

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 [Mitrans](#). These seminars were highly formative for the FWBO/Tiratna 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 Tiratna 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 [Tiratna 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

The Venerable Sangharakshita Mitra Retreat Questions and Answers based on
'Dhyana for Beginners' 1976

Sangharakshita: Any general points or general attitudes, as it were of the text that haven't been made clear?

_____ : (unclear) translations (unclear) using different words for what might be the same term or the same word for maybe two different terms and it's generally becoming a bit of a hotch. It sort of rambles (unclear).

S: I think we did get the impression when we went through this at an Order study retreat that perhaps the text had been made up from talks and lectures given to disciples at different times. There do seem to be a few gaps, as it were, in the text. I mean not actual gaps in the text itself but the system which is implicit in the text, the system of meditation as it were, isn't made fully explicit, and that when we edit the 'Dhyana for Beginners' seminar this is something that I want to do, to write a lengthy introduction and make the whole system fully explicit. Because it is a very useful text as regards certain topics which it does cover very well, and if those gaps which are filled in in the overall structure were made clearer it would be a very useful text indeed. Despite those relative shortcomings I still think it's the best sort of general introductory book to meditation that we have in English. I can't think of any (unclear). I'm not very happy about books on meditation anyway, but if one has to have a book on meditation this is about the best that we have, I'm sure. I was rather horrified to learn recently that Heinemann's are thinking of commissioning someone to write a book on all existing meditation techniques, which doesn't seem to be the right sort of thing to do at all. Needless to say it would be someone who hadn't practised all of them, or perhaps not any of them.

_____ : From one particular religion or...

S: I don't know. It hasn't been clarified. I don't think they were quite clear about this.

_____ : It will probably be read by people who don't intend to meditate at all!

_____ : A thing that crossed my mind that still isn't clear is this thing about you can't practise dhyana (unclear) unless you go away. (unclear)

S: Well put it this way. There are degrees of going away and there are degrees of practising dhyana. To the extent that you go away, to that extent you'll be free to practise dhyana. So if you shut yourself up in your own room for an hour all by yourself you've 'gone away' to some extent, and to that extent you can practise dhyana, but if you want to get really deeply into it, which might mean hours of practice a day, then you have to go away in a much more radical sort of fashion. That might mean going into solitary retreat for a month. But the principle is that to the extent that you want to practise dhyana, to that extent you have to go away. That is if you are a beginner and this is dhyana for the beginner. If you are advanced and you can maintain a positive, as it were, dhyanic state of consciousness in the midst of your ordinary everyday activities, that's fine. You just mustn't fool yourself about that. The beginner needs to go away in order to practise dhyana, whether it's go away into his own room or go away into the forest for a weekend or go away into solitary retreat for a month, or go away into a hermitage for two or three years.

Aryamitra: You see within the movement that will be what we will be doing next. At the moment people do a lot of work. That will be the next wave. You can't really get into dhyana states and work at the same time. Not to begin with.

[2]

S: You can't, but at the same time I've noticed say at Sukhavati that the general state or level of consciousness among the people living there seems to be very positive. I think more than I've encountered, apart from sometimes on retreat, in the case of any group of people in England. I've not encountered anything so good since I left India, most definitely. So there is a combination of work and meditation and just general companionship and a relatively innocent life, and that seems to (obscured by coughs) positive influence. Most of them say that when they go out of Sukhavati, even though they've quite enjoyed themselves, had a good evening out somewhere, they're quite happy to get back.

Aryamitra: Is that produced more, do you think, by working together than the actual sitting that they might do. Because I've heard that mostly while they're sitting they're thinking about what work they've got ahead.

S: This might be the case with regards to one or two who are responsible for organizing the work, but I have heard - in fact they admit it quite frankly - that they often find it difficult to meditate because they're so tired sometimes. But nevertheless, one must think not so much in terms of technical levels of meditation attained while sitting, one must think much more in terms of the overall level of consciousness maintained. The overall level of consciousness maintained seems to be very good and very positive and, as it were, somewhat dhyanic. There's a faint or sort of diluted dhyana state that most people are enjoying much of the time. It's very friendly, there's no negativity or very little, and I certainly have not felt any sort of tension or friction between people since I arrived there. It seems completely absent, which is quite extraordinary when you think of two dozen people living there.

So the positivity of the atmosphere there seems to depend upon three factors as far as I can see: the first factor is that you have a definite objective towards which you are working. This seems to be the first thing, that you are working for something.

Aryamitra: It keeps your concentration.

S: It's not just work. You are working for something that you believe in. That seems to be the first. There is a regular spiritual practice, even though it's not always very well kept up, though I think most people are pretty sensible. If they feel that they're so tired they're not going to have a good meditation they just stay in bed with a clear conscience and no one is going around making them feel a bit guilty or a bit of a bad boy for not getting up and going to the meditation. It's left to their own judgement. If someone feels well no, it's not going to be any good going and meditating, it's better having another hour's sleep, he feels free to do that. Or if someone feels he'd like to take the day off, well fair enough. It's left to each individual person's sense of responsibility to do the right thing by himself and by everybody else.

So these two things. Firstly the fact that you're all working for a common objective, that you all have a certain amount of spiritual practice in common, and there's also the study; and also a third factor which seems to be quite relevant, which mustn't be overlooked, is the fact that

it's all men, and that also seems to make a great difference.

So I think it's just these three things. Which in a way are the things that you get in traditional monasteries, certainly Zen monasteries and Chinese monasteries. You get the common spiritual objective, which is enlightenment itself, and everything is geared and oriented to that, even the organization and administration of the monastery; and then you get the common spiritual practice. Everybody at least gathers together and chants together, even if they don't meditate; and then it is a men's community. These are the essential things of a 'monastic', inverted commas, set up in the East. And they seem to be extremely powerful and positive factors, and if you're all living together in that sort of way, a positive atmosphere is almost automatically created.

But again I must say - I've been thinking about this quite a bit - I think the work is very important, because if you're working, especially if you're working in that sort of context, you are putting energy into something, [3] energy does not stagnate. If there is any sort of curse of monasticism in the East, and it's a real curse, and it's probably the curse of monasticism in the West also in its day, it's simply stagnation and idleness. This is really the thing to watch. So I think once the work on Sukhavati is finished we have to be very careful that the community doesn't sort of settle in or settle down and then find itself with nothing much to do. Then even your meditation will be affected, the general atmosphere will be affected. The work is very important.

