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 Mitras. 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 Adhisthana Dharma Team

Hyphens were missing from this file. Some have been reinstated through spellchecking.

Questions and answers with the venerable Sangharakshita, on 'Enthusiasm': Chapter 7 of A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Rivendell, June-July 1987.

PRESENT: Sanghadevi, Vidyasri, Vajragita, Sridevi, Vidyavati, Trish Mander, Tessa Harding, Viv Bartlett, Karola, Christine McCluskey, Caroline Gutt, Maggie Graeber.

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Sangharakshita: All right, then: questions on verses 1 30, chapter on 'Enthusiasm', Batchelor's translation and, of course, this is from Bodhicaryavatara. The first question is: , Have you any general remarks to make about the relative merits of the two translations of the Bodhicaryavatara in current circulation in the Movement, i.e. Matics and Batchelor?

S: I have not compared them in detail I have not compared them verse by verse but there are one or two observations that can be made, the first of which is that Matics' translation is made directly from the Sanskrit original (which does survive, fortunately), whereas Batchelor's translation is a translation of a translation, namely it is a translation of the Tibetan translation, made in accordance with oral explanations by a Tibetan teacher. So I would say that, if there is any difference in actual meaning as between Matics' translation and Batchelor's translation, the likelihood is that Matics is the more correct, because his translation is nearer to the original. There is also the point that the construction of a Sanskrit sentence doesn't go very easily into Tibetan, and sometimes it seems that in the Tibetan translation a complex sentence is divided into a couple of simple sentences, or even more than two simple sentences, and that does to some extent distort the meaning. I will give you one or two examples of differences (I think actually some of the questions are based on these differences). For instance, if you look at verse 5, you see that Matics says: Do you not see those of your own group dying according to their turn, And yet sleep is to you as the buffalo to the outcaste (candala)? But Batchelor says I am concerned with the second half of the verse : Whoever remains soundly asleep (Surely behaves) like a buffalo with a butcher. These are rather different. It seems to me, without actually looking at the text, that Matics is the more correct; because when the Matics version says: And yet sleep is to you as the buffalo to the outcaste it means 'Sleep is to you very dear', because the buffalo is the sole wealth of the outcaste, the candala. Candalas are often butchers, and so candala can be understood as 'butcher'; the candala may keep the buffalo in order to slaughter it and sell the meat. That reinforces the idea that the buffalo is very dear to the candala, because it is his sole wealth, his sole source of income. And this is why the Tibetan version, apparently, has 'butcher' for candala. But to say 'Whoever remains soundly [2] asleep Surely behaves like a buffalo with a butcher' does not in any case convey such a clear meaning as 'And yet sleep is to you as the buffalo to the outcaste'. So it would seem that Matics is nearer to the original than is Batchelor. I will give you another example from a neighbouring verse. There is a question from one of you based on this later on. It is verse 3:

Because one is unconcerned with the sorrow of rebirth,
Sloth arises through inertia, relish for pleasure, torpor
And eagerness to be protected.
But then Batchelor says:
Because of attachment to the pleasurable taste of idleness,

Because of craving for sleep
And because of having no disillusion with the misery of cyclic existence,
Laziness grows very strong.

Which is rather different. The construction of the original Sanskrit sentence, one would imagine from Matics' translation, is more complex. The Tibetan has not been able to render the complexity of its structure, and that has to some extent affected the sense. And, of course, Batchelor has translated according to the Tibetan and therefore according to the sentence structure of the Tibetan, rather than according to the sentence structure of the original Sanskrit. Batchelor is sometimes more readable, in the sense that his English is rather more contemporary, one might say, even more colloquial. But I think, broadly speaking, he is not quite as reliable as Matics is. No doubt the best way of studying the text is just to take the two versions side by side and compare verse with verse.

Vajragita: I have got a translation in Dutch from Sanskrit ... few things I have compared... Matics, but I have to go through it.

S: Anyway, let's go on. Oh yes, there is an additional question [on] that. What do you think of 'enthusiasm' as a translation of virya? I would have thought of it more as a support for virya, something out of which virya arises, because I was under the impression that virya was essentially active, the actual application of effort, energy in pursuit of the good. Well, fortunately we know the original word here, which is of course virya, which Matics translates as 'strength', which I think is rather feeble. It usually is translated as 'energy'. But 'enthusiasm' isn't bad; it's as though no one English word is really quite adequate. It is energy energy is based on strength but it is enthusiasm too. I think the advantage of the term 'enthusiasm' is that it suggests that the energy is not forced, the effort is not forced. It is something that flows forth freely, spontaneously, joyfully. This is what 'enthusiasm' seems to connote. So I think that one can very well think of virya as comprising what we call enthusiasm as well as energy, as well as strength. It is all those things. I don't think the word 'enthusiasm' by itself is an adequate translation of virya. Perhaps there is no word which is a fully adequate translation. But it certainly does suggest one particular aspect of virya. It makes it clear that virya contains a strong emotional component. Virya doesn't suggest force, it doesn't suggest wilfulness.

Sanghadevi: The Tibetan commentary talks of 'joyous effort'.

[3]
S: That probably is good, because effort by itself is not necessarily free from stress, but the Bodhisattva's effort is essentially a joyful effort, a natural, spontaneous effort; at the same time a very vigorous effort. So 'enthusiasm' certainly conveys part of the connotation of virya, even though it may not express the whole meaning of the term. All right, second question: According to Geshe Gyatso's commentary on Batchelor's translation, there are three types of laziness: Oh dear, three! the laziness of indolence, the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action, and the laziness of discouragement. He then indicates how vv. 314 are concerned with the first type of laziness, v. 15 with the second, and vv. 1630 with the third., (a) Do you think there is suggestion here by Shantideva that the laziness of indolence and the laziness of discouragement are stronger within us than the laziness of attraction to the unwholesome, or (b) do you think the distinction between the first two types of laziness is an artificial one and is not as clear-cut as the commentary makes out, or (Laughter) (c) [were] indolence and despondency Shantideva's particular hindrances? I have wondered whether the story of

Shantideva having the nickname of 'Lazy Bum' and his subsequent rise to fame due to the inspiration of Manjusri is a fanciful story or has some basis in facts. Hm, oh dear. I think I'll start with the middle bit. 'Do you think the distinction between the first two types of laziness is an artificial one and is not as clear-cut as the commentary makes out?' So what are the first two types of laziness? The laziness of indolence and the laziness of discouragement. I see these as rather different. I don't think the distinction between them is artificial.

Sanghadevi: No, it's the distinction between the laziness of indolence and the laziness of attraction to the unwholesome.

S: Ah, sorry, it's going back further: the laziness of indolence and the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action. All right, let's look at those, then. The laziness of indolence what is this laziness of indolence, taking the English word fairly literally? Indolence, as the word is used in English, is not necessarily a negative state, though more often than not, perhaps, it does have a negative connotation. So the laziness of indolence would be when your present situation and your present state is so pleasant, so satisfying, that you feel no inclination to make any effort to go beyond it or to get out of it. That would be the laziness of indolence. The laziness of indolence would not necessarily refer to something as it were negative, something unwholesome. You could be, for instance, in a mildly dhyanic state and feel indolent with regard to that, not want to make any further effort. But then 'the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action' I suppose the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action is when you don't make any effort to prevent yourself from being attracted to those unwholesome actions or unwholesome states with regard to which you feel a sort of natural inclination. You may be attracted to states of craving, to states of hatred and anger, but you make no effort to resist that attraction; you just allow yourself to slide towards those unskilful mental states. That would be the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action. And 'the [4] laziness of discouragement' is the laziness which consists in telling oneself 'You can't make the effort, you're too weak', and so on. So I think that the distinction between the first and the second types of laziness, that is to say the laziness of indolence and the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action, are somewhat different. I think the distinction is not an artificial one. Is that clear? Does everyone find that convincing? (Murmurs of assent). And then, going back to (a)

Sanghadevi: My only query on that is that in the verses in which the commentary refers to the first laziness, Shantideva is saying quite a lot about reaping your karma and reaping the consequences of evil actions. It seems to be an incentive to shake you out of that sort of laziness, but at the same time he seems to be dwelling quite a lot on the consequences of your unskilful actions, which was why I wasn't sure about it.

S: I think sometimes it is difficult to apportion the verses neatly between the different subdivisions. They shade into one another, as it were. I think the distinction between the laziness of indolence and the laziness of attraction to unwholesome action, in itself, is clear enough; but whether you can allocate certain verses exclusively to this type of laziness and certain other verses exclusively to another type of laziness I think is another question. I think it's a question of the subdivision of the text, whether it really can be neatly subdivided in that way; even though it can to some extent, or even to a great extent. The text is in a way very poetical, so Shantideva isn't necessarily following a very logical scheme which can be divided and subdivided in the way that the commentator is trying to do. 'Do you think there is suggestion here by Shantideva that the laziness of indolence and the laziness of

discouragement are stronger within us than the laziness of attraction to the unwholesome?' You could say that attraction to the unwholesome is a broader category, but I suppose it would differ very much from one individual to another. One might be more prone to the laziness of indolence, another more prone to the laziness of discouragement, another more prone to the laziness of attraction to the unwholesome. I find it difficult to generalize in that way.

Sanghadevi: That question was based on that apportioning of certain ... effects to particular ...

S: Right, yes. I think it doesn't necessarily follow from that especially as perhaps the verses can't be apportioned in a very exclusive way. One finds that in the work as a whole Shantideva has much more to say about patience than he does even about virya, so does that suggest that he thinks that anger, say, to which patience is the antidote, is twice as strong in us as laziness, the antidote to which is virya, because he devotes twice as many verses, practically, to kshanti? Can you really reason like that? Perhaps you can, but not necessarily so. W[ere] indolence and despondency Shantideva's particular hindrances?' Well, as I have said, if one counts the number of verses, anger must have been his particular hindrance, because he has devoted the longest chapter to kshanti, which is the antidote to hatred. I suppose, in the case of Shantideva as in the case of probably everybody else, all the hindrances are pretty strong! It is difficult to say which of them is the strongest.

Then, another question: Do we have any facts about Shantideva's career at Nalanda?

[5]
We don't really have very much information. I have read bits and pieces of information here and there; I am afraid I can't recollect them, but they have been collected somewhere. We don't have a proper biography of Shantideva, certainly. There are various myths and legends. It would be interesting, perhaps, to know more about him, but ancient Indians didn't go in for biography or autobiography or anything like that. They didn't even write their memoirs! The Tibetans developed this much more. It seems there were some Indian Buddhist biographers. There seem to have been biographies of, for instance, such personages as Naropa and perhaps Tilopa, and the Tibetan biographies were modelled on those; but the Tibetans seem to have developed the art of biography to a much greater extent than the Indians ever did. The Chinese also were fond of biographies, but that was because they were Chinese rather than because they were Buddhists. According to the Matics translation, laziness grows primarily because of a lack of concern with the sorrow of rebirth, whereas in Batchelor's translation this is only one of the factors. I think this is just a question, as I indicated, of the construction of the Sanskrit and the fact that it isn't reproduced very closely in the Tibetan translation. Matics says: Because one is unconcerned with the sorrow of rebirth, Sloth arises through inertia, relish for pleasure, torpor, and eagerness to be protected. Whereas Batchelor says: Because of attachment to the pleasurable taste of idleness, Because of craving for sleep, And because of having no disillusion with the misery of cyclic existence, Laziness grows very strong. So Batchelor puts all of those three factors on the same level, as it were; but Matics definitely makes unconcern with the sorrow of rebirth the primary factor, and speaks of it as arising in different ways. In fact, you could say, according to Matics and presumably according to the original, there is only one factor, only one real cause of laziness, but it can arise in different ways. 'Because one is unconcerned with the sorrow of rebirth, Sloth arises through inertia', etc. etc. It is unconcern with the sorrow of rebirth which is the main thing. I think we can regard Matics as reproducing the meaning of the original more closely. That does seem

logical, doesn't it? Because what prevents you making an effort, what makes you lazy, is your lack of realization of the sorrow of rebirth, the sorrow of conditioned existence itself, and this can arise either through inertia or relish for pleasure or torpor or an eagerness to be protected. It is as though there were some clauses not translated by the Tibetan version. The fact that the Bodhicaryavatara is in verses provides us with a sort of check, as it were; because supposing you have a verse, as here, in the Sanskrit, part of which is not found in the Tibetan, at the same time the Sanskrit version is complete metrically, so you can be quite sure that something must have been left out of the Tibetan rather than added on to the Sanskrit. It would be very good if we had a bilingual edition of the Bodhicaryavatara, with the Sanskrit preferably in Roman characters on one side of the page and a literal English translation on the other.

