalyana mitra*. And presumably there is the possibility of someone being prepared for ordination, and receiving ordination, being prepared by their *kalyana mitras* individually, and perhaps never having attended a study retreat or a *kalyana mitra* retreat. That theoretical possibility does exist.

Vajradaka: I heard once somebody saying, an Order member saying, that such-and-such a Friend was worth ten Mitras; which I thought was a pretty terrible thing to say. It sort of makes it look like sheep.

_____: I think we have to be careful in that terminology.

Lokamitra: On the whole, I think that's the exception, and I think that any system like that will lead to this sort of thinking to some extent within those who are members, and I don't think it's on the whole important that Order members are people who think like this. I think it's - you're a Mitra and obviously at times you're going to think that there are certain things you have to fulfil

S: Well, there are facilities which are provided, and the facilities that we provide in the form of *Mitrata* and the study groups and the Mitra- *kalyana mitra* retreats will certainly help most Mitras to clarify their commitment and prepare them for commitment. And most Mitras will no doubt wish to take advantage of those particular facilities as provided. But we mustn't forget that there may be the odd Mitra who just doesn't like to do things in that way, or who perhaps shouldn't do things in that way. In such a case, of course, all the more responsibility will come on the *kalyana mitras*, and perhaps on the Mitra himself or herself. But there is the possibility of someone preparing himself or herself for commitment entirely outside the standard facilities that most Mitras are taking advantage of.

Dhammadinna: question of time. Some people get into things very quickly, some people take a lot longer to get round to them.

S: It might well be that a couple of *kalyana mitras* come along with a Mitra whom they are

convinced is completely ready for ordination, but that Mitra might not have attended any of the standard facilities.

Nagabodhi: There are other facilities we provide, for example, fund-raising. Although it has its objective purpose for raising money, it is actually a facility we provide to Friends and Mitras, and I think that's quite a good way of looking at this. Some Mitras are going to want to take advantage of that facility, others maybe not. This is certainly one of the areas of confusion sometimes in my mind, I think in some minds, certainly in Mitras' minds, - 'I ought to be doing that'. Maybe it would be good for their development, maybe not.

S: In a way, all the activities are facilities for Mitras, but there are others specifically provided for them in view of their interest in ordination. But even so, we mustn't forget the possibility of some people preparing themselves merely through more intensive contact with their *kalyana mitras* and their own perhaps more intensive practice on their own. We may have sort of freelance Mitras, practically, apart from their contact with their own *kalyana mitras*.

.....: facilities provided should have the feel of being optional when

S: I think no doubt the majority will definitely attend, and certainly if someone is slacking something should be done about it. But I don't think it should be regarded as absolutely, as it were, compulsory, and someone who doesn't participate in all the Mitra activities is not a good Mitra, you put a little mental black mark against his name.

Bodhisri: That kind of thing does seem to happen sometimes, that I think you have to notice it.

S: It's connected with this whole general question of the 'good' person, the 'good Buddhist', the 'good Order member', the 'good Mitra'.

Nagabodhi: On the other hand - well, not really on the other hand, but equally, the *kalyana mitra* has a perfect right - anyone has a perfect right - to say to anyone what they think of that person's non-attendance.

S: Right, indeed, yes.

Vajradaka: It's quite often you get people who are so, so, so good for so long and suddenly they turn out to be real horrors.

S: No, say it the other way, say after a long, long time they turn out to be really delightful!

Anyway, I think we'll stop there, because it's coffee time.

(Break)

S: All right, we have had a fairly general discussion about the *kalyana mitra* system. We've also considered the special situation in Brighton, and we've touched on various difficulties. But we haven't very much time left. I think what we'd better do now is to ask Padmaraja just to refresh our memories about those last few queries that he raised, so that if there is anything there that he wants considered, or even decided upon, that we haven't settled so far, we can spend some time doing it now.

Padmaraja: We touched on most of the points, actually, but -

S: Just check through, then.

Padmaraja: Such as what to do when *kalyana mitras* are unable to fulfil their responsibilities at a personal level.

S: I think what emerged from that was that other *upasakas* and *upasikas* should take the matter up very seriously with the *kalyana mitra* concerned, if it was felt that he or she wasn't fulfilling their part of the relationship. Have we had to do this yet in any cases? Or are there any cases that we ought to be doing it in? (*Voices.*)

Ananda: I'm not quite sure what to say about Chanda. I hear it's not going all that well, and maybe I'll personally follow it up

S: All right, thank you.

Ananda: Well, Chanda and his Mitra Jane -

_____: Well, I'm the other one.

Ananda: Oh, you're the other one; well, what I heard was (*noise*) he's sort of given her up, in a way, and that she was wanting to go back into other fields, like spiritualism, and he said that she should be allowed to do that, shouldn't pull her back into Buddhism.

Padmaraja: Well, Jane was on the *kalyana mitra*-Mitra retreat, and she was - it was very good for her. (*Voices.*)

Ananda: ... obviously hit something

Padmaraja: Chanda more than anybody has really had regular contact with her, he's been really good. (*Voices*)

_____: I saw you shaking your head at something, say what you think.

Vessantara: I was shaking my head at Ananda's report, if it was true.

S: Obviously, something has passed which has given Ananda cause for concern. Because Chanda apparently did say that.

Ananda: He did, yes.

S: So even if the situation isn't like that, it means that Chanda has misunderstood the situation so that it's still something to be cleared up, and perhaps that should be done anyway.

_____: I don't that has been done.

S: So perhaps it would be good if you'd check up about that. But if she's gone back to spiritualism and virtually is out of touch with the Movement. Because if he is under that impression, presumably it should be corrected and -

_____: and certainly Jane isn't out of touch with the Movement, she's just spent two weeks on a *kalyana mitra* retreat.

Ananda: Ah well, then,

_____: She's (Voices.)

S: Anyway, have a talk with Chanda none the less, to make sure that he is fully in touch with the situation.

_____: I think another one is Mamaki.

S: Yes. Does anyone know whether she will be coming along later in the week?

_____: She's given no indication.

_____: I thought she said something like she was going to (Voices agreeing.)

_____: Yes, on the Continent

_____: With Mamaki and and myself, that's a relationship there, I was just saying to Nagabodhi that in a sense I've never ever really felt that Mamaki - I don't feel that - I don't feel in contact at all with Mamaki. I don't feel *any* contact.

Aryamitra: I think there's going to be a bit of a change in the future. Mamaki has expressed - she's come to Order meetings at Aryatara, they've only just started but she has been very happy coming along there, and she's enjoyed the smaller number of people. And I personally feel that Mamaki *is* going to get more in touch with the Order in this way in the future, and [I've] personally had contact with her.

Ananda: One of the reasons that she felt it's a real drag going up to Archway, through the rush hour,

_____: seeing Mitras, then?

_____: It's not just being out of touch, it's giving Mitras a negative impression of the Movement.

_____: And that comes up through being out of touch.

_____: Partly, yes.

_____: That's a very complex question.

_____: Yes, I feel Mamaki.

S: Right, good.

Manjuvajra: Are we discussing *kalyana mitras* or the relationships ?

S: Could you say that again, I'm not quite clear?

Manjuvajra: Well, let me be more specific, and that is the position of Janet in Cornwall. It is very difficult, I realise, the whole situation. And I'm not sure if anything could perhaps be done about that -

(end of side)

Tape 8, side 1

about that in a positive way.

S: I'm not sure, and maybe lots of other people aren't, what the situation *is* that is difficult, so maybe someone could say a few words about that, to put us in the picture.

_____: Shall I, or would - ?

Manjuvajra: Yes. Well, briefly, it was a difficult situation to start off with. (*Noise.*) There is a Friend in Cornwall called Janet. She came into contact with, she has friends in London, and they She was very much into and some physical thingsand there was some difficulty in finding two *kalyana mitras* for her, and it turned out that those two *kalyana mitras* happened to be in London and that was Marichi and Mangala, and the contact has not been very good, really, at all, and Marichi has made quite has made quite a lot of effort in that direction. But she certainly feels out of contact with her *kalyana mitras*, and I think she feels a bit resentful because that contact isn't there.

_____: the same personal contact

S: What about the possibility of her moving to London?

_____: That's

Manjuvajra: That could be changed, and she may not be moving to London.

S: Well, people have to make up their minds what they want. You can't insist on having things your way, and the things you want where you want them, and the contact brought down to you.

Marichi: I suspect she's moving without

Manjuvajra: I think it's likely that she may stay in Cornwall, with various changes, it may be that she may want a more, a much stronger contact with the *kalyana mitras*.

S: It depends how strongly she wants it. As far as I know, she is in a position to move to London and find work in London. If she feels the need of that contact strongly enough, then she will move to London, and should move to London.

Mangala: I have written to her. I haven't heard from her for several months. I postcard

_____:

_____: Can you speak up, please?

_____: Sorry, Manjuvajra. The possibilities are there that she tends towards paranoia and withdrawal

_____: on your part

_____: No, it's not quite that in Cornwall (*Voices inaudible.*)

S: We did try - we went all out to provide her with *kalyana mitras*, which she very, very much wanted, and there were certain difficulties in the early stages. And we made a very great effort to provide *kalyana mitras* just because she was so desperate to have them, as it

were, and we really stretched ourselves to do it. I just wonder whether there's been a corresponding effort on her part.

_____:

Asvajit: I found her very difficult to communicate with. She seemed to make very little effort on her part to communicate with me. Of course, I don't know the details of difficult - perhaps one shouldn't even make generalisations at all, but certainly she is a difficult person. And it seems that she really wants to get on, she should have much more contact with the Order and with the Movement.

_____: She's unfortunate ... has a difficult personality needs a great deal of effort ...

S: Well, perhaps it should be put to her plainly that she *is* a difficult personality, and that if she wants really to get over that and make progress she needs a really concentrated attention, and if the mountain can't go to Mohammed, Mahommed will just have to go to the mountain. It just depends how serious she is. I think perhaps it should be put to her quite bluntly - that with the best will in the world we can't give you the sort of attention which it seems now that you need, from London; you'll just have to come up, if you do take the whole question of developing yourself sufficiently seriously. If you don't, well, that's your decision.

Mangala: I'll be going down to see her, actually, probably in

S: I think the more bluntly it's put, probably, the better.

_____: A man ! (*laughter.*)

S: Make sure that the situation is discussed fully and frankly. I have the idea that there are - I have the suspicion or feeling that there are one or two X factors involved. I think you'd better dig them out and discuss the situation quite frankly and fully, otherwise there's no point in it.

_____: I did situation in London Order member blantly You chose to become a Mitra and -

S: And then you chose to go away?

_____:

S: Yes, if people as it were unilaterally put themselves in situations where they're out of reach, they can't really blame us if we don't run to their rescue when they feel the need.

Lokamitra: I think up to now quite a few Mitras have been much too lightly. I remember at Order meetings people have said, when objections have been raised: 'Well, if they want to be a Mitra, then they should be a Mitra. Yes, and there should be *kalyana mitras* for them.' But it shouldn't be as simple as that: they should really - at the moment, when there's a shortage of *kalyana mitras*, they should be hammering at our gates to become Mitras, in a way.

_____: Well, they are.

_____: They are, yes.

Lokamitra: Some of them are now, yes.

S: Any other individual difficulties of this kind, *kalyana mitras*? Probably not.

Ananda: to what extent people with outside commitments like myself - and there are one or two others - should attempt to concern themselves with - in other words, take on - Mitras and Friends and involve oneself in that way over and above one's other commitments it - necessarily for the time being I'm going in a different direction.

S: Well, everybody has to weigh up his own capacity, whatever the other factors are. We can't decide or generalise. If you are approached by someone who asks you, 'Will you please be my *kalyana mitra*?' you have to decide, in the first place. If you feel happy about it, all right, then take the next step of raising it at an Order meeting. If you don't feel happy about it, well, there, so far as you are concerned, the matter ends.

_____: It's a question of distance

S: But, again, it's for *you* to decide. If you feel that, never mind, there is a distance, but I'm going to go every weekend - OK, that's your decision.

_____: This did come up with someone who did ask to be a *kalyana mitra* and considered that it was too hard, But this could happen again.

S: It's not any cut-and-dried question of a certain number of miles, or a certain amount of time. Even supposing, say, a Mitra is in London and the *kalyana mitra* in Norfolk: if the *kalyana mitra* feels ready to take it on, and ready to do justice to it, either by writing lots of letters or going down to London every weekend or every month - well, that's their personal decision, if they feel that they can do it. They can then put it to the Order. And if the Order is convinced, yes, that they're going to live up to that and will be actually doing that, fair enough, they can accept it.

_____: you can't actually do that frequently.

S: I'm not laying down any sort of general rule. It's up to the individual to decide in the first place whether he thinks he can, or she thinks she can, be a *kalyana mitra* under those circumstances - then you tell the other Order members. They may agree, or they may express some scepticism, or they may want to know exactly how you are going to do it. If you can convince them, well, fair enough. But I don't think we should lay down a general rule - if you're more than 100 miles away from your Mitra you can't have contact with them. If you feel that you are prepared to *bridge* that gap and *make* it possible, that's up to you. Otherwise you can live in the next *street* and not be in proper contact.

Nagabodhi: The particular Mitra involved, certainly,

_____: Well, the first ones, yes. (*Chat.*)

S: But it has to be considered on individual merits. Supposing that Mitra says, 'I know you're way up in Norfolk, but I'm going to come and see you; I promise that.' And if you feel that they really mean it, well, OK, consider the matter.

Nagabodhi: As I say with Carol, she was staying but I'm finding it very difficult to get hold of her in London. She's

S: Well, you have to assess the individual person, and you have to assess your own resources. It's very difficult to lay down general rules, but obviously the further away you are the more difficult it's going to be. The question is, recognising that: are you going to be able to do something about it, or are you *prepared* to make an extra effort to overcome that extra

difficulty?

_____: thinking about it a good idea just to see whether that other person feels like they might live up to their and you yourself.

_____: Would it be a good idea to have a trial? Because, you know, supposing one thinks that it would be a good idea for this particular person, who might have interests in common, even though the difficulty is very great, and the whole Order could say, well, no, of course, it can't happen, you're too far away. Would it not be fairer to see if it *could* happen, and to give it a chance of developing? And if it didn't, then we could say this isn't suitable.

S: Well, one might consider that, or the Order might consider that, -

_____: because otherwise you don't

S: Say, all right, let's see, bring it up in three months' time, and if during those three months your proposed Mitra has been in fact in regular contact and you with your proposed Mitra, all right, then we may consider formalising it. This could well be said.

Vessantara: It comes back in partly to saying about the *kalyana mitras* system being a formalisation of an already existing relationship. This is very important.

S: Right. Because supposing say someone was in Norfolk and somebody else was in London, and supposing at the end of three weeks it had been reported that, yes, they've met frequently and had already got a good relationship - well, there'd be no point in refusing to regularise that through the necessary ceremony. But supposing it proved too difficult, and they hadn't even been able to meet once: well, it's obvious then that it's not on.

Ananda: It seems more and more clear to me as we go through this question that the *kalyana mitra* formal ceremony, formal recognition of someone as a Mitra, is merely - well, not merely, but is essentially - a recognition of something existing. In other words, the Mitra can only come into existence after a certain period of pre-existing contact.

_____: I feel Mitras at this point are

Subhuti: Just in general have a sort of calling of the banns. it comes up on an Order day and it's decided then. I think we should bring it up on one Order day, or it's just raised and it shouldn't be decided until the next Order day.

S: That's a very good idea, yes. (*Chat.*)

_____: Or even the Order day after that, two or three months in which to definite approach to

S: And that would make, even if the Mitra ceremony hadn't been performed, that person would feel that they were probably on their way. (*Voices.*) Perhaps it would be good to say, let it be brought up at one Order meeting, and -

_____: Order day.

S: Order day. And raised and discussed at the next one, if possible settled, but if it were still not clear, the decision can be postponed to the month after that.

_____:

S: No, be careful, at least it can be brought up at that next Order meeting.

_____: If everyone's happy, then go ahead.

S: Then why not? Yes. (*Voices.*) And the Mitra knows that something is being done, or the proposed Mitra - something is happening.

Anyway, what was the next point, Padmaraja?

Padmaraja: What to do with difficulties. Sometimes insurmountable difficulties arise between Mitras and *kalyana mitras*.

S: By 'insurmountable difficulty' you mean the sort of complete breakdown of communication so that virtually there is no relationship between those two?

Padmaraja: Yes.

S: Has this happened in any case yet?

_____: Yes.

S: Yes? Could you mention those cases?

_____: I think it happened in the case of Mangala and

Mangala: I don't think that's true. I think maybe it's not pulling in the crowds exactly (*laughter*) more space between them - (*Voices.*)

S: Who is the other? Oh, the other is Ananda. Well, if you're not calling for help, then we needn't bother ... (*Voices.*)

Ananda: I'm very glad to hear that.

Aryamitra: This brings up the whole question of the communication between *kalyana mitras*. I mean you just found out that the relationship's going alright with Mangala. I mean you're the other *kalyana mitra*.

S: Also there seems to be a bit of lack of communication between Jinamata and Chanda earlier on. Or Chanda and Jinamata. (*Voices.*)

Ananda: I've been away for over a month.

Aryamitra: the *kalyana mitras* themselves keep in contact and communication about their Mitras, not just come to the Order meeting and say hello.

S: What was the other point, Padmaraja?

Padmaraja: What are the requirements to be expected from Order members who wish to become *kalyana mitras*, bearing in mind that ideally *kalyana mitras* should be *maha-upasakas*?

S: I think we have talked a little bit about this in the past. One could say quite a lot, evidently, couldn't one?

_____: Is that still your feeling? The correlation of *kalyana mitra* and *maha-upasaka*?

S: Eventually, yes. Yes. One of the important things that has emerged or re-emerged this morning has been that the *kalyana mitra*, or proposed *kalyana mitra*, in question should have a really positive relationship with the rest of the Order, and that an *upasaka* or *upasika* about whose relationship with the Order there is any doubt at all should not become a *kalyana mitra*. If they're a bit peripheral, or they have been perhaps a little bit negative towards the Order as a whole, they shouldn't become *kalyana mitras*. Because the *kalyana mitra* is the Mitra's link with the Order; which presupposes that the *kalyana mitra* himself or herself is fully in communication with the Order, with other Order members.

_____:

S: Yes, right. And also that the proposed *kalyana mitra* should be emotionally stable, and able to offer a bit of support if necessary; not be so overwhelmed by his or her own problems that they can't even think of their own Mitra. This happened in *****'s case, quite definitely. She didn't even want to see her Mitra, so she wrote to me, for about six months.

_____: Probably better that she didn't, in a way.

S: Better that she didn't, but unfortunate too. So only healthy, happy *upasakas* and *upasikas* should be allowed to become - Even if they're not all that well up in the Dharma technically, even that doesn't matter too much. If they really are in contact and communication with the Order, and they're quite positive and a bit outwardgoing and a bit friendly - that's mainly what is needed. They are not expected to function as teachers or gurus.

_____: Perhaps we shouldn't try!

S: If it happens like that, so much the better; it's a bonus for the Mitra concerned. But that's a bonus.

All right, any other points?

Padmaraja: Well, again, we've touched on this what to do when Mitras wish to terminate the Mitra-*kalyana mitra* relationship.

S: Well, if they on their side wish to terminate it, we accept that, obviously.

_____:

S: Well, he has to bring that to the attention of the Order. And then the Order will have to find a replacement, if necessary; unless the other *kalyana mitra* is able to function on his or her own.

Padmaraja: The other point was what to do for those Friends who wish to become Mitras yet can't because of the unavailability of *kalyana mitras*.

S: Well, in a general way, and especially with regard to those in London who are, as it were, waiting, it has to be made clear that they are not being kept waiting through any fault of theirs, or any lack, but simply because we don't have the facilities to include them.

Lokamitra: Sometimes it is, because sometimes someone will ask for Mitras after someone else, but they will obviously be much more ready for ordination and much more committed, and so they will be taken first. So - sometimes that is the unfortunate case.

_____ : There seem to be all kinds of things that happen - there's one mitra that comes within this category, Barbara Cole, who - I sort of feel in a way, she comes and sees me once a week, and she wanted to do this, and so I see her very regularly; and this sort of thing seems to happen, she's obviously decided she wanted a close relationship with an Order member, and I don't know whether Ananda

Sanghamitta: May I say if there are any Mitras who want a close relationship with an Order member, they are always welcome to come down to Hastings(?).

S: Mitras, you said, or - ?

Sanghamitta: Yes! ...

S: Those who already have *kalyana mitras*, do you mean, or those who haven't got? Because now we're talking -

Sanghamitta: Those who haven't got them.

S: Yes, well, they aren't Mitras, are they? You said Mitras, huh? You mean Friends in the ordinary sense?

Sanghamitta: (*noise*) Well, yes, been waiting *kalyana mitra*. The Order members come down Order member very welcome. (*Voices.*)

Vajradaka: This seems like a good situation, actually, I don't know whether this actually happens, but I get that impression, that they ask for Mitras instead of the idea of having a special relationship with someone, and with this waiting period they could then have a relationship with a couple of people, and then those two people would naturally become *kalyana mitras*.

S: Yes. You could say quite honestly, 'I'm not in a position to take you on as my Mitra at the moment, but if you'd like to come and see me when I do happen to be free, I'll be glad to see you.' And that could pave the way.

But is anything more involved than that? There has been, I think, this question of whether to include these potential Mitras in *kalyana mitra* and Mitra activities, hasn't there? There are cases in which they can get *Mitrata*, especially those in Holland or those in Finland, or even elsewhere. But what about being included in other activities - other *kalyana mitra*-Mitra activities in certain cases?

Lokamitra: Should there be - who decides whether they're going to get *Mitrata* or not? Is it just up to the Order member responsible for that group, or should it be brought up anywhere?

S: I think this is something we'd better leave to the editor of *Mitrata*, who is also the Convenor, and I suggest that it should be open to him to supply *Mitrata* to any one in this position on the recommendation of their as it were nearest Order member. Which need not mean resident, but someone who has had personal contact with them. If any Order member suggests to Padmaraja that there is such-and-such person in such-and-such country whom I'm in contact with - they're a good Friend, but obviously they can't be a Mitra yet - please send them *Mitrata* - then Padmaraja should be free to do that. I think here if anything we err on the side of generosity.

Vajradaka: As far as allowing these kind of on-the-fringe Friends, or rather on- the-fringe Mitras,, to come to retreats, maybe it's better to say that the Friends who have least contact with a group or Order members should be allowed to come on retreats as they are a

minority anyway and wouldn't flood a *kalyana mitra* retreat.

_____: 30 of them.

S: They wouldn't come all at once. I think it has to be left to the discretion of the organisers of that particular retreat. I don't think we can legislate in a general way.

Vajradaka: I don't think there are. I didn't mean Glasgow and Brighton.

_____:

Vajradaka: No, I didn't mean Glasgow. I meant like people in Holland and in Finland who aren't associated very much with a very strong *kalyana mitra* system or

S: I think probably the best thing would be if it is left to the Convenor of Mitras, and if, for instance, Padmaraja, you send or start sending *Mitrata* to people abroad, when you start sending write a little note asking the person concerned just to write and let you know a bit more about themselves, inquire if they would like to come on retreat in England if it would be possible to include them. And so on. And then you just have, if it is possible, to fit one or two in. I think it'll just have to be done like that. I don't think there will be very many, partly with the distance and expense involved, and whether they can get off at that time; but there may be one or two, and it's good, I think, if we can extend our facilities to them.

_____: There are a lot of people waiting in London to be Mitras.

S: Well, the people in London have got special facilities or extra facilities anyway, by virtue of the whole Movement being there. But we are thinking, in this case, of people that Order members might have had contact with, say, in Holland, who are definitely Friends and under other circumstances might well be Mitras, but haven't even got a Centre to go to. So they are in a rather different position from people in or around London who are waiting to become Mitras but who have all sorts of facilities laid on anyway, all the time.

Any further point?

Padmaraja: The last point was the one Subhuti made about Mitras till the next.

S: Yes, I think this is a very good idea.

_____:

_____: Sorry, I can't hear you.

_____: It was said that the Mitra and *kalyana mitra* relationship had to be ratified at Order Day, and I was asking what was the system in Finland or New Zealand.

S: Well, there it's more ad hoc, obviously, because the situation is quite different. In New Zealand, before my departure I authorised Akshobya to perform that ceremony, and if there is any proposal for anyone to be a Mitra or for anyone to be his or her *kalyana mitra*, that will be raised in an Order meeting in New Zealand; and if it is agreed, then Akshobya will perform the ceremony. In the case of Finland there's no such arrangement at present; they have to wait until I come on my annual visit and then it's done.

Subhuti: Is it worth considering the idea of Friends third tier, as we were talking about earlier?

S: I have been thinking about it, even for some time. It will correspond to a membership, but it will not be a membership in the ordinary sense. I think there is a great deal to be said for it, because it raises the question that in a way there will need still to be a category of people who just come along and don't even want to be Friends.

_____: They'll have to be allowed to come and end up being Friends.

S: We have said so far that the Friends were those who just came along, without even feeling any commitment, but who just took advantage of the facilities; that's what a Friend has been hitherto. So we could possibly keep 'Friend' as it is at present, but think up some other designation for what would otherwise be a member. You could say 'supporter' or something like that. In traditional Buddhist terms, it's the *dayaka*, the supporter, the giver of alms (*laughter*) He supports. He doesn't even necessarily himself observe the Precepts or Go for Refuge, but he's a regular supporter of those who do. It's more like that.

Lokamitra: Would you have a ceremony for such as this?

S: Well, that's what we're talking about. I think there is a case for that.

_____: A precept-taking ceremony ?

S: No, I think it is just to give expression to their sense of definite connection with the Movement as a whole, though not specifically with two *kalyana mitras*, because at that stage they haven't any idea of ordination.

_____: A subscription.

_____: particular offerings subscription

S: Yes, I think it would have to be probably something like that. (*Chat.*)

Manjuvajra: I feel that the introduction of a number of different categories within the Friends is not necessarily a very positive move, because it creates all sorts of feelings of belonging and a hierarchy and wanting to get on, purely in terms of nomenclature.

S: But there's always that danger, but I don't think that should blind us to the positive side of the thing.

Manjuvajra: But I think particularly in the West, where there's a large experience of purely ecclesiastical hierarchy rather than any spiritual connections weighs everything against this, and I -

S: Has that happened so far?

Lokamitra: Yes. I think there's always this danger in the Mitra system. There's always this danger to some extent, and it's always going to show its head, a little bit. So we have to be very careful as Order members what we do and what we say. And I think this danger - because people would be relatively less committed in the next one, whatever it is, that this danger would be much more so, especially as they wouldn't have as much contact with Order members.

S: But also don't forget that on the level of the FWBO it isn't intended to be a spiritual community.

_____: something which people just do when they feel like it, becoming a client or when they want to do it, they do it.

Marichi: And have to be publicly recognised

Manjuvajra: Ah, but it would be. The whole thing would set a certain kind of atmosphere to the Friends. I think it would tend to disturb and frighten off a lot of people who would otherwise come - (*Voices.*)

_____: depends on us what If we carry ourselves around hierarchy, but I don't think we do.

Manjuvajra: No, I don't think that's true either. I think what happens is that people see things from the outside, and if there's a structure, a hierarchy that they can see from the outside then there's nothing you can do to tell them that it's not like that. You can't say that we don't have a hierarchy when they can see a hierarchy.

Nagabodhi: You just help them to evolve through it.

Manjuvajra: Well, I think you're creating difficulties. You're building - (*Voices.*)

Nagabodhi: I see the institution of this particular level as a way *through* the difficulty, if it's something that people don't have to feel they conform to certain expectations it's a personal thing. I'm just thinking - not on a tangent, but - the Rajneesh people who do have this thing called a sannyasin, which is a kind of somebody who has made a commitment. So far as I know, if you want to do it you just do it. It's their only level, it's seen in a way as a hierarchy but there seems to be absolutely no rejection problem in it, because people don't feel they've got to conform to anything; they ask for it, they get it. They don't have this problem. And I see that on this level of instituting a Friend or a supporter or whatever it's called, something that one just *does* because one feels it, one's already stepped into the hierarchy without even noticing it, in quite a healthy way.

_____: any Order member has a hierarchy; hierarchies do exist. It's just something that people maybe have to accept. One doesn't have to give a hierarchy a particular it is a fact that Order members grow in that way, and there are hierarchies, and maybe people who find that difficult - all right, that's giving a moral flavour, this level is better than the other; maybe they'll just have to see that hierarchies do exist, without the particular value judgement attached to this. And that have to see it.

Manjuvajra: I'll make one last point, and then I'll keep quiet. I do feel quite strongly about this, and I think that what you say is true - I agree with that - but I think that in the particular cultural atmosphere, to try and introduce something like that, that is repulsive to so many people, is going to create an awful lot of difficulty.

_____: I think that will have to be broken. One can't say because it is repulsive we have to keep away from this. People just have to get out of the fact that it is repulsive. (*Voices*)

_____: If people come in contact with us and they're listening to Bhante's teachings and the message comes over loud and clear the distinction between the group on the one hand and the spiritual community, and all that that means and implies, on the other - and I think it comes over loud and clear.

Lokamitra: But Bhante just said that it wouldn't be a spiritual community, it would be a -

_____: No, I'm talking about people who are put off by what appears to them to be something other than what it is.

Ratnapani: This argument has a real history. Is it so much of a problem in Archway, where you've got the most people? there's this reaction against hierarchy and them up there?

Sona: With some individuals; but I think most people are quite happy with it.

Ratnapani: We can't pander to everybody's *micchaditthis*, can you?

_____: I remember Buddhadasa saying, about a year or so ago, if he'd come along to the Archway Centre as it was when he found it then about a year or so ago, had he first come into the Friends, he'd have run a mile, and we'd have lost him. (*Voices*)

S: What was it you were reacting to? I'm not quite clear about it. Were you reacting or would you have reacted to hierarchy or lack of it, or what? - I'm not sure.

_____: ... programmes and -

Buddhadasa: It's the idea of slotting into a system. I'm by nature someone who doesn't like very large crowds, I suppose it's better army but I think I'm over that one, I can see things much clearer. Beginning to -

_____: It is quite a common reaction.

Nagabodhi: Yes, it seems that the people who we are attracting these days are, I think one can generalise, in London they do seem to be more healthy, positive people than the people we used to attract when there wasn't this.

Ananda: Mainly because we are more healthy and positive in ourselves.

Nagabodhi: I hope so,

Ananda: People are attracted very much by how we are in ourselves.

Nagabodhi: Right, this is how we are becoming popular. The whole hierarchy thing simply I hope it's through what we are and how we do it - will re-educate people, that the hierarchy that we have, and we do have one, is a hierarchy of commitment.

_____: It's quite common in other groups to have different levels of people, You have your people who are practising every day in a certain category, you have the people who come regularly to practise, and then the people who are in peripheral contact or written contact - they're separate but they're all aiming towards the same thing.

Ananda: You have this throughout the whole history of the Christian church. (*Voices.*)

_____: There is a great difference between a Friend who is someone who writes, who has a Newsletter subscription, and someone who comes three times a week to the Centre and is not a Mitra. There is a great deal of difference in commitment.

Abhaya: I would be interested to see how many people in the room think it's a good idea and how many people don't.

_____: I'd like to see what -

Abhaya: No, just to see how many people feel it would be good to make this an extra circle and how many actually don't, and then we have a good idea. (*Voices.*)

_____: I don't think it would even have to , it's just an individual thing, not joining another band.

S: I think it would amount to that in the end, because the Mitras at present seem to have a sort of corporate identity, and I think in a quite healthy way, even though we didn't think about that at the beginning; I think it would happen in this case too, though again I don't personally feel unhappy about that.

Marichi: but I don't see at the moment that that would provide increased facilities beyond that sort of thing for Mitras

S: No, I don't think that - Hm, right. Well, the fact is that it would be an even more outer circle, if you like a dotted line. So, yes, inasmuch as the Mitras were a more inner circle, there are special facilities for those who become Mitras. But there wouldn't be special facilities for those who are as it were recognised Friends; they'd just do something presumably, go through some little ceremony which gave them the feeling of being regular Friends, and there it would end.

Siddhiratna: divided but seen to be different from; what's after the dotted line?

S: Well, for instance, as Marichi said, those who maybe live out in the country somewhere and get the Newsletter, and are certainly in contact with us but not in that way; or maybe come once or twice a year.

_____: Or even come every other week,

Subhuti: Very much on a Wednesday night, which is the beginners' night, people come along - it varies considerably from individual to individual, but some people come along, they just do the meditation, maybe in some cases for a month, maybe in some cases only for a couple of weeks. Then they start to come up to you and they want to know more about how to apply in their whole life, how to get into the Friends more -

_____: That's presumably where the Mitras come in.

Subhuti: No, I ... the point at which they became really -

S: I think we must - (*Voices.*) No, what has happened is we've upgraded the Mitras also, so when you upgrade something there's still the original level from which you've upgraded, on which there are still some people.

(end of side)

Tape 8, side 2

_____: You think something new has to be created to

Lokamitra: It's only a part of an upward-moving thing, but for those people who really appreciate what we're doing, maybe who live outside London, receive the Newsletter, donate regularly, and really consider themselves supporters of the Friends, and very close to Friends but don't in fact go any further than that?

Ananda: I think that's quite sufficient. If people are encouraged to work in that way within the body of (*Voices.*)

_____: I wouldn't like to refuse to send the Newsletter..... I notice the feeling very much like this when we tell them, 'You are the Friends' - they appreciate it, they are the Friends, they come to the shrine, they are considered to be Friends, they appreciate it very much.

Subhuti: I definitely think we should keep that. It's a very strong part of our approach. It does seem to be between that and Mitra.

Ananda: a corporate body in order to give that

Marichi:supporters, you just have all these people who make an offering

_____: a feeling in themselves that they are part of it is the main thing.

Ratnapani: But are they not in fact joining a healthy group at that stage?

S: Yes. This is what it would amount to, and quite rightly.

Marichi: It does seem a recognition of exists.

_____: desirable. (*Voices.*)

Lokamitra: Can I suggest that we ask Bhante to think about it?

S: I'll think about it.

_____: I rather like the personal offering on Sangha Day. That wasn't to become a Friend - a sort of provisional Mitra. (*Voices.*)

Ananda: I think the danger is that we're going to create a whole host, series of steps, names and levels.

S: But why do you consider that a danger?

Ananda: Because I think then you just proliferate a system for its own sake.

S: But why do you - you're not doing it for its own sake. We are considering these things because of an actual concrete need, and we are just considering how we can meet the need. We don't start off with an abstract idea of doing things in this way or that way.

_____:

Ananda: I don't feel there's a need for any identifiable corporate body in a sense. What I feel the need for is a sense of involvement and possibly, which I think can take place without any additional structure.

S: I don't think it's a structure, but what has been suggested is a ceremony, and we know the importance of ceremonies for people at every stage.

_____: How would that affect those who are outside the,?

S: I don't know, I just haven't considered that.

_____: and they could just come to London for a day -

_____: Or when they come to London, they could - (*Voices.*)

S: I think if you mention the case of that particular Friend, I'm quite convinced that in the case of a person like that, a ritual acknowledgement of what already exists makes a tremendous impression, and you'll have that person for life. I'm quite sure of that.

_____: So how would that come about, with ?

S: Whenever they - well, as far as I can think at the moment without having given it previous thought, there would just have to be the little ceremony or whatever it was when they did happen to come in contact with the Movement.

_____: very, very careful consideration just how we present it. I think it's critical.

S: Well, I think it requires very careful thought, for that reason. And I may feel the need to think for another year, even. But I will think.

Padmaraja: Another point. The possibility of some kind of token like a black cord or whatever, some sort of cord for Mitras and kalyana mitra.

S: You mean something analogous to the kesa?

Padmaraja: Yes. Could we think about that? Possibly for Mitras.

_____: We've already thought about it,

S: Well, maybe, but - No, I don't have any strong idea, but - (*Voices.*)

_____: upgrading the Mitras system to the level of the ordinations where they were a few years ago, and it would seem to be in order to have some sort of physical recognition some sort of token

_____: Perhaps we could give them a rosary.

S: Well, not everybody might care to use [it].

_____: Is there a question about *upasaka* ?
(*Voices.*)

_____: When you said cord, do you mean a cord like?

S: Yes, there are some ceremonies of blessing, and of course when you become a Mitra you get a blessing; a thread is tied round the wrist, after the recitation of the Mangala and Metta Suttas, and that when the thread was passed round the circle then a section of it is taken and tied round your wrist - that's the sort of thing that Padmaraja has in mind.

Marichi: It's like a ring, isn't it, rather than ?

S: In a way. I don't know - could one even consider a kesa of a different colour? I'm just

thinking aloud now.

_____: A cream-coloured one!

S: No. (*Voices.*) What I felt was - I'm only thinking aloud, so I don't want any sort of, you know, reactions - I was thinking of a thinner, green, kesa, like green is the colour of nature; so you come as it were into the room as a healthy, natural person, without any spirituality but just normal and healthy.

_____: Haha. (*Laughter.*)

S: There's no harm in giving them something to live up to. But my thinking aloud.

_____: Green's the colour of Going for Refuge, actually.

S: No.

Subhuti: The colour of vegetables.

S: Well, green's got different significances in different contexts, it's the colour of the Green Tara, for instance. But broadly it is the colour of nature, healthy nature. (*Voices commenting.*) But anyway, this is just an idea, this is not anything I'm actually *thinking* of introducing; I just wondered what ideas other people have.

_____: I like the idea of a cord. (*Voices agreeing.*) It's fairly discrete....., you don't have to

S: A cord worn where? (*Voices.*) I say, I just thought of this: what about a cord with a little windhorse suspended? (*Laughter; voices.*) In preparation for your becoming Treasurer eventually. (*Voices.*)

_____:associate the Mitra with the whole Order, and the idea of a ring is cord round there's no real link, it's not a I think it would have to be on the lines of a proper kesa (*Voices. Noise.*)

Mangala: I think it was the Karmapa, he was giving pieces of white, red, green, which I think people to had round their necks

S: Yes, Tibetans do that quite a lot. White for lay people, red for monks. It's considered to be a very concrete blessing.

Mangala: In a way, something like that is similar to a kesa. It's just much more discrete. Perhaps it could be green, or -

_____: I quite like the idea of something that's deliberately put on, not something to be worn quite casually. Something quite deliberate for mitras and green kesa, I suggest, but without the Dharmachakra embroidery on it. (*Voices.*)

_____: It's bad enough those who want to become Mitras but can't, and so on.

_____: I think in the experiment it would be very good if the thread was passed around, the way they did in

S: I have been thinking, in any case, to make the Mitra ceremony a little more elaborate.

(noise) Usually what happens is, such threads are tied round the wrist and you leave it there until it just drops, or drops off. (Voices.) Well, by that time perhaps you've been ordained.

Siddhiratna: It could be a small plastic bracelet. (*Laughter from women.*) I don't know what plastic but it's quite cultural, I think it actually could work

S: I used to have those ideas about plastic until I went to Finland, and saw what really could be done with plastic. (Voices.) Well, even kesas. (Voices.) But anyway, whatever you think of, just make the suggestion, even if you do feel it to be foolish, because we are just as it were thinking aloud and wondering what can be done.

Mangala: Could be sort of nylon cord, which would last, like fishing tackle.

_____: Well, you could always as you have a new kesa, couldn't you? (Voices.)

S: That sounds pretty good, actually. [Laughter] But if you had lots of Mitras you'd lots of blood; especially if you had eight in a row,a week in hospital! (*laughter*) blood transfusion. You'd be literally giving your blood to your Mitras. No, I think this is quite serious [Laughter] Do think about this. It would also ensure that *kalyana mitras* were really healthy! - You couldn't have any weedy ones. We'd have to feed them up for the ceremony. (*Laughter throughout.*)

Ananda: I like the idea of the cord round the neck. (*Laughter.*)

S: I seem to remember, Ananda, that some years ago you wore a sort of collar, didn't you?

Ananda: A dog collar?

S: Something like that. (Voices.) Yes, right, discuss it further this afternoon and then report back.

_____: more Mitras.

S: Yes, right.

_____: personal to them, it's not put on, something like somebody suggested a medallion.

_____: That's something I would have thought that Friends would have.

Lokamitra: There's no Mitra Sangha, there's no real Mitra Sangha, although there is a feeling of Mitrahood, but -

Ananda: I do think it's important that it's something quite discreet,

S: Anyway, thrash it out in the afternoon. I think we have gone over time already. Is there anything else, Padmaraja?

Padmaraja: I have no more

Lokamitra: One more point you have talked about, Bhante, is *kalyana mitras* and Mitras of the opposite sex. I don't know what

S: There seem to have been a few cases where that hasn't worked very well. Has anybody else got any thoughts about this? We did start by saying it would be preferable that your two *kalyana mitras* were of the same sex, and then we found that there weren't enough *upasikas* to go round, so we said then at least one *kalyana mitra* of the same sex. But it would seem that in a few cases that hasn't worked very well. Has anyone anything to report or any suggestions on this score?

Bodhisri: I have difficulties with my Mitra because he wants a purely intellectual contact, only through letters, and if I see him he disappears (*laughter*)

S: Is this anything to do with the fact that he is a young man and you're a woman, or is it something related to quite different things?

Bodhisri: Yes, I think so. He is a shy person.

S: I had some contact with him, and I didn't think he was really shy. (*Voices.*) I think maybe work on it a bit, or work on him. This doesn't seem to be the sort of thing that (*drowned in laughter.*)

Ananda: It's a bit difficult in New Zealand

S: Well, write *him* letters, bombard him with letters, phone him. Phone him. But has anybody any thoughts or reflections on this particular topic?

_____: certain things that (*Voices.*)

_____: on principle, but take it very much on an individual approach.

Bodhisri:

S: But this is what we have done so far, but it hasn't always worked out very well, even

Bodhisri: I think that on the whole it is important for women Mitras to have (*Voices.*)

S: Well, it didn't work very well with you and Judy, did it? And it didn't work very well, apparently - at least for a time - with Mangala and Madeline - and Janet. But I think in the case of Madeline there was specifically this sort of question, wasn't there? (*Voices.*)

_____: all right if one of them is a woman, but I think that

Ananda: Is there any other, apart from ? I don't think there's any problem where (*Voices. Chat.*)

Sanghamitta: I think it's such an individual thing, but I think emotional difficulties can arise. As we do in meditation, the stages, that we keep for the same sex. When you consider the difficulty that I've had somebody would want to become that Mitra, for that reason, that they have a thing about somebody of the opposite sex and probably feel that it will give them an opportunity and yet kid themselves that it's a spiritual thing. I think it can create these difficulties. I think one has to be extremely careful where they're opposite sexes.

Lokamitra: With most people I'd have thought it would be much easier with someone of the same sex, even though there may be no difficulties as such, but it would probably be much

more straightforward.

Ananda:in principle but in these exceptional cases many people of the same sex
.....

Lokamitra: Well, it can I'd much prefer if I - I don't feel any particular difficulties there for that reason, but at the same time - you know - it would be more straightforward if it was another man. I don't feel (*Voices.*) But at the same time I feel I can do as much as anyone can at the moment in our present situation.

S: Anyway, then, let's just sound a note of warning.

Nagabodhi: Something I think is worth pointing out, I've heard it said earlier on about Janet - I can't remember who said it - that she had an unofficial *kalyana mitra* in Manjuvajra.

_____: I said that she'd got

Nagabodhi: I think that's - I also live in a relationship with a Mitra. It's a dangerous assumption to make because it's not a *kalyana mitra* relationship, it might be a good one, but it isn't a *kalyana mitra* relationship

_____: I'm including that side of it.

Nagabodhi: It's quite important that people don't get the impression that someone's being looked after by their boy friend or whatever, and *kalyana mitra*

S: If anything, it might create more work for the *kalyana mitra*. (*Voices.*) Anyway, to come back perhaps to more general considerations before we close. And there's also one other matter that we have to attend to, which is to confirm Padmaraja in his office of Convenor of Mitras, if he wishes to be confirmed and if everybody is happy about that, as we did in the case of the other officers of the Order earlier in the week. So perhaps deal with that second matter first. I personally feel that Padmaraja has made a thoroughly good job of the Convenor of Mitras office (*sounds of agreement*), and perhaps we should ask him whether he is willing to continue.

Padmaraja: (*Voices; laughter.*)

S: Any general observations or feelings about the *kalyana mitra* system? Or about the - yes, there are one or two more things - the function of the Convenor? Whether that's all right as it is or whether it should be extended or restricted; and also the content of *Mitrata* - is there anything on any of these topics?

_____: The function of the Convenor, I suggest we clarify this afternoon and present tomorrow.

S: OK, fine, yes.

Ananda: One thing I just wanted to clarify about the previous item on the adoption of Mitras is that when this is discussed I think the issue should be - maybe this is the case, I'd just like to clarify it - the suitability of the particular *kalyana mitra* and Mitra rather than the readiness of someone to be a Mitra, because I feel that the fact that someone is seriously asking to be a Mitra, there shouldn't in a sense be any question about adopting them as a Mitra, if the facilities are there,

Subhuti: the question by saying 'seriously' ask.

Ananda: what is felt to be a fairly serious

Subhuti: Then that question discussed. (*Voices.*)

_____: This has been in the first place about the contents of *Mitrata*, I'm not suggesting it should take on any function *Mitrata* itself, and it's all Sanskrit. I think editorial, something a little more personal, ties it all together. (*Voices.*)

Ratnapani: I've got a very useful collection of pieces of paper which seems to have been using it, but I don't think it magazine called *Mitrata*. I think it might be sort of half of *Mitrata* which is useful information being disseminated. I think I was at a meeting where it was talked about, and it was going to be a sort of *Shabda* for Mitras, contact between the Order and Mitras. And I feel there's absolutely no context to it at all, it's sheets of very useful, very well-prepared information and transcripts, but not a magazine at all.

_____: Perhaps we Newsletter, as it were, between Mitras, perhaps they ought to get their own kind of newsletter together.

Ananda: And in particular correspondence. (*Voices.*)

Vajradaka: Could we hear what Padmaraja thinks about it?

Padmaraja: The thing does exist in a context.

_____: *Mitrata*'s got at the moment. In the next few issues I'd quite like to see that continue, because this provides a very good basis for ... Mitras in the future, ... a solid block of very excellent material there, and I think after that, after you've got this basic information that's so desperately needed, we can possibly move into this area of a more personal magazine, but I think not for the moment, and I'm quite happy with the Newsletter provides personal content as it were. Also personal content itself, I don't think there's any need for anything more personal in another set of papers..... You get down to the nitty-gritty.

Lokamitra: I do. Quite a few Mitras live outside London, and there are Mitra colonies in New Zealand -

_____: Presumably they also get the *Newsletter*. (*Voices.*)

S: I think it would be good if there could be an editorial, but I also wonder whether Padmaraja has time to write it. There's that also to consider. But if he hasn't time to write it, we can't help that; it certainly is very useful indeed as it is. (*Voices.*) I am very dubious about Mitras contributing, because that could very easily become - well, even sometimes Order members' contributions to *Shabda* leave a lot to be desired; you don't want just to fill up some pages of *Mitrata* with possibly some misunderstandings, or very immature understandings of the Dharma.

One suggestion that I would like to make, though, for consideration is that there could be a question and answer column, with perhaps Mitras writing in with questions, on the basis of the material, if there's anything that they want explained further or anything that still isn't clear they could write in and say, 'Would you please explain so-and-so?' Or even general Dharma questions that come up and are of interest to a number of people; and either Padmaraja could answer them himself or he could invite an Order member to prepare an

answer or in some cases if there was (*break in recording*)

(*End of session*)

Tape 8, side 2 (contd.)

Session 5

S: and this morning we come to our third plenary session, which is on the teaching of the Dharma, both theoretical and practical. And there are various subdivisions here. First of all, basic principles, and then the content, structure and leadership of study, as well as meditation, classes, and study courses. So we'll go through each of those in turn.

Let's go first of all into the study classes and things of that sort, the teaching of the Dharma in the more as it were theoretical and almost philosophical sense. This will include, of course, things like lectures.

The first point to be made clear here is that what we teach is basic Buddhism, for want of a better term; in other words, the fundamental principles. It's these that we've got to get clear in people's minds first of all; not so much the teaching of any particular school or any particular sect of Buddhism. I think this point has been made many a time before, but I wonder whether anybody has anything to say about it as the result of their actual experience in the teaching situation, whether in the course of taking a study group or class, or giving a lecture or just answering people's questions about the Dharma.

_____: communicates an attitude

S: Well, this raises the question of what is the function as it were of the Dharma teaching? And in the case of the teaching as a whole, as it came from the Buddha, one of the points that I have made is that the Dharma was the Buddha's attempt to communicate to others not Enlightened something of his experience of Enlightenment and to communicate it in such a way that they were impelled to move likewise in that direction. So it is this sort of thing that we have to do on our own level and within the limits of our own experience. It is not teaching the Dharma as a subject; I think this is a point, really, which is emerging, isn't it? Not teaching the Dharma like you might teach arithmetic or history or geography and so on. Of course, there will be a certain factual content; you'll be having to say that the Buddha lived at such-and-such time and the details of his life were as follows, and that there are such-and-such doctrinal teachings. But through that medium you will be trying to instil a certain overall attitude towards life, a certain feeling.

_____: I find people don't really have very much interest in the formal aspects of doctrine.

S: What do you mean by formal?

_____: Well, for example, people never ask us to the Noble Eightfold Path or the Four Noble Truths.

S: Why do you think that is?

_____: I think they think it's - there's this idea that Buddhism is more than just doctrine, so they tend to disregard the doctrine.

S: Ah. Well, this is obviously going to the other extreme, isn't it?

_____: Surely that means they have to be encouraged to relate to the doctrine.....
(?) That seems to me one of the functions of a study group. It's to make that connection between them, the Noble Eightfold Path, make the bridge.