_____ : And that would even apply to more rural settings where there's never any lack of work to do.

S: Perhaps.

_____ : (unclear) Christian monastic communities (unclear)

S: I think the combination of just these three things - the overall spiritual context, there's an ultimate spiritual objective for everything that you're doing - one. A certain amount of common spiritual practice, at least meditating and chanting together, and then it being a masculine community. These three things seem just to work wonders for people. So some no doubt can be immersed in that more or less permanently and others can come for the odd weekend or a week retreat as circumstances permit. In this way they'll benefit very much. It's not necessarily a permanent set up.

Aryamitra: It seems that the communication through work seems to develop a lot, in terms of creating positive energy rather than highly, sort of more personal things.

S: Sometimes personal things are a real drag. Or to hear about personal things and personal problems. But if you're working together and, as you say, communicating through work, that can be very positive and you get a very definite relationship built up. [Pause]

Padmapani: In the context of the text - 'Dhyana for Beginners' - do you see the possibility in the future of people doing full time dhyana practice in Sukhavati and out in the country (unclear)

S: Well what does one mean by 'full time dhyana practice'? Are you putting the emphasis on

practice?

Padmapani: Well one's developing meditation and trying to develop higher mental states. I'm talking about a long period of time, months at a time.

S: I think we must be very careful to distinguish between the sitting practice and practice in general. The real aim is simply to experience, permanently if possible, a higher state of consciousness. Sitting and meditating, as we call it, helps you to get into that and experience that, but ultimately one must experience it the whole time. So one mustn't tie it too exclusively to actual sitting and meditating. This is what I was getting at when I spoke about the slightly diffused, even though diluted, dhyana like atmosphere at Sukhavati. Even though they're sitting and meditating maybe it wasn't going all that well. So it's not necessarily a matter of getting more and more into that higher state of consciousness simply by increasing the number of hours that you sit and meditate.

For instance even if you're, say, following a quite strict routine and being absorbed most, if not all, the time in that higher state of consciousness, you may not actually be sitting and meditating. You may be engaged in various simple tasks and at that time when you are just making that transition from a higher state of consciousness, a dhyana state, experienced while sitting and meditating, to a dhyana experience or dhyana state experienced while doing other things, it's very good to make that transition by engaging in very simple tasks that don't require much mental activity. Which require, certainly, awareness and alertness. For instance sawing wood or just doing some weeding or something like that. You certainly have to see what you're doing but you don't have to think in the sense of work things out and worry. So you can make the transition from sitting and meditating to working and [4] meditating more easily through these very simple basic activities. But if you're given, for instance, a complicated piece of book-keeping to check through, then it will be almost impossible for you to keep your dhyana state, because your mind will have to be so active then. But eventually even that might be possible.

So for instance in the case of Sukhavati I'm quite sure that those who've got less responsibility meditate better. Those who have got more responsibility have to think more, and thinking is inimical to dhyana.

Another important point we touched upon the other day which is very relevant from a general dhyana point of view, is the preparation of food, and I mentioned the point that in some of the Japanese Zen monasteries, we are told, that it's a very senior and experienced monk who prepares the food, who is the cook, because it's important that people should get the right sort of food. Not only the right sort of food, not even the right kind of food, but it should be prepared in the right sort of way, that is with mindfulness and with care, with love, because it is a traditional belief which seems to be well founded, that the mental state of the person preparing the food affects the food itself and the person who eats the food. So therefore it's also said that if you are practising really intensively it's best to eat food either prepared by your own hand or by the hands of people who are spiritually close to you, your fellow disciples and so on, and you really feel this sometimes if you go to outside restaurants. There's a very, in a sense, bad atmosphere there, and what you eat there can't do you much good, even if it is vegetarian. So that's another thing to consider; and again that applies to Sukhavati. The food is prepared by the people who are living there, and I'm sure this has an effect. Everybody looks healthier than before. I don't think it's just eating whole grains and

things, I think there's this mental side too.

And I think it was a very good step that they took - I don't know if you know about this - formerly everybody took a turn with the cooking, even those who didn't want to, they had to take their turn, but they've dropped that now, so you're included in the rota for cooking only if you want to be. If you don't like to cook you need not. So it means no one is cooking with resentment, and some people made the point that they could sometimes pick up that someone didn't really like to be cooking and from the way he was chopping the vegetables it was clear he just didn't want to do that, and they couldn't help almost remembering that when they were eating. So now the only people who cook are those who want to cook, and most of them do anyway, but there's a minority that just do have a thing about cooking, for one reason or another, so they are just allowed not to cook. No one minds. No doubt they make it up in other ways.

_____ : There are traditions about some foods being unsuitable if you're trying to meditate, particularly garlic and onions...

S: You see the traditional thing about garlic and onions in India is they're supposed to be aphrodisiacs, you see. But I personally think that this is rubbish, because every food is an aphrodisiac in the sense that everything that nourishes you makes you more healthy and full of energy in every respect, including the sexual. So if you want to control sex through food you just have to starve yourself [Laughter] and reduce your energy so that you just don't get those sort of feelings either [Laughter] but then you're good for nothing anyway. So I don't think there's much in that. But there's no doubt that in the Mahayana scriptures it says bodhisattvas should not eat garlic and onions, and when Indians eat garlic they really do eat garlic. The Nepalese too. My own particular feeling is that this is simply in view of the stress on the Bodhisattva's making himself acceptable to people, and if you're breathing garlic [Laughter] you can't be considered very acceptable, it's not very Bodhisattva-like. That was the original reason, not anything to do with aphrodisiacs or anything of that sort.

Otherwise you just have to ask yourself. Does it have that sort of effect on me? It's no use taking these things just on faith. But as far as I have been able to observe in India, I don't think there's any particular food that can be regarded as an aphrodisiac. There are certain things which will irritate the bladder and so on and sometimes that irritation will be communicated to the [5] sexual system, but that's a physical irritation, it is not a stimulation, and that is a quite different thing.

