

General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

Hidden Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team

MEN'S ORDER CONVENTION 1987

Tape one side one

Sangharakshita: I'm not sure what I think of this ugly duckling business. [Laughter] I don't think my mother would agree at all! [Laughter] In fact I think she'd protest rather vigorously. I think I like the swan business even less! [Laughter] Sometimes I feel more like a goose.

Which gives me a rather neat transition to my questions and answers because in India the goose is rather a glamorous bird actually. Goose is 'Hamsa' which is very often translated as 'swan' but that's absolutely wrong. 'Hamsa' is the goose, especially the wild goose who flies to and from the Himalayas. And this wild goose, this 'Hamsa' has one particular characteristic which is referred to in philosophical literature, especially Vedantic literature, quite a lot. It is said that if you give a 'Hamsa' a saucerful of milk mixed with water as he drinks it he'll separate the milk from the water, accepting the milk and rejecting the water. So he is regarded as symbolical of what Shankaracharya calls 'Passatviveka', that is to say the ability to distinguish between the real and the unreal, the existent and the non-existent, and that what I've got to do with these questions. [Laughter] They are rather a mixed bunch. I must say at first sight, and I must emphasise at first sight, they seem a bit disappointing. In a way that's not a bad thing I suppose because if you're able to come up with just a handful, and there really are only a handful, of not very distinguished questions it means you've sorted out an awful lot on your own, which obviously is a sign of progress, maturity, independent thought and so on.

So it's not such a bad thing that we don't have what seem at first sight to be some not all that stimulating questions. But anyway I'll do my best with them and we'll just have to see what emerges, and we begin, one might say, with our reverential salutation to that great tantric guru - work, because I'm first of all going to handle the questions dealing with right livelihood. The question of right livelihood was discussed at some length on the Women's Convention. They followed a similar pattern there. They had discussion groups and, in the case of their discussion groups they started off with somebody reading a carefully prepared paper; they discussed that paper and then they formulated questions for me and I dealt with those questions in another discussion group. That sort of format seemed to work rather well, but I don't think I'm giving anything away, I don't think I'm giving any secrets away, when I tell you that they did have some difficulty, so I was told, in finding enough people, enough Dharmacharinis, for the discussion group of right livelihood. I don't really know why that was. I think they had in the end to conscript a few Dharmacharinis into this group. I pulled their leg a little bit about it and said that probably some of them, especially those working in co-ops, were so fed up with the whole theme of right livelihood that they just didn't want to talk about it. They laughed but I'm not sure whether that was really the reason or not.

I don't know whether the same sort of thing happened on this convention. I don't know whether right livelihood was one of the most popular topics but anyway I think we've got more questions on it than on any other topic, which is perhaps significant.

The questions unfortunately are rather complicated. I don't know that I can really deal with them very adequately in this sort of way, but I'll read them and I'll make such little comments as I can in passing and I think that will probably have to suffice.

All right,

"It would seem from our questionnaire put round on this convention, one of the failings of the right livelihood situations in the Movement has been the lack of clear leadership sufficient to communicate the spiritual significance of work in our right livelihoods...."

I think I wouldn't disagree with that, and clearly the spiritual significance of work in our right livelihoods, or our team based right livelihood businesses, has to be communicated primarily by Order members. This was something we talked about on the Dharmacharinis' Convention.

"In our discussion group we here all agreed upon four critical factors that constitute a right livelihood business.

a) *That the work should be ethical."*

No one will disagree with that.

"b) *That the business should generate funds for dharma projects, the other-regarding aspect.*

c) *That it should provide its workers with support."*

Maybe that needs a little rephrasing. Perhaps one shouldn't simply say support, perhaps 'adequate support' or 'meet their needs, their reasonable needs', something of that sort. And then lastly,

d) *That it provides kalyana mitrata.*

That within the work situation itself communication between the workers, whether Order members or mitras, is of such a nature that it provides kalyana mitrata, spiritual friendship, spiritual fellowship. Obviously one accepts b,c and d as well.

There is however, a prevailing attitude that right livelihood is seen just as an economic necessity without its spiritual value appreciated.

Well that's rather a whopping generalisation. I don't think I could accept that generalisation without very definite evidence and that means of course a survey throughout the movement, at least in this country. The language here is a little unclear. "A prevailing attitude that right livelihood is seen". So are the people who have the prevailing attitude different from the people who see right livelihood in this way or not? It's not even very clearly formulated. That needs to be sorted out. So

Do you still consider that these four factors are suitable bases on which to set up a right livelihood business?

Yes I've no reason to change my views on this subject at all. Perhaps there's one particular aspect which isn't spelled out with sufficient clarity, and that is the need for adequate skills within the right livelihood business. Perhaps that's implied by the fact that the business should generate funds for dharma projects and also should provide its workers with support. Clearly profit has to be made and that profit won't be made without very skilled management. So perhaps if anything is to be added it should be something to the effect that a right livelihood business would be one in which all the skills necessary for the success of the business were present - managerial and other skills. Perhaps - I'm not completely sure of this, but perhaps - that should also be added because we do know that in the past sometimes right livelihood businesses have been set up without adequate knowledge, without adequate equipment, without adequate managerial skills and so on, and therefore the business has not succeeded. Or for other reasons also perhaps, not succeeded as well as it might have done. So perhaps we should give consideration to adding a fifth factor which would embody that particular consideration. No doubt that can be further discussed.

So with that proviso I do still consider that these four factors are a suitable basis, upon which to set up a right livelihood business.

Would you like to add any other factors to this lot and comment upon right livelihood

in our businesses as a spiritual practice?

Well I've already suggested a possible fifth factor, but 'comment upon right livelihood in our businesses as a spiritual practice'. I think that's pretty clear isn't it. If the work is ethical it's a spiritual practice. If the business is generating funds for dharma projects, for dana, obviously that's a spiritual practice. One might even say that if it's providing its workers with support, that's a spiritual practice. It's again a form of dana. And if it provides kalyana mitrata well certainly it's a spiritual practice. It would seem to me that this is really self evident. I don't think I can comment any further on right livelihood businesses as a spiritual practice to any greater extent than that. There is of course this whole question of energy. Getting your energies going through working hard and sitting at the feet of that same great tantric guru, but we've gone over that ground so many times before that I don't think it's really necessary for me to do it all over again.

There is a questionnaire, or rather results of a questionnaire and there's a note at the bottom - *'would Bhante like to comment on any of these results?'* Well perhaps he would. let's see. I'll go through them.

