

Mining for hidden treasure

From the mid-seventies through to the mid-eighties, Urgyen Sangharakshita led many seminars on a wide variety of texts for invited groups of Order members and Mitras. These seminars were very formative in FWBO/Triratna as Sangharakshita opened up for the still very young movement 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 more accessible book form <https://www.windhorsepublications.com/sangharakshita-complete-works/>. However, a huge amount of material remained unchecked and unedited and the Dharma Team at Adhithana has been exploring how to make more of it available.

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.

At times some of the views express attitudes we hope Triratna has left far behind <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/ethical-issues/unhelpful-attitudes-and-ideas/>.

- that sex is an aid to kalyana mitrata (spiritual friendship)
- that men are spiritually superior to women
- that any sexual orientation is spiritually superior to another
- that single people are spiritually superior to those in relationships or with families

Beyond this there are those brilliant flashes of clarity and understanding, teachings that have become part of our Dharma landscape but are easily taken for granted. We see our task as bringing them back into focus through making them available online, ensuring they do not get lost and forgotten.

We'd encourage you to engage with the seminar transcripts in this light.

DISCLAIMER

This transcript has not been checked, and may contain mistakes and mishearings.

THE "ADVICE GIVEN TO THE THREE FORTUNATE WOMEN BEFORE THE DEPARTURE" SEMINAR. (TAKEN FROM " THE LIFE AND LIBERATION OF PADMASAMBHAVA" - CANTO 103)

HELD AT: PADMALOKA

IN: 1980?

THOSE PRESENT: Ven. Sangharakshita; Dharmacharis Sona, Dhammamati, Viramati, Sthiramati, Vajramati, Roger Jones, Campbell McEwan, Brain Duff, Tony Wharton, John Wakeman, John Roche.

Sangharakshita; Alright then let's start on the text. This as you can see from your copy is Canto one hundred and three of "The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava". This is a book which has come out only recently published by "Dharma" publishing in the United States under the direction of Tarthung Tulku. The original Tibetan work is one of a number of biographies of Padmasambhava. I expect everybody has heard of Padmasambhava Tibet's great guru Padmasambhava who was mainly responsible for planting the Dharma or establishing the Dharma in Tibet.

So this is one of the biographies. It was translated some years ago into French. This version is translated from the French into English but it's been checked and revised in the light of the Tibetan text by Tarthang Tulku. It's a rather extraordinary story - the life of Padmasambhava - we're not going into that on this occasion. What we're concerned with is just this one chapter in which Padmasambhava having established the Dharma in Tibet is about to take his departure and he is asked by a Tibetan lady, in fact a queen, to give her a teaching. So the chapter consists of his final teaching to her which gives quite a good summary of his presentation so to speak of the Dharma, covering quite a lot of topics. So we're just going to go through this chapter. There's only hardly four pages but I expect we'll need all our time to get through them because their message is, so to speak very condensed.

So if you'd like to start reading just a sentence at a time. The whole canto is the advice given to the three fortunate women before the departure, mainly to the queen whom I mentioned and then there are shorter advices to two other women.

Roger Jones; 'Then Ngang Chung, the glorious noble queen, invited the Guru, that second Buddha, into the temple of turquoise dedicated to her tutelary deities.'

S: Well there are several questions that arise here obviously. Can anyone see what they are?

Brian Duff; What are tutelary deities?

S: Tutelary deities translates the Tibetan 'yiddam' which is generally considered to be equivalent to although it isn't a translation of, the Sanskrit Ishtadevata which means so to speak, chosen deity. You know that ordinarily there are the three refuges Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - these are sometimes called in the Vajrayana tradition the exoteric refuges. You also have the esoteric refuges which are the Guru, Yiddam, or tutelary deity and Dakini. So in what does one arrive at the esoteric refuges so to speak. I spoke about these things at one of the conventions. I think it was the last convention. The line of thought so to speak is like this. You haven't seen the Buddha. You aren't in direct contact with the Buddha. You've only heard about the Buddha or you've only read about the Buddha. You've no direct contact, no personal experience but you do have personal contact with and personal experience of your own teacher. So therefore it is said

that the teacher, the guru is the esoteric form of the Buddha refuge. In other words the guru is the Buddha so far as you are concerned in existential form. In other words for all practical purposes. The point at which you make contact with something or someone who is so to speak superior to you is the guru. So in the same way with the dharma. The dharma is very extensive. There are thousands of teachings, thousands of scriptures. You might not have read them all. So at what point do you actually make contact with the dharma. You make contact with the dharma at the point of your own meditative practice and in the Vajrayana context that means the particular Buddha or Bodhisattva you meditate upon. So that Buddha or Bodhisattva you meditate upon - your chosen Buddha or chosen Bodhisattva your chosen deity or tutelary deity, is the esoteric aspect of the dharma. The word esoteric is probably misleading. It's more like existential. What it means for you in terms of practice. In the same way with the Sangha. The sangha in principle is all more highly developed followers of the Buddha throughout the four directions of space and the three periods of time. Obviously you have no contact with them. But for practical purposes existentially speaking what is the sangha for you? It's those with whom you actually practise the dharma, with whom you're in personal contact - direct personal contact. This is what is meant by the dakini. Which doesn't mean a sort of spiritual girlfriend or pseudo-spiritual girlfriend as I've said, it's someone with whom you're in very close existential contact and with whom you practise the dharma and who inspires you. It isn't necessarily just one person. It can be a small number of people with whom you have that sort of contact. SO in addition therefore to the exoteric refuges you have these esoteric refuges and the tutelary deities are those on whom you particularly meditate - who for you embody the dharma in meditative and experiential terms and of course you can have images of your tutelary deity or deities, you can have a special separate shrine or even a whole temple. It seems that this is what this particular queen had because she invited the guru, that second Buddha, into the temple of turquoise dedicated to her tutelary deities.