In India of course, and in the East generally, people like to believe that certain foods are aphrodisiacs. Maybe they get a certain mental boost out of taking them but I don't think there's anything in it at all. Life itself is an aphrodisiac. [Pause]

But all of this points in the direction of something I've stressed before. I think it's mentioned in the course of this text and the discussion on the text. The importance of preparation and conditions. If you prepare properly for dhyana, if the conditions are propitious, you're already half way there. Hence Sukhavati, hence the Happy Land, where conditions are ideal. You still have to strive, certainly strive very hard, but then circumstances aren't going against you, they are co-operating.

These two things are important, your own personal preparation in every sense, and the

conditions under which you practice, the overall context of it. And everybody finds this when we go away on retreat, it's just so much easier, unless of course you try to overdo it, and you must be careful not to do that. You might have a very good meditation for two hours, but it doesn't follow that if you force yourself to sit for four hours you'll get twice as far. That doesn't follow at all. You can experience a very sharp reaction against this. [Long Pause]

_____ : Is it a common experience that when people start meditating they have a period of very successful meditations and then it seems to be really quite (unclear) for quite a long. I think I found it's taken me about....

S: Yes actually I haven't talked about it lately but I used to talk about it quite a lot, especially when I was taking classes in London. It seems to be quite a common experience that when you start you have quite good meditations. Occasionally it happens that somebody's first meditation is his best for a long time. His very first meditation can sometimes be the best that he has for months and months and months, but even if that isn't the case, what we usually find - at least what I used to find with people coming to beginners' classes, it might have changed now, but what I used to find - was that for three or four months, maybe up to six months, everything went quite well and people might not have a good meditation every time they came to the class or every time they sat, but they kept up a fairly steady level of progress. But after four to six months, in quite a number of cases, everything seems to go wrong. They couldn't meditate when they sat. They had lots of disturbing thoughts and they start feeling rather churned up and sometimes week after week, even day after day, if they were sitting every day, they just wouldn't get a good meditation and they'd get quite upset. And it would seem, as far as I could see, that what was happening was that the meditation was beginning to produce effects. That they weren't just meditating, as it were, with the surface of their minds, something was percolating through, something was beginning to sink into the unconscious, as it were, and a sort of general upheaval was taking place, as a result of which for the time being they couldn't meditate. But usually if they stuck with it and persisted and didn't altogether force things, then after a while they re-established their meditation, in some cases on a better and more positive level, and in the meantime they might have sorted out a few, for want of a better term, personal problems or made a certain personal adjustment. This in those days used to be quite a common sort of thing to happen.

And then again there'd be a bigger and sometimes an even more traumatic upheaval after a couple of years, and I noticed that we quite often lost people after two years. That seemed to be a quite critical period. If you got through that, then you were probably in it for good, as it were. But very roughly speaking the two year period was quite critical. I don't know whether people still find that. I'm a bit out of touch with the day to day happenings now.

_____ : The two previous meditation classes etc., that I went to before I'd come to the Friends I left them both after two years.

S: Oh! That's interesting. So how long have you been with the Friends? [Laughter]

[6]

_____ : I was just trying to calculate that!

S: That's interesting isn't it, yes.

_____ : I don't know about the length of time involved but I was noticing up until a couple of days ago, for about a fortnight a real difficulty in meditation, and since I have sort of come to grips with it and just finding I was starting to get on better, I was wondering whether half the problem might be that I was sort of getting fed up with it and getting annoyed. Whether that was holding me back from actually getting anywhere.

S: But then why should one get fed up with it or get annoyed with it if it's going well? Sometimes that does happen, that in a very odd way your meditation is going quite well and you're having a good positive experience, but for some reason or other you don't want to continue. It's as though there's something on an even deeper level that is kicking against it. It's those unregenerate lower levels as it were. So sometimes you might just have to persist gently. At other times recognizing your limitations, just meditate for so long and not for any more.

_____ : It seemed as if one thing after another would come up. As soon as I'd get over maybe coughing, I'd get tired and then after that there's be something else. Just one thing after another and I'd get really annoyed with it.

S: But it is that the whole system is beginning to feel threatened. Your whole being, as it were, beginning to feel sort of, 'My god, he's taking it all seriously!' [Laughter] It's not any longer just a pleasant little comfortable sitting where you float along quite happily and then go back to the pig trough, as it were, afterwards. It's not like that, it's beginning to bite, it's beginning to take a hold and you're beginning to be a bit changed. So of course there is a strong reaction, a sharp reaction from that part of you - it's a very big part obviously - which is not as yet involved. So this happens from time to time quite definitely, on different levels.

_____ : I found on this retreat, after the first day I found myself very tired and very negative inside and all sorts of things were churned up - well is it worth it? can I carry on? - so I did stick it and (unclear) about something positive, since when it's disappeared.

S: Right. And there is another factor also, which is that meditation puts you in contact, very often, with feelings that are actually there, but which you haven't allowed yourself, as it were, to experience. For instance you might come along say to a retreat like this, and you might actually be very very tired, and you might not know that you were tired. You might have been working without any holiday or much of a rest for quite a few months, and you are really very tired, but in your conscious mind you don't think that you're tired or feel that you're tired, but actually your system is tired. So when you get the opportunity to relax in meditation, you start coming into contact with that tiredness. So you mustn't think all right it's the meditation that has made me tired, no, you came along tired, or you came along angry or you came along resentful and you've got in touch with that now. [Laughter] Which is good. So if you feel a real basic genuine tiredness all right, I need to rest, I need to take things easy. Or if you get in touch with sort of anger or resentment, all right, where's it coming from, what's caused it, is there anything that has to be changed in my life that is making me resentful, or is it just a purely basic resentment that I've got to get over and get rid of.

So when we come on retreat, especially when we come from a more or less sort of normal life, we come really in a very battered state, psychologically, and we may have to experience that and realize that for a while. In the papers recently there has been a lot about battered wives, but I think there are also battered husbands. In fact you could go so far as to say that

everybody is battered! [Laughter] Why only battered wives?! Everybody in this civilization is battered. You're being battered day and night, right and left. You go to work, you're battered, go home you're battered [Laughter] You can even go [7] to a council meeting and be battered. [Laughter] Civilized man is a battered man. But you realize this when you come on a retreat or you start trying to meditate. But another thing also which again we mentioned lately - the importance of keeping the beginner's mind. This is a Zen term but a very useful one - beginner's mind. Why do you have such a good meditation often when you begin? Because you don't know what's coming. You've no thoughts, no anticipations usually. You just do the practice. But after you've done it a few times and maybe had certain little results from it, you start sort of thinking and anticipating. You don't do it with a completely fresh mind, and that's why it becomes a bit stale or becomes a bit boring because you think it's the same old meditation. But it isn't! Every time it's different. So every time you should approach it with a fresh mind, and do it as though for the first time. That's very very important.