S: Well, this is the function of the teacher. And this is what I was saying in the course of one of the study seminars - that whoever is leading a study group - and this probably applies to people taking or giving lectures as well - should be able to convert, as it were, the general doctrinal teaching into precepts applicable to the actual spiritual needs of the people to whom you are talking. In other words, in a way you can't give them straight doctrine; in a sense, there's no such thing as straight doctrine. On the one hand, you've got the doctrinal tradition of Buddhism, then you've got your own experience, your own spiritual life, and then you've got your people to whom you are talking. So, with the help of your own experience, you translate the general doctrinal principles into precepts for them to practise.

_____:

S: Oh yes, they must have come alive. If you're just teaching out of the book, well naturally people will think it very dull and very dead. You have to enliven the letter of the teaching with your own experience, otherwise you can't possibly produce precepts for people to apply.

_____: (long inaudible speech) And that's much more effective,

S: I've been thinking recently, not only do we need to go back to the beginning, but that we need to spend more and more time about less and less. (*Agreement.*)

_____: I think books should be

S: When you say books, do you mean scriptures, or books about Buddhism, or do you mean used in the context of the study group?

_____: Yes, I mean texts and anything that is written for people to take from books. very little of that, and But be careful not to just go on reading.

Lokamitra: I think that's too much of a generalisation. If that book is alive for someone, they will be able to convey a great deal from it.

S: I think the advantage of a text rightly used is that it does provide a systematic arrangement of material, if it's a good book, and also it provides a point not only from which you can depart but to which you can return.

_____:

_____: There are arguments for not using books, but a minimum

S: Yes. When you say minimum, what do you mean?

_____: Well, I think there is a tendency to read, to just go on reading, page after page, and that's what I mean by a minimum, maybe only one page rather than ten, or something like that.

S: Well, obviously a study group is a study group and not a reading-aloud group. Has this been experienced as a difficulty?

Aryamitra: Mm. The reverse probably.

S: What is the reverse? Waffling on?

Aryamitra: Yes, going on, not back to the - or maybe only covering half a page or something like that, and

Ananda: I don't really think it's anything to do with the quantity of text that you get through, it's the way one experiences (*Voices.*)

Ananda: But this is a thing in which I tend to disagree with most people, because I feel it's justified to go off at some tangents, because some people need to relate their own experience, however mundane it might be, to the Dharma; you can't hold them too rigidly to the text.

S: Well it is just a question of the overall mindfulness and skill and tact of the person leading the study, the study group. But it is true that sometimes people need to go off at a tangent, but you must see that they are going off at a tangent and quite consciously allow that to happen; then see when they've gone off at a tangent sufficiently, and then tactfully bring back the discussion to the text. I think sometimes one does have to do this. And what may seem to be tangential in that situation, for that particular person may be very central and very important; so the skilled study group leader will be able to spot that, and make allowances for it. It is quite distinct from allowing someone just to waffle on irrelevantly; it is giving scope to that particular person to express or bring out something which is of considerable importance to him or her, even though not strictly related to what you have been studying. But at least the study has sparked it off. So I think one is quite justified in giving that person scope and even discussing what he or she brings up or introduces. But it's up to the leader to bear in mind what is happening, see what is happening, and when the right time comes, to bring everybody back to the text in a tactful manner, without anybody feeling that they haven't had their say or they've been cut off.

Ratnapani: The process I've observed is that a tangent will go so far and then begin to die down and the atmosphere becomes sluggish. There then seems to be a choice whether it's led back to the focus, or whether a new tangent from that, a sort of spur from that, is artificially invented to just bring the energy up again, and then you just keep going on.

S: So much depends on the skill of the study group leader.

_____: the actual choice of texts

S: Has anyone anything to say about this, their experience with particular texts? - whether they found some that were selected very unsuitable or difficult or *vice versa* - whether there are any suggestions on these points?

_____: I know that Tuesday nights *Jewel Ornament* didn't work very well.

S: Why do you think the *Jewel Ornament* didn't work? [Pause]

_____: It's very it's very condensed,

Siddhiratna: I think Sagaramati said the same thing about the *Dhammapada*, that that was too condensed, too -

S: The *Dhammapada*?

Siddhiratna: Yes, that it was too condensed, too short.

S: If it's very condensed, it means that the leader of the group has to do quite a lot of expansion. And if he isn't up to it for any reason, if he either doesn't have the knowledge or is too tired that evening, hasn't sufficient vitality, then of course the whole thing falls very flat. You just pass on to the next verse.

_____: I think one of the difficulties of the *Jewel Ornament* is that it's got such a lot of emphasis on having faith in spiritual friends and having faith in almost ecclesiastical And I think people react strongly to that, and so they can't see all the gems in the book. On the other hand, I think the chapters that don't have that in it so much bring out an awful lot.

_____: a lot of different things

S: But I think it's important that when people are having a reaction against the material, you should stop and discuss the reaction. And I think this will enable them then to relate more positively to the material. For instance, if - this instance has been mentioned - if there is this emphasis, or as some people like to say, over-emphasis on faith in spiritual friends, stop and say, 'Why do we all feel it's so difficult to have this sort of faith?' Stop and talk about that for a while, and 'Why do you think it was apparently easy for Indians and Tibetans to have it?' Say 'Are we different from them? Is it due to our cultural conditioning? Are we justified in having less faith? Is all that faith necessary for us?' Sort of ventilate the whole subject quite frankly. You may end up disagreeing with the text. You don't have to agree with every word of a given text.

_____: Talking about the group, experiences within the group.

S: What do you mean by that?

_____: Well, that if people are experiencing difficulty difficulty in studying the text, -

(end of side)

_____: Talking about the group, experiences within the group.

S: What do you mean by that?

_____: Well, that if people are experiencing difficulty difficulty in studying the text, -

(end of side)

Tape 9, side 1

- studying the text, but these are just as it were, these are discussed within our group.

S: But that's what I'm saying.

_____: Not much of that has actually happened.

S: It hasn't?

_____: I don't think so.

S: It may be that there haven't been many stumbling blocks of this kind. It's only necessary to discuss in this way if something of this sort does come up. But the possibility should be there, if there is a sort of stumbling block.

Manjuvajra: I think one of the happened is if somebody - if you're studying something and you find some fundamental character of that book that you can't -

S: Of the book as a whole?

Manjuvajra: As a whole, yes; there's a tendency to reject the whole book.

S: But if you're uncomfortable with the book as a whole, you shouldn't be studying that text.

_____: ?

Manjuvajra: Well, actually, I'm really talking from my own experience of the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. I've been reading that on and off for a long time. And I found a strong reaction to it when I first looked, because of this particular point. But after a while I gradually got into it, and I now accept that point. But I find that when I introduce that book to other people, they go through the same sort of thing.

S: Well, perhaps one should then be careful about recommending that particular book. But, as regards study groups, one obviously shouldn't be taking a study group on a text about which you feel basically unhappy, or with which you are in fundamental disagreement on important points, but just leave it aside, take another text. But if they're just incidental points that the group as a whole is not happy with, or even some people are not happy with, just stop and discuss it. For instance, you might get a description of the workings of karma, and say, 'How do we take this? Do we believe this? Do we accept it? Do we take it on faith, or what is our attitude? Or do we just pass it over? How seriously do we take this?' But it's up to the leader of the group to make it clear that this is a part of traditional Buddhist teaching, so therefore let's at least understand it. But we don't expect people to accept it if they're not really able to do that. But at least discuss it, and possibly discuss the reasons why we find it difficult to accept or to understand.

Nagabodhi: I think this difficulty often arises in the minds of people who are still conditioned by the school attitude of studying a book: that the job is to understand it, not to actually question it if necessary and see how one can relate to it personally. At school you just have to understand, valid place in the world

_____: Quite a few of those who I've had experience difficulty in studying but said, 'Well, I never liked study when I was at school anyway'. So that does seem to be true.

S: When you say study, you mean in the study group?

_____: Mm. But it's like they're not able to see that this is a completely different kind of study.

S: Is this a serious difficulty for a number of people? (Voices agreeing.)

_____: I would say that what we are doing is understanding, in a real sense, involving one's experience and intuition and feelings as well, but they have no experience of that, coming from school. They have experienced only as intellectual understanding, which is what we call understanding, And that -

S: Is study the right word - or do you think we should try to find another?

_____: Yes, I've wondered about that -

Vajradaka: I very rarely use that word study. I always use the word discovery.

_____: It might well be worth finding other words.

_____: Except on the programme, we call it that, but in the actual group itself we never call it study.

S: How do people feel about the word seminar?

_____: That's still got a very academic sound. (Voices.)

S: There was quite a discussion about this three or four years ago, and most people weren't very happy with it, but we couldn't find any other.

_____: We certainly have no resistance to the word study in our group.

Lokamitra:we always have 'Dharma study'. (Voices.)

_____: There may be people who actually like study, and use the word

Subhuti_____: I think part of the problem is we haven't always avoided that particular danger. Sometimes it has been study, in a more conventional way. (Voices.)

_____: Exploration.

_____: Yes, it's not really discovery.

_____: Really, if people are wanting to find out then it doesn't matter what you call it. It's the difference between being forced to do something you're not actually interested in and actually having the problem there of - your meditation, whatever it may be, you are trying to work with in your own, and here are words of other people who've on that, and been through that and interested in cars and just about to buy a car,

S: Yes. And what we have to be careful about is that people who are really interested aren't given a bone instead of a fish. And some people can come along with real interest and think 'Oh, Dharma study, it must be something really wonderful' - and then they're taken through a rather dry recital of developments of sects and schools, possibly something like that. That's the sort of thing that we have to watch.

So, first of all, careful selection of the text, and then the leader of the group himself or herself being really alive and able to convert that into precepts, to see where the different people in the group are at, to allow time for flying off at a tangent if necessary, and also ability to bring back the discussion to the text, and to use the whole situation as a means to help people clarify their own experience and understanding and to grow and develop. The study group, after all, or Dharma study group, is an instrument of growth, just like meditation. This is what needs to be borne in mind.

Sanghamitta: I was just talking to before about the way people teach, and I said to you I can't remember all the steps of the Eightfold Path....., and you had to give a way of

doing this which meant something, and more interest to hold some people's minds. And I was saying it took away blocks your mind against anything that's called study. Because it wasn't made interesting question, and different teachers can arouse interest by the way they put it across and the way they give it they are able to let you hold it, retain it.

S: And of course the teacher has got to be interested himself, this is the first thing.

Sanghamitta: Yes. But you are able to help people sometimes to retain it, whereas the difficulty is being able to retain something.

_____: It's more of a situation where you draw something out of people rather than put something into them.

S: The teacher, or leader of the study group, is also giving, but is encouraging the other members of the group also to make their contribution.

Dharmapala: to education is drawing out.

_____: education.

Manjuvajra: What about 'Dharma research'?

S: What do you mean?

_____: Well, that gives an impression that you're Dharma

S: Oh, sorry, I thought you meant something quite different - whether we had any ideas about individual Order members doing prolonged research into Buddhism.

_____: No, I was thinking in terms of different terms, instead of using the word study.

_____: I don't think (Voices. Chat.)

_____: recorded by several instead of just by one.

S: I think perhaps the important thing is to make clear at the beginning of the course what you mean by study, if you're taking a course. Say, we've called it a study group but this is what it actually is; and then really tell them. And live up to that.

_____:

S: Have Order members been finding that the study seminars that I take are helpful in this sense, and that you can then take a study group on the text that is studied with me? Is there a link-up in this way? Or has anyone any suggestion in this respect?

Ananda: I certainly wouldn't feel that I could take a study group on the strength of attending one seminar,rediscovery of the text subsequent to that, going into it over quite a long period, and group with you leading

S: And, of course, eventually there will be the complete record of the thing available.

Ananda: I think those seminars a lot of material.

Aryamitra: It's also a discovery for the leader as well. So I don't expect to go into a study

group knowing everything -

S: It would be quite tragic if you did.

Aryamitra: Yes! I mean you're one as well, you're discovering and so -

S: This is why it's interesting for you as a leader. If you're merely having to repeat again something that you have already worked out and are thoroughly familiar with, it becomes almost a chore, because you also want to discover.

Lokamitra: Maybe some of the seminar texts are not so appropriate. But some certainly are, and it seems to me that maybe not so much for beginners but certainly others are - seminars present these texts in the way you see them relating to Western at the moment. In a way, it seems to be one of the most important things we can do to carry this over to other people.

Ananda: I think maybe one wouldn't have to know all about it but one has to have a certain experience of what the text is about.

_____: It certainly makes sense

Vajradaka: How did you find your 'Some Sayings of the Buddha' study group ?

_____: Nagabodhi

S: Where was this?

_____: At Archway on a Tuesday night. And we danced(?) around quite a lot, book.

S: You didn't find it too piecemeal?

_____: No, not at all. And each passage tended to be the right length,

Nagabodhi: I don't entirely agree with that. I feel it was a bit piecemeal, and also some - I think what Manjuvajra said, I think some people at quite an early stage, came up against things which perhaps they found quite difficult to accept. I think of study text groups that I've been in, that was quite a good one, but it was much better when in fact we dropped text altogether in the next session. I wasn't altogether happy, I felt I personally found it not terribly alive.

_____: study group with a text as well as without,

_____: What have you been doing?

S: Could people speak a bit more about this, because this is a comparatively recent development, and not everybody may be familiar with it? So perhaps something could be said about that.

_____: It was up to the group leader to decide what aspects of the Dharma a short talk half a page of notes and maybe come back again to Sometimes the discussion would actually lead back to the main text.

S: So do you think that this might replace the study text, or go along side by side with it?

_____: side by side. I think it worked for that - people that ... people were, study text.

S: I think also there is the point that perhaps people, especially newcomers, require a more direct contact with whoever is leading the group, and with his thoughts or her thoughts or experience.

_____: That seems to be what

S: Has this been tried anywhere else, apart from Archway?

Vajradaka: Yes. We did that first before we started the study group, because I felt that people did need to have more of a personal contact, so for the first nine months we just went through all the basic formulations - the five spiritual faculties, Eightfold Path, Four Noble Truths, things like that, the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. And I'd give a little talk and then we would discuss it. And after about nine months then we started studying 'Some Sayings of the Buddha'.

Nagabodhi: That would seem to be the order to do things rather than the other way round

_____: I think

Uttara:the aim of a study group is?

S: The aim of a study group? Well, I did touch on this when I said that the study group basically was an instrument of development, a means of development, for all those participating, both for the leader at his particular level and all the others at their level. And this should be the overall orientation. And, in more particular terms, you're using the study group situation as means of development to try to understand the text, what the text is all about, and relating that to your experience and your own growth and development.

Uttara: getting too much input. Each week you go and study a thing and you come up with ideas understood it intuitively put it into actual practice so many precepts so much information, so much ideas, so much practice

S: Well, this relates to what we were saying earlier on about going more and more thoroughly into less and less. That should be perhaps the tendency.

Nagabodhi: I certainly feel that our textless study group really was quite a powerful instrument for change, that group leaders found it very stimulating.

_____: So in a way, in a study text, you're revivifying, revivifying the original inspiration put down in the text.

S: Right, yes. Because after all, the text is not just words. The text represents a slice of somebody's experience, and you've got to be in contact with the experience behind the words if you are the leader of the group, make the words convey that experience, or at least something of that experience, to those in the group. Maybe they are not familiar with the words, not familiar with the idiom, not familiar with the idea. You have to expand, translate, improvise - on the basis of that text, so as to communicate to those studying the text the real meaning of the text, and the experience from which the text ultimately issued. That is the

study group leader's job. And then, of course, to relate that to where people are, and to suggest ways in which they could practise or how it could help them, and so on. There's a lot of improvisation in taking a study group.

_____: Can you expand on that?

S: Amplify that. No, I think not; partly because I've got a tooth which is hurting me and it's painful to talk, so I want to talk as little as possible. But maybe somebody else could.

_____:

S: (laughs) Or put it this way, you can't stick to tramlines when you're exploring mountains. [Laughter] The tramlines may take you up to the base of the mountain, but after that the leader of the party has to find a way

Mangala: It means being creative, then, and inspired.

_____: I think I've a fair idea what it was I wanted to hear, but I just -

S: - wanted to hear it! So far we've talked about study groups, but the Dharma is also communicated or taught through lectures, and there have been quite a few lectures lately. So could we perhaps talk about that?

Ananda: One thing I've found about lectures is that one needs a great deal of time not just to prepare it but to give it.

S: To give it?

Ananda: Yes. It's a whole area. Personally, I need researching in various areas quite broadly. And then perhaps the actual preparation of the lecture in terms of writing it only takes a day or two.

Vajradaka: One suggestion that Subhuti gave to me which I found invaluable - he said that at one time he said 'I try and write as little as possible before the lecture.' And before he said that, I'd been writing for three months before I gave my lecture; I did a big pile of writing, and so when it actually came to the time to give the lecture I just had too much material. But when I tried this approach of just keeping it, turning it over in my mind and then writing right at the very last moment, it just came out right.

Abhaya: I found that the organisation of material was extremely difficult. Well, the first lecture I'd given there was a tendency to over- in a way - I had a lot of material then the organising of it into a linear form, expressible formulations, quite difficult. And I think one mistake I made, too, was not to consider the audience to which I'd be giving the lecture; what sort of people it would be composed of, whether beginners, or people who some familiarity with it. I think this is important, to really be aware, right from the start, of what the audience will be, or some idea. And also as I say, the organisation of the material itself I found very difficult.

Subhuti: There has been a quite noticeable tendency in a number of lectures that I've heard for it to be over the heads of the majority of people in the audience. (Voices.)

_____: In what sense, over the heads? Could you say?

Subhuti: Well, you assume too much about their understanding of and interest in and commitment to Buddhism.

Vimalamitra: Isn't there a tendency to start the lecture from quite simple ideas and then work up from that anyway? That gives a solid foundation, quite a simple solid foundation to build up to, and as you get to the end of the lecture you

Ananda: I think the same principle applies to Dharma study group.
..... one very simple principle, like karma - (loud and prolonged laughter)

S: It was years before I dared to give a lecture on karma. (Voices. Comments.)

_____: Could we get together afterwards?

_____: Not to try to go off on

S: I think, you see, one of the things that is happening is that in the earlier days of the Movement we were more dependent upon Buddhism as it (drop-outs on tape), because there was less experience. But now quite a few people have a certain experience of their own from which they can speak, or they can speak about quite fundamental and simple topics and aspects of the Dharma in the light of their own experience, and they don't need to bring in so much of traditional Buddhist doctrinal presentation. So perhaps that should be more and more the tendency. For instance, if you speak about Going for Refuge, you don't need to quote Shantideva and Nagarjuna, and discuss the development of the Refuges in different Buddhist countries, and so on. You just say what Going for Refuge means, for you, and in this country, in the West.

I have also suggested, as I think most of you know, that each and every upasaka and upasika should have ready three lectures which they can give at a moment's notice.

_____: It's gone up! (Some laughter.)

S: It's gone up to three.

Vajradaka: Karma is the first!!

S: First of all, a general talk about Buddhism, perhaps with beginners, such as you might give if you were invited to speak at a school or college and so on. And then a talk about meditation. And thirdly, a talk about some topic of your choice - say, 'Buddhism and Art' or 'Buddhism and Society' or 'The Sunyavada Doctrine' or 'Going for Refuge' or anything of your own choice or special interest. And just have the notes of these by you and be so familiar with the topics that if there's a need at very short notice for a Buddhist talk you can just go and give it, without even having to think about it beforehand.

Vajradaka: I'd like to say something about the specialised - the third one, the specialised talk. Something that I did with my first lecture was that I just rearranged all the information and cut out bits of my original lecture in all my subsequent lectures, so that it had the same title but it was a completely different talk each time. And I found that as a result of that I became far more familiar with the actual essence of what was really meant by the title. And I'm sure I could go on for the next ten years using the same title!

S: How many people present have not yet given a public lecture? It's about half, isn't it, or a bit more than half? Who has? Hm, yes, about a third have and two-thirds haven't. That's not too bad, I suppose. But I think sooner or later everybody, practically, will have to have had this experience. So you'd better get your three talks ready.

_____: I was wondering - what you said, Subhuti, about a lot of the talks that have been given were over the heads of most people, if in fact these talks were of this third type

that Bhante mentioned, in other words a talk of our own choice rather than being a specific topic.

Subhuti: I don't think necessarily so. I think all of these could be given at a number of different levels. I think it's just, like Abhaya said, really aware of takes a while to realise.

S: I think it's also a question of not only what you present - for instance, the doctrine of sunyata and so on - but your lead up to it. Because I think you can communicate something about that, even to people who know nothing of Buddhism, provided you pave the way carefully enough. But that may take quite a long time.

Ratnapani: There's a principle I was told in writing up notes at school for experiments, that you should assume the person reading - I think it applies to the person listening - is intelligent but utterly ignorant, and start from there.

S: That's a very good point, yes.

Nagabodhi: This is one of the difficulties and one of the blessings of integrating Buddhism, the Dharma, into our experience - that something that seems quite natural to us might be quite strange and unnatural to somebody who may be very intelligent but who isn't a practising Buddhist. And this is the sort of assumption one should make; it's not just one of intellectual sophistication but a totally different language of looking at the world.

_____: I think it's a very good discipline in this area, not to make any assumptions at all (Voices.)

Vajradaka: I think if you are a well-informed person, if you listen to the radio occasionally and read a newspaper, you know basically the common world views, and you can relate your viewpoint to those.

_____: It's very important, actually, You've got something, quite often.

S: I used to find when I was in India among the ex-Untouchables, any reference in the course of a lecture to local happenings or local personalities went down very, very well indeed, because it showed that you were in touch with them and their lives.

_____: remember what you said

Padmapani: It seems very important that when a person is giving a first lecture, that other Order members can come along not only as a supportive, but also to suss out, so to speak, the atmosphere and what sort of people they are. Sometimes - well, I haven't done a lecture - it seems to me that the person might not be able to fathom that, that side of the so much as Order members who are mixing in with one another, and it will help the dharma quite a lot if you get a lot of feedback from actual people who are there, this is what my lecture is all about, what do you think about that? but they were actually there to sort of soak it up.

Ratnapani:that always happens at Archway ...

_____: quite a good idea of the type of people that can come along.

Padmapani: question this factor of you don't know who you're speaking

to. Surely Order members will have - listening and soaking up the atmosphere then they'll have a good understanding

Devamitra: I think maybe I am not quite sure of feeling not particularly associated with the Archway Centre. When I gave my lecture I knew who I was talking to and what sort of people were going to be there,

.....: actually got there to give a lecture, and you can feel who people are, and you feel who they are and then you have to adapt your lecture to them.

S: Right. This is why you go along with a skeleton of notes, and you may have to change your approach at a minute's notice when you see a sort of audience quite different from what you'd expected.

Vajradaka: Just to carry on from that: when I gave that lecture in Aberdeen and in London, before I went to those two places I rang up and wrote and said, What do the people there, the people who are likely to come to the lecture, what do they really need? What kind of people are they? Asking a trusted person - the people who are in with that group. And each time the person I asked was I felt quite right; they gave me something very useful, and I just trusted them and modelled the talk on what they said.

S: I used to do this among the ex-Untouchables before I went to any particular place. I'd ask especially what was the local situation, had they any specific problems or troubles, and so on; the particular character For instance, in a certain place they might all be the members of a particular sub-caste, and they might have certain leading personalities from that particular area, and you'd have to know all that. Or there might have been certain clashes in the past. If one did this, it put you very much in the picture. And you can also avoid pitfalls and speak in a way that was very relevant and interesting.

.....:

S: Very often they do it anyway. They give you a idea, especially colleges, I've found, that you'll be talking to such-and-such people who know so much about Buddhism; or at least we've done so much study.

.....: If you actually talk to the person who's asking you, you, then they and change that, we've actually done two classes on Buddhism; but what I want which is quite different from the original then you can go into that situation in much more

S: Sometimes you find that people in that situation are not nearly so interested in learning about the history of Buddhism, which they can do with their own teacher, but what makes you a Buddhist? How did you come into it? How did you discover it? What difference does it make? And sometimes even if you just talk in a very ordinary way about these things - sometimes - that is much more interesting to them than any amount of academic dissertation.

Abhaya: You think that would be a good choice for the introductory talk?

S: What's that?

Abhaya: 'Why I am a Buddhist'.

S: It might be in some situations. But one has to be careful that it's a sort of communication, and it doesn't give the impression of you trying to proselytise them. But as Gotami said, suss

out the situation first, and gather whatever information you can. It may be that that is just what is needed; or it may not be.

_____: it really is astonishing they don't know or

Manjuvajra: I gave a series of talks at a school. I started off with 23, and it was a six-week course, and I finished up with two.

S: Well, why not? What do you think - ?

Manjuvajra: Well, it's the same thing, much too high, completely outside their experience, and - well, just that.

S: I think this raises something very general about our teaching that I've touched upon before: that we seem to be getting more and more away from historical Buddhism as doctrinally formulated, and much more into speaking in terms of our own experience, maybe illuminated by passages from the scriptures and so on.

Lokamitra: I think school is - I gave a talk they are so interested, certainly I wish I could have given them so much more. It's quite a good feeling, in a way, certainly an experience, because they are, they're alive, They want to know.

S: There's also another point that occurs to me, and this is what has been called the step-by-step approach, in communicating the Dharma. How important does one think that this is - that you start systematically at the beginning, and gradually build up? And, of course, if so, what is the beginning or where is the beginning? (Voices.) What have people found in their actual experience?

_____: general view of Buddhism, it's about Higher Evolution more specific. Eightfold Path and

Vajradaka: This is probably quite important for a person who is beginning a lecture series to remember, because if the people, like in this last lecture series at Archway, are coming from all over Britain to give a lecture series; in a way they hadn't conferred, there wasn't any common, really common, denominator, except that it was on different subjects. But I think that it probably would be quite helpful for the people who are going to be listening to the lectures, every lecture, to have in the first lecture one which is a bit general.

S: What was the first one in the last series?

_____: Mine.

S: Yours, and you're one of our

_____: I think it was quite sort of -

Nagabodhi: in the previous lecture series, that is the way it went. It started with the theme of Buddhism.

S: Do you think we are giving enough attention to lectures, public lectures?

Nagabodhi: We're giving it all we can, certainly in Archway. (Voices.)

S: Do you think we are going out enough?

_____: lectures in other places,

S: What I feel is that there are probably two sort of great means of drawing people, or attracting people. One is meditation, and I think the other is lectures. And certainly this was my own experience when I was in London, both before the Friends were started and afterwards. Sometimes it seemed almost as though more people were interested in lectures as a starting point than even in meditation. So I sometimes wonder whether we are not neglecting that a bit. I'm not thinking so much in terms that there should be regular lectures at the Archway Centre, but that certain people who are known to be quite good as lecturers should make a point of going out or accepting or even inviting invitations, and having a very forceful and fundamental sort of lecture which told what we are all about, and what we do stand for, in very forthright terms. With appropriate follow-up.

_____: Certainly we are beginning to move out more than we actually did.

_____: You yourself have stopped giving lectures actual Order members and Friends, but I thought that you had going out and giving the odd lecture

S: Yes, for me - because there was so much else to do.

_____: But not in general?

S: Not in general, no.

_____:

S: I don't know, I think sometimes one can be a bit random and a bit experimental. Sometimes almost as if give a lecture in what seems to be a quite unpromising place, and see what happens. I think there's a great deal to be said sometimes for randomness. Sometimes a lot happens as a result of apparent accident. So I think room should be left for randomness, and you shouldn't always do what seems to be the reasonable thing. Just sometimes, if you like, just for fun, give a lecture in what seems to be a completely unsuitable place, and see what happens. [Laughter] Well, just see. Because sometimes one thinks that something is suitable or unsuitable, just as a result of conditioning.

_____: Yes, I

S: Yes, that is true, but then there is the follow-up in the form of the Newsletter, and if people are really interested they can be told about retreats, they can be invited to visit the London Centre or any other Centre, or to start up a Centre in their own area; arrange to invite another Order member to give another lecture. Or say 'Would you like to organise a retreat? I'll come back and take it if you get together six or eight people. I'll come back with some tapes and we'll do some meditation' - and so on. I think also we have to be a bit adventurous in this way.

(end of side, side 2)

_____: definitely, people are

_____: Quite soon you'll have a couple of people wandering round.

S: That would be good. (Voices.) I think we want for the general public consumption, as it were, very clear, forthright lectures about what we basically stand for and are trying to do,

with a minimum of reference to traditional Buddhist doctrine.

Sanghamitta: People have expressed quite recently in Brighton that particularly lectures rather than on And is a need for rather shorter lectures.

S: Well, I don't suppose I'll be giving them, but maybe others could.

Sanghamitta: No, possibly some of these people could bear this in mind to fill this need. So short, sharp.

S: You haven't ever thought of doing anything like that yourself?

Sanghamitta: Well, I have, but I haven't gotten around to it! (laughs)

_____: I think it would be really good.

Sanghamitta: Yes, I know. get it together

S: Well, if you had to talk then you'd get it together.

Bodhisri: Has anyone tried to give a lecture using drawing charts on the wall and using slides and ?

S: I sometimes have drawn charts -

Sanghamitta: The Wheel of Life, you've done.

Bodhisri: Yes, that's what I mean, the Wheel of Life,much better -

Subhuti: I've given lectures on the Wheel of Life using slides, using a series of slides which picked out each part that I was talking about.

_____: Using the poster?

Subhuti: Yes, I took photographs of the poster, blew them up.

_____: If you're talking about specific points, I've tape-recorded the Prajnaparamita and played that, and then showed slides and gave a brief explanation of what the deities were about. It seemed to go down very well.

Sanghamitta: the Wheel of Life because it's already got together,

S: At some other session we'll be talking about sort of as it were audio-visual means of communication, not just the verbal conceptual. The imaginative also.

_____: I think that with the amount of thangkas and visual material Buddhists we could very easily do that slide and tape show of, say, the Buddha's leaving home. I think it would go down very well.

_____:

S: This is verging on the arts, and we're going to have a whole session about that. One point - you referred to the Higher Evolution. I'd just like to inquire to what extent people find it useful in talking to people about the Dharma to speak in terms of what I call the Higher

Evolution, rather than in more traditional terms?

_____:

_____: It's very useful as a sort of backbone(?) which,

_____: It's very good

_____: The New Man

S: Anybody got any reservations about it?

_____:

S: But not if you make clear the different levels of consciousness.

_____:

Ananda: I can't hear you.

_____: People who - you know - politically-minded people who -

S: Didn't this come up in Finland, Bodhisri? Vajrabodhi wrote me a letter about it, that in Finland people are very resistant to the idea of anybody being more developed than anybody else. Perhaps you don't have it quite so much in England, but no doubt there is the odd person who objects to the idea of anybody being more evolved than he is.

Bodhisri:

S: Yes. But Vajrabodhi suggested a way round this. He said that comparisons should not be made between one person and another but between your own present and future stages of development, and that the emphasis should be there in the case of such people.

Bodhisri: Yes. And also a way round it in the context of evolution, one can make it quite clear to them that although somebody may be at a given stage now, but potentially the others that stage as well, and one can make it clear I think evolution is very useful to get over that point as well.

S: Also, of course, in the long run, as I have pointed out to Vajrabodhi, we mustn't forget to explode this micchaditthi that everybody is equal. You might let them get away with it for the time being and mitigate what you have to say, but in the long run we have to make it clear that when you feel uncomfortable about the idea of somebody being more developed than you this is highly unskillful, and it precludes the possibility of faith - faith in the sense of reverence and looking up to something which is higher than yourself.

_____: Some people can accept that, but can't accept that they may be more developed than someone else.

S: That they themselves are more developed?

_____: Yes.

S: False modesty.

_____: Well, no, that they have changed, and that they have grown.

S: Well, lack of confidence, and - one sees so much of this. You have to tell people, no, you are better than you think. This is what one has to say much of the time: you are getting on much better than you think you are. You are not doing so badly. Don't grovel. Don't denigrate yourself, don't run yourself down. Appreciate yourself; even be proud of yourself.

Bodhisri: very much about explaining to people that they can develop together the power more developed or whatever economic power or whatever.

S: But they think perhaps of development in terms of becoming stronger, and sort of using your strength against other people.

Bodhisri: Yes, that is what they are thinking.

_____: Maybe this is started off by such phrases as 'the superior man'.

Bodhisri: Yes, they hate that

_____: the characteristic

Ananda: But you can't tell people, in at least, you can't tell them about the higher state of being. You've got to lead the way in which they can actually sense that higher state of being.

S: Most of the people who make this sort of objection are sort of intellectuals, for want of a better term, so you have to convince them of the theoretical possibility of a higher stage of development for all, which involves the possibility that others might already have achieved that step, and they might also.

Siddhiratna: Isn't the idea of equality in mankind contained in the idea of Buddha-nature - that everybody -

S: That's the metaphysical foundation, but then most people don't accept the idea, or don't know about the idea, of Buddha-nature, and if you explain it to people prematurely they might interpret it in terms of a sort of empirical equality, rather than in terms of something very deep and spiritual. I think it's quite dangerous to tell people that they've got the Buddha-nature. They then start thinking of it as a sort of possession, thinking that they've got it just because they've understood the idea abstractly. I think it's much safer to speak in terms of development, and that you are not like that now but you can become that. Speak in terms of growth, not that 'You really are Buddha, you've only got just to see the fact.' I think this doesn't work, I don't think this works this way. But certainly speak in terms of potentiality: that you've got a great potential, you can grow, you can develop. But not that you, in some sense, are already that.

_____: You think that's to be avoided?

S: That's to be avoided. We went into this at one of the seminars. I think maybe this is one of the extracts that we ought to take out and print in *Shabda*, perhaps very soon. Does anyone remember which seminar that was?

_____: just transcribed ...

S: No, it's another one, recently. Udana much more thoroughly. (Voices.) There's a quite

lengthy discussion about this - it must have been in the recent Udana seminar. (Voices.) Yes, but that is the lengthiest discussion, in the Udana seminar.

_____:

Mangala: telling people that they really are Enlightened, and they've just got to realise it.

S: We sometimes come up against this in its Zen form, because people may come to us after being familiar with Zen literature, having read 'You are Buddha', and sometimes we just have to deal with it for that reason.

Mangala: Yes, I know, but I thought been through all this ages ago, and realised then that it was a popular micchaditthi which everybody was aware of.

S: I'm not so sure that everybody is clear about it.

_____: that don't know what's happened in the past, for instance Siddhiratna wasn't aware of it. So all these points, I think, you can go on and on and keep going over them, because It's good for everyone to hear them again

Bodhisri: I think we should really quite concentrate on elaborating the concept of development, I feel that idea of empirical equality everywhere in the West, and at present in biological and also psychological sciences people are very much working on the concept of development, which is something that - something is there, like an embryo develops, it has only one cell but it has the potentiality of a human being coming from biology. And psychological science gives the same concept. And we really use that concept as well: there is the potentiality of the Buddha, although we are not there, and then there are stages. And I think with that development happening Western sciences to get across to people

S: It is certainly a familiar language.

_____: Yes, and it is developing in various in the Western world,

_____: that sometimes the idea of such evolution is a linear thing, where you're going from one place to the other; whereas perhaps if you could put it over as more expansion -

S: There is that, too. That is as it were the complementary aspect, of unfolding from a centre. Yes, this is true.

_____: The linear thing gives rise to all sorts of authority

Bodhisri: beware that we don't get trapped by a rigid status structure, either, because all the time and and although there are phases comparing

S: I think we have to be rather cautious here, and sometimes not hesitate to oppose wrong thinking, even though very, very widespread. However tactful we are about introducing our own ideas, that in the long run we may have genuinely to disagree with some of the most fundamental assumptions of modern thought, especially as regards egalitarianism.

_____: What's egalitarianism?

S: The belief that everybody is equal. And also make it clear, yes, that we believe that everybody should be equal before the law; that everybody should have equal opportunity - sure; but that is quite different from saying that we believe that everybody is equal, in the sense that all human beings are the same in respect of development.

Bodhisri: But in the eyes of history there has been some connection with has been highly developed spiritually have also had the power.

S: I don't know, have they?

_____: They may have been

Bodhisri: But they have sort of been used

S: But that is again different from a higher degree of development. You've simply got an ecclesiastical position. That is quite different; a social position, really.

_____: I think that's another point that has to be made very clear, the difference between an ecclesiastical hierarchy and evolution.

_____: That's more of where you are on the seesaw, up or down; you're still on the Wheel rather than developing.

Bodhisri: I used the wrong word, I used the word 'spirit',

S: Religious.

Bodhisri: Yes, religious or educate..... (?)

S: We have to make clear the point that social and even ecclesiastical organisation does not necessarily reflect spiritual development.

Just one point I'd like to make before coffee, or it's more like an inquiry than a point. Someone mentioned people with analytical minds, asking questions about Buddhism, especially with some sort of political background. And recently I've been thinking that there are, especially among young people, many who for want of a better expression one could call political idealists; perhaps rather naïve but with tremendous energy, sincerity, enthusiasm. We seem to have practically no contact with such people: why? Or how could we perhaps have contact?

_____: We've got a few in Brighton.

S: You've got a few? That's good.

Vajradaka: We've got a few in Glasgow. (Voices.)

S: You know the sort of people I mean?

_____: have to apply to ideals

_____: This is why they're at meditation classes anyway, or they're coming along. But they're very reluctant to give up their ideas, have to do.

Marichi: social services changing the

S: But are we making any attempt actually to contact such people, or at least to be in contact with them and to let them know that we exist, as it were, that we're not just a sort of religious organisation?

Subhuti: It has certainly started to happen in Bethnal Green, as we're moving in there. The very people who we've contacted are these types

S: Ah, that's very good.

Lokamitra: It's probably, I should think, more out of London than in London, it would be easier.

_____: In London

_____: Universities and colleges and things like that.

_____: I think when you're out of London it's quite simple to cut through all strata of society and go from top to bottom, in all sectors of society - not only contact with

Nagabodhi: I think it's also a matter of when political idealists can actually see us doing something, in terms of providing an alternative, not simply in the shrine room or in our minds but in the world - that's when they can take notice. I know several people like this, and I think that they are half-prepared to accept what I say, that consciousness will change society, society -

S: But changes in society help changes in consciousness, and we say -

Nagabodhi: But they've got all their eggs in one basket, we only put some of them.

S: I think we must make it clear that we are not like some movements that maintain that it all comes from consciousness; all that you've got to do is to change your mind, and then everything will be changed. We don't say that. We also say that in order to help at least the beginner to develop his consciousness, certain more favourable conditions are necessary than we find now; so therefore we would like to change certain things in society, very radically indeed, to make possible or to make more easy and more natural this higher development of consciousness.

Nagabodhi: But I think almost as soon as we start making some kind of impact in that way - at the moment all we can point to is retreats, for example; we can take some people away on retreats, but as soon as perhaps we have a farm going, some kind of business -

S: And neighbourhoods, Buddhist neighbourhoods.

Nagabodhi: Right - I think then it's going to attract a lot of interest.

S: I think this is very important.

_____: have to overcome this vague materialism that has - young people

_____:

_____: I was going to say that I met one of the Buddhists from I think you could call in the West recently, who said, 'I've met a lot of these Buddhists, and I think most

of them were associated with the Friends.' He said that none of them seemed to do anything. So this made me reflect -

_____: I've had the same problem from social changes and social work.

S: Because at the same time - we can quite accept that criticism - at the same time there are two things to be said. One is we do not believe in activism, in other words doing things for the sake of doing things. And also, if we do anything, we want it to be really good and really helpful; and I'm quite sure that many of the things that are found in the name of social service, helping people etc., don't really help them at all; they just keep somebody happily busy.

Bodhisri: But that's in the area of we do something, and if one says that isn't really helpful to them,

S: Well, they feel that you're negating them,

Bodhisri: Yes, they don't want to really consider them because they find not in the real sense, in the legal(?) sense.

_____: I think the most common one I've heard is

S: There's also the point that not everybody can do everything. I remember when I was in the train once in India on my way to the ex-Untouchables, I met somebody who was running a leper colony, and he wanted to know why I wasn't running a leper colony. So I made this point to him that I've got my interests and my work, which is among the ex-Untouchables; that these people were completely degraded and now, thanks to Buddhism, they are gradually being elevated in every sense - economically, socially and so on. But he didn't feel happy. He thought everybody ought to be into leprosy and helping lepers; that was the most important thing. So many social workers are like that, unfortunately.

_____: social work..... meditation, (Voices.)

Lokamitra: We were talking first of all about spiritual idealists, and there are very negative people, I think, we can get confused with here, who in a way we just don't want to bother with at all. And we don't really want to waste our time with these people.

S: But there are lots of young and enthusiastic people with a basically positive outlook, who just haven't thought in these sort of terms before - that is, our terms - but might well do so if our approach was brought to their notice.

_____: There are a lot of people - for instance, social workers - who genuinely work - who are not negative in that sense, they do do a lot of things, they believe that they are helping, and in some sense they are. But in another sense, is it really real help? And some of them -

S: Is it radical enough?

_____: Yes, exactly. And they find that they don't ask these questions.

_____: Yes, but they are they are

Lokamitra: I think most sincere idealists - and we were talking about these people - if they come in contact with us, with the Sangha, will feel something from this which they can relate

to, and will -

S: But they've got to feel that Order members are lively, positive, enterprising sort of people, not a lot of old fuddy-duddies just going along to their Centre and performing occult rituals and so on.

Lokamitra: Certainly this has been people have responded very much

_____: People do go along

Subhuti: I think ideological people we've mentioned a religious solution being a very introvert and withdrawn -

S: Ah, right. But this is often said by religious people - pseudo-religious people - that just change your heart and everything will be all right.

Nagabodhi: There was an article in 'The Middle Way' some time ago about 'My contribution to pollution is cleaning my mind'!

S: No!

_____: Yes! I'll try and find it for you. Well, it's good stuff! (?)

S: It isn't, actually, not on that level. Anyway, shall we have coffee?

_____ (*Break*)

S: We come on now to 'Content, structure and leadership of study, meditation classes and study courses'. So far we've been talking more about the teaching of the Dharma through the medium of study, lectures - I think perhaps during this half of the session the emphasis ought to be a bit more on meditation.

Has anyone anything to offer on the subject of taking meditation classes - either from their own experience of taking or of being taken? This is evidently something very, very important indeed.

Aryamitra: I think it's quite essential that all working especially beginners' class, and also allowing the after-class space for people just to come and talk, like - well, not so much social, more casual talking. I find that Wednesday classes - I think this is with all Centres - tend to be meditation instruction and then lecture, and it happened at Aryatara, it hasn't been in the programme - there's been a Puja afterwards if you wanted to attend. And this would take most of the evening, leaving very little time for personal contact. I think mainly

S: Are you thinking of more than one Order member needing to be present, so as to have enough people to talk to newcomers afterwards, or for other reasons as well?

_____: For other reasons as well: support, and to give people an idea of different types of people, different types in the Order, especially at beginners' classes, so they don't get the impression of just one type of person.

S: Has anyone else got anything to say about this?

Asvajit: Seems to me that even more important than having more than one Order member is

that the Order member who is taking it should prepare himself or herself properly beforehand, and be in a right state of mind.

S: This seems to be absolutely fundamental.

Ratnapani: Some time ago, in the last year or two London Centre, there were quite definitely those who list ... those who could take meditation classes, particularly for beginners, which is quite a small list. I'm wondering whether this principle - whether they are still giving out lists or whether it was anybody who could take meditation classes.

S: Well, I'm not giving out lists, mainly because I'm no longer in close enough touch with people down in London to be able to say, and there may well be Order members able to take meditation classes I'm just not in regular contact with. But I think the Order, or the local chapter of the Order, should keep its eye very much on this, and if it is ever seen or noticed that a certain Order member, at least for the time being, isn't in a proper state really to be taking meditation classes, then it must be just suggested to them that they shouldn't take them.

Ratnapani: I was thinking also there are people who are not necessarily in a short-term bad state of mind, but just they don't seem to be particularly good at it yet; not, say, inspiring enough - haven't got what it takes yet, even in their normal, average state of consciousness.

S: Well, there are two things. First of all, to be able to take the meditation class you must be solidly into your own practice and not be having problems with it. And you should be normally in a very healthy and positive frame of mind, so that when you go to take the meditation class you are really practising with them, and you are being very positive with them in a way that can be almost tangibly appreciated. So that's the most important qualification. But also you should have some capacity to explain the details of the meditation to newcomers, and not everybody has that. But I rather tend to think that if you are really positive and really into your own practice, even your apparently inadequate words of explanation will do the trick in many cases, even if you're not particularly glib or aren't a particularly good speaker I don't think it will matter much - if at all, even.

_____: When you say

S: No, when I say problems I mean more in the sense of having doubts about your practice or whether you ought to be doing something else; or have developed an aversion to it and not want to do it. If you're just going through a dry period, but you're keeping up the practice, then I wouldn't regard that as really a problem. But I think, as I've said, that this is a matter on which the Order as a whole must very much keep its eye, and not hesitate to say to any particular person that you really ought not to be taking a meditation class, you're just not in a fit state. And if someone is told this, they should take it in a positive spirit as this has been said for their good, and for everybody's good. It's not meant as a criticism or as a personal attack, or anything like that.

_____: But if it is a criticism it is meant as a criticism.

S: No, when I say criticism I mean not as something directed against you, and negative towards you. Constructive criticism, if you like.

_____:

Devamitra: Something which quite amazed me recently was that somebody on the men's retreat at Aryatara said that the first time he went to a beginners' class at Aryatara they did a visualisation practice of Sakyamuni. (Slight sensation), I'm just amazed that this kind of

thing is still happening.

S: Yes. Well, this raises two questions: one, the regular steps and two, innovation. And one of the points I wanted to make was with regard to innovation: that individual Order members should not innovate in their teaching or in their classes, and should be very, very cautious about any sort of experimentation. If it's just a very small change or small experiment, do it only after definite discussion within the Order meeting; or if it's something more important, after discussion with me. But not to do things in a new way or start experimenting off your own bat, as it were. (Voices.)

_____: It must have been a long time ago that it happened. (Voices.)

S: But it did happen, even if it happened a year and a half ago and only once.

Ananda: I don't remember ever doing that, I must say, in a beginners' class. (Voices.) I'm sure I've never done that in a beginners' class.

_____: It has happened in the past, I know

_____: We've done it on recent retreats, yes.

_____: I had the general feeling that visualisation was only practised in

S: I think that there may be room for a few exceptions with regard to the Sakyamuni visualisation. I'm quite happy to leave that to the judgement of local chapters of the Order. But certainly not anything more than that.

_____: That and the stupa.

S: Oh, stupa, yes. When I said visualisation I was thinking in terms of the figures. But stupa visualisation, yes: this is a very good bridge, as it were, from the other two practices into visualisation of figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, so I'm quite happy about that. If it's introduced, of course, after the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana.

_____: How about things like Six Element and the Just Sitting practice?

S: I think the Six Element Practice - I take it you mean the one where we say 'This element doesn't belong to me'? This quite definitely within the Order, because it is a spiritual practice, it's a vipassana-type practice, and has a very definite Transcendental goal, and therefore needs the support of a devotional approach and commitment to the spiritual life, otherwise it can have a very unsettling effect psychologically, and be taken merely psychologically. What was the other one you asked about?

_____: Just Sitting.

S: I think be very cautious about that. People should only do Just Sitting when they can really sit and meditate, otherwise they won't Just Sit, their minds will be wandering. But only if people are well established in concentration and can, in fact, just sit, should one do this practice.

_____: you saying this in the context of retreat when one has built up momentum.

S: Right, this is true.

_____: That's what I was thinking of - in terms of when you do a double or a treble meditation.

S: Yes. And if you are sure that people are in a concentrated state and can just sit without wool-gathering - then, all right, introduce a short period of Just Sitting. But if people have come straight into a class in the evening after a busy day, it's quite useless to even think of Just Sitting. It's difficult enough to sit and concentrate.

Ananda: What about the Sakyamuni practice, Bhante? What

S: Well, as I've said, let this be introduced after the mindfulness of breathing and the metta, even in the case of non-Order members, at the discretion of the local upasakas and upasikas. But not by anybody off his own bat individually. Consult with your brother and sister Order members.

Mangala: start the morning with Just Sitting practice, and yet they were absolute beginners.

S: Yes, but it wasn't just sitting in the sense that I'm speaking about it now. The first time we did that, it was because nobody had yet had any instruction the previous day, so that couldn't be a Just Sitting in that sense; they were just sitting quietly, learning to sit quietly without moving; it was no more than that. If anybody had had practice of meditation before, yes, it would have been a Just Sitting, but on the whole it wasn't.

Vajradaka: But it did become that over the period of the retreat. People did actually start to Just Sit, even though they hadn't had any specific instruction in it. But in view of -

S: You don't want any instruction in Just Sitting, because you just sit with nothing to do, but if there's a momentum behind your practice from the retreat as a whole, then you can quite spontaneously just sit. (Furniture removing noises.)

_____: What about walking and chanting?

S: That seems to be one of the most useful practices, for everybody, it really does. I'd like to see much more of it, that is to say long sessions, at least three sessions of sitting, with two bouts of walking and chanting in between. I think this is really good, and we should do it as much as we can.

_____:

S: It seems very balanced - well, it's not so much - I find it useful, but I see that people do benefit very much and enjoy it. It seems - it's a sort of balanced practice. They are sitting, they are mindful, they are meditating, they are concentrated; and then they get a period of as it were exercise, and they can expand a bit and they can put their energy into the chanting; and this seems to get rid of any accumulated tensions, so that when they sit they really are quiet. So it seems to work very well. It worked very well in New Zealand, it worked very well in Holland, and as far as I know it works very well in the British Isles.

Uttara: walking and chanting not actually walking and reciting the mantra, reciting

S: I think it could, but the main emphasis, I think, should be on doing everything mindfully. Otherwise you can get absorbed in a practice, which could be quite good, but then if you're having to go about ordinary everyday affairs then you may become a bit as it were absent-minded, you might get run over by a bus. And maybe the main emphasis would just be on doing everything very mindfully.

Siddhiratna: Bhante, sometimes in that walking and chanting - I remember doing it once, chanting Padmasambhava, and I found that - I'm not sure but I just found that Padmasambhava seemed to be a chant that one did in the evening; it seemed to work much better. Chanting it during the day, in fact in the morning, didn't seem to go very well with it. So is there any sort of preference?

S: Are you talking about walking and chanting the Padmasambhava mantra?
_____: Yes.