All right: *One, 'of 97 respondents'*, well 97 respondents, that means not the whole Order clearly, so we can't really generalise very much from the responses to the questionnaire. We must be very cautious. I don't think we could generalise with any degree of validity unless the questionnaire had been extended to all Order members in Britain. So I'll make comments only with that reservation in mind.

So *'Of 97 respondents, 18 are working in a right livelihood business.'* Not all that many. But then one must bear in mind that at least some people who at the moment are working in right livelihood businesses would have been here had their responsibilities in those right livelihood businesses not prevented them from coming. So the statistics are distorted from the beginning one might say. If those people were all present then the percentage of those working in right livelihood businesses would no doubt shoot up. *'46 are working full time in another capacity for the FWBO.'* Even bearing in mind what I said before that's quite a handsome figure in a way. So *'64 is the total of which 26 receive full financial support.'* One just hopes that too many of the remaining people are not still dependant on what is very far from being a tantric guru, that is to say the dole.

Anyway *'Two: Of the 18 in right livelihood, 10 intend to remain over the next three years. Of the 79 remaining 8 intend to join or start a right livelihood business over the next three years.'* So what you gain on the roundabouts you lose on the swings it seems. So with the proviso that this is not a survey of the Order as a whole, it would seem that the right livelihood situation in respect of the number of people involved is going to remain static over the next three years, more or less.

Then, *'Three: Of the 97, 58 consider right livelihood businesses vital to the FWBO. 36 consider them useful. One didn't know'* [Laughter] Oh dear! *'And two didn't respond.'* Well one could say that that figure of 58 might shoot up because some of those who are not here are presumably not here, those who are working in right livelihood businesses, are here because they do consider, among other reasons, right livelihood businesses vital to the FWBO. So again the figures probably don't reflect quite accurately the real situation.

'Four: an attempt was made to ascertain in a rough and ready sort of way, attitudes to particular aspects of working in right livelihood businesses. The figures tabulated overleaf are expressed as percentages of the number of respondents.' I hope the technical phraseology is not confusing anybody. [Laughter] *'My experience of working in a right livelihood business'*, and this is not Bhante speaking, this is the respondent speaking, [Laughter] Bhante doesn't work in a right livelihood business except of course his literary factory, so *'my experience of working in a right livelihood business has been with regard to personal interaction... out of 97 personal interaction is rated as good by 42 percent of people, as OK by 44, and as bad by 14.'* No comment. [Laughter]

Then, *Enjoyment*. Well 36 percent say it's good and 46 percent say it's OK, and 18 percent say it's bad, don't enjoy it very much.

Then *Clarity of economic goals*. 33 percent say it's good, 26 say it's OK and 41 say it's bad. So allowing for the sort of distortions I've referred to already that is clearly something that needs looking into. The clarity of the economic goals. So 41 percent of the respondents regard that as bad.

Financial support. 21 percent regard that as good'. Hmm, incredible huh. '38 percent as OK and 41 percent as bad.' Again that needs looking into. Is it really bad? Why is it regarded as bad? What could be done about it if it really was bad etc., etc.

Then *'Clarity of leadership and management structure'*. Only 17 percent think this is good. 41 percent thinks it's OK, and 42 percent think it's bad.' Again obviously here something needs looking into.

Then *'Provision of sufficient time for other spiritual activities.'* I like that other spiritual activities. [Laughter] I trust it was used intentionally, that adjective. 17 percent think that provision is good, 50 percent think it's OK but only 33 percent think it's bad. But that again is quite a high figure. Again bearing in mind what I said about possible distortions in the statistics. So perhaps that needs looking into as well.

And then *'Training'*. I suppose it means training to work in a particular right livelihood business. Only 15 percent of people thought that training was good, 36 though it OK and 49 percent, the highest figure under the 'bad' column, thought it bad. So training is something that needs to be looked into.

And *'Staff turnover'*, '15 percent thought it good', though is a quick turnover considered good or a slow one? This isn't really made clear. There is some confusion here. Anyway whether good means quick or whether it means slow, only 15 percent thought it was good, 43 thought it was OK and 42 thought it bad. So whether quick is good or whether slow is good it still needs looking into [Laughter] because 42 percent think it's bad! Yes all right. I'm glad we've had the services of a professional statistician. Perhaps we need some training in that field too.

So would Bhante like to comment on any of these results? Well I have commented, but I can comment only to a quite limited extent, as has been obvious. But I think we really, in any case, need to look at the fact that quite a lot of people feel that clarity of economic goals in our right livelihood businesses in bad, that financial support is bad, that clarity of leadership and management structure is bad, and that training is bad and that staff turnover is bad. So there are quite a lot of things that need looking into, and I think this particular exercise has been well worthwhile, even though it's only a sample of the people actually present on this convention. I think these sort of surveys should be conducted by all centres and results pooled.

I've spoken about this already down at the LBC. I've spoken about it to Dhammarati particularly and in fact the members of the London Buddhist Centre Council, because theirs is a particularly large and complex situation and they and we need to know what is actually happening there, because one hears all sorts of rumours, all sorts of very general statements, that all the Order members around the LBC are doing this or that they're not doing that and so on, or all the mitras or all the Friends are doing this or not doing that, but very often these are only quite superficial impressions, and one cannot really plan, one cannot really plan for the future, unless one really has the facts at one's disposal. So I suggested to the LBC Council, I think I'd like to suggest to the Councils of all FWBOs, especially the larger and more complex ones, that they carry out surveys so that they know their actual positions.

For instance have a survey, how many Order members are involved in your particular mandala? This is basic information. When I say mandala your particular complex of Centre, Co-ops and Communities and Chapters. How many Order members are in that mandala? How

many mitras and how many Friends? Friends of course you'll probably have to roughly estimate, but you certainly know how many, or should know how many, Order members and you should know how many mitras. And then you can proceed further. How many Order members, male, female, live in single-sex communities, how many live on their own, how many work in co-ops, full time, part time, how many are pursuing courses, for instance homeopathy courses, osteopathy courses, how many live on their own, how many are married, how many have children, how many lead classes at the Centre, how many support classes. You really need to gather all this sort of information with regard to Order members and mitras and, to a lesser extent, with regard to Friends. Only then will you really know, at least to some extent, what is happening in and around your mandala, and only then will you be really able to plan and to provide adequately for the people involved in their various ways to their varying degrees, in your mandala. I think this is really very important.