So this suggests that she was already practising the dharma - how seriously she was meditating we don't know but being a queen, apparently she had built this rather lavish temple or perhaps chapel and had installed images of her favourite divinities and the chapel was decorated with turquoise stones which the Tibetans are very fond of and which you have an abundance of in Tibet. So it seems at least she had some strong devotional feelings and therefore she asked the guru for a teaching. So then Ngang Chung, the glorious noble queen, invited the guru, that second Buddha, into the temple of turquoise dedicated to her tutelary deities.' She actually invited him into the temple. So what does that suggest as it were? It suggests it's a serious occasion. She doesn't just ask him over lunch so to speak. She invites him into her temple or into her chapel. It suggests that it is a rather special occasion for her. She wants to ask Padmasambhava for instruction in the right sort of place with the right sort of atmosphere. This also is important. The beautifully decorated temple with its images of tutelary deities suggests a sort of heightened more ideal sort of atmosphere and environment within which it is easier to talk about, to communicate about, the dharma.

Sona-; Why is Padmasambhava referred to as the second Buddha?

S: Ah that's quite a point, yes. Why do you think he's referred to as the second Buddha? Can there be a second Buddha?

Sona; Well it depends really what you mean by Buddha in the first place. Presumably, well often we take the word Buddha to mean the person who rediscovers the dharma and then teaches it. Maybe in this sense because he took it to Tibet and they consider him as that.

S: That might well be a popular sort of interpretation but it isn't the real reason why he's called the second Buddha.

All Tibetans don't agree with this. It's the Nyingmapas who call him the second Buddha. Some Buddhists in fact would be quite scandalised to hear of a second Buddha before the sasana as established by Gautama the Buddha had died out. There couldn't be one. So what does one mean by calling Padmasambhava the second Buddha. Well the Buddha reveals.... first of all I must say the Nyingmapa teaching isn't completely clear, there are many different traditions in different sources but, yes first of all the Buddha is someone who announces something, rediscovers them, which had been lost for some time. So in the case of Sakyamuni the Buddha it's the teaching in general or the dharma in general. So for Padmasambhava to be a second Buddha in that sort of sense he would have to announce, he would have to rediscover, he would have to promulgate something which had been lost for some time. Something which had not in fact been promulgated by Sakyamuni the Buddha. Do you see what I mean? So what could that be?

Sona; The Tantric tradition.

S: Yes and no. Sometimes it is said that whereas the Buddha taught the sutras Padmasambhava taught the Tantras, but this is much too broad. This is not in fact quite correct. The general tradition, even Tibetan tradition is that Sakyamuni, Gautama the Buddha taught the Hinayana and the Mahayana and the Mantrayana, by that meaning the three exoteric tantric systems, that is to say the kriya yoga, the upayacharya yoga and the yoga yoga. These are called the outer tantra. But he did not teach or not reveal the inner tantra. This was left for Padmasambhava to do and of course also accordi~ to Tibetan and especially Nyingmapa sources Padmasambhava came almost immediately after the Buddha which is of course not correct according to modern historical knowledge. According to this biography Padmasambhava was born forty two years after the Parinirvana of the Buddha which the Tibetans place earlier anyway, which is in a way absurd if modern scientific history isn't completely haywire. Padmasambhava historically lived in the eighth century but according to Nyingmapa tradition he was born - appeared on the lotus flower forty two years after the Parinirvana and lived for three thousand years. His function was to reveal the esoteric Tantra, the Vajrayana proper. The exoteric tantras came to be called Mantrayana, the esoteric tantra can be called Vajrayana. Also - this is another interesting thing - that the standard Buddhist teaching is Buddhas appear in different world cycles etc., etc. The Nyingmapa teaching is that in every world cycle you get not only a Buddha but also a guru, a Padmasambhava like figure as it were. So it's as though the Nyingmapa tradition doesn't see simply a Buddha coming and teaching, it sees a Buddha coming followed by a guru. Perhaps it would be better to speak not of say the Buddha and then the second Buddha but of the Buddha and the guru, in the sense of Padmasambhava. In fact there is a chapter in this work which gives a whole long list of Buddhas appearing in different world systems at different times. It also names the guru who follows immediately after them. Now this might sound rather strange not

to say bizarre but there is a meaning. So what do you think this meaning is?

Sona; Following the path of regular steps. You first of all have to have sutras.

S: You have the Hinayana sutras, Mahayana sutras and then you have the exoteric tantras and then the guru comes and he promulgates the esoteric tantras, the Vajrayana. So what does that represent? What is the tradition so to speak trying to say?