S: I'm afraid there have been a few innovations as regards the mantra chanted, that I haven't known anything about. I've ever only done the Namotassa, which seems to fit. I've also been told recently that the Sakyamuni mantra has been chanted, and that works, which I'm quite prepared to accept, but I feel very dubious about walking and chanting the Padmasambhava mantra. I too feel, I don't quite know why, that it does suit the evening and the night. And that the rhythm isn't quite right for walking.

Siddhiratna: So can you use the Sakyamuni mantra?

S: How have people been finding it? Let's hear.

_____: I've found it very successful.

_____: retreat

S: But why did one, say, think of introducing this rather than carrying on with the namotassa?

Ratnapani: If I had done it I would know why I would have done. I haven't taken any retreats, but the namotassa for many years ... left me completely cold. I just dreaded and loathed the walking and chanting, on all retreats. The first time I did the Padmasambhava mantra on a summer retreat - not Padmasambhava, the Sakyamuni - it was a completely different experience, I understood what walking and chanting should be. It felt like a practice on the move, with mindful moving and recitation.

_____: That's what I felt,

_____: Yes, it conjures up more feelings of devotion (Voices.)

S: The Sakyamuni? Strange, in a way, inasmuch as the namotassa is a salutation to the Buddha.

_____: I can't agree with that, I find namotassa very vital, joyous, and meditation. The Sakyamuni mantra is rather slow, a little sombre, and in fact you always have the backing line that the visualisation that goes with it is the Buddha sitting down, and there you are walking around. (laughter) This is the very point I'm trying to make: walking and chanting should be done at a natural walking pace.

_____:

_____: That's what I'm

S: Yes, natural walking pace.

_____: Natural walking pace, and people walking in natural attitudes. It's not and it's not slow.

Ananda: The Sakyamuni mantra can be done at a natural walking pace without any difficulty.

_____: No, the tendency with the Sakyamuni mantra is to reduce the natural walking pace to something much slower.

Ananda: I haven't found that.

_____:

(end of side)

Tape 10, side 1

Sanghamitta: I don't know if anybody else has experienced this: I used to do walking meditation years ago, not chanting,, but going round I used to get quite giddy.

_____: Especially

S: Well, maybe the circle is too small.

Sanghamitta: I just had to drop out,

S: Or maybe the walking is too fast. Or maybe it is something peculiar to you. (Voices.) Ah, yes. I think one has to watch this, the length of time it goes on. This brings me to another point which is quite important, and I've been thinking about, and applies to this also - that those who lead meditation and anything else should have confidence in what they are doing, or confidence in their material. Sometimes those who lead meditation, communication exercises, may be tempted to put the pressure on a bit too much to make sure of getting results; because if they get results, [and] something happens, then they feel they're doing it all right, something is happening. But they haven't got enough confidence in themselves and in the method to be going on doing it without any very obvious result. So sometimes people may be tempted to keep things going longer, to make sure of getting a very definite result or to do them much more vigorously than really is required by those people present, but just to reassure yourself. So I think this is something that very definitely must be watched.

Just as taking the communication exercises you may not be quite happy or quite sure that you're doing them right or successfully until you've got several people in hysterics. But if everything's very quiet and no one is shouting, you think, 'Maybe I'm not doing it right', and you start putting on the pressure to make something happen, when maybe everything was quite all right, and then you are just interfering.

Sanghamitta: I don't thinkgo round the other way

S: Maybe you just want to go round widdershins. It must be the witch in you! I think it may be something just individual to you.

Sanghamitta:round the opposite

_____: small room, if it's a small room and other people -

S: I must say that once in Christchurch, when we were doing it and there were far too many people in the small shrine, I myself felt a little dizzy once. But I know it was just the atmosphere of the room.

Sanghamitta: I wobble, you know, I can't keep going

S: I think it may well be the atmosphere, the closeness, maybe lack of ventilation. I think one should attend to all that. It may well be you're just a bit more susceptible to that sort of thing than most people.

_____: practice ?

S: I personally usually start off with six or seven minutes, but I have on occasion gone right up to half an hour - but not very often. I'm quite cautious about

_____: half an hour.

S: I think one has to be very careful about that, especially beginners. I think the average should be 10 to 15 minutes, my feeling.

Bodhisri: How long would this take altogether session for ?

S: I usually tend to take about - let me think - last time I did it I took - er - if it's first of all a Mindfulness of Breathing, let that be, say, 40 minutes, then if next time you do a Metta Bhavana, let that be 50 minutes; and then I usually make the last session definitely the shortest, because if people have been doing the combined practice the whole morning, the last sitting session is short, they don't feel it dragging, and so even if it finishes a bit sooner than they expected, so they are left with a sort of pleasant, happy feeling; [Laughter] not with a feeling of 'Thank heavens that's ended at last.' So I think it's important psychologically that the last session, the third one, when you do three, should be definitely shorter. And that can well be a Just Sitting period: 20 to 30 minutes, not more than that.

But I really think that people taking meditation classes and anything of that sort must not force the pace to basically reassure themselves, and not make things happen to reassure, and just trust the Dharma and trust the practice, and trust yourself. Even if nothing happens, OK.

Ratnapani: There is the theme(?) - some years ago, I presume it's still going on - a general happening of three hours' meditation each morning, a three-hour session walking - I don't know how -

S: On the retreat situation?

Ratnapani: On the retreat situation, early in the morning. I don't know how that was found generally, because I know often until very recently to me it was just purgatory, and I think quite a few people found that: they really dreaded this great big lump, partly to a lack of personal confidence but also just that one didn't have a momentum to stay at it for three hours, they became desperate for breakfast. I don't know whether that's still the general feeling on retreats sometimes.

_____: In London retreats it seems that sometimes for three hours, we've just been introducing it back again now because we've got a But for quite some time -

_____:

S: Right, on such occasions.

_____:work up to that

_____: Summer retreats. We at Aryatara only do two. I personally would like to three, third from last year

Vajradaka: It was very successful increasing the meditation very slowly on the last retreat. It just crept up on them, and they didn't really notice. (Voices.)

Ananda: As we're talking about retreats now, at the very beginning the programme on retreats and then what people feel in general about having but I've felt sometimes the need to retain times of meditation getting-up time from day to day, and you just generally change the pattern of events from day to day.

S: What sort of changes were you thinking of?

Ananda: Just in the times that those things were done.

S: Well, do we have a pretty rigid programme in that respect?

Ananda: Well, it's a sort of, not rigid but a generally accepted thing like three-hour meditations before breakfast.

S: I've only heard about it quite recently.

Ananda: Oh. I thought we had been doing it for years.

S: Perhaps, but I hadn't heard about it. (Voices.) Long ago. I don't know what happens now. (Voices, laughter.)

_____: All the retreats I've been on the programme and changed as

S: And there should be an Order meeting every evening at which - perhaps what you're really asking about is the extent of the modification that is allowed, as it were.

_____: Maybe - if you just said how you did the programme on your retreats, that gives an idea of what you mean.

Ananda: Well, what I did was, we arranged it from day to day, we had an Order meeting every night, and then decided what the needs of the next day were, according to what the day had up.

S: That again is standard procedure.

Ananda: Ah, well, maybe it is now, but it hadn't been up to fairly recently, I thought.

S: I thought that we always did that; every evening -

Ananda: I think hadn't been, (laughter. Voices.) I felt the need to revise the programme from day to day, and I did that on the retreat, and we changed the getting-up time from day to day; we changed the - what else did we change? - the number of periods in the meditation session from one to three, we did have four at one point. And the meditation practice was changed from day to day. I think that was the general extent of the changes.

_____: I think you changed every three days.

_____: That's right, yes, we had blocks of three days, and the first three days were all

the same, and then the next three days

S: I don't see that that represents any very radical departure. It means a slight rearrangement of the same elements. I think that's well within the competence of the Order members on that particular retreat, and that the leader makes those sort of changes after consulting other upasakas and upasikas in the evening Order meeting. I feel that sort of change or switching around is quite permissible, I don't see any difficulty.

Ananda: And altering the number of sittings in a meditation session.

S: I don't think that ever has been fixed.

Ananda: Ah. I just picked up a sort of unwritten law on that, that it should be -

S: I changed things myself, didn't I, as far as I remember, from time to time?

Ananda: experience of conflict between the assumption that there is an unwritten pattern of retreats and the programme -

S: No, it's more like the number of common elements, but there's no hard and fast arrangement of those in the form of a particular programme. We expect to have a certain amount of meditation; we expect to have some lectures. We expect to have Puja. At least those three things. Sometimes there are communication exercises, sometimes study. But these are the basic elements which the leader of the retreat, in consultation with other upasakas and upasikas will arrange according to the needs of that particular retreat. He certainly won't make wild innovations, but these sort of changes you've mentioned seem quite reasonable, and it should be open to anyone

Ananda: at the same time, I felt it wasn't quite acceptable to make them, see what I mean?

_____: Actually, walking and chanting (laughter)

_____: That's outrageous! (laughter.)

S: Unprecedented! Unique!

Ananda: All I'd like to say is that I feel the need to make a change on the spot because of the needs of the situation, is that OK to make that change?

S: Well, I've already said that the changes you've mentioned only constitute rearrangement of existing elements, and that's quite

If you wanted, for instance, not to have any meditation at all on a retreat, just as an experiment, I think that you should raise at an Order meeting; something as radical as that. Or if you wanted to have a two-week retreat which was completely silent for two weeks, well, raise that at an Order meeting. Or if you wanted to make any similar radical change, raise that at an Order meeting well before the retreat starts. But otherwise the sort of changes that you've mentioned, or modifications, are within every retreat leader's competence to make.

_____:

S: And the reasons.

_____: Bhante, what do you think about experiments with the other tunes in the

mantras, the Avalokitesvara ?

S: I'm quite happy about experimenting with different tunes, provided it's all tried out within a small group of Order members first before being introduced more generally; and it should be introduced more generally only after being discussed and in this case listened to, or chanted, by all the other members of the Order.

_____:

S: I'm quite happy about additions on the musical side, because this is a field within which I'm not able to do anything myself, so it has to be left to other people; but not - again - anyone introducing anything just off his or her own bat, without others knowing about it, so you come along and you find something going on that you're completely unfamiliar with. If it's good and helpful, let it be known to everybody and utilised by everybody.

I did hear some time ago that there were a few - I think they've discontinued now - somewhat idiosyncratic ways of conducting Pujas. It seems, at one time, people, or at least some people, tended to think that everybody had to have his own distinctive way of taking a Puja. But I think that has passed away now.

Sanghamitta: I've heard several comments about the Puja, that people would prefer to have the Heart Sutra read to them, rather than all chant it together, or

S: I don't know; this hasn't reached my ears yet. Anyone got anything to say about it? It does belong, perhaps, to another day's discussion. But, anyway, it can be just - if anyone's got anything to say now - ?

Sanghamitta: I must say sometimes, if one lets go oneself and listens to it it seems to mean more than if you're all joining in.

Ratnapani: One is free to stop reciting it, to listen. (Voices.)

_____: What I tend to do whenever a new person comes along, I read it for one time and then It seems to work quite well.

S: Anyway, we are really on content, structure and leadership of study, meditation classes and courses. I think we've said quite a bit, maybe enough, about leadership. What about content and structure?

_____: I think it's the other way round, Bhante: we've said a lot about content and structure, we haven't said anything about leadership.

S: All right, let's go on with leadership!

_____: about content and structure, about

S: A break?

_____:it might be good just to have a bit of chanting, and then study, and then ... Puja afterwards.

S: I've certainly noticed this myself, that sometimes it's been really difficult to get into study after a period of meditation, simply because the mind is not functioning.

_____:

_____: worthwhile thing to try a mixed session?

S: Yes, I think that meditation followed immediately by study is just not desirable at all, and that some other arrangement should be made.

_____: I prefer to have a short meditation, anyway, because if you're doing study groups during the week people come from work and so on, they come from whatever they've been doing; they need to be concentrated, they need to -

S: Well, that's just a pause for recollection. That's not getting deeply into meditation and cutting off your mental processes. But sometimes if you have to think and your mind is just not working, it's quite painful.

_____: It produces a headache. (Voices.)

_____: And it also puts people off come downstairs and immediate social -

S: Certainly a 10-minute sort of light meditation is Just sitting and relaxing, being quiet and collecting your thoughts, your scattered wits, for the study. But not getting deeply into meditation - even if you could.

Ananda:

S: That comes at a later stage, Ananda. (laughter, voices.)

Ananda: I think seriously it can be a useful (Chat.)

_____: I'm not quite clear about what study groups we're talking about, Are we talking about a specific ? (Voices.)

S: It's not so much a question of study groups specifically, but anything that demands fairly intensive mental activity after a period of meditation. You shouldn't have, for instance, a Council meeting immediately after a meditation. Not after a whole session, anyway.

_____: After ?

_____: We can always have a cup of tea.

S: But then - you don't have to talk unless you want to, unless you are responsible for contacting -

_____:

Asvajit: You don't get the people

S: Or what happens (?) to the metta bhavana, which would make you more outwardgoing in that sort of situation.

_____: more planning, he comes along

S: You can just smile sweetly.

Lokamitra: Two other brief points on structure. One was - we've talked about stage where a lot of us came related down from our own experiences. It seems important that we should emphasise respect for tradition. And secondly, a principle which seems appropriate is that whatever medium we use, whether intellectual, meditation, whatever, people should be vitalised through these.

S: Ah, yes, right.

_____ : One other point walking practice

S: You mean walking around in a circle, or just sort of wandering?

_____ : Walking in a circle, but without chanting.

_____ : ?

_____ : Not necessarily

S: The chanting seems to help you together. I think that would be difficult without the chanting.

Devamitra: experience. It just introduced a very strange kind of atmosphere - we were walking very, very slowly as well. It was not very

_____ : I'd have thought you could only have when you're well into a long retreat.

_____ : This is the kind of thing I was thinking of, on a retreat, where you have been doing other things as well.

_____ : What was, what advantage is there by doing it silently that you're not doingover doing it with chanting? Why innovation?

_____ :

_____ : I've found it - er - in certain respects, I didn't feel needed any
.....

_____ : I've noticed that sometimes some people when walking and chanting they just don't chant, they don't want to chant.

S: They

Lokamitra: On a retreat a few years ago, at Cambridge, which, ... personally found it very useful and - on certain kinds of retreat only. But on other retreats I very much liked
.....

_____ :

S: While it was not very many of you.

_____ :

_____ : normal walking ...

Ananda: I see it able to continue the practice that you've been doing,,
continue session

S: But also in connection with the chanting, one must remember that you're trying to involve body, speech and mind. The mind remains in the meditative state; body is walking; speech is chanting.

Ananda: What I've found is not all of me but some I've just lost the mindfulness,
..... the concentration practice. The chanting (Traffic Noise.)

_____: If you're concentrated, I would have thought it wouldn't matter what you did,
the concentration was the same. I wouldn't have thought it was possible to chant
unmindfully. (Voices.) feel really good.

_____:

_____: There are other people chanting too, not only you.

_____: It seems also quite a good practice that if everyone tried to carry over the
concentration to like in general all the time, and doing the chanting in between the meditation
gives you a certain amount of practice of doing that, doing ... to carry over that awareness,
that concentration, and the more practice you have of that the easier it would be to usually be
mindful and aware all the time.

S: I would say that I take the walking and chanting as the norm, but if in the context of any
given retreat the leader of retreat and the other Order members present felt that a period of
just walking, without chanting, was helpful, then it should be open to them to introduce that;
but watching the results carefully. And it seems to me that it is possible, one, only within the
context of a fairly lengthy retreat, two, where there are not too many people keep walking,
and when there is a very definite meditative atmosphere and people are very much together.
If it was relative beginners it might well be But I wouldn't like to exclude that
possibility altogether, but certainly take the walking with chanting as the norm and introduce
the other only after proper consideration and consultation.

_____: It can lead to alienation.

S: Yes. - (Voices.)

_____: It's important to have

_____: I think it's quite important to do the three body, speech and mind,
I mean the integrate the three. And if you leave one, what can you do?
(Voices.)

_____: you've got one where you're sitting and just using the mind, and then
you've got one where you're using body, speech and mind,

_____: I think it's experience in the right sense of alienation

S: Well, it would be up to the leader of the retreat to see that people were sufficiently into
meditation that they wouldn't be doing it in an alienated way. I've certainly noticed that when
people, in the course of the walking and chanting, have not been chanting - have been just
walking - they sometimes have been alienated, and unable to chant or unwilling to make the
effort. So this has to be watched.

_____ : when one is walking rather more vigorous breathing chanting encourages it. If you're just walking, breathing can become rather too shallow.

S: When you walk and chant, you very quickly start chanting and breathing from the chest.

Manjuvajra: Could we move on to the subject of leadership? - because I've experienced a difficulty in I've tended to and I'd appreciate any comments about how to deal with it. The particular thing is that, really, it's a matter of dealing with projections. Emotionally it's manifested - if I'm taking a class, particularly in the discussion afterwards, sometimes I find myself getting a bit irritable. When that happens, what seems to go on is that somebody will bring up some point for discussion and I will strike and there seems to be some kind of conflict with that, and it's almost as though anything I say is immediately argued with and you find yourself, you can't say anything right. When I get to that sort of state I get very frustrated and quite irritable.

_____ :

Asvajit: I think I know what Manjuvajra means. I think it may result from the attitude that he has to get agreement from other people. If subconsciously, not fully conscious of it, that what you say has to be agreeable, then when a response isn't forthcoming I think an uneasiness arises,

S: I don't think Manjuvajra was meaning that. I think he was meaning that more they do not allow him to communicate. There's no question of agreeing or disagreeing, they haven't even heard what he has said; they're so busy reacting to him. It's more like that. But if it was agreement or disagreement, even - well, even more so if it was disagreement you could say - there would be communication, they would have heard what you had to say and be disagreeing. But even that doesn't happen. But they just react almost as though they hadn't noticed what you'd said.

Manjuvajra: complete lack of communication. That's what they've come for. They've come to argue,

S: You feel like a sort of Aunt Sally, as it were.

Manjuvajra: Yes! (Voices.)

S: Just write it down. (Laughter, voices.)

_____ : If you play Aunt Sally, you must expect a few coconuts.

S: A fairground character. You go along to a fair, and there's a sort of doll-like figure and you throw coconuts [balls] at her, and she's called Aunt Sally, and if you hit her you get a prize. Manjuvajra, I imagine, on such occasions feels like an Aunt Sally - the coconuts are flying from right and left, and they just don't want to listen to him, they want to shy a coconut at him.

Vimalamitra: Is it that, or is it that, as you were saying, you felt came over, and that had an effect which made - ?

Manjuvajra: Usually I feel OK when I get to the class, and after some time I feel better. But then later on,

S: I think really there are two ways of dealing with this, both extreme. One way is you have to have infinite patience and be infinitely sweet. The other is you have to get angry, because

people take anger seriously.

_____: This

S: What have others to say from their own experience? Have they encountered this, maybe in a less extreme form, ?

_____: Not in that extreme form, but coconuts, and I've found that a quick, sharp word, a sharp retort, and point out that there are other people in the group

_____: and don't always worry about the fact that it might be you.

Manjuvajra: Yes, not feel it, I think sometimes this thing that comes up like you feel that you've got to win sometimes, you've got to win somehow, so you just cut them off and just go on to somebody else, if it's obvious, if it's quite obvious that somebody's doing that, you just cut them off quite sharply

_____: That has to be done skilfully, so that you don't leave the person with the feeling of unresolved

S: You probably will. I think you probably can't avoid that.

_____: Yes. you can't, because if they are it's never going to be resolved, is it? Unless they've actually seen, and so if you cut them short, if you see it happen, coming up, and just go on to somebody else.

S: And, if possible, if it seems suitable, take them aside after the meeting, and have a word with them.

_____:

_____: I think if you are confident in yourself, that is the best protection, because usually people are like this because maybe they see an element of diffidence, and want to perhaps dominate you, dominate the situation.

S: Just trying it out, trying it on.

_____: Yes, and if you're quite confident in what you are doing. This comes back to keeping experience.

_____: be quite firm with those people, not even try to coconuts, just go on and on in a neurotic way. quite firm sort of way, bring them back where they are.

S: Well, we haven't got very much time left. Has anybody any other point? Or have you any other point? You mentioned two points.

_____: No.

S: About leadership, content of classes, meetings, meditation, structure? Taking a very quick general look, do people feel that on the whole the structures of classes, study groups, meditation classes, lectures, the sort of things that we ... on retreats - feel that their structures are basically all right, or that we ought to think in terms of any serious changes? You don't

think we're getting into a rut? Do you think everything still is working, really?

_____ : I find a tendency to just go through things rather than think about what we're doing. You know, youmeditation, then we'll run off a lecture, then we'll do a Puja - without really thinking about -

Uttara: That may be the case on but I don't think Order members. (Voices, inaudible contributions.)

Devamitra: to provide a balance, surely? Provide a balance in each individual class, and provide a balanced course for the whole week.

S: And also give individual attention as much as you possibly can.

_____ : I don't think it's actually the structure, but rather to get the turnover, get things moving. I think what happened at Aryatara was we felt meditation, maybe that is what ... we do now, and then quite a few people come along, people stay for a while and then stay for the whole year, and it just becomes a little bit dry, and new people sort of come through and move on to another class, new people just continue to -

S: Have you got these other classes for them to move on to?

_____ : Yes, we have.

Ratnapani: I think the social contact thing is - this very new element as it were that one You've got certain building blocks; all we can do is really rearrange them, so far as I know, more or less, personal so that people do see what all these things mean, lectures and meditation classes and study and so on, then they see where it leads to.

_____ : I'd like to make the point here that the lectures can be a little monotonous week after week after week, and once a month you don't have a lecture you have a form of celebration, freshness and discussion,

_____ : Send the lecturers to us! We lack (laughter.) I really mean it, we haven't got these lectures. We value lecture we have to go down to London (Voices, inaudible remarks.)

_____ : Let's get one point straight: I haven't experienced Bhante's lectures are monotonous, but people coming along fresh to the Centre and they are a lecture ... do experience a certain monotony. And and express their own points of view which in the course of the evening they very often haven't got, but provided in a month, have a traditional significance anyway, it's very important and looking forward to it, it gives them an opportunity to participate, and provide and then

_____ : same each night.

_____ : No, we're quite flexible. (laughter.)

_____ :every class participates beginners' class, perhaps, in preparation for the regulars' class

Dharmapala: I think it's similar to one occasion during a retreat, when we had a good discussion about the retreat,

_____:

S: All right, any other point? - content, structure, leadership,

_____:

S: I think, so far as Archway is concerned, the speakers' class is actually the giving of the lectures! I think it's progressed to that now. I think elsewhere there are speakers' classes. Could those concerned speak up? I have heard that there is a speakers' class somewhere else.

_____:thinking about a speakers' class in Brighton, and there's been quite a bit of interest in this area.

_____: Speaking as a new Order member, I think a speakers' class would be very good for those people who have never given a public lecture before.

_____: when they've got on prepared, if they together a few other Order members and informally give that talk

S: Yes, that would be very good. Well, this has been done, I believe - was it, Abhaya?

Abhaya: No,

S: They tried out this idea on a small captive audience at Abhirati. (Voices, laughter.)

_____: It was a real ordeal.

_____: I gave it informally, actually, on

S: I happened to hear about it from both sides afterwards.

_____: sat down in the library and talked in the library I think it's better if you do that kind of thing properly do it standing up, as if you're addressing -

S: Yes, this is what we were doing in the old speakers' class.

Devamitra: Yes. But I must say, when I took part in a speakers' class in London I didn't find it particularly useful, and eventually, after being provoked by Subhuti to plunge into the dark, I did, and I think certainly in my case that is what needed to be done. I found that the speakers' class inhibited me.

_____: I think it wasn't quite right. (Voices, chat.)

_____:perhaps on something like Mitra days, have groups of people, say, instead of having a lecture in the afternoon, having an Order member or even a Mitra giving a short 20-minute or half-hour talk,

_____: These sort of occasions can be useful.

S: Any other ? (*Concorde taking off!!*)

_____: Concerning a general point that perhaps we should say that only Order members under the auspices of the Friends take any part - only Order members only under the auspices of the FWBO

S: I think this has been understood, but perhaps it should be made a bit more explicit.
(Voices.)

_____: For example, perhaps, karate.

_____: But even then it's desirable to have an Order member.

_____: What do you mean by ?

_____: Well, it has to be agreed by the Council.

(end of side)

Tape 10, side 2

_____: by the Council.

_____:

S: I think we can leave it to the Council. I think the Council, if anything, will err on the side of caution, anyway. I hope!

_____: Secondly, new Order members, they shouldn't expect to or be expected to take a teaching position immediately.

_____:

S: Or even at all.

_____: Or even at all.

S: Because there may be some Order members who do not want to teach explicitly, as it were, in the sense of leading a class or giving lectures. No doubt they'll communicate meeting people and talking to them, but it shouldn't be expected that every Order member will eventually become a teacher in the formal sense. And even those who are willing and able should be given time to settle down a bit, or settle up a bit, within the Order, before they take on any such assignment or responsibility. A breathing space,

_____: where there are a lot of Order members one can very easily apprentice oneself in a course, for example, or in a study group how

S: Yes. All right, is that - ?

(end of session)

Tape 10, side 2 (contd.)

Session 6

S: I think we'd better begin - and the topic this morning is the functions of the Order and the WBO, and the subsidiary topics are: starting new Centres, Buddhism in the West, needs of individuals and Order, other spiritual traditions, personal and political involvement, and it's also been suggested we should consider conservation, in the sense of conservation of resources and the environment.

I think a few days ago we touched on this question of the starting of new Centres, and the point was made that it would be advisable and desirable in future if new Centres were started in a much more planned way, preferably by small teams of Order members or Order members and Mitras who had had some experience of working together as a team before, rather than having the solitary, brave Order member going out into the wilderness as it were and planting the banner and struggling by himself with relatively little contact with other Order members, especially if he is away from the main Centres.

As I've said, we touched upon this earlier on but there may be some further points to be considered. I'm thinking especially when it comes to starting Centres in new countries, where there aren't perhaps any Order members or Friends at all, or very few and far between. So it would seem that it would be desirable for such new Centres in such areas to be started, say, by two or three Order members with one or two Mitras, and they should establish themselves as a sort of working community first and gradually start up activities. Anyone got any comment on this, either from experience or observation, or just any thought?

Padmapani: I'd like to say something, Bhante. Some of us have moved away from our own home towns and, say, come up to London. become Order members say from the Medway towns. There seems to be - as one gets familiar with Buddhism slowly the commitment becomes stronger, one becomes an Order member. Presumably after a few years sometimes these people want to go back to these places where they come from. I'd like to ask people and yourself comments of how they feel about the difficulties which will arise about going you meet a lot of your old pals, so to speak, and they might see you in the light of what you were, not how you are now.

S: OK.

Padmapani: Does anybody sort of feel strongly enough in that?

S: I know that at least one Order member has been thinking recently of the possibility of going back to his home town and starting up a Centre there. He may or may not care to say something about that, but he seems to be thinking more in terms of the advantages - that he'd have friends and relations there who could help him in various practical ways.

Padmapani: I'm not ruling that out.

Mangala: Yes, I've thought about this. The thing is I don't think I've got any friends back there (laughter). I think I only had about two anyway but contact with I've got lots of acquaintances I've just lost touch with completely. But - I'm thinking more in terms of the advantages, like I've still got some relatives there, and I know I could get a lot of material support from that point of view, and also I know the scene very well, I grew up there - this is Belfast, incidentally.

S: Well, you ought to cheer.

_____: Is this Dublin?

Mangala: Belfast.

_____: Oh, Belfast,

Mangala: And it somehow has a good feeling about it, you know? I feel I'd be right in the place.

_____: I must say I have thought sometimes of going back to Germany, although I

won't be in a position to start a Centre with to look after, but that people would presumably come with me. And I also think there's an advantage in so far as I would know the people, I would have relatives and would have material support. I'd be able to earn money easily, practise. And I would know the people and the culture, and things like that, which is an advantage.

Devamitra: I think, certainly in my own case, if I went back to one particular town, due to certain things that I did when I was a youth (laughter), people would be very prejudiced against me and against Buddhism because of certain activities I've engaged in. With some people it wouldn't necessarily work out, it could definitely be a drawback, I know in my case it

Sanghamitta: I have also said, when we have thought about going back up north, and I felt where I came from because I was born in Rotherham, I was two when I left there, so Sheffield I think of as growing up in, but one does know the scene, and you would be able to stay with people that you know, although in some ways this might be a bit of a pull, and there are deep friendships there, and they still think of you as you were. But I've felt that you'd have to tension(?) a city like that, and it's not gone up north places like that, but I would think that it would probably appeal tremendously. And yoga's not gone up there, any of these things don't seem to have spread up there. I would think that in that sense, but I think it's more that you know the scene.

_____ : I think, you know, one needn't worry about that - they'd think of what you were before - so they might do for a while, but if they really want to change and then they see that you have changed, they will accept that, even more so because they know what you were before. I think that can very much work as an advantage. They may react to you very strongly at the beginning, but if they really want to get on and want to change they will see

Padmapani: I think one has to really look at one's own motives, why one wants to start a Centre up in the north certain element there may be wanting to impress.

Dharmapala: I think the discussion started off with just pointing out that one should be wary of starting a Centre unless you've got some proper support to do that, with Order members or Mitras, otherwise you can get into difficulties on your own.

Vajradaka: It might be worth while discussing how that procedure of collecting five or six Order members actually happens. When Bhante originally mentioned it, I had visions of the first scenes of the Seven Samurai, going round rounding up all these different samurais to go to the place and sort out the problems.

S: It might be a bit like that in some cases at least. I think it would be up to the individual Order member, upasaka or upasika who felt strongly about setting up a Centre in a particular place - in the first instance to have a talk with me about it, and then sound out other people that he or she felt might be interested and might care to make up the team or help make up the team. And then they could all get together and maybe decide to have some experience of being together and working together in England or at their local Centre first, before going forth as a team to start a new Centre as a team. But no doubt the initiative will usually come from one particular person who for some reason or other feels quite strongly about starting up a Centre in a particular place, whether his or her own home town or somewhere completely different.

_____ : What's this idea about one or two Mitras Order members?

S: I was thinking more in terms of long-standing Mitras who are quite near to ordination, and

whose own kalyana mitra or kalyana mitras were in that team; and between whom there was already a good personal and working relationship.

Anybody else ever had thoughts about starting something in their own old home town?

_____: There was one time when I went home and visited my parents who, as you know, are not very far from here, for a few months. I found quite quickly that people knew I was there, probably because I have two sisters also living in, and they brought their friends along and talking to them about Buddhism, and they'd been talking to them about me, since they heard you were here they wanted to come and talk to you about it; and it would have been quite easy to start up a meditation class there, and had I been more together I probably would have done so for a short period. And I can quite easily feel that should I go back and, say, live with my parents, there is already a place there for me a meditation class, and one could easily have contact with people who not too far away, and get the meditation class to go on retreats not too far away, and gradually build up from there. I must admit, in my own case, if I wanted to do that, I don't really feel the necessity for having five or six Order members, because I felt it would build up in that kind of way. What do you feel about that?

S: I think, in the light of past experience, it would be definitely desirable for at least one or two other Order members to be with somebody setting up a new Centre, even if it was their own home town. Perhaps, one might even think, all the more so; so that they didn't get into the habit of relating to the people they were in contact with in the old way, didn't slip back into that, that they were all the time with people who were relating to them as another Order member. I think this is quite important.

Nagabodhi: I'm thinking of my father, but I think it raises a general point. He, and possibly other people, has considered the possibility of getting something going simply so I can bring friends round to listen to lectures or study a text of ours or some other text. I've always told him that if and when he was to do this I'd go home as soon as possible and take other people with me. Also, I imagine people anywhere who read our Newsletter or who've had some contact with us are likely to do this. So a kind of group starts forming, whether we like it or not. I'm not quite sure how to relate to this. In a way it's a bit like Brighton, I suppose; how Buddhadasa went down to something that was already going, and more or less -

S: That was a relic of the Middle Ages, wasn't it? [Laughter] I mean the old Brighton Buddhist Society that I'd been going to month after month for several years in the old days, and it had really not changed at all.

_____: You think really we should just let these groups look after themselves until we've got resources to go down with help?

S: I think we should certainly keep in contact with them. I believe Vajradaka's been doing this in Scotland, haven't you?

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: Like to say anything about that?

Vajradaka: Yes. There are - one, two, three, four main cities in Scotland: Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Glasgow. And we have the Centre at Glasgow, and there are Buddhist societies in the other three cities. Two of them are very small and one of them is - well, not very big but medium size, like the Edinburgh Buddhist Society - I'll give you a kind of survey: the Edinburgh Buddhist Society has been going for quite a long time, but it's got about middle-aged people in it, and it's the weakest of all the Buddhist societies, they really

aren't going anywhere, they're very feeble. And the secretary made a very definite plea to the Friends in Glasgow to help them. He said, 'We really do need help. We need energy, we need Order members, we've decided' - or at least he had decided - that he'd rather have Friends come than the people from Samye Ling, which is further away anyway, and that they wanted us to look after them. And that's what we started doing. I started going there, taking classes, two classes, and gave them regular literature and details of retreats and things like this. And they come over for lectures and festivals, and they that we have. The actual man who runs it, Mr. Brice, the reason that the society is so woolly and weak is because he is, really; and he's a bit kind of for Samye Ling but on the other hand he doesn't want to give himself too much; it's all kind of wobbly with him. But Andrew, the secretary, has just said what he wanted, and he's going ahead and doing it. And he said that he's going to try and make it possible for an Order member to come and live there; he's going to buy a flat and he wants, once the flat is bought for the Order member, to come and stay and then maybe to start working from there to get a Friends' Centre together.

He doesn't want to kind of push Mr. Brice and his Buddhist Society down, but at the same time he does recognise that the Buddhist Society is a bit of a -

_____ : - flop.

Vajradaka: Yes.

S: I've been there several times in the course of the last eight or nine years; I never saw any change. And they did arrange for me to give a public lecture about five years ago, and I gave that public lecture, and about 100 people came, mostly young people and many from the university. And Mr. Brice, who was around in those days, said, 'We just can't cope with that', so they just withdrew into their shell of their five or six regular old-fashioned members, and nothing was ever done about or for those 100 people who'd come along - many of whom were clearly very, very keen.

Vajradaka: The most lively member of the group is a 76-year-old old age pensioner in an old people's home. He really is, and has demanded that we did the Puja and things like that. So that's Edinburgh. That seems within the next year or so - I mean Andrew is making quite a lot of money, and he probably will be able to buy a flat quite soon. And so within the next year or two an Order member certainly could go there, probably even more - well, according to -

S: So the moral here seems to be that we should keep up individual contact with existing groups, and then the more lively elements in these groups, these already existing groups, say Buddhist societies and so on, will certainly, I'm sure, respond to our contact, and gradually a more living relationship will be established, and the group itself will come more and more alive.

Vajradaka: The personal contact - that to me is the most important thing.

_____ : At the same time you're being patient and you're not so eager to have an upasaka there just as soon as possible, but to wait and let things prove themselves against

S: It may be that the people there, all of them, definitely don't want anything more than they already have, in which case there's just a friendly but somewhat distant contact. But in several cases we have seen that there have been members in these groups who really welcome contact with the Friends, and who start working on their own fellow members in that group.

Dharmapala: It's a very good situation if they get to a point where they can invite Order members to come and support them, and also have quite a lot of resources available for use.

Padmapani: Do you think it's a good idea, Bhante, the idea of infiltrating information, say, to one's home town, like introducing people who come up from that town to taped lectures etc? Then sort of sussing out the area and maybe even finding a Centre for one, and then inviting all the others down - rather than a team to go straight in and get it all set up?

S: Oh yes, I only gave a very brief sketch. By all means do a preliminary survey. The person who is interested in setting up a Centre in a particular town could always, or in fact should always, go there first, have a few preliminary visits, make a few contacts, and then come back maybe and talk to others about it. I think for instance Asvajit did this in the case of Bristol. Where is Asvajit?

Asvajit: Here. [Laughter]

S: You had the idea of starting up maybe something in Bristol some day, so you went and had a visit and made a few contacts. Could you say something about that?

Asvajit: Well, I had had the idea ever since Bhante mentioned Bristol, (laughter) - it was one of the towns that he mentioned, I don't know why everybody laughs -

S: ancient history - the New Forest episode.

Asvajit: It immediately rang a bell in me, I thought 'Oh, that's the place for me.' And I've thought so ever since. My ideas have been developing rather slowly, and I see that there are certain dangers, perhaps, in going it myself, and this is precisely what I should not do. So I gradually held back, and being that it's very necessary to involve more and more people in it and also to take things very slowly, very gradually, to get to know people, I've been along there once and met three Buddhists: one a professor who holds meditation classes at the university and occasionally takes people on retreat; he's a very enthusiastic and sincere man, and he believes that what Bristol really needs is a Centre with at least two committed Buddhists, two upasakas. So I have a relationship there, of sorts. And then there are a couple of other people as well. And what I'm hoping to do in the near future, or the not very distant future, is to perhaps go there and give a series of talks with one or two other Order members, and gradually get interest going in that way. And then in a year or so's time, maybe a year and a half, maybe two years, according to how things develop, to go there and actually move in, having found suitable accommodation with two or three or four Order members or Mitras. In that way the Centre will be starting.

S: Another point I have made, I think, is that when the team does go, the first thing that they should do is just to dig themselves in and make themselves comfortable and get settled, and know their way around; and then actually start up classes as they think they are ready.

Nagabodhi: It seems quite important that if one has to find two people should really go on the understanding that they will get jobs and support, because this will immediately take care of a whole quite big and important area, just so Centre doesn't have an air of impoverished lifestyle and Order members on the dole.

S: Well, if a team of, say, five people goes, then two or even three could be working and the other two or three could be full-time into the Centre activities, and that would be a quite balanced and quite fruitful kind of arrangement. Otherwise you get one solitary person struggling to make both ends meet and maybe having to work and also find a place and also run classes. We have done a little bit of that sort of thing in the past, but I don't think we should do it in future if we can possibly avoid it.

_____: It's a good point of contact, too, working meet people.

S: Right.

Mangala: I think a good idea would be a wholefood shop and/or bookshop, which -

S: Yes, one need not necessarily think in terms just of a Centre with meditation classes, not to begin with. You can open a bookshop or you can open a health food or vegetarian restaurant. There are various ways of starting off.

Dharmapala: I think this may - Centres may arise out of different communities set up working on different projects.

S: I must say I have myself been thinking that sooner or later we should expand up into the Midlands and the North. I feel there is a very fruitful field here. I think it would be quite good to get away from the London and south-east England circuit, as it were. I think there's a quite different spirit and even different sort of culture and ethos up there, and I feel there would be a very good and practical response once we get up there. I'm thinking of the major cities like Birmingham and Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield.

Sanghamitta: in this sense a better chance of getting accommodation

S: I think also the general accommodation scene is easier - I think; I hope I'm not mistaken.

Devamitra: I don't think it is, actually. Having worked in reps in those areas, I've always had trouble getting a room to live in.

S: Maybe that's the theatrical -

Devamitra: No, I think it's genuine difficulty,

S: No, I was thinking in terms of, say, renting a house. I think it would be much easier to rent a house in a suburb up there than it would be down here. I remember Akshobya was talking originally in terms of Nottingham when he was there, and he found it quite easy to get a place. And he said there were plenty of quite big houses available in the suburbs of Nottingham.

Sanghamitta: When was this?

S: This was a few years ago.

Sanghamitta: Yes, change.

_____:

_____: Is there any Order member sort of familiar with the Midlands - Devamitra?

Devamitra: Yes.

S: Ananda too; you're from the Midlands, Ananda?

Ananda: Midlands?! [Laughter]

S: Sorry. Well, does it qualify as the north? The noble town of Preston? Would you really like to start a Centre there, Ananda? No! Well, from the way you say it, it seems they really

need a Centre there. [Laughter] And I've passed through Preston many a time in the train on the way to Glasgow, and thought, ah! Ananda's home town! Here -

Ananda: That's the best thing to do! (laughter throughout)

S: Also I think sooner or later we should have something in Wales. We've got obviously some connections in Wales. I must say I rather liked the town of Aberystwyth, with its university. So if anyone is thinking in terms of Wales, please bear Aberystwyth in mind. But I feel it would be very good if - it would be good for us also - if the Movement spreads to the Midlands, because I don't think the orientation, socially and culturally, should be too narrowly south-east England.

Devamitra: I personally have not found all that much difference, actually, between the attitudes of people in the midlands to those of the south-east, coming from the north-east. I do feel a very definite difference between the north-east and the midlands, which in London. It seems pretty dull to me. I don't find the same friendliness in London.

S: Ah. Well, perhaps we should merely say that there's more and more as you get further and further north, more and more friendliness; maybe culminating at Glasgow or Edinburgh.

Sanghamitta: I think it might be a good idea if yoga classes could be started, because -

S: Well, that is another way of starting up, to begin with yoga classes, and then lead into meditation.

Sanghamitta: Because they just haven't - they're not into anything like this up north, and I feel there's a very big potential for this kind of thing, and then have it all -

S: This does raise a very important point: that when we start a new Centre anywhere, though we may intend to have eventually the whole range of activities, which particular activity we start with. I think this should be considered very carefully, in view of the general nature of each area; whether we start with meditation classes, whether we start with a series of lectures, whether we start with yoga classes or opening a bookshop, or whether we start with even communication exercises, or whatever - or a study course.

_____: I think we also have to be careful not to - so far Sanghamitta says that they've got nothing like this up there - that's completely wrong. In Birmingham nearly every young person Transcendental Meditation; the same in Liverpool, and I think very much the same in Manchester. They've got it all up there, Friends. In fact, it would be very hard to they are already into meditation, in a sense, and they don't believe -

S: I'm sure there's some people left! There would be some people left.

_____: Oh yes, but I mean, it -

_____: There is a lot of Buddhist activity up there.

Sanghamitta: Yes, I was thinking particularly of yoga, that - you know -

_____: yoga teachers all over the country, and everywhere.

Sanghamitta: Yes, but it doesn't seem to spread up north, and take hold

_____: You can check actually Buddhist society.

Sanghamitta: Yes, I know, it's all true, but -

_____: There are yoga classes

Lokamitra: No one's got anything like the Friends, anyway.

S: Hear, hear!

_____: I think it's valuable to discuss the form a team should take, because I personally think it's important for at least one - well, one - yoga teacher on any team.

S: Yes, right. A balanced team. (Voices.)

_____: One woman Order member per Centre.

S: Why only one?

_____: Even better! (Voices.)

S: Why, every Centre has got at least one woman. (laughter.) Why limit yourself?

_____:

_____: I was thinking of starting something in my home town.

S: Which is that?

_____: Kentish Town (laughter.)

S: Yes, let's hear more.

_____: I think my local knowledge and contacts would be very useful.

S: Right. Well, this is a very big point, as we've said before - that the local person knows the local scene. Even though you may have been away for quite a few years, you feel quite at home when you go back, you know the ropes almost instinctively. Perhaps I might point out that I started the Movement itself in my home town, which was London. And I think I found it all the easier because I had been born and brought up there, and I did feel I did know my way about.

Manjuvajra: How about, instead of going to just one particular place, cultural area, for example someone doing the universities?

S: That's another point, yes. What one might call the university circuit, as it were. Yes, that's a very good point. Could you elaborate on that?

Manjuvajra: Well, just - I suppose it would involve someone contacting a number of and seeing if you could set up a series of classes in the college. And then a team working round it.

_____: A series of one-night stands, as it were.

_____: A lot of students

S: I feel we should be very imaginative in our approach, because we are considering this from the point of view of the Order, and we have got the standard FWBO set-up through which to function if we wish, but the Order as such need not think that it necessarily in all cases functions in that particular way. There could be all sorts of other ways of functioning to do essentially the same thing. No doubt we will have FWBOs planted all over the place, but there are also many other different ways in which individual Order members and teams of Order members can function, other than through FWBO Centres. And this perhaps is one of them. Another thing I've sometimes thought of - Manjuvajra mentioned universities - perhaps we should think in terms, in some cases, of having a semi-monastic community in or near a university town, not carrying on any activities because I think regular activities in connection with universities are rather out, because you've got such a turnover; but just have, say, a semi-monastic community with at least two or three quite mature and experienced Order members simply staying there, living there, getting on with their own meditation, study, practice and so on, but available to students who want to talk to them - whether about Buddhism, about their personal problems, life or anything; just available to talk. Obviously this will require a rather special sort of Order member.

It occurs to me that two kinds of Order members might be suitable: one, an Order member who is himself university-educated, who has been through university and is well versed in Buddhist philosophy and an 'intellectual', inverted commas, as well as being a dedicated Order member; two, a completely unsophisticated person who is thoroughly into his meditation and fundamental Buddhism but has never been through a university and has no higher education, even, and just bypasses all that. Either one or the other, I think, but not the half-educated.

Nagabodhi: This isn't the way (?) university-educated acquired knowledge

S: A very difficult task. But you see what I mean? But these are just alternative ways of functioning. Again, another Order member might run correspondence courses, or his own correspondence with isolated Buddhists, things like that. Or he might travel around as many towns and cities and villages as possible giving the same or virtually the same lecture over and over again, over as wide an area as possible, to as many people as possible. In other words, just scattering seed broadcast; that might be somebody's way of doing it. Or someone might just choose to go on a walking tour and just talk to all the people he met along the way, and leave literature in their hands.

So I think, as an Order, we mustn't confine ourselves to thinking in terms of functioning through a standard FWBO set-up. This is an excellent thing, the FWBO-type set-up, but it's only one of the possibilities, and there are many more possibilities.

Ananda: One thing, Bhante, I've found very surprising. I've just been up to Samye Ling, stayed there one night, and I talked to as many people as I could there, about 30 or 40 people; and not one of them I talked to had heard of the Friends. I was really amazed at this, because they were mostly - not committed Buddhists but at least interested in Buddhism. And I think we tend to overestimate how many people have heard of us, and maybe a lot more energy could be put by some people in the Order into just making the Friends a bit more known, rather than going out in terms of setting up - in terms of commitment, just making the name known and -

S: The point also must be made that, so far, or until very recently indeed, we did not advertise ourselves, quite deliberately; otherwise I myself have got contacts, say, with the Maha Bodhi Journal, the Buddhist World, and it would have been quite easy to place articles regularly about the Friends. But I felt that for the first seven or eight years of our existence, both the Order and the Friends, we had to consolidate and strengthen ourselves. But perhaps the time now has come to make ourselves more widely known in this way. And maybe there

is something to be said for people writing articles about the Friends and putting them in Buddhist magazines and so on, now that we have something very distinctive and quite solid to offer, even though still on a relatively small scale, but still, we believe, completely genuine and capable of really helping people.

Ananda: I think people were really surprised to hear of the existence of something like the Friends, and very eager to know where were our Centres. I met -

S: Right. But we do send our Newsletter up there. Didn't you see it?

Ananda: Yes, it was there. It gets stuck away in a tiny little corner of the library, and nobody ever sees it.

S: Well, perhaps there also is something to be said for Order members regularly touring existing Buddhist groups and centres, and just going and staying in a friendly way, and talking to them about the Friends, just at least for the sake of information.

Ananda: I felt that contact I had, even just for a very brief time, was very valuable, for me and for the people there.

S: So no doubt you left a bit of literature, or - ?

Ananda: Yes. They've got a big notice board, and there's a lot of information about other Buddhist groups, and nothing about the Friends.

Vajradaka: We did send our posters out.

Ananda: There was something about Bhante there

S: But obviously we need something much more.

Ananda: There was one chap I met up there lived at Archway, and never heard of

S: Recently?

_____: Yes, he's still there.

Padmapani: Ananda, can I ask if, when you were up at Samye Ling, there were many Americans up there?

Ananda: I didn't notice many. There was an American nun there, that's all.

Padmapani: I think that would be an area that would be quite fruitful became the contact with some Americans.

S: Well, this is again one of the advantages of having a Centre in London, a big, active Centre; because in London you do meet people from all over the world. And we have already one American Order member, a American upasaka, don't we? Don't we? Dharmadasa. He's a sort of adopted Welshman for the moment, but -

_____: Could we maybe move on that as well, to the next one, Buddhism in the West?

S: Yes. I was thinking in terms of moving from London as a cosmopolitan place, to some of

the cosmopolitan cities on the Continent. And I've been thinking myself very much recently in terms of eventually Centres in Amsterdam and in Copenhagen, because in Europe there are really these three international centres with a sort of counter-culture etc., where there would be a very good opening for the Friends. And I have been thinking about this more and more. Obviously it has to be something that develops naturally, and we did have the European retreat in Holland recently. Perhaps we should say Netherlands; it is really more correct, so I'm told, to say the Netherlands; Holland is only part of the Netherlands, and if you say Holland instead of Netherlands it's rather like saying England when you should say Great Britain. So in the Netherlands we had this European retreat, and we made very good contacts with people from Sweden, as well as a contact from Belgium, two from France, one of whom was Dominique, and quite a few from Holland. And quite a few of those people really look forward to there being a Centre of the Friends in Holland. And it looks as though Amsterdam will probably be the best place. So it's just up to Order members to think about it, and if you feel so inspired, just to go into it more and more.

I personally feel that - I may be completely mistaken; sometimes developments do occur completely at random, and we must be prepared for that too, and give room for that - but my feeling is that the Friends will be expanding into Scandinavia and the Low Countries. I think that will be next.

_____: And the what countries?

S: The Low Countries; I mean Belgium and Luxemburg. The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg, plus the Scandinavian countries. One of the friends that we met from Sweden was someone who had been a Buddhist for some time but had no real contact, and he really wanted Sangha, spiritual community; and he practically volunteered himself ordination on the spot, and was really overjoyed to meet us. And Vajradaka is hoping to have a weekend retreat there in Sweden when he comes down from Finland later in the year; and also another weekend retreat, possibly two, in the Netherlands themselves. So we seem to be sowing a bit of seed on the Continent, quite apart from our flourishing Centre in Helsinki, where several Order members, I think, will be visiting quite soon.

Bodhisri: those cosmopolitan cities?