_____ : Is this why preparation is so important?

S: It's partly that, yes, because if you are properly prepared you sort of slide into the meditation and you don't sort of think well what's coming and you don't worry if you don't get the exact experience that you got yesterday and the day before.

_____ : An image that's been popping into my head quite a lot during this retreat (unclear) when I first started was that in your new little booklet where you had the object of meditation is not to have good meditations, it's to evolve or transform.

S: I think I've gone into that quite a bit in the course of the talk on meditation that I gave in New Zealand, the tape recording of which unfortunately isn't of very good quality, but I have stressed that quite a bit in that particular talk.

_____ : The one thing I find myself doing is sort of straining to get some sort of experience and just really pile it on.

S: Well again I went into that in the course of the talk I gave last November - Enlightenment as experience and as non-experience - why do you think so much in terms of experience? It's because of the inner emptiness which you want to fill. Sometimes you try to fill it with something worldly but you even try and fill it with a sort of spiritual experience. Instead of growing into that, you try to grab hold of that and sort of force it into yourself, so that you can sort of latch on to it, which isn't the way at all.

_____ : Can you explain that a bit more fully?

S: Well it's a bit like the preta state. You know the Wheel of Life, you know the pretas are these mythic beings with enormous bellies and very narrow necks, and mouths like the eyes of needles. What does this represent? It represents a sort of neurotic craving. You've got this deep seated, deep rooted, sort of hunger, so instead of asking yourself well why do I feel this, what is this, you start trying to satisfy it with some object outside you. But that object outside you can never really satisfy your craving, because it's something you've got to come to terms with within. You've got to resolve that sort of feeling of inner emptiness, otherwise you can't even experience what you experience. People often get this or experience this in sort of emotional relationships. They feel they need something or someone, they want something or

someone very very badly, but when they've actually got that thing or that person they still don't feel satisfied, and they just try to grip that thing or that person more tightly than ever. They feel that the tighter they grip it then the more they will feel and enjoy, but actually they feel and enjoy nothing, because underneath it all is the inner emptiness and the inner emptiness is they're not experiencing their own selves. You can only experience others if you experience yourself, but if you try to use the experience of others - that is your experiencing of others - as a means to experience yourself, that's quite useless, it doesn't happen, and you'll get more and more frustrated, just like in the Buddhist scriptures, things like a dog gnawing a dry bone when what he wants is meat. However long he goes on gnawing the dry bone he won't get any satisfaction. So the meat is, as it were, your own experience of yourself. If you experience yourself and are, as [8] it were, at peace with yourself, you can experience others, but it will be in a non-neurotic way. You won't be trying to use other things, other people, other experiences, to fill your own inner emptiness. But when the time comes, when it's just appropriate to experience other things and other people you'll just do that quite happily and then pass on, as it were, just let them go. Rather than clinging and hanging on.

So you mustn't even think of enlightenment or dhyana as an experience to sort of fill your own inner emptiness. It never will. The dhyana state, in a way, is your experience of your own inner fullness and richness and positivity. If you're being all weak and empty and dry and shrivelled up and trying to grab a dhyana experience to make you feel all right, that's no good at all. You just get more and more frustrated and more and more miserable. You are thinking of a dhyana experience to be something 'out there' which you attain, instead of something 'in here' which you gradually cultivate and bring into existence. So as I said in the talk it's like, as it were, cutting a flower and sticking it in a vase, instead of cultivating the flower and allowing it to bloom here. Or it's sometimes even worse than that, it's sometimes getting an artificial flower and pretending it's a real live flower. It might look just the same but it feels different. [Laughter]

Aryamitra: The whole thing about renunciation. Renouncing things that one uses to try and satisfy, one can become more in touch with what's really going on.

S: You don't need to give up things that you really enjoy, because you give them up naturally anyway. You don't bother about them. But it's when you don't enjoy them, paradoxically enough, that you want to cling on to them. A thing that you really enjoy in a non-neurotic way, you are quite happy to let go of. But the things to which you are neurotically attached, these are the things that you must give up, so that you can experience your own inner emptiness and resolve that in a natural way. But of course you mustn't fool yourself. Sometimes people say, 'oh I'm not really attached, I can give it up any time I like, there's no neurotic element in it', you must be really careful of that. Maybe you can, maybe you can't.

Aryamitra: Maybe then we have to learn to enjoy the things we use neurotically.

S: In a sense that is true, in a sense that is true, yes. Which might mean of course separating yourself from them for a bit. [Laughter]

Padmapani: I suppose you can always take the object of your craving and put it in front of you and do a meditation on the impermanence of it.

S: That certainly does help, yes. Because one element of the neurosis is wanting to have that

thing permanently and not accepting the law of change, that even if you do succeed in possessing and enjoying that thing, one day it's just going to pass away, or you are going to pass away from it. One or the other, sooner or later. It's in a way a very fine point - being able to enjoy something in a positive way, non-neurotic way, and just letting it go, and a sort of cynical attitude. One has to be very careful not to develop a cynical attitude, or an exploited attitude.

Aryamitra: Sometimes you know when you're not craving because it's almost like your needs become fulfilled then. As soon as the craving comes in quite often - I don't know if anybody else has found this - almost that blocks you actually getting what you might need.

S: A female yogi in India of whom I heard - this is the period of the memoirs, though she's not actually mentioned in it, I only heard about her - had a very interesting teaching. She said, or she used to say, that you don't experience happiness by the enjoyment of an object, but when you have enjoyed the object, maybe 'enjoyed', inverted commas, and when your desire is satisfied and you have no desire, that is the moment of happiness or enjoyment. You see the point? But it's only momentary for most people. You've enjoyed that particular thing, so just for an instant you're free from desire for that thing and just for that instant you're happy. Not because [9] you've enjoyed that thing but because you've become free from desire for that thing, just for an instant, and sometimes that's very true. It's the sort of aftermath of enjoyment which is the real enjoyment. Because the desire is no longer there. But of course in most cases it just comes back a little while later, if not a few minutes or a few seconds later. But there's a complete cessation or suspension of desire at that point.