Sona; You can only progress so far with the teachings of the Buddha. You need something even more.

S: Yes so why is that. Why can you so to speak progress only so far with the teachings of the Buddha and what is that something more that you need which is apparently supplied by Padmasambhava, according to the Nyingmapa tradition?

Dharmamati; A living teacher.

S: A living teacher. That is quite important too but you get living teachers in the other traditions. You get living Mahayana teachers, you get even living Hinayana teachers, you can come into contact with something living through them.

John Roche ; Is it applying your own personal energy to that?

S: Your own personal energy. This is getting a little bit near. This is going in the right direction so to speak, Try to think what might be the basic nature of the Vajrayana, the esoteric tantra.

Sthiramati; It's based on experience.

S: It's based on experience but then all the schools of Buddhism are based on experience. Well what is it about the Vajrayana experience which is perhaps special? What does it represent? Well consider Padmasambhava's visits to Tibet. Why was he invited to Tibet. Come on you've heard the lecture I'm sure. What was the story. How was he invited to Tibet.

Sona; To subdue to inimical forces.

S: What are they called in Tibetan tradition?

_____ Demons.

S: Demons! The gods and demons of Tibet. So why was he invited To subdue the gods and demons of Tibet?

Roger Jones; Because no one else could.

S: No one else could. Who had tried?

Roger Jones; Kamalasila.

S: No Kamalasila was a bit later. It was Kamalasila's teacher who tried so what was his name?

Sona; Sangha. . er

S: Santarakshita - and he is known as the Bodhisattva Abbot. He was a good monk, a follower of the Bodhisattva ideal but he wasn't able to subdue the gods and demons of Tibet. So what does this signify do you think. What do these gods and demons of Tibet represent?

Brian Duff; Do they represent the main forces to be overcome in particular cultures?

S: Yes they represent that both externally and internally because Those forces are not only outside one, they're also inside one. It's

not just cultural conditioning. We also read that Padmasambhava throughout his biography, he's constantly teaching the dakinis. He's subduing the dakinis and all sorts of weird sort of psychic monstrosities almost. So what sort of impression do you get about Padmasambhava and the nature of his activity. What sort of level does he seem to be operating on? Here's the Bodhisattva Abbott teaching the Four Noble truths, the Eightfold Path, the Twelve Nidanas. It is all very good, very true, very beautiful but he's not able to subdue the gods and demons of Tibet. Now what does that mean?

John Roche; A kind of ferocious, kind of warrior like quality.

S: Yes. That type of teaching however good, however true, that sort of mental philosophical ethical rational teaching doesn't really penetrate down to quite deep levels of the psyche where there are very powerful energies which can be represented, can be symbolised to use that word in terms of gods and demons and so on. That type or that mode of teaching just doesn't penetrate deeply enough. So Padmasambhava has to be called in. His kind of teaching, his kind of approach, the Vajrayana to give it its sort of traditional term, is able to do this. We could also look at it in another way. You could say the Buddha or someone like say the Bodhisattva Abbott, comes along and took Buddhism to Tibet in very much the same way that the Buddha taught in India. So yes the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold path this is all very good, it's all very beautiful, it certainly has a great effect. People follow it. But on a sort of broader front so to speak, even though the individuals may gain liberation through following that teaching, in the world so to speak all sorts of deeper forces and energies are churned up and come into opposition. Do you see what I mean? So it's as though the initial promulgation of a teaching in the course of its very success, stirs up or churns up very basic energies, in society, in human beings, not just individually but perhaps socially speaking in particular cultures, which later on have to be brought under control of some more radical presentation of the teaching. And Padmasambhava represents that. So it's as though after every Buddha, representing the more rational you need the Guru who starts dealing with, or who deals with, the powerful psychic forces that have been aroused by the promulgation of the Buddha's teaching and which now needs to be brought under control, and to be integrated. Do you see what I mean? In a way of course the Guru is an aspect of the Buddha. You mustn't too literally think in terms of two separate figures as it were. Padmasambhava - he's basically a historical figure but that historical figure has been elaborated in the sort of ways that it has to cover or to represent the need within Buddhism, within the history of Buddhism, to follow up the Buddha's initial teaching by attempts to reach down and to tackle the very much deeper almost primordial energies, which have been stirred up by the fact that the Buddha's teaching has been introduced into the world. That process of stirring up must have taken some time. The Buddha didn't live long enough to experience it and to deal with it but somebody has to deal with it. The Buddhist tradition itself has to deal with it, and the figure of Padmasambhava seems to represent that sort of attempt. It's as it were a personification to the extent that the figure isn't historical, of Buddhism's attempt to come to terms with, to cope with, to integrate, those very powerful, in a sense negative energies which have been stirred up by the introduction of something like Buddhism, a catalyst like Buddhism, into the samsara. So therefore he's called the second Buddha. Not in the sense that he does the Buddha's work all over again, no the Buddha has done his work, but there's a second work to be done. There's a follow up

needed. So you can see this occurring on different levels in different contexts because in India, yes it was the Buddha followed by the Vajrayana tradition or Padmasambhava if you like. In Tibet it was the Bodhisattva Abbott followed by Padmasambhava. So maybe this represents a sort of general law or general principle whether in terms of the individual or whether in terms of the group so to speak or a spiritual tradition. You remember that in the context of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path the stage of vision is followed by the stage of transformation. So perhaps in this sort of context the Buddha represents more the stage of vision and Padmasambhava more the stage of transformation.