S: I think - if it so happens that things do develop quite spontaneously otherwise, well, fair enough; but looking at it in a reasonable way, and what might reasonably be expected, it would seem a very good idea that we should have Centres in Copenhagen and in Amsterdam. Also a great advantage to English-speaking Order members is the fact that English is so widespread in these places, with - I'm told in Copenhagen 50% of the population speaks English; in Amsterdam it's more or less the same, perhaps. But certainly everywhere one goes in Holland and in Scandinavia too, you find English very widespread.

_____: And

_____: until there's a local -

S: Until there is a local Sangha, or a Sangha of local origin, yes.

_____:

Vajradaka: In a way, I think that the most ideal situation, and I do use the word 'ideal', is for people from a certain country to come over to here, like say for example when the Bethnal Green Centre is set up; and to stay there maybe for a year or so, really get framed up, and then go back. Because there is a kind of a national pride and things like this in the language, which is overcome if a

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..... a national goes back, and can speak the language and has the spirit of the Movement.

Bodhisri: I think the person who goes there should learn the language anyway.

_____ : Yes, but that's not possible for a person touring.

Bodhisri: Ah, no, the person who goes starting up a Centre should definitely learn the language.

Vajradaka: On the question of Holland, if anyone is thinking of spending a week or two in Holland maybe they could make it the weekend around the weekend of 17-18 November, and then we can be there together and maybe do something.

Padmapani: Where's that going to be, Vajradaka?

Vajradaka: They haven't decided on the place yet.

S: But we have now an address list of up to nearly 50 people now with whom we are in contact in the Netherlands, and this enthusiastic Buddhist from Sweden brought three friends with him who were not quite such characters as he was but still who were very interested. He was a man of about 40, and quite a character, a very sturdy independent person, very frank and quite communicative. I think he was doing work with people in prison, wasn't he?

Vajradaka: No, he was dealing with - I think subnormal children, When he heard about the Order, he said 'I want to be Ordered.' [Laughter]

S: I also have been thinking that we should open up a bit of contact with the German Buddhist movement. I have myself personal contacts, mainly within the Arya Maitreya Mandala, and I have a standing invitation to go and stay with the leader of the Arya Maitreya Mandala in Germany, that is Dr. Armin Gottmann, who stayed with me for two months in Kalimpong many years ago when he was still a student, when he was about 17. And I knew his parents, who were also Buddhists and also in the Arya Maitreya Mandala too, they were all in India together, all three of them. So there's already a quite good contact, and they send us their magazine and they get our Newsletter. So I think now the time has come for us to open up a bit of contact, and I think next time we have a European retreat we should try to advertise it in The Christ(?), which is the organ of the Arya Maitreya Mandala, in good time, well in advance; it comes out every two months. And I'm sure we'd get a few people along from Germany. And if we could have - there would have to be an English-language retreat for the time being, but if we could have any German-speaking Order member on the retreat, so much the better.

_____ : How large is the Arya Maitreya Mandala, Bhante?

S: I don't really know. It's quite widespread in Germany, but then in Germany the whole Buddhist scene is rather widespread. I rather gather it's pretty much as it is in England, minus London and everything in London; there's no FWBO, there's no Buddhist Society, in the sense of one quite large organisation in the capital city, as it were; -

_____ : There isn't a capital city, I mean everything in Germany, it's all spread in all the big towns, which makes about 10 or 15 towns.

S: I think you could say that there are 10 or 15 small groups of the Arya Maitreya Mandala,

and quite a few scattered individuals, but I don't think - well, I know that they don't have activities on anything like the scale that the FWBO does. But they are very similar in their outlook to us in many ways, because they were started by Lama Govinda.

_____: It is a Sangha?

S: It is a Sangha, yes. Though I must say I don't think that they've gone into this as thoroughly as we have, from the contact that I've had with them. But still in principle, it is a Sangha, yes, which is a very important point. It is definitely a step beyond a society. So I think it would be all to the good if we had a bit more contact with them. And one of the things I hope to do during the coming year, which I hope to spend in Norfolk, is just to renew contact with some of the Buddhist friends abroad, also in the East, that I just haven't been able to write to for so many years because I've been so busy; but I want to open or re-open as many contacts as possible.

Strange to say, the last few months, quite a few of my old friends have been writing to me, for no apparent reason; some of them expressing great appreciation to receive the Newsletter. This does circulate quite widely in the East, though there aren't too many copies of it going there, and several people recently have written, people whom I hadn't heard from or of for years and years, saying they've been getting it regularly and how much they appreciated it. So a little bit of news is percolating round in those centres where I had connections and friendly relationships before; mainly in India, in Ceylon, Thailand, Singapore; mainly those areas. But I've also lots of contacts in America that I want to open up again - some of my old students who took my course at Yale.

_____: Presumably would include America.

S: Yes. I also have had several other ideas. Let me just think aloud a little bit, so that people just are acquainted with my thinking or at least dreaming, even though nothing happens for the time being, or even maybe for the next ten years; but there's no harm in having a little dream sometimes, or a few Centres in the air!

I have also been thinking lately of Beirut. (Voices: Ah!) [Laughter] Now you might say, why Beirut?

_____: It's warm!

_____: Cosmopolitan.

S: It is cosmopolitan, yes. It's in the Middle East, but it's not in (I hope I haven't got my geography wrong) - it isn't in a Moslem country; it's in Lebanon, which is a Christian country, and a mildly Christian country.

_____: There is a Moslem community.

S: There is a Moslem community, but the majority of inhabitants are Christian, of one of the more archaic Eastern churches, and they are quite reasonable and tolerant. It will probably be easier to start a Centre there than anywhere else in the Middle East, as far as one can see at present, and it is cosmopolitan, it is the big centre, especially banking centre, for the whole of the Middle East; all the financial transactions apparently go through Beirut. And it is on the route to the East. So I have been thinking about Beirut.

_____: Have you ever thought about the southern European countries, or strongly -

S: I feel that the southern European countries will take a lot of penetrating by Buddhism, in any form.

_____: We're getting quite a few letters at Aryatara from Yugoslavia.

S: Are you? That's very interesting.

_____: Yeah, from interested people, very sincere and quite urgent. There's nothing there at all. I have been to Yugoslavia with Michelle, when she went to Yugoslavia. She's not in fact involved with Buddhism. And from my point of view it did seem quite a likely country. I think politically there's a few things stirring up at the moment, but otherwise in the countryside and so forth it's very quiet, and very stable.

_____: Well, I'm not sure.

S: That's very interesting. But I've also been thinking of Poland, now we are on eastern Europe -

_____:

S: You see, another interesting thing is Britain at the moment is very much extending its commercial relationships with Poland. There's quite a flow of commerce, and quite a few English businessmen have been going there lately, and it seems as though, at least commercially, Poland is coming quite close to Britain. So that means there are some channels of communication, there are possibilities of going there, presumably.

_____: Apparently it's impossible to get into, because Karen(?) tried. You have to pay a very large sum of money for each day that you're in Poland, so that it's practically impossible to stay. (Voices.)

S: A lot of countries are insisting on this now.

_____: I must admit, now that we're on Eastern Europe, I dreamt the other day - I mean the other night, sleeping, not waking - of a Centre in Moscow.

S: Well, Vajrabodhi is quite keen that next time I go to Helsinki I should pay a visit to Leningrad.

_____: Yes, you should.

S: But I have no illusions about what is possible in Russia at the moment. But I think, as regards the Eastern bloc countries, Yugoslavia and Poland are the most penetrable.

_____: Yes, they are the most likely. The Arya Maitreya Mandala has in fact got something in Hungary.

S: They have, but in a very collegiate way, I think; rather heavily disguised in academic form.

_____: I think out of those, the eastern countries, the only ones are Poland and Yugoslavia, and even there I don't think the chances are very good.

S: So if one has possibilities of contacts in Yugoslavia, by all means follow them up, because even if there's no possibility of organised activities at present, an Order member or two or

three Order members could easily go on holiday there and just go around visiting the people who have been writing; just talk to them.

_____: There are cheap ways of getting in, like on tour.

_____: Hungary Yugoslavia.

S: That's true, yes, so he has.

_____: from that.

S: Well, maybe yoga classes would go down very well there, without a word breathed about Buddhism at first, except in private conversation. There are all sorts of possibilities. This is why I say we must be a bit imaginative and not think in terms of always establishing a Centre. There might be some countries in which you might not be able to establish a Centre for years and years, but you might be regularly visiting and having personal contact. And after all, it is the personal contact that is important, and even the Centre is only a sort of means to make extensive personal contact possible. But there might be cases in which you just have the personal contact, you just talk to one or two or three people about Buddhism, about meditation, without there ever being any regular classes or courses or Centres.

_____: What about Thailand? Buddhism.

S: I don't feel very happy about the Buddhist East, or about India, because the whole trend there is towards industrialisation, material wealth and so on; even those areas which are Buddhist I think the tendency is very much of this kind. And I think you have to give them time to get through this. I think we have to work more in those areas which have seen through all this and are beginning to look around for something more.

_____: The eastern European countries are just coming

Vajradaka: I heard that you can get quite a lot of concessions in foreign countries if you have a press card, and so I thought maybe Dharmachakra Publications could produce a few.

_____: It doesn't mean that sort of press -

S: No, press cards - you have to be a member of an official body of some kind. (Voices.)

_____: A union -

_____: Well, we could still print a few anyway. [Laughter]

S: There is also the point that in some countries people with press cards are the first to be put into prison when there's a coup. Or

_____: We have connections with Poland Chris Lomzig.

S: Yes? (Voices.) Ah, that's interesting. That's where the Lomzig comes from. Well, I'm a quarter Hungarian if that will help.

_____: Send one of your legs over.

Mangala: That still leaves Africa and South America. (laughter.)

S: I think we'll leave those until the next Convention! [Laughter] This is a bit of thinking aloud, and possibilities. Let Order members stretch their imaginations a bit.

_____: What about Israel? (Voices.)

_____: Australia?

S: Well, again, there are several points there. One is that the former prime minister of Israel - what was his name? Ben-Gurion - was deeply interested in Buddhism, and attended some Buddhist meetings and studied Buddhism quite deeply. We have had several Israelis along to Sakura in the old days, mostly sons of diplomats who went back to Israel, and they did get very much into the meditation. Nagaboshi(?) has had karate courses in Jerusalem, but I think the whole of that part of the Middle East is in such a turmoil, virtually, I think - well, if someone feels inspired to go and spy out the land, fair enough, and make some personal contacts -

_____: [I had] some contacts with a Zen roshi who holds classes in Jerusalem. He seems to get quite a lot of people along -

_____:

_____: There's a Zen Buddhist group in Jerusalem itself.

_____: There's a lot of disillusionment among young Israelis, they are quite free of the paranoia held by the older generation, and they're frustrated by the national scene they're brought up in.

S: Well, perhaps an adventurous Order member would like to go out and just have a look round, and report back.

_____: Israel, so

S: I must say I was thinking that if something were started, say, in Beirut, whoever was functioning there would also be keeping an eye on places like Jerusalem.

Nagabodhi: I don't think that would be possible. Communication is just out.

S: I did give a lecture in Cairo some years ago, and there was a very good response, mainly from the cosmopolitan diplomatic crowd. Looking further afield, we have our Movement as you know in New Zealand, and some of the New Zealand Friends are quite interested in extending to Australia. And Akshobya's already paid a visit to Sydney and made some contacts, and several Australians have attended courses and classes in Auckland and in Christchurch, so I think sooner or later we will be having something there. And I'm probably going to visit Australia on my next visit to New Zealand; that won't be for at least another year, probably a year and a half.

Ananda: We used to have a friend in Australia called Jeremy B..... Do you know him? He used to write to me very regularly,

S: Well, perhaps you could put him in contact with the Auckland Friends. Because some of them will be going. Purna is thinking quite seriously about it, of going to Sydney.

_____: There's *****, isn't there, in Australia, in Sydney

Vajradaka: The less said about him the better.

_____: I don't agree - *****?

S: Can you go on talking about *****, and I'll just go and -

_____: Why this - ?

_____: I've just heard so many different things about him, Guru Maharaji, and going; it just seems to me that he was a very disturbed person He was very mixed up, and he's just sort of - his allegiance is

_____: No, I don't think so, I think (Chat.)

_____: Does anyone have any definite ideas, I mean definite plans?

_____: What about?

_____: About any of the things that we've been talking about. (Chat.)

Subhuti: occurred to me in connection with our development in England particularly, or in Great Britain - would be that we've been talking a lot in terms of ecology and encouraging more healthy practical work, it would be a very good way of spreading Buddhism through wholefood wholesale, with retail outlets. If we started developing wholesale importers, maybe even taking over from community supplies, and using - when somebody start buying the wholefood shop. It would be a source of income

_____: There's lots of things like vegetarian cheese and things like that.

_____:

S: But that has to be considered - there are lots of places where you won't have any local freaks. They are a fairly local phenomenon. There are some countries which don't have freaks at all, (Voices.)

Mangala: Health food's also health food shops very small town, ...

_____: I think that health foods and wholefoods are going right across the social range. A friend of mine invited some builders in who were working on his house, and he's a real healthfood freak, and he gave them some tea, and he was going to apologise for giving them brown sugar, because he thought they'd like white; and they said, 'Wot! We don't never 'ave no whoite' (laughter.)

_____:wholefood about 12 to 15 people and they're all from the city, except one or two businessmen around 30 to 35 age group, and becoming very aware of environment and and so on.

S: Yes. I think we have to be very careful to update our ideas all the time, and not remain with ideas and the scene as it was seven years ago when we started, because things are changing all the time, even year by year.

_____: Even cheese! (laughter.)made with synthetic enzymes now, Karen informs me; yes, it is.

_____: - I belong to a vegetarian society - about this.

_____: cheese scene. cheese factories all over France and Yugoslavia
..... -

S: We're in the Common Market now, you know.

_____: countries - and study in factories with the cheese- makers

_____: Talking about updating ideas, I was thinking about this communication between sojust thinking aloud as it were, this worldwide network of communication is very important, just thinking perhaps that the more electronically-minded - I was thinking of the ham radio; that's really very good,

S: Someone suggested to me that I should have a walkie-talkie to keep in contact with Centres everywhere, but I firmly rejected the proposal! (Voices, laughter.)

Anyway, two points occurred to me while I was out of the room. One point is I think - and this is something that concerns, I think, Nagabodhi particularly - I think that we should see it to systematically that the Newsletter goes to all the existing Buddhist Centres in Europe, including Great Britain, and that we have to hunt out names and addresses of Centres and groups, and just see that they get the Newsletter; and perhaps a few more in the East as well. Because quite a few have come into existence since we have, some quite flourishing groups in the East, in India for instance, and Ceylon. So perhaps that could be done.

Another point that occurred to me, of a more general nature: people are of several different kinds, and it does occur to me that there are some people who are very good at pioneering but who are not good at systematic follow-up. So I think it should be clearly understood that there are people who are good at pioneering and should be allowed to pioneer, just go around maybe on their own, make contacts, distribute Newsletters, talk to people about the Friends and about Buddhism, about meditation; but they are not necessarily expected themselves to establish Centres wherever they go. They may just break fresh ground and leave it to other, more systematically-minded Order members to do the follow-up. They can just be roaming and do that without thinking that 'I mustn't arouse too much interest, otherwise I'll have to start a Centre and I don't really want to do that.' But certainly as they go around making the contacts, just give people addresses that they can write to, where they can get fresh literature from, and so on. Because some people are really good at establishing fresh contacts and breaking fresh ground, but don't necessarily feel like following it up in this systematic way, and there should be definite scope for such people. Some might choose to roam all over the world; you might not see them for two or three years, but you'd get postcards from Singapore and Saigon and Nebraska, and Chicago and Paris and you'd know that they were going around and talking about the Friends wherever they went; and you'd be getting requests for literature from all these places, and maybe the odd request for an Order member to go out and start a Centre or a team to go out and start a Centre.

_____: They won't be crossed off the archives if they send postcards?

S: No.

_____: You're certainly not happy about one person going out to start a Centre - are you happy about one person wandering off for three years on their own?

S: Well, obviously it depends on the person. They should be stable within themselves and able to subsist spiritually without that regular contact with the Sangha.

_____: And have the basic contact, prolonged contact,

S: Yes. I imagine that people who do this will have been in very deep regular contact for at least four or five years.

_____: It would be good if Newsletters are going to be sent systematically to groups in different countries; if we could produce, maybe, one or two sheets within the Newsletter, a sort of précis in the language of the country of, say, the principal points for -

S: Yes, why not? (laughter.) I think there is definitely a case to be made out for, say, when we do get a proper little booklet about the Friends, to get it translated into several languages, so that we can send batches to people in foreign countries to distribute, who do become interested. Certainly in French, in Spanish, in Italian - we can quite easily get it translated into these languages, and possibly into others as well.

_____: Bhante, what about in Malaysia?

S: I haven't heard from him recently, so I can't say; but he was very keen that I should visit Malaysia again on my way to New Zealand next time. I am quite willing to do that if some arrangements can be made, and I'll probably be stopping over in Hong Kong too, where we have a contact in the person of our Friend Michael Wallace(?).

It did occur to me, since we've just a few minutes before coffee, and we've touched on ecology in the form of wholefood wholesale, that we might just spend the rest of the time before coffee on that, because Ananda wanted to say something about conservation.

Ananda: I feel it's very important, this whole area, and I've got quite strong feelings that we should be involved in it, because things are happening. Lots of people are very concerned about it, very involved in the whole business of conservation, and there's also fuel(?) and pollution And I feel that our commitment as Buddhists obliges us to be concerned with these things, and there are lots of groups all around the country working very hard on some of these things. And I just wonder what the feeling of the Order and you, Bhante, was about active involvement in this area. I've made contact in particular with a very interesting group called the National Conservation Corps, and they run very active and frequent work camps, mostly in the summer, throughout the UK. They apparently get lots and lots of young people on these things, and -

S: There is the point that if we have contact with them, they also have contact with us, and it's a two-way process.

Ananda: Right, And I think it would be, not only from the point of view of our effect on the relationship of Buddhism and conservation ideas, but the fact that the actual contact we make with people who are in these fields I think are important. I have the feeling that people who are working in this area would be interested in Buddhism.

_____: Can you explain about the work camps in a bit more detail?

Ananda: Yes, they publish a newsletter called 'The Conserver' every three months, and it's basically very active work - workshops if you like, work camps - where people go and they camp or they stay in cheap accommodation, and they work on something like de-polluting rivers and general repair work on the countryside, and also in much more profound ways like work on pollution campaigns anti-pollution, which I feel is very vital, very important. And just generally they mount publicity campaigns for people to be aware of these things, like the effect on the countryside that we're having, the effect of noise on people, and things like that.

S: We could certainly interest ourselves in this question of noise, just from the standpoint of meditation, because if it rises above a certain number of decibels meditation becomes impossible; so we've almost a vested interest in this question of sound.

Bodhisri: It's part of our social and political

Ananda: I think an essential part of the Friends is political or social involvement.

_____: There's two aspects to what you're saying. One is how we personally individually apply, almost as a precept, should Order members, say, avoid using cars, pollutes the air? And there's a second aspect, how we should present that as part of what we're doing.

Ananda: I almost take it for granted that we should put those principles into action, because I feel that our Precepts make it a duty, almost, to

S: Well, it does seem very much to come under the heading of awareness of nature - the four main aspects of awareness, remember: awareness of oneself, awareness of nature, awareness of other people, and awareness of Reality. So if one wants to include it in a systematic exposition, it very well comes under the heading of awareness of nature, awareness of things, awareness of natural resources, awareness of the material environment. It all comes in here, quite naturally.

Ananda: Even now, more and more, it's our duty as Order members to set the example to others, in a sense, and that we should be a bit more aware of the implications of exploitation of our environment. And we should try and live as simply as possible and non-exploitatively as possible, as non-polluting as possible, things like that. As self-contained as possible, not relying on industry.

_____: we have established contact with the Whole Earth group, which seems to be centred around Sussex University, and they are in contact with most of the groups in the country, for instance that group that has had the fair that we attended recently on various groups on alternative technology and conservation and preservation.

Ananda: And there's Friends of the Earth as well.

_____: Friends of the Earth, yes. They're all interconnected but very (?), because if we do tend to get involved in this conservation idea organisation is just don't like it. But there's quite a lot of dialogue goes on between the various different groups.

S: I think it would be quite good if there was a short article in the Newsletter on 'Buddhism and Conservation' or 'Buddhism and the Environment' or 'Buddhism and Ecology' - just a short one, just to indicate where we do stand as a Movement in this respect. With perhaps a few addresses of ecological or conservation movements.

_____: There has been a several of the different Naming names of

S: It would be good if certain Order members had individual contact, or even attended some of these camps.

Ananda: That is what I feel, it would be

S: Not only just to find out what they are doing and how perhaps we could either co-operate or apply, and also to let them know about what we are doing.

Ananda: I have the address of the National Conservation Corps, which is the biggest organisation and the most together of the organisations.

_____: There's one point that strikes me, and that is that will we be connecting ourselves with these groups in order to work on the conservation side of it, in other words to deal with what they're dealing with, or will we be making contact with them to try and translate our particular view in their terms?

S: It's both. For instance, suppose you go along to one of their work camps, you work along with them, doing whatever they're doing and helping; but no doubt round the camp fire at night you'll be talking about all sorts of things, and no doubt you'll start talking about Buddhism sooner or later, and the Friends.

Ananda: I think it's a very fruitful and potentially good area of contact, not only working on conservation but just spreading the Dharma.

S: There is no doubt that we should be more conservation-minded, and that we ourselves should not do anything - (Voices.)

_____: On a more daydreamy note, I feel - well, it needn't be daydreamy eventually, but - a large country retreat centre should be the epitome of all the ideas that have been

_____: There's a whole movement called low-impact technology, and it functions round about the south-west, I think, of England; and I should think that Friends need to incorporate some of the ideas they have, like solar - they have wind-power machines, and they have solar batteries which drive radiators and heating elements.

Asvajit: Which we should be investigating at Bethnal Green, all kinds of methods of maximum efficiency of energy utilisation and so on.

_____: just using the technology as it stands without abusing nature through the technology.

Dharmapala: This brings us back again to types of Centres and having a Centre that's perhaps dedicated to that sort of work, and people going there and really sort of finding out does it work, how it works, and that can then be given usefully to the Order.

S: Right, just as you could have a centre concentrating on meditation, another one concentrating on ecological developments.

Chintamani: I saw a programme on television a while ago talking about the new alchemists. It told of the movement in the States - sort of farms on which people sort of - er - and at the end of the programme they had them sitting round the camp fire doing some sort of meditation or something - that sort of person seems to -

S: Well, that might well happen, you see: you might get a whole lot of people sitting round a camp fire and then they start talking about meditation, and someone might say, 'It would be nice if we could meditate,' and then the question arises, 'Who could lead it? Who knows anything about meditation?' Then the Order member pipes up, 'Well, me.' (Voices.)

_____: It just so happens there's a Centre - !

_____: This is what exactly did happen on a recent fair held in Wales, as opposed to a festival. Apparently more and more fairs are coming into existence, where people gather

from all over the country ... interest in

S: This is another thing I've been thinking - obviously, it needs resources, but I was thinking that Order members should just go along to more of these things, mix with people and talk with them - gatherings of, you know - and also to go out a bit, as well as establish our Centres to which people come. Going out necessarily as individuals or maybe in twos and threes. But as Order members get a bit more time and as there are more Order members, go along to fairs and go along to festivals, and just meet people and talk to them. It's not a question of pushing it down their throats, but just get to know them and talk, and share experiences, as it were. And especially, probably, younger Order members could do this. I've been thinking, or rather wondering, in this connection, whether the Order as a whole isn't getting a bit old, a bit old in the tooth as it were. I've been looking around for potential Order members who are very young, and I think there is something to be said for this, if they are ready. I mentioned on one of the study retreats that I felt the Order was beginning to get a bit staid, and this was rather hotly denied by some Order members, but I'm still not quite sure.

Sanghamitta: [that] you've got to be young. The last time I was on a train I got talking to a girl from Austria, and she'd been here five years, and she said she found me much more interesting to talk to and generally older people had got something more interesting to say, and she was very interested and took down the details of, and we had a long conversation!

S: I quite accept what you say, but I still think that if we're not careful we shall settle down into being a very staid and reliable and solid movement, but with a certain lack of freedom and spontaneity which very often you find with very young people, and I really think we must watch that. I would personally like to see, if they are available, some very much younger people in the Order. When I say very much younger, I mean 16, 17, 18, 19 - because you do find great sincerity at that age. (laughter.)

Asvajit: Perhaps in this connection we should mention Richard Hutton, down at Brighton, who a lot of us have had the opportunity of meeting there. He's a really delightful person to have around.

S: How old is he?

Asvajit: Eighteen.

S: Well, he sometimes seems about 30. (laughter.) But anyway, I think it's coffee time now.

(Break)

S: about conservation and ecology, so perhaps, though it's going a little bit out of order, but perhaps it would be good if we went straight into social and political involvement. It's a good point of departure. I think perhaps the ecological situation is a very good illustration of the sort of thing that I had in mind when I mentioned social and political involvement.

Asvajit: It seems to me that it would be very difficult to get politically involved if you declared yourself openly to be a Buddhist. You'd get very little support. That is my feeling, but on the other hand I feel very strongly that involvement in that sphere eventually would be a very good thing. It's difficult to see how it can come about.

_____: There's something I was listening to on a tape the Buddha's philosophy of personal relationships There was a very good thing on that about employer-employee relationships, which it could be very profitable to just - particularly that section, to

transcribe, edit and print, to be circulated to trade unions and - I think it's really probably that's the quite violent reactions (Chat.)

_____ : Could you outline exactly what it said? Was it strong?

_____ : Did you take it from - ?

S: It's from the Sigalovada Sutta, yes.

_____ : But I felt it can crystallise the whole problem and define what really was the function of an employer and the employee and how they could best and state their responsibilities to each other. And it in a way it offered an alternative to the usual confrontation that occurs between employers and employees, and redefined what their responsibilities were, and it seems to me that in a way that if too much of a head-on collision occurs between two sides in -

S: I think perhaps it should be pointed out that this tends to occur much more in this country. I talked about these things with Vajrabodhi, and Vajrabodhi made the point that we had to be very careful not to generalise too much from the situation in England. And he said that on the Continent people are really sometimes astounded at the foolishness of the British, who allow this sort of confrontation to develop, which is not found, according to him, usually on the Continent - this confrontation between the employer and the employee. And he said certainly in Finland you don't have that sort of thing; people arrange matters differently.

_____ : Maybe this could be backed up with - that could be the central core of an article, backed up with data from, say, countries like Finland and Sweden,

_____ : I think, though, that on the whole now at present we shouldn't think in terms of any organised political and social involvement, but just be aware that we live in a society, and that we relate something that Gunavati said to me about the people in Brighton I find very useful is that it encourages people to go out; in other words we relate to - we have social relations outside the Movement, and we relate to society. And that is the sort of social involvement we have now, rather than writing pamphlets or getting involved with trade unions and employers, etc. I don't think that concerns us

S: I mentioned the ecological movement as a model in this sense - that we do have the idea that we would like to see Buddhist principles applied systematically throughout the whole of social life, so we see, for instance, in this particular case, that people who are working in the field of ecology and conservation and natural resources are doing the sort of thing that from our point of view quite naturally follows from being a Buddhist. They are doing it without being Buddhist, but they are doing the sort of thing that we regard as a natural application of -

(end of side)

Tape 11, side 2

as a natural application of Buddhism. So inasmuch as we also should be into what they are doing, we like to establish friendly contact with them, and that will naturally be a sort of two-way thing and through us they'll get in contact in some cases perhaps with Buddhism. So I think that if we do have any social-type contact at this stage, it should be in that way. It should be individual Order members establishing individual contact with people who in different fields - social fields, cultural fields - are doing the sort of thing that we would regard as a natural application of Buddhist principles.

_____ :comes into everyday life, and I find myself in the area where I live

..... and -

S: You've got to be a mother first.

.....: Well, yes, wherever one is

S: Right, so you've got to be a mother, or be an artist, or be a trades unionist, or be an ecologist, as well as being a Buddhist, and then that gives you your series of contacts. If I went along to a Mothers' Union meeting I wouldn't get in. They'd discriminate against me!

Ratnapani: I think in the narrowly political sense which we've come up against before - what can we do about politics? In the field of narrow politics as we see it - because all these things are in fact politics, but in the narrow sense - the whole thing is a bit too corrupt for us to be able to do that,

S: This is what I've felt. Ever since I've come back to England, and ever since I started the Friends, I've been searching, every time I look at the newspapers - for: is there some opening in the political field, something that we could take up as Buddhists? And so far I've found nothing. Because all the issues are so complex, and there are all sorts of factors with which we wouldn't want to have anything to do at all. But certainly I see a few areas of a more social nature - though perhaps with political implications - like the field of ecology and conservation of resources, where I think we can do something, make some start.

Ratnapani: In the meantime, apart from fields where we can get into action, we should know where we do stand politically at least as far as we are concerned, inasmuch as one can take a stand on the issues.

S: I think in terms of party politics, it's quite impossible.

Ratnapani: I don't mean party politics, I mean - at least, the political parties, I suppose, are eventually concerned with social structure in a very wide sense, in the whole country, and I think we should - the individual Order member who's going to ever talk to people on the subject, and we all might, should know just what he feels should be the social structure in accordance, in our case, with Buddhism. So that it can be put across if the situation does arise,

S: Yes, I think this is important. I must say that this is very much in the melting pot at the moment, because it's only recently that I've had much time to think about it systematically, and we are approaching in a very tentative and piecemeal fashion - we are thinking in terms of right livelihood, for instance, and we'd like some of the activities of the Friends like the press, or like possibly a plant for recycling waste paper would provide employment for some Order members and Friends, we'd like to see this sort of development. We'd like to see neighbourhood communities developing. At present we can only offer something a bit piecemeal, though we're quite clear about our general principles, and I think one particular point that must always be made is that we do not believe that the improvement in society comes about simply through the change of heart on the part of the individual. We definitely do believe that there must be radical changes in the structure of society. But we demand those changes for the sake of the individual, so that the individual within a more helpful environment can develop more easily as an individual, instead of having his environment mainly against him, or against her.

So we can make our position clear there - that though we are a spiritual movement we do not stand purely for the individual spiritual change within one's own heart; we also want to see changes in society, because we believe that the individual is crippled by the wrong sort of social environment, the wrong sort of education, the wrong sort of work life, and so on. So

we want changes in all those spheres, possibly more radically than any of the existing political parties. So this, I think, at least, must be clear. And just indicate, then, the very few fields within which we've started working very tentatively, but make it clear where we stand in principle, as it were.

_____: There is a political ideology that I feel rather fits that, and that's the - in the middle of the last century there was a group who called themselves the communo-anarchists, which was led by a Frenchman called Proudhon. And they very much had the idea that people should develop individually but with a consciousness that society played They were very successful - I think they were the basis for the present in Switzerland.

S: I think Order members who are interested should pursue these matters and read up these writers and see what there is in them relevant for us. Another writer whose name occurs to me is Henry George. I have a feeling that there's something there - I bought a copy of Progress and Poverty some months ago, but I haven't yet had a chance to read it. And also I was thinking recently that we ought to look into Mahatma Gandhi's economic writings. And Nagabodhi has been reading Small Is Beautiful, for instance. So I think these things we should explore a bit.

_____: And get more interesting articles in Shabda

S: And in the Newsletter.

_____: What's the name of that economist who is -

Voices: Schumacher.

_____: Is that Small Is Beautiful?

_____: Yes.

_____: He's quite a social interest in whole-earth

S: And he is, apparently, a Buddhist.

_____: I'm not sure!

S: Well, I've read articles by him in Buddhist magazines years and years ago, when I was in India.

_____: No, that's in Resurgence, isn't it?

Nagabodhi: He uses quite a lot of Christian terms

S: That may be because he's writing for people in the West.

_____: Does anybody know him?

_____: I wrote to him appeal.

Devaraja: Several years ago you talked about you felt that there could be an effective vertical involvement on like a local council, -

S: Yes, right. There is that possibility, not only that but just by sheer weight of numbers on

our part in certain areas, just influencing councillors, without direct political activist-type involvement but just through knowing people and talking to them and getting things done. And this may well develop in the Bethnal Green area.

Ananda: This is a way, if any, we are going to affect things like trade union politics, through getting to know individual leaders and activists in that area.

S: I think it is quite important that in some of the big urban centres like London we have our Centres which have very close relationships with the whole neighbourhood and with people like local councillors, so that we do become a sort of local force to be reckoned with; not exactly politically, but at least culturally and socially. And that our views and our feelings carry a certain weight in the neighbourhood.

Devamitra: Do you think there is any point in particular Order members trying to get elected on to councils ?

S: I think that's another matter. At present I tend to feel that, better than get involved in the hurly-burly of party disputes is just to remain outside and exert influence, socially and culturally, through personal contact. I think this is better at the moment, because party politics is such a bitter business, very often, and you make certainly as many enemies as friends. We, if possible, want to make only friends.

Devamitra: I was just under the impression that a lot of people on councils at this level weren't necessarily associated with a particular political party. (Voices dissenting.)

S: For instance - Subhuti knows more about this than I do - but in Tower Hamlets it's I think a 100% Labour constituency, and a Labour council, and they are politically motivated, or oriented at least.

Vajradaka: And the person who was opposing the Friends taking the Fire Station stood for Parliament in Crouch End. Kandinsky (?).

S: I also believe it's a Labour council in Glasgow.

Vajradaka: Yes.

_____: There's also the possible channel of mass media. Have you considered that? Or even local radio stations, which have - I understand they are getting more frequent

S: I'd be much happier with local newspaper publicity and local radio publicity, rather than the national network. I think if you deal with the national papers and national radio and television you're on very dangerous ground. It can be a very double-edged weapon indeed.

_____: You're going to have to be quite careful now in Bethnal Green this whole thing of the media.

_____: If you'd got a printing press of your own, paper. (Laughter.)

S: Well, perhaps I should announce at this point - again, it's only an idea, but I hope it will materialise sooner or later - that I have been thinking in terms of a newspaper.

Sanghamitta: I was just thinking that Bhante, this very second yes!

S: Were you? There you are, you are obviously the future editor! (laughter.) No, the chief

reporter. Anyway, I'll say no more about it now, but that idea is in my mind. A monthly paper, to begin with, like East and West - but us, in the broadest sense. Anyway, it does occur to me that, since we have got on to the topic of Bethnal Green, that perhaps this is the time to ask Subhuti and the committee to say something that they probably have been bursting to say since the beginning of the morning, and then we've only got one or two things to get back to before concluding.

Subhuti: (inaudible.)

S: Well, thank you. (Rustling. Voices.)

Subhuti: Well, this is the new London Centre. The position is that we are in the process of negotiating a lease. We're actually in there, we've started the work of renovation, and technically we're squatters, but that's merely a formality, it's known about and we'll be signing the lease as soon as we've negotiated a rent-free period. It's going to take us about a year to do all the work that is necessary to repair and renovate the building, and we need quite a bit of help with that. There's a team of about 10 people at the moment who will be undertaking most of the work, and people will be coming in for weekend retreats and so forth.

Really, most of the information is in here, I can't think of anything in particular to say. So perhaps if anybody has anything they want to ask about the Centre they can ask me first, Lokamitra.

S: Perhaps more from an Order point of view, as it were.

Dhammadinna: Who will live there? How will it be renovated? What will happen?

Sanghamitta: Is it possible for to get a room going as soon as possible, so that something could be started from there?

Subhuti: I hope there'll be a shrine room when we get back, quite a large shrine room. We'll be holding whatever classes - Broadly, when the community is actually functioning, there will be four or five Order members, probably five Order members, and about 14 or 15 Mitras and close Friends. There will be two communities, one men's community and one women's community, probably more men than women - just because there are more men than women about at the moment.

I think really it depends on the function as a community, mostly as a sort of training centre, but there will be a number of Order members, kalyana mitras, with Mitras, living there. They'll be doing study together, working on the Centre together. And this could form a sort of nucleus for future Centres - teams of four or five people going out afterwards. So that's one aspect of things, the community itself.

S: So that could play a quite important part in the training of future Order members and expansion of the Order, and also expansion of the FWBO through the teams of Order members that went forth. So the significance of the Bethnal Green Centre really extends far beyond the fact that it is a Centre of the FWBO in that particular part of London, on account of its size and the number of Order members and Friends who will be there.

Subhuti: It has really got three main areas in which it is significant. Firstly, it is a local Centre, it will be the East London Centre, and from the sort of contacts that we've made already, and just a general feeling of the area, and the fact that there is nothing else of any kind, any sort of - I don't know quite what you'd like to call it, but in places like Highgate and Hampstead there are so many different spiritual groups, even if they don't have the distinctive extra that we have - there's nothing like that in Bethnal Green at all. Not even the Divine

Light is there. So I think there is tremendous potential, just as a local Centre, and the people there are really very friendly and emotionally open; and I think we could learn a lot from them emotionally. So at that level, yes, it will operate at that level.

And then the community, as I've already said; there will be a sort of training centre for men. I think also it will be quite good experiment - it will be the first time we've had a really large community functioning semi- monastically - that is, meditating regularly together each morning, doing Puja whenever possible in the evening -

S: Eating together.

Subhuti: Eating together, and everybody there will be there for the purpose of keeping that Centre going, so it won't be a number of disparate people just living together in a hotel-type situation. Everybody will be there in order to keep the Centre going and contributing in their own way to the functioning of that Centre. So, in a way, we rather see people thinking that they're not paying rent, or something like that, but that they're contributing to the necessary funds of the Centre. And I think this is quite an important experiment and departure. And there will be the training aspect of the community.

And then the third point is that I think it will function as a very strong focus for Buddhism, not just in London, in England, but in the West in general, in that it will be a sort of showcase ... We really do want to do it absolutely first-class, every detail is going to be perfect; and everything will be highly embellished. Stupas and Windhorse flags and terracotta towers, the lot. And I hope it will really provide an outlet for people's creative and artistic energies and efforts.

Sanghamitta: I would think the contact with these people in this kind of area might even in the early days arouse enough interest in them to want to help to get that Centre built, because they're the type of people who are good with their hands -

Subhuti: This has already happened. Somebody came in just to talk to me about karate, the background to karate. He just stood in the middle of the room and said, 'I wanna help!' [Laughter] And they volunteered to send round some paint - which they actually did, but the kids that they sent it down with started trying to flog it to us. (laughter.)

_____: You've got to be sharp!

Subhuti: You've got to be sharp,

S: The resourcefulness of the East Enders. It does occur to me, incidentally, just to make one point that I was intending to make anyway, and that is in connection with guests. We have talked about this in connection with the Archway Centre, but no doubt the Bethnal Green Centre, or New London Centre, more than ever before, will be having guests - first of all, Order members from elsewhere in England, Order members from elsewhere in the world, as well as visiting Buddhists of different Eastern schools, perhaps. So I have been mentioning recently already, in connection with Archway, that there must be proper arrangements for receiving guests, because we have rather fallen down in this respect in the past. Now, I understand, in Archway it is much better. Marichi is as it were in charge of guests, and responsible for making them comfortable and looking after them. At least we should make sure that visiting Order members and if possible distinguished Buddhists from abroad are arranged accommodation with us, if possible, are shown around a little, taken here and there, and generally looked after. And I think this must apply to all our Centres, wherever there are Order members and Friends and not only the WBO but the FWBO also. We must be much more mindful of this in future.

Subhuti: There will in fact be four or five small rooms set aside specifically for guests, or for people who want to stay for a longish period in the community and just experience the routine of the community.

S: But I think it is very important when a new person comes, whether an Order member from abroad or just a visiting Buddhist or inquirer, that we do whatever we can for them - not even just providing them with a room but seeing that they are all right, and especially if it's another Order member, just seeing if they've got enough money, and whether we can give any help in taking them around or showing them places, or helping them to get things. Some visiting Order members in London want to find out where they can buy books, where they can buy antiques, where they can get a Buddha image, and so on. So we must have one or two Order members able to devote time in this way, just to helping the visitor and making them feel at home and looking after them.

Was there something more you had to say?

Subhuti: Perhaps it would be a good idea just to outline the sort of facilities that there will be there. There are four floors and a basement. The top three floors will be the two communities, that is probably the men's community on the top two floors and the women's on the first floor.

S: That doesn't include the attic - the attic itself?

Subhuti: The attic's left out. It doesn't include the tower, either.

_____:

Subhuti: On the ground floor there are going to be two shrine rooms, one very large - about 1500 sq.ft., just two or three times the size of the one at Archway at the moment - and the other one smaller. And Chintamani is in fact in process of designing the shrine rooms. He has plans for a large rupa - 10 ft. high, is it?

Chintamani: Well, the whole shrine structure will stand 10 ft. high.

Subhuti: It will be able to cater for very large festivals, classes, lectures, and so forth, and also for more small and intimate occasions. There will be quite a large reception room with another couple of small study rooms, and there will be a bookshop.

S: This is all on the ground floor?

Subhuti: This is all on the ground floor. And I think we've already got the best Buddhist bookshop in England, and when it goes to Bethnal Green it will really be -

S: Foyle's have been expanding lately, I must warn you. (Voices.)

Subhuti: Then We are lagging behind Luzac's. (Voices.)

S: It might have been true last month, but it might not be true this month.

Subhuti: Well, it will be when it gets (Voices.) It will be the best. And it will also expand into other related areas.

S: books on philosophy, poetry, ecology and so on.

Subhuti: We've been thinking in terms of having the Order Library at Bethnal Green, and there's a specific part which would suit that very well, so there are two or three rooms together.

S: That's on the ground floor, isn't it?

Subhuti: This is on the first floor, actually, just in the extension. It's a little sort of flat which could easily be made into a sort of reading room and two storage rooms.

Then in the basement there's quite a large workshop area where the printing press will, we hope, be situated, and where Siddhiratna and others are in process of designing quite a comprehensive design studio - not quite that -

_____ : Print workshop.

Subhuti: Print workshop. And there will still be quite a lot of space left over for other workshop space for other sort of activities.

S: One suggestion was, from an absent friend, that we have a freak-out room.

Subhuti: A freak-out room.

S: A soundproof room where anybody could go and scream their head off who felt like it, in the basement.

Ananda: What about a music room or classroom?

Subhuti: Well, that's what this workshop area will be. At the moment it's quite open, we'll just see what comes up.

_____ : Cornwall, saving of tapes. Is that right, Subhuti? He's a professional musician, got a lot of his own tapes and equipment, thinking of asking to be housed down there. Sounds as if the basement could serve those sort of areas very well, workshop area

_____ : The attic might also serve maybe as a studio.

_____ :

Lokamitra: There's so much scope for anything we seriously want to do, we can do it there.

_____ : (Chat.)

_____ : really big enough.

Subhuti: Well, I don't think it will be for long!

S: Anyway, there will no doubt be property round about falling vacant. Maybe there will be communities forming in the immediate neighbourhood.

Subhuti: I think perhaps it's time to come down to brass - well, just brass!

S: In other words, Lokamitra. Gold - pure gold.

Lokamitra: Well, we reckon that we need £30,000 to do it up and everything. We have to bring it up to a certain standard, and obviously we want it in the best possible condition too. And we have to do all that, we reckon, within the next year, so we need the £30,000 within the next year.

_____: Are we paying rent during the first year?

Lokamitra: Hopefully not. But we've got £15,000. Now we've collected just over £5,000 of that in the last year. The other came from the donation by an old friend of Bhante's which was kept in trust up till recently, but we cashed this recently, and that realised all of £10,000. But for the next year we've got to get another £15,000, and this is quite heavy on my mind at the moment. So you see all these forms here? We can start here - this is what I thought, anyway. Like last year, last Convention, we were collecting for Bhante's mortgage. This year, if any of you can contribute in any way, please give me these forms filled in in whatever. If you can spread these around to Friends, people who might be interested, please do so, and the others - the pledge forms. If you're not going to use them, please give them back to me, because we can distribute them usefully.

Also ideas we need for fundraising. We don't need them so much, but all ideas are useful and are considered. Money is basically what we need, and people to approach people, and people just to give. I can't really say much more, I think, except please be as generous as possible. A pound, 50p if you can't afford more - £100, £200 if you can. It would be nice to make a good start, though, at the Convention.

_____: happen, does it make any differences what you're earning

Lokamitra: You have to be paying tax to fill in a covenant, so -

_____: Because I know you can make a seven-year covenant and give it all or - but you have to pay -

Lokamitra: You can do that, yes. You have to be paying tax, yes. (chat.) It doesn't concern just FWBO London, in a way. We were talking this morning about expansion in the West, and Manjuvajra had felt that perhaps we were talking a bit too much in the air. We can't afford to talk up in the air, because we don't know how long Bhante's going to live, for a start; we don't know what's going to happen. We've really got to work. And this, in a way, is a very strong contribution to stabilising, to bringing Buddhism to the West, and so it concerns us all.

S: Anything to add to that? It would be rather difficult, wouldn't it?

_____: How is the fundraising going? That is, these names that you are supplying to people, that they are to go and see or contact - how is that going?

Lokamitra: We stopped that recently, until we knew whether we'd got Bethnal Green for certain or not. And this is what I will be concerned with as soon as I get back to London.

_____: How much have we raised so far from the Newsletter appeal recently?

Lokamitra: From our recent Newsletter we raised £70, no, £100. Normally if we appealed in the Newsletter we should receive about £30, £35. (Chat.) Certainly up to now we've been fundraising - it's been quite difficult to approach people, because we haven't had anything concrete. Now we've got this, someone called it a monstrosity, and we've got to use it. We've got -

S: I know someone you could approach, I've just thought of it: John Betjeman. He's into preserving monstrosities. Get him to back you and tell him what you're doing, he's got lots of connections, hasn't he?

_____: He might even write a poem. (Voices.)

_____: It was built by Norman Shaw, quite a famous architect.

S: Well, yes, approach John Betjeman, he might even do a poetry reading for you.
(Voices.)

Lokamitra: All these and especially if you can approach people by yourself, if you can take on this sort of thing by yourself, if you know people. For instance, you may come from a fairly wealthy family or circle of friends, and you may take it upon yourself to raise £1,000 from these. We only need 15 such people and we've got enough.

S: I'm sure some people have got relations earning that much and more every year, as individuals.

Lokamitra: Exactly. Some of us come from more wealthy backgrounds and some of us don't, so we all have to do what we can do.

S: It has just occurred to me we might even ask John Betjeman to write an Ode to the Old Fire Station - ... print it. He is very much into these things. And he tosses off conservationist poems every morning after breakfast. [Laughter]

_____: And he's interested in maintaining the East London,

_____: Yes, he's written poems for Whitechapel Gallery,

S: And Highgate cemetery.

Lokamitra: I think the point is that however much money we have, we could do it, but to do it to the standard to which it's really got to be done -

S: And we want to embellish it. We'd like to embellish it.

Lokamitra: We need at least £30,000 - the more we have the better. Chintamani's got gold leaf, and -

Padmapani: Do you think it's a good idea that - this amount has got to be raised within a year, but you need an investment of a certain amount in order to start up some sort of business, to get some return on this

Lokamitra: We need all the money we can get as quickly as possible, I'm afraid, we have the £15,000 -

Padmapani: I'm talking - I am talking about that.

Ananda: If we invest it, it won't be available as feedback. (Chat.)

Padmapani: I didn't necessarily mean a large business, I mean a group of two or three people could start up small businesses with maybe £50 outlay get about £300 back. For instance, like candle-making - I know it's a bit of a habit in London now, but that's just

_____: Surely there must be jobs that make more than that, that people could take, to make a lot of new money. There must be (Chat.)

S: I think individuals have to explore this themselves.

Lokamitra: And let us know of any ideas, please. And if you're working, and if you're living on much too much money, don't stop work but fill in one of these forms. And, er -

S: I think the point is very fully taken, which mainly is that the new London Centre isn't just the concern of London, as it were. It is of great significance for the Order, and the expansion of the Order, and therefore it is really up to all Order members everywhere to do whatever they can to help make it a success. And at present, of course, the greatest need is cash, and next to that, perhaps, labour. So perhaps let it rest there and let everybody please think this over very seriously and do whatever they possibly can to help make the whole project a success; because it will certainly constitute a very great landmark in the development of the whole Movement. Probably - well, undoubtedly - our biggest single achievement so far, since the whole movement was set going.

_____: I wonder, on the working retreats, whether you couldn't perhaps go on working retreat and be replaced by ten women, or something like that (??)

Devamitra: Could I just say one further point? I remember when you came back from New Zealand, one point that you made was that most of the Friends out there seemed more financially committed, and that some Order members - or maybe even Friends, I'm not sure - had taken upon themselves a voluntary levy of 10%.

S: Yes, they're still doing that. They call it their tithe.

Devamitra: Well, maybe we could discuss something like this amongst us now. Even if we're only on the dole, only giving a small amount, even if it only amounted to 40p a week. If we all did something of that sort, that would add a tremendous boost, I think.

Lokamitra: This is why I've given the forms, to encourage -

S: Regular dana.

_____: So did you want to talk about it any more?

Devamitra: Yes, how people would feel about giving 10% of whatever they get, even if they're supported, out of that same fund as it were, or if they were on the dole or whatever: if we all gave 10% of whatever comes to us each week, that would be a regular contribution and I don't think it's asking for very much.

_____: Well, how many people are doing that? I have a feeling actually that a lot of people were doing this?

_____: I don't know. I the case.

_____: There might even be a danger in limiting it - if you ask for 10%, people would just give you 10%, whereas otherwise they might give more. (Voices.)

_____: One could say 'at least 10%, if you are on a low income' - even those on a very

low income give at least 10%; others give as much as they can.

S: Well, the form is with you all, so perhaps we'd better leave it there and let everybody just weigh up what he or she can give, bearing in mind Devamitra's suggestion.

All right, we haven't very much time left. I'd like to pass on now to 'Other Spiritual Traditions'. What I have in mind is that in the course of our work, especially when we're working through Centres, we may come across people who are connected with other spiritual traditions which may or may not have something in common with us. For instance, in the course of my own travels in the course of the last year, I heard quite a bit about, and had some contact with, at least two or three different movements. For instance, I did have quite a bit of contact with people connected with the Maharishi's movement, Transcendental Meditation, and also here and there with the Divine Light movement of Guru Maharaj; and then there was also in Finland the Anandamarga movement. So I think it might be as well, in the case of some of these better-known movements with which we are likely to come in contact, just to clarify our own position and just to know where we stand.