_____: I think I enjoy the desire rather more actually...

S: The anticipation.

_____: I think so.

S: Not even anticipation.

_____: Just the desire.

S: I think that is more healthy. More healthy than the neurotic craving, because you are experiencing yourself. In a way you're enjoying your own feeling, irrespective of the object, even though you're not yet in contact with the object of that feeling, the experience of your feeling for that object is a source of enjoyment. So to that extent it is more positive. Some people say they can sort of prolong this indefinitely in certain cases and never actually reach the point of fulfilment and it's fine, it doesn't matter.

[End of side one side two]

Because you're so much in touch with your own feeling, it's satisfying. People are of different kinds. You notice when they eat some people put the tastiest bit to one side to be enjoyed last. [Laughter] Others of course gobble it down immediately first.

_____: I suppose the middle way would be a person with mindfulness. [Laughter]

_____ : I suppose a solitary retreat is the ideal situation to get in touch with one's true self.

S: Right, yes, to experience yourself. Because you can only really experience others in a positive way if you experience yourself first, but not to use others or your experience of others as a substitute for your experience of yourself.

_____ : That's why it seems so difficult to stay mindful when you're interacting with other people. Staying in touch with yourself.

S: Right. I think most people's work puts them out of touch with themselves. I mean ordinary employment, so the reaction is from that to try to go from that situation into a situation where you're in touch with something, as it were, interesting or stimulating, but you try to do that directly, instead of first re-establishing contact with yourself and your own feelings. So therefore your so-called experience of or with other people and other things is unsatisfactory. You haven't given yourself time to experience yourself.

For instance if you had a very sort of hectic day, and you think oh I'm so fed up with this and you feel quite cut off from your own feelings and your own self - though you may not be conscious of that - you sort of switch on some nice music that you usually enjoy, but you can't enjoy it. It's just sound, it's just noise. Well that's because you haven't yet re-established contact with your own feelings. You have to wait for while and just do nothing, let your own feelings come back, re-experience yourself. Then you can put the music on and maybe enjoy it. But not to jump from alienation to distraction, as it were. So very often we try to make up for the alienated state that comes about as a result of our wrong kind of work, we try to make up for it by plunging into distraction. From the shop floor to the bingo hall. That sort of thing. And you bypass yourself and your own feelings completely. You must give yourself time to re-establish contact with yourself, and that applies to meditation. If you come home from work, the chances are you'll be in a somewhat alienated state, so don't start trying to meditate immediately. Give [10] yourself time to re-establish contact with your own feelings, with your own self, and then start meditating.

_____ : That's why people often like to have some form of background music.

S: I'm not sure about that. It could be. You mean on the factory floor for instance. Yes, it could be. At least it represents that more emotive element. You're not altogether out of contact with it, even though you are in the midst of the machines and so on. It could be. I haven't thought about this.

It's said that people who have a supply of piped music while they work do work better. It could be for this reason, but I don't want to be too sure of that because I haven't really gone into it or thought about it.

_____ : The cows do milk better with the music playing. [Laughter]

S: Depending on the music! Bach goes down very well with cows, but rock music disturbs them, yes!

_____ : They found this with plants as well. Plants like classical music, but not music like, say, Wagner. They like smooth classical music. They don't like rock and roll and they don't

like Jimi Hendrix.

S: Apparently what I read was - I don't know how widely this has been confirmed - that classical music, especially Bach, and jazz. Jazz seems to have a positive effect, but certainly not rock music.

_____: Perhaps if you just (unclear)

Padmapani: Sagaramati (unclear) with the bagpipes. [Laughter]

S: Well they're very stirring. They're heroic.

Padmapani: Heroic, right, yes. A masculine quality.

S: Perhaps we should have a sort of bagpipe band, full time. Mara would just flee [Laughter] when he heard those Dharma pipes! [Laughter] Probably so would everybody else as well! [Laughter]

_____: There's still the piper in (unclear) Scottish army.

S: That's another point, you see, about music. In connection with meditation and spiritual life generally. In the ancient world, whether it was ancient Greece or ancient China, it was widely believed that different kinds of music affected their lives in different ways. The Greeks classified music according to modes. Does anyone know anything about this? There was the Doric mode, the Lydian mode, the Frygian mode. The Doric mode was the heroic. The Lydian was the languid and voluptuous, even erotic, considered very unmanly. The Frygian was the wild and ecstatic and excited, and the Greeks recognized that these different types of music had a corresponding psychological effect. The Chinese also were very very much aware of this, and there's a story in the life of Confucius where Confucius was one day wandering from state to state as he often had to do, looking for a prince to accept his advice, and as they approached the borders of a certain state, Confucius just stopped and listened and there was the sound of music coming from within the borders of that state, and Confucius shook his head and said, "We won't go there, that state is not well governed." He could tell from the music. So I think from the spiritual point of view, or even the point of view of general psychological health, we have to be a bit mindful of what sort of musical influences we expose ourselves to.

_____: It's interesting that of the seven Greek modes we are only using two of them.

S: Do you know all the seven?

_____: I know of them in general but I was just mentioning. But it is [11] interesting that where once there were the seven there are now only two.

S: What, the Frygian and the Lydian?

_____: I don't know, the major and the minor.

S: Well the wild and ecstatic and excited and the voluptuous.

_____ : (unclear)

_____ : (unclear)

S: There's another point. I was reading that the members of an orchestra in America reported that they found that playing modern music, that is ultra modern music, had a very disturbing effect on them psychologically, but they always thoroughly enjoyed Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart. They felt really good after playing that, but after playing some kinds of modern classical music, advanced classical music, they just felt their nerves completely jangled and some even were quite seriously mentally affected and had to have treatment. This is really symptomatic of a sick civilization in a way. [Long Pause]

So it means in a way that one's life has to be all of a piece, and this is really the principle of the, for want of a better term, the monastery. It's an area within which, just like the mandala, everything is of a piece, it's all integrated towards the same end. There's nothing disturbing or distracting, nothing inharmonious, nothing chaotic.