Not transformation simply of your speech and your livelihood but something even deeper than that. The transformation of very basic human and even cosmic energies.. So that it isn't enough just to accept Buddhism mentally, it isn't enough just to agree with it rationally. You might go on like that for a few months or a few years and then you find that Buddhism having been introduced into your life, very deep energies have been stirred up, very deep resistances have been provoked and your present understanding of Buddhism is unable to cope. You have to deepen your understanding of Buddhism. Your Buddhism has so to speak to become tantric to cope with and integrate those energies which your earlier more rational ethical involvement with Buddhism has stirred up. So we need to make that transition in broad principles not say in sectarian terms, from the Hinayana come Mahayana to the Vajrayana.

So this is why Padmasambhava is called the second Buddha. 'Then Ngan~ Chung, the glorious noble queen, invited the Guru, that second Buddha into the temple of turquoise dedicated to her tutelary deities.'

Airight, next sentence.

Sona; "Piling up on a precious throne fine silks and tables of divination and regaling him with many pleasing things, she greeted him respectfully and made this request:"

S: So 'piling up on a precious throne fine silks and tables of divination and regaling him with many pleasing things, she greeted him respectfully and made this request-' . So what sort of impression does one get from this?

_____ She has a lot of respect for him.

S: She has a lot of respect for him. Not only has respect but 7he shows it in a particular way. In what sort of way does she show it?

John R.: Making offerings.

Roger Jones; She seems to be offering the very best that she possibly can.

S; Yes right. Piling up on a precious throne fine silks. I'm not sure what these tables of divination are. They occur a number of times in the course of the biography. I'm not quite sure about the translation here but it may well be one or another of the sort of chequer boards which Tibetan lamas do use for throwing dice and according to the throw of the dice, making predictions and so on. It probably refers to something of that sort.

Nevertheless his throne is equipped. They're not ment~oned but presumably there's a bell, there's a dorje and there's a little

container for holding the rice which is used for throwing and there's this board for divination. Everything that he might require is sort of set out.

In the Vajrayana, especially in Tibetan tradition they make quite a big thing of this pleasing of the teacher. It looks superficially like putting the teacher in a good mood. What do you think is the significance of this?

Roger Jones; It really appeals to me that she seems to have found herself in a position which is not very good but all she's doing is recognising that fact and giving of herself just saying this is the very best that I actually possibly have and I'm offering myself up to it and that's all I can do. This is it.

S: Right, Well there is this very strong devotional element or aspect. The queen clearly has this strong devotion towards the Guru and the fact even that it's a queen who is asking is perhaps not without its significance because the female personality so to speak, is more often used symbolically to represent the attitude of devotion and acceptance and receptivity and so on so that might be as it were brought in here for that sort of reason. But it's not only a question of being devoted because you can be very devoted without being very intelligent but it specifically says and regaling him with many pleasing things'. Here it's a more sort of in a sense tantric aspect. Presumably she gave him something to eat, she gave him something to drink, lit some sticks of incense. So what does this suggest. In addition to the fact that she does it out of devotion?

Roger; Perhaps she feels that it's really rather necessary for him to be in a certain kind of mood, to be amiable to answer her.

S: It's like when you invite somebody to pay you a visit and you invite them just as a guest, you usually offer them food. Why is that? They've got food at home and they could have eaten at home. So why is that? Why do you feed them?

Sona; To sort of show them that you're Open, you're receptive to them.

S: Yes that is true but what sort of effect does it have. When you've invited somebody as you surely must have done at least those who've got households of their own, invited somebody for a meal, and then after the meal you've really laid on a fine spread for them and they've enjoyed it, what sort of mood are they in?

_____ Happy.

S: They're happy so what effect does that have upon the communication? Roger; It's very conducive.

S: Yes. Supposing for instance for the sake of argument when they'd turned up the food hadn't been ready and then maybe when it was served it wasn't very good and you'd forgotten to order some wine and maybe the table cloth was dirty and you kept having to rush off and answer the telephone during the meal, what sort of mood might your guest be in? (Laughter) So what sort of possibility of communication would there have been between you? So it's as though, take it that the guru is enlightened, yes, and he's not going to take exception to anything that might be lacking, but nonetheless it's as though any sort of possible wrinkle in the communication, has to be smoothed out so that he is in a perfectly

so to speak good mood and really feels like answering the queen's question. There's nothing disharmonious. She's received him with all due respect. She's created the best possible environment. Here he is in her very own temple, and she's put him up on a nice throne and laid out everything in front of him and she's not only bowing down with great devotion, she's making offerings of food and she's lighting incense sticks. In other words she's trying to create the very best conditions for an ideal communication, a completely harmonious and positive atmosphere, and this is very important.

Dhammamati; It shows the importance of preparation.