Personally I'm becoming a little tired of vague impressions. For instance if I ask someone from a particular centre 'how many classes are held at your centre every week', he might say, or she might say 'well two or three, oh no it might be five, no, maybe six. I'm not sure.' Well that's really no good to me at all, but very often that is the state of affairs. We need much more precise information. Certainly I need much more precise information and I think the Councils of the respective Centres need more precise information. The Chapters need more precise information. So please give this very serious consideration. Let's proceed on a basis of knowledge, not on a basis of vague guesswork or imprecise generalisations.

All right, I'm going to jump to something completely different now.

Nagabodhi's just shown us the latest issue, the latest glorious edition, of '*Golden Drum*'. So from that particular issue which deals with the subject of 'sex and spiritual life', it's a very natural and easy transition to the subject of celibacy and to the anagarika ceremony, and we have a little question about the anagarika ceremony. It's a nice, straightforward little question, not very demanding.

Was Bhante still considering altering the anagarika ceremony? If so what form is it likely to take?

I do believe I did mention some time ago that I might alter the anagarika ceremony, but I must confess I haven't given it any further thought. For the time being we're going to carry on with the same ceremony, so I'm not able to say what form the anagarika ceremony is likely to take in the future. For the time being at least we're going to carry on as we've carried on in the past, and I'm quite glad to be able to tell you - perhaps some of you already know - that it looks as though there will be at least five more anagarika ceremonies, that is to say for five different people, in the course of the next, let's say, six months. I suppose I ought to give you a bit of a breakdown having talked so much about precise statistics. [Laughter] I'll have just to think. Yes five would be anagarikas, three are men, dharmacharis, and two are dharmacharinis, and one of them is over sixty and the others are below sixty! [Laughter] I can't tell you more than that at the moment. Yes, so that's that question dealt with.

But incidentally I am very pleased that things are moving in that direction and people are thinking more and more seriously about celibacy and even about becoming anagarikas which means pledging themselves to celibacy in the true sense of the term more or less indefinitely.

Yes, so perhaps from questions about the anagarika ceremony it's not a very far cry to a little question which is also to do with ritual I suppose. This question reads as follows:

How do you feel about your image being used on shrines....

I didn't know I'd got as far as an image! [Laughter] I thought there were only photographs but then one always learns.

..... while you are leading meditations or pujas or chairing a talk?

I thought this over but I came to the conclusion I didn't feel anything at all about it. [Laughter] Which is in some ways rather disappointing. [Laughter] But reflecting on it a little on this sort of matter, a little after reading the question, it occurs to me that there are quite a lot of things I don't really feel anything about one way or the other but which people seem to expect me to feel something about. So I can only say quite honestly that I don't have any feelings. I remember some time ago I used to irritate a certain person quite a lot because sometimes he'd ask me for instance - this is just an example - 'would you like a cup of tea or would you like a cup of coffee?' and I'd say 'I don't mind', no particular preference, and he'd get quite irritated and he'd say, 'well you must have a preference!' [Laughter] 'you must prefer tea or coffee', so I'd sort of search my mind again [Laughter] and I'd have to confess well no I honestly don't have any preference! [Laughter] I really can't discover any sort of hint or vestige of a preference', and he'd get really annoyed then! [Laughter]

Or someone might say, 'like to go for a walk?' and I'd say, 'I don't mind' [Laughter] I'm happy to go for a walk and I'm happy not to go for a walk. It's all the same really. So there are quite a few matters which are all the same to me, and if this attitude of mine irritates people well I'm very sorry, but I can't help it because I genuinely feel quite impartial, as it were, with regard to quite a number of matters.

So it's the same when I see my image, well perhaps I should say my photograph, on the shrine. I sort of say well 'oh you here again!' [Laughter] So, yes, I notice that he's there. I take note of the fact, well I might have feelings about the particular photograph that is used - I must admit that, but about a photograph in general, especially when I'm giving a talk, I don't really mind one way or the other. Maybe the questioner was wondering whether I felt confused because standing in front of the shrine and seeing me there when I thought I was here! [Laughter] But once again I have to admit I don't feel confused at all. I'm very sorry but I really don't. So perhaps we'll leave that.

Yes we're still with the meditation and ritual discussion. There's another question. Consecrating rupas. I had much the same question on the Dharmacharinis Convention. They were quite interested in this particular matter. I'll read the question and then try to answer. Oh I read it a little wrongly - it isn't 'Consecrating rupas', it's 'Consecrating Rupas?'

While you were reading from your memoirs you mentioned that Dhardo Rimpoche had consecrated your rupa in Kalimpong,...

Yes, that's an established fact.

Could you say briefly what was involved in the ceremony and what it meant to you to have it consecrated? Could you see a place for a similar ceremony or adaptation of it in the FWBO? We were wondering if there were different levels or different types of consecration.

I can't be absolutely certain what Dhardo Rimpoche did on that particular occasion. I wasn't there and I didn't inquire of him afterwards. I suspect he simply chanted some verses of blessing and scattered rice over the image and the shrine generally. That's the simplest form of consecration. But more usually in Tibetan Buddhism, the consecration of an image, and also of a thangka, takes a somewhat different form. Supposing for instance the image is that of Amitabha, then the person consecrating it will do a puja and visualisation meditation of Amitabha. So he'll have a clear, as it were, vision of Amitabha, and then he will imagine, so to speak, rays of light descending from that visualised figure of Amitabha onto and into the image and he will even, as it were, imagine Amitabha descending down those rays of light and, so to speak, occupying the image. This is a broad, a general outline of what happens.

So clearly one has got to have the capacity to visualise in that sort of way. This is quite necessary. There are more elaborate procedures. Some of these I learned when I was in Kalimpong many years ago. For instance one can take a sandalwood stick which is square with a pyramidal top and write or paint mantras, the mantra of the Buddha or Bodhisattva the

image represents, along the side and various other formulae, especially the formula of conditioned coproduction, and the Om Ah Hum. And then one inserts that inside the image. It represents the sort of psychic spinal column, the median nerve as it were, and the end of the sandalwood stick stands in a little copper pot, and in that copper pot there are the seven precious things and various other objects. Seven precious things means of course a little diamond, a little emerald and so on, and then of course one seals it all up. One can also add sacred texts and so on, then one seals it all up.

You'll notice that Tibetan images are very often sealed at the bottom and they're sealed with a double vajra, suggesting the indestructibility of the consecrated image. That is a procedure which one can also follow. It's not invariably followed. Sometimes they just enclose sacred texts written by hand in the image, seal it up and leave it at that.