_____: Do we include in that other Buddhist schools?

S: I didn't have other Buddhist schools in mind, because we did talk about that at the last Convention. But if there is any special point in that connection, certainly it can be brought up into the discussion.

_____: There are a lot of Order members here who were not at the last Convention,
.....

_____: Was there ?

S: Yes.

Ananda I feel it's a principle, very definitely, that we should preserve the natural communication with the more spiritual traditions wherever we think that there is room for growth.

S: I think that qualification is important: 'wherever we think that there is room for growth'. Because I think it must be recognised that in some cases there isn't; because some of the people belonging to some of these movements are really so fanatical that you just can't talk to them at all. And some of them come along to meetings just to disrupt.

Nagabodhi: I think also it's important that we relate within our own terms, rather than getting - it's very easy to get caught up in rather woolly conversations where they're trying to make you say it's all one really, we're really after the same thing, we're really on the same path, and so on and so forth, when in actual fact there's a very high probability we're not.

Ananda: On the other side of that coin, I'd like to stress also that there's a danger in assuming that they are not on a path because they in a different tradition, and I think in some cases, certainly in my experience, they are on the path, they are on a path; and I think we must respect that and be open to it.

Nagabodhi: But I have found on the whole that in my communication with these people the communication is of a much better quality rather than cosy conversation about everything you've got in common you do in fact really talk from your own experience - that our experience is within the Dharma, within the FWBO, and that's the language we apply and the best basis to work from, rather than trying to find some middle ground.

_____: Yes, I think the criteria shouldn't be like you said, they are on a path; it should be are they growing, and really growing?

Ananda: That's what I mean. If you're on a path you're growing.

_____: This 'a path' is a very nebulous It doesn't mean anything any more.

Ananda: The path of Higher Evolution.

S: As Jinamata said, 'are they growing?' That is the really down-to-earth question.

Manjuvajra: I feel, in the conversations with people about groups, it's probably best just to try and keep clear of it, because -

S: If they allow you.

Manjuvajra: Yes, or even if they don't allow you, try and do it quite forcibly, because if you agree with what - somebody may come along and they don't know, they just go to TM or go off to Guru Maharaj or come along to you or go to a Zen group, or whatever; and they will usually take the position, talking pro one of the other groups; when they go to the other group they talk pro you. So you can do nothing to help them. If you say that 'We're such-and-such and we can do it better than these other people,' they up against you, and they tend to If you say, 'These other people are fine, just as good as us' sort of thing, then they don't know what they're doing. And I feel it's probably best just to say, 'There are various -'

S: But now you're talking about a different kind of person, whereas we were speaking about other spiritual traditions and people definitely committed to other spiritual traditions, with whom in one way or another you come into contact. I found this in New Zealand, for instance, in a few cases, that some people of these other traditions just come along deliberately to your group, either to try and make things a bit difficult for you or just as a recruiting ground for their own movement. And they might ask very truculent questions and adopt a very truculent attitude generally. I think there was a bit of this in Glasgow at the beginning, wasn't there? If people are nebulous and not sure, just say, 'We don't wish to make comparisons; just try what we have to offer.' That's simplest.

_____: You don't have to talk about the Friends in terms of other groups, anyway; you can just say what we do, and say

S: Sometimes people who are definitely committed to another tradition and come along to us for proselytising purposes will try to say 'What you're doing is OK but ours is much better', and try to involve you in a discussion or argument in that way. Then you just have to deal with it as best you can, seeing the nature of that particular person you're talking to. And sometimes you may have to be quite firm, or even quite rude, I've found - just to shut them up when they've had their say, so that you can get on with the class.

Vajradaka: You can usually spot them when they come in, especially if they start coming in waves, as they did in Glasgow. We were standing at the door looking come in, the moment someone begins to say the word 'diuu [phon.]' ['do you?'] go up to them and talk to them and be very firm, and ask them -

_____: What? What was the word?

_____: Dim? [din] [??]

S: I must say that on the whole I've found the Transcendental Meditation people quite

reasonable - on the whole. If anything of all these different traditions we've been mentioning, they seem practically the best of the bunch, so far as my experience goes. Maybe other people haven't had that experience.

_____: There's a lot of dangerous work(?) in many ways. I don't know if you've seen a pamphlet they've produced for businessmen?

S: No, I haven't.

_____: ... lethal, awful

_____: 'Improve your money-making capacity with meditation.' (Voices.)

S: I was thinking about the individual TM people that I've met.

_____: the ones I - I mean I meet quite a lot of them Just, I mean, one person was spouting fantastic figures to me, the numbers they initiated every month, it was in the thousands, two or three thousand each month.

_____: What is this happening a lot of It seems to be

(end of side) Tape 12, side 1

It seems to be the kind of pattern that people get into the scene, and then they reach a certain plateau and - I mean quite a positive experience, and then start looking round for something else.

S: This is what I find, that by the time they get into contact with us, or with me, you just find someone who's done two or three months' meditation, and he's got on quite happily with it, but there's nowhere else to go as it were, there's no local group, there's no further teaching, he's heard about the Friends and he comes along. Usually at first he doesn't want to give up his TM meditation but he likes to come along to the Friends. And usually I've found such people are quite amenable. They don't seem to have any ingrained fanaticism, those that I've met so far, though obviously my experience is limited. But I think every Divine Light person I've met has been fanatical and difficult. Quite different from the TM people.

_____: People who do TM seem to be frightened to let it drop.

Sanghamitta: There was a young man at Mamaki's that weekend, you know the one, he came up, and he'd been TM. He said, yes, he'd had a positive experience, it was all right as far as it went, but then they feel stuck there and they want something else

_____: Now they are doing residential courses and

_____: Yes, they're organising more events, I think.

_____: I think we probably still will be getting these belated TM people who don't have much contact with their movement, and who stray along to us. And I've found them comparatively easy to deal with and quite friendly.

Manjuvajra: In Truro - I've got a friend down there who teaches TM in, and he's even gone to the extent of offering part of his shop that we could use as a Centre, if he could use the room as a meditation hall. He felt we've got very positive relations with him. (Voices.)

Ratnapani: The actual technique TM uses doesn't seem to be too dangerous?

S: No.

Ratnapani: - at best it seems not to do very much at all,

S: Right, yes.

Vajradaka: quite positive relationships in Glasgow between the Sri Chinmoy group and the Friends. They don't seem to do any harm, and when I've talked a bit to the leader of their group he's always been very friendly, and when he's talked about what they've done it hasn't sounded too bad.

S: Sri Chinmoy, I think, is connected with the Sivananda movement, and he has quite a few followers. Sivananda was the guru of many of these people. And they just seem to have a quite pleasant and not very demanding combination of yoga and a bit of meditation, a bit of Vedanta, a bit of Indian thought; and they are usually quite open and quite free, and not fanatical. And very often doing quite good yoga, with some meditation.

Sanghamitta: We may find, Bhante, thatthey are now trying to introduce meditation to policemen, for instance, and in hospital. Some of these people, again, like with the Transcendental Meditation, will find that they get a certain calm and want to go further, and this might well - this type of people that wouldn't otherwise think of doing meditation, because it's done through their own job.

S: I must say, the main thing that I'm not happy about with regard to the TM movement and the Maharishi's own pronouncements is this apparent complete acceptance of the status quo. Whether it's just a device on his part, I don't know; it doesn't seem to be, but he does seem generally to believe this.

_____: It does seem that if TM is being introduced in all these different occupations and so on it's bound to have some effect. meditation

S: One can only just wait and see whether, when all these millionaires are doing meditation, they will really change. Because I heard him say it myself on the radio, in an interview with Malcolm Muggeridge, that if you were a millionaire and you took up TM you'd become a millionaire twice over, thanks to TM. If it's only an approach, you can understand it as an approach to certain people in a certain situation, but it doesn't seem to be an approach, it really seems to be almost a philosophy. And he seems to be against social change, even.

_____: I don't think that's necessarily - the guy I know in Truro certainly uses all those techniques when he's talking to people, but he realises that it's a device, if you like.

S: It would be nice to think that the Maharishi did too, but so far I've seen no signs of that.

_____: It might be a bit of

S: So it could be very much like the more - what's the term? - the adjustment type of psychotherapy: it just enables you to go on in the same old way, with a bit less strain, but no real change in your life.

_____: They're doing this because they've started a meditation centre on an army base in America now, to relieve stress in the Army so that they can carry on fighting as well.

S: Well, in the Soviet Union some yoga and meditation techniques are being used in this way; for instance in the training of astronauts - or cosmonauts, I think they call them - or is it the other way round? So this is the broad issue that I'm not at all happy with. The actual technique of meditation which they use - Buddhism can incorporate it very easily, swallow it without a trace! But his overall approach of apparent acceptance of the status quo I'm not at all happy with. I don't think we should do this even as an approach, except maybe in a few individual cases, privately; otherwise we just become bulwarks of the existing order, which we don't want to do.

_____: Something I found the TM person was just simply the fact or question of how far to encourage them to take up our meditation practice, and just how far to suggest that he stops doing TM and take up Mindfulness of Breathing, say, or -

S: I think it isn't just a question of TM versus Mindfulness of Breathing. It's what we totally have to offer: all our methods of meditation, our whole philosophy, the Movement itself, the Order, our whole scheme of social change, and everything.

_____: Usually, you don't in fact have to push anybody very strongly towards the Mindfulness of Breathing. I used to do TM, and what I found and what she found was they reach a point where you want to become further involved in you obviously can't do that unless you're practising meditation, which depends on, so it sorts itself out.

Ratnapani: There's no harm in somebody as it were TM-ing away quietly in the corner while you're doing the Mindfulness of Breathing?

S: I think I'd be inclined to turn a blind eye to that. There's some very good individuals; it's not their fault, as it were, that they met TM before they met FWBO. It's the luck of the draw.

_____: One of the people on the last course did TM. He did the Mindfulness and he also did TM. We said that was OK, carry on.

S: Right. I think we can't be too strict in matters like this - or too narrow,

_____: What are your feelings about Divine Light, though?

S: They seem much - I've had very little direct contact - one or two brushes in Christchurch - but from all that I hear they seem very fanatical, and the sort of person, the sort of people who get involved seem much more dependent and much more inclined to depend on an authority figure and the great guru and all that kind of thing, in a quite unhealthy way. Some of our Friends went to this Puja at Alexandra Palace, and they reported back that there seemed to be two kinds of people around: the majority of sheeplike people, gazing in adoration and wanting to be ordered about, and the minority of very bossy, bullying people, who were pushing everybody else around and running the whole show in the name of Guru Maharaj. I must say I get a most unpleasant feeling of the whole movement. I describe it as crypto-fascist, almost. I think it is very unpleasant. I wouldn't regard it as a spiritual movement - even though there may well be good individuals within it. Again, because so many people are looking and searching, and they cotton on to the first thing that comes along, and these people really do get around. So someone may in good faith and all sincerity join the movement and even benefit from it, but I think if they really want to develop they'll have to get out of it sooner or later. I think the movement as a whole is not a healthy movement. I certainly wouldn't say that about TM, despite its limitations in certain respects. But I think the Divine Light movement is unhealthy, from top to bottom practically, though there may be good individuals in it. I think we must see this, that there are so many movements around and people get connected with one or the other almost by accident - very good people can be in movements which on the whole are not very healthy or very positive.

_____ : The other main area people involved in is as wild, It's quite difficult.

S: Right, yes. But there does seem to be this general phenomenon of wanting to look for help somewhere. You don't believe in God any more, and for some people a guru-like figure seems to have taken his place, and people's feelings of weakness, dependency, inadequacy, are being exploited, virtually.

_____ : Recently, with regard to the Karmapa's visit, there was a letter in the last Middle Way written by saying that many people are confident that Karmapa was the very Buddha himself.

S: I think this is a very dangerous statement to make. For instance, I read in one issue of the East-West Journal, published from America, that the Karmapa himself had said, or supposedly said, about two different American gurus, that they were the greatest spiritual figures since the days of the Buddha. He'd apparently given each of them this certificate. And they quoted it in their ad. It's most repulsive, this sort of thing; this sort of claim, this sort of - how can you possibly say anything like that? You could say at the very best it's spiritual bad manners, and in the worst of taste. You may have your private feelings about your own teacher, but if they are genuine you won't want to plaster them across the world in the form of an ad in a paper! It is really quite distasteful.

_____ : When I saw the publicity, I think it was in Glasgow when I was up there, and I got exactly the same feelings got from the Divine Light -, exactly the same.

S: And it is not to say that the Karmapa himself isn't a very good person. To what extent he lends himself to what is going on, I don't know; to what extent possibly he misjudges the situation in the West I don't know. But that whole feeling and aura around him and it I just don't like at all.

_____ : It's not only him, there's quite a wave of them, each one getting more excited

S: It also happens in the East. I've referred before to the fact that Dhardo Rimpoche - I think everybody's heard of Dhardo Rimpoche - if you haven't, speak up and I'll say a few words. (Voices.) This is one of my own teachers in Kalimpong, Dhardo Rimpoche, the one who runs the school.

_____ : Dhardo Rimpoche?

S: Sometimes it's pronounced Dhardo, sometimes Dando. I remember him telling me when the lamas started pouring out of Tibet, he said, 'When I came' - himself - 'to Kalimpong, I was the only incarnate lama around, and everybody flocked to me. But then another incarnate lama came, everybody flocked to him. And then the Dalai Lama comes, they all flock to him. The Karmapa comes, they all flock to him. Tibetan people, they do this.' It's the latest one, the new one. But it's the real, genuine, faithful followers who stick to their guru, respect the new arrivals too, but they don't get swept off their feet and transfer their allegiance periodically. They're very superficial. No doubt the Karmapa has some genuine followers in this country, but the wave, as Khema calls it, is quite another thing. One just must express oneself, I think, quite clearly and if necessary forcibly on this matter, this is not a spiritual life or spiritual movement when this kind of thing happens. One can't go along with it or encourage it or condone it, and if possible disillusion people about it.

Ratnapani: The rock on which the wave might break, in fact?

S: Right. After all, even in our own short history we've seen a few waves coming and going, haven't we? I've even forgotten the names of some of them, but they were quite waves in their time.

Sanghamitta: could you mention one or two?

S: There's no point, if we've forgotten them; let's forget them. But what I was going to mention, another not exactly spiritual tradition but a tradition with many people following it, - it could be regarded as rather lowbrow in a way, but it isn't always so - is spiritualism. I think there are some very good people in the spiritualist movement, and it's usually sort of subcultural, as it were - but there are millions of people connected with it.

Sanghamitta: They seem much more open to a lot of our ideas, but they don't seem to get any further.

S: I think most of the people who are into spiritualism are people who are not on the cultural level usually - or were not - where they would come in contact with books on oriental philosophy and things of that sort. It's more like going round the corner to the local séance, or the medium comes to your street or your area as it were. But there are some very good people in the movement.

Sanghamitta: Their ideas seem to have more depth than, say, ordinary church people,

S: That's true. So I was wondering whether we should -

_____:

S: So I've been feeling that perhaps we should have some contact with some of the groups of this sort, too. There are lots of them along the south coast and in and around Brighton.

_____: We have two groups in within 200 yards of

S: Have you? Any contact?

_____: Yes. just pop in quite frequently.

S: Well, at least they buy your incense.

_____: Buy lots of Buddhist books as well.

Sanghamitta: We had one member at Hastings, and she's now taking meditation classes at the spiritualist church and very

S: I delivered a lecture in a spiritualist church in Northampton. I must say it was a really beautiful place, the way they'd done it up. And they had a congregation of young, very lively people on the whole, with some older people, and there was a woman minister who was a really good speaker and very positive person. It was quite amazing, in a way.

Sanghamitta: I felt a great wave of warmth in the spiritualist church, in a different sense from Methodists who come to get you at the door and that kind of thing.

S: Well, they only call it a church. It isn't quite that.

Sanghamitta: Yes, And I went to summer school. They set up a room, and it was

amazing, the atmosphere in that room. In a very short time it was really terrific.

S: I must say all of these people were very receptive. I spoke about Buddhist meditation and they were very friendly, and evidently well disposed towards Buddhism, very pleased to see me and to hear me speak.

_____: Presumably one of the basic ideas in the philosophy of spiritualism is that of evolution, isn't it?

S: In a very vague way, I must admit. It's not really on a very philosophical level.

_____: But that's one of the basic assumptions behind it - that there's some sort of progress.

S: Yes, they have more assumptions than a specific philosophy. They do assume progress, progress in the next world. Even in the next world your fate isn't finally fixed. You go on developing. And many of them believe in rebirth, of course, that you come back after a while and continue developing. So the idea of development is quite widespread in these circles and developing through meditation and prayer and faith healing. They believe in all that kind of thing - with more or less of Christian terminology.

Sanghamitta: There's a lot of energy being wasted there, isn't there? - that could be channelled if people could get into personal contact with and who were in themselves strong enough to

S: They must be through personal contact, evidently.

_____: I think it's probably very strong in Bethnal Green.

S: Possibly. Anyway, I think we are coming very nearly to the end of the -

_____: There's one other -

S: Yes, there's one bit more.

_____: There's one other group that we haven't mentioned, and that's the Sufis. There's various Sufi groups around,

S: Well, they usually seem to be quite friendly and positive, friendly towards us.

Ananda: There's one near Bethnal Green, isn't there? It's difficult to

Sanghamitta: And they seem to attract a different type, a better-dressed type of - wear a usual dress, but -

S: The Hampstead hippie.

Sanghamitta: Yes, Hampstead -

Ananda: The thing about the Sufi movement as a whole is that they believe very much in integrating with the established existing society and working within its structure and being as unobtrusive as possible.

Sanghamitta: They seem financially better off, don't they, they seem to be able to get money. I don't know why, but -

Padmapani: They're in very close contact with - there's a lot of Sufis in America and there's a lot into sort of changing and I know that there's a new movement in the Sufi Order, different Sufi orders. I know that last year prior to - this is one reason that really set me been ordained, I went to a Sufi camp last year in Chamonix, and there's a very international cosmopolitan atmosphere, and the person who was leading this group is Pir Vilayat Khan, and he's trying to use, trying to incorporate all different religions into this idea of it's all one, all you know, although individual religions have their own individual leaders, spiritual leaders, the main thing is that all these religions stem from one thing etc. And this was stressed quite a lot. I feel that the person who gets attracted to this Sufi Order is in a lot of cases they are either searching or going through a phase in their development before they make their own minds up, or they're actually devout Sufis, and they're initiated into a particular Sufi Order. There's quite a lot of scope in the Sufi Order for people who actually call themselves Sufis but they're not really, they're still searching out.

Ananda: Well, a lot of the Sufis don't call themselves Sufis.

Padmapani: All right, but that's just an intellectual thing.

Ananda: No, it's different, I think it's quite important.

Chintamani: I met somebody at the Tibet House in Chelsea who belonged to something called the H..... Sufi Order, and he'd managed to clarify my mind, because I'd been really worried about this whole business of Sufis who don't call themselves Sufis and it's all one 'I'm a Moslem, it's as simple as that, and you can't be a Sufi unless you're a Moslem. You follow the Koran and everything, the Prophet and all that, I accept everything, that's why I'm a Moslem, if anybody else I'm a Moslem.' And that really tidied it up. (Voices.)

_____ : one that Pir Vilayat Khan leads, who is certainly not as as that.

S: It seems to me that the Pir Vilayat Khan movement is what I would call a very much watered-down version of Sufism. And this is why I think quite a few nice, woolly people belong to it. It's people who are, say, disillusioned with orthodox Christianity, but they don't want to go against Christianity completely, so for the time being they find refuge in 'All religions are true, it's all one', you see. But I think if they want really to develop or evolve, they have to as it were again affiliate to a more specific tradition with more specific methods, which may be the Sufi tradition in the stricter sense or it may be some other. But in Pir Vilayat Khan's movement there are many of these nice woolly people, some of whom I've known.

Padmapani: I suspect actually that Pir Vilayat Khan knows this himself, because on the camp last year, and I think on succeeding years, Lama Chime has gone over there for one week where Pir Vilayat Khan usually goes off to the States to see Trungpa or someone like that. (Laughter.) And what happens is that Lama Chime takes the group, he takes the morning meditation, and then he gives darshan for the rest of the day etc. And what happens is that there's a general pattern - I was watching this very closely - it's just morning meditation and darshan, you didn't see the guru, so to speak, until just the evening or the early morning. And he just said, 'Have a nice day - go off, do some walking, enjoy yourself etc.' But on the last day, prior to his departure, he gave a very strong talk about 'If you're going to be a Buddhist you've got to be committed, and you've got to give yourself to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.' And then he was off. And I got the very strong impression that Pir Vilayat Khan knew this, Lama Chime was invited on this camp to make it attractive to certain people who wanted to get into Buddhism, to come along, maybe

S: But some years ago I was in contact with them through Joyce Purcell, who used to come along to the Centre and our lectures quite regularly, and she was the secretary of their

movement in England. And she invited me along to speak at many of their big functions - but I never actually did, for one reason or another. But the last one that I was invited to, I was glad I didn't go to, because I got reports about it that - give you an idea - there was a Christian speaker, then there was a Buddhist speaker, then there was Pir Vilayat Khan. So his point was this: he said the Christian has given the devotional approach, Christianity is devotional; the Buddhist gave the intellectual approach; but Sufism combines the two. You see? (Voices: Oh no.) So I didn't like this at all and I was quite glad that I hadn't been put in that situation, because I would have had to say something, maybe a bit unpleasant. [Laughter]

_____: just a couple of weeks ago, Bhante, I was with ... a couple of weeks ago.
And -

S: This was about four or five years ago, by the way.

Dharmapala: international service or some such name, which I attended. And they went through I think seven different religions and gave a certain approach, and each one was described as being the wisdom or the love aspect. And I brought this up with her afterwards - like who made those categories? and so on. And one teacher somewhere along the way had set this up, to be changed where necessary, according to who was there, and so on. And it was not a rigid thing at all.

S: For instance, the one who gave the talk on Buddhism, on that occasion, was Russell Webb, so of course his approach lent itself to that. But I used to find this in India too - for instance, the Ramakrishna Mission people always say that what we need is the tremendous heart of Buddhism combined with the intellect of Shankara - as though the Buddhists didn't have any intellect of their own. And I had to protest against that there. But I'm rather resistant to this attempt to incorporate Buddhism by identifying it with a particular aspect, and I think they tend to do this sort of thing.

Devaraja: It occurs to me that there always seem to be - it's a way of depotentiating any possible contact. Other traditions are a threat, and the way they depotentiate is by incorporation.

S: That's the old Hindu tendency.

_____: really make a decision or a jump or a leap from

S: I think this is why a lot of people like the Sufi movement, because you don't have to make a decision. Maybe they're not ready for a decision yet, but for those who want to decide that isn't really the right sort of climate for decision.

Dharmapala: I'm not sure, Joyce isn't like that. There is a Buddhist group that meets at the Sufi Centre in Wimbledon, and she very much supports you and would very much like some representative of the Friends to go there.

S: Well, that would be very good, because I'm no longer able to go to such gatherings, but it would be quite good if some Order members did.

Devaraja: The thing that - house-to-house collection, and somebody was saying to me the usual stuff about all these religions being one, but the answer I gave him was a simple 'I don't think they are'. ethics is an application of wisdom on that level. Judaism doesn't seem to me to have any Transcendental Insight, otherwise there'd be no animal sacrifice. And I wondered, too, to what extent we should make these points very strongly to people, and not to accept this -

S: I think one should get them to clarify their thinking. It has been said that when people say 'All religions are one' you just say 'One what?' [Laughter] Well give your answers and say 'What exactly do you mean by that?' You could act the innocent Socrates: 'What do you mean by one, in what sense are they one? How are they one? Could you explain?' And as soon as they try to explain it, they obviously get into deep waters. If they say vaguely, 'They're all paths and they all lead to the same goal' - you see? Then you say, 'Is that analogy really correct? Can you really think of the different religions in that way, taking that analogy so literally? And what is that goal? How are you sure that they are all aiming at that? They don't all say that they're aiming at that. They seem to be aiming at quite different things.' And get them to clarify. And then eventually they realise the absurdity of putting it in that way.

Padmapani: I think one's got to be very careful, Bhante, that when one approaches that sort of person, the person doesn't then say, 'Yes, just what a Buddhist is - intellectual!'

S: Well, it would depend how you said it

Padmapani: Yes, one has to approach -

S: There are two kinds of universalist people. The first kind, you could say, is the person who is just not very intellectual but with some good will towards all, kind of thing; and if he says all religions are one it doesn't really mean anything, it's just an expression of general good will. So don't take him up on it too much. But the other person who, when they say all religions are one, it's an expression of confirmed micchaditthi, which probably ramifies into many, many different fields; and that is quite a different situation, which you have to deal with quite differently. Don't be too hard on the quite simple person who quite simply says, 'All religions are more or less the same', sort of thing. Don't be too hard on that kind of person, don't take them up on it too sharply. It might not mean very much, it's just their expression of general good will, not much more than that.

Asvajit: I tend to find this kind of expression among family and friends in the past,

S: Anyway, we have gone over time and we've got one more topic to take up - though I have the feeling that we have in a way been dealing with it indirectly - and that is the needs of individuals the needs of the Order in inverted commas. (?) I think not so much in the case of the Order but in terms of, or in the case of, the Movement or the Centres, some people felt a bit of conflict between their needs as individuals and what seems to be the needs of the Movement or, here, the Order, demanding certain things or certain expenditure of energy. So I thought we should just talk about this too.

Really I personally feel there's no conflict, but sometimes it seems that in some people's eyes as though there is some conflict.

Asvajit: I've not experienced any conflict at all so far; I've felt that my own development is synonymous exactly with the development of the Order. There's only one little thing that has just occurred in the last few days, and that is the Order retreat. I feel on this particular occasion I want to take a solitary retreat, and so I wonder should I take a solitary retreat or stay with the Order? But apart from that I've not felt any conflict.

S: It's not so much you and the Order, because you're part of the Order. I think you have to - the individual Order member has to be very careful not to think in terms of 'me here and the Order there', because you are in the circle, as it were. It's me and the other members of the Order, not me and the Order. I think it's a very important distinction.

Ratnapani: Where I've seen conflict it's been a personal conflict - that individual who has felt this 'me and the Order' and there's been a split between the two, it's been entirely a personal conflict which would have been going on anyway and it's just crystallised it. When somebody who's not sure whether to do one thing for themselves or another thing for the Movement with an air of sacrifice about it, it's expressed their own personal conflict.

Chintamani: I used to experience quite a bit of conflict, and just recently I've come to various conclusions - that it really stems from the mind - I don't say this on any kind of high horse or anything, but in the last section of the Puja where it says 'So may I become that which maintains all beings', and the way I see it that it's a kind of awareness of my own limitations, and if the Movement requires certain things and I don't feel that I can do that - the Movement, I mean the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order - I'd much rather keep myself to myself and not inflict myself on people in certain situations where I And I feel in not inflicting myself that's the best I can do, and just to get on with this lack which I know I do do without any egocentric alienation, that which I'm doing, the activity which I'm doing, ((noise)) 'By that activity which one does for simple love of it, it should be that activity which one does without any need for approval, and gives oneself to those people, situations, activities from which one craves nothing. If one finds that selfless activity and immerses oneself in it, isolated from any competitive feelings and all needs to prove oneself. That selfless attitude is spread out to other areas of one's life. We should be very suspicious of any desire that we may have to be seen to do wonderful things. (a) any neurotic need for approval is infantile, (b) unable to carry out in the first place, i.e. we basicallyactivity, and (c) we continue to alienate ourselves from a healthy, selfless giving. Giving is not something one does.' Etc. etc.

S: It seems to me like a little commentary on those verses of the Puja, putting it in another way, really.

Lokamitra: Something that comes to mind on this section is that in a way it's a bit like the early days of the Buddha in India, where Buddhism is new to England and the Buddha told his disciples to go out and preach for the good of the many, for the benefit and the welfare of the many, and so on. And in a way, to some extent our objective and individual needs should coincide here, but we'll be doing it in the best way we can, which for some will be painting icons, others will be doing other things - others will be teaching yoga, others will be

Manjuvajra: I must say I sometimes do feel a kind of pressure in that I feel I'm not doing sufficient for the Movement. I must say I don't feel that at the moment.

S: Well, because you're here.

Manjuvajra: Because I'm here, I suppose.

Ratnapani: I think everyone needs modesty, in a way. I think we expected to do tons and tons it's almost a conceit to feel that you're capable of changing the world single-handed, but if you're in a position where you are just doing a little and that's that, you won't worry if you're just content to with that little, in a modest way.

Lokamitra: I think people - it's changing, I don't think that's the situation now - but I think people have been far too easily contented with far too little up to now.

S: Both for themselves and for the Movement.

Lokamitra: Both. I wondered how - the task we've got before us really is amazing.

Ratnapani: There are one or two people who aren't in the mainstream, and might not have a

great deal of movement moving material in front of them, and they have to either move physically, and go where it is, or be content with what they're doing, one or the other.

Padmapani: It's obvious that Order members are all in different stages of development, that some people haven't got that confidence which other people have in the way they have to be nurtured.

Lokamitra: But how do you get that confidence?

Padmapani: You still seem to have an attitude - one still has to have an attitude towards that confidence which somebody suggested. Do you see what I mean? There's still a positive attitude which grasps that attitude when you have that confidence. You can't say, well, bang, this is going to do you good when the person has made a mistake - It just won't work.

Sanghamitta: I've found that as regards giving, sometimes, I get guilt feelings. And I'm in a bit of an awkward position, because I haven't any money of my own too, and my husband is not a committed member. And I think he's generous doing what he does, broadly speaking, but I tend to find that people do as an individual. 'I can't understand how you've got a good husband,' - and what the heck do they know? And people look at your situation, they think you're well off because you live in a decent They don't know what the commitments are the situation - that you are up to the eyebrows sometimes in commitments. And why you haven't accumulated anything before. And if you have along your life in your own way tried to be giving and that sort of thing, you haven't had a chance in your own way to gather goods and things. You have, in a sense - and one doesn't want to speak about it. You have to tell them that's all there is to it. Because you haven't looked in that way, and you're not money-minded in that sense, you just have to be practical. We were practical enough at the time in the situation, to take someone because we were feeling that we had to get out of places that belonged to other people. And in the end, I hope the Friends will benefit, but at the moment we're doing just what we can.

Marichi: This is something that's going to happen more and more, as we encourage to give more and more money to and accumulate less and less

Sanghamitta: No, one feels that sometimes individual members look at the situation as it is and think 'They ought to be able to give more than that.'

_____: It seems to be a thing. Sometimes people seem, if they are unable to give money themselves, to expect other people to do it for them.

Sanghamitta: It's difficult sometimes to know just where to give and what to give, and so on, it's very difficult.

Dharmapala: I think there's a that too, sometimes you can give a lot and expect everybody else to be able to do the same, and

Sanghamitta: all aspects of giving are very important.

Mangala: I think a lot of the problem arises in whether one confidence in oneself and a good feeling towards oneself and what one is doing, I think that if you have this then I don't think you'll feel this alienation from the Order. I think you feel this separation.

Sanghamitta: Well, perhaps I do because I haven't been with the Order sufficiently.

Lokamitra: It's very important, one has to learn to rejoice in one's own merits very much, and people don't do this enough.

Vessantara: Looking back at the Order, in the same way as we talk about waves, people going to new teachers and things, I've certainly seen myself at times chasing after the new largest thing that's happening - I could feel something in the air this morning when we began talking about a new Centre in Amsterdam and everybody got very excited. It was like - it's very easy to get carried away into wanting to do a tremendous amount - partly in order that other people see that you're doing a tremendous amount, but not actually be resolved to follow it through, and in attempting to do a tremendous amount in fact not actually achieving anything, or achieving far less than one could if one was much steadier and just more resolved.

S: I think perhaps we really have to leave it on that thoughtful note. There is a session in the afternoon, as you probably know: in the afternoon there's another plenary session, a general question and answer period with myself Here the idea is that upasakas and upasikas should be able to ask any question that has come up into their mind in connection with the Order, whether it's in relation to something we've discussed already or something quite new, and put that to me. I'll say what I have to say, and maybe there will be other contributions too. This is just to allow some time, some space, for questions which might be in people's minds but which have not been provided for within the framework of the existing sessions.

And then tomorrow there will, of course, be a Dharma question and answer period. And for this I've asked for written questions to be handed in. This is just to ensure a certain precision as we are dealing with the Dharma, so if there is a Dharma question in anybody's mind, something that's been maybe bothering you or that you've been wondering about in the course of your reading or study or discussion or teaching, then we can clear it up, we hope, for the benefit of everybody. And supplementary questions, of course, from the floor will be admitted. But let the initial questions come in written form, so that we can be sure of a very serious and precise approach. So let me have those questions before the session, or just place them here on the table. If you don't want to attach your name, don't.

_____: There's a lottery this evening (Chat.)

S: I suggest we start again at 2.30.

(end of session)

Tape 12, side 1 (contd.)

_____: (bangs and bumps) some mention of the growth of the Order, how fast it's grown, and and I'd like to

S: Could you be a bit more explicit? What do you mean by integration and so on?

Devamitra: I think in Shabda it had mentioned that there were quite a lot of new Order members being ordained very quickly in a short period of time last year, and that as well as being able to assimilate people in a harmonious way

S: I think it is much more a question which concerns the local Order chapter, because supposing lots of new Order members are ordained, say, in New Zealand, it doesn't affect us here very much in that way, and vice versa. But I think it is much more a question of people ordained within the same area or from the same Centre that we need to be sure that there aren't too many ordained at the same time, in such a way as to upset the balance of the existing chapter and make integration difficult.

I think this is also connected with the question of the ideal size of local chapter, but I feel that your local chapter of the Order shouldn't be too big. And if it does get big in any particular

area or in connection with any particular Centre it should as it were divide itself; and have joint meetings periodically but the regular meetings should be of a smaller number of Order members, so that there can be more direct and more dynamic exchange between them when they do meet.

I think that there is a very definite limit to the depth of exchange and communication which is possible within a larger group. For instance, one sees this all the time when you have, say, a study seminar.

(end of side)

Tape 12, side 2

.... a study seminar, the kind of communication which is possible when there are seven or eight is not possible even when there are 12 or 14. And again, when there are 20, it's a quite different situation. When I was in New Zealand, I was sometimes taking study groups on retreats of 20 and more people. It was very difficult, sometimes quite a strain; and there was a definite limit to the level of communication or depth of communication. So therefore I think it is very necessary for there to be recognised a broad optimum size for the local chapter, and that is the one within which you will have your most regular and frequent contact. And then more occasional contact at larger meetings.

We have been talking in terms of, say, the weekly meeting of the smaller local chapter, the monthly Order Day for the larger Order chapter, say, of two or three smaller, more local ones, and then of course we have at present got the Order Convention. Perhaps we should have regional get-togethers every three months, and maybe our real international Convention every five years. But I think what is very important is that each Order member should be in contact with, or belong to, a relatively small local chapter within which he or she feels as it were really at home, knowing everybody individually quite well and able to have a sort of in-depth communication when they all do meet together. I'm sure some people have got some thoughts and reflections on this.

Dhammadinna?: It seems that the Order [may?] itself get too big and unwieldy I don't know what other people feel about that.

S: I think one shouldn't try to have too much discussion at a big meeting. There's a limit to what you can discuss, or the degree to which you can discuss, when there are too many people present; so you should accept that and not try to do too much. I think when there are larger numbers of people present, say, on a particular monthly Order Day, there should be more emphasis on meditating together and doing Puja together, and maybe splitting up into smaller groups informally just for informal exchange, rather than to have a large or try to have a large group discussion, which I think is often very difficult. And not everybody very often gets a chance to have his or her say, and sometimes a certain amount of frustration and even resentment develops. So I think the group should use - the standard size for regular and most frequent meetings should be not too big, so that everybody is able to have his or her own say, and be an effective presence as an individual.

Sanghamitta: I don't know whether it has been decided upon, but somebody in the chair that

_____: ?

Sanghamitta: We've done that, yes,

_____:

S: So I think it is good to have meetings of larger numbers of people periodically - even thousands, eventually - but you must be very clear what you are trying to do in such a large meeting, and you certainly can't have a very fruitful discussion in a very large meeting, or come to very definite decisions about matters of detail. So I think when you have very large gatherings, for instance on monthly Order Days in or near London, I think it should be generally recognised there can't be much real discussion at an open meeting with everybody present. Therefore, do more meditation together, Puja and chanting together, and split up for certain purposes, I think; even just to drift off informally into small groups, or just buttonhole the particular Order member you wanted to talk to, and say hello to everybody else. And you are meditating together; the communication is there too. You are doing the Puja together. But not make a large-scale group discussion the main feature; I don't think that is possible or desirable when you've got too many people present.

Devamitra: My own personal views about is that although I feel the need to together I would certainly prefer that the emphasis wasn't there, because I do like to talk to people and get into groups with people that I haven't seen for a month or two months or three months or whatever. And I would prefer that there was a large chunk of such a day - maybe four or five hours, in which one could do this, and I've found that the most fruitful and invigorating exchanges that I've had are on those occasions when it's been possible to do that.

S: I wasn't envisaging that the Order Day should become a sort of retreat, with more meditation than anything else. I was only reminding people that meditating together is a way of communicating and being together. But certainly there should be four or five hours for discussion between individuals.

Anybody want to add anything to that? Does this answer what you were getting at, Dharmapala? Hm. I'm not so sure that all that many new Order members have been ordained recently - leaving aside those ordained in New Zealand, I think we've had nine this year - is it nine, or is it less than that, anyone know?

(Voices calculating.)

S: I think the very recent feeling has been - and I'm speaking now more about the Order members in and around London - I think the most recent feeling has been that the Order there feels ready to take in a few more, feels in a position to integrate a few more. Is that correct? (Murmurs.)

_____: We've not really discussed it generally

Voices: Yes.

_____: better

S: All right, any other question? Let's pass on.

Padmapani: Could you say a bit more about? You talked about the relationship between the Order and the Order they want to have lectures, or Mitras want to Someone said something about they wanted - the Order wanted to upgrade they have five years' experience

S: Yes, this is what we are aiming at. It certainly isn't possible at the moment, but as a general principle it is desirable that Order members shouldn't take on the responsibility of being kalyana mitras until they've had some experience themselves, until they are stable within themselves and can take on that responsibility. And certainly we have it in mind for the future that as a rough and ready guiding principle we say five years in the Order before

you take on that responsibility. But this is for the future; we hope to work up to this. In New Zealand, for instance, one or two Order members had to take on - well, one Order member, one upasika, had to take on Mitras the day after she was ordained. But she was an older woman with definite emotional stability and great devotion, so it was felt in her case she was able to do it, especially as the Mitra was a much younger woman and they already were getting on well together and meeting regularly; but that was quite exceptional.

_____: It seems that if that's going to be, there's going to be quite a gulf between the Order member.....experience, and older Order members who will be shackled quite a lot by having lots of Mitras.

S: No well, I said this is a principle for the future, something that we're going to work up towards. We'll have enough Order members, I hope, by that time, to be able to do this sort of thing. In a few years' time you'll all have five years' experience; a few of you have that already. But I'm not happy with the situation on the whole of someone newly ordained, yet to find their feet within the Order, and having at once almost to take on the responsibility of Mitras; simply that. But the system isn't yet working perfectly, and sometimes arrangements are a bit of a compromise, a bit makeshift; but we're trying to perfect the system and upgrade it all the time.

There's a question I'll put to everybody present, just for my own future information and reference. We probably sooner or later, probably later, will be having more study seminars for Order members and possibly a few Mitras. Are there any favourite texts that anybody would like to be taken into consideration for study? (Voices making suggestions.) Middle-Length Sayings; some of the Digha Nikaya.

_____: Have we Bodhicaryavatara?

S: We've not done that last chapter. Looking through it I've been becoming more and more doubtful about doing it; it is so complex and difficult.

Dharmapala: I'm not familiar get hold of a copy, of the text on Vimalakirti, which is

S: That is available - there is Charles Luk's translation available, and there is a new translation, an English translation of a French translation from the Chinese, which has been made by Sarah Boin, and duplicated copies are available. I have one already, but it is going to be brought out by the Pali Text Society, so we'll have two translations to work with, if ever we do get around to this particular text. The Lamotte one is very scholarly indeed, with a full critical apparatus, and very useful. Charles Luk's is more devotional and inspirational.

_____: Did you mention the possibility of doing the Life of Milarepa?

S: I did, yes. That is a possibility.

_____:

S: Yes, that is a possibility except that there is a series of lectures on that. I have been thinking also about the Sutra of Golden Light.

_____: You did mention you were going to do one on 'The Three Jewels'.

S: I did, yes. We worked with this in New Zealand quite a lot, and I must say my eyes were a little opened as we did so, because I'd assumed it was a simple introductory book that explained itself, but apparently it doesn't; so at some future date I'd like to take a study seminar on 'The Three Jewels', going straight through it, going through the whole of it with a

small group of Order members, maybe one or two Mitras.

_____: Have you done one on the

S: No. It would take quite a while; it's quite a concise work, covers quite a lot of ground. Eventually - in fact this is something I should mention while everybody is present - eventually I am hoping, though this is very definitely in the future, but none the less definite - I am hoping to be able to have a three-month study seminar or study retreat, with the possibility perhaps of a few people attending the whole three-month course, and others attending constituent courses. It would be so organised that there'd be definite constituent courses making up the overall course, so that each constituent course was self-contained and you could follow just that for 10 days or 20 days or 30 days, whatever it was.

_____:

S: Well, that's a bit of a dream. Maybe it could be.

_____: (laughter.)

S: It could even be Norfolk.

_____: Something you mentioned some time ago was the possibility of your friend Ken Shabda (??) going over Mind Only.

S: I think Subhuti has been in correspondence with him. What is the position?

Subhuti: Well, he was going to write and say when he could come.

S: I think he probably has been very much upset by developments in Vietnam, because he is from the North, and couldn't go back to the North because he was a Buddhist, and couldn't go back to the South because he was from the North. I don't know what he is doing now about that.

Subhuti: I'll get in touch with him

S: Right. He was certainly willing to come.

Subhuti: Yes. He was really keen to come.

_____: I'd like on the Mahaparinirvana Sutra.

S: Yes, that is a very good text. Any other suggestions? (Voices.) Yes, the Sukhavativyuha - yes, right. If you have any unusual or bizarre suggestion, don't hesitate to bring it forward.

_____: How about the Prajnaparamita?

S: I have been thinking about two of those texts - Prajnaparamita. I have been thinking about the one in 8000 lines, which is very rich and varied in content, with a lot of quite general material. And also about the Samcayagatha, the Verses on the Accumulation of Precious Qualities, said to be the oldest of all the Prajnaparamita texts. So that is a distinct possibility.

_____: What was the name of that one?

S: The Ratnaguna Samcayagatha, it's called. In that new translation, or new edition of

Conze's translation of the 8,000 lines Perfection of Wisdom, this is included. It's on sale at the Centre bookshop.

Devamitra: Are there any Chinese texts which go through the history of - or reflect the Dharma as it flowered in that particular context? I'm trying to say you've often commented on the similarity between the Dharma in China and as it's being introduced in the West now. I just wondered if there were any Chinese texts which would be particularly useful for us to study in the light of that.

S: I rather think not. There are - we do have translations of a few essays by, for instance, Seng Chao (?) I think it is, in which he deals with questions which Chinese Buddhists had to answer sometimes, questions arising out of the nature of Chinese society and culture. For instance, one of the questions he deals with is the relationship between the monk and the emperor; and another about the Buddhist attitude towards filial piety, because the Confucianists were very shocked by what seemed to them serious breaches of filial piety on the part of Buddhist monks, so Sen Chao had to write his essay to explain, in this case, how it was that there wasn't in fact a breach of filial piety. For instance, some Confucianists said, because monks did not marry and did not perpetuate the family line, the family name, this was a serious breach of filial piety; and Sen Chao retorted that no, there was no breach of filial piety; by leading a monastic life, by remaining celibate, by accumulating merits and by sharing them with the ancestors, you were exhibiting great filial piety. And he recounts stories of monks who, by virtue of their great punya, even rescued their departed ancestors from demeritorious states, so what could be more filial than that? This is the sort of discussion you get.

And then there was the famous discussion about monks not showing respect to the emperor, not doing the ninefold kowtow. Monks refused to do this, which greatly shocked the Confucianists. So eventually a compromise was worked out that the monk respected the emperor by not respecting him!

And then there was the question of what they called the dark wisdom, the relationship between the Perfection of Wisdom teaching and a certain Taoist teaching; to what extent the Taoist teachings could be regarded as anticipations of the Perfection of Wisdom teachings. We do have various essays dealing with subjects like this, which might be a bit instructive and illustrative, but I think not much more than that.

_____: Going slightly away from study seminars, do you intend to have any more retreats on our practices?

S: Yes, I do hope so, yes; but not just yet, because for the next at least few months I want to get mainly into literary work - writing. But once I have got into that and feel a bit satisfied with what I have been able to produce, then I'll start thinking in terms of such weekend seminars around particular practices.

Uttara: Legend of the Great Stupa.

S: That's also a possibility, yes. Then - yes, there is another point: if people could make suggestions for texts to be studied over a weekend retreat, that is to say small enough to get through, as far as one can see, in the course of a single weekend. I think perhaps the Legend of the Great Stupa falls into that category.

_____: Calm and Clear.

S: Calm and Clear. I also asked Christina to try and get hold of copies of another work, the Sutra of 42 Sections.

_____: It's the Chinese paramita(?)

S: No, it's quite different.

_____: Shambala.

S: That's right, yes, that's a very good book too. That would need more than a weekend. We could certainly do a chapter in a weekend. It is rather concise, but very useful.

_____:teaching of Bodhidharma - on the lines of bringing you closer to the spirit of the festivals that you celebrate.

S: Right. Well, Bodhidharma is such a vague figure, there aren't really any definite teachings authentically associated with him - not as, for instance, there is in the case of Milarepa.

By the way, I see that there is - talking of Milarepa - a new edition of the complete two-volume translation of the Songs of Milarepa. We ought to be stocking that.

_____: In paperback, isn't it?

S: It is in paperback, yes. That's not the one-volume Selections, in fact; there's now a two-volume paperback reprint of the complete translation. I forget who the publishers are; maybe the same ones, but maybe not. I saw it in Foyle's. Foyle's are streaking ahead.

Have all questions been answered? Everything dealt with?

_____: I was thinking about the transcript on openness in Shabda. Could you say anything about secrecy private life of?

S: I think this ties up with what I said earlier on about the local chapter of the Order to which you regularly belong. I think there are as it were degrees of opening up, which don't always depend upon you. I think it's quite difficult to open up completely when there's a larger number of people present. It's as though the number of people present practically determines the level or depth of communication; but I think it would be a really good thing if Order members could be completely open and virtually have no private life, as regards at least two or three other people - be able to talk to them about anything and everything. But that certainly wouldn't be possible within a very much larger gathering. Or at least have one other Order member with whom you are completely open and discuss absolutely everything, from whom there are no secrets. It's not even, with regard to the others, that you've got secrets; it's just a question of conditions of communication, conditions under which communication, real communication, is in fact possible. But I would say the best thing for the average Order member is that within your local chapter, whether it's of five, or six, or seven, or eight other Order members, you can just be completely open and talk about everything quite freely.

But I think there has been a bit of discussion, certainly down at Archway, or around Archway, about this question of the 'private life'. I don't know whether anyone would like to say anything about that? Presumably the private life as distinct from the public life.

_____: other people Where it brings in other members of one's family in connection with their life impinges on yours, that affects you.

_____: It is perhaps also the question of when one is (Voices.)

_____: private life. I feel that the private life shouldn't be equated with family life, it should be equated with that in oneself which one doesn't make available to

It could be that family, but it needn't be -

S: It could be almost anything.

_____: - and I think it certainly shouldn't be anything, because one just holds back, as one holds back from committing oneself.

_____:

S: It should be the unexamined area.

_____: Yes, that's right, the unexamined area. (Voices, all women's.)

Sanghamitta: Yes, but what they do, know, affects us as a mother(?) and our state of mind. those things.

S: Well, if you come along to a Order meeting, and someone says 'You're looking pretty down in the mouth today', you just say, 'Yes, my family's been really getting *(break in recording)* You can be open - you need not, if you don't want to, go into full explicit detail; they probably would be only too glad not to hear the full explicit detail. But just be open to that extent, not say, 'Oh no, there's nothing. I'm all right.' Just say 'No, I do feel down, it's that wretched family of mine' - if it's a wretched family. Be open about it. Or, if you need to go into greater detail, and ask actually for advice or a bit of sympathy, well just talk to one or two people about it. But as Jinamata says, the private life is that area you want to screen off; you don't want anybody to look at it, because it represents an area of weakness. And it may be your public life; your public life may be your private life.

_____: that be?

S: Well, for instance, there may be an Order member who is, to give an extreme example, a politician, and Order members might wonder why he was doing certain things in that capacity which seemed incompatible with Buddhism. At an Order meeting they might say, 'This is what we've heard or understood about you. It doesn't seem very Buddhistic.' He might say, 'That's nothing to do with the Order, that's my private life.' He wouldn't want that area to be examined in the light of Buddhism.

Ananda: I prefer to use the word secrecy rather than privacy. Privacy has certain that area.

S: It's not just 'private', it's 'private life', which has a very definite connotation. We don't talk much about secret life - The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. Certainly, this also must be clear, that every individual needs privacy, in the sense of the possibility of being completely alone from time to time, without interference or without interruption. This is necessary; in fact, should be insisted upon. Everybody should be alone.

This brings me to another point - that I have been saying that every upasaka and upasika, as soon as possible after ordination, should go on a solitary retreat. I'm now beginning to feel that it should be before ordination that Mitras should be encouraged to go on solitary retreats -

_____: They've done that.

S: - Some have done that, have they? That's really good.