S: The importance of preparation. I don't know how many of you have read the Yastasastrikaprajnaparamita, Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, but there are several chapters there which deal with the question of how disharmony may arise between pupil and teacher. The text attributes it all to the workings of Mara, but here within the tantric tradition steps are taken to obviate that sort of thing. There's a lot of emphasis and sometimes it's almost going to extremes, of pleasing the teacher and sort of really feeding him, sometimes regaling him with wine and whisky and all the rest of it. They take it as far as that. Sometimes they treat him so well that he's almost incapable of speaking.¹ (Laughter). So you get the idea. It also suggests that you mustn't overlook the so called human aspect. You mustn't think oh yes the minute the guru walks in without waiting for him to get comfortably seated, without even offering him a cup of tea, you're right there asking your question. This doesn't help communication. It's self defeating in a way so the Vajrayana and tantric tradition and so on emphasises this very much and it applies to all human communication. Suppose you want to talk to a friend about something well don't sort of pounce on them as soon as he enters, this is not the best way to handle the situation. Not the best way to get his opinion. Let him settle down. Let his mind become a bit calmer, a bit clearer and approach the subject gradually. You'll get much more out of him then.

So the same applies with the guru.

Roger; It is a two way thing isn't it. You get the best out of both of you.

S: Right yes. So therefore it says, 'piling up on a precious throne fine silks and tables of divination and regaling him with many pleasing things, she greeted him respectfully and made this request.' You notice it's a request. She's not going to extract teaching from him by force so to speak. She's just asking.

Alright what does she ask?

Dhammamati; "Give me a few words of great import, an effective verse which I can memorise.

Though I have not renounced the world, I would like to cherish within me a Doctrine which at later time would lead me to Buddhahood."

S: So what does she say. 'Give me a few words of great import, an effective verse which I can memorise.' So she wants a few words of great import. In other words she's asking for a sort of concentrated teaching and she also says, an effective verse which I can memorise. What do you think is meant by an effective verse?

John R: One that has a practical implication.

S: Yes one which has practical implications, which can be put to practice and is spiritually efficacious. Which I can memorise. Give me something which is short enough for me to be able to memorise it. Learning by heart is traditionally considered very important and especially anything that you want to reflect upon or meditate upon you learn it by heart. There's an interesting article by Dr. Conze recently published and he's going on rather about the laziness of people in the west who want to study Buddhism and he points out that in the east the first thing you do when you want to study or meditate upon a text, is to learn it by heart. He suggests that all those who are interested in Zen and so on, the first thing that they should do is to learn the Heart Sutra by heart and he recounts an experience when talking about Buddhism and about Zen apparently to a group of Buddhists in the west. He asked how many of them had taken the trouble to memorise the Heart Sutra. Of course nobody had. Hardly anybody had read it even but there they were wanting to learn about Zen and all that. So this learning by heart is considered quite important. Because then you can turn it over in your mind on all sorts of occasions. It's not a question of committing things to memory for the sake of committing things to memory but of being able to turn them over in your mind and reflect on them at length.

So this is the sort of instruction, the sort of verse which she is thinking of. A few words of great import. So clearly if you are going to memorise it and reflect upon it you don't want something very expanded. You want something very concentrated, the meaning of which will emerge as you reflect and meditate upon it. There are many texts of this sort in Buddhist tradition and perhaps the Heart Sutra is the most famous example. Short texts which are meant to be committed to memory, which are meant to be used as a sort of basis for reflection and in a way meditation.

Roger; Something that struck me. Do you think there's any corollary with a mantra and this sort of effective verse.

S: There is in a way because some mantras are quite lengthy and do have an analysable meaning like the Vajrasattva mantra. So sometimes the line of division between a mantra or a dharani in the short text of this sort is very difficult to determine. For instance there is that mantra so to speak in many of the practices - 'Om svabhava suddha, sarva dhamma, svabhava suddho ham' which is often repeated. So this is a sort of mantra but it has an analysable meaning which can be reflected upon. It's a little bit like a condensation of the Heart Sutra, it's also a little bit like an ordinary mantra.

There's another thing that we don't always realise. That in the Buddha's day many of the Buddha's own disciples had just a few verses from the Buddha which they learnt by heart and on which they reflected. There were no Buddhist scriptures. There was nothing to read. There is a passage in the scriptures where a bhikkhu visited the Buddha and the Buddha asks him what he's been taught and he recites a whole series of verses which make out the (Atikkavagga) of the Sutta Nipata. So the teaching had been condensed at that early stage it seems into a short series of verses which bhikkhus used to be taught and on which they'd reflect and meditate, but there is no sort of general reading. So this in a way reminds us how little we can get by with, providing we do take it really seriously. We maybe learn it by heart, study it thoroughly, reflect upon it. So that's why I've sometimes said a few verses of the Dhammapada really are all that one needs. One doesn't really need to study so much. If one is naturally inclined to study well never mind. What is not

important is you just know a few things very thoroughly and go quite deeply into them. Those things may be so short and so condensed you could just write them out on one page, even on the back of a postage stamp. (Laughter) But it's well known that there are people who have read very widely in Buddhism, even in the original languages but don't seem able to put very much if anything into practice. So the traditional method, the original traditional method during the Buddha's lifetime and a bit later, was more just to concentrate on a few teachings that you'd heard and committed to memory and just try to reflect on and understand them and put them into practice. Or on a string of formulas. Some (may bear in mind) the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path etc., etc. The formulae performs much the same sort of function.