But, yes, it isn't impossible that in the FWBO we do, as it were, adapt a version of this kind of ceremony, that is to say invoking the Buddha or Bodhisattva to descend, but I think one thing is very important. One has to believe in what one is doing or one has to believe in what is happening. If you just see it as a colourful ceremony which maybe has some significance I don't think that's really enough. If you really do believe that you are in invoking something of a higher power as it were, 'power' in the spiritual sense of course, into the image well fair enough, you can do that. But I don't think it would be very skilful to engage in that sort of consecration ceremony just as, as I've said a colourful sort of ceremony. Tibetans take it very very seriously. They don't use any image or thangka which hasn't been consecrated in this sort of way.

In the case of a thangka of course it's consecrated among other things by writing the Om Ah Hum on the back of the thangka in places corresponding to the head centre, the throat centre and the heart centre of the image that is painted on the reverse, and one is supposed to get a yogi or an incarnate lama, or at least a very learned lama, to do this sort of thing for one.

So probably we need to study these things a little more before we think seriously of adapting ceremonies of this sort in the FWBO. We shouldn't do it without serious consideration.

The question also asks what it meant to me to have the image consecrated. I must say I can't really remember very clearly. I was pleased, as I think I made clear in that chapter, that Dharpo Rimpoche, even though I didn't know him personally then, had come and consecrated the image. Partly because something had happened at the hermitage during my absence but I think at that time I probably just had a sort of general sense that it was the right thing to do according to local, that is to say Tibetan, Buddhist tradition. I doubt whether I had any more definite ideas than that. At that time I knew not very much about Tibetan Buddhism.

Anyway perhaps that's enough about that.

Oh! We come on to art now. Art in the Order. And there's a quotation from me to begin with.

'Art is the organisation of sensuous impressions into pleasurable formal relations that express the artist's sensibility and communicate to his audience a sense of values that can transform their lives.' In the above definition we agreed with the definition but questioned the usage of the word 'pleasurable'. Who is it pleasurable to? - the artist or the audience? The example of Goya, the painter, was cited as someone who painted disturbing paintings which nevertheless conveyed considerable meaning. In what way could they be said to be examples of pleasurable formal relations? We suggested possible alternative words such as 'meaningful' or 'significant'.

This doesn't really seem very clear. In the definition it's the formal relations that are pleasurable, that is to say the relations of mass, colour, line and so on, considered irrespective of their representational content. Perhaps I should enlarge upon this. Quite irrespective of the representational content of a painting, where there is a representational content, the different masses, different colours, different lines in the painting, can be related to one another in such

a way that the relationship between them gives pleasure, gives aesthetic pleasure. So this is what I mean by pleasurable formal relations.

So having clarified that let's go onto the actual questions. Who is it pleasurable to? - the artist or the audience? Well in the first place of course, it's pleasurable to the artist, and his pleasure in those formal relations is one of the things that the artist communicates to the audience. Hopefully they, like the artist, proceed to experience the pleasure in those formal relations.

'The example of Goya the painter was cited as someone who painted disturbing paintings.' So 'disturbing' presumably refers to representational content as distinct from the pleasurable formal relations. Do you see the difference? 'Which nevertheless conveyed considerable meaning.' So this seems to be a bit of a non sequitur. It doesn't seem to follow. Because clearly a painting which has a disturbing meaning can nonetheless convey considerable meaning. The fact that the painting is disturbing doesn't mean that it doesn't have a considerable meaning. So I don't quite see how the question follows 'In what way could they be said to be examples of pleasurable formal relations'. I think the different parts of the definition are being a bit mixed up. Let's try to sort them out.

All right, Goya painted disturbing paintings. All right that's agreed let's say, but the fact that the painting is disturbing is quite a distinct thing, quite a different thing, from the pleasure which is given by the formal relations within the painting. Let me give you an example. Supposing Goya is painting. Well there is a painting by Goya of an execution of a number of people. The people who are being executed are standing up against a wall on the left and on the right men with rifles are kneeling and they're in the action of shooting, executing, the people on the other side of the painting with their hands raised. Now forget all about what the painting represents. Just look at the masses, look at the light, distribution of light, look at the colours, look at...

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... the lines. If you can abstract your mind from the representational content or the representational significance of the painting, you will see that the relations, the formal relation between the masses, colours, lines and so on give pleasure. To make this clearer you can turn the painting upside down. Very often you don't then recognise any particular objects. You just see the formal relations which are pleasurable. So the two things are quite distinct - what the painting represents, whether disturbing or otherwise, and the formal relations between the constituent parts of that painting. But here a proviso comes in. If you look at a painting, sometimes it happens that the representational content is so disturbing that you are unable to notice the pleasurable formal relations. You don't notice, you don't see the formal relations at all, so you are unable to enjoy them. You are, as it were, overpowered by the representational content.

Now I would say that when that happens the artist in a way has committed a mistake. He's allowed a certain element in the painting, say the representational element, to get out of hand. Supposing the painting just makes you physically sick, I'd say then it wasn't a painting in the full sense of the term. The representational element had got out of hand for one reason or another, maybe psychological. You can see this in a lot of Italian and Spanish baroque paintings, especially of martyrdoms and crucifixions and executions where there's so much blood and such a realistic representation of severed heads and cross-sections of necks and breasts that have been cut off and so on and so forth, that you just can't pay attention to the painting as an aesthetic whole. That element has got out of hand, the representational element has got out of hand. You are no longer able to attend, even, to the formal relations, much less get pleasure out of them.

So the questioner goes on to suggest possible alternative words such as 'meaningful' or 'significant', though I think this is confusing that pleasurable formal relations, that element of the work of art, with the sense of values that can transform people's lives. I think if one speaks of a significant form there'll be a confusion because there is a special theory of

significant form put forward years ago by Roger Fry, wasn't it? But it's considered out of date now. And 'meaningful', no. Formal relations are not meaningful, except perhaps in a highly metaphorical sense. I think it's much better to describe them as pleasurable. That is what they are. Every pattern gives you pleasure. Meaningful is a quite irrelevant word I think in this context.

So no doubt there's a lot more that could be said on the whole question but I don't see any reason - this is the substance of the matter - to change pleasurable into either meaningful or significant. I still think that pleasurable is the word here. Pleasurable, formal relations. No doubt the discussion will continue.