Sanghadevi: Have you got any texts with the Sanskrit in them?

[6]
S: I don't; I have been trying to [get one]. I did have one at another time; I lent it to someone and never got it back, but that was in Devanagiri characters with a Hindi translation. There is no edition of the Sanskrit text in print, to my knowledge, unless there is one produced in India. Have you any comments on this? Not beyond that. Referring to v. 15, in what sense can one 'reject the supreme joy of the sacred Dharma' if you have not been practising long enough to experience it as supremely joyful? Is the text referring more to the tendency to close one's eyes to the truth? You do perhaps have a glimpse or vision which gives you an inkling of the possibilities the Dharma offers you, but you don't pursue that vision wholeheartedly because it is not strong enough and you are not very integrated. Well, that is about it, I think, but let us look at that verse. First of all, Matics: Having cast away the delight of the Dharma, the most noble cause of endless delight, How is there delight for you in arrogance, derision and such causes sorrow? Or Batchelor: Having rejected the supreme joy of the sacred Dharma This is a boundless source of delight, Why am I distracted by the causes for pain? Why do I enjoy frivolous amusements and the like? That doesn't sound very good, does it especially those first two lines: 'Having rejected the supreme joy of the sacred Dharma This is a boundless source of delight'?

: Might be a misprint. Should be 'which' 'which is a '

S: Anyway, the Matics translation is clear, isn't it? 'Having cast away the delight of the Dharma'. Well, if you had really experienced it as delight, presumably you wouldn't have cast it away. But there is, of course, the question of degree: there are degrees of delight. And you can thoroughly enjoy, say, your Dharma study without necessarily wanting to continue it very much! We find this happening all the time, don't we, even when we go away on retreat and enjoy meditation, enjoy Dharma study; but you go back to wherever you came from, and you can forget how enjoyable it can be to be on retreat; so you don't make a very great effort to go on retreat again, not perhaps for a long time; not until someone reminds you or takes you by the hand and drags you along. If, of course, your enjoyment of the Dharma is very, very great indeed, especially if it is conjoined with Insight, you are unlikely to forget that. But I think we can have quite a considerable experience of the joy of the Dharma, and none the less forget it. That does seem to happen quite often.

Sanghadevi: Might that link up with when you spoke about the difference between disillusionment and disgruntlement that you are not really disillusioned with conditioned

existence, so although you have had some delight - ?

[7]
S: Yes. Once you are removed from the situation that gives you delight, the lack of genuine disillusionment can take over again, and you can find nondharmic things very attractive and enjoyable or otherwise! and yet still go after them. But it is, in a sense, a question of not being very integrated, because if you were integrated you would not only experience the joy of the Dharma but have some insight into it, and some insight therefore into what it was that gave you that joy; and you would not abandon it, therefore, so easily. Matics doesn't speak of the 'supreme joy of the sacred Dharma', which almost suggests the joy of Enlightenment. He just speaks of 'joy'. Anyway, we come now on to something a little different. Sometimes it is beneficial to take on more than you think you can cope with, as it stretches you. It can also prove to be too much and is just draining. So: (a) By what criteria can you judge when it is the latter or the former? (b) Likewise, how can one enjoy one's pipe and slippers without being complacent? (Laughter). I didn't know that ladies smoked pipes! I knew they had slippers!

Trish Mander: It should have been in inverted commas, I suppose!

S: It should have been in single inverted commas, eh? 'Sometimes it is beneficial to take on more than you think you can cope with' yes, surely 'as it stretches you. It can also prove to be too much and is just draining.' Well, yes, we know that, too. 'So by what criteria can you judge when it is the latter or the former?' I think you can't (Laughter) you don't know in advance. I think that what usually happens is that, when you are young and enthusiastic and perhaps a bit over-optimistic or perhaps overestimating your own capacities, you do tend, especially if you are a certain type of person, to take on more than you can cope with, whether because it stretches you or for some other reason. And then you find from your own experience that you have taken on too much. And if you are a normal healthy person you learn from that, and you learn more and more as you get older. You learn to estimate your own resources, your own strength, more and more correctly. But I doubt very much if there is some criterion which you can apply straight away when you are very young; in fact, young people don't usually think in those terms. They've got a lot of confidence, perhaps they are overconfident. They don't even stop to think, sometimes, whether they can really take on what they taking on or not. They learn from experience. Can you look back over your own lives and see whether you, at the age of 17, 18, 19, cautiously looked round for a criterion, or whether you plunged straight in?

Sanghadevi: No, you didn't look.

S: You didn't look for a criterion, not at that age, I think usually.

Trish: He talks about when you start something, you mustn't stop it. Yes, v. 47. I'll read it: First of all I should examine well what is to be done To see whether I can pursue it or cannot undertake it. (If I am unable) it is best to leave it, But once I have started I must not withdraw.

[8]
S: Mm. I don't think that the verse is laying it down as an absolute rule that you must not ever, under any circumstances, give up doing something you have started doing. It is drawing attention to, or even emphasizing, the fact that you must know what you are doing, you must

know what responsibility it is that you are taking on, and also know what your own resources are, what it is possible for you to cope with. If you had done that, if you had done both of those things, it is very unlikely that you will have to give up whatever it is that you have taken on. But I don't think that people can do that, usually, at the very outset of their careers, careers in the ordinary sense. Perhaps if they are spiritually mature and by definition, I suppose, a Bodhisattva, even a beginning Bodhisattva, is spiritually mature they can do that sort of thing, but the ordinary person doesn't, not even when embarking on the spiritual life. We know that sometimes people take on too much, more than they can cope with; they take on too much study, take on even too much meditation, take on too much work. So one learns from experience and modifies one's behaviour accordingly.

Sanghadevi: So you think that's more to do with ordinary human maturity, it's not a question of spiritual maturity? Well, if you misjudge, it's [because] you are not mature enough on a human level

S: Not experienced enough. You may be mature in a sense, but you are just not experienced, you just don't know, you don't know what your own strength is, you don't know what you can do, don't know what you can't do; so more often than not you just plunge in. I think that applies at different levels. Perhaps it even applies at the Bodhisattva level, who knows? Perhaps some Bodhisattvas even take on too much, more than they can cope with; perhaps they take on too many universes! (Laughter). A novice Bodhisattva shouldn't take on more than two or three universes at a time!

Vajragita: But even when you have got some experience, I find it is still difficult to judge, because you change, and sometimes you might have been able to do it and [think] 'I know I can', then you do it again and then it is not

S: It depends on the sort of thing you are doing. Some things require physical strength and stamina, which may decrease as you get older, or if you are ill. Those factors don't remain constant, so you have to take that into consideration too. You may have more understanding than you had, say 40 or 50 years ago, but you may not have the same physical energy, the same physical strength; so you have to take all those things into account, and you learn to do that, I think, usually, as you get older or as you get spiritually more experienced. You also know how to go about things. You don't waste your energy as young people sometimes do because they've got so much of it. You conserve your energy. You learn perhaps not to waste it in worry or in negative emotions or unnecessary movements. So 'how can one enjoy one's pipe and slippers without being complacent?' Well, I suppose when you've got a clear conscience (Laughter done a good day's work; you've done what was expected of you, you've done what you took on, you've done it quite well or quite satisfactorily and it is a good thing, it is a healthy thing that you should just relax. Relaxation has its place. But even then you still have to be careful that you aren't being complacent just over-satisfied with yourself. Then comes a more difficult question: What criteria can you use to choose which activity to engage in when enthusiastic about a number of things?

[9]
That isn't easy. Do you think it often happens that people are enthusiastic, in the full meaning of the term, about a number of things?

Sanghadevi: There are degrees of enthusiasm. I have certainly felt I've had certain options or

choices of what I put my energy into, and I've got a degree of interest in certain areas.

S: Well, if there are degrees of enthusiasm for different things, then the things for which you have greater enthusiasm will gradually oust or supplant those things for which you have a lesser degree of enthusiasm, given that your time and your energy are limited. We do find that, don't we? But supposing that isn't the case, what about the objective criteria? We could consider which things that we are enthusiastic about have the greatest intrinsic value in terms of our own growth and development, or which have got perhaps the greatest value for other people, or which have both. Presumably, among all these things, we should choose, ideally, those activities which we engage in with the greatest enthusiasm, which are the best for us, and also the best for other people. That would be ideal. But perhaps that doesn't very often happen. Is anyone confronted by this problem, and if so in what way have they solved it, if at all? Don't let me do all the talking!

Vidyavati: She's suggesting, perhaps, the test of time might show which projects you are going to have most enthusiasm for

S: I think sometimes your choice is determined more or less by accident or force of circumstances. I can remember in my own case I was very enthusiastic about the visual arts when I was in my teens. I would have really liked to be an artist as well as a writer and, of course, various other things. But when I went to the East, and especially when I was wandering around, it wasn't easy in fact, it wasn't possible to engage in the visual arts, but it was easy to write, because paper and pencil were available everywhere, whereas artists' materials and all the time that you need and the special conditions that you need to paint or to draw, at least for me, were not available. So that enthusiasm for the visual arts, that enthusiasm for drawing and painting, got squeezed out in my case. Whereas my enthusiasm for writing, my enthusiasm for writing poetry especially, didn't get squeezed out because I could do it almost anywhere, under almost any circumstances. So sometimes accident or circumstances do play a part, too. But there have been a few cases I have known of recently where someone has fallen ill and been confined to bed, and has had therefore an opportunity to write poetry, which they would not have had had they not fallen ill and been confined to bed.

Vidyavati: A bit ..., it's difficult to make these choices if you do perhaps feel young and healthy, you want to put your energy into things

S: Yes, so many things. I suppose one has to try to achieve the best combination of subjective and objective factors: what is best for you in the truest sense as well as best for other people, that you should engage in. But if you have got a number of very strong enthusiasms, in the long run I think the strongest will win out, or the strongest one or two, or two or three, will win out; taking into account also the factor of circumstances.

[10]
Side 2

Sanghadevi: And do you think, if you don't feel very enthusiastic about anything (Laughter). If something arises that is much more obviously involving you yourself, it's better to just get started with that than ... your energy?

S: Well, if it does involve you, if the word 'involve' means anything, it means you are enthusiastic about it to some extent. Other factors being equal, it is better to be engaged in something about which you feel enthusiastic. Or you might even say that it is better to engage yourself in something which perhaps is a little less good but about which you are enthusiastic, rather than in something which is better but about which you don't feel very enthusiastic at all. Because I think once you have got involved in something with enthusiasm, it isn't difficult for that enthusiasm to spread to other things. All right, [No.] 7, With growing awareness, is death really wholly unexpected? It shouldn't be, should it, if the awareness of death has grown to any degree?

Vajragita: ...when somebody gets a car accident and then you get more and more developed and you are aware. Of course, in the text Shantideva says it can come quite unexpectedly, death, ... you are doing something, and then you are wondering whether you are whether you might know (??)

S: I think it's a question of what 'unexpected' means here. I think 'unexpected' means, not literally unexpected, perhaps, but more that it was statistically less likely. Well, you could die because a golden eagle had escaped from a zoo carrying a tortoise and had dropped that tortoise on your head. (Laughter. It is quite possible that you should die in that way, due to that cause; but statistically it is not very likely. It is much more likely that you will be knocked down by a bus. So the first could be regarded as unexpected, whereas the second would be much less unexpected. But even the first should not be entirely excluded from your consciousness even that can happen! Of course, you can't at the same time be thinking of all the different ways in which you can die. Perhaps you can bear in mind a few of the more likely. But you should also be prepared mentally for the unlikely.