So then she says 'Though I have not renounced the world I would like to cherish within me a Doctrine which at a later time would lead me to Buddhahood.' When she says though I have not renounced the world, what does she mean?

Dhammamati; That she hasn't taken up the spiritual life.

S : Not quite. I think she means she hasn't become a nun. In other words she's being a bit modest which is of course Buddhist etiquette, Tibetan etiquette - well I'm not someone who's really committed to the spiritual life. I haven't given up worldly life. I'm still a laywoman, I'm still living at home with my husband, my family, I've not become a nun. But nevertheless I would like to cherish within me a Doctrine, a teaching which at a later time would lead me to Buddhahood. So you see how she's not saying I'm very ready for an advanced spiritual teaching, she says no I'm spiritually not very advanced, I haven't even given up the world but please give me something which, even though I'm not ready for it I can cherish it and think about it until I am ready, a teaching which would lead me to Buddhahood. That is my ultimate goal. I don't consider that I'm ready for a teaching of that sort but please give me a teaching so that even though I'm not ready I can cherish it until such time as I am ready and then practise it. She's not making any great claims for herself. She's not maintaining that she deserves that teaching, that she's ready for it and therefore he's got to give it to her, which is sometimes peoples' attitude.

So therefore she says give me a few words of great import, an effective verse, which I can memorise. Though I have not renounced the world I would like to cherish within me a Doctrine which at a later time would lead me to Buddhahood. So it's a very modest, unegoistic, non assertive sort of approach. It's very different from the western approach. Here there is something that Dr. Conze comments upon again. As soon as people hear that there is something which is the highest teaching, the most esoteric they at once think this is the one for which I'm qualified. (Laughter) They just cast aside the basic things as something far too elementary for them. Such a different attitude.

There's no doubt in the queen's mind that apparently her ultimate aim is Buddhahood, not Arahantship or Pratyekabuddhahood but Buddhahood. But she's very modest about her position on the spiritual path.

Let's carry on. What does the guru say?

Campbell McEwan; "To this the Guru replied. 'Listen O~en

N an Ch&n~ To be in with a ur ent attention to impermanence, then strongly turn your mind towards taking Refuge, and direct your prayers to the Lamas."

S: So he mentions three things. To begin with pay urgent attention Uo impermanence, Why do you think he mentions this first? What is its importance, what is its significance?

John Wakeman; It inspires you to follow the dharma.

S: Right yes.

_____; She's obviously got a lot of riches. Although she's obviously treasuring it she hasn't quite renounced it yet. It's all really impermanent.

Sona; Also she's been lucky enough to actually come in contact with the dharma and she ought to really make the most of it.

S: You notice he says pay urgent attention to impermanence. Don't lose any time. This is in fact one of the things one notices about the whole biography. The people in it - Padmasambhava, his disciples and other teachers and those with whom they come into contact seem very deeply aware of impermanence. I rather wonder whether this is or was easier in Tibet and India than it is in this country. Lokamitra wrote something quite vivid in 'Shabda' about this, about living in India where sort of birth and death were going on around you all the time. Here everything is muted, everything is a bit smothered. It was perhaps not without significance that just a couple of weeks before I arrived in Pune one of our mitras there died. Within the circle of people that we knew during the time that I was there there were several births and deaths, not of any mitras but certainly people we'd had some contact with or Lokamitra had had some contact with. It's as though, not as though it happens more often, it can't do surely - it might happen a little earlier, but it's though it's much more public, it's much more part of the general scene. You're much more aware of people coming into existence and passing out of existence. You're much more aware of the possibility of losing things. For instance just after I left Pune one of our mitras who is now an Order member received suddenly an order I suppose it was from the local corporation that his house was going to be pulled down within a matter of days and he had to get out. This wouldn't happen in England I think. You can lose your job, you can be out on the street with nothing to fall back upon. Here we're sort of cushioned and cosseted much more especially in this century. You don't have these dramatic ups and downs.

In India if you lose your job you can starve. That's a real possibility. This is one of the reasons of the importance of the family there because there's nobody else to help you if you get into real difficulties. Often other people are just not in a position to help you. They just don't have anything extra. At the very most your close relations, your son can stretch a point and share with you but even then you may not always be able to do it.

Sona; It seems to indicate that when the group or society sort of make conditions sort of easier for individual people that they're doing them more harm than good.

S: In some ways. In some ways for instance they're shielding them from contact with things that are actually happening.

Sona; When you go to sort of countries like Sweden you find everything there is made so safe. When you look at the sort of incidence of mental disease and drug addiction there's a connection.

Sona;(cont'd.) I think you once said that you heard on the news some figures about mental troubles in Belfast and the incident of mental disease had decreased since the troubles started.

S: Yes. Another fact that I discovered in New Zealand which really surprised me was that New Zealand has one of the highest percentages of people committed to mental hospitals in the world. This seemed so extraordinary that I checked up on this. I read it in a magazine and I checked up on it and I discovered that it was quite well known to our New Zealand Friends. I thought well why on earth! They've got this lovely country. It's about as big as Britain. There's only three million people, two thirds of whom live in the North Island. There's hardly a million people in the South Island. It's half the size of Britain. Their way of life is easy and relaxed. There's no real problem about living but nonetheless. They look healthy but nonetheless they've got one of the highest percentages of people who at some time or other in their lives have to be admitted to mental hospitals for treatment. It quite staggered me. The problems of the devaloka.