_____: Probably more Mitras than Order members.

S: That's really good. But certainly -

_____: Order members

S: That may be so. Mitras have less responsibility. I think certainly all Order members should try very hard to have the experience of a solitary retreat. I think a month is a pretty fair period. Certainly encourage one's Mitras. Probably in their case mention a period of a week; if they choose to make it longer, fair enough.

_____: The Hampstead Vihara has cells

S: Ah, hm. Well, maybe we should have an arrangement with them. Your kalyana mitra can escort you to your cell, lock you in, and return in a week or a month's time.

_____: You're not allowed to take anything with you,

_____:

_____: No, I don't want to

S: They have their own ideas about solitary retreats.

_____: You don't have to

S: It is quite an experience just to remain completely on your own without doing anything - without reading, without meditating. That itself is an experience. Though I think for most people what is the most fruitful experience of this kind is a rather mixed one, with some time for quiet reading and real study, some meditation and some chanting, some walking about, perhaps, chopping wood, preparing meals; doing it all in a very gentle, leisurely, mindful way, as you feel like it.

_____: Sounds terrific.

S: Especially for those who are going back to work on Tuesday. Never mind.

_____: Going back to the question of openness, together, I don't think one can expect to be other than a short acquaintance

S: Right. It is very definitely something that grows and develops, like friendship itself.

_____: build a community, because you might not find it easy coming to the meeting for example with people who are going to live with you - eventually it would happen, I think.

_____: Working together

S: And playing together. Or sometimes you might find it difficult to say whether it is work or play. And that's best.

_____: It seems (etc.) feels at the moment is that it is absolutely essential, because only Could you say what the nature of that is automatically

S: I think broadly the sort of thing that I have in mind is that in the first place we do

spiritually belong to the spiritual tradition of Buddhism. But on the other hand I feel that we must have towards that tradition an attitude of complete honesty - faith, certainly, and openness, certainly; receptivity, certainly; but that we must constantly translate that tradition, or as much of it as we can, into terms of our own experience and into terms also of the culture to which we belong, the situation in which we find ourselves. And I think that I make my distinctive contribution in this way - having, I hope, steeped myself in the Buddhist tradition while I was in the East, but at the same time being very aware of the situation here in the West, especially since I've come back.

Vessantara: Can I ask, related to that, this morning I was interested - you seemed to be putting forward a number of different ways in which we could communicate the Dharma, and absolutely the essential thing is to get across the Dharma to people not necessarily trying to spread the Friends but the Dharma. Can you envisage us having which might in fact not be the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, which might leave aside say the more traditional aspects of Buddhism and simply concentrate on presenting the teaching of the Higher Evolution?

S: It might be so, but eventually if people started asking, 'Where did you get from, and how did it all originate?' you'd have to bring in Buddhism, out of simple honesty. But it might well be, at the same time, that what you were actually saying would not depend for its truth or credibility on the fact that it had originally come from India, and from the historical Buddha. The Buddha himself says, 'Whether Buddhas arise, or whether Buddhas do not arise, this Dharma, this Law, this Truth, stands fast.' The Buddha himself has said that. But if one is asked about the origins of that teaching, obviously you have to be completely not only truthful but grateful, because you didn't think it up yourself, you got it from somewhere else, and you are only acknowledging your own indebtedness. Maybe you have made your own creative contribution, but you had a very great deal of material to start with, just given you.

Ananda: Do you think, Bhante, that in some cases - maybe this is an extension of what you said - that certain individuals it would be unskilful to present oneself as a Buddhist and that one would have to use different -

S: It depends on what you mean by a Buddhist.

Ananda: In the very categorical way that being a member of an institution in a particular tradition.

S: I'm not happy with this word 'institution'.

Ananda: Yes. Connected with a Buddhist movement,

S: It's very difficult to generalise, but I think you shouldn't conceal the fact. Certainly not deny the fact. Because you want to get across the Dharma, so you can't very well get across the Dharma, so you can't very well get across the Dharma if you start off by denying some aspects of the Dharma. It may be that in some situations communication is very difficult; perhaps you can't communicate the Dharma, there is so much misunderstanding, so much misconception. Even if you use the word 'religion', 'spiritual' - well, misunderstanding; 'evolution', misunderstanding. I don't think you can ever completely avoid misunderstanding. But if the person you're talking to is relatively open, and at least trying to understand what you're putting across, then you'll be able to put across something. But if he's just finding fault with every word and term that you're using and not wishing to there's nothing you can do about it.

Ananda: I've encountered a personal difficulty when giving lectures to some groups. The most predominant and prevalent difficulty is the people who say - this is in connection with

some Christians - the old accusation against Buddhism that we do nothing in terms of activity, and the accusation seems to be

S: Turn it on them: Christians never meditate. That's terrible. Say, Buddhists in the East - when they hear that Christians don't meditate, they can't believe their ears. Not meditate, and they're supposed to be religious people? You can turn it right round like that.

_____: activity of like the missionaries in the East, who have done

_____: 'What are you doing there?'

Ananda :..... tradition in the historical sense.

S: Well, how did Buddhism get all over Asia? A couple of thousand years ago. They were so zealous to spread it, they walked everywhere, the Buddhist monks from India.

Ananda: Difficult to answer, because I've no personal experience of what people did in the East

S: It's a matter of historical record.

_____: You can use the there've been so few wars.... it's been a Buddhist country And if that's not better than helping people,

Ananda: I think they often don't see it in such a way,

_____: I think there's fewer Christians nowadays, very many Christians within their own faith,

S: I suggest, in dealing with people like this, one should not be on the defensive. I think one should go right out and, in a sense, attack them. Not allow oneself to be put on the defensive - 'Why aren't Buddhists doing this? Why aren't Buddhists doing that?' 'Well, we follow Buddhist principles. We don't intend allowing Buddhism to be judged by Christian principles or secular principles. We abide by our own principles, for which we have got good reason, and we see very rich fruit in the East arising out of that, and we find in this country too, to the extent that we follow those principles, very rich and worthwhile fruit.'

Mangala: It comes back to having again confidence in oneself, you might actually be doing nothing in a direct way to help other people, but if you're really doing what you're doing, sitting in a chair or meditating or like that, -

S: Right. Once or twice I've been asked by people, by Christians, 'What are you doing for the good of others?' and sometimes I say 'Nothing.' Nothing! I've no intention of doing anything.

Ananda: But this sometimes leads to a lot of misunderstanding.

S: Well, I shock them to begin with.

Ananda: You think this is really effective?

S: Sometimes it is, oh yes.

Mangala: what you shouldn't say, ... If you say that, you couldn't actually

feel waste of time.

S: But don't be apologetic. If you feel the need to be apologetic or defensive, you ought not to be meeting such people. You ought to be maybe meditating somewhere or studying somewhere.

Ananda: No, I don't say apologetic for Buddhism, but

S: No, but you mustn't come across as apologetic.

Chintamani: I remember once at the Centre when we were somebody who was saying about his friend's suicide, what were we going to do about people like that? And he said very sternly, 'I refuse to be emotionally blackmailed.'

S: Right, yes. Sometimes it's not only emotional blackmail, it's emotional bullying. Trying to make you feel bad about not doing something which they feel people ought to be doing - well, we don't accept that principle. We've got other principles by which we live. I don't intend being made to feel bad for not living up to Christian expectations.

_____:

S: Oh yes, we know! So clever! So you must either be more clever still, or you must just be a bit rude and ruthless.

_____: Yes! When you start talking about the Bodhisattva Ideal, it gives people - if you start talking about the Bodhisattva Ideal, they immediately assume that you think you are a Bodhisattva, and so they point out hundreds of different ways in which -

(end of side)

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in which you're not a Bodhisattva.

_____:

S: To begin with, you must be careful about speaking about things like the Bodhisattva Ideal. You should know that those people are like that, and that it's asking for it to start putting forward the Bodhisattva Ideal.

_____: So do you think maybe that ought to be - I mean I've been taking the Bodhisattva Ideal seriously. Maybe that should be kept in the background a bit.

S: Possibly, I wouldn't like to generalise, but possibly.

Vajradaka: people could use anything like that. You could talk about meditation making you more relaxed, and they could say, 'Well, I'm more relaxed than you are.'

_____: It seems to remain a difficulty,

S: It just seems that they want to find fault with you. Maybe that's what you should have out with them. Talk about what their real attitude is. They're not talking about the Bodhisattva Ideal, they're talking about you. They want to get at you - say 'All right, this seems to be the situation: you want to get at me. Why is this? You're just using these questions as an excuse for getting at me? Why? What have I done? Why do you feel that way?' Confront them

with it. Don't take it lying down, don't be defensive. Don't say, 'Ah well, the Bodhisattva Ideal is very sublime, ha ha, we do our own little best, ha ha' (laughter) Say, could we have a few more lively words (?), please?

Ratnapani: I think often I've observed this happening where the situation is someone's being either obstructive or negative or deliberately misunderstanding, and the basic fault seems to be being weak enough to see it in their terms and not being firm enough in one's own terms, knowing exactly where one stands, and why, and how. very frequently get caught up in their terms, in their attitudes, and then you're sunk.

S: It does come very much back to this question of confidence and enthusiasm and positiveness of communication, and not letting others put things on to you or over you. Say, 'Look, you're a Christian, I'm a Buddhist' - supposing he is a Christian - 'I'm quite happy to discuss with you, I'm quite happy to enter into dialogue. But please remember, I'm a Buddhist, and I do it as a Buddhist. And you mustn't try to judge me by your standards, which I don't necessarily accept' - or humanistic standards, or Marxist standards, whatever it is.

I think on the whole, in the past, we've been much too apologetic, much too much on the defensive, with not nearly enough confidence in the Dharma itself and in ourselves.

_____ : I think - because obviously we've all got Christian conditioning - maybe if we were entering into talk with a Moslem, say, it would probably be slightly different, and we could be more objective and probably more positive, because we haven't got a Moslem conditioning to deal with at the same time.

S: You mean there is a weaker side of ourselves which still criticises with the opponent?

_____ : Yes.

S: Yes, that's true sometimes. Lack of integration.

_____ : a Christian and a Moslem or a Christian and a Buddhist, because the categories are so different, and the is easier. That can happen, can't it?

S: It certainly can happen. But then the question arises, either you've gone to them or they've come to you. If you go to them, it's usually at their invitation, and you can say 'Please allow me to express the Buddhist point of view. When I'm gone you can disagree with it as much as you like.' Or if they've come to you, say, 'Look here, what have you come for? I don't want to hear about Christianity. I've heard enough about that in the past. Presumably you've come to learn something about Buddhism. All right, if you're receptive I can explain something, or try to explain.' Be a bit sharp with them.

_____ : And presumably, if they have asked, there is a certain readiness and receptivity anyway.

S: Yes. If they have asked, certainly assume that there is a certain amount of receptivity on their part. If subsequent exchanges show that they've come along for some other reason and they aren't really receptive, just pull them up about it, and say, 'I rather wonder why you've come along. I've no wish to argue or just dispute. I've been assuming that you just want to know something about Buddhism. I'm quite happy to tell you whatever I've understood. But that's all. I've no wish to argue or dispute. If you've come just for that, you're wasting your time and my time. Please go away.' Be quite frank in this manner. And sometimes they do go away and sometimes they apologise; then you can get into a bit of more genuine discussion.

_____: Maybe reasons why they have come.

S: It's quite useless, I think, to try to enter into discussion with, say, the Jehovah Witness who rings the doorbell and puts his foot in the door when you open it. I've had a few of these at Muswell Hill.

_____: I've had Mormons.

S: For instance, one woman rang the bell and I opened the door, and I saw at once from the literature she was a Jehovah's Witness. So she said, 'I'm sure that you're interested in world peace'. So I said, 'No, not at all,' and shut the door. (laughter). Yes, I knew the tactic. If I said, 'Oh yes, I'm interested in world peace' - well, 'Jehovah's Witness shows the way to world peace, here you are, here's a tract.' Or attempt to get into discussion. Cut it short. Or if you've got plenty of time and you think it might be amusing, all right, invite her in. She'll probably camp there for a week.

Sanghamitta: 'No, I don't want to hear, I'm a Buddhist'. And it was: 'Ooh, I've never seen a Buddhist before.'

S: 'Have a good look.'

Sanghamitta:! I said, 'No, it would take far too long and I haven't got the time' - shut the door.

S: It's a great pity, because when a human being comes to that it means they really are out of communication.

Sanghamitta: It's a waste of time trying to -

S: It surely is.

Sanghamitta: Because they're only glad to get the opportunity even of tactics to get in

S: If they were willing to discuss or exchange ideas it would be all right, however fixed they were in their own ideas. But usually they don't want you to have a word. You can't get a word in edgeways, literally.

Sanghamitta: And Mormons are like that as well.

S: So I think don't waste one's time when it really does seem that no exchange is possible. Don't hesitate to close the interview.

Sanghamitta: close the door.

_____: One more martyr goes back to the Jehovah's Witness HQ.

_____: A Mitra of mine said that a Jehovah's Witness came along to him, and he talked them round to Buddhism, and they're now very much interested in Buddhism.

S: He must be some Mitra. (Voices.)

_____: And when I went down to visit him, again a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses came round, and he, but they didn't want to know - but he was very good. They were actually controlled. (?)

S: It just depends on the amount of time and patience and energy and persistence that you do have. Some people are much better at this sort of thing than others.

_____: has got a very high degree in psychology. He knows the right tactics.

_____: if you enjoy that sort of (Voices. Chat.)

S: Any other point or question? If not, we'll just have an early tea.

_____: Could you say anything about the higher ordinations - the maha-upasaka ?

S: I have been thinking about these things lately, but I haven't come to any definite conclusion. But I will give you some idea of what my latest thinking is, or has been.

Some people have mentioned recently the fact that they were thinking in terms of the regular practice of celibacy, not to say even taking a vow of celibacy. And others have also been inquiring about the anagarika ordination. So I've been turning all this over in my mind.

_____:

S: Well, I'll say a few words about that first, as it's been understood so far in the Buddhist world. For instance, you've all heard of Anagarika Dharmapala? Anagarika Dharmapala founded the Maha Bodhi Society. So why did he call himself 'Anagarika'? His idea was this: he wanted to work wholeheartedly for the Dharma; especially he wanted to revive Buddhism in India and restore Buddha Gaya as a living Buddhist centre. So one would have thought the natural thing for him to do would be to become a monk, but unfortunately in Ceylon monastic life had become so rigid and so hidebound that to become a monk, in those days at least, would have meant virtually being unable to do anything for Buddhism at all. So what he felt was, he'd become a sort of freelance monk; that he'd be living the life of a monk in all essentials, but not taking upon himself all the minor rules which certainly inhibited - or would have inhibited - his freedom of action. So he took the Ten Precepts, just like upasakas and upasikas in the Western Buddhist Order take, except that instead of kamesu micchachara it was abrahmacarya, that is to say instead of promising to abstain from sexual misconduct he promised to observe brahmacarya or complete celibacy. And he wore an informal yellow robe, and didn't shave his head. So this was the anagarika status.

You get the idea? You're a monk in spirit, and even in certain externals, but you're not in Theravadin eyes properly ordained as a monk. In a way, it's a bit ridiculous, because he was living a completely dedicated life - very much like, I assume, some of the direct disciples of the Buddha himself. But he didn't take upon himself the formal monastic ordination, with all the later technicalities that that implied.

So this is the anagarika ordination - that is to say, you are leading a semi-monastic life; you're not immured or cloistered, you move about the world, you work for the Dharma, you've no secular occupation, no family, you're celibate, you wear a yellow robe. But you haven't got the bhikkhu ordination. So in spirit you are really a bhikkhu. In fact, in the Dhammapada, anagarika and bhikkhu are used synonymously, which is quite interesting. So you could say you are a 'monk', using that term for the time being, but without all the formalities of the later developments in the Hinayana and in the Theravada which were inherited to some extent by the Mahayana.

So what I have been thinking is this - that within the Western Buddhist Order the second step, the second step up as it were from upasaka should be twofold: there should be a twofold possibility. In the case of the married person with social responsibilities and so on, but who

wishes to make that further commitment above and beyond what is expected of an upasaka, they should become a maha-upasaka or maha-upasika. And those who wish to not remain or not be within the framework of ordinary social life and domestic life, who definitely want to be single and celibate and give all their time to Buddhism and the Dharma, they should take the anagarika ordination. But that these two should be as it were co-ordinate; they are not second and third steps, they are both equally the second step.

And in future I hope that it will be maha-upasakas and upasikas and the anagarikas and anagarikas who will be kalyana mitras. This is my present thinking, though I haven't yet come to any definite conclusions. But I'm concerned with two things: one is to safeguard the uniqueness of the original upasaka ordination as the occasion when you Go for Refuge. So this is the ordination, as it were, the Going for Refuge, and any further ordination is very much an intensification or even specialisation of commitment, either as a maha-upasaka or as an anagarika. Do you see the thinking? But that these two would be as it were co-ordinate, not that the anagarika is a further step from the maha-upasaka or the maha-upasika from the anagarika. In other words, very broadly speaking, it's the same level of commitment with the same kind of responsibility, but within the context of different lifestyles.

_____ : any kind of for a period of a year or couple of years
..... ?

S: I haven't thought about that. I rather think, at the moment, that if someone becomes an anagarika it probably should be with the intention of for life or indefinitely. I would say if someone just wants a year, OK, make a particular vow that you're going to live like that for a year, but without as it were formally assuming anagarika status. Some people even do at present take vows of various kinds, especially with regard to celibacy - say, for a month or three months; but without any external ordination, just a vow they take themselves or with another Order member or two present.

Sanghamitta: - again, you'll have to correct me if I'm wrong, but ... anagarika - that at the stage of Non-Returner anybody can fall back in their spiritual life. At the moment, as things are, we are Should it not be that not just because somebody has been an Order member for so long or been working for so long in the Order but if their spiritual life is also in depth as well, because they may be in a bad state -

S: When you say lead, what do you mean?

Sanghamitta: Well, they have the right of sort of head, aren't they, to take over and everything. If they're still not in a good state, they not be ?

S: No.

Sanghamitta: So - (hesitating)

S: Are you trying to ask me what is the place of seniority or how much value or significance is to be attached to seniority?

Sanghamitta: Yes - seniority at the moment has been based on how long the person, say, sets out to work for the really working hard. but there can be a spiritual life, Do they still have this right to -

S: Well, I wouldn't think of it as a right.

Sanghamitta: Well - there is still technical position of seniority, or is it up to other Order members to correct them or -

S: It's also not even a sort of taking, it's more being given. Very definitely the tradition in the East is that seniority is respected. This is, for instance, within the bhikkhu order, and that provides a more for other contexts. The situation is that on any 'formal' occasion, formal in inverted commas, precedence is according to seniority; that is to say that supposing there is a ceremonial meal, the seniormost monk, that is to say the one who has been a monk longest, will be served first. He will sit at the head of the row, the next next to him, and so on. So on all as it were formal occasions attention is paid, or respect is paid, to seniority; it being assumed that the longer you've been in it the more experienced and more spiritual you will be. This is the norm, as it were. You've been at it longer, you're more experienced. But when it comes to actual important decisions, that's another matter. For instance, supposing there is a meeting of the Sangha, the bhikkhu Sangha; everybody expresses his opinion. Usually the procedure is that the seniormost monk speaks first, then the next, then the next, down to the most junior, but no one is obliged to accept the seniormost monk's opinion because he is seniormost. You only give him the courtesy of speaking first. But when it comes to a decision, the youngest bhikkhu's ideas may be accepted; or, in the meeting, very junior bhikkhus who are very able and experienced and may sway the whole meeting, and the seniormost ones, who may be not very capable in some cases, may just keep quiet.

But on formal occasions respect is paid to seniority. But if it's a question of a real question to be decided, then it's decided by ability, and that usually emerges. And I must say, within the Order in the East, these things are usually managed very well, and very often more senior monks who are not very capable are quite conscious of their incapacity, and they just keep quiet. They just allow the younger ones to take over and manage the proceedings.

So, applying that to us, under normal circumstances, the seniormost upasaka present should lead the proceedings. If for any reason that upasaka is not in a fit state to lead, then he or she should be sufficiently aware of that to resign to the next person, or simply to say to the Order as a whole, 'I don't feel able to do this. Will somebody please take over? Will the Order please appoint somebody to take over? I don't feel quite happy about it, I'm not quite in the state to do it.' If for any reason they are unable to appreciate their own state, then it should be gently and kindly pointed out. It is not a question of criticism, it's just a question of the good of everybody. This is just the way that things are done.

So there's no inherent right of a senior person, which the senior person himself can insist on. There's nothing like that. It's what is sometimes called a priority of courtesy.

_____: Could you say a bit more about celibacy?

S: From what point of view?

_____: Well - is it, er, necessary?

S: Necessary for whom? It's very difficult to generalise, but I would certainly say more necessary for some than for others. I think every individual case has to be dealt with individually. It's very difficult to make a general rule. What I would make a general rule about is emotional dependence. I think to discuss the subject in terms of celibacy or in terms of sex or no sex is a bit misleading, it's a bit of a red herring; the real culprit to be detected is the emotional dependence, which of course is very often associated with sex. So if you feel that you can't - your sex life and your emotional life are so interdependent and intertwined that you can't get over emotional dependence without a spell away from sex - at least a spell - then you should consider being celibate for a while until you've dealt with your emotional problem.

Uttara: heard thathe or she even thinks things of that sort, or even in dreams then you have broken your vow.

S: Well, in a sense you have, but you certainly shouldn't feel too bad about that sort of breaking; because, after all, you are only a human being, and you have to be very careful what you demand from yourself, and not demand something which is virtually impossible.

_____: Surely it must be - it would be a training precept ... one would have to recognise these things, instead of feeling guilty about them.

S: Yes, and deal with them.

_____: - recognise - as with the other precepts.

S: But, as I said, I feel that the main thing in this area to be dealt with or to be tackled is the emotional dependence on another person, which very often is associated with a sexual relationship or even sexual dependence.

Uttara: you have more energy ... -

S: Again, I think this depends very much on temperament. Some people do, others don't; others feel blocked, which certainly isn't a very energetic state. So I think one mustn't assume that if you become celibate you automatically become more spiritual; it's not nearly as simple as that. You may or you may not.

Mangala:?

S: Well, of course, that is a possibility which attaches to any form of observance. So one certainly shouldn't refrain from doing something skilful just because you might become attached to it. Though, of course, watch out for the possibility of attachment.

_____: I think it may be that in particular, because there is so much - with a Christian conditioning about sex, that I think quite often one can get into a pseudo-purity thing, Whereas with the other precepts I don't think one could be in quite the same way.

_____: peculiar perversions what they should be doing (Voices.)

Mangala: the ultimate precept, (laughter)

S: In some ways it is, traditionally, because it simplifies life so much.

Mangala: I have really being a monk or really being into Buddhism and beinginto it.

S: This is certainly the view in the East, especially in the Theravada countries, but this is not the view that we have taken, because we take the view that the real line of demarcation is when you Go for Refuge.

Mangala: Yes, but I think it's probably psychologically just as

S: Well, it wouldn't be due to any Buddhist conditioning, would it? (Voices.) Well, Catholic conditioning, but it wouldn't be Protestant conditioning. Protestants don't have this sort of idea, they have married clergy, all Protestant sects.

_____:

S: Well, certainly it is true that the celibate life, while it isn't itself necessarily more

dedicated, makes possible a greater degree of dedication, because you are free. But it should be viewed just as an opportunity, not as an achievement in itself. If someone is just celibate, so what? They're just celibate. What do they do with their celibacy? They can sit down and twiddle their thumbs, (laughter) or they can get on with an enormous range of activities. Celibacy by itself is just a clearing of the decks for action, it's not the action itself.

_____: Yes, that's very important.

S: Celibacy is a beginning, not the end.

_____: Surely one should be fully and totally sexual and have that energy available before one intends

S: Oh yes, there's no virtue in the blind man shutting his eyes, as it were. (laughter)

_____:

_____: When you talk about - if you take a vow [you'll] have more energy available -

S: I haven't spoken in that way.

_____: Ah. If you take a vow, then you'll have more - life is simpler, and -

S: I'm assuming first of all that you are a healthy and aware and developed person, with definite spiritual ideals, and you've worked through emotional and sexual problems and are just available as a human being. Not that you're some sort of psychological abortion that has thought of celibacy as an easy way out. (laughter)

_____:

S: This is why, when people do come to me and say they want to take a vow of celibacy, I certainly don't encourage them straight away. I'd like to know why, and I suggest 'Try it for a short while first,' etc.

_____: Bhante, - I'm not suggesting this here, but it has cropped up - one feels that one's emotional are stable and worked over those problems, there's still a residue of energy there, a monastic community in Bethnal Green, so that energy won't go into emotional dependence on other men.

S: There is a possibility that it might - and I only say might, because I haven't considered this question before - develop into a sort of group dependence. I think that is more likely than emotional dependence on individuals.

_____: in the sense that you can't clearly define one is

S: It'll be up to your kalyana mitras or your fellow Order members to point out anything that they notice which is amiss, and to you yourself to remain quite aware.

_____: I really meant on a more, all the Order members who are in the monastic community, but be well aware of that happening.

S: And also, no doubt, even those who were in that community would be in quite frequent contact with Order members coming from outside, they're not completely self-contained. And if anything developed in that way, other people coming from outside would certainly

notice something amiss and raise the matter.

Ananda: would Order members would all other Order members be aware that certain individuals had made ?

S: If they had received an anagarika ordination, which would involve celibacy, then of course everybody else would be aware. But if it was just a private vow of celibacy as distinct from the anagarika ordination, other people might not know. The point has been raised, but I haven't thought about it myself carefully yet, that those taking the vow of celibacy, even if only for a certain period, should perhaps make it known to others who might help them in observing it.

Ananda: a very important step indeed, and to avoid any kind of mistake, a certain number of Order members.

S: I think it is in a way quite a delicate matter. One doesn't want, say, to have in Shabda a list of Order members who are observing celibacy this month. (laughter.)

_____:

S: On the other hand, it might be simpler to have a list of those who weren't! But certainly I think there should be some sort of factual and also natural means of just letting the other Order members with whom you're more closely connected know about it. Otherwise someone might invite you to go and see a pornographic film, and you wanted to keep away from that sort of thing.

Ananda: Bhante, could I just go back to the maha-upasaka ...? I'm a bit unclear about two things: what in fact one is actually undertaking in terms of additional responsibility and precepts.

S: Very broadly - I won't go into precepts now, because that is a rather separate thing - but how I broadly see the joint responsibility of the maha-upasaka and the anagarika - assuming this system is introduced - is that the anagarika or the maha-upasaka is a sort of natural leader of a small group of upasakas, for instance the leader of a team, or is a person within the team who is most capable of taking initiative, and whose superior capacity or energy or devotion is generally recognised. So the maha-upasaka or anagarika will give cohesion and direction to small groups of Order members - that is to say, very small chapters of the Order, as it were. Because even Order members sometimes get into difficulties and may need someone that they can go to to whom they definitely look up, not just a fellow Order member on the same level as themselves, but someone who, though also an Order member, they feel is a bit more advanced than they are and can definitely help them. I think the maha-upasaka and the anagarika should have this sort of function and responsibility within the Order. And also they would be kalyana mitras, they would both of them perform Mitra ceremonies, and so on.

This is roughly my thinking, though I haven't come to any conclusions yet; but this is the way in which I have been thinking from time to time. But I'll be giving some more thought to the whole matter in the coming months.

Ananda: say that which one is given without asking make the initial approach?

S: One or two people have already made approaches; this is one of the reasons why I've been considering. But if I personally felt that someone was really ready, but wasn't asking because they weren't quite sure what the situation was or how I felt, then I would give a hint: 'Perhaps you should be thinking about this.' And then explain what it was all about, if they

_____: Would a maha-upasaka have to be a married person?

S: This is something I haven't gone into in detail. Obviously one can't have too many intermediate types and intermediate ordinations, but broadly speaking I think usually the maha-upasaka would be a married person with a family, with a job and so on, but I don't want to make any hard and fast rule here. They might be living in happy polygamy, you know?
[Laughter]

_____: Do you that the anagarika would take the four vows that have previously been taken by the maha-upasaka?

S: Ah, I've been thinking about that too, and I think very likely yes.

_____: change from being a maha-upasaka to anagarika?

S: Yes, supposing for instance that you were a maha-upasaka, a married person with a family; supposing your children grew up, and supposing you were a man and suppose your wife agreed that you should take this step - yes, then you could transfer on the same level to the different lifestyle and be an anagarika. Or if you decided after a few years as an anagarika that you wanted to settle down to family life and work in that particular field, then you'd become a maha-upasaka and give up the anagarika ordination. Though, as you say, that possibility would probably be more remote.

_____: How can you do that?

S: Well, normally you would intend, I think, to take it for life, but in the Buddhist tradition no such ordination is irrevocable; not as, say, in the Catholic Church where you can never withdraw except in a few cases with special papal dispensation, but in Buddhism you can give up the higher ordination at any time you like by getting together a small number, a chapter, of people with that same ordination that you have, and formally giving it up and reverting to the previous state or degree. There is never any attempt to keep people in, in Buddhism. But if a maha-upasaka or if an anagarika felt that they could no longer shoulder that additional commitment, then they could just quietly give it up and revert to being an upasaka. Though, obviously when you take a higher ordination you certainly hope to be able to remain in it, and intend; but if you've over-estimated your own ability or circumstances even make it impossible in any way, you're quite free to revert without blame.

_____: (Voices.)

S: Anyway, we are a little over time. If there's any further question that anyone thinks important or has just thought of, well, bring it up; otherwise we'll have tea.

_____: I have an idea - I don't know quite the value of it - I was wondering whether it would be any value for Order members to strengthen relationships within the Order by in effect taking kalyana mitras.

S: Are you suggesting that upasakas should take maha-upasakas or anagarikas as their kalyana mitras?

_____: Or senior

S: This could certainly be considered, especially as the Order is increasing in size. One could certainly consider this. In a way, I function as the sort of kalyana mitra in general, but that's becoming quite difficult, I must admit, now that there are 66 or 67 Order members. So we may have to think in those terms, yes.

_____ : I mean present Order members haven't got kalyana mitras and we were thinking in terms of these relationships persisting after ordination.

S: Right, yes. I think probably the ones who've been ordained already can manage, inasmuch as they do have the personal relationship with me, which others probably will not be able to have, so they will need their kalyana mitras, in other words the more senior members of the Order, even after their own ordination, and will feel free to go to them whenever they feel the need. But I think perhaps this is a good point that, in future, on the occasion of ordination, we do stress that in a sense the two kalyana mitras remain their kalyana mitras, the two people within the Order now with whom you are still specially connected and to whom you still can go if you feel the need. I think this is a good thing to stress

Ananda: And another brief point which I have raised this morning and which had a rather ... mixed reception. I was thinking of the ceremony where everybody present as if they took their leave from everybody else present. I wondered if some form of this ceremony might be useful within the Order.

S: I think this is quite a good idea. I know it has happened once or twice quite spontaneously. I'd like to leave it spontaneous if possible, that if someone feels that he or she might have given offence by over-strong language and so on, at the end of the meeting, they should just say, 'Well, look, if I've spoken a bit too strongly, please excuse that. I certainly didn't intend to hurt anybody's feelings.' I think Asvajit inserted a little note in Shabda, didn't he? - saying that when he was in New Zealand if he'd trodden on any Order member's toes he was sorry. So I think at present leave it in this way. Say, at the end of an Order Day if somebody feels that he or she might have rubbed someone up the wrong way, just express your regret. But I don't think I'd be quite happy about everybody standing up and saying a form of words, and many people might feel that they hadn't done anything like that. But I think for the present at least leave it as it is at the moment.

But certainly, if anybody has this feeling at the end of any Order meeting, that they have rubbed someone up the wrong way or there has been a misunderstanding, certainly express it in some way or other. I have noticed sometimes after Order meetings and discussions and two Order members have had a rather hot discussion, immediately after the session they've gone and given each other a big hug, just to show there's no ill feeling. You don't even necessarily have to express it in words, but just something to put right anything that might have gone wrong in the course of the discussion. young blood is sometimes a bit hot.

_____ : I think there's another element to it. (Voices.) I think another element hasn't been included, and that is that if negative feelings and I think sometimes it's necessary for one to say 'I'm sorry, but I felt like that towards you', even though And I think a ritual would perhaps take care of that aspect. (Voices.) Well, maybe you could, and maybe you couldn't. Sometimes it's easy to say and sometimes it isn't. Sometimes you may hate everybody in the whole Order for a few you may suddenly discover you shouldn't it's not so specific -

(end of side)

Tape 13, side 2

..... can't specifically deal with -

S: Well, perhaps we should - I can't at the moment think of anything that we might do, but perhaps it should be considered.

_____ :communication exercise or

S: In a way.

_____ : there are so few people who end up taking maybe it would be a bit superfluous.

_____ : I've done this myself in a kind of private ritual and I the shrine room one day when it was quiet (*laughter*) and

S: I thought you meant a ritual for use within the Order as a whole.

_____ : Well,

S: Well, perhaps the way you did it is best. (*Murmurs of assent.*) It seems to have worked.

_____ : deal with I certainly found birthday in the Order team years ago, I felt as if I was starting again, and I wanted to express clearing up any old debts and and some kind of ritual I think would be good

S: It did occur to me some time ago that we could have a sort of *homa*(?) at the end, that is to say a sort of fire ceremony, or if you like even a bonfire, and people could write - at the end of a year - these are just again thoughts aloud - and everybody could write down on a piece of paper whatever he felt he'd done amiss during the preceding year (*some laughter*). Maybe you could provide forms that you could just fill up. And you could write out confessions of all the really wretched and despicable things you'd done, and then you'd just screw it all up and just at a certain point in the ceremony you'd throw it all into the fire, with feelings of confession and putting it behind you, it's done with now.

_____ : I feel it's ceremony,

S: Well, some people might not have anything to put in, they'd just sail past with virtuous expressions and a blank piece of paper. Others would drag in a large folio volume. Or others would feel like jumping in the (*laughter throughout.*)

_____ :

S: No, that's not what I have in mind Devaraja! I think that had better be that.

_____ (*Tea break*)

S: Dharma questions. There are a few on the table, not too many. One has been carefully put at the bottom, so I'm going to see what it says. [Laughter] Some are more general but some are a little bit technical. I think I'll deal with the one that came in first.

"According to modern science, as far as I have understood, there is life on this earth because there is will to live, become and reproduce. Because of grasping and clinging there is life. Buddhist practices aim at stopping the Wheel of Life and so in a way life itself. I find this hard to communicate to non-Buddhists. Depressed people might be attracted, ecologists and so-called healthy people might turn their backs."

I think what one has to take up here is 'Buddhist practices aim at stopping the Wheel of Life and so in a way life itself.' This is true, of course, but it's only half the truth. In other words, it's only half the teaching about conditionality. Certainly stop the Wheel of Life, but what about that Spiral? And I think that when one is presenting Buddhism not just to modern people but I'd say really to anybody in principle, don't speak so much in terms of stopping the

Wheel of Life so much as in terms of developing the successive stages of the Spiral. Though it's true that in the East this has not been done, especially, say, in Theravada circles, there is this teaching about the Spiral, the progressive path, very definitely there in the scriptures, but it hasn't been made sufficient use of; and this is one of the things that we've been talking about quite a lot from time to time. If necessary, drop all reference to the Wheel and stopping the Wheel, just speak in terms of developing to a further and higher stage of experience and consciousness here and now. And if you give the complete Buddhist teaching, give the Wheel of Life side by side with the Spiral.

So don't talk simply in terms of stopping life, but of developing life to higher and higher levels. This would seem to be not only a more acceptable approach but one which is at the same time more in accordance with Buddhist tradition. I think this is the important point to emphasise: it's not just some adaptation of Buddhism to satisfy the Western mind, it is getting back to real Buddhism itself, where this progressive, positive Spiral teaching very definitely is found - but rather lost sight of in some Buddhist circles in the East.

_____ : It's not a question of stopping life, anyway. I knowthe question of developing.

S: Well, yes, and there is the question of stopping the Wheel.

_____ : Yes, stopping the Wheel, but does that mean something else?

S: Well, what is life? This raises quite an important question, because in oriental philosophy, in Eastern philosophy, in Indian philosophy, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, there's no word for life, in the English sense. I think this is quite interesting, and it draws attention to the fact that our thinking is very much conditioned by the language that we use. 'Life' in English is a beautifully ambiguous word. There's no such word in Sanskrit or Pali at all as 'life'. You've got *jivitendriya*(?) which is sort of life-faculty in a very limited sense. You've got *prakriti*, which is nature. But you haven't got 'life' with a capital L as it were. We talked about this, quite a number of bhikkhu friends of mine and myself, in the East, in India, some years ago, in connection with Mr. Christmas Humphreys's statement that 'All life is one'. You can't translate that into Pali or Sanskrit. It represents an entirely different way of looking at things, an entirely different mode of thinking and expression.

So one could say, therefore, to speak in terms of 'Buddhist practice aims at stopping the Wheel of Life' - stopping life - this isn't really quite correct. The Wheel of Life, as we translate it, is the *bhavacakra*, the Wheel of Becoming. One could say, if one wanted to use the word 'life', that there are two kinds of life: a life which is cyclical, and a life which is spiral and progressive; and you want to get away from the cyclical and reactive kind of life into the spiral and progressive and creative kind of life; you could say that. But if you made the blanket statement that Buddhism aims at stopping life, your Western listener won't just think in terms of Wheel of Life, reactive life, he'll think that it includes a denial of creative life too. That is a very serious misunderstanding.

_____ :

Siddhiratna: Does it not also involve some deterministic view - that if you stop the Wheel of Life, and if you took that to its logical conclusion, you get

S: That's right, yes; that is the ideal state of affairs - when everything in the lower form of existence attains a higher form of existence. But even then, even in traditional Buddhist terms, there isn't just a sort of annihilation; there is the progressive attainment of higher and higher levels, as it were by everybody.

Siddhiratna: It doesn't stop there, in fact, it goes on.

S: It goes on. Except that, of course, Buddhism does regard evolution, if you like, and human development, as going on to levels of consciousness and even existence which don't come within the scope of modern science. One has to accept that.

Ananda: the logical conclusion of the cessation of grasping and ignorance and so on is the annihilation of biological life as we know it, but not of spiritual life.

S: Yes, one could say that. For instance, some people have put it in this rather extreme form of supposing everybody became so highly developed that there was no reproduction of the species; everything would die out. Well, no, not at all, because what is behind that reproduction of the species? Energy. And if the species are no longer reproduced, it doesn't mean that the energy dies out; the energy has assumed a higher and subtler form, and it's operating and producing on that higher level.

_____ : wouldn't necessarily produce a physical form.

S: No.

_____ : energy

S: Yes, you could put it in that way. You just can't block it, you lead it to higher and higher levels. But Buddhism does recognise levels which are not scientifically recognised, so science, or someone looking at things from a purely scientific point of view, would see energy just disappearing as it were into the void, because it was not finding any outlet on the level of sexual desire, whereas the Buddhist would see it breaking through into a higher level and finding its expression there.

_____ :

S: Well, no, it can go lower too. It can only go higher once it passes the Point of No Return.

_____ : idea that the In other words, Are you now saying that you don't exist ?

S: Well, we *are* human. This is our starting point, and luckily it's a good one.

_____ : Yes, but if we take the universe manifest then what would be the basis for the development?

S: According to Buddhism there are formed beings. What Buddhism calls the gods, the *devas*, the divine beings and so on, a whole hierarchy of them up which the former human being can climb as it were and evolve.

_____ :

S: Not necessarily.

_____ : hasn't yet reached the Absolute?

S: It hasn't reached the Absolute. It's only retarded - according to traditional Buddhist teaching - if when you're reborn on this higher level the rebirth has been due to the accumulation of good actions and merits, without too much of wisdom and understanding.

But if there has been wisdom and understanding too, then in that higher state there will be a recollection of the purpose of the whole process, and so you'll press on instead of just enjoying the higher state itself. You find this sometimes with some human beings; some just enjoy the human state because it's happy and healthy, and don't think of going further; but others not only enjoy the human state but realise that the human state is meant as it were to lead to something higher. But no doubt on the *deva* level the danger of settling down and enjoying is greater, just because the enjoyment itself is greater. And certain difficulties that attend human existence are not found there.

But if during one's human state one did develop a very definite aspiration, a very conscious aspiration, then that would persist even during the birth on that higher heavenly level.

_____ : If it *deva* level is that a necessary step, or -

S: No, it isn't a necessary step, because a human being in this life itself can gain Enlightenment, that bypasses all the *deva* states. You didn't bypass them, you recapitulate them in meditation. The *dhyana* states are *deva* states. But if you die in a *dhyana* state, you're reborn in a *deva* state; it's corresponding. So while you're meditating, you're a *deva*; if you're in a high state of meditation, you are a *deva*.

_____ : I think this is another thing - this business between seeing the *devas* as outside, separately existing beings, and seeing them as another state or level of your own consciousness.

S: they're both.

_____ : At the same time?

S: Yes. Not in the same sense. For instance, suppose you experience a higher state of meditation, you become a *deva*, but other people see you as an objectively existing being, not just as something within their own minds. The *devas* exist both subjectively and objectively; it's not just subjectively.

_____ : In that case, there's still a connection with the *deva* with physical form, meditation without physical form, -

S: Ah, without *gross* physical form. The position of Buddhist teaching is that *devas*, the lower *devas* at least, have subtle physical forms; those on higher levels have forms made out of light, and so on.

Mangala:the Buddha, after attaining Enlightenment - well, after he died - How would that manifest?

S: (*noise*) One could say that in the case of a Buddha there's no distinguishing between the energy itself and the manifestation. The form is void and the voidness is form. That distinction has been transcended. But in the case of any conditioned form there is a distinction of the energy and the form. The more subtle the energy, the more subtle the form. And in the case of human beings, there's a gross physical body and a comparatively gross energy, comparatively gross consciousness. In the case of *devas*, there's a comparatively fine consciousness and a comparatively fine body. And in the case of the Buddha, there's the finest of all bodies and the finest of all consciousnesses, and the two coincide. One could put it like that. So it's a sort of progressive series, and this is the point that we started from: not to speak in terms of the annihilation of life or destruction of life, but the leading of life to higher and higher levels. If with the newcomer or inquirer you get into discussions about what *devas* actually are, and whether they're objective or subjective, you'll get into great

difficulties.

It's therefore best, I think, just to stick firmly with the general idea of human growth and development, taking that as far as you possibly can; and development and growth through meditation and with the help of an improved environment, and so on. But not to give people the impression that Buddhist practice is just a destruction of life. You could say, yes, a destruction of unskilful mental states, because it's the unskilful mental states that make the wheel go round; but it does consist in the development and cultivation of the skilful states. So one must have this positive emphasis throughout; I think this is absolutely important.

Unfortunately, due to quite a lot of literature - much of it emanating from south-east Asia and some from more scholarly Western sources - the idea has got around that Buddhism is very negative, and Buddhism is very life-denying. Well, you can't really say that Buddhism is life-denying or life-affirming, because this blanket term 'life' doesn't correspond to anything in Pali or Sanskrit. You have to break it up into the skilful mental states and the unskilful mental states, and the Transcendental states. So Buddhism says get rid of the unskilful mental states, develop the skilful mental states, and use those as a basis for the experience of Transcendental states, states which are even higher than skilful. I think we have to be very careful how we use this word 'life' in discussion with the public(?).

Sanghamitta: Does that form of energy from the Buddha passing over - does it help sentient beings?

S: Well, this is - one can't really say. You can speak of it as though it was, but at the same time you can't reify it or think of it as entities still there and functioning, like a sort of god. This is why the Buddha said that with regard to the Tathagata and his fate after death, it's quite inept to say either that he exists, or that he does not exist, or both or neither. Thought absolutely fails here. You can certainly reflect on it and meditate upon it, and get some glimpse into what that really means; but you can't say that the Buddha goes on living after death and still helps people. At the same time, you can't say that the Buddha is completely extinct and no longer exists; you can't say that, either. It's very baffling for the mind, but that is the position.

Sanghamitta: I was thinking that - there's no Buddha if we think in a mundane mind, but energy

S: Well, you can put it this way, that the Buddha is beyond space and beyond time, so he's no more 2500 years ago than he is now, as Buddha. He is equally here as he was there, equally now as he was then. The Buddha as Buddha is in no closer connection with the India of 500 BC than he is with the England of so many hundred or thousand years later. There's no question of 'going on', because the Buddha is beyond time. The Buddha is sort of equidistant from all points in time.

_____ : Is that the only way the Buddha can become Buddha? (?)

S: We've had all that before! But what emerges from this question, and what I've said and all the discussion is: we must have a positive emphasis in projecting Buddhism. And if someone has read a bit about Buddhism and asks you about the Wheel of Life and stopping the Wheel of Life, say yes; the Wheel of Life, broadly speaking, means all our unskilful thoughts. We want to stop those. But that's only half the truth of Buddhism; we also have to develop our skilful thoughts and enable them to grow, and this may well take the whole human race onto a plane higher than that recognised by science, beyond the sphere of biology as we at present know it.

_____ : I find this very, very much the best way of talking about Buddhism

higher evolution, the triangle - they go so well together. You don't have to just forget about the Wheel of Life and talk about developing levels of consciousness.

S: Sometimes I wonder myself to what extent the Buddha spoke in terms of the Wheel of Life simply because that was a common mode of Indian thinking at the time. His actual teaching was about the Path and developing higher and higher levels of consciousness and being; but it sometimes seems clear that he used this machinery, as it were, of the Wheel and karma and rebirth to make some of his points because that was part of the belief and culture of those times, but it isn't part of our belief and culture. So I think we can very well sometimes it in terms of further development, further growth, further evolution, without bringing in too much about the Wheel of Life in that particular traditional sense.

But even if people already accept the Wheel of Life, even then make it clear that that represents only half of the truth. The other half is the truth of the Path and the Spiral and the creative mind, and so on. But you must get across a positive emphasis, make people feel that Buddhism is going to help them to grow, not that Buddhism is going to blast them, as it were, or shatter them to bits; or deny everything that they are interested in.

_____ :

S: Well, it doesn't deny it; it recognises it and gently - or firmly - coaxes you to raise the interest to a higher and higher level. If you're interested in Sakyan maidens, Buddhism leads you to contemplate the heavenly nymphs, and once you get tired of *them*, to contemplate Nirvana.

_____ : something other than scientific objectively

S: Traditional Buddhism would say yes.

_____ : What would you say?

S: I'd say yes. [Laughter] I don't have any personal doubt at all. it seems quite natural and quite reasonable, anyway. (*Voices.*) Down in Cornwall you ought to be able to make your own explorations and at least see the odd pyxie! [Laughter]

_____ :

S: Start with pixies and work your way up! (*Roar of laughter.*) I think also it's quite good to keep in touch with fringe scientific explorations, such as those which are mentioned in that book which everybody was reading a few months ago and which probably everyone has forgotten now.

_____ : *Supernature.*

S: *Supernature.* There was another one, too, what was that? (*Voice.*) *The Secret Life of Plants.* Read some things of this sort. It will certainly open up wider perspectives of this kind from a rather scientific point of view, but disclosing things that are of very definite interest to traditional Buddhism.

Sanghamitta: Is it not possible, Bhante, that - pixies and things - people do claim to see them?

S: Well, there are books with photographs of them in.

Sanghamitta: Yes, I know - I've seen them, but one doesn't know just how factual these

things are, or whether Isn't it possible that another form of man, giants, smaller, but we cannot see them around us?

S: There seems nothing unreasonable in that. Whether actually there are such beings, that's another matter, to be verified in various ways. But there's nothing irrational in the assumption, nothing self-contradictory.

_____ : There must be some connection with geography,

_____ : explanation - that in fact they - I read that book and I wondered why and the explanation was that there were these units of energy depending on your conditioning Yes, because your frame of reference is diminishing in terms of your

S: Well, scientists do say that you can look at certain physical phenomena either in terms of waves or in terms of corpuscles. So if you can look at the light in one way or the other, either as waves or as corpuscles, can't you see beings also in the same way - in alternative ways, both of which, paradoxically, are true?

Ananda: corpuscular theory is different from the wave theory.

S: said - that a tiny pyxie is really different from a cauliflower(?)

Sanghamitta: I was thinking week about children who have schoolmates. at least, that children actually do, and that parents as they develop.

S: I think they probably are in contact with forces which adults cannot perceive, and that they do perceive them in a personalised way. I think we have to beware of saying that they perceive *persons* - it's as though they personalise what they experience, probably more -

Ananda: misunderstanding of newcomers things like devas. They think: 'Does a deva exist, objectively?' should really ask, '..... '

S: Don't forget we must apply the same thing to human experience, human beings. We experience one another as persons, but we are as it were - I won't say 'just', I don't want to be reductive - but we are essentially energy. It is not that human beings are persons but *devas* are not; we are all in exactly the same boat. They are ...personalities, different kinds of personalities or, they are essentially energy, so are we.

_____ :

S: I don't know, I've not come across this before. Though I do know some people see other human beings as a bit diabolical; that's another - I think sometimes you have got a definite insight into human nature. You might at times see people as very *preta*-like, you're very conscious of their greed and their craving; or as very *asura*-like, when you're conscious of their intensely competitive behaviour and so on. And perhaps they *are* being *asura*-like or pyxie-like or elflike, and so on. And you actually maybe have a good visual imagination, and you see people as they are in themselves being.

Sanghamitta: getting rid of demons, you know, there've been one or two outstanding cases recently of - I forget what the name is

S: Exorcists.

Sanghamitta: Yes, but another group that they belong to. And is this how they see the evil in them, that they have a thing about cast out demons, because they see them in this way?

S: Possibly they may as it were be personalising - I don't know, I am just

_____ : What's people who have had experiences of this kind?

S: The only danger I can think of is a certain conflict when other people tell them that they don't really see anything, or that it's all a delusion, or that they ought not to be doing this; and they have to suppress or even deny their own experience. This is the only danger I can think of.