_____ : Presumably in such a set up it's possible, maybe even encouraged maybe, to have a place where people could get out their pent up emotions which don't come out smoothly. I can imagine that in such a set up, somebody say breaking through into a new state, rather abortively, could experience the monastic set up as being suffocating.

S: Oh indeed yes.

_____ : I was just thinking at Sukhavati are you going to have - I was going to say a padded cell. [Laughter]

S: Nobody seems to need one at present. I don't get the impression of anything pent up at all.

_____ : I suppose I meant in the sense of say doing full dhyana practice, and you didn't have work to work it off.

S: That isn't the pattern for Sukhavati at present. If anyone really felt strongly enough that would probably suggest that he left and went off into the country, because the pattern for Sukhavati is work to establish that centre.

_____ : Probably work's the best thing if somebody like that does come along.

S: But also one mustn't think of a sort of monastic set up as something a bit dead where people can't be themselves, though no doubt that is the picture that we have (unclear) from a Buddhist point of view it shouldn't be like that at all. Even say at Sukhavati they sometimes do let their hair down a little bit, so I've heard. [Laughter]

Well since I've been around apparently it hasn't happened, [Laughter] but I gather it did happen, at least once in the old bad days. They had (unclear) and they danced around and things like that. Might have even danced at Aryatara. (unclear) [Laughter] But we have to beware of thinking of a mandala as a static thing. It's a sort of dynamic equilibrium, an equilibrium of forces which are themselves forces. It's not that everything is motionless and neatly arranged in a nice symmetrical pattern. That's your mandala and that's your monastery

and everyone neatly fitting in and no one getting in anyone's way. All just very quietly subdued. That's not a vihara or monastery at all. It's very lively and there's an interplay, an harmonious interplay of energy, not [12] something static and still. The peacefulness is in the harmony of energy - not in the repression of energy - or the counterbalancing of energies, or interplay or energies.

_____: A monastery seems to work out a lot of rules to avoid people following (unclear) I remember reading in the traditional - I forget which one - one of the main Zen schools, that there are many rules so that you don't disturb your fellows.

S: If you've got to have rules about that, that's the beginning of the end, because it means you're not sensitive and you're not aware of the people who are living there with you.

_____: (unclear) set up anyway within the context with fourteen year old kids coming along and (unclear)

S: Right, yes. Someone has well made the point that many Zen monasteries were just like boarding schools for rather unruly sprigs of the nobility, yes. They were more like Eton or Harrow than they were like say Monte Casino or somewhere like that. So you have to beat all these rather high spirited youths into some sort of order!

_____: It was very detailed. I think it was Jiyu Kennett, but I'm not sure.

S: She does rather go in for that sort of thing! [Laughter] The only thing is she doesn't get the fourteen-year-olds. She gets the oldsters more.

_____: (unclear) tradition (unclear)

S: Well to the extent it can be said to exist, a tradition of that sort, but it is going on in Japan in some places you can say. It seems very irrelevant to me.

_____: Obviously the danger of monasteries (unclear) a friend of mine was in a Catholic monastery and he said a lot of the concentration was on behaving in such a way, as though people were quite likely to be bothering each other a lot and he thought a lot of the silence was so that people wouldn't bother each other. It seemed to be a really big factor.

S: Well it is important, if you're thinking in terms of getting on with your own individual meditation, and if there are a number of you living together in the same place, well obviously you don't want to step on anybody's toes, but I would have thought your own individual sensitivity and awareness of others would be sufficient to prevent that. Not there being a need to draw up a lot of rules.

Also in a healthy sort of monastery, to use that term, there should be such a sort of general atmosphere of goodwill pervading the place that there's no sort of feeling of mutual trespass. Everybody respects one another's individuality and at the same time they enjoy being together. What you say almost suggests that in these sort of places people are a bit afraid of one another, and why should that be? Some people are afraid of getting too close. There's that aspect too. If you're living with other people, with the same people over a number of years, for instance, well you just may be afraid of getting too close, you may be afraid of your own

feelings, so you need to set up barriers. There's that aspect too. [Pause]

_____: What do you mean by afraid of your own feelings?

S: Well for instance you might start feeling very resentful towards certain people, but you're not supposed to feel resentful, so you tend to withdraw a bit from the other people because your contact with them makes you more conscious of your own resentment against them and you're not prepared to face that or to talk about it with them openly. So you just withdraw into yourself a bit. If people are living together within the same sort of set up over a period of years, these sort of things are bound to arise from time to time. And if one isn't happy about them and not prepared to acknowledge them then you just sort of withdraw and withdraw from one another and [13] then everything goes a bit sort of stale and a bit sort of repressed and there's no life in the place.

_____: Does that only go for negative feelings?

S: It can even go for positive feelings. Some people are quite afraid of positive feelings. If they are feeling very friendly and expansive and feel like giving someone a hug well it may be not acceptable, the other person may not like it and so they just sort of sit on it. This also is not a good thing.

I mean probably in this country people are just as much afraid of their positive feelings as they are of their negative feelings. In some cases maybe more so. So a monastery shouldn't be a place where people are so afraid of their feelings that they are sort of shutting themselves up in themselves and get out of contact with others and ultimately with themselves too.

I think we must avoid the use of this term 'monastery'. it is etymologically incorrect anyway - monk - it's the monos which means one - one who lives on his own, so how can you have a monastery with a lot of monks all living together? [Laughter]

_____: Perhaps that's the problem.

S: Maybe that is the problem, that there's a lot of people living on their own, only under the same roof, they're not living together.

_____: Do you think the alternative of Vihara instead.

_____: I think I'll start using vihara yes.

_____: Has number 5 Balmore Street got a name?

_____: Maitrivihara

S: They've had it for months.

_____: Maitrivihara, I didn't know.

_____: Because no one uses it!

_____: (unclear) Kumaravihara.

S: Which one?

_____: Number 5.

S: No it was Maitrivihara. That name's probably reserved. That will be the teenage vihara.

_____: Number 3 is angel vihara according to Lokamitra.

_____: Angel!

_____: He said (unclear) to add to the district here.

S: Who are they? [Laughter] I thought it was referring to the fact that there were 2 females present.