All right,

"The Order and other Buddhist cum spiritual traditions cum religions."

"If an Order member goes along to another Buddhist group and in the course of events takes the Refuges or receives an initiation or ordination, what would your response be? What if a mitra does the same?"

All right, let's look at this. If an Order member goes along to another Buddhist group and in the course of events takes the Refuges or receives an initiation or ordination, what would your response be?

I think really the question needs to be more precisely put. For instance what does one mean by 'goes along to' another Buddhist group, and what does one mean by 'in the course of events'? 'Takes the refuges' - well what does one mean by taking the refuges in that situation or receiving an initiation or an ordination in that sort of situation? There are all sorts of possibilities. For instance you might hear, you as an Order member or Mitra, you might hear that a certain well known, let's say Tibetan teacher is going to give a lecture at the Albert Hall. You are just interested in hearing him. All right, fair enough, you go along, you attend. There's nothing wrong in that. It's a good thing to do. But suppose at the end of his talk or whatever it was he'd given, question and answer meeting, he says, 'Now I'm going to ordain you all', well clearly he isn't taking ordination in the serious sense in which we take it in the FWBO.

This sort of thing has actually happened to some Friends of ours. I can't remember if they were Order members or not. So he just asks you to repeat something. All right out of politeness perhaps you just stay there and you repeat it. Well this cannot be taken as taking the refuges from him. It's a little bit like for instance someone coming to an FWBO Centre, staying for the Sevenfold Puja and reciting the refuges and precepts in the context of the Sevenfold Puja. We wouldn't regard that person as having been ordained.

So in the same way if an Order member or mitra happens to go along to a meeting in that sort of way and happens just to recite the refuges and precepts after somebody in a manner that clearly doesn't constitute ordination in our sense, well in the case of an Order member there's no breach of his Going for Refuge under the auspices of the Western Buddhist Order. Unfortunately the same thing might happen with regard to an initiation. Presumably one is speaking of Tantric initiation. Tantric initiations should be really very serious affairs indeed. According to the original Tibetan tradition - I say original because it seems to have been abandoned in the last couple of decades - you couldn't receive a Tantric initiation unless you'd been a serious practitioner of the Hinayana and Mahayana first. According to tradition again - though this was neglected in Tibet for quite a long time, not just in the present century - the Bodhicitta should have arisen before you enter upon the Vajrayana. Not only that but you should have progressed as a Bodhisattva to the tenth bhumi. Strictly speaking Tantric initiation, Vajrayana initiation, Abhiseka, takes place within the tenth bhumi.

So it's rather difficult to understand this widespread scattering of initiations by Tibetan lamas. It does seem to be rather almost a sort of vulgarisation of the whole thing. I know they talk

about planting seeds, but this is I'm afraid a very vague concept indeed. So it might happen that not realising that a Tantric initiation was going to be given you went along to a meeting and in the same way you might find that at the end the lama said I'm going to initiate you all now, give you a mantra, please repeat it after me. If it was on that sort of superficial level, you certainly wouldn't be acting inconsistently with your membership of the Western Buddhist Order in just repeating it along with everybody else.

But if a lama individually was to buttonhole you, and sometimes they do that, and ask you to become his disciple and tell you that he is going to give you the refuges and precepts, then you should say no, because that would be a definite breach of your going for refuge under the auspices of, or as a member of, the Western Buddhist Order. Politely you should tell him that I already have been ordained, I already am a member of the Order. I have already a teacher of my own. Thank you very much but I have to refuse. That is quite a different sort of situation.

In the case of a mitra of course, if a mitra accepted ordination or initiation in that sort of way, that individual sort of way, and if they really understood what they were doing, it would mean automatically resigning their mitraship within the FWBO. That has happened in a few cases. Sometimes of course the mitra just doesn't know what's happening any more than sometimes the Order member doesn't. This is all rather unfortunate. I think what really matters in instances of this sort is just intention. But sometimes, again unfortunately I think, lamas it seems are out to sort of nobble disciples. I've even known cases of an ordination being sprung on people when they went to see a lama. The lama just ordained them and then told them well I've ordained you and now you're my disciple, and this is completely inconsistent, not only with our approach but with Buddhist tradition.

Perhaps this needs more detailed discussion on some occasion, but this broadly speaking is my attitude.

Then

In a circular to chairmen from the Order Office, you are quoted as wanting the FWBO to present a uniform approach and you suggest that all contacts with other Buddhist groups are not dealt with by Centres but passed on to the Order Office for your perusal and any action you think fit. Does this include individual informal contact e.g. attending a class given by a local group for instance?

No. I didn't have individual contact in mind. If, as I mentioned earlier, if a famous teacher appears and is giving a public lecture and you want to hear him, go along by all means and perhaps afterwards just go up to him if you have the opportunity, pay your respects and introduce yourself. But as to attending a class given by... I wonder why one would want to attend a class by another Buddhist group unless it was for a very specific purpose. I think here people should consult me. Occasionally this does happen. Kamalasila asked me whether I thought it would be a good idea for him to attend classes of a particular group in order just to study or have some experience of their method of teaching meditation, and I said I thought in his case that was a good idea, inasmuch as he was specialising in the practice and teaching of meditation. But I'm afraid I wouldn't be very happy about an Order member or even a mitra hearing that some wonderful initiation was going to be given in a particular class and going along just for that purpose. I think this would represent some misunderstanding of the Vajrayana and even of the Dharma itself.

What about contact with other religious groups on a Centre basis and on an individual basis?

If other religious groups are active in your particular area it probably is a good idea to remain on friendly terms with them and perhaps even have a certain amount of contact with them, but I think it would be better for more serious and intensive contact to be handled from Padmaloka by myself and members of the Order Office. If you're invited as an Order member to go and give a talk to a particular religious group, that's fine, assuming that you're properly

qualified to do so. If you have any doubts about your qualifications you'd better get in touch with me and ask me whether I think you're really qualified. Because if we do go out to other religious groups, if we do, as it were, represent Buddhism, represent the FWBO, we really must be a fit and proper person to do that. Otherwise we shall just let down the Dharma and give perhaps a wrong impression or an impression that people don't take very seriously.

All right, oh we come to the last question. Rather a small bag today but never mind. This is an apparently simple question but perhaps there's more to be said about it than appears at first sight.

You mentioned recently that you felt the Women's Wing of the Order to have made a qualitative leap forward. Do you see a parallel development taking place within the Men's Wing? In what particular areas do you feel we (presumably the Men's Wing) still lack maturity?