Ananda: those kind of experiences are somewhat alluring and intoxicating

S: Well, all experience is, in a way. When you meet human beings, it can be alluring and intoxicating. I think it's best to just treat it in a matter-of-fact way if you do see other things, that you see them just like you see human beings, sort of 'So what?' - you've got an extra eye or an extra ear and so on. And if, say, small children say that they see things or talk to people or you see children talking to what seem to be invisible beings, well, just treat it in a very matter-of-fact way; don't hasten to tell the child it's all nonsense and you're not really seeing and hearing anything. I think most children as it were sort of grow out of it anyway, so there's no need therefore to bother much.

_____ : A bit like dreams, the energies representing them are very, very real.

S: It has been said by some psychologists that primitive human beings, like children, externalise and personalise in this way rather easily, and are rather prone as it were to, for want of a better term, see spirits and so on.

_____ : children and fairies, particularly

S: In a way, yes. But anyway, let's come back to the actual question and the emphasis which I feel we always should give - that is a positive and progressive and creative and expansive emphasis. I think this is very important.

_____ : nature as well the environment..... see the environment as a positive thing

S: Yes. Well, that's good, we just have to lead them into higher levels of positivity within their own minds, and especially with the help of meditation. Say, it's really good that you've got so far; but there is a higher possibility, we believe, which can be reached through meditation and what we call the higher evolution or the spiritual path.

Dharmapala: There is a tendency now to see these elemental beings or *devas* as in some way higher levels of beings than humans, and I think there would be a strong encouragement to see them in that way, to stay with it as it were, develop it.

S: I'm not so sure about that, because there are *devas* and *devas*, as it were. just as it were nature spirits, quite nice to be with but not particularly evolved as it were. More like playing with pets - dogs and rabbits and so on. Also there is this whole question of socialisation; you don't want the child to be a misfit in society. You don't want them to become so familiar with *devas* that they become alienated from human beings, because this would give rise to a fresh set of problems.

Anyway, let's go on.

Recently a friend died suddenly and unexpectedly over a period of a week. If we find ourselves in such a position, i.e. feeling close to death, are there any short-term practices to be recommended?

Hm - well, yes and no. The best safeguard is, of course, your long-term practice, which will be continuing its momentum even if you do realise that you are going to die within a few days, and you'll just then give it an extra momentum, due to the urgency of the situation. But if you've neglected your practice and you find then that you've only got a few more days to go, you're in quite a difficult position. I don't think there's very much you can do for yourself. I think in that situation the best thing you can do is to call round to your spiritual friends and ask them either to meditate with you or to talk to you or do some chanting, and so on.

_____ :

S: Someone who hasn't been keeping up his practice very well and can't - presumably, when you find yourself near death you want to intensify your practice, so as to ensure a good rebirth or at least some definite progress on the path here and now. But you won't be able to intensify it, usually, if you haven't been practising well already. So at that moment you won't be able to fall back on your own resources unless you're a quite exceptional person; and therefore you will need to call around you spiritual friends who can give you help and moral and spiritual support at that time, and help you to get up a bit of momentum and get into perhaps your practice if that is possible. But the best and wisest thing is to keep up one's whole spiritual practice and way of life during your life when you're healthy.

Confucius is supposed to have been asked, when he was near death, what prayers he was going to say now that he was near to death, and he said, 'I've been praying for a long time.' So that's really the only solution - not to leave it until too late, and also you never know. We don't want to be morbid, but we are reminded sometimes that we never know when we're going to be called away, or pop off, or run under that proverbial bus. So the best thing is just to keep up not just our meditation practice but our whole spiritual life.

_____ :

S: I think for a person in that situation, when it's likely to drag on, if they haven't got spiritual friends easily available, one of the best things would be tapes; tapes not only of lectures and talks but chanting. This could certainly have a very positive effect on the mind of the person lying there and just listening, and taking it in.

_____ : I was thinking of the yesterday, after the session we had where people Pujas

S: I think it would be, very much so.

_____ :

S: Well, you can certainly keep that friend in your mind and send positive thoughts to them, and you can go and see them. And you can be positive while you're with them; not ignore the fact that they are ill and approaching death, - recognise that, even talk about it. My guess is, without having had too much experience in this field, that some people who know that they are dying would be quite pleased and relieved to be able to talk about it with someone, whereas usually the attitude is 'Hush-hush, don't tell them, don't talk about it, let's pretend they're going to get better' kind of thing. But I think some certainly more sensible people would much prefer to be able to talk about it with a friend, but in a positive way. And I am sure some dying people feel quite uncomfortable having to keep up this pretence and seeing other people keeping up this pretence that they're going to get better, and it's not so bad - but

they know they are dying. I think it would be better if they were able to talk about it.

So one could help in that way, by allowing them to talk about it if they wanted to.

Sanghamitta: where they're in a confused state and not with you - is there any point in being with someone like that?

S: Well, I think yes, because when they're in a confused state it may be due to various reasons: it may be due to malfunctioning of the organism because they are dying, but -

Sanghamitta: But I mean too ill to speak to you -

S: They may be mentally quite clear. I think this is something one must understand: that shortly before physical death there is a sort of derangement of the organism and the brain, so that the mind may be quite clear and conscious and mindful, even, but is not able to function through the body properly and through the brain, so the person may not be able to speak or may not be able to control his or her own movements, but the mind may be quite clear, and they may well be able to hear and understand what you are saying. The fact that they're not as it were in control, or they seem confused, shouldn't necessarily be taken to mean that they themselves in their inner being are in a state of confusion and lack of clarity. It may be - well, in most cases is - the beginnings of the breakdown of the physical organism, that it isn't working properly and the mind, for want of a better term, is no longer able to function through it as before, when the mind itself may be all right.

Sanghamitta: Even if they're not conscious, ?

S: Even if they're not conscious. Or appear to be. You say that they're not conscious because you don't get a response, but they may be conscious.

_____ : that you're quite likely to yourself (*Voices.*)

Ananda: The mind continues almost increasingly independently of the physical organism. In a way the mind isn't affected, one could say, until the moment of death, but becomes increasingly estranged from the

S: Yes, that is a good way of putting it, and I think one should be very careful not to assume that someone is mentally confused when it's simply the progressive estrangement, as Ananda calls it, of the mind from the body.

_____ : If you're with someone who is dying, how important is it to encourage that person to remain awake and alert?

S: I think it's very important. If there seems to be no response - this is part of the significance or function of the Book of the Dead - one can just as it were say: 'It's all right, this is a quite natural process. We're all with you mentally. We're saying goodbye to you. Just let go. Everything is all right. Remember the Buddha, remember the Dharma, remember the Sangha. Remember your practice, remember your meditation experience. Just surrender yourself to the Buddha.' Just say very quiet things like that.

(end of side)

Tape 14, side 1

_____ : I guess if that person, a friend of yours, say was a Christian, one would speak in terms of their own - symbolically, those things that had meaning for them.

S: I don't know. I think if someone was definitely a Christian they ought to have another Christian with them. One might not be able to speak in those terms with complete sincerity. You might feel it was a language that you're using a bit mechanically, and you couldn't really mean it. You should say what you mean. You can't just substitute Jesus for Buddha, because the person happens to be a Christian. They wouldn't feel it, it would be dishonesty. But if you are in that sort of situation and know that person is a Christian and you're not, just as it were speak in impersonal terms: be peaceful, let yourself be carried away into the peace; don't worry, just be clear in your own mind. Think of your own value(?), think of your own previous good life. Put it in that way.

Sanghamitta: I feel rather badly about that. Had I been so clear on that when died, I could have done that; but one felt that one was - (but she?) couldn't express it, would rather you went away and left her quietly alone.

S: Sometimes you feel that. You must be also a bit sensitive to what the dying or apparently dead person feels. You may well feel, if you are very quiet and near someone, that they would rather you went away, that they want to be on their own. You may feel that. If you feel that, if you pick that up, well, quietly go away. Sometimes you can feel, after someone's death, how they are, and one must act accordingly. But if one is with someone who is dying or apparently dying, or even apparently dead, one has to be a bit sensitive and a bit receptive to what is going on.

Vajradaka: There's a little book published by the Pali Publication Society in Colombo. I think it's called Tribute to Francis, about the last days of Francis just before he died. He had cancer, and it's very inspiring indeed, and it has quite a lot of Francis's own attitudes towards his death and preparation for his death. It's really worth reading.

S: There's also Philip Kapleau's little book, THE WHEEL OF DEATH, which is quite useful in a general way. I believe we stock that in the bookshop, or we have done.

Bodhisri: We thought that metta bhavana dying She was lying in bed and we did the METTA BHAVANA She was very

S: That would certainly be very helpful, yes. If the person is receptive to meditation, even if they haven't done it before, you do something like this and they do it, or describe the stages aloud and let them join in, if they're able to do that - that is certainly very good indeed.

Sanghamitta: In the West, Bhante, they partly for this reason What about the East where they have to dispose of the body?

S: That is rather unfortunate, I think. The usual practice in this country now is that no one is cremated or buried until they have been dead a week. This is for purely practical reasons in connection with booking time at the crematorium. But it is a good thing, in fact. You're always a week in the mortuary(?).

_____ : embalmed

S: Not a proper embalming, just a few days.

Vajradaka: I think that might be true in London, Bhante, where London crematoria are a bit rushed, busy, but outside of London it doesn't seem to be true. In Glasgow it's about three days.

Nagabodhi: Something that causes confusion to me and I think other people have questioned is the idea that in fact what counts is the thoughts at the moment of death,

irrespective of what kind of a life one might have led beforehand, if one's thought at the moment of death is positive or skilful - that is what counts.

S: What do you mean by counts?

Nagabodhi: Er - that is what would in fact the thought that would find expression

S: Yes, that is true. The last thought is very important, as that can determine the nature of the rebirth - or that factor takes precedence in determining it. Not that the karma of your whole previous way of life will not take effect; it will take effect subsequently. But if there is a very powerful last thought, this will have an immediate effect, and the karma of your whole way of life will catch up afterwards. But meanwhile, if you've had a good last thought and you have a good rebirth, then even if karma catches up with you afterwards you're in a better position to deal with it. So the last thought is quite important, even if you've led a pretty awful life, it's still very important to generate that last thought if you possibly can.

Nagabodhi: Do the METTA BHAVANA

S: Yes, right. Supposing the woman that Bodhisri mentioned had been very angry and quarrelsome, the fact that she died in a state of METTA BHAVANA would as it were waft her into quite pleasant and good positive surroundings. Later on, she has, under the law of karma, to experience the results of her bad temper, but she would have started off in a more advantageous position, and be therefore better able to deal with all situations.

_____ : In the Japanese and Chinese Avalokitesvara descending from above to take you away

S: Right. Not to take you, to welcome you into the Pure Land. So that you hardly knew it, you're lying in bed and looking at this picture, you closed your eyes and you opened them and you saw Avalokitesvara, so eventually you wouldn't know whether you were looking at the picture or whether you were seeing Avalokitesvara and you really had died - that was the idea. It would ease the transition.

Lokamitra: Something that - this may not happen yet but some day some of us are going to die - (LAUGHTER)

S: We're all going to die.

Lokamitra: I would hate to be cremated in one of those crematoria -

_____ : Oh gawd, don't

Lokamitra: - or embalmed in one of those horrible resting houses. Maybe we could consider our own funeral -

_____ : This is a point I was trying to the other day, I really feel very strongly on this. And I was wondering if there is anything you could produce in this direction, like - perhaps the legal points could be really clarified before we -

S: You're not permitted to dispose of a dead body indiscriminately in England, or I think now generally in the whole so-called civilised world. Even in India, there are restrictions. There are certain areas only, recognised burning and burial grounds, where dead bodies can be disposed of. We had this difficulty in Sarnath in the course of my last visit, when the Abbot of Sarnath died, and we decided not to cremate him in the official cremation ground. We decided to take him to the top of a hill near Sarnath and cremate him. We could not get

permission for this from the local health authorities, so we did it by force, I'm afraid. But we collected such a huge crowd of people that the police, though they were present, didn't interfere. But the monk who was effectively the was interviewed by the police afterwards, and he said, 'We had no choice. There was such a huge crowd of people, and they just insisted. If we had refused there would have been a riot, so we just did it that way.' (LAUGHTER.) So the police accepted that explanation. But it was illegal, you see.

So we have, presumably, to develop some legal way of doing this. But we have obviously first to investigate the present position. There might be a loophole in the law.

_____ : It would be good if we could have the body for, what, seven days

S: Well, provided you knew how to deal with it. Because even after three days the body is quite unpleasant.

Sanghamitta: approve more of cremation, would you, than burial?

S: Not necessarily. I think that ecology comes into it here. Cremation is traditional among Buddhists, but there's nothing in Buddhism itself, in the Dharma, in the teaching, to say that cremation is better than burial. So there's no Buddhist rule about it. It's entirely according to local custom, culture, convenience and so on.

Sanghamitta: But at least you don't pollute the air - the atmosphere if they're cremated.

S: You don't pollute the atmosphere if you're buried, do you? (VOICES.)

Sanghamitta: No, but -

S: I think the argument against burial nowadays is the shortage of land.

Nagabodhi: I was interested to know - this is one of the areas I was asked to follow up, and I didn't really do anything about it - I think before I start I'd like to know exactly what people have in mind as an alternative, because I'd like to know what people want to know, to find out whether it's possible or not. Like Lokamitra, for example, if you have a horror of the conventional ways, if you'd like to say why you have that

Lokamitra: Well, anyone else.

Nagabodhi: Well, can you say what you'd like?

Lokamitra: I'd like to see bodies that have to go through that treated in a more respectful manner, and more reverence should be paid to them. To me, it doesn't really matter as long as the reverence can be there and that we can perhaps do what we want, as an Order.

Nagabodhi: Well, for that we could probably establish our own company of undertakers, the pre-cremation (VOICES, LAUGHTER, INAUDIBLE DISCUSSION.) maybe considering our next town to move to a Centre start an undertakers (CHAT.)

Sanghamitta: The law allows at least to use that period of time because lying in the chapel of rest they might allow us as Buddhists -

S: I don't know what

Lokamitra: We want even more than that, though. If we're going to have a cremation, then we should be able to have it ourselves, with no one else present, so that

S: You can have it with nobody else present. For instance, when you use the ordinary crematorium, the place is placed completely at your disposal. Were you under any other impression about that?

Lokamitra: Well, no, I wasn't really the surroundings was what I (VOICES PROTESTING.)

S: They usually are very co-operative. If you want to take the cross off the altar and put a Buddha image, no one ever bothers about that. You can do anything you like. The only difficulty is, you're very pressed for time, especially in the London area. You usually get just 25 minutes flat, or sometimes they say 'Do you mind, could you make it 20 minutes? There are so many people waiting.'

_____ : But you don't actually see the burning, do you?

S: No. What happens is that the coffin - I'd better describe this, because I think most people don't know - what happens is that when someone dies, the proper authorities are notified, and then the body is removed by the undertaker, and he looks after it for a certain number of days until it's cremated or buried. And then on the day appointed for the cremation, the undertaker has the body ready in a coffin, and I believe there is a casket inside the coffin. So the undertaker drives from his establishment with the coffin, and he calls then at the house of the people who want to accompany the coffin. And you arrange the number of cars beforehand. So he picks you up on the way, and then you all drive in procession - that is you, with the coffin - to the cremation place, to the crematorium. And other friends are waiting there. And then you have a priest of your denomination - most crematoria have a list of priests of different denominations: if you can't find one or don't have one of your own, they will provide one of any denomination. There's a standard fee of two guineas for (it was two guineas when I last received it) - all undertakers give this.....

So then what happens is - there's usually two or three hearses waiting, so you're just received by the person in charge, you've got to sign in, and the priest has to sign in. And then they usually keep you waiting in a little vestibule. It's all very well organised, everything goes very smoothly. As the other cremation party goes out one door, you come in the other - there is just an INSTANT when the place is empty, so that you're not actually entering as they're leaving, but it's empty when you enter, and the four bearers with the coffin, supplied by the undertaker, carry it in. And then it's placed at the end of the chapel in front of the altar. And there are various arrangements: some have doors behind which it goes at the crucial moment; others have curtains coming round, and then it sinks down or goes forward. There are various methods. So what happens is, once the coffin has been placed in position, everybody leaves except the mourners and the priest officiating; they all go away, you're left entirely to yourself, there's nobody else - none of the undertaker's people and none of the crematorium officials.

So then you conduct your service, you can do exactly as you please. And then when you want the body actually disposed of, in some crematoria there's a little button on the priest's desk; he presses it, and the door opens and it slides through, or the curtains come rustling round, and it sinks - something like that. In some older ones, you have to catch the eye of a man who's looking through a little window up there, you give him a signal, and he pulls a lever, and it happens. The priest has to just check up about these things beforehand. So that is how it is done.

Sanghamitta: Are they burned immediately then, or is it the old story about there have to be

so many waiting?

S: To the best of my knowledge, it's immediately, but I've not yet been able to find out whether the undertaker salvages the coffin or not. Some reports say definitely the undertaker salvages the coffin and uses it over and over again, and every time it's paid for. The undertakers themselves strongly deny this, and say that every coffin is actually burnt, but only the fittings are removed - the brass fittings or silver fittings or whatever.

_____ : strongly pointed out that the fittings are plastic, and burned and so on.

_____ : The trouble is they don't actually burn -

S: Plastic wouldn't burn.

Sanghamitta: Some people want the ashes to be scattered.

S: That is possible. They do say that it's very doubtful whether actually your ashes - they will provide, by request, some ashes, there may be some of yours -

Sanghamitta: big personlittle ... or a big one!

S: You can't be absolutely certain. Maybe Mangala's uncle could provide authentic information.

Mangala: My uncle's actually dead (LAUGHTER. VOICES.)

S: You couldn't inherit the business, could you? (VOICES.)

Padmapani: Sometimes the ashes are scattered over the ground, and sometimes they're buried in a plot, and a rose tree put over it.

S: Or they can be given to you in a little vase or something like that.

_____ : Usually the coffins are supposed to be burned and all the metal stuff removed and the plastic has to be burned

S: But when there is a burial, obviously everything is buried - the coffin

Sanghamitta: Then there's a book of remembrance, if you pay a little extra they can be put in the book of remembrance -

S: There are all sorts of variations, there's

_____ : We ought to start a campaign to have cremations on fires, without coffins.

Lokamitra: I think you've got to find out the exact situation: what the law is about what has to be done and who can do it. And then find out exactly what we want to do.

S: Could someone gather this information?

_____ : Also what happens to the body when

S: Well, then you'd have what is called a pauper's funeral. Each crematorium has got a full-

time Church of England clergyman who officiates and performs a service for every corpse that is disposed of, even if there are no relations or anybody present; the state looks after that.

_____ : If you left your body to a hospital then you wouldn't have

Lokamitra: No, if you left your body for the use of a hospital -

S: Oh then, obviously, yes; there might be a memorial service if friends or relations wanted.
(VOICES.)

Sanghamitta: transplanting - taking parts

S: I hadn't thought about that, I must say.

Sanghamitta: Well, actually, does this have to be an accident - it has to be done before the body's cold, so I suppose in a sense it would not be right, would it?

S: I'd like to give it further thought, just collect information.

_____ : say I don't mind somewhere else,

S: Who would like to collect information - or who COULD collect information?

Mangala: I probably could.

S: Right. You have to check whether the legal requirements there are the same as in this country. They probably are, more or less.

Lokamitra: So we want three things: we want to find out what the existing legislation is now; whether or not we as Buddhists can perform our own - or do something ourselves; and then we have to -

S: No, excuse me, do what ourselves? We can certainly perform the service ourselves, there's no difficulty about that.

Lokamitra: do the whole thing ourselves. We just want

_____ : situation is, legal requirements

_____ : That would be quite good in association with other religious groups, wouldn't it?

_____ : They might not want might not want to be

S: I think this is by arrangement with the undertaker. They behave like this because this is what is generally wanted. I've noticed myself that the undertaker's men, the four men carrying the [coffin] have got really solemn expressions, but once it's all over, or even in between, they're just laughing and joking among themselves.

Sanghamitta:

S: I think if you had a word with the undertaker and said, 'Our faith does not think that death is something gloomy, and could your men not be dressed in black, could they be dressed

normally - and so on' - I think the undertaker would probably be quite co-operative. It's simply that they are supplying the existing demand.

_____ :

S: I don't know. I'm not sure about that. (VOICES.) There was - for instance, when we Buddhistically buried Violet Wragge at Brighton, her husband survived her, and two daughters and two sons-in-law, and the sons-in-law turned up for the funeral in dark suits, in black suits in fact; and Carl Wragge sent them back home to change. He said, 'We don't want any mourning here. We don't believe in all that.' And it was his own wife that had died. He sent them back to change into ordinary suits, he wouldn't have mourning. And on the way to the graveyard, he and everybody else were quite happy and laughing and talking - she had been dead a week; and he was in a very positive mood indeed. The undertaker's men looked a bit shocked. I think they were a bit surprised. But people will gradually get used to this - that there doesn't have to be artificial gloom or morbid melancholy in connection with a funeral.

_____ :on that occasion?

S: As far as I remember, it was the only so I'm not sure. Anyway, on that cheerful note, let's have our coffee.

_____ (BREAK)

S: All right. A second question from the same person who asked about death.

I've had the experience of another YIDAM appearing in my meditation. Should I change or modify my practice in any way, in the light of this? The uninvited deity happens to be the wrathful aspect of my own yidam.

This is quite a common occurrence, and there is a standard way of dealing with it, and that is that you produce yourself into (that is a technical term) your own, or your original own deity, and you meditate upon the one who appears in front of you. Supposing, for instance, your own proper practice is that of Manjusri and you're supposed to be visualising Manjusri out there; but supposing, say, Tara keeps coming instead. All right, just think 'I am Manjusri, and as Manjusri I'm going to meditate upon Tara.' In that way, justice is done to both sides - that is to say, the objective and the subjective. This raises this very important question of what is called in the Tantric tradition the self-generation and the generation in front. This is something that I'll have to talk about at length, and even give a lecture on some future occasion; it's very, very important. But the self-generation stands really for the transformation of the subject, and the generation in front stands for the transformation of the object. And eventually, of course, there is neither subject nor object, but a quite different sort of experience, which could be regarded as symbolised by what is called the JNANASATTVA, the knowledge-being. But this brings us into quite deep waters. I don't think we can go into it now.

It does link up with another question, though, so I'm going to take that question next.

_____ : May I ask ? I do the Tara practice, and the practice feels but sometimes I Tara externally, Green Tara

S: There are Taras with swords. I'll have to check up the precise iconography, but then think that you are as it were the first Tara and that you are meditating on that Tara, because there must be not only the two sides the subject and object but, one, the two sides in the sense of the tradition handed down, and your own innate spontaneity and creativity. You can certainly

embroider upon your visualisation, as it were, and if they change, well, they change; this is your spontaneous practice. Not that you are trying to change something, but it does actually change - so let it change. This is good, because it shows that the spiritual vitality is there, and the spiritual creativity.

After all, how did all these scores of different kinds of Taras originate? If, for instance, you regularly see a Tara brandishing a sword, and supposing there isn't a Tara brandishing a sword traditionally - well, if you keep seeing her, there must be one. [Laughter] And if you had pupils you could teach them to practise in this way. In this way, in due course, another kind of Tara - one brandishing a sword - would be added to the list, at least within the tradition that has originated with you, or that you were connected with. This is how these particular forms all originated - within somebody's experience.

Bodhisri: In that context, I do the Manjusri practice, andChintamani's Manjusri. I found it very beautiful, but it wasn't but after that I feel as though Chintamani's rather than mine, and in fact that was part of the

S: When you say yours, what do you mean - your picture?

Bodhisri: Yes. And it was kind of - I found that quite disturbing, because it wasn't something that had arisen as spontaneously as the one that

S: But where did your visualisation itself come from? It must have come from some picture or source.

Bodhisri: Yes, I know.

S: This would seem to indicate a bit of uncertainty. You have to finally make up your mind which one you're going to try to visualise. In a way, it doesn't matter whether you get the idea from a picture or a verbal description, a literary description, but you have to make up your mind which one. In a way, it doesn't matter, but stick to one.

And this does bring us on to another question, which is the third of a series of three submitted by somebody, but I'll take the third one first because it links up with what we've been talking about.

Is there a difference between the responses that a Bodhisattva form evokes, both actually and potentially, and the Bodhisattva him/herself?

This introduces the very important distinction between what is called the SAMAYA-SATTVA and what is called the JNANA-SATTVA in Tantric tradition. Supposing you start visualising, and you start visualising 'out there', and you with practice see quite clearly and steadily an image or form of a particular Bodhisattva, and you're quite experienced, you see it clearly, steadily, whenever you wish, you're able to concentrate on it, etc. This is what is called the SAMAYA-SATTVA. SAMAYA is a very difficult term; it's usually translated as 'conventional'. SATTVA is 'being'. It's the 'conventional being'. This can be explained in two ways. It's Manjusri, or Tara, or whatever, visualised by you according to convention, according to tradition. Also it's the conventionally or relatively real form; it's the conditioned form. It's a product, in a way, a construction of your own mind. You've as it were taken a bit of your own mind, like a bit of elastic, and stretched it out and formed it into Manjusri or Tara or whatever 'out there' - you see what I mean? This is what is called the SAMAYA-SATTVA. Then you meditate and reflect upon this. But what happens next is that, inasmuch as this has come down from tradition, inasmuch as behind this form as originally described by some yogi, by some teacher, there is an actual Transcendental experience, there is an analogy between this conventional form that you've built up, that you visualise, and some aspect of Reality.

Because of that correspondence or affinity, that built-up form, that SAMAYA-SATTVA, becomes the vehicle for the manifestation and experience of an aspect of the Transcendental. This corresponding aspect of the Transcendental is called the JNANA-SATTVA, the 'knowledge-being' - knowledge in the sense of the Five Knowledges of which the Five Jinas are an embodiment. So you see the idea - that you have to first build up the SAMAYA-SATTVA and then make it sufficiently vivid and intense and concentrate on it sufficiently, until it becomes a vehicle for the manifestation of something which is Transcendental, and that is the JNANA-SATTVA, which is in a way neither subject nor object, neither subjective nor objective - which goes beyond that, which bridges those two.

So - to come back to the question - 'is there a difference between the responses that a Bodhisattva form evokes, both actually and potentially, and the Bodhisattva him/herself?' The Bodhisattva form corresponds to the SAMAYA-SATTVA. The Bodhisattva himself or herself is the JNANA-SATTVA, but there is a difference. The SAMAYA-SATTVA, the conventional visualised form, is SAMATHA-type as it were; the JNANA-SATTVA is VIPASSANA-type as it were. That is the difference. So if you just see the SAMAYA-SATTVA, you get an uplift, a beautiful, devotional feeling, but you can completely lose that and sink away from it. But if you sustain it to the point where it becomes a vehicle for the manifestation of the JNANA-SATTVA, then that corresponds to a flash of Insight which of course has a permanent modifying effect on your whole being. So that is the difference.

So here we see this distinction of SAMATHA and VIPASSANA sustained even at the level of the Tantra, within its particular context. This is why I said on that seminar that this distinction of SAMATHA and VIPASSANA is so important and runs through all forms of Buddhism and all kinds of meditative practice, including that of the Vajrayana.

_____ : So the SAMAYA-SATTVA can be created from consciousness and from unconsciousness? seems to me, in the case of Manjusri, SAMAYA-SATTVA,

S: Yes, I see what you mean, this is true. You could say, for instance, the one produced on the unconscious coming as it were from a deeper level, and the one produced from the conscious mind would be much more of an effort for construction.

_____ : Manjusri SAMAYA-SATTVA.

S: Well, don't bother with it too much. Just think as it were, at the beginning, I am Manjusri; and then concentrate on the figure in front. Don't work on 'I am Manjusri' - just say it to yourself to begin with, to get the Manjusri as it were out of the way; to acknowledge it as far as it goes, and then leave it, and concentrate on what is spontaneously appearing in front from one's as it were unconscious mind.

_____ : always accompanied by quite a disturbing

S: Which is?

_____ :

S: Then one must watch that. It is very important that it should appear calmly, even a wrathful figure - it should appear calmly and smoothly. If there is any disturbance, please be quite careful.

_____ : When you say disturbance, do you mean disturbance in the visualised form?

S: No, if you feel shaky or if it seems to disrupt you a bit as it comes, or if it takes you over -

be quite careful then.

_____ : The visualised form is very calm in a way, reassuring, frightening.

S: Yes, you have to be quite careful and watch those feelings and try to see what is happening.

_____ : if I have another form coming up, I'm not quite clear what I have to do

S: One can do that, certainly, but you have to be very careful that what is coming up is not just recollections of this deity and that deity, and I've read something about him in this book and something about her in that book - and you're just being a bit distracted. It may be just reminiscing, coming up from one's reading or what one has heard or thought about, and therefore to be treated as a distraction. I think one has to watch this and be quite sure that it isn't a distraction. It may well be.

Sanghamitta: Is it possible that even fairly Bodhisattva Is it likely then that any other would come up?

S: This has been known to happen, yes. You can't prove, of course, that they've never heard of that one before, or seen a picture, but as far as we have been able to tell, in some cases, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that the person concerned had no knowledge of has come up in I've even heard of cases of Moslems having visions of the Buddha and being most annoyed about it, being pursued by it, and having in the end to become Buddhists.

_____ :

S: I haven't heard of it working the other way, so far.

_____ : an unknown form of Bodhisattva arising?

S: One can only say that Reality is infinitely rich, and there is an infinity of forms.

_____ : I mean unknown to the person -

S: Well, in a sense it must be always unknown, because of the incommensurability of the conditioned mind and the Unconditioned mind. We only THINK that we knew it before, but actually if we see the JNANA-SATTVA we will see that the SAMAYA-SATTVA gave no inkling of it at all. It's easy for us to think, say, now: There's a JNANA-SATTVA of Manjusri, and corresponds to the SAMAYA-SATTVA, but when you actually experience it, it's something quite different as it were, but still in correspondence. But it's always different.

_____ : Could you say something more about being careful?

S: What I have in mind is that one must be careful about a sort of being taken over, in a psychological way - in a way sort of possessed. This is what one must be careful about. It's more than that. And that usually creates this feeling of disturbance and being shaken up. It is important that whatever is visualised or appears does so smoothly and gently, even if it is a wrathful form.

Sanghamitta: Does it ever happen, Bhante, that visualisation could become ?

S: What do you mean by 'take over'?

Sanghamitta: You would be taken over by it - you picture of Reality that you would be taken over by it and

S: There is a difference between you being taken over in the sense of your present consciousness annihilated and replaced by another, and your present one being absorbed into a higher one and becoming just a facet of it but still there. There's quite a difference between these two states.

Sanghamitta: And it's still even if it's Bodhisattva ?

S: There's a difference between you being absorbed into it, and it taking you over in a psychological way. It wouldn't really be the Bodhisattva in that case, it would be maybe some aspect of your own personality or something you'd heard about or seen or been impressed by.

Sanghamitta:

S: Yes, there would be the same danger. Whether the possession is as it were positive or as it were negative, it's still a possession, it's still a taking over. It's still, possibly, also a sort of inflation.

Ananda: Could I just ask for previous about this transference of images? I get a variant of that. My two practices are Tara and Vajrasattva, and the Tara visualisation when I'm doing the Tara practice, and I get the Vajrasattva mantra breaking through into this very strongly, and almost

S: You can combine the two. There is a version of the Vajrasattva mantra - I don't think I've ever spoken about this - there is a version of the Vajrasattva mantra with PADMA instead VAJRA, and one can repeat this in connection with Avalokitesvara or Tara and so on. So I suggest that if this continues to happen you do that - instead of 'Om Vajrasattva samaya', 'Om Padmasattva samaya' and so on, and this becomes a sort of Tara mantra. It's as though Tara is assimilated to Vajrasattva, or Vajrasattva assimilated to Tara. Of course, one mustn't think of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and so on as mutually exclusive, strictly speaking; we treat them in that way for purposes of preliminary practice, but they're all like different facets of one multi-faceted spiritual reality, which is the Buddha in the highest sense. So one will merge with, and blend into, and flow into another, in the course of our spiritual practice.

Ananda: It doesn't happen so much in the reverse direction, maybe because I've been doing the Vajrasattva

S: Well, if it persists, as I said, one can recite 'Om Padmasattva samaya', and so on, substituting PADMA for VAJRA wherever VAJRA occurs. With the same general meaning, but there's certainly a different feel.

Sanghamitta: I've found Is it that one should not - as possibly being taken over rather than

S: I think the fear of being taken over is rather -

(end of side)

Tape 14, side 2

S: I think the fear of being taken over is rather different from the actual danger of being taken over. You can be afraid of the actual danger, but there is a fear of being taken over which is a separate psychological phenomenon.

Sanghamitta: Yes, danger

S: I think one must be quite sure about that, and examine oneself and ask whether one isn't just afraid of being taken over. If so, by what and why. Some people are afraid of being taken over by their own emotions. They know that the emotions are there, lurking or bubbling somewhere, and they are afraid of being taken over by them; they are afraid of getting out of control or losing control of themselves. So when is a person afraid of losing control of themselves? Not when they are in a calm and balanced state through and through, but when there is something that might come out that they don't particularly want to come out.

Sanghamitta:

S: To do what?

Sanghamitta: The visualisation practice.

S: In a sense, that is when you should do it, when one should do any practice. But one just has to use one's common sense, and don't constantly force oneself in such a way that the practice becomes a sort of chore and something that you react against and think about negatively, but there may well be occasions when you don't feel in the mood and are a bit negative; you think 'I maybe won't do it today' - but never mind, do it. And often one can get into a much more positive frame of mind, quite genuinely.

_____ : If you're doing the visualisation outside yourself, the samaya-sattva, and you feel you want to incorporate you feel you want to be Manjusri, ?

S: Well, there are several ways of doing it, and I think I've described them on occasion. The best-known way is that, at the conclusion of your practice, you visualise the form or the figure as shrinking from the extremities, and growing brighter and brighter until it condenses into a ball of light, and this ball of light you visualise as descending onto your head and going down the median nerve into the heart, and you receive it there along with all the qualities of that particular Bodhisattva; and you become one with

Ratnapani: That's very interesting, because that's very much the sensation in my heart.

S: Right. Well, this is a standard conclusion to a practice. It's the next stage on, as it were, from just visualising out there and allowing the figure to fade away. When one has built up the practice, in a sense, you want to conserve it, you want to incorporate it, so you do it in that way. That is the standard way of doing it. This can be applied to any practice. If you're just doing, say, the visualisation out there in the simplest way, or visualising a ray of light coming from the heart of the figure to your heart, and you have a quite good meditation in that way, you can either just allow it all to fade away at the end or you can do this, which is a much more positive step; you can allow the figure to condense into a ball of light - in the case of Manjusri, golden-orange, in the case of Vajrasattva white or blue, in the case of Tara green or white, according to the colour of the figure; in the case of Amitabha red; and then absorb that in that particular way into your heart. And you can feel it quite slowly, take as much time over it as you please. Or you can do it quite quickly, depending on how you feel and how much time you have.

_____ : If you do it, would you at the beginning of each sitting visualise it outside keep that - ?

S: Yes, the whole procedure, yes.

Nagabodhi: Something that happens to me is when I have dissolved everything away, the meditation bell says it's the bell to end (?) or I might be getting up, and I am suddenly aware as it were that Amitabha is still there..... a very strong feeling of his presence, and maybe for a couple of hours I'm walking around, he's there, I can't see him but I know he's there.

S: I think I've mentioned before that some people have great difficulty with actual visualising in a concrete sense. That isn't so important if one has the feeling of him being there, as it were. That is more important. Some people have just got a good eidetic capacity, they can form these images quite easily and then meditate on them. Others can't, but that doesn't matter so much provided you have that feeling of that spiritual presence or spiritual personality being there or being with you.

_____ :maybe after a couple of years or so. Is it possible that that initiation ?

S: What the Tibetans usually say is that if you haven't done any practice - the practice that you were initiated into - for three years, then you must get re-initiation. I wouldn't take this completely literally, counting days or anything like that; it's just a sort of rough and ready But if one feels any doubt one can always get the initiation again. But in the case of some people, if they took it very sincerely, but were prevented by practical considerations from getting on with the practice, efficacy more than three years. You don't want to be mechanical about it. But this is what the Tibetan lamas usually say.

Aryamitra: mantra going round in circles in the middle of - does it always go in a certain direction?

S: Ah. For masculine deities it goes clockwise, for feminine deities anti-clockwise.

_____ : Ah, I get those mixed up. (LAUGHTER.) I find Sometimes - it might just be unsure -

S: Uncertainty is always bad. That is why you must be quite clear and sure what you are supposed to be doing. If you're not, it undermines the whole practice.

_____ : Masculine deities clockwise.

S: Yes.

_____ : And Avalokitesvara Chinese ...

S: Well, this is the Indo-Tibetan tradition.

Ananda: Bhante, should one in all practices, at the end, visualise the mantra as transferring the deity to the ?

S: There are different stages of practice. The simplest is you just visualise the deity in front of you and feel devoted. Then the next stage is you can visualise the ray of light and the mantra coming from the heart of the figure to your heart. And then a further stage is that you can shrink the deity, as it were, into the ball of light and absorb that at the end of the practice.

I think I might have to write out something about these different stages one and the same kind of practice. It's quite standard.

Aryamitra: In my practice, dissolve I was wondering about this -keep it there

with you.

S: Well, you do keep it there with you. The fact that you as it were absorb it again doesn't mean that it isn't ever with you. They are not mutually exclusive.

_____ : Is the colour of the words of the mantra as you visualise them should one be very careful about that?

S: There is usually an actual colour prescribed, but sometimes colours differ according to different practices. For instance, you can have the letters of the OM MANI PADME HUM all white, or you can have them different colours according to the different spheres within the Wheel of Life with which they are associated. The Tara mantra, for instance, is - for Green Tara - it's always green, jade green or turquoise; for White Tara then white. For Manjusri it's always that orange-tawny colour, and so on.

_____ : I never know what colour to use.

S: You broadly speaking follow the colour of the deity.

Sanghamitta: And for Sakyamuni it's silver?

S: No, for Sakyamuni it will usually be golden yellow. But if one has a definite feeling to visualise it in silver, by all means -

Sanghamitta: silver,

S: I don't remember, but there might have been a purpose when I said it, I just don't recollect.

Sanghamitta: at the initiation, because I spoke to you

S: Sometimes it happens, if somebody asks something in connection with the practice, I say according to what I see at the time, but I don't remember all the details always afterwards, so sometimes you have to remind me. Because there are so many of these, I don't carry them all around in my head.

Ananda: Bhante, this question of dissolving - to go back to it for a moment - dissolving a figure in visualisation would you say it does any actual harm

S: No, definitely not. None at all.

Ananda: Ah. I've been in two minds when I've been doing this on retreat, leading it, for instance doing walking and chanting the mantra, and then coming back and dissolving it after the walking and chanting Is there any harm in that?

S: No, that would be quite all right, quite good.

_____ : When you visualise deities themselves, actually physically -

S: Yes, if you do it properly you visualise the seed mantra of the deity in the heart, and the mantra revolving round that, and you visualise yourself as of that colour and that form. You may even assume that posture, especially, say, if it's a simple one like that of Tara with one leg hanging down. You might even for a while, in the course of the practice, assume the particular MUDRA - just holding a lotus and giving the ABHAYA MUDRA and so on. Or you

may just visualise it

_____ :

S: Not necessarily. To dissolve it in that way into the heart by a ball of light is a somewhat more - well, you could say advanced practice, at least more specialised, more definite.

_____ :

S: You could do that, but you have to be a bit careful, because it may get in the way. There are some stories about this - that there was, for instance, a lama who visualised himself as Yamantaka, with the bull head and the two horns, and - you've heard the story? Well, then you know. (LAUGHTER.) He used to visualise himself and experience himself as this bull-headed form, with his two great horns. He didn't dissolve the deity at the end, so every time he went through a door he had to go - (LAUGH) otherwise the horns would have stuck in the door.

_____ : occasion..... he started driving and he used to chant this mantra while he was driving, and the visualisation got in the way and, and he gave up driving rather than the mantra.

_____ : Could that lead to alienation?

S: It could, yes. Because you're divided, as it were. So in a way it's best, if the visualisation is very intense and clear and strong, it's best not to leave it there - this is why this is the next stage - but to absorb it, and then it's there with you and you're with it, there's no division. If your visualisation isn't very successful and fades away very quickly anyway, you need not bother. But if it's a very strong and clear and powerful visualisation, it's better to actually dissolve it at the end of the practice.

Dharmapala: There is the question, too, of these forms coming out of voidness and going back into voidness.

S: Yes, this is the first stage - that you visualise the pure blue sky, and then the form emerging out of that. This is again standard practice, to start off with the clear blue sky, the ground, the void.

_____ : One of the questions that come up, it seems, is the great need weekend retreats

S: It seems to have accumulated some arrears. I feel that quite a few arrears have been accumulated in the Movement generally, and I might say I sometimes feel a bit pushed to clear them all up, but I'd rather not feel too pushed, especially with regard to matters like this that have to be dealt with at leisure, in a proper manner. But no doubt in the course of the next year or two all these things will be cleared up, as well as various other things. I also want to standardise the visualisation practice a bit more, so that it's more easy to deal with. I have therefore been suggesting that in future Mitras should be encouraged, prior to their ordination, to think in terms of one or another of the four great Bodhisattvas, without going beyond those for the time being. Otherwise, when the time comes for me to hand over, someone or other may have to know about hundreds of different practices, which may not just be possible - or even desirable.

But if it's kept, to begin with at least, within the sphere of the four great Bodhisattvas, then there's quite a few people who will be familiar with all those practices and vehicles to hand them on. So I think, for the time being at least, we encourage Mitras to think in terms of either Avalokitesvara, or Manjusri, or Vajrapani, or Tara; and these certainly cover between

them the four great aspects.

_____ : Not Vajrasattva, ?

S: That is true. I haven't really thought about that. But a lot of people have Vajrasattva practice, and I have several texts for Vajrasattva too. Yes, don't exclude Vajrasattva, but at the same time do think in terms of these four; and also Sakyamuni. Sakyamuni is obviously a special case.

Bodhisri: Vajrapani is a rather wrathful form.

S: It can be either wrathful or peaceful.

Bodhisri: Because a Mitra

S: No, this is not a question of Mitras going into it, but before their ordination, when it is explained to them that at the time of their ordination they'll get a mantra and so on, let it be suggested that they should think in terms of either one or the other among these four. There's no question of them actually doing it. And certainly wrathful deities should be taken up comparatively late. Usually one starts on the peaceful form and then goes on to the wrathful form.

Lokamitra: has been coming up I've been dabbling, if you like, with the Refuge Tree; I've been doing this for part of my practice. I'd like to do it again, and also other deities coming up. And so the question comes up, when you do it - and take on other practices, or whether one's own practice should be a sort of lifeline practice, something that one should ?

S: There's quite a bit to be said on both sides of the question. I think, bearing in mind most people's general character and attitude in the West, probably it's best to stick to one throughout; but without making this absolutely hard and fast. If spontaneously and very powerfully and definitely some other form, some other figure, emerges, of course you have to include or incorporate that, or even change over to that; but unless something like that happens, I think stick very definitely to your own practice. And just be more and more in it. Eventually that practice will expand and become conterminous with all practices.

_____ : I personally do the Refuge Tree, but the preparation involves - but I haven't had any initiation, haven't been given the full

S: The Refuge Tree practice is a good practice, undoubtedly, and at the centre of the Refuge Tree you can see the particular teacher of one's own tradition, which in the case of most of the practices that I've passed on will be Padmasambhava.

_____ : Yes. my practice isn't Padmasambhava ..., I feel a little bit - as you say, like something missing, and I'm not connected with

S: I think if there's anything further you'll probably have to go into it with me on some other occasion, and we can go into it properly.

_____ : Just about the SADHANA - the SADHANA is quite long and complex, and general rule it's usually

S: Right. I am incidentally getting some more SADHANA texts translated, things I've had with me for some time and which I got the initiation for in Kalimpong, I'm getting the texts translated. So there will be a bit more material available.

_____ : As a general rule the SADHANA is usually quite long and complicated. One wouldn't interfere with them at all?

S: One would practise them according to tradition, yes. Until a modification very definitely came from one's own experience, not just from one's wandering mind.

_____ : Would you say that in connection with say the Refuge Tree?

_____ : Not especially.

_____ : I have a small point I remember you said in New Zealand that I found very helpful. If, after doing the SADHANA, you feel that something is not quite right, if you've not done something in accordance with the tradition, do you repeat the Vajrasattva mantra?

S: That's true, yes. ... purifying. Perhaps I should have mentioned that more generally. This is a traditional Vajrayana practice. Vajrasattva represents purification from 'sins', inverted commas, and salvation from hell, etc. So if one is doubtful at any time that one might have made a mistake, then the practice is at the end of your session of practice you recite the Vajrasattva mantra three times, to purify any error in your performance. And this will as it were put you right with your own mind. With, perhaps, the feeling that I might have made a mistake, it wasn't intentional, it's through ignorance or inadvertence; let that be purified. I regret that, I'm sorry for that.

_____ : Sometimes I did a Vajrasattva mantra before my visualisation practice.

S: Yes, well, one certainly can do that. Then you can regard it as purifying the way, removing obstacles, clearing away everything that might hinder the practice.

_____ : Are the SADHANAS ?

S: Usually I give them only to those who are actually doing the practice, for obvious reasons. It's not that they are particularly secret or anything like that, but there is such a thing as idle curiosity about what other people are doing, kind of thing. But the two SADHANAS which are available, and which people should have if they've got that particular practice, at present the Manjusri one is available, the Avalokitesvara, and one of the Tara ones is available. So if anybody has got the Tara initiation or Manjusri initiation or Avalokitesvara initiation, but hasn't got a copy of the SADHANA text, then they should see me about that. I'll have to get some more made, I've distributed those that I had to people.

_____ : Padmasambhava

_____ : Would you say that they should only be practised on initiation, or that - ?

S: I said they are BEST practised on initiation.

_____ : You also mentioned one of the Vajrasattva ones.

S: I have several of those. I don't think I've given anybody any of those yet, only the mantra, and the simple practice as one of the four yogas. Some people have had that.

Vajrasattva is one of the practices I'd like to devote some time to. I've got quite a bit of material, which is all ready for

_____ : Do you generally go through the visualisation with people?

S: Yes, we have had a few seminars, and I did this quite a bit in New Zealand, because I wouldn't be there again for a while - going through the texts and studying and explaining, and also going through the practice.

_____ : Say someone hadn't been through that with you,

S: Well, quite a few people haven't, but ideally I want to go through everybody with these practices, with their particular practices. But I'm afraid all this is going to take time. You can't just do it like that.

_____ : I have heard that women Is that true?

S: As regards the Order, as far as I recollect nobody has had

_____ : ?

S: No, there isn't anything like that. What you might be thinking of, or might have heard about, is that in the monasteries there are chapels dedicated to the Defenders, who are wrathful in form but they are not Bodhisattvas; they are more terrestrial than that. And usually women are not admitted there. They are quite horrific, and there are stuffed animals hanging up, and representations of corpses and so on. I think the idea is that women are a bit more susceptible to shock - a pregnant woman in particular might be disturbed, so they're not admitted. But the wrathful forms of YIDAMS are YIDAMS for women as well as men, because that is a spiritual level; this is as it were the other level, of the guardian deities. It is more psychic, it's not spiritual.

_____ : What's the colour of Prajnaparamita?

S: There are several: there's a golden-yellow one, and I think there's a white one. Usually, it's golden-yellow. That's the more common one.

Uttara: a mantra, not your own mantra but some other, does that have any effect on your ?

S: If you recite it, it becomes your own.

_____ : If you

S: It's better to be initiated, but even if you haven't and you recite it it does become your own, in a way.

_____ : You can still get in touch with - ?

S: Oh yes, quite certainly. But it is better to be put on the line properly, as it were; but it doesn't mean that you can't recite it yourself and get benefit from it.

_____ : It could be a sort of comfort, no doubt, to those who perhaps want to get ... direct teaching

S: Well, I've known one or two Order members who've had very inadequate contact with me as regards their personal practice, but have got on remarkably well, none the less; better than some others who have had quite a bit of practice with me and been through it step by step

with me.

There's also the question of Mahayana and Vajrayana here. For specifically Tantric practice, Vajrayana practice, you do need initiation, but you don't for Mahayana practice. So if you recite a mantra which you've just read in a book, you can take it that you're practising within the Mahayana, but not within the Vajrayana, for which you require the initiation. It's less intense, in a way, but if you put energy and effort into it, it becomes intense. So better a Mahayana mantra that you actually practise, than a Tantric initiation which you never practise.

_____ : Padmasambhava,

S: Yes. If you're not initiated into it, then it isn't a Tantric practice. But it's a perfectly good practice - it's a Mahayana practice.

Ananda: But this can't take you as it were as far as it could, no matter how much you practise it, if you get the initiation it's more effective.

S: It's more effective. Other factors being equal, if you have the initiation, it's more effective.

Padmapani: Bhante, you meant what you just said, ... Siddhiratna and myself a couple of days ... you said that there was a touch of the Tantra about it. Could you say what you meant? Because I know afterwards I had this - more like a sort of - I couldn't grasp it -

S: I'm not quite sure, I don't recollect very clearly. But I remember about the name; when I said 'a touch of the Tantra about the name 'Siddhiratna' I meant with reference to the 'Siddhi' component.

Padmapani: Padmapani.

S: I don't remember that bit, I'm afraid. But in connection with 'Siddhi', SIDDHI means success, but I said 'in a double sense' - it's mundane success, and it's also spiritual or Transcendental success; so SIDDHI also means Enlightenment or Bodhi. But there's a Tantric touch inasmuch as it also suggests occult powers, which come especially when you follow the Vajrayana path. In that sense there's a touch of the Tantra about 'Siddhi' or 'Siddhiratna'. I don't remember how Padmapani came in!

_____ : we had a talk just before the and you mentioned that there Padmasambhava.

S: Oh, that's right, yes. Padmapani, or Avalokitesvara, is after all the SAMBHOJAKAYA in the Trikaya of which Padmasambhava is the NIRMALAKAYA. So there's a definite connection of Padmasambhava with Avalokitesvara; but in this sense there is a touch of the Tantra about Avalokitesvara. For instance, in Nyingmapa temples, you see on the ground floor Padmasambhava; the first floor, you find the image of Avalokitesvara; third floor, image of Amitabha. There is this definite connection of Avalokitesvara with the Nyingmapa tradition, so in this sense there is a touch of the Tantra about Avalokitesvara or Padmapani. And that seemed appropriate to you - that there should be a touch of the Tantra about you.