_____: Oh no! Lokamitra was quite ...

S: Angels are sexless, neither male nor female. [Pause]

Anyway to come back to 'Dhyana for Beginners' [Laughter] We've got another fifteen or so minutes left. Any point that has arisen that anyone would like to go into further?

_____: Sangharatna was saying the other day that Zen teachings when they came over to the West they say you've got to be really mindful [14] and they become zombie-like and I was wondering like when you come out of the meditations, especially on retreat I sometimes feel like just really being almost hyper-mindful but it doesn't seem to work with other people.

S: Do you mean you feel like being hyper-mindful in the sense that you want to make the effort to be or that you already are?

_____: Well I already am when coming out of the practice, but it's really easy just to fall into chat and stuff like that and I wonder whether the mindfulness has become alienated.

S: It's a very fine point and a very fine line indeed because sometimes say at the end of a retreat especially you go back home or wherever you came from, and you want to try to retain something of what you gained on the retreat and you want to try to remain aware and mindful, so you may make the effort but you may become a bit alienated in that sort of way. On the other hand you may be quite aware of that danger and you may think well I don't want to become alienated so you just sort of, remaining a bit mindful, you just sort of get involved in things a bit, but very quickly you find that you have lost your mindfulness. You've gone to the other extreme. So just to keep on that fine balanced intent of being neither alienated nor unmindful is very difficult. And that will take a lot of practice and either one will become a bit alienated or one will become a bit exuberantly unmindful and be going to one extreme or the other for some time before you sort of come to rest more in the middle and can be very lively and active and happy and even talkative but still mindful, that's very difficult indeed. This union of energy, liberated energy and awareness, if you get these both together you are practically made, as it were. But usually we have either the one or the other. And in the ordinary worldly situation, for lack of a better term, your energy may be functioning quite well but you may be comparatively unaware. But on retreat, if you are not careful, you may

become very clearly aware but somehow you lose contact with your energy and your liveliness but you have to try and bring both together and be now working on one, and now on the other until you can bring them together into a common focus, as it were. And be very aware and very mindful and knowing clearly exactly what you are doing but completely in contact with your energies and very lively at the same time. That's the ideal, as it were.

Sagaramati: I think it's important to remember that mindfulness has a feeling quality because that's never ever mentioned anywhere that I know of.

S: That's very important. As though it's clear but cold.

_____ : So what was that you said? It has a what quality?

S: A feeling quality. A sensitivity and delicacy, even a sort of warmth.

_____ : I notice that I can only really be mindful when I'm feeling good, when I'm feeling pretty happy and positive.

S: Well that's very good because you have got a positive danger signal.

_____ : When I'm not like that it's really hard to be mindful, just really don't feel like being mindful.

S: Like you're very aware and very mindful when you are being creative, when you are absorbed in your creativity, and happily absorbed. You're very mindful, you're very aware. As when you're writing or painting something or making music.

Padmaraja: So that kind of thought, as distinct from more discursive thought, is conducive to dhyana would you say?

S: Yes, creative thought, to use that expression, seems to be thought which is integrated with energy in the creative process. But [15] sometimes when you get very deeply into the creative process there's no thinking - you just do it. I remember I had the experience quite a few times in India, it may seem very strange but I was giving lectures without thinking, yes, and I was aware of that and it seems, in retrospect, quite odd, that words were coming out of my mouth, for hours on end [Laughter] but I wasn't thinking. I was, as it were, listening to myself and this was because I was in a very urgent situation, this will come at the end of the next volume of the () [Laughter] and I hadn't time to think so I didn't. I had to give so many lectures in this particular situation, I ended up giving twelve on the last day, so I was full of energy, I didn't feel in the least tired and the appropriate words all seemed to be coming out. I wasn't thinking at all. That was very odd.

_____ : I've noticed that in pujas.

S: Ah, right.

_____ : And if you do start to think you just forget the words.

S: Yes, you lose, sometimes, confidence in your own non-thinking. Sometimes when you are

painting and discursive thought isn't really necessary, you get into this sort of state, you're just painting away. You know what you have to do, you know that red has to go there and green there, but you don't think, as it were. The red just goes there, the green just goes there. There is a creative activity, there is the awareness but there's no discursive thought about it, or very very little. That's a very positive state to be in.

Or when you are doing some simple occupation. When you are cooking you can be in that sort of state. You're not sort of really working out what the menu's going to be. It just sort of occurs to you. You put in this, you put in that and it gradually all comes together. Maybe this is easier when you are doing it just for a very few people. If you're doing it for a dozen people or twenty people, maybe you do have to calculate quantities and all that sort of thing, but if you're cooking just for a few people it can be very creative with a minimum of thought, and you can be very happily absorbed and very aware.

Aryamitra: Would you say that's truly creative or would you say you can still be pretty creative thinking?

S: Creative thought is very rare. Creative thought in the philosophical, scientific sense, which brings something really new into existence.

_____: This state of doing things without thinking about them. Sometimes I'm more likely to find my mind's not doing what I'm doing.

S: Well that's sort of alienated because the mind may be occupied with something else, but in the case I'm thinking of the mind is occupied with what you are doing, but is not actively thinking about it. You're thinking of it, you could say, but you're not thinking about it.

_____: What you said about when you go back from a retreat and you nearly always lose what you gained on the retreat, I wonder if you actually do lose it, what you've gained?

S: Well in a way you don't, because the mere fact that you experienced that has left some, as it were, permanent trace on the mind or in the mind. This is now permanently a part of your total life experience and will have a sort of modifying effect on the totality of your experience, or on you, on your being. The seed is always there.

Sagaramati: Is that like the Yogachara ideal?

S: It's a bit like that. You've sown a seed. You've deposited a seed. Circumstances being favourable it can sprout again, and all the more vigorously for having been planted or experienced once before.

[16]

Sagaramati: I was thinking in connection with Paravriti.

S: Paravriti is something much more fundamental. That is something on which you don't go back. More like Stream Entry, as it were.

Alan Angel: If you were acting with no thought and you know that green goes here and red goes there, very often I'm suspicious of that state of... I think I've got to think it out before I

act and get my thinking clear, which is something which you've stressed.