Trish: So you think it's unlikely that you will have a premonition of your death?

S: Some people do seem to have premonitions. I can't say that I know exactly how it works, but that does seem to be the case. They may not have a premonition of exactly how they are going to die, but they may well have a premonition of the fact that they are going to die: that is, at a particular time, not very far away.

Trish: You get stories of developed people being able to choose their next rebirth. I suppose I wondered if that consciousness came back further to being able in some senses to choose when they died.

S: Well, it is said that some yogis can do that. There is no objective proof, obviously, but they do seem sometimes to predict and to choose.

Vajragita: Sometimes something happens, something dangerous near to you, and sometimes you can have a very strong feeling of staying calm; you just feel 'I know [11] I am not going to die.' But one way or another you are fooling yourself there, or rather you can sort of feel that you are going to die or not (?).

S: Well, you do know that you are going to die, don't you? If you don't know anything else, you know that, presumably. So it shouldn't ever really take you by surprise, in whatever form it comes. So death cannot really be wholly unexpected, even with a minimum of awareness. And as the awareness grows, you will be less and less likely to regard death in any form as

unexpected; even if that golden eagle does drop the tortoise on your head, you won't be in the least surprised. You will say, 'Well, it could have happened. Well, it has happened!' That is the way a famous Greek poet died.

: Who was that?

S: Aeschylus. According to legend, the eagle thought that his bald head was a stone and dropped the tortoise on it to break its shell. This is what the story says. (Laughter.)

: Keep your hats on.

S: I don't know whether the poet was taken by surprise or not! So death should never be really wholly unexpected, whether our own or that of some other person connected with us. But, even though we know that death will come to ourselves and others, we forget that very easily and we are as it were taken by surprise, get very upset and so on. Sometimes we are upset not because of the fact of death but [because of] the time and the circumstances, especially when someone dies young. We may think 'What a pity that they didn't fulfil their early promise.' But if someone is very old and they have done whatever they were supposed to do, we shouldn't really be surprised at all when they die. We certainly shouldn't be upset, however close to us they happened to be. Anyway, there is a question from Emma Jung that was Mrs Jung, wasn't it?

Trish: Yes.

S: Emma Jung suggests that in integrating their anima Oh dear! men have to overcome pride, where for women, with their animus, inertia, and lack of confidence have to be surmounted. Would you agree with this, and have you any comments?

S.:It seems to me a bit of an oversimplification, quite apart from the difficulty of generalizing about that great subject, men and women. I am sure there must be pride in the case of women; I don't think women are devoid of pride. At the same time, I don't think that men are devoid of inertia and lack of self-confidence. It could be that men have more pride; it could be that women have more inertia and lack of self-confidence it could be. But, when one says 'men' or when one says 'women', one is talking about an awful lot of people, living under all sorts of different conditions, all sorts of cultural backgrounds, so I think it is quite difficult to generalize. I am rather surprised that Emma Jung has the well, the self-confidence, in a way! to generalize to this extent.

[12]
Trish: It's probably misquoting her slightly, because in context it's not quite so generalized. She is talking specifically in relation to the anima and the animus not that men have more pride or that women have less.

S: But how would that work out? 'Emma Jung suggests that in integrating their anima men have to overcome pride.' This suggests that men have more pride than women, because they have to overcome that in particular before they can integrate their anima, no?

Trish: I don't think that's what she meant. I think she meant more that they regard the qualities associated with the anima as inferior, and so they have to overcome pride to incorporate it.

S: Ah. And that is not the case with regard to women in connection with the animus, presumably?

Trish: No, because you tend to regard it as more superior.

S: Hm. So 'Emma Jung suggests that in integrating their anima men have to overcome pride, where for women with their animus inertia and lack of self-confidence have to be surmounted.' Who agrees with that? Or do you think it's an over-generalization?

: I didn't realize the animus was to do with I never knew I had to think of the animus as superior. I just thought of it as different, because I hadn't actually come across that anyway.

Trish: It's not that it's superior; you tend to think of it as

: No, that's what I mean, I hadn't thought of it as superior, I think; so therefore I think she is making some sort of generalization, as, not knowing it, I didn't think of it

S: But do people usually think of their anima or of their animus in that sort of way? What does one mean by integrating their anima or integrating their animus? Is it a very conscious process?

Trish: I suppose it depends on the extent to which you use that terminology, doesn't it?

S: Yes, or even the extent of your culture, or the extent of your education, or even the extent of your awareness.

Trish: Perhaps a different way of phrasing the question might be to think in terms of just the process of becoming more aware. It did seem, when we had the weekend last year at the LBC of all the women who had asked for ordination, that lack of confidence was one of the universal characteristics that we felt we needed to overcome.

S: But does that have necessarily a special connection with the integration of the animus?

Vidyasri: Well, I can possibly connect it with developing more what you think of as your masculine qualities, like outgoingness, being capable, being effective, being outgoing; which you may think of as more masculine qualities. And it does seem that women need to gain confidence to be able to act in that way. So I could connect it up in that way.

[13]
S: I have thought for some time I think I have talked about this on one of the Tuscany courses [that] there is a possible confusion when one thinks of those elements or those aspects of one's personality of which one is unconscious in terms of masculine or feminine, or even anima and animus. I gave this a lot of thought a few years ago, and the conclusion I came to was this I am not sure if any psychologists, Jungians or whatever, have made this point but to begin with, obviously there is much in our psyche of which we are not conscious, so in the case of, say, the woman, she speaks of masculine qualities of which she is not conscious, which she has not integrated, etc., and similarly with the man. But why does one do that? Why does, for instance, a woman think of that part of her psyche of which she is not conscious as masculine, and vice versa? I think that it isn't that it is to be regarded as

masculine in the literal sense; I don't think the animus is to be regarded as masculine in the literal sense, nor the anima as the feminine in the literal sense. The anima and the animus represent the unknown. Because you are not conscious of it, it is the unknown. So it is the 'other'. So in your ordinary life, your ordinary experience, what is it that is the unknown? What is it that is the other? It is the opposite sex. So the opposite sex, or the figure of the opposite sex, or a member of the opposite sex, comes to represent that in you which is unknown, that in you of which you are unconscious. But that doesn't necessarily mean that that of which you are unconscious is either masculine or feminine in the literal sense. I think if we take that step, a certain amount of confusion is created. It's just that part of your psyche which is unknown. So you can think of it quite easily in terms of the masculine, if you are a woman, because the masculine is unknown to you. But those unknown qualities, that unknown part of your psyche, is not therefore to be considered masculine in the as it were literal sense. Don't think, therefore, that you can argue that self-confidence, for instance, is a masculine quality in the literal sense, and that if a woman is lacking in self-confidence therefore she is lacking in masculine qualities in the literal sense. It is simply that she hasn't developed her self-confidence! There are plenty of men also who are lacking in self-confidence. Different people are confident about different things. Men are confident about certain things that they can do, women are confident about certain things that they can do or unconfident about certain things they can't do, or think that they can't do. So I think we shouldn't use this sort of terminology too easily or too literalistically. But the first part of the question '...suggests that in integrating their anima men have to overcome pride, where for women with their animus inertia and lack of confidence have to be surmounted' I think this suggests that you undervalue what you are unconscious of, especially the first part of this. But I don't think that is necessarily so. Sometimes you overvalue it. Sometimes you undervalue what you don't possess, or that you're not conscious of, and sometimes you overvalue it. For instance, if you take well, take the question at its face value, and suppose that men do have an anima and that they have to integrate it; I think you might find that some men overvalue the anima or the qualities it represents, and other men undervalue it. And similarly with women with regard to the so-called animus. Some of them overvalue the animus, some of them undervalue it; others perhaps neither overvalue it nor undervalue it, but just regard it as something on the same level, as it were. So I don't think, even accepting Emma Jung's terminology and point of view, that you can say that men always undervalue the anima and therefore have to overcome pride in order to integrate it; nor do I think that women necessarily in all respects have inertia and lack of self-confidence, and therefore have to overcome that in order to [14] integrate their animus. I think the whole situation is more complex than Emma Jung's comment appears to suggest.

Trish: When we talked about this a week or so ago, we were wondering not having heard your comments, of course whether this bore some relation to how the men seemed to move through the process of being able to Go for Refuge faster than the women did. Would you have any comments on that?

S: How would it, or how could it, have any bearing, do you think?

Trish: Well, it seemed like perhaps Jung talks about the animus giving meaning, and that therefore that is quite a crucial thing in terms of development, because you have to understand what it is that is happening. So that for [men?] perhaps easier for them to make that step and then integrating their more feminine sides can come along a little later; whereas for women perhaps that can't happen like that, they have to

S: Hm. But on the other hand, when men Mitras, say, go on the selection retreats, their emotional state, their degree of emotional positivity, the extent to which they are in touch with their feelings, is one of the things that [are] looked at by the members of the team. They don't simply consider the extent to which the Mitra understands what Going for Refuge means. So I think in practice that probably wouldn't work out; I think a man who is, to use this terminology, very much out of contact with his anima just wouldn't get on to the final ordination course; he certainly ought not to get on, and I don't think he actually would. Because it would be so obvious in the context of a retreat of almost any kind if you were alienated, so to speak, from your anima, your more refined feelings or feminine side, as people sometimes say. I think in the Movement generally people are very conscious of these sort of issues. So where does that leave your question about

Trish: I'm not sure!

Vidyasri: What was the actual question that's what I'd like to know?

Trish: Just about it seems to take men less time to be able to Go for Refuge...

Vidyasri: Bhante seemed to be

S: Hm?

Vidyasri: I was thinking there seemed to be lots of different factors involved in why men get ordained faster than women.

S: My own sort of hypothesis is that men are able to mobilize their energies more quickly, but they can also demobilize them. In the case of women, they mobilize their energies less quickly, but they also demobilize them less quickly! Do you see what I mean? (Murmurs of assent.)

Sanghadevi: It's got strength to it, as well.

S: No, I'm not thinking in terms of strength so much. Is it clear? or maybe it isn't clear.

Vidyasri: No, I'm not entirely sure what you mean.

[15]
S: It seems that a man can sort of gather all his energies together and direct them to one point much more quickly and easily than a woman, but he can also withdraw them and scatter them again. Whereas it seems, from just observing women in the Movement not going beyond that that women take a longer time to gather all their energies together, but once they have gathered them together they stay gathered to a greater degree, very often, than is the case with the men.

Vidyasri: I have heard other people commenting on that that they have noticed that.

S: You could compare the men with the hares and the women with the tortoises! Sometimes the tortoise beats the hare! But you could also consider that the more the Movement grows, and the greater the number of years over which it progresses, you will get a steadily

increasing army of women gradually getting there! Do you see what I mean? It's beginning to happen already, isn't it, really? Because real commitment, real Going for Refuge is tantamount to Stream Entry, when you don't change, you don't draw back after that; but it is very difficult to get to that point. But I think, in the case of men, before reaching that point, they can get near it and then draw back, near it and draw back, a number of times within a short period. But it seems that, in the case of women, they make a steadier progress; they are slower, but you don't get that drawing back and then going forward again, and drawing back and then going forward again, in the same way. Even so, one shouldn't over-generalise; but that seems to be the broader, more general pattern.

Trish: Have you any ideas why?

S: I think ultimately it must be biologically based. But anyway, anima and animus I sometimes wonder to what extent the Jungian terminology illuminates these sort of issues, and to what extent it confuses them. I must say I feel less and less happy with Jungian terminology; but it is still quite widely used, isn't it?

Vidyasri: I've noticed that some people seem to find it useful when they are beginning to become aware of the processes in themselves, and the different aspects, and I have noticed that with some women it's been helpful to read about the animus, say, and to think about this tendency in themselves to take on opinions and so on without being fully conscious of why and the emotions behind it, and to

S: But does one have to use the terminology of the animus? Why not simply say 'I need to develop such-and-such qualities, and until I have developed them in a genuine way I tend to incorporate them in a rather unreal way'?