Let me say a bit about the Women's Wing first. As you all know I did attend the Dharmacharinis' Convention so I think I can say that I'm the only person who's attended all three conventions - the Dharmacharinis' the Combined - I don't really like to call it mixed, let's say Combined - and then the Men's, the Dharmacharis'. So I've got a pretty broad view of you all I suppose. So with regard to the Women's Wing of the Order I've probably got a broader and better view than I have of the Men's Wing inasmuch as a higher percentage of women Order members attended the women Order members' convention. I can't give you an exact figure but perhaps it will be worked out. A very high percentage of Dharmacharinis in the United Kingdom were present there. There were very few in fact who weren't and they were not there for very definite reasons. So as I say I probably have been able to have a better view of the Women's Wing in this way than of the Men's Wing because quite a lot of men Order members are not present and haven't been present in the course of the Convention.

Perhaps this is something that I should emphasise a little bit. We only have the Convention every two years and we don't have it for very long. How long has it been, a miserable eight, nine days? Some people were saying at suppertime that they could really do with another couple of weeks of Convention and perhaps that sentiment is shared. But it is quite disappointing that more Dharmacharis have not turned up, and I think it is the responsibility of all Order members, both male and female, to make every possible effort to get along to the Convention, at least for a few days, but preferably of course for the whole period. Those who haven't been able to be present for whatever reason, adequate or inadequate, have missed a very important experience because, well just speaking of the Men's Convention, this present Convention, I personally feel it is the best that we've had. The whole series of Conventions have constituted the best Convention that we've ever had and I really regret that so many men Order members in particular did miss the Convention.

So you've got two years to go until the next one, so please get a 1989 diary if you can and as soon as you know when the next Convention is going to be just put it down in your diary and start planning from now if necessary to make it possible for you to attend. If you're short of money all right start saving from now. If you've got certain important duties and responsibilities start from now organising them in such a way that you will be able to come. It only needs some foresight, it only needs some planning, in the majority of cases. Very very very few people will be so indispensable at that period around their centre that they can't come. We've had two years to arrange our lives, to organise our lives, in such a way as to make it possible for us to attend the Convention and it's one of our primary responsibilities as Order members to be here on Convention and take part in whatever activity is being conducted by all of us together. So that's as it were just in passing.

So, in the case of the women's wing nearly all of them were there. I doubt very much if there was anybody not there without a very good reason, and that led I must say to a very positive spirit - that among other things - among the women Order members. I hadn't seen them in that way of course for two whole years, just as I haven't seen you in this way for two whole years. I must say, as I've said before it really did strike me the extent to which the women's wing of

the Order collectively, so to speak, had matured during those two years. I also got the very distinct impression, which has been confirmed on other occasions, that they all knew one another pretty well. Probably - what shall I say? - the degree of mutual knowledge within the women's wing is considerably greater than the degree of mutual knowledge within the men's wing. That's partly of course due to numerical reasons. That there are just so many more men Order members, but it's not just due to numerical reasons. I think I can say that the women's wing of the Order seems to attach much more importance to working together and working as a team and considering the needs of the women mitras as a team, than does the men's wing of the Order, and all this has helped them to make this qualitative leap forward that I've mentioned.

So 'do I see a parallel development taking place within the men's wing?' Oh dear, this is difficult isn't it because there are so many more of you but yes I think, I believe I perceive a greater degree of collective maturity than last time. But again I can't be sure, I can't be sure that my judgement is correct because so many Dharmacharis, proportionately speaking, are missing. I felt safe generalising about the Dharmacharinis but I don't feel so safe generalising about the Dharmacharis collectively because, as I said, so many are missing. But all right, nevertheless, 'in what particular areas do you feel we', the Dharmacharis, 'still lack maturity?' Hmm, I thought a little bit about this.

Comparing the women's wing with the men's wing I think, again making allowance for the difference in numbers, there's still more what I might call intra-personal reactivity within the men's wing. There seems quite a bit more unhealthy competitiveness and rivalry within the men's wing, and quite a bit more of quite unhealthy - what shall I say? - not getting on very well, or even pursuing little feuds almost. Or having very serious misunderstandings. In a few cases even - this has happened in the past - resulting in violence, physical violence. One does get, I'm afraid quite a bit more of that sort of thing within the men's wing of the Order. There are much more serious divisions between men Order members than there are between women Order members.

Women Order members do have their little differences. I don't want to make them out to be perfect by any means. They do have their little tiffs from time to time, but they seem to contain them better. They don't for instance spread them all over the pages of '*Shabda*'. They keep them more or less to themselves and they work on them very often just quietly. But I'm afraid that sort of thing doesn't happen, at least sometimes, in the case of the men's wing. So I see the men's wing of the Order as needing particularly to work on this sort of thing, this competitiveness. I've discussed this with the women sometimes, and two or three women claimed that women were no less competitive than men! They didn't want to be left out. [Laughter] But I really don't agree. I've definitely come to the conclusion that within the FWBO at least the men are much more highly competitive than the women and this competitiveness between the men sometimes has quite unfortunate consequences. Sometimes they've a very negative and even rather nasty turn. So this is something that really needs to be worked on. There must be much more working on very positive feelings of goodwill, of friendliness and so on within the men's wing.

I am not saying, I have never said, that there's no such thing as a positive healthy competitiveness. I have spoken about that. Men do seem to be on the whole much more competitive than women and the competitiveness can take a positive as well as a negative form. But I think it takes, within the men's wing of the Order, a negative form much more often than one would expect of a spiritual community, of a Sangha, of an Order.

So I think it's probably this in particular that the men's wing of the Order as such needs to pay attention to. Men seem much more ready to take offence; they seem to react much more quickly; they seem to put pen to paper in these sort of matters much more quickly and reactively than the women do. So as the movement goes on and as we have more and more years of experience behind us, I certainly find that these sort of comparisons - and again I'm not comparing men and women as such, I'm only making a comparison within the Order at the moment - one can begin to see that, yes, the women's wing of the Order has certain

characteristics and the men's wing of the Order has certain characteristics, and these are sometimes complementary.