B~~t actually the people in India that I was in contact with within the Friends mainly I found them emotionally very positive and happy despite great difficulties that they had to face, great hardships even and living under very difficult conditions with very little room, very little money, no privacy worth speaking of. But nonetheless they were positive. They didn't have time, they wouldn't have time to live in a mental hospital. There were too many other things to do. They'd come back and say well what would happen to their families. They just couldn't afford to go into a mental hospital so they don't, they don't seem to need to.

So we are shielded from a realisation of impermanence. I mean people in this country don't even show their age in the way that people do in the east. All people look really old. You really are bent, you really do hobble along. Your cheeks really do fall in, your hair really does turn grey. You really look old when you're old but not so much here. People are trying to doctor themselves. I was reading in the newspaper some weeks ago about a woman who'd had umpteen operations at the hands of a beauty surgeon in the States. She had seven or eight facelifts. She'd had something done to her navel to improve its appearance. (Laughter) Her boyfriend had had something done to his navel too apparently to improve his appearance. (Laughter) People sort of pretend that they're not old and they try to look young. Women perhaps more than men. The sort of cockney phrase old mutton dressed like young lambs. This again shields us from impermanence doesn't it. We try to ignore the fact that there is such a thing as death, that there is such a thing as old age but they're painfully obvious in India and I assume in Tibet also.

So the whole culture there seems imbued with a much deeper feeling for impermanence. It's not a philosophy or an intellectual understanding or realisation. It is a feeling. It's something which is brought home to you pretty much all the time.

Sona; I guess we can't really introduce that sort of feeling of impermanence just through intellectual reasoning.

S: Well only if you actually see impermanence. It's not only Th~permanence it's also precariousness. This is the feeling you get in India. The precariousness of life, the precariousness of Prosperity, the precariousness in a sense of happiness, the precariousness of security. For instance supposing a woman's

husband dies. This is quite a common thing, women usually outlive the men. Well no doubt he has supported her faithfully and she'd

been maybe at least reasonably well off but when he dies? Usually there's no pension or anything like that. She's literally at the mercy of her relations. Totally dependent for her food, her clothing, her everything. Maybe on her own sons if she's lucky. If not on more distant relations, but some times even the sons will grudge the help and grudge the support after a few years and she'll be not really wanted and feel that well maybe they can't really afford to keep her. Maybe they've got lots of children and she might feel well they could turn me out, Sometimes it does happen and she has to wander off as a beggar after having led a reasonably prosperous life. In Europe this could happen until fairly recently. I was reading in some accounts of social conditions during the Victorian period, of people terrified of bankruptcy, small traders. Bankruptcy would sort of plunge them from precarious footholds on the lower ranges of the middle classes to pauper(ing) They'd have no alternative but the work house which was a complete social disgrace. This abyss sort of yawned beneath them if they failed in their business. I remember at even an earlier period I was reading the Life of Luther who there was the founder of Protestantism, the great reformer but after his death what happened to his wife? She became a beggar. She was a beggar for years. There was nobody to support her.

So if that was Luther's widow's condition well what about other women who have been left in that sort of condition. So how precarious your life was, how precarious your prosperity was. That's the position in India still.

So it's not only a question that things are impermanent~. they're precarious too. Or because they are impermanent therefore they are precarious. I mean health is precarious here, perhaps even that we don't realise because if something goes wrong with us we can go to the doctor, we can get some pill or there can be an operation but for many people in the world and for many people in India this is not possible. They can't afford the medicine to begin with. There's no National Health Service there of course. Your child might be very sick but you just have to watch your child die. You can't affo~d to do anything about it. So life is really much more because life is so precarious you feel the impermanence of everything very much more. And that is the basis in many ways of a sort of deeper so to speak spiritual understanding. You realise it's not much worth devoting time and energy to worldly things. They're impermanent, they're very precarious anyway. It would be better if I devoted myself to the Dharma and this is the traditional reasoning.

Roger Jones; But it does seem to me that this feeling of impermanence doesn't necessarily inspire many people does it. I always get the impression from the Buddhist teaching of impermanence that it's meant to be really kind of inspirational.

S: This is true. The Tibetans seem to find it very inspiring. Judging by their literature the Songs Of Milarepa and this life of Padmasambhava you get the impression the Tibetans find it very inspiring indeed but perhaps you've got to be someone to begin with of very aroused and awakened energy. You've got to be a vigorous and self-reliant person to be inspired by this concept of impermanence or feeling of impermanence. Otherwise you can be just depressed I think.

Dhammamati; Also realising there's a possibility of a spiritual.... that something could happen to you. It's like he~e there's quite often no spiritual ideal so that all that impermanence means then is death so they hold onto what they've got so that they cover

themselves up from it. If you've got an ideal then every moment is precious to get on with getting towards that so the idea of impermanence is inspiring.

S : Otherwise in the absence of a spiritual ideal a feeling of the impermanence of things can just be a motive to blatant hedonism.