Vidyasri: I think you could, but it seems to be just that people come across that terminology and are talking about something they can relate to. So I notice people use it for a while, and then stop using it when they become more conscious of the processes and can identify them within themselves. That's what I have noticed.

Trish: It's like it gives you a framework to work with initially.

S: Yes, you should regard it as a sort of shorthand for certain experiences, but not as representing definite psychic entities.

Trish: But even Emma Jung herself says that it's very difficult not to fix it (?).

[16]
S: I also think it's important, as I have said, not to think of the animus as being literally masculine, or the anima as being literally feminine. All right, let's [go on to] something different. How did the formulas of the Bodhisattva's vows arise? I think we don't really know, because they just appear, as it were, in various versions, in the Mahayana sutras, and we really know so little about the evolution or development of those Mahayana sutras as oral traditions and literary documents. I'm afraid we just have to say that we don't really know. Perhaps we will know one day.

Trish: Do you know how early they were?

S: Even that isn't easy; really it's a question of the age or date of the Mahayana sutras. You do get Bodhisattva vows in the Ratnakuta collection, and they could go back to about 200250 years after the time of the Buddha; some of them, anyway. But how they arose that isn't so clear; what particular sequence of steps led to the formulation of those vows, that we really don't know. There are quite a lot of things we don't know about the development of Buddhism. How are we going to time? oh!

Sanghadevi: Are we going to stop ...?

S: Do you want to stop? All right, we can.

Sanghadevi: Do you want to Well,

S: Because these questions go on now on to quite a different series of topics.

Sanghadevi: We could [leave] the mandala till tomorrow.

S: OK, fair enough. Stop with the anima and the animus, eh? Give you something to dream about tonight! (Laughter.)

Viv Bartlett(?): Do you feel that people it's unhelpful to use those terms because people are fixing parts of themselves too much with these terms?

S: Well, clearly one has to use some terms, one has to use some language. The Jungian one seems quite widespread, quite current. I think you can't really discourage a particular language, because people are going to use some language or other, and you can always take a language too literally, even literalistically. So probably it's just desirable to remind people not to use a particular language too literalistically, not to reify concepts.

Sanghadevi: Do you think it would be better to take that section out of the Mitrata Omnibus that [is] about animus and anima?

S: In a way I have brought trouble on my own head, because even in the Eightfold Path no, the Bodhisattva series I have spoken about 'masculine' and 'feminine' aspects. Even then, I put them within single inverted commas to show that they weren't to be taken too literally. And I think one has to remember, because the [16a] 'masculine' is used in the case of women to represent the well, the unconscious to some extent that it does not follow from that that the unconscious is as it were masculine by nature. The 'masculine' is there to symbolize that, because the 'masculine' represents the unknown, which is what, of course, the unconscious by definition is. The unconscious can contain a lot more than just, so to speak, the 'masculine', even when it is a question of so-called masculine qualities not having been realized. One shouldn't even limit the unconscious to the masculine, in the case of a woman, or to the feminine in the case of a man; it is much vaster than that. If a woman dives deep into her unconscious, she won't come across a man, as it were; she will come across a whole range of unrealized qualities, some of which may have a resemblance to certain masculine qualities, but not necessarily so. And similarly for the man. Otherwise, it is almost as though you think of yourself as belonging to one sex in a quite literal sort of way, but hidden away in your unconscious is the other sex, almost in a literal sort of way. But it isn't really like that, I think. Anyway: the rest tomorrow.

Sanghadevi: Thank you, Bhante.

[17]
Questions and answers with the venerable Sangharakshita on 'Enthusiasm': Chapter 7 of A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

Rivendell, June-July 1987

PRESENT: Sanghadevi, Vidyasri, Vajragita, Sridevi, Vidyavati, Trish Mander, Tessa Harding, Viv Bartlett, Karola, Christine McCluskey, Caroline Gutt, Maggie Graeber.

30 June 1987

[Voice prints. Then:]

Sangharakshita: This is Bhante, who hasn't been for a walk with anybody! I have been studying the questions. There are some questions left over from yesterday, so we will start with those. In v. 4, Batchelor translates klesa as 'disturbing conceptions', whereas Matics translates klesa as 'passions'. In the footnote (p. 179, no. 7), Batchelor explains why he has chosen his translation. I was under the impression that klesa was more definitely emotive, and the term jneya was concerned with the more cognitive aspect of our delusion and would include the 'mistaken views, doubts, etc.' which Batchelor lumps under klesa. Would you give your own explanation of what klesa and jneya are please? It is not really quite so simple as that. After reading Batchelor's note, I think in a sense I agree with him, though the translation 'disturbing conceptions' by itself is misleading, if one doesn't read Batchelor's note and bear in mind why he is translating klesa as 'disturbing conceptions'. I take it everybody has in fact read that note? Did it seem convincing, or not?

Sanghadevi: I didn't fully understand it.

S: Well, let's look at it. He says: This term is variously translated as "delusion", "defilement", "emotion"; but here the term "disturbing conception" will be employed. The reason for this choice is as follows: According to the Abhidharmasamuccaya, a klesha is a mental factor that, upon occurring in the mind, has the function of producing turmoil in and a lack of control over the psyche". That turmoil is, of course, predominantly emotional. By adding the term "conception"..., it is being noted that the kleshas are primarily a reflexive as opposed to a pre-reflexive function of consciousness. "Conception" should not be understood in the limited sense of intellectual thought, but in a wider sense of any subjectively conditioned mental response, whether emotional, such as in attachment, hatred or pride, or intellectual, such as in mistaken views, doubts. etc.' I think the key phrase here is: 'the kleshas are primarily a reflexive as opposed to a pre-reflexive function of consciousness'. So what does one mean by 'reflexive as opposed to pre-reflexive'? If one doesn't understand that, one won't really understand the reason for his translation of the term.

Sanghadevi: I don't understand it.

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S: So what is 'reflexive'? He speaks of the 'reflexive' or 'pre-reflexive' function of consciousness, but one can, of course, speak of 'reflexive consciousness'. What is reflexive

consciousness? We sometimes use that term, don't we, in connection with the Higher Evolution?

: It's aware of itself.

S: Aware of itself, yes. Reflexive consciousness is the consciousness of one who is aware of himself or herself. Reflexive consciousness is consciousness aware of consciousness. Pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness which is not aware of consciousness. So Batchelor translates klesa as 'disturbing conception' rather than as 'passion', because passion can be confused with instinct, which is pre-reflexive. He wants to make it clear that klesa is not just a matter of instinct: it is a matter of a mental state or what else does he call it? a mental factor which is consequent upon, or dependent upon, self-consciousness or reflexive consciousness. Do you see the difference?

Sanghadevi: So does that mean well, say, animals wouldn't you wouldn't speak of an animal having klesa?

S: Yes; to the extent that animals represent just instinct, you wouldn't speak of an animal as having klesa.

Vidyasri: Would all human beings have klesa?

S: Yes, to the extent that they have self-consciousness or reflexive consciousness, they have klesa as well, of course, as passion in the sense of instinct. But Batchelor seems to be translating klesa as 'disturbing conception' just in order to make it clear that klesa is not just a matter of instinct which we share with the animals; it is a matter of a mental factor that is reflexive as opposed to pre-reflexive. So he has a definite reason, which I think is quite justified, for translating in this way. One just has to be careful that one gives its full emotional force to the term 'disturbing', and that one doesn't limit 'conception' to purely intellectual states as he says.

Vidyasri: So what would be the word for 'passion' in the sense of instinct?

S: I am not so sure that there is one in Sanskrit. I can't recollect one. I think the psychology of animals isn't really discussed. Where animals are mentioned at all, as in the Jatakas, they appear like human beings or they represent human beings. I doubt if there is a term for instinct. I think, if a Buddhist author had wanted to express what we speak of as instinct, he would have said something like 'animals that are following their nature', or something of that sort.

Vajragita: I wonder, when the word passion is used 'overcoming the passions' that's not referring to instinct?

S: No, it's referring to klesas.

Sanghadevi: So does that mean that more basic drives, such as drives for food, sex and sleep, which often perturbs the animal, wouldn't be aspects of klesas?

S: I think, in the case of human beings, what we speak of separately as instincts are sort of

incorporated into the klesas. For instance, take the question of food: we don't only feel a desire to eat, we are conscious that we have that desire to eat. We are conscious of ourselves as having that desire to eat. So one could say, I

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think though I won't be completely sure of this that, in the case of human beings, instincts are incorporated with klesas in the Buddhistic sense. Animals have simple instincts and drives, but we have klesas.

Vidyasri: So then jneya the other one pride: if klesa also includes intellectual thoughts and responses, what is jneya? I thought that was the intellectual, conceptual

S: It isn't intellectual or conceptual in the ordinary sense, because jneya represents Insight. So you could say, whereas instinct to use that term is below reflexive consciousness, jneya is above reflexive consciousness; though we can speak of it as though it was a form of reflexive consciousness. For instance, we can say well, we could say 'I am Enlightened.' The Buddha might say 'I am Enlightened.' But, strictly speaking, he can't say that, because Enlightenment is not something that can be possessed, so to speak, by the reflexive consciousness. You can't be conscious that you are Enlightened, because that reflexive consciousness doesn't exist in the state of Enlightenment in the way that it exists in unenlightened human beings.

Sanghadevi: So that's jneya?

S: So jneya pertains to Insight, it pertains to prajna; it does not pertain to something intellectual or conceptual in the ordinary, reflexive consciousness, sense.

Sanghadevi: Isn't it a veil? I thought it was one of the veils?

S: Yes, it is a veil, but in what does that veil consist? (Bewildered laughter.)

Sanghadevi: Something very subtle, by the sound of it.

S: One could say two things. One could say that there is jneya as the actual veil itself, which has to be removed by Insight; and there is jneya as the actual Insight that removes the veil. But unless one makes some such distinction, then there is no difference according to Batchelor, or in effect according to Batchelor between klesa and jneya. He says: '"Conception" should not be understood in the limited sense of intellectual thought' which is what jneya very often means 'but in a wider sense of any subjectively conditioned mental response, whether emotional, such as in attachment, hatred, or pride, or intellectual, such as in mistaken views, doubts, etc.' That would seem to do away with the distinction between klesa and jneya in the ordinary sense. Is that any clearer? Or at least is it clear why the expression 'disturbing conception' is employed?

Voices: Yes.

Sanghadevi: Do you think maybe it's simpler to just think in terms of having to free oneself of klesa, then, rather than think of it as two veils?

S: Yes, because the two veils the klesavarana and the jneyavarana are said to correspond to

pudgalanaratviya and dharmanaratviya (??), aren't they? But that does seem to be a later refinement. It seems, in the earlier texts, especially the Pali Canon, that one speaks only of klesa.

Trish: What was the second [pair] you mentioned, Bhante?

S: Pudgalanaratviya and dharmanaratviya the emptiness of the self, which is supposed to be obscured by klesa, and the emptiness of dharmas, which is supposed to be obscured by jneya. One could say well, that is a later distinction; one could [20] say it is a rather artificial one. Perhaps the distinction between the so-called klesa and the so-called jneya does break down to some extent. And, as I said, in the earlier texts it seems that only klesa is spoken of; that sort of distinction is not made. Perhaps one has got involved in a bit of scholasticism here.

Sanghadevi: It's interesting.

S: Yes, maybe you should forget what I said about jneya, in that case. (Laughter.)

Sridevi: Why do you say that?