S: I think one does have to, if one thinks at all, think clearly, but one doesn't have always to think. For instance it is as important to get your energy freely flowing as it is to get your thinking clear. Yes? And in order to get your energies freely flowing, in this sort of context, you may just have to slap around green and blue and red, not bothering much about the result in the form of a work of art, just to get yourself accustomed to expressing your energy freely. Just as you may, for instance, set yourself a crossword puzzle to solve every day just to encourage clarity of thought, even though the aim of your existence is not going to be solving crossword puzzles. This helps you to think more clearly.

_____ : Would you mind clarifying a point that came up a day or two ago on this question of vipassana, the different levels of insight. In the text there came a point (unclear) relationship between concentration and insight.

S: In a way concentration is a misleading term here. What is called concentration, which is equivalent to dhyana, means a sort of very high level of consolidation of all your positive energies, and on the basis of that state, as it were, or you in that state, that the insight can develop. So in this way there's no real vipassana, no real insight, except on a basis of your own consolidated positive energy. Otherwise there's no sort of thrust behind the insight. It remains just very mental, very theoretical, very feeble. In other words you must be totally involved, you must be really behind the insight. You must really want to know. For instance if you have the question 'who am I?', well you can decide well who am I, and you can think it over, but there's hardly any energy behind it, but if all your energy is consolidated in a very positive way and then you take up this 'who am I?', then you can penetrate into the question and in that way the insight arises. But we very rarely put all our energy behind something in that way, of any kind. At the most about a hundredth part of our energy goes into something. We are very rarely totally involved with all our energy into that. It hardly ever happens in ordinary humans.

Sometimes it happens in negative ways, as when you get really angry then you might find that all your available energy is going into the anger, and you sometimes feel quite shattered afterwards. It's not only just because you've been naughty and been angry, but because your energy's been totally in something. To the extent that energy can be totally into a negative state. There is a limitation due to the fact that the state itself is negative, but you can be sometimes much more totally into your anger than almost anything else. So you transcend yourself to some extent, albeit in a negative sort of way and not for very long. If you can imagine that as a positive experience, then you begin to get some glimpse of what is really meant by concentration. If you could be as powerfully into say love as you can be into anger sometimes, well how positive you would be. [Laughter] But usually the love or the metta is a feeble flicker, whereas the anger is a much more full blooded sort of thing.

So the level or degree of the insight, to go back to what you actually asked, depends to a great extent on the intensity of the energy of the positive emotions which are behind that insight.

_____ : There are all kinds of degrees of vipassana.

S: Oh yes. They have been variously classified in different texts. They've been classified in so many different ways, but they are basically all the same thing, that is to say penetration into

truth, penetration into reality, [17] with your consolidated, positive emotional energy behind the thrust of the insight. So in that sort of way how many people really ever think? With their whole being. That is really what a philosopher is, a thinker in this sense whose whole energy is powerfully geared to try to penetrate into the nature of truth or reality or whatever.

Sagaramati: I get that impression from Nietzsche.

S: One does indeed, yes. His energies didn't go into other things, didn't go into family life, relationships, career, money making. He gave everything up. He was just thinking, perhaps in a slightly one-sided way, where he sort of strained himself perhaps.

_____: In the Friends you don't practise trying to apply the same kind of concentrated mind to contemplation as you do say to development of metta. Does that happen later?

S: Well it happens very much with the visualization practices which are within the Order, which one gets at the time of ordination. Owing to the nature of the practice itself one is able to put very much more energy into them. I think most people will agree. That is the visualization associated with mantra recitation and so on, such as Padmasambhava or Manjughosa and so on.

_____: And they count as vipassana?

S: They do, yes. They count as Mahayana vipassana practices, yes very definitely. Mahayana in the sense that the, as it were, philosophical basis is that of Mahayana sunyata philosophy, and not Hinayana Abhidharma philosophy. But all these philosophies, to use that term, do point in the same direction, but the visualization practices are Mahayana vipassana practices.

I must keep an eye on the time now. [I have a train to catch.] Have a quick cup of tea.

[Quick cup of tea noises]

Sagaramati: a Friends dictionary. There's so much in the seminar material.

S: Yes a Friends dictionary. A Friends Buddhist Dictionary. Even non-Buddhist terms that we use in a particular way, like the term 'neurotic'. We use it in a very definite sense of our own. It could start in a quite small way and just be expanded in subsequent editions. You need not compile a great thick volume straight away, but just a slim one would do. 'Buddha' and then define or describe 'Buddha' in terms of Enlightened Man, make that very clear. Then 'Evolution', 'Higher Evolution', and then distinguish 'Progress' and 'Development'. This is all very important, and it's something that one could work on just from time to time. I'd say start off with a hundred terms, common terms, and bring them out in a little booklet and then be collecting them all the time. When that edition of a hundred terms has exhausted, well bring out a new one with maybe a hundred more. No doubt people would send you in terms or ask you to include terms. 'Wheel of Life', brief explanation. Things like that. 'Retreat', 'Reactive Mind', 'Puja', 'Image', 'Buddhism' [Laughter] 'Relationship', inverted commas. 'An extreme form of neurosis involving two people'. [Laughter] Possibly three! A term that was much used in the earlier days was 'symbiotic'. 'Mutual parasitism'.

_____: (unclear)

S: But, as it were, a sort of mutual dependence, biologically, doesn't it. Like for instance the orchid.

_____: (unclear)

S: Yes. In biological terms it's positive in the sense of contributing to the [18] survival of those particular species.... [General Quiet Cup-of-Tea Type Chatter]

It's the work period now isn't it. Sorry I have to leave you all to it! I'm with you in spirit.

[End of tape one tape two]

I suggest you start your collection and have a sort of card index. As you discover terms put them on a little card and, at your own convenience, get around to writing your definition or description of the term. 'Sangha', 'Spiritual Community'. Some would merit a little article. About a hundred words or so.

_____: It would be great.

S: It would be very useful for the new person coming in who doesn't yet know the language which can be very confusing.

_____: Especially when they look in the Buddhist Dictionary and look up words which we might have used and the way that they use them in the book is completely different from the way they are used in the Friends.

_____: 'Upasaka'.

S: Right, yes, yes. You might have to revise your definitions every few years. 'Regular steps', 'Irregular Steps'. [Pause] 'Hero'.

Original tape recording ends

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