Perhaps I should also mention, maybe just for the sake of fairness, that in the case of the women Order members, and this applies to women mitras to an even greater degree, perhaps the biggest weakness is just lack of self confidence. But I've seen an enormous change in this area among the women, especially the women Order members, in the course of the last couple of years. This is one of the things that struck me when I was on the Dharmacharinis Convention, how much more self confident the vast majority of them are than they were a few years ago, and this has contributed very greatly to their increased maturity. There were only one or two or perhaps three Dharmacharinis present for whom this was still something of a problem, so I was very pleased to see this because in the past in many ways the Dharmacharinis and the women mitras have been held back not through innate lack of capacity but just through lack of self confidence, whatever the reason for that may have been. But nearly all of them, as regards the Dharmacharinis, seem to have overcome that or come to terms with that, with the result that they are much more effective than they used to be and much more mature.

So I think perhaps the men's wing of the Order needs to realise that, well the women's wing is a bit different from what it was even a couple of years ago and perhaps they will need to adjust their attitude accordingly. But be that as it may, one of the things which has given me most cause for concern as regards the men's wing of the Order over the years has been this negative competitiveness as I've called it. So perhaps that is something that could be discussed in Order chapters, and if you do see that say two people within your chapter, two Order members within your chapter, are not getting on well, that there is antagonism between them, that there is even enmity between them, well please do your best to resolve the situation or the issue. Or if you see that there is ill will between Order members belonging to one centre or one chapter and Order members belonging to another centre or another chapter, please do everything in your power to resolve that, because it is a serious threat to the unity of the Order itself. This is the only really serious worry in a way that I do have sometimes. That these sort of misunderstandings, these sort of antagonisms, these sort of splits will proliferate and affect the unity of the whole Order.

It isn't very serious at present. It doesn't affect all that many people but these things have a habit of growing if they're not checked, if they're not dealt with. So please do deal with them whenever they need to be dealt with.

Anyway, that's the last question, but perhaps I shouldn't close on what might appear to be a slightly negative note, though it isn't really such, and perhaps I should give you all collectively and individually a little pat on the back before I conclude, because it really has been an excellent Convention, and even though I personally haven't taken part in everything that has happened, I personally have enjoyed the Convention and I've felt it's been very worthwhile indeed. I really enjoyed the Women's Convention, I enjoyed the Combined Convention and I've enjoyed this Convention too very much. It's been a very worthwhile month, I might say, for me personally, and I really do rejoice to see that the Order as a whole, both the Women's Wing and the Men's Wing, has grown and matured to such an extent in the course of the last couple of years. The Convention that we've had this last couple of weeks is not to be compared with the Conventions that we had say well seven, eight, nine, ten years ago. I felt that especially listening to the talks. I did quite deliberately attend nearly all the talks. I wanted to attend all of them but it wasn't possible for various reasons, but one notices in the talks an increase of maturity also.

I couldn't help feeling that from the point of view of the talks, or with regard to the talks, this year's Convention, that is to say the Men's Convention, has been a quite educative Convention. The educational element I think was quite strongly represented, and I was very pleased to see this. I'm quite sure that everybody present on the Convention who attended the lectures learned quite a lot from them, and it was very very good to see different Order members as it were specialising in different subjects, different aspects, of the spiritual life,

culture, Buddhism and so on, which I have been able only to touch upon. I certainly am not under the impression that I've spoken the last word on any particular subject. I've only started a few hares as it were, and it's up to all of you to, so to speak, chase those hares!

I was very very pleased to hear Ratnaprabha elaborating on the Higher and the Lower Evolution, from more precise and more detailed knowledge of, for instance, biology than I possess myself. I was very happy to hear Chintamani expatiating on Buddhism in relation to art and the spiritual life or the spiritual life in relation to art and developing certain lines of thought, growing perhaps out of lines of thought that I developed myself, but which had needed to be drawn out of my lines of thought which I had not so far done. And who else did we.... Just jog my memory.

[Voices offering names]

Oh Jnanavira, yes! [Laughter] Oh yes! Oh dear how could I forget Jnanavira. No I didn't forget him, it's just that at my age one's memory's not quite so good. Though again this reminds me of a little story about Doctor Johnson, the celebrated Doctor Johnson, the ever popular Doctor Johnson. He complained once - I don't know how old he was at the time, probably over seventy - he said that the young man forgets his hat, people say 'Oh, he's forgotten his hat.' but if an old man forgets his hat they say, 'Ah, his mind is going!' [Laughter] I don't suppose it's really like that, but yes Jnanavira and Christianity. I myself have held very strong views on the subject of Christianity from a very early age. I don't know when the disillusionment did actually set in but it was pretty early on, and I've been taken to task for expressing rather critical views on Christianity. But anyway that has been a quite important element in my life and thought, and I'm very pleased that Jnanavira is continuing that line of thought and will probably arm himself with even sharper weapons than those that are at my disposal or have been at my disposal, and I really rejoice to see him and hear him following up this particular line of thought. It's very very refreshing and very inspiring. I hope he'll be able to go much farther than I've been able to go, though I've gone pretty far perhaps. I'd like to see him learning his Hebrew and Aramaic and [Laughter] Or perhaps he won't, perhaps it isn't necessary, perhaps somebody else will learn it! But it's very good, it's a very positive experience for me to see these different lines of thought that I've started - really no more than started in many cases - being continued, being protracted, being pursued, and for me this has been a very positive feature of this particular Convention.

In the earlier days I used to sit patiently through lecture after lecture and I could recognise every single sentiment, every turn of phrase - it was very familiar! But that doesn't happen any more. It's not that anyone has departed from my thought but they've made it their own, they express it now more and more in their own way, their own language, and they draw it out, they develop it, they add something, and that I find very very interesting indeed and this really is a sign of maturity.

And then of course we had that lecture by the Nagabodhi. That was really fascinating. It was really wonderful to hear how well known the FWBO is beginning to be in the States. I've sometimes felt in this country the truth of the saying that a prophet has no honour in his own country. I think this is true to some extent with regard to myself. I don't quite know why. Perhaps there isn't any particular reason. Maybe it's just happened, but that's the way that things seem to have been, so it's good to learn that the FWBO and myself personally are appreciated, it would appear, somewhat more, the other side of the Atlantic than this. Though of course we are becoming a bit popular and well known in various parts of the continent. Perhaps we'll end up there more popular than we are in the United Kingdom itself. But these are all very happy signs and happy auguries, and I must say that I really enjoyed all the talks.

I was very happy also of course to hear Subhuti having another go. Casting his net again and I was very pleased to hear Dharmadhara expressing his views on faith and healing. I was happy of course to admit the mitigation of my own initial scepticism with regard to all medical science and treatment whatever. I've modified my views just a tiny bit [Laughter] in the course of the last year.