S: Well, perhaps it would be simpler just to think in terms of klesa. (Pause.) Well, I will give the matter further thought, and perhaps I will come back to it at some other time. But, as I said, at least it is clear why the expression 'disturbing conceptions' is being used: that one has to distinguish between passions, which are below reflexive consciousness, and klesas, which are as it were on the level of reflexive consciousness. All right. Yes, the question says: 'I was under the impression that klesa was more definitely emotive, and that the term jneya was concerned with the more cognitive aspect of our condition and would include the mistaken views, doubts, etc.' So if one accepts what Batchelor says about klesa and disturbing conceptions, that distinction would seem rather to fall to the ground; perhaps suggesting that the distinction isn't really necessary certainly not in that clear-cut sort of way that we do sometimes get it. All right, on to the next question. Is there a connection between klesa and jneya on the one hand, and punya and jnana on the other? The distinction between punya and jnana is in fact much more clear-cut. In the context of the Mahayana, it is often said that dana, sila, kshanti and virya by themselves are productive only of punya; whereas jnana corresponds to prajna, and it is of course only prajna that makes dana, sila, kshanti, virya and samadhi into paramitas. So, if one accepts the scholastic distinction between klesa and jneya, yes, there is a correspondence with punya and jnana; but if that distinction between klesa and jneya falls to the ground then one can't make a correspondence in that way. None the less, there is a much more definite difference, even, between punya and jnana than there is between klesa and jneya.

Sanghadevi: There seems to be the implication in the text that well, I find it rather hard to understand the sort of split between mind and body. It's like the body becomes joyful through wholesome actions, and the mind becomes

S: Well, one has perhaps to go back to the Bodhisattva ideal of the Mahayana. According to the traditional teaching, the Bodhisattva has, of course, practised the paramitas for numberless aeons, so it's on account of his having practised the paramitas and accumulated an enormous amount of punya that he is born under certain conditions or with certain equipment, as it were. For instance, he is born in a noble or even royal family; he is born wealthy; he is

given a good education and he is born healthy, he is born of long life, he is born of attractive appearance, and so on. So the general tradition, especially the Mahayana tradition, is that all the Bodhisattva's material advantages, as we may call them, are the product of the punya that he has accumulated, whereas his wisdom and Insight are the product of the jnana that he has accumulated the expression of the jnana. [21] This is not to say that body and mind are therefore entirely distinct entirely different; they are distinct, but perhaps they are not different. In the same way, you could argue though the Mahayana does not actually say this that punya and jnana, though distinct, are not really different. One could say that one is the internal, the other the external, but the Mahayana does not actually say that. You could go on to argue that a dualism of punya and jnana does imply a dualism of mind and body, but Buddhism does not actually usually admit an absolute dualism of mind and body. Incidentally, in thangkas of the Buddha, the aura around his body is usually considered to represent his punya, and the aura around his head is usually considered to represent his jnana. But punya is definitely considered the height of the mundane; punya is all possible positive qualities and endowments exclusive of actual Insight. But jnana is the Insight itself. We come on to a similar topic with the third question: .28 seems to suggest that a highly evolved being who had perfected their punya could remain in cyclic existence for the sake of others, but not experience any suffering through their body. I thought they would, in a sense, because they have a body, though mentally and emotionally they can transcend the pain. Well, if one accepts the Mahayana point of view with regard to the Bodhisattva ideal that I have outlined, then I suppose theoretically it is possible that you should have accumulated so much punya that when you are born in your last life the life in which you become a Buddha you are born with absolutely all material advantages, to such an extent that you never experience any pain or suffering. But there is an implication here, the implication being that everything that befalls you on the material plane is due to your past karma; but is that so? Is that actually the Buddhist teaching?

Voices: No.

S: No, it isn't, is it? So however great this is my own reasoning however great the punya that you have accumulated, however many your material advantages, you may still be subject to some pain and sorrow or suffering which are incidental to conditioned existence itself, and have nothing to do with your personal karma. You can be full of merits but still suffer, which is what, according to the Pali Canon, happened in the case of the Buddha, because occasions are mentioned when the Buddha did suffer from illness, and suffered pain on account of the illness, and when he was wounded in the foot and apparently suffered pain. So it would seem that this verse 28 cannot really be taken literally: As their bodies are happy due to their merits And their minds are happy due to their wisdom, Even if they remained in cyclic existence for the sake of others Why would the Compassionate Ones ever be upset? Well, they would be upset, occasionally at least, because the experiences that befall them in cyclic existence do not necessarily depend upon the karma, i.e. the punya, that they have accumulated, but they are in spite of the punya. Mahayana Buddhism is very optimistic; it tends to suggest sometimes that the really good person, the person endowed with infinite merits, cannot suffer. But I think that is not really true. I think that is to take an unduly optimistic view of life, and it isn't really [22] in accordance with basic Buddhist teaching with regard to karma. Do you see what I am getting at?

Trish: Do you think that could be something to do with the Indian reverence for wealth, for money?

S: Well, there is a very strong tendency in India as, for instance, among the ancient Jews to think that wealth was a sort of, in the case of the Indians, the result of good karma, as in the case of the Jews it was considered the sign of God's approval and blessing. I think one has to be careful not to associate material prosperity or material advantages with spirituality. You can perhaps lead a very good life, a very ethical life, a very spiritual life, but you can nevertheless suffer for various reasons. Indian thought, on the whole, seems not to have faced that possibility fairly and squarely. Of course, in the case of the spiritual person, you may well be mentally or spiritually above the suffering. It may not influence or affect your mind, as was the case with the Buddha. But none the less, so long as you have a physical body, you will be accessible to suffering, and you will suffer, even if it is only little aches and pains. You cannot ever escape from that completely. And through your body you may in fact suffer severely, despite your great spiritual qualities or even your Enlightenment. I think Indian thought generally does not see that possibility sufficiently clearly well, it is not just a possibility, it is an actuality.

Sridevi: Isn't it obvious from the Buddha's life story that his disciples must have suffered before they met him? I don't think they were all rich and attractive and like I suppose before one gets Enlightened.

S: None the less, that does seem to have been the tendency, or the trend, of Indian well, Buddhist thought, especially in the Mahayana. But it is a general trend in Indian thought.

Vidyasri: Do you think it's trying to communicate more symbolically the fact that, even though painful things might happen, if you had a lot of punya and merit and understanding you wouldn't necessarily mentally [suffer]?

S: It wouldn't be the punya that would save you, not the merit; it would be the jnana. Unless you are thinking in terms of meditative states, mundane meditative states.

Vidyasri: Yes, I was. Sometimes I have wondered if it put itself across in that way, that you would never suffer, almost symbolically, but if, I suppose through jnana, you had practised and were in a very strong, stable mental state and didn't get overwhelmed by the suffering that happened to you,

S: Yes, but not being overwhelmed by suffering and not experiencing suffering these are two quite different things. It may be that, as you have said, in India they did just try to represent a state which was at least mentally or spiritually free from suffering, but they did sometimes express that in such a way as to suggest that there was no possibility of suffering at all, for someone who was so to speak enlightened. I think that perhaps in Indian thought generally, not excluding Mahayana Buddhism, there is a tendency or was a tendency to play down suffering, even though in Buddhism suffering is the first Noble Truth.

Vidyasri: Do you know why that should be why they should do that?

[23]
S: Well, in a sense it seems almost like an unwillingness to face reality, or at least face the facts. I think, perhaps this is a wild generalization this is a tendency of the greedy type of character, and perhaps Indians have got this greedy type of character, as it were. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Vidyasri: Wanting to create a heaven.

S: Yes, wanting everything to be all right; which it isn't, always. So, yes, I don't think we can agree with this verse, even though Shantideva seems to say it. What does the Matics version say? The body is happy by means of merit, The mind is happy by means of learning. Learning' is not a good translation here. What can hurt the Compassionate One As he remains in the realm of rebirth for the sake of others? Well, anything can hurt him! (Laughter). No, I'm afraid I can't agree with Shantideva here. Well, perhaps it doesn't hurt him in the ultimate sense, but certainly there is, at the very least, some peripheral suffering. But even Shantideva has to be read critically, you know.

Sanghadevi: Is the metamorphic body purely mythical?

S: Are you thinking of the nirmanakaya? (Pause.) Laughter. Where do you get this term, 'metamorphic body'? Does one of the translators use it?

Sanghadevi: Well, it's The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava that I am studying.

S: Ah. I think that is the nirmanakaya, I think it's meant for nirmanakaya. If that's of any help. No, perhaps we shouldn't deviate into the life of Padmasambhava; not at the moment! Next week.

: ... we'll get confused.

S: So 'v. 28 seems to suggest that a highly evolved being who had perfected their punya could remain in cyclic existence for the sake of others but not experience any suffering through their body. I thought they would, in a sense, because they have a body' well, that's true 'though mentally and emotionally they can transcend the pain.' Yes, that is the position there. I think we can't accept, certainly not literally, what Shantideva says in this verse. All right: Batchelor refers to the Lord of Death (v. 4). What is the place of Mara as Lord of Death, Yama as Lord of Death, Mahakala as Lord of Death, in Indian Buddhist thought? wonder what one means by 'the place' of them in Indian Buddhist thought or am I being pedantic?

Sanghadevi: Sridevi's question.

[24]
Sridevi: Oh, I tried to formulate it quickly! Well, who are they, in Indian Buddhism?

S: I did speak about Mara in the Wesak lecture, didn't I? I spoke about the four Maras. There was Klesa Mara, there was Skandha Mara, there was Devaputta Mara, and Maricchu(?) Mara. So I suppose by Mara as Lord of Death one means Maricchu Mara? But again, as I indicated in that talk also, you can't really, perhaps, split up the four Maras as though they were literally four. In a way, they are different aspects of one another. Anyone remember what I said?

: (inaudible)

S: Mara, as Devaputta Mara, is a mythological being. He is a being who occupies a place in the hierarchy of the gods. He rules over the whole kamaloka, in the mythological sense; though in a deeper, more philosophical sense, of course, he rules over the whole of

conditioned existence, inasmuch as everything conditioned comes to an end. And in that sense, of course, he is Lord of Death. If you want to put it in the broadest sense, you can say that Mara is the personification of the fact that everything has an end. One of his titles is Antaka(?), the End-Maker. So one could say that that was his place in Indian Buddhist thought.

Sridevi: So is he earlier than Yama and Mahakala?

S: No. Yama is a different figure altogether. Mara seems to be distinctively Buddhist. The term Mara, to the best of my recollection, is not used in Hindu literature at all. But Yama is a Vedic figure; Yama is a very ancient figure indeed. I think it's the Rig Veda that speaks of Yama and Yami, the primeval pair. They are twins, they are brother and sister; they are also husband and wife. They are also the first human beings, so they are also the original ancestors, so they rule over the world of the ancestors, they rule over the realm of the dead. In that sense, Yama is the Lord of Death. But that is in a much more primitive, archaic sense. Mara, you could say, though he is a figure in Buddhist mythology, is a much more philosophical figure. He represents a much more philosophical conception, whereas Yama is a very primitive figure from pre-Buddhist mythology, from Vedic mythology.

Sridevi: So the monster holding the Wheel of Life would that be Mara?

Vidyasri: It's Yama.

S: No, it's not a Mara. I'm not even so sure that it's Yama either. It's usually described as the Demon of Impermanence, which perhaps comes closer to Mara. To the best of my knowledge, that figure is not actually described as Mara. As for Mahakala, Mahaka means 'great time'. This is a more philosophical conception, though Mahakala is a Tantric figure. Very broadly speaking, he represents Time, Great Time, as the destroyer. Again, he is more akin to Mara, but he is a purely Tantric figure, because he is representing wrathful form with many arms and legs in union with his consort. So although they can all in a way be described as Lords of Death, they have very different backgrounds, and they are really mythologically speaking, at least, or symbolically speaking very distinct figures. I don't know whether you realize this, but I may be a bit more familiar with the literature, both Buddhist and Hindu, than you are, so to me these are three quite distinct figures.

Sanghadevi: In the Bodhicarya, Shantideva uses Yama.

[25]
S: Well, perhaps one could say that, for the Indian, whether he is Hindu or Buddhist, the figure of Yama gives rise to much deeper reverberations, as it were; he is a much more primitive, more archaic figure than Mara. Yama is a quite shadowy figure. He doesn't figure very prominently in Hindu mythology; he is there in the background of Hinduism, in the original Vedic substratum.

Sanghadevi: So would Pluto be a figure that reminds one ?