_____ :

S: And when I said 'a touch of the Tantra' in a very general way, it means a sort of energy. The Mahayana is very beautiful, but there isn't the same sort of suggestion of energy, or

suggestion of the kind of energy, that you find somehow in the Tantra; so the Tantra is very definitely a vehicle of energy, in the full sense, energy at all levels. So when I said - jokingly, but with a bit of seriousness, that there's a touch of the Tantra about maybe you and Siddhiratna, I meant in a very general way also a certain kind of energy which not everybody has. That Tantric touch! Vibrations.

_____ : - a cue for a song -

S: Well, perhaps it is, it's a pity we don't have any songs.

_____ : (LAUGHTER)

S:

_____ : wrathful deities to do with the Mahayana in ?

S: No. If there's a wrathful deity, and if it's a deity in YAB-YUM, it is the the Tantra proper, the Vajrayana, and you can only practise with the Tantric initiation. And should only practise. Broadly speaking, a lot of what is popularly called Tantra is Mahayana; it's really only the ANUTTARA-YOGA-TANTRA which is Tantra. The other three tantras are really extensions of Mahayana. They're Mantrayana rather than Vajrayana.

Anyway, there are other questions, but we're going to leave them until the afternoon session. I think we'll close on that note, and reassemble punctually at 2 o'clock.

(end of session)

Tape 14, side 2

Session 8

S: All right, we'll take now the two sessions which [break] of the third question, which I took earlier on.

First comes a question from the JEWEL ORNAMENT OF LIBERATION.

In the JEWEL ORNAMENT OF LIBERATION, the family of the followers of the Mahayana way of life are classified as (a) self-existing, and (b) evolved. Could you explain this classification?

I must say that I haven't come across ever any explanation of this distinction, so I'll have just to tell you what I think it means, and I think it probably is correct. It seems to be a classification of Bodhisattvas, who are, of course, the followers PAR EXCELLENCE of the Mahayana. The self-existing Bodhisattvas will then be those that do not have any earthly or mundane history. (?STOCKTAKING GOING ON IN BACKGROUND. BHANTE PAUSES.) The self-existing Bodhisattvas, as far as I can see, are those which do not have any mundane history; they are just as it were archetypal aspects of Buddhahood, or Buddha-nature, or Enlightenment. In a sense they always have been Enlightened. They're not historical personalities. And the evolved ones are those who have worked themselves up to Bodhisattva level from the ordinary human situation. As far as I can see, this is the basis of the distinction, though, as I mentioned, I haven't seen any explanation of the distinction anywhere.

Then,

(2): It seems to me that certain people exhibit the qualities of certain Bodhisattvas to a greater or lesser degree. If beings are viewed in this

horizontal manner, then two effects are noticed: (i) the beings lose their egoness, and (ii) the action of beings is seen as the activity of Bodhisattvas. Is this view in line with the traditional approach and, if not, does it seem to you to be of value?

'It seems to me that certain people exhibit the qualities of certain Bodhisattvas to a greater or lesser degree.' I presume the question means that, for instance, a particular Bodhisattva, say Avalokitesvara, exhibits compassion or he is the embodiment especially of compassion, so you might see in a particular person or persons, to a greater or lesser degree, the quality of compassion, which perhaps you don't see in others. In others you may, say, see the quality of wisdom, which is the characteristic especially of Manjusri; or the quality of purity, which is the quality of Vajrasattva - and so on.

'If beings are viewed in his horizontal manner, then two effects are noticed: (i) the beings lose their egoness'. Perhaps it means that one doesn't encounter them so much as other egos, but sees in them something spiritual above and beyond anything egoistic.

'and (ii) the action of beings is seen as the activity of Bodhisattvas.' I think we have to be a little bit careful here, because I think it's mainly a question of being quite honest, and not going through the motions of thinking, or pretending to think, that people are Bodhisattvas when you don't really in your heart of hearts think that. People are very mixed, after all; you may find in some people certain Bodhisattva-like qualities or qualities of, say, certain Bodhisattvas, but they might also have very un-Bodhisattva-like qualities; so would you view them in the light of their Bodhisattva-like qualities or their un-Bodhisattva-like qualities? So perhaps it's best to say not that people are Bodhisattvas virtually, but that they do have very good qualities sometimes, or sometimes they don't have very good qualities.

'Is this view in line with the traditional approach, and if not does it seem to you to be of value?' The approach IS in line with the traditional approach, certainly. There are some texts which say that we should look upon all beings as Bodhisattvas, but the real point is whether we can really do that. It mustn't be a sort of mental gymnastic that we don't actually feel. If we can deeply feel that living beings are, after all, struggling, that they have got certain good qualities, that something is emerging, that many of them are growing; if we sincerely think like that, that's fine, that's a very positive way of looking at people. But if someone does us really some nasty turn, or speaks to us harshly, or behaves very badly with us, we shouldn't go through a mental gymnastic of thinking, 'Ah well, they're really Bodhisattvas, it's all Bodhisattva activity.' You'll just be kidding yourself then.

So I think there is a sense in which this is a true and valid approach, but only if you take it in a very realistic manner, actually looking at people and really seeing actually good qualities there which really are Bodhisattva-like, but also seeing the other aspect and realising after all it's only a human being trying to evolve, not trying to project on to the human being something of the glamour of a Bodhisattva so that you don't really see the human being. I think that is the danger. Anyone got any thoughts on this?

Lokamitra: [There] have been attempts in the past, I don't but there are people who identify skilful mental states with Transcendental ... states which Bodhisattva.

Asvajit: I don't quite understand what you're saying; could you elaborate?

Lokamitra: Well, one can feel compassionate in a skilful way, but it needn't be a transcendental state. It needn't be the MAHAKARUNA, it would be Bodhisattva KARUNA. So someone might say you're a great Bodhisattva, but in fact it's just an ordinary skilful state.

S: Right. I think we should be a bit careful how we say things like that - 'Oh, you're a great

Bodhisattva' and use the terminology too loosely or too lightly.

_____ : While we're on the subject of this, I had this impression - Order members in the past, and they said that maybe there could be such a thing as a Bodhicitta arising in a group of Order members rather than individually.

S: Well, certainly not in a group in the ordinary sense, but within a spiritual community. This stems from the statement that the Bodhicitta is not something individual in the ordinary sense; that it isn't something that belongs to, in a sense, someone more than another. So that if you have a spiritual community of people who are all dedicated to the Bodhisattva Ideal and the Bodhisattva Path, and if they are sincerely aspiring after that and are in very close and intense communication with one another, this can certainly generate a situation in which the Bodhicitta arises for them all. It's not one, it's not many. It's certainly not a group thing. At the same time, it's not an individual thing. In a very mysterious way it's everybody's and it's nobody's. This is what was being got at.

Aryamitra: Can the Bodhicitta arise in dependence upon that - in dependence upon the fact of it being a spiritual community and the communication that takes place

S: This isn't discussed, as far as I know, in the tradition, but my own feeling is that the Bodhicitta will arise more easily for all in the context of this intra-spiritual community intercommunication and common practice.

Aryamitra: I'm wondering if, say, one was away from the spiritual community, at least physically, it's possible for the Bodhicitta to arise for that person, or would it - is it only -

S: Oh no, it would certainly be possible for it to arise in association with one individual; but the point to be stressed is it isn't any individual's as it were personal possession. It cannot be appropriated by the individual.

_____ : It's more like he becomes -

S: Well, it arises in dependence upon whatever he does, but it is not in a sense continuous with him. It's not his individual thought or his individual volition. It transcends that. At the same time, it is associated with him and his activity as it were as its face; but if you have a number of people practising together, there's a greater intensity, a greater energy generated, and the Bodhicitta is more likely to arise for all of them; not that one as it were collective Bodhicitta arises. You could say that there are many Bodhicittas; it would be equally correct to say that there is one Bodhicitta, a non-collective one Bodhicitta. It's simply that the spiritual community situation is a more favourable situation for the arising of the Bodhicitta in respect of all members of that spiritual community than when one member is practising on his own. But what arises, whether you're together or whether you're alone, is a Bodhicitta which is not anybody's individual possession and which is neither one nor many.

So, in the context of the spiritual community, it's not that you all generate different Bodhicittas, so that there are as many Bodhicittas as individuals present; it isn't also that you generate one collective Bodhicitta. It's neither of those.

_____ : You've got a share in it.

S: You could put it in that way, though even that suggests one common as it were collective Bodhicitta. It's not even a sharing. It's more like a participation, you could say. Obviously it becomes difficult to express.

_____ : Participation sounds

Padmapani: Could it be looked upon as like in the Grail legend, individual people the well or something

(end of side)

Tape 15, side 1

well or something or stream of immortality, take from the central fountain.

S: You could certainly look at it like that. You could say that the central fountain is the absolute Bodhicitta, and the different ways in which you take from it, or take it, are the different forms of the relative Bodhicitta. You could say that; that would be one way of putting it.

_____ : It has more of a graphic connotation.

S: Maybe, yes.

Ananda: In one of your lectures, Bhante, you gave a very beautiful graphic illustration of the absolute and relative Bodhicitta in terms of prisms, a central sun, and the Bodhisattva manifesting the relative Bodhicitta as in the prism splitting up the light,

_____ : The absolute being the pure white, and as it goes through the prism the different colours being the

S: Yes, you could certainly say that there was one white light arising there, but different colours according to the different temperaments and so on of the people -

Ananda: I think you described the individual rays of white light relative Bodhicitta, and the coloured light being split up by the prism as the perfections. (VOICES.)

S: Ah, I'd forgotten that. Well, no doubt it will come along in MITRATA sooner or later, then we can all read the correct version again. But you get the general idea of the Bodhicitta as neither an individual nor a collective phenomenon?

That was getting a little bit away from the question. What I was mainly stressing was seeing other human beings as they really are, and giving full weight to whatever is positive and skilful in them, and really trying to see them as living and growing human beings, and even as potential Bodhisattvas, but without pseudo-idealisation, or without seeing them in very roseate colours and just projecting, as it were, on to them. It must be realistic, but in a warm, human way. Not coldly realistic or critical, or anything like that, and with a very ready appreciation for whatever is positive and developing and growing in them - which is certainly viewing them in the light of the Bodhisattva Ideal, and seeing them as potential Bodhisattvas; but not in a sentimental, wishy-washy way - that's no good at all; or glossing over their undoubted faults, on the empirical level. Or pretending that they're Bodhisattvas when in your heart of hearts you don't really think so at all, it's just an act that you put on of thinking everyone is so wonderful and glorious and lovely when you don't actually believe that and you don't actually see that.

Any comment on this aspect of the questions?

But certainly, seeing people very positively; as positively as you possibly can. Even if there's any doubt whether they're being negative or positive, give them the benefit of the doubt; take it that it's positive and not negative; err on the side of positivity if you have to err at all in your appraisal of other people.

Asvajit: If you're living very much in the present moment, Bhante, is it necessary to think or make any judgement about what you see whatsoever - label it either as good or bad, positive or negative??

S: If you're thinking in terms of growth and development, then it is useful to think in terms of what conduces to growth and what does not. But to label black and white, good and bad, that probably is not very helpful. Because the same thing that may help you at one time and not help you at another could be labelled black or white according to different ways of looking at it. Sometimes bad things help you develop, the so-called bad things. Sometimes so-called good things hold you back. So think in terms of growth and development, overall growth and development, rather than in cut-and-dried terms of good and bad, or BEING either good or bad. The question is: are you growing? Never mind if you're a rascal, but are you growing? What's the use of being good if you're standing still?

As I think Jinamati said the other day, it's a question of 'Is he growing?' or 'Is she growing?' or 'Are we growing?' That's the simple question. We need not think in terms of good and bad as categories to apply. All right, nothing further on that?

All right, we've got just one more question left, but it's a quite important one.

Please say something about the basic principles underlying the path of regular steps, and the significance of introducing it into the Order at the present time. (I have experienced it in some respects as an inhibiting factor in my own development, and I feel this may be due to a misunderstanding of its real application.)

First of all, a few words about the basic principles underlying the path of regular steps. The main point is here: why do you have to get on to the path of regular steps, when you've been following the path of irregular steps? How is this? What happens? What leads you to start thinking about, or following, the path of regular steps?

_____ :

S: Yes, you can't go any further. It's not that you're switching over from one complete path to another complete path, as though there were two quite separate and distinct paths. It isn't that, but you realise that in the course of your development you've got to go back in order to go forward. You've got to consolidate something which was a bit shaky before you can go further. This is what the path of regular steps really means. It means strengthening the foundation so that you can build upon it, and sometimes you start building before the foundation is firm enough; then you find that the building is wobbling, so you think 'Good heavens, let's go back and strengthen the foundation, so that the building stands firm.' So this is the basic principle.

There is the possibility of misunderstanding. I'm just wondering whether the person who put the question would like to say something about his idea of how this might be misapplied, or how it might be an inhibiting factor.

Ananda: Well, in my own experience, really the main point is that I'm inhibiting my own natural experience - for instance, to be a bit concrete, if one feels like introducing some non-traditional aspects into a Puja, for instance music, Western music, just to take an example, I've felt that this would be opposed or restricted on the principle of regular steps because it doesn't traditional aspect of that

S: No, I think the path of regular steps applies to one's own experience. Supposing you felt that you were not getting on very well and maybe there was a certain lack of emotional

development and you had to strengthen that, strengthen your emotional side before you progressed, you might think 'How can I do that?' Well, obviously more Puja. 'But the Puja at present doesn't appeal to me' - why? 'It's too oriental. All right, how can I make it more appealing? All right, I'll bring in some Western music.' If you did that and did it mindfully, and fitted it in properly, and also consulted others within the spiritual community, that would certainly not be any deviation from the path of regular steps; you would in fact be following it, because you would be making those changes so that you could take that next step, you'd be strengthening your foundation.

So the path of regular steps doesn't mean doing things in the strict traditional manner. It's essentially a way of looking at your own individual development, going back to something which should have been strengthened or consolidated before, but you didn't do that. But going back and consolidating it just so that you can push ahead.

Ananda: I feel that's the essence of the confusion.

S: Has anyone else thought that the path of regular steps meant following the traditional path quite strictly as it has come down?

Aryamitra: It has been - people have given that as reasons for certain other actions, like 'We'll have the shrine simpler, because of regular steps' -

S: Ah, there is a sense in which this is true. For instance, you've got the three successive YANAS. You've got the Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana; these are regarded as successively higher stages of practice. So sometimes people like to try and get straight into the Vajrayana; this is the path of irregular steps. But then maybe you find you're not getting on very well so you have to go back to the Mahayana, even to the Hinayana, and go through those practices and those experiences which correspond to those stages. So, for instance, supposing you were playing around a bit with DORJES and bells, that's the path of irregular steps - you're not really doing very much with them, and after a while you realise this - I'm not ready for these things - so you put your DORJES and bells and gongs and drums and things like that aside, and you just get back to plain, simple, maybe devotion and offering a few flowers and getting more into your meditation, which is technically the Hinayana as it were.

Aryamitra: I can see that as being extreme if you're playing around with them, but I think you can just, say, have them on the shrine. I know that you brought this up - I'm not doubting misapplications of symbols and so on, it's a good thing - but the reason has been because of regular steps, people have them on the shrine, to remind some people who may be aware of the symbols and others

S: The point I brought out in connection with the bell, though I've been doing it myself at the beginning, I wasn't happy about using the VAJRA bell just to signal the end of a meditation session, so I suggested we use other bells and kept the VAJRA bell eventually for its own special purpose. There's no reason why it shouldn't be kept on the shrine if it does actually function as a reminder of some higher level; I don't want to make a hard and fast rule here; but I think simplicity is a good general principle rather than cluttering up the shrine too much with objects and with ritual implements that you don't have really any practical use for. But if certain things do serve as a real reminder, by all means keep them on the shrine, even though you aren't yet in a position actually to make use of them.

_____ : I was just using that as an example. example of the way that the phrase is being used, 'regular steps', for that, not because of the

S: But I think the question, the crucial factor in making the transition from the path of irregular steps to the path of regular steps - and it's a transition you can make a number of

times in different contexts and in different ways, not just once and for all - the crucial factor is going back so that you yourself individually can go forward.

Lokamitra: The things you have on the shrine, on the shrine itself, induce certain experiences, and so this would fit in with what you were saying to Ananda, that the path of regular steps applies to experience; therefore, if you have a VAJRA on the shrine when beginners come along, you just serve to confuse things.

S: Ah, you're referring now to the public shrine. Reference might before have been to the private shrine, I'm not sure.

Ananda: Both.

S: I think with regard to the public shrine, which beginners are going to come along to, keep that as simple as possible and basic Buddhist as it were. Your own private shrine, you obviously arrange that in whatever way you find inspiring and helpful. I have been saying that as regards the public shrine - the image should be simply that of Sakyamuni, and no DORJES and bells; just flowers and incense, possibly the seven water bowls, but nothing more than that.

Ratnapani: That can be said to be the path of regular steps, simple basic Buddhism.

S: Yes, in that way. But at which point, and in what way, people make the transition from the path of irregular to the path of regular steps is entirely up to them, in the light of their awareness of their own experience and their own development and their own needs. Someone might have made the transition from the path of irregular to regular steps in matters of ethics but not in matters of art, or VICE VERSA, or both.

Any further query about this path of regular steps?

_____ : Only that something - stressed that it's something one keeps doing, If you do some one thing, you go back

S: Yes. Of course, you can have a very general going back. Someone might throw away all his Vajrayana posters and his Mahayana sutras, and say 'I'm going right back to the beginning in every respect. I'm going to really consolidate my Going for Refuge and my Five Precepts, my METTA BHAVANA and my mindfulness of breathing; I'm not going to bother about anything else. I'm going to get these absolutely right. And my Right Livelihood as well.' This would be a general retracing of one's steps. But not everybody might do that. Someone might just throw away his Vajrayana THANGKAS and keep the simple Sakyamuni picture, but still be very shaky about the Precepts. Somebody else might keep all his Vajrayana pictures but go back to basic Theravada precepts and practise them. So it isn't quite a straightforward matter, or not too simple.

_____ : We have had a more general application, as distinct from the individual, in the Movement shrine

S: Right. More and more - not more and more OF less and less, but going more and more thoroughly into more and more basic topics. It's much more like that.

Sanghamitta: I'm afraid I've never even heard the lecture -

S: Well, it is available, the tape; and also there is a précis of it, a quite lengthy précis, in the Journal - the annual magazine-like journal - of the Auckland FWBO. That has already come out last month, I haven't yet got my copy, but if you like to write to them I'm sure they'd send

you one. There is a summary of it there, done by one of the New Zealand Order members, which contain all the essential points.

Mangala: In that case, Bhante, would there not be a case for, say, for everybody just studying the *Udana*, say, or Pali texts, for a couple of years, and sticking very close to the Hinayana; then, after a couple of years moving on to the Mahayana -

S: Maybe. I think with some people, not with all, perhaps. The Mahayana is not just a matter of a few steps further on; it's also a different kind of spirit that pervades everything right from the beginning. One could also say that. Even the same with the Vajrayana.

Ratnapani: I was quite impressed many years ago saying, with the Hinayana work with a Mahayana outlook.

S: This is what very often the Tibetan teachers do say, and some of the Chinese Mahayana masters say. Be a perfect Theravadin in practice, with the heart of the Bodhisattva. But I think another aspect of the path of regular steps is getting away from theory and back to practice, away from being up in the air and very vague and general, and back to very empirical realities, and where you actually are, so that you can go forward, because going forward is not dreaming of going forward, it's actually taking steps here and now on this earth with your own two feet. And I think the transition from the path of irregular to the path of regular steps for many people consists in a realisation that whereas before they thought they were practising, actually they were only thinking, but not practising. It was only thinking, it was only mental activity. I think for many the transition consists in that realisation.

I think those who are going along to the Buddhist Society summer school will see quite a lot of that around there, if it's anything like the summer schools that I remember. A lot of mental preoccupation with quite advanced and abstruse Buddhist ideas, but very, very little in terms of practice and experience. But originally we were all tarred with the same brush, so in a way why particularly mention them? There's still quite a lot of it in the Order itself, but much less than before.

Mangala: I should think it's very, very hard to actually practise principles outside a lot of contact with the Sangha, with the Order -

S: I really think so.

Mangala: - like if you were just going to work or something, and practised with people once a week. It must be very hard.

S: But at least one should realise that that is not the best situation, and look around for the Sangha; and not think this is all right, I'm all right without it; I am a perfect Buddhist, virtually. The Sangha doesn't matter. And this is something that I used to hear from such people.

_____ : I must say, having heard that lecture live, tape again, the first time I heard it I realised

S: I think it was because - I think at least two people resigned from the Buddhist Society after hearing it.

_____ : And most of them haven't heard it.

S: And most of them haven't heard it yet, right! (Voices.)

_____ : in a way I didn't pick up at the time,

Ananda: Is it true - I heard a rumour that our tapes of that lecture are available at the Buddhist Society to their people?

S: It's very likely - I hope they are. (Voices.) refuse to hear it without hearing it.

Ananda: In a way, that implies that they've heard it in a way.

S: I did hear that it was proposed to play the tape at the Buddhist Society itself, and some people very much wanted that, but there was very strong opposition from some quarters, and it therefore in the end wasn't played. So presumably it's a little bit explosive.

_____ : tapes, I noticed at Archway you have the tape library, and all the lectures you have given, I think, are more or less available to the general public, and you have things like the Tantric series and things like this, that's not -

S: Well, in a way this is the path of irregular steps. I'm not saying that the Movement as a whole is on the path of regular steps. It isn't, and I think it can't be in the West. I think it isn't possible. I don't think you can have a complete transition to the path of regular steps, simply because so many books on all aspects of Buddhism, elementary and advanced, are in everybody's hands - what can you do about that? So it has to be accepted, as I said in the lecture, that the path of irregular steps is a path. And I think for most people it'll be a matter of commuting, almost, between the path of regular steps and the path of irregular steps; that you will like to be on the path of irregular steps as much as you can, you can't help it. You can't help thinking about sunyata and about those five Buddhas, whether you're ready for them or not, because you've heard about them, you've read about them. But, more and more, those who are serious will make the transition to the path of regular steps at different levels. I don't think it's a question of entirely giving up the path of irregular steps and completely being on the path of regular steps; I don't think that will ever happen.

_____ : It seems to be a bit like meditation and the rest of one's daily life, and trying to carry through the skilful states one's experienced or might experience in meditation, or the inspiration; in the same way the Tantric series can really inspire one to get down to some solid work.

S: Some people might well start off with the Tantric series who would not have been started off by the Eightfold Path series, even though that logically comes first.

Ananda: Looking back now to the course (?)origin of that question, I can see that my main misconception of it was to associate the path of irregular steps with emotional richness and colour and devotion and all those things, and the path of regular steps with the absence of those things.

S: Yes, or of doing it in a regular way - going through the official channels in the approved order, etc., whether you like it nor not; whereas the path of irregular steps is doing it in your own way. Yes.

_____ : So the path of regular steps really is the full integration of those qualities and -

S: Right, yes. The two paths, in a way, are not really mutually exclusive. The only way in which you could completely follow the path of regular steps [would be] if you were in a completely traditional environment, there were no books on Buddhism, and nobody gave you any teaching except what you were actually ready for, and didn't give you any more until you'd fully practised the first lot of teaching. But that's an impossible situation in the modern

world. It used to be possible in the East, when communication was purely verbal. It might still be possible in the East in certain areas, where faith is very strong and books are few. But it wouldn't be possible in the West.

Ananda: In fact, it strikes me that the path of regular steps is that followed by the Tantra in the most strict sense, where you have a guru and a disciple, purely receiving the precepts ...

S: That is true. But of course in the West now, Tantric literature, Tantric iconography is freely available to everybody, even to those who have no intention of following or practising Buddhism at all. But what can one do? One just has to work within the existing situation. By all means let your imagination run riot if you wish in all the glorious fields of Buddhism, but make sure that you are actually following a definite path in your practice too.

_____ : In a way, it seems like a lot of people, say, who are teaching in the Order need to keep up with all this modern literature in order to counteract this sort of information that's fed to them or told that such-and-such a tradition has happened, almost as if one has to keep up with certain literature.

S: It may be necessary or useful if a few Order members do, but I wouldn't say it was necessary for everybody to do that, by any means.

_____ : What, [those] who were teaching?

S: A higher percentage of those who were teaching would need to do this than of other Order members, because you might encounter certain difficulties or certain micchaditthis in the course of your own teaching, and it's useful to know the background of these things. Unless you've got your own direct, intuitive wisdom which can deal with them on the spot, as it were, without reference to the background.

Manjuvajra: Perhaps connected with this is something you said the other day about precepts. You said that precepts were specific -

S: Ah. It has occurred to me that I ought to clear up a possible confusion about precepts. When we speak, say, of the Precepts of the Gurus, the English word 'precept' translates a different word from when we speak of the Five Precepts or the Ten Precepts. When we speak of, say, the Ten Precepts, the word 'precept' translates sikshapadam, which means a step in training. When we speak of the Precepts of the Gurus, the word 'precept' translates upadesa, which is personal instruction in the widest sense, about all matters pertaining to the spiritual practice of the disciples. So can you now put your question bearing that distinction in mind, because it's the upadesa - it's precept in the sense of upadesa or personal instruction?

Manjuvajra: Actually I was referring to the other sense.

S: OK, then, put the question.

Manjuvajra: I think we were talking about seeing the Ten Precepts as being very specific. I've often, when I've talked to people about, say, -

S: Did I use the word 'specific'?

_____ : I'm not sure if you used -

S: I think I usually say 'comprehensive', inasmuch as they cover different aspects of body, speech and mind.

_____ : Yes, well, the impression that I got from what you said was that one particular precept shouldn't be generalised too much. If I can give an example of what I mean: if it's the precept of not taking the not-given, it's obvious you mean don't steal, but you can extend it, you can widen it out a bit, so that it becomes in a way a kind of universal precept.

S: Ah. Yes, I've sometimes spoken of this in a slightly different way - say, that the precepts in this sense should be regarded as principles rather than as rules; that each precept indicates an important principle that you must try to incorporate in your own life, and realise spiritually, and then apply in accordance with your own common sense in specific situations. You can't have a list of rules to cover all possible situations that might arise, but you can have general principles just to give you general guidance which you have to apply yourself when you find yourself in particular situations. So each precept is a principle rather than a rule. This is the point that I have sometimes made. Especially if you translate it into its positive form - say, not taking the not-given, well, giving. Giving is the precept, or the principle. But the precept itself, as principle, doesn't tell you exactly how and when and to whom - that's left more or less to you. It simply says giving; practise giving. And some people may practise in one way, some in another, but the principle is giving.

So the so-called precepts do not lay down a list of rules, but they inculcate a set of principles. I think it's very important to make this point. Sometimes you get elaborations of the principles, to give you a clearer idea of what is meant, but these elaborations mustn't be taken as themselves sets of rules; they are only illustrative, they are not legalistic. For instance, some rather dim-witted person might say, 'Not taking the not-given; that's rather complicated. What exactly do you mean?' So you have to go into detail and say, 'Not do this and not do that and not do such-and-such thing.' 'Oh yes,' then he understands. But you shouldn't take those illustrations as rules; they are just illustrations of different ways in which the principle could be applied by the individual.

Dharmapala: Could you clarify a bit more about the third precept? Situations have been described of how it evolved from not committing violence of rape, abduction, adultery; and later on it's been more understood as not catering to neurotic desires.

S: Yes, right; because the positive counterpart is contentment - contentment within oneself, and not this neurotic need to gain some satisfaction, whether sexual or emotional, from some other person. So it is the aspect of contentment which is to be stressed. For instance, if you are discontented when you are away from a certain person, really worried and disturbed, then you are breaking the precept, even though there may be no question of adultery or rape and so on. You're not able to experience contentment. So if you can experience contentment, then you can really be with somebody else; but if your contentment is dependent on being them, you can't really experience contentment at all. So you can't be really happy with someone until you can be happy away from them.

Dharmapala: I thought there might be possible complications with regard to translating, but I think this is just an error, because the tendency has been to look at the precepts in a negative way rather than a positive.

S: This is something, again, that perhaps we ought to look at: looking at the precepts in their positive form. That is to say, instead of not taking life or not hindering living beings - practising metta: the principle of metta, the principle of loving-kindness. And instead of not taking the not-given, the principle of generosity. And then the principle of contentment.

_____ : It would obviously go down well with seeing through the evolution of man, it would probably go down very well with spiritualists.

_____ : That seems to be more natural. If you're explaining the precepts as being the

way the Enlightened mind would behave, rather than say the Enlightened being would not behave in that way

S: For some reason or other, the Indian mind was very fond of the negative form, which is a bit unfortunate.

Mangala: negative form, but also promote encourages feelings of guilt, attendant upon this kind of prohibitive factor involved, which if you had a certain precept you feel guilty about it, like you broke some law, you've offended somebody or something like that.

S: As though there is a sort of spiritual court of justice, with a judge and even a spiritual policeman lurking in the background or round the corner, waiting to arrest you and haul you off and sentence you.

Lokamitra: At the same time, if they are taken as training principles, they are very useful in that negative form. You can think in terms of giving, but you may be blind to the actual exploitation you've done at the same time.

_____ : I'm not with you there, Lokamitra.

Lokamitra: Well -

S: Well, you might have stolen in order to give. You might be so overwhelmed by the importance of giving that you just went and robbed a bank so that you could give, not realising that in robbing the bank you were doing the opposite of giving. I have actually encountered people like this - not actually robbing banks, but certainly robbing Peter to pay, or to give to, Paul.

Mangala: But I think on the whole, personally I think the positive precepts are one of the best things we have, if not the best thing that we have - and especially the emphasis you've been giving recently to a positive

S: This is why I've translated the Ten Precepts into a positive English version, and this is sometimes recited now, isn't it?

_____ :

Lokamitra: Will there be a positive version of the Five Precepts?

S: Mindfulness.

_____ : Because it would be good if we could use those in ordinary classes,
(Voices.)

S: There is the series of the bodhiangas, which is a very useful series - the factors of Enlightenment, which include mindfulness. These are progressive. There is a lecture on them, or they are included in a lecture somewhere. This is a very useful text to work with, because they illustrate the progressive, positive order of development very strongly. I sometimes have been thinking that maybe we ought to drop all the more negative formulations that have come down from tradition, and adopt all their more positive counterparts. Positive Buddhism.

Mangala I think that would do a lot to take away this association of gloom and prohibition, and see it more in terms of encouragement and growth and development.

_____ : the biggest point about Buddhism is its negative aspect of renunciation.

Bodhisri: Personally I must say that comes up as well, negative, and they feel depressed. I've never experienced this at all. I know it's come up often, and I just wonder - I can't understand why people feel so negative, it seems to me (Voices.) I wonder whether it does depend on temperament, or what it is. But if it is the case that it (Voices.)

S: I think it is important to put the other side of the picture - that there's not only a Wheel of Life and its cessation, but a positive spiral, a creative spiral that grows out of a certain point on the Wheel, so that cessation is not the last word and the only word. Also I think an important point is the way you put something across; for instance, if you talk in a very matter-of-fact tone about the Wheel of Life it won't come across as something negative; but if you talk about it with a negative feeling, if it means something negative for you, you'll communicate a negative impression. If you say, 'Old age and death' - they're just facts; everyone grows old, and everybody dies. But if you say (spectral voice) 'Old age and death'- [Laughter] you give people an entirely different impression.

_____ : You didn't manage to make that sound negative.

S: do better next time. (laughter.) But you know what I mean. I imagine your attitude is probably quite matter-of-fact, but I think if you were talking to people about the Wheel of Life, I think you'd communicate a matter-of-fact impression and not a negative one, but someone who was himself or herself a bit disturbed about these things, and experienced them as negative, talking about the Wheel of Life, could communicate a negative impression.

_____ :

_____ : cessation, teaching of Buddhism just for the sake of cessation and of course that is depressing, just cessation.

_____ : It fits in with

S: I think also another thing we have to bear in mind is - the impression I get from reading the Pali scriptures is that the Indians in the Buddha's day - leave aside what they are now - were very cheerful, positive, life-loving, lusty people who enjoyed life and wanted to have a good time, they had strong emotions and strong passions; and that the teaching was addressed in that form to those sort of people. They weren't in the least bit negative; they needed a bit of reining in.

_____ : There's also a very strong positive presence of the Buddha.

S: Right, yes, that's true - and of nature.

_____ : This came up in the Jewel Ornament of Liberation as well: the Tibetans had very strong faith in a positive context.

S: Yes, right. The ancient Indians didn't have any doubts about the value of life and things like that; they really enjoyed themselves. They weren't like the modern Indians in many ways. The picture you get from the Pali Canon is very different - that they really did enjoy themselves, and they revelled in luxury and pleasures, and so on. The Tibetans are like that, they're not religious in the Western Christian sense. I remember one of my own pupils, a young Khamba trader; he told me that they regularly divided their income - and they were quite wealthy people - into three parts: one was for religion, one was for business and living expenses; and a third was for pleasure, which meant picnicking, gambling, drinking, visits to

Calcutta - (laughter.) A third of the income was for pleasure, pure and simple. And a third for religion, and a third for everything else. And that seems very typical. And the ancient Indians were very much like that, it seems.

_____ : Do you think that trying it out?

S: You see, there must be a basis of healthy positivity before there can be a genuine growth of spiritual life.

_____ : Perhaps the negative precepts would come across very positively.

S: Yes, this is another point. The negative precepts came across very positively, because there was something to negate - not to negate, but to shape -

_____ : what it was. It wasn't negative at all, but just a channelling.

S: Right, as you say, just channelling. And also there is the point that, even grammatically, words which are grammatically negative in Sanskrit and Pali have a positive ring about them - just like our English word 'immortality': literally it means 'no mortality', it's negative in form, but it has a positive ring, immortality. So many of their negative words are like that, but they don't come across to us positively at all. We don't feel them as shaping, we feel them as negating. So I think we have to translate the terminology, as it were, in a much deeper way - translate the meaning, not just translate the grammatical form.

Ananda: That's a very big stumbling-block, I feel. All the way through the study of the Survey in our study group, that was the main difficulty, in fact. We spent hours discussing those words, and the actual meaning and spirit of them, and why it didn't come across, and people were wondering about ... negativity, and

S: So it's quite a task, in a way. I think we have to attempt it, or do it - have this more positive approach. But at the same time, not disguising from ourselves facts like old age, disease and death, but looking at them in a matter-of-fact way.

Bodhisri: I can also see something else, like for instance it started off by saying maybe one should drop all negative formulations. I think if one had strictly positive formulations I can see that something else might develop, which is a sort of pseudo-positiveness. And this has not been the case in our own Movement, and I think that's not to be encouraged either, like everything is positive -

S: And everything is beautiful -

Bodhisri: Yes. And I can see that happening

S: It's the process of the spiritual life itself which is positive, though that may involve dealing with, and having to face, things which we find quite unpleasant. But to face those things, in a way accept them and grow beyond them. But the overall process is positive. And our terminology should express that overall positivity, without seeing everything through a rosy mist, and without refusing to face in a realistic way relatively unpleasant facts.

Bodhisri: I also feel that the difficulty people experience with those negative formulations alone may indicate something to work on. Why is that?

_____ : particular tradition just this particular society. And the idea, for instance, of freedom from desire as being a really good thing, really to be looked forward to,

(end of side) Tape 15, side 2

looked forward to, just isn't around so much in society.

S: I think there is something to be clarified here. When one speaks, say, in terms of death, that is not a negative formulation. The negative formulation comes when, for instance, you speak in terms of getting rid of desire, and you reduce the whole of the spiritual life simply to getting rid of desire, without bringing in the higher states which are experienced when you have got rid of desire. But certainly one can speak in terms of getting rid of desire, because there is a desire, neurotic desire, to be got rid of. So it isn't negative just to include that, but it is negative to equate the whole spiritual life simply with removal of unskilful states, without drawing attention to the cultivation of the positive states. It isn't negative to mention death or old age or disease; that isn't negative at all, I would say; that is just being realistic. But to speak of the spiritual life as a whole simply as the cessation of what is unskilful, without bringing in what you achieve and experience positively, that is a one-sidedly negative formulation, I would say. But we can't leave aside unskilful thoughts which we have to get rid of and unpleasant facts which we have to face. Perhaps it's a combination of realism and positivity.

_____ : Seems to me that the positive way of looking at it is 'take it and go on', and the negative way of looking at it is as a working basis, because to get rid of craving you know exactly what you have to do.

S: Your ideals should be positive, even though your working method may have to be negative, because you may have so many unskilful things to work on and get rid of. But the ideal and the overall view of the spiritual life and path should be positive and progressive.

_____ : psychological

S: I remember Anne - that is Anne Bancroft - showed me one day an anthology of poems written by a very worthy English monk in the East, and one poem ended with the refrain, every single verse: 'Doom, destruction, death, decay.' Anne and I were chanting thisat the shop at Sakura. We were really enjoying it : 'Doom, destruction, death, decay.' The poem was very naïve, it went like 'The Buddha shows the way: Doom, destruction, death, decay' ! (LAUGHTER) 'To the gods you mustn't pray - Doom, destruction, death, decay'. Anne and I were just rolling on the floor at Sakura, these verses and this refrain. And then she said, 'This is the sort of thing that is being put out in Buddhism,' and shook her head over it.

But he was a very worthy monk, and he had written this very worthy poem, and that was the refrain of it, that was how he saw Buddhism: doom, destruction, death, decay. 'The only way', I think it also rhymed with - a whole series of verses, all rhyming with 'decay'.

_____ : BODHICARYA very difficult.

S: Yes, I think we have to be very careful there too.

_____ : Tantra

S: I think we have to be very careful. I think the matter-of-fact approach is the best, probably, here for many people; not an emotionally loaded approach one way or the other, just matter-of-fact and straightforward and sensible.

Lokamitra: In the BODHICARYA those things are said with so much positivity, and that positivity doesn't come through - you can even, I should think, say, 'Doom, destruction, death, decay' in a very -

S: - exhilarating way!

Lokamitra: Yes! You can probably -

S: Depends on the context.

Lokamitra: Yes, but when you write that down, and someone else sees just the words, they just don't get the feeling at all.

S: But if you are writing it down and you know that people are only going to get the words, then you shouldn't write those sort of words.

Ananda: Even in the English language they have - in the course of the development of the English language - certain words which had very positive and creative connotations now have very gloomy, negative ones, like the word 'doom' itself - originally

S: Yes, doom was simply judgement. You might be acquitted sometimes. (VOICES.) I'd say what is even more important than positive terminology is positive attitude; this communicates even more. I think we have to think very much about our centres in this context, because the Centre itself speaks, even if you don't say a word. The way it is arranged, the way it is run, the colours of the Centre - all these things speak.

Mangala: people are very impressed. (VOICES.)

S: Places, too; nature as well. The weather can make all the difference to a retreat, sometimes.

Well, we've come to the end of our questions. If anyone has a serious question that they really want to ask from the floor, as it were, we can deal with that, but there's no need just to go on discussing for the sake of discussing. So pause a moment and see if you have a real question about the Dharma that you've just thought of.

Dharmapala: I had a question related to yesterday's discussion on ANAGARIKA and MAHA-UPASAKA. I was left with the impression that the MAHA-UPASAKA would be a married person and so on, and that the ANAGARIKA would be celibate, and nothing between, that's the impression I got left with, and not like a single person who might not be celibate but perhaps could be a MAHA-UPASAKA. Is that a possibility?

S: I was thinking aloud. There are, as I also said, these intermediate steps or stages or shades. I think it would be quite difficult to cover them all; you'd have to decide probably whether someone fell more this side of the line than that side of the line. I was considering the two as it were chemically pure states or cases.

_____ : What does the word ANAGARIKA mean?

S: It strictly means 'city-less', one not associated with a city or with, say, organised social life. In modern Indian languages, it has the connotation of uncultured, uncivilised, but the real meaning is someone who is not connected with the ordinary social and domestic and household life, who is not a householder, though he has not taken formal what later became bhikkhu ordination; he's a sort of freelance monk. As, in fact, the Buddha's own disciples really were originally.

_____ : Lama Govinda - does that ?

S: He took the title of ANAGARIKA when he was in Ceylon, but he kept it on even after he

married, and a lot of people were quite upset about that and said -

_____ : You say he took it, but one gives ?

S: This I don't know. I think he must have had some ceremony, but he retained it even after getting married, and added 'Lama', so quite a few people that I knew were not at all happy about that, and some people refused to use 'ANAGARIKA' when writing to him.

_____ : Is there a traditional ceremony, then, for the ANAGARIKA?

S: Just as we have the UPASAKA ordination, but substituting ANAGARIKAM SAMAMSILAM for UPASAKAM SAMAMSILAM, and substituting ABRAHMACARYA for KAMESU MICCHACARA. So it's all as it were laid on already, you could say, if we do decide to take this up.

_____ :

S: I don't know. These are relative details. I'd say probably yellow, because they would be as it were monks or nuns, as the case may be.

_____ :

S: No, I've not thought about all that (VOICES.) ANAGARIKĀ, with a long a.

Bodhisri: Here's another question. I've heard of some people you had talked about - this relates to DUKKHA, the experience of DUKKHA, it's something different from people who think they're suffering or whatever, but I can't really

S: No, it's something rather different from that, but I know what must have got back to you. What I said actually was that the realisation of the Aryan truth of DUKKHA is quite distinct from the experience of DUKKHA, this is what I said.

_____ : I think that

S: Is that clear, or shall I say something more about it? (VOICES.) Traditionally there are three kinds of feeling. There is the pleasant, the painful and the neutral. The painful, of course, is DUKKHA. So that is DUKKHA in the sense of painful sensation. But the realisation of the truth of DUKKHA is the actual experience of the fact that all conditioned things whatsoever, whether pleasant or painful, fall short of the supreme experience which is nirvana. So that you experience, paradoxically, the painfulness even of pleasant experiences. So just to experience painful experiences, that's got nothing to do, or very little to do, with the realisation of the truth of DUKKHA, which is a realisation or an insight into the conditioned nature of all experiences and their ultimate unsatisfactoriness, even though your present experience is completely pleasant.

So the fact that someone has lots of painful experiences doesn't mean that he is necessarily nearer to a realisation of the truth of DUKKHA; he may be far away from it. And someone may have an experience of the truth of DUKKHA, the Aryan truth of DUKKHA, while their present experience is very blissful.

Siddhiratna: not the possibility at the top?

S: In the sense that if you are suffering, you have an incentive to end the suffering or to find out what causes the suffering - in that sense. There's more of stimulus, as it were, to get out, to get away from that very unsatisfactory state. Whereas if you've got lots of pleasant experiences, then there may not be much stimulus or incentive. But there is the theoretical

possibility of having a present pleasant experience combined with realisation of the truth of DUKKHA, and in the same way a present experience of DUKKHA with no insight into that whatever, no insight into the Aryan truth of DUKKHA whatever. It was that distinction I was getting at.

Did it come back in a garbled form, or - ?

Bodhisri: No, it was merely

Ratnapani: I think in the context of meditation, SAMATHA and VIPASSANA meditation, to have an insight into the Aryan truth of suffering, you can't be suffering because then you - it wouldn't have the SAMATHA on which the VIPASSANA is based; you're just sort of in meditation, cushion -

S: Of course, you can have the VIPASSANA when the SAMATHA has passed away.

_____ : Yes, I see.

S: Another point which is very important here is that there are some teachers who step up the pressure and make you go through all sorts of painful experiences, and then they say, 'Ah, what you're experiencing now is the truth of DUKKHA, that's Insight.' That's a complete misunderstanding. By depriving you of sleep and making you do eight or ten hours' meditation a day, they can induce all sorts of quite painful experiences, which are then identified with an experience of, or insight into, the truth of DUKKHA, but that is just not so at all.

_____ : (LAUGHTER.)

Bodhisri:

S: Yes, exactly. It's got nothing to do with Insight at all. It may be very painful, but it is not Insight into the truth of pain. You don't necessarily have Insight into the Aryan truth of suffering just because you're suffering, though it may be an incentive, the fact that you're suffering, to search for something higher. And a perfectly happy person can have a complete Insight into the truth of suffering - as the Buddha did.

Bodhisri:

S: Yes, right. You can have a complete realisation of an Insight into the truth of suffering, having had a very pleasant life.

_____ : You probably have to to discover it,

_____ : MICCHADITTHI

S: Right. I did mention that an American scholar had investigated in China, in the days when the Sangha was crumbling and Buddhism was being undermined by Marxism after the Communists took over, and he found that the monks who really stuck it and were faithful to their vows and the spiritual life were those who had entered the Sangha as very young boys - seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven. Those were the ones who seemed, he said - and he was rather surprised by this - to have the genuine dedication. He didn't mean just religious conditioning, but real spiritual dedication, which could not be disturbed even by very adverse circumstances.

So I think we must recognise this possibility, that there may be very young people with a very

genuine and very pure spiritual aspiration, who can go straight into the spiritual life, who do not need to go through an experience of the world.

_____ : It makes the school very important,

S: Right. But it doesn't mean that children of Order members will necessarily be little angels. They may, despite their good Buddhist parents, turn out to be absolute little devils. You never know. After all, there are grandparents and great-grandparents lurking in the background, all the way back to old Adam. But it is possible that some Buddhist parents may well have, by virtue of karma and so on, children who are comparatively advanced and get off to an early start. That is quite possible. I don't want people to start thinking of their children as little Bodhisattvas and things like that, force them into the role, thrust little begging bowls into their tiny hands. They have to see it for themselves.

Srimala: Put Shanti out

Uttara: to suggest should they not be given the - well, they can't at this moment, but - (VOICES.)

S: Some Buddhist parents say they can't keep their children away from Buddhism. They try to be very objective and say 'You'd better study other things too, take a look at Christianity'. 'Oh no, daddy, I want to be a Buddhist.' It seems more this way.

Abhaya: My wife that she took the two children down to the playing field, and Louise, that's my daughter, she was coming down the slide like this (LAUGHTER). And then they all started doing it.

S: It's not a question of suggesting it to them, you probably can't keep them away from it.

Srimala: Children love things like the chanting

S: Also it's that they want to imitate their parents. It's a quite natural and healthy thing. If their parents are doing Buddhistic things of course they will want to join in. It's not that they are seriously becoming Buddhists, it's more a cultural thing. But you shouldn't exclude the child from that on the mistaken idea of letting them make up their own minds. Of course they will make up their own minds later on, but don't deprive them of that as it were cultural participation in the meantime.

_____ : I must say when Abhaya moved into Abhirati, the children always wanted to go and sit in the mornings. And we had a Puja, and Jane's children had come over, so we always Pujed, they really loved joining in

S: Well, they like something colourful and something that's happening, and everybody's joining in, and why shouldn't they?

_____ : Yes, it's good, isn't it, a happy family, naturally gravitated to the Movement

Lokamitra: It's quite common round here, I think, to think that people have to have - you can only be free if you're outside of things, you can only have a free choice outside. non-Buddhist. If you're brought up as a true Buddhist then you'll have total freedom, or much more.

S: You can't really bring up a child as nothing; you can't do that. It would be very cruel. (VOICES.) If, for instance, the child says, 'My little friends are all celebrating Christmas, they

want me to go to their Christmas party' - you don't say, 'You're a little Buddhist, you can't go to Christmas parties.' [Laughter] Just let them go along, it's just a cultural thing. And obviously there will be a bit of cross-cultural reference, as it were. You can't exclude them entirely from the culture of the environment. If they want to go to a Christmas party, fair enough. Even if they want a Christmas tree, you can always put a little Buddha on the top!

_____ : They'll want to go to church.

S: When they are old enough, if they want to go to church, let them go and see.

Sanghamitta: This is the awful thing about, say, the Plymouth Brethren the children are not allowed to anybody else's children, and vice versa, so that they always keep them in that circle, they're not allowed to join a certain kind of school, so they won't hear of anything else outside that circle.

S: They're probably consumed with curiosity, or will be when they're a bit older. You can't keep -

Sanghamitta: But they'll be terribly conditioned, won't they, not having

S: Either they will remain terribly conditioned and be good Plymouth Brethren, or they'll completely break away from it and react violently, and probably break with their parents.

_____ : It would be quite interesting to see the second generation,

_____ : A friend of mine had three young children and when they reached the age of seven she started to teach them meditation, and the eldest who is just now seven - he just loves it, he loves lighting the incense in the shrine room

S: You can certainly talk to the child, in a reasonable and rational way, not talking down - and saying, 'I'm a Buddhist, this is what I believe and why, but you must make up your own mind. Go and have a look at other faiths if you want to; that's up to you.' But certainly don't refuse to tell the child why you are a Buddhist, and admit the fact that you think that Buddhism is best; and perhaps the child will be a bit influenced by that. But at the same time leave the child quite free to make his own explorations. And really speak your mind to the child when he or she is old enough; not hold back and think 'I mustn't influence the child', so that you don't say what you really think. Say what you really think, but also say, 'You're free to make up your own mind.' Don't hold back your own conviction.

_____ : I've had experience of parents not wanting me to talk to the children about it, because they felt that I would influence the children.

_____ : It's funny how we can be prepared to go out and influence all the rest of the world and be not prepared to influence

_____ : I don't think the question arises, if you are really into Buddhism - your own practice and so forth.

_____ : I don't think it's so much a question of what you say, it's a question of what you are, as far as children are concerned. That's what they understand, not what you say to them. It's a question of their and later on as well.

S: Even if they never become Buddhists in the full sense of committing themselves, at least they will always associate Buddhism with a happy home life and a happy childhood and something positive - at least that; and they'll always have a good word for Buddhism, even if

they don't themselves decide to take it up.

_____ : talking about Buddhism specifically, because then the children are (ETC.)

S: In a sense, whatever a Buddhist says is Buddhism; you can't not say anything about it.

_____ :

S: Unless someone has a definite question, maybe we should end on that happy juvenile note. With tea.

E N D

of

Second Order Convention, 1975

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