So all in all this has been a very very enjoyable and positive Convention I hope for everybody, and I really hope that in the course of the next two years we can all go from strength to strength and have an even bigger and more glorious, possibly, possibly even longer Convention next time, but that is all no doubt to be considered.

Meanwhile we're very happy and thankful I'm sure that we could be together for so many days in this sort of way on this particular occasion, this year. The Convention isn't of course quite over so I mustn't give the impression that I'm winding things up. That will no doubt be somebody else's job.

But, yes I'm very glad to have taken part, very glad to have been able to answer these questions. Well to be quite honest moderately glad [Laughter] I must admit I'm beginning to wonder whether this is a format which is any longer very useful. When I was on the Women's Convention Dhammadinna introduced me when I took a general Question and Answer Session. We had one general one, as distinct from the particular group ones, right at the end of the Convention. Dhammadinna introduced me and she made what I found a very interesting remark because other people see you differently from the way in which you see yourself. She felt that my teaching methods - I'm not sure if that was the expression she used or not - but she said that she thought my teaching methods had gone through distinct phases or stages. She said first of all, in the first stage I'd given lectures. In the second I'd led study groups, and in the third I had conducted question and answer sessions. And I thought yes, that's correct. It didn't happen intentionally or deliberately, it just happened like that. First of all lectures, then study seminars and then question and answer sessions, with of course a bit of overlap, because I do occasionally give a lecture, though I haven't taken or led a study group for quite a few years now I think.

So this led me to reflect and to wonder even well, what's the next stage going to be, what's the next stage going to bring forth, because I must say I think I've more or less exhausted this particular format, the question and answer format, in this sort of way. Because some questions have become very long and very complicated and very elaborate requiring much looking up of Pali and Sanskrit dictionaries, and one can't deal with questions of that sort just off the top of one's head. Also because the whole movement, the whole Order, is maturing, there are a lot of questions that people just ought to be able to answer for themselves. I still do occasionally get a question which someone could have answered himself if he'd just looked in the Pali Dictionary. That's all that was necessary, so I've tended more recently just to refuse to answer such questions, because if you can do it yourself you should do it yourself and not expect me to do it for you. So people are becoming more and more able to answer their own questions, or the Order or a particular chapter of the Order, a particular discussion or study group is becoming more and more able to answer its own questions, so fewer questions are coming up, as on this particular occasion. Here you are - a hundred of you - you've only been able to produce about ten questions. Well I don't regard that as a failure. I regard that as very good.

A few years ago there might have been a hundred questions. Well today there's only ten or twelve. That means you're able to deal with a much higher percentage of questions yourselves, or among yourselves than you could a few years ago. So perhaps the question and answer session is dying a natural death.

So what next? Well I've had one or two little ideas. I'm not making any promises but one of the things I thought was I could read poems! [Laughter] Oh dear! Oh dear! [Laughter] Yes, I thought why not, I could read poems. I don't mean read poems for the sake of reading poems but I thought well poetry at its best, at its greatest, is a great instrument, so to speak, for the communication of inspiration. I don't know whether I'm able to do that through my poetry, but perhaps I could have a go, perhaps I could try. I might have a certain modest success. [Laughter] Might get a few people along, might communicate a few ideas. I don't know whether I'd have the effrontery to send any poems to '*Shabda*' [LOUD Laughter and some applause] for publication. I don't have that degree of self confidence. Sometimes I think I'm probably quite a mediocre poet. But let posterity judge! We shall see.

But I've also more seriously thought that perhaps I should devote, as I'm trying or have been trying to devote, more time to literary work. Perhaps that is the phase that I'm entering now or have entered now, and certainly I would like to do more and more literary work. I have on hand as I think everybody knows, the second volume of my memoirs. They've been dragging on for a whole decade now and I promised myself that I will try really hard to get them finished by the end of next year. I'm not promising you - I've only promised myself.

[Laughter] Let that distinction be clear. And there's lots of other things I'd like to write. I'd like to write a volume three of my memoirs but in a different way. That would cover my second seven years in Kalimpong, the period of the Triyana Vardana Vihara, the period of my contact with important lamas and the beginning of my work in the plains among the followers of Doctor Ambedkar. I'd like to organise the book in such a way that I alternated between these two - up in the hills with the Tibetan lamas, down in the plains with the ex-Untouchables, and introducing, every now and then, a strange, eccentric, bizarre character, usually European [Laughter] or American! The Indians don't seem to have produced these sort of characters, neither do the Tibetans.....

[End of tape one, tape two]

.... the commencement of the FWBO. A couple of years before and a couple of years after, again written in a completely different way. I think here I'd take Henry Miller as a model. Perhaps that's a bit mysterious but, yes, I like the way in which he writes from a purely as it were technical, literary point of view. And of course there's that long awaited volume on Buddhism and Christianity. Or perhaps I should leave that Jnanavira. (Laughter) Who knows? And I'd like to write quite a lot of a more general nature about the Dharma. Sometimes I think I really need to write another big comprehensive book on the Dharma. A little whisper reached my ears in the way that little whispers sometimes do that in a certain discussion group someone - in fact two people - had made the point that Bhante's "*Survey*" is already out of date. Poor old Bhante - he's out-of-date now. (Laughter) Well, probably quite true. I wrote the "*Survey*" thirty years ago, more than thirty years ago and it may be that certain historical portions, though those are quite limited, do need a bit of revision. But apart from that so much more has been published in the last thirty years, so many more books on Buddhism, so many translations from Tibetan and Chinese, perhaps one needs to take a new look. Perhaps one needs to write a new "*Survey*". Who knows? But that would take quite a long time.

I wrote my first "*Survey*" in the course of fourteen months and did quite a lot of other work and had several lecture tours in between as well. Fourteen months. I don't think I could write my new "*Survey*" in fourteen months now. Not with the Order Office next door to me. (Laughter) No reflection on the Order Office but I just use that term to represent all the other work that I have to be responsible for these days. Maybe I can do better in Guhyaloka. That remains to be seen. So perhaps the next phase is to be, not so much poetry, but prose and the written word. Perhaps that's what I shall be getting into now.

But again I'm not making any promises. I just entertain a few private hopes. But anyway perhaps I'd better come to a conclusion now and let Surata take over and make such closing remarks, brief and to the point I'm sure, as he thinks fit.

(Applause)

(end of session)

*Transcribed by Silabhadra and Paul Dore
Checked and contented by Silabhadra*