S: You could say so to some extent. I am not sure whether Pluto is regarded as the original ancestor, in the way that Yama is. I don't think he is though he might have been originally, because according to some anthropologists all religion originated in ancestor worship, and it

is quite common for the ancestors, the original primeval pair, to be regarded as reigning over the kingdom of the dead. But I think one has to say, with regard to these mythological figures, one can't really say 'They mean this', 'They mean that', as though it is very definite and clear-cut. They belong to a different sort of world; they belong to a world of symbols and archetypes, for want of better expressions. You have to ask yourself what they mean for you or to you, what sort of feelings, what sort of images they give rise to. Perhaps they don't mean very much to us at all because they belong to Indian mythology unless we have soaked ourselves in Buddhist literature or Indian literature, Indian mythology until it does mean something to us. I must say the figure of Mara does mean quite a lot to me personally, Yama not so much, and perhaps Mahakala very little indeed. Anyway, then there is another question: Are we to take these figures as purely symbolic or as existing in certain dimensions of consciousness? I think, from a Buddhist point of view, we can take the figure of Mara as existing in certain dimensions of consciousness, because he is supposed to dwell in the highest of the kamaloka deva realms.

Sanghadevi: The highest?

S: Mm, of the kamaloka deva realms.

Sanghadevi: Ah.

S: There are the kamaloka deva realms and the rupaloka and arupaloka deva realms.

Sanghadevi: Is he in the same realm as the Four Great Kings?

S: No, he is higher. There are six deva realms belonging to the kamaloka. The Four Great Kings occupy the lowest, and Mara occupies the highest.

[26]
Side 2

S: You are well aware of the fact that, corresponding to the dhyanas, there are well, heavens, for want of a better term, and these heavens are, so to speak, occupied by various beings who can be regarded as, as it were, mythological. Mara is one of these. So he can be regarded as existing in a certain dimension of consciousness as an actual being. He can, of course, also be regarded as purely symbolic - symbolic of death in particular.

Trish: Does he have the same connotation of a fallen angel as you get with Lucifer?

S: Umm yes and no; because there is no history of Mara's fall; you just don't get that way of thinking in Buddhism at all. But certainly he is a being who has the same sort of mixture of attractiveness and evil, in a sense, that Lucifer has. But again he is not evil in the way that Lucifer is, because there is not that sort of conception of evil in Buddhism, or indeed in Indian thought at all. Mara is wicked and mischievous rather than evil. All right, carry on. Are the supports to enthusiasm (v. 31) a traditional list?: I must say I haven't come across them anywhere else. For achieving the welfare of beings there is the power of zeal Constancy, joy and release. No, I can't say that I have come across this list elsewhere. It may exist but it certainly isn't one of the well-known traditional lists. All right, now we come to a question which has got a heading to it in capitals: WILFULNESS Oh dear. My impression is that to

many women Mitras and Order Members who have been meditating and practising for some time in the FWBO, the question of wilfulness arises as an important area and tendency to work with. It seems to be more so for women than for men, as if it is more damaging to women to ignore their emotional responses than for men. (a) Would you agree with this? (b) Do you think it helpful for us to be cautious about being too, helpful?

Oh! Wilful. (Laughter.)

S: Oh! That's a real Freudian slip! Oh, that does give the game away! Whose face is red? (c) Do you think, if one is wilful but just carries on, after a time a deeper level of emotion is integrated anyway? Well! But what does one mean, what does one understand, by wilfulness? What is this wilfulness that apparently we are always talking about? Anyone got any idea? Wilfulness?

[27]
: It's sometimes motive power.

S: It's more than that, isn't it?

Christine McCluskey(?): It's when you deny certain aspects of yourself, possibly.

Sanghadevi: One part of your being overriding other parts of your being.

: (inaudible.)

Sanghadevi: In fact, overriding the greater part of your being.

S: But is that possible?

Sanghadevi: Well, it is to a certain well, for a certain time.

S: For a certain length of time, yes.

Christine: Maybe less of ourself is absent for that time?

S: Well, that can be the case in all sorts of situations, can't it? It's as though, in the case of wilfulness, you identify with a particular aspect of yourself, or a particular part of yourself, and put all your energy or as much energy as you can behind that at least for a while, because you can't go on doing it indefinitely. That would seem to be what wilfulness is. It therefore implies, perhaps, a rather fixed outlook about yourself, a rather fixed view of yourself that 'I am this' or 'I am that', and investing as much energy as you possibly can in that. So it therefore suggests obstinacy, doesn't it? What else does it suggest of that sort?

: The dictionary said obstinacy was being headstrong.

S: Being headstrong, yes. So what does 'headstrong' mean? It usually means going ahead regardless of certain considerations which perhaps you ought to take into account, including perhaps other people's advice. So let's look at the question again:My impression is that to many women Mitras and Order Members who have been meditating and practising for some

time in the FWBO, the question of wilfulness arises as an important area and tendency to work with.' One would have thought that anybody could fall victim to wilfulness, inasmuch as anybody can think of just a part of themselves or aspect of themselves as being the whole of themselves, and just put their energy behind that. Anyway, let's leave that for the moment. It seems to be more so for women than men' I am afraid I am a bit doubtful about that; some men can be pretty wilful, I can assure you 'as if it is more damaging for women to ignore their emotional responses than for men.' I really doubt that, because how could it possibly be more damaging for women than for men? If you've got the emotional side and the intellectual side, and the emotional side, whether you realize it or not, is really an important part of you, it must be damaging for you to ignore that, whether you are a man or whether you are a woman. I would have thought so. 'Do you think it is helpful for us to be cautious about being too wilful?' Well, wilfulness as I have defined it is obviously something not just to be cautious about but to be avoided. The opposite of being wilful is to see yourself in perspective, see yourself as a whole, see which parts of yourself are more important, to so speak, in a natural sort of way; and to put your energy behind the whole of yourself, especially those parts which represent growing points for you. So we shouldn't just [28] be cautious about being too wilful. In a sense, we shouldn't be wilful at all. Sometimes you may need to push yourself quite mindfully, just because of circumstances, at least for the time being, but that's quite a different thing. You are not then operating predominantly through a particular part or aspect of yourself because you've got a rigid view of yourself or a limited view of yourself, but because you see that there is perhaps a job that needs to be done, and you have a particular skill which enables you to do that job, even though that skill doesn't represent the whole of yourself. Do you see what I am getting at?

Viv (?): So then the difference is that you are aware that it doesn't represent the whole of yourself, rather than thinking it does?

S: Yes, indeed. And being blind to the other aspects of yourself. But perhaps even that you can't keep up indefinitely. You must know your own strength from experience. Then the questioner says: 'Do you think that if one is wilful but just carries on, after a time a deeper level of emotion is integrated anyway?' I doubt this very much. I doubt whether it happens automatically.

Trish: I think in the FWBO sometimes people have used wilfulness to sort of get themselves going and then, because they think

S: But is that strictly wilfulness? Is that a correct use of the term? If you just put energy into something to get yourself going, well, then you are not doing it simply because you have a limited view of yourself.

Trish: But I suspect you were thinking, when you did have a limited view of yourself, that you would use that way of operating to sort of get things done. But

S: Perhaps we could say that one always does have a limited view of oneself. But it is a question of going ahead, at least for the time being, with that limited view, but being open to the fact that there are a lot of other sides of yourself which sooner or later need to be taken into account.

Viv: Lately my experience what I see is that wilfulness is a hindrance that we you know, the

Friends we have to work with; as we become more aware of ourselves we become more

S: When you say 'work with', what do you mean, exactly, by that?

Viv: Well, by taking having to be quite conscious, consciously trying not to be wilful.

S: Ah, you mean working on it rather than working with it?

Viv: Yes, working on it and working on becoming aware of more aspects of yourself, because I think a lot of us are quite wilful.

S: But then, as I have said, we cannot but be, to begin with, because we don't always recognize or realize all the aspects of ourself. And perhaps that isn't always wilfulness in a purely negative sense. Wilfulness is more like sort of deliberately ignoring aspects of yourself when they are presented to you, or when you begin to become aware of them, or when people point them out to you, you persist in ignoring them, you persist in carrying on in the old way. That would seem to be more like [29] wilfulness, and that is certainly a dangerous thing. But if you see that a situation requires you to function just through a particular aspect of yourself and you do it mindfully and with awareness, then that, I think, is not to be described as wilfulness.

Trish: Is that doing your duty?

S: You could see it in terms of duty; you could certainly do that. I personally see the word 'duty' as a quite positive term, not as a negative one.

Trish: Sometimes it has seemed as though, if you worked too hard, people have sometimes mistaken that for wilfulness, because

S: Yes, indeed. It may, from outside, look like it, but from the inside, so to speak, it can be very different. I do get the impression that sometimes people are discouraged from being wilful when in fact they are simply working hard.

Viv: It's interesting, though, because I did wonder if wilfulness wasn't more damaging for women than for men, because I have seen men being wilful and being able to be wilful at times, and carry on, and it doesn't seem they seem to just carry on.

S: But are they being wilful, then? Is it real wilfulness?

: Well, it's

S: Take a concrete example. Subhuti spent more than a year setting up Guhyaloka. During that time he was putting all his energy into legal matters, building matters, whereas in a sense he would rather have been getting on with his writing. But I don't think he could be described as being wilful, because he was doing it quite consciously and knowing what he was doing and why he was doing it. But he was doing it for the sake of the larger movement, he was doing it for my sake, and it was something that had to be done then and he could do his writing later on. So I wouldn't regard that as wilfulness, even though he did find it quite difficult to function in that sort of way for so long.

Viv: So even if because what I have seen is well, say a situation like that, although not Subhuti; and where a man is pushing himself to do something, you can tell, you can see that he is ignoring other aspects of himself; and, for instance, he isn't able to meditate because when he meditates these other aspects are probably there, and therefore he can't meditate. And yet he seems to be able to do that for a while. Whereas women well, my experience is that women don't; they seem to either get ill or become very, very unhappy and have quite a big kickback to having done that in a way that I don't see men having the same kickback. And maybe it's not wilfulness, but then maybe men are more able to put themselves under pressure than women, but there seems to be

S: Well, it may be connected with what I said yesterday about men being able to mobilize their energies more quickly and totally, and then also to withdraw them. It may have something to do with that. But I am quite sure that men can be wilful as well as women. In some ways I think they can be even more wilful; certainly more difficult to deal with sometimes. It is more damaging to women to ignore their emotional responses' I think it's no less damaging for men, for reasons that I have said before. So I am not completely [30] convinced that women have got a greater proneness to wilfulness. I am not convinced about this.

Viv: No. I mean I didn't mean they hadn't got I suppose I do think that they seem to be more damaged by it. They seem to suffer from it more.

: Do you think that may be because for women, say, to be wilful they have to perhaps mobilize more of their energies than they've got access to normally, to function in that way and then they experience the kickback of ... over-use themselves, almost? (Pause. Murmurs.)

S: But I certainly have become aware that people in the movement, and especially perhaps around the LBC, are talking very much in terms of wilfulness. I think sometimes the term is used a bit loosely, and, as I have mentioned, sometimes applied to someone when they are just working hard rather than being wilful in the sense that I have defined the word.

Viv: That may be true, yes, that may be true. But I think it has arisen because a lot of people do work hard in such a way [that] they damage themselves, which to me becomes wilfulness, when they are not caring for themselves and actually are not caring for other people. But then I think it's easy to then jump on that bandwagon and think that whenever somebody's working hard that's what they are doing, when actually they are not being wilful. Well, do you think it is justifiable to work hard that you damage yourself because the objective situation is demanding it?

S: I think one needs to look into this idea of damaging oneself more closely. What does one mean by damaging oneself?

: Being ill, perhaps.

Viv: Yes, hurting your body in some sort of way, undermining your health or your mental states very strongly.

S: I don't think you should ever work in such a way that your health is permanently undermined, whether it is due to wilfulness or for any other reason. I don't think you should

do that; not unless the circumstances are absolutely exceptional. But also, perhaps, it is not just a question of the amount of work done but the attitude towards it. Some people seem to be unable to cope with a relatively small amount of work.

Viv: That's true, I think.

S: Whereas others can do quite a lot with apparently no ill effects.

Viv: That's true. Yes, I'm sure that's quite a big part of it how you do it, how you work.

S: Some time ago someone told me that she thought she was being wilful and over-working and all that, and I asked her to tell me what she did; I was astonished, actually, how little she did, to be quite honest. I could hardly believe my ears; I thought, 'Well, there must be something more that she does,' but no; she didn't do very much at all. And she seems to be a woman of average health and strength, so I couldn't understand it.

[31]
Vajragita: Perhaps, then, it has to do with doing something that she doesn't really want to do and experience, because 'Bhante has said '

S: In the case of this particular woman, she seemed to want to do the things that she was doing but didn't seem able to do them very much; so it becomes just difficult to understand the situation.

Trish: Perhaps she left out things, the in-between things.

S: Also there is the point that you can't develop and cultivate all the different aspects of yourself at the same time, so that they have to take their turn, usually. One can even ask: are you able, in the course of one lifetime, to do all the things that you would like to, to develop all the aspects of your personality? I think I mentioned the other day that I personally would have liked to be an artist at one stage of my life. Well, perhaps it has damaged me that I haven't been able to be an artist, or that I haven't been able to find time to write symphonies! It's difficult to say, isn't it? Or that I haven't had time to study all the languages I would have liked to study. So what are we talking about when we talk about giving expression to all the different sides of ourselves?

Sridevi: But isn't it to do with somehow finding ourselves in a situation where you work from one power somehow you can't give enough attention to what you need to be happy in a situation; balanced, feeling healthy and balanced.

S: Well, very often people don't even know what they need. I must say that I think that this sort of area requires very careful consideration. We have to be very careful we don't jump to conclusions too readily.

: Bhante, what did you mean when you said about growing points?

S: Well, I was thinking, for instance, something like meditation; you find that meditation is something that helps you a lot, which contributes very greatly to your growth and development, but it is something that you haven't as yet devoted much energy to; well, that, I

would say, was a growing point for you; an area which, if you put energy into it, would result in quite an extensive overall development on your part. Anyway, we haven't said much about this third question: 'Do you think that, if one is wilful but just carries on, after a time a deeper level of emotion is integrated anyway?' I think it depends very much on the degree of wilfulness. If you are very, very wilful, in the sense that I have defined it, I doubt whether that deeper level of emotion will be integrated. But if you are just a bit wilful, in a way that is perhaps just due to force of circumstances to some extent, then it may well happen. It is very difficult to be sure or to generalize. But I don't think one should rely on it. 'Could you say something about the difference between wilfulness, determination and wholeheartedness?' I think that has become clear, hasn't it, as a result of the discussion? All right; is that enough about wilfulness? It seems to be a favourite subject! Do you think you are all a bit wilful, or have been wilful a bit in the past? Do you think it has damaged you? Do you in the past?

Voices: Yes.

[32]
Trish: At one stage, yes, certainly.

S: Irreparably, or ?

Voices: No.

S: I think that is why one has to look at this concept of damage; because if you work very hard, maybe if you don't get a proper night's sleep, you do feel tired and out of sorts for a while, so to some extent you've done yourself some damage. But if you have a good night's sleep the next night, you feel quite all right in the morning. You haven't done yourself any real damage. But, yes, you can do yourself damage through overwork; it may not be just due to wilfulness, it may be due to sheer economic necessity. You can see people in India who have damaged themselves, damaged their health, through just having to work under very unpleasant conditions. They are not wilful, but they either work like that or they starve, and their families starve. What else can they do? Anyway let's pass on. Oh, we haven't got much time.

Are there any things you are surprised that more people in the FWBO, after several years of practice, haven't let go or given up? Well, there is one thing I am surprised that people haven't given up it's very few people that haven't given it up that is smoking. That really does surprise me that there are still a few furtive smokers lingering about the FWBO, even one or two Order Members. This really does surprise me this dirty, disgusting, smelly old habit! (Laughter.) I don't know why, I really don't know. They say, I think, it calms their nerves and all that; but surely meditation could do that. [They say] it helps them to concentrate well, again, meditation could do that. So, yes, I am surprised. But were you thinking of that sort of thing, or something much more profound and psychological? Yes, I am a bit surprised that some people still go to pubs. I was a bit surprised that some people seem to like parties. When I say parties, I mean the more mundane type of party, with loud music and alcohol and all that sort of thing. I don't mean pleasant social gatherings. Is there anything that anyone here is surprised that more people in the FWBO haven't given up? (Silence.) You are quite satisfied with the level of giving up? Pretty well everything has been given up, has it?

: I am surprised a little as well that some people go to pubs sometimes. Usually I don't find

them a pleasant environment, but some people still

S: Sometimes it's unpleasant even to pass by them, and you get a whiff of whatever it is you get a whiff of, and you hear just a blast of the music.

: Yes, it does surprise me that some people actually enjoy them.

S: I am not talking of, say, going into a quiet little country pub, perhaps, when you are out in the country somewhere, and having a coffee or even perhaps (don't quote me) a small glass of something else! But a crowded city pub, you know, with the juke box or whatever you call it going and people crowded together, and the loud conversation and the smell of alcohol and all that.

Karola: So what about alcohol in your dining room? ... Are you dismissing alcohol completely, or just the particular environment of the pub?

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S: I think there is a difference if you have, say, a glass of wine at home with a meal. But in the last few years I have tended to discourage that. At Padmaloka we don't have, say, even a small glass of wine now on festive occasions; we haven't had for a couple of years. It is partly because I feel that we ought not to give any encouragement to alcoholism. I am not saying that a small glass of wine occasionally with a meal is going to do you any harm; it probably isn't. But then you are as it were setting a certain pattern, you are encouraging a certain habit, or appearing to encourage it, and there are so many people nowadays suffering from alcoholism I really wonder whether we should give even the slightest support to the drinking of alcohol. These are my current thoughts. Anybody else been thinking along those lines, or not?

Sanghadevi: About alcohol, you mean?

S: Yes.

Sanghadevi: Well, I had heard that you had said that yourself, and it set me thinking last year when I was going to visit someone, I had thought of taking them some drink, and then I thought 'No' even though she was

S: Yes, one does in a way encourage it. Even though that particular person drinks, say, very moderately; you might take them a bottle of wine, they might make that bottle of wine last a whole year. But none the less you are contributing to that tendency, even though to a very small extent. I also have similar feelings about veganism, but that is a bit different because, though I am a vegetarian, I am not a vegan; but I don't object to being a vegan. But I am not a vegan because at present I see it as just one more thing that one would have to think about; and I have so many things to think about I don't want to have anything more to think about. But if someone was just to put a vegan meal in front of me I would have no objection at all. It sometimes does happen like that at Padmaloka: it is just convenient to make a vegan meal, especially as one or two people are vegan anyway. So if, for instance, the community at Padmaloka decided to be vegan, I would be quite happy to go along with that. But at present, at least, I don't feel [like] having to think about food in that sort of way. But yes, I think on the whole it probably provided you could get the nourishment that you needed it probably

would be better to be vegan. Anyway: Do you think the general level of involvement and interest reflect a healthy degree of attraction for what is wholesome? Mm, 'a healthy degree': I think there is room for improvement. People are still quite attracted by things which are unwholesome. I think sometimes the attraction is quite strong, even if it takes a comparatively mild form perhaps the not so mild form of going to see certain films. People seem to have a very strong attraction to films and TV programmes which can't really do them much good, spiritually speaking.

Sridevi: It does seem surprising why they still do it. I find it surprising people still go to see violent films and read detective stories, for instance, ...

S: Well, they must appeal to something in their psyche. Anyway, let's press on.

: Some people read murder story books ... or love stories! (Laughter.)

[34]
Trish: Which is probably just as bad!

S: Some people read Barbara Cartland! I had to mention her at least once!

: Why?

S: Well, she is one of my favourites! What part, if any, can ambition play in one's spiritual life? Well, it depends, obviously, on the definition of ambition, doesn't it? You can use the term ambition in a positive sense, you can use it in a negative sense. Ambition can represent a sort of healthy pride in oneself, but it can represent a tendency to get on and succeed regardless of all other considerations, regardless of the cost to other people or to yourself, for that matter.

Sanghadevi: If you are an ambitious person, say if you get involved in the Friends and you are an ambitious person

S: you shouldn't become chairman?

Sanghadevi: (laughing) No, I wasn't going to say that! Is it better to just use it and, yes, maybe end up as chairman, or restrain yourself and, you know ?

S: Well, it depends what exactly one means by ambition. Taking the word in its positive sense, I would say that in the FWBO probably people on the whole don't have enough ambition. Their expectations of themselves are often very modest. I think one can look at ambition in two ways: ambition can be as it were competitive, when you are trying to do better or bigger than other people, but it can be more positive when you are just trying to do the best that you can, regardless of what other people are doing, and not with any desire to compete with others or dominate others. You just want to do the best that you can do. Ambition in that sense is a quite healthy and positive thing. It has, of course, to be distinguished from wilfulness! I am reminded of a little story I don't know if you will think this amusing or not! in the life of Florence Nightingale. You have all heard of Florence Nightingale, the Lady with the Lamp? She was a real Tartar, I can assure you! At one point the whole British government was terrified of her! But anyway, before she embarked on her

nursing career, or rather before she founded the profession of nursing virtually single-handed, she was the daughter of a very well-to-do family, and she describes how, when she was younger I think this lasted until she was well over 30 her mother and her sister used to spend the whole day lying on sofas in the drawing room and telling each other not to exert themselves! And this sort of life didn't appeal to Florence Nightingale. I must say, sometimes when I hear all this talk about wilfulness 'You mustn't be wilful. You mustn't do this wilfully, you mustn't do that' I am rather reminded of Florence Nightingale's mother and sister! if you see what I mean, not putting too fine a point upon it. But that is not to say that sometimes people aren't wilful and even actually overwork. But I think we have to be a bit cautious that, in the name of not being wilful, we don't dampen down people's enthusiasm and energy. I think that is no less a danger, sometimes.

[35]
Trish: That seems to be why it's important to have a perspective on what you're doing.

S: Yes. Anyway, have we got to stop?

Sanghadevi: Well, yes, if finish that question.

S: I can go on if you wish. Because there is a tenth question with three sub-questions! People are very fond of these sub-questions! Yesterday Oh dear, it's something I said yesterday I am going to be taken up on now! you mentioned you thought it was better to engage in something a little less good that one feels more enthusiastic about than something more objectively valuable that one doesn't feel very enthusiastic about. Perhaps I should modify that and say 'that one doesn't feel at all enthusiastic about'. Because, if you've got some enthusiasm for something, you can work, you can make a success of it, but not if you have hardly any enthusiasm at all, or no enthusiasm at all. So I think that if I did say that I'd like to modify it, and say 'something more objectively valuable that one doesn't feel at all enthusiastic about'. (a) If this means that Mitras and Order Members don't choose to work in the coops and Right Livelihood situations we have at our centres, as is increasingly the case Oh dear! would you feel happy for them to fade away or remain very small? No, I must say I wouldn't be at all happy, because it would mean that people hadn't appreciated the importance of Right Livelihood. This is what it would really mean. Not that a coop is the only form of Right Livelihood, but one isn't thinking just in terms of transforming oneself; one is thinking in terms of transforming the world, or at least a small part of it. And economics is a very big part of the world. So,

if we are going to transform the world, if we are going to transform society to any extent, you must introduce, you must practise, Right Livelihood. You must set up coops. That seems to be almost the archetypal form of Right Livelihood. So if you don't feel enthusiasm for Right Livelihood, it means you have almost retreated into a quite subjective and personal, and therefore one-sided, view of the spiritual life.

Sridevi: Maybe it isn't enthusiasm for the few kinds of goals we have; maybe we need to found more of them, to have more variety, and more people would feel more enthusiastic.

S: Well, we did have more variety, but they collapsed. So why is that? Centres have not closed down over the years; communities, really established communities, haven't closed down; but business after business, or coop after coop, has closed down. It is as though people

did not realize the importance of Right Livelihood.

: Also maybe they weren't skilled enough.

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S: There were all sorts of factors, but I think some of them need not have closed down. Two restaurants have closed down; the building team has closed down; the design studio was closed down; the candle workshop has closed down.

Vidyasri: Windhorse Photosetters is in the process of having to close which does seem very sad.

S: Yes. So it is really quite unfortunate. I think it is because not enough people realize the importance of transforming the economic life of society. I think quite a few people in the Movement, even in the Order, are concerned more with just getting on with their personal lives in a way that is satisfactory to them in a quite narrow sense, sometimes. They are not looking beyond that. I think this is perhaps especially the case around the LBC, because in that particular mandala you can find a place, you can find a niche, really without contributing very much to it, in some cases.

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Side 3

It is as though, in the case of the LBC mandala, where there is already a little nucleus of the new society, some people are sort of satisfied within that and find a niche in it, rather than try to extend it for the benefit of other people so that more people can live within it. So I think, to some extent generalizing a bit, perhaps the apparent lack of interest in Right Livelihood, in coops, unwillingness to work in coops, is to some extent due to a sort of rather individualistic approach to the spiritual life. I think this is what is at the root of it. (b) Is there a case for some people putting aside their more personal inclinations and interests in order to work in, and support, these situations i.e. coop situations? Well, yes, certainly. Not that they necessarily have to put them aside altogether or in all respects, but it is also, of course, important that they should feel enthusiastic about the coop situation and that the enthusiasm should be based on a real understanding of the need to transform a bigger part of society for the benefit of more people. (c) Why do you think there is not a greater enthusiasm in more people to work in our Right Livelihood coops? I think it is just due to the reasons I have explained. Is there anything you can see that could be improved in them to make them more attractive situations for people, both Order Members and Mitras? I am sure that improvements can be made in coops, but I don't know exactly what because I am not really close enough to the situation. Certainly working environments can be made more pleasant and, from the point of view of Mitras, there could be more Order Members working in the Right Livelihood coops. There could be more finance, if that is possible. There could be a greater sharing of work. The more people work, perhaps even part-time, in a coop situation, the lighter the work becomes for everybody; the more time people can have off for other things. I think perhaps the most important thing is increasing people's awareness of the need to transform society; that it isn't just a question of getting on with your own spiritual life in a narrow sense. Well, transforming society is, in a way, part of your own spiritual life, so it isn't a question of your just finding a niche within the FWBO mandala and sort of settling down in that and just doing your own thing. It's not that at all. You can do that now at least, you can do it within the LBC mandala.

It's big enough.

Viv (?): Do you feel some of those people are doing their own thing for a period of time, and that then at some point they may be going to then be able to take that out and back to society? That may be what ... painting, writing, or something.

S: That may well be the case. I think people should be very serious about that, and ask themselves is that what they are really going to be doing, and are they doing their own thing for that purpose, or are they doing it just in a more self-indulgent sort of way? For instance, people who take up the arts: they have to ask themselves have they got any real talent? 'Will I ever be able to influence people through my art?' They have got to ask themselves that sort of question. Have they got that [38] degree of talent? Are they really creative? It is easy enough to just fiddle around with some paints and brushes, without really producing anything worth while, if you are thinking in terms of communicating to other people because you can't communicate unless you have really got something to communicate and the capacity to communicate it in that sort of way. Otherwise you would be better employed washing up in the Cherry Orchard.

Karola: Don't you think we could transform society more if we had more skilled coops, like people have been setting up ...

S: Oh, yes. I think people should take more advantage, say, of the business training courses, courses in administration. One or two have, but people can equip themselves better, there is no doubt about that.

Karola: ... using their skills. I think there has been a lot of waste, people giving up their skills that they have had, and going to very labour-intensive unskilled work.

S: Yes. But, of course, that is in some cases because what they were doing before, especially, say, in the case of people who were into computers, had done them definite harm, they felt. So they wanted a rest from whatever their skill was, at least for a while. It seems particularly noticeable in the case of those who have been into computing. In most cases, they just want a good rest from it for quite a while, because they say it has cut them off so much from their whole emotional life.

Vidyasri: On the whole, Order Members seem to be more attracted to the prospect of teaching the Dharma more full-time, than working in a coop full-time. That is what we have realized at the LBC. That is partly why it's difficult to get Order Members in the coops.

S: I think it's a question of a fairly even distribution of resources. It's probably no more desirable that everybody should go and work in a coop than that everybody in a particular mandala should think in terms of teaching the Dharma. I think one needs an even distribution of Order Members. Also, perhaps, a sorting out of priorities. Mainly you need, of course, Order Members in centres, especially teaching in centres, in communities and in coops. If you have got a concentration of them in centres or in communities or in coops, there is going to be an imbalance and the Movement isn't going to develop properly. You probably have to start with centres, if you open up in a new area, start with centres; you start attracting people, and then you set up communities for them, and then, when they become more involved and committed, and willing to give up their ordinary occupations, you start up coops. That would

seem to be the sequence. This is what has happened in the past with the FWBO. In some cases, perhaps you could set up a community first. Anyway, that has happened at Taraloka, hasn't it? It's not a public centre in the way that a city centre is.

Sanghadevi: It is a centre, though, isn't it? Birmingham began as a community, then a public centre.

S: That's true. But that phase lasted just a very short while, didn't it? That is partly because those who set up the community-cum-centre were very busy earning the money for it. But the normal pattern has usually been public centre, then communities and then coops. The coops seem to be the most difficult things of all, in a way. It seems comparatively easy to run a centre, comparatively easy even to run a community, though a good community isn't easy to set up; and still more difficult to set up a really successful coop or business. The two most successful in the Movement seem to be the restaurant in Croydon Hockney's and Windhorse [39] Trading. They seem to be the two most successful coop situations, both in terms of their personal positivity and their earning capacity.

: So is that the criterion you apply, then? Their personal positivity and

S: Well, I normally apply three criteria: first of all, a coop provides support for the people who are the members of it, provides them with their material needs; two, the working situation provides them with kalyana mitrata, both horizontal and vertical; and, three, the coop earns money with which to finance the centre with which it's connected, and Dharma activities generally. These are the three main functions of a coop. You could add a fourth: provide a service either to the Movement as a whole or to the general public. So unless a coop is fulfilling those three functions that I mentioned first, it isn't a coop in the full sense of the term not a Right Livelihood situation in the full sense of the term. It should give you your material needs, that is, give the worker in it his or her material needs; a working environment which is conducive to leading the spiritual life, especially through kalyana mitrata, and an opportunity to make money for dana. And perhaps an opportunity to render service either to the wider movement or to the community at large. Perhaps there needs to be more talk about Right Livelihood around centres; more lectures on it, more discussion about it. Perhaps we have had an over-emphasis on the arts for the last few years, or even on therapy. Years ago, I did say, I think, that work was the Tantric guru; I think the Tantric guru has been rather neglected of late! But I certainly have seen that working in a Right Livelihood situation can have and does have a very positive effect on people; not that it's easy it's often quite difficult but on the whole it does have a very positive effect on a large number of people, or a high proportion of people.

Sanghadevi: Do you actually make a distinction between working in a centre as Right Livelihood and working in a coop as Right Livelihood? Isn't working in a centre

S: Well, if you're working in a centre and are supported, so that you can work in various ways, in a sense that is Right Livelihood, but it isn't contributing to the transformation of society in the way that a coop type structure is. Because, with the coop, you are going out into the world, you're conquering the world's territory in a way that you are not quite doing with a centre.

Vidyasri: We were listening to the Sutra of Golden Light tapes recently, and there is the ... the

Four Great Kings. For some reason that made me think of coops, because

S: Not the goddess Sri?

Vidyasri: Well, that did, too! But with the Four Great Kings, because they were conquering the hordes of the Nagas and Yakshas and everything, and they were occupying an in-between state between the higher realms and the lower realms, I sort of thought, in the coops, that's what we're doing.

S: That's true, yes.

Vidyasri: They are intermediate between -

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S: Well, one of the Four Great Kings I forget which one well, yes, he's the leader of the Nagas, and another is leader of the Yakshas, and they are both, both the Nagas and the Yakshas, are supposed to be guardians of hidden treasures and all that sort of thing. But I don't underestimate the difficulty of running or working in a coop. I know it is very demanding.

Trish: Especially if you're working with quite a backlog of lack of experience and trying to ..., it's very difficult.

S: But even if you don't have much experience, you can learn. For instance, look at Padmaraja; look what he has set up with Hockney's. What did he know about coops or business or catering before? He knew absolutely nothing. He'd worked for the BBC. But he learned as he went along. And you have to learn about finance, and you have to learn about accounts, all that sort of thing. I don't know how he'd done it; but he's done it. So I think if there's a real will, you can learn things that you didn't know you can pick up.

Karola: It's a matter of really having vision and enthusiasm, then finding your King ...pala people who know, who do have those skills.

S: But originally Padmaraja was a relatively new, inexperienced Order Member with a background in the BBC, film editing. Look what he's gone into and look what he's done, and there is no reason why everybody shouldn't do that, at least to some extent in one way or another. You need even to know a bit about law; about local government. Look what Tejamati's had to learn about applying for grants, all this complicated business. It's really in a way quite dreadful, but he's a master of it now.

: He's been remarkable.

S: So I don't want anyone to work themselves to death. That would be a rather heroic way to die, I must admit, but ! (Laughter.) But I think we do need these coops and people really need to be encouraged to go into them; at least, for a period of two or three years. And that also means a few Order Members have got to devote themselves to them for a longer period.

Trish: They are not going to be 'coops' any more, are they?

S: Yes, I have to get out of the habit of saying coops, and say Right Livelihood what is it? situations? projects? Team-based Right Livelihood projects, yes, that's the official designation, I believe.

Karola: Limited companies?

Trish: ... charities.

S: I must say I don't understand all the ins and outs of these things; I haven't cared to put my mind on to them. I trust the people who have been making these changes.

Trish: It seems to be mainly to facilitate the flow of money.

S: Right, yes. I did understand that point! I only hope there is lots and lots of money to flow! There is no point in digging a deep, wide channel if there is nothing to flow in it! You only dug the channel; you mustn't confuse it with the actual flow of cash! [41] We do tend to draw out a bit. A couple of months ago Bodhiraja said to me, 'Bhante, would you mind not buying any books this month?' So I thought, 'Oh The support must have dried up.' (Laughter throughout this) I do buy a few books usually each month.

Sridevi: It's almost ten years ago you gave that lecture about 'It's good wholesome stuff, let's spread it around.' We still haven't got much, have we? (Laughter.)

S: Well, perhaps one lecture wasn't enough! Maybe I over-estimated my abilities! Perhaps I'll have to give a lecture like that every week! But I am a bit concerned about this diversion of energy, as it appears to be in some quarters, away from the 'team-based Right Livelihood projects'. Perhaps 'coops' sounded a bit old-fashioned. I can remember the Coop when I was a child; I can remember the sort of associations that clung to 'the Coop'. Maybe they still cling for some people, and maybe though I find coops as such quite inspiring, maybe not everybody does. Maybe they've got a rather motheaten, old-fashioned, socialist sort of image.

Vidyasri: No, I personally still find it attractive to call something a coop rather than a business. I prefer to call it a coop, personally.

S: Well, a coop is a business, but a business is not necessarily a coop. The term 'business' is too broad and too vague.

Vidyasri: I like the touch of professionalism now that is more inherent in 'business' than 'coop', because there is always that sort of feeling of somehow being a bit amaturish with coops.

S: But it isn't really justified by the facts, because even the old Coop was quite successful from a business point of view. It just had a rather shabby sort of image, a cloth-cap sort of image, if you know what I mean. Anyway, anything more about coops? sorry, team-based Right Livelihood projects? All right, then, perhaps we'd better leave it there. Nobody feeling wilful any more? Right-ho, then, let's leave it there.

Voices: Thank you very much, Bhante.

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