Dhammamati; Surround yourself with TV sets.

S: Alright so to begin with pay urgent attention to impermanence Then strongly turn your mind towards taking Refuge.' This is the sort of spiritual counterpart, the other side of the coin, the other side of the coin being of course the realisation of impermanence. The two in a way go together. Incidentally the translation reads 'taking refuge' but I'd much rather translate literally and say 'going for refuge'. Why do you think going for refuge which is the correct translation anyway is preferable to taking refuge?

John Roche; It implies some effort. Reaching out for rather than bring it to you. Outward rather than inward.

Sthiramati; You change in the process rather than you just accumulate

Roger; It also gives the impression when you're going that you're continually at it rather than taking it.

S: This is something I'm going to be just touching upon in my Thlk tomorrow when I give a few reflections on my tour because at one stage I did really feel that people saw say ordination in terms of getting something. This happened mainly in New Zealand. I said at one stage that I had the impression that some people thought that Bhante had arrived from England with something in his luggage called ordination and that if you could get on the right side of him or convince with enough arguments or be sufficiently pushing that he'd take it out and he'd actually give it to you. I really did get that impression quite strongly, that ordination was a thing that if you pressed hard enough you'd be given that thing or even if you made enough fuss or made a big enough nuisance of yourself you'd be given that thing in the end just to keep you quiet. (Laughter) Almost like a sort of spiritual dummy so to speak.

But what does this also imply, this sort of attitude? I reflected upon this quite a bit because it seemed to extend into other areas of life, that you thought in terms of getting something or of being given something instead of doing something or adopting a particular attitude or entering into a particular relationship with somebody. For instance to go back to what I felt about ordination being something that I brought over in my luggage, it's as though people weren't bothered about relating to me. They weren't sort of bothered what I felt or anything like that but I happened to be the one who had come with that thing that they wanted in my luggage. Otherwise they probably wouldn't have wanted anything to do with me. (Laughter). So the whole thing seems to become completely distorted and the only reason why they wanted to come and see me and press me and argue with me in some cases and bring pressure to bear. It was really quite extraordinary. To give you the most extreme example one Friend, someone who was very peripheral and not even a Mitra happened to see in a book shop a woman who had asked for ordination and though he didn't know her personally he recognised her, having seen her perhaps at the Centre, he'd never spoken to her. S,' he went up to her and assured

her that he'd see to it that she got ordination. (Laughter) It was thought of as something that could be obtained with a bit of string pulling and a bit of pressure in the right quarter etc., etc. I was really astonished but this is just an extension of a whole sort of wrong way of thinking of ordination as some thing which you could get if you tried hard enough.

Not something that you had to do, an attitude that you had to develop, a relationship with people into which you had to enter but something that you could get or grab or grasp if you were influential enough or persistent enough etc. etc. And then clearly also it was seen as conferring a certain status. This is why it was wanted, that thing called ordination. I was reminded of an incident in the Life of Milarepa, it comes right at the end, do you remember it? It's a sort of symbolical incident. Milarepa's corpse becomes a ball of light, I don't remember the details but this is roughly what happens, it becomes a ball of light like a ball of crystal and it floats up into the air and all the disciples are present and it's just above their heads and they try to grab it and it shoots away out of their reach. Then they stop trying to grab it and it sort of comes down and then when it comes a bit lower they have another go (Laughter) and it shoots out of their reach. This is what I was reminded of. And I was reminded of another thing also of the same kind. So I started generalising a bit. When we first started having men's retreats and it became obvious the men's retreats were very successful, the women started asking what is it that they've got on those men's retreats? It was as though they thought when the men got together they produced some mysterious something which they gloated over and enjoyed together, but as soon as a woman appeared on the scene they hid it! (Laughter) The men would not share this thing with them. They didn't think that what the men enjoyed was simply the relationship between themselves as men, and that that by very definition would be disrupted when a woman appeared on the scene. They thought of a thing which the men if they wanted to, if they weren't such selfish beasts, could actually share with the women and allow them also to enjoy. It was only when they started having their own women's retreats and entering into similar relationships with one another, then it started dawning on them what it was all about and that there wasn't a thing which you could cajole or force the men into sharing with you. It was a kind of relationship into which you could enter with members of the same sex based upon your common spiritual commitment.

So it's an instance of the same sort of thing. That you reify, you substantialise and objectify what should be an attitude and a relationship you think of it as a thing which you as you are at present without changing, can grab hold of and add to all your possessions.

So this is why it's even dangerous to speak in terms of taking refuge because that can very easily lead to all these sort of misunderstandings. So it really should be going for refuge or commitment as I said the other day.

John Roche; It also highlights the sequence that this teaching's given in. You get impermanence first (against that materialistic attitude).

S: Right it should dissolve that materialistic attitude, that craving to grasp.

And then of course Padmasambhava says, and direct your prayers to the lamas. So what prayers.... I suspect the Tibetan is

(Mong Nam) which means Path of Aspirations. It's not prayer in the sense of petition, it's not asking for good weather tomorrow or anything like that. It's the path of your aspirations to enlightenment. So direct your prayers to the lama. So what are you really doing? When you do that. Are you literally asking the lamas to give you something? It may take that form though again you must be very careful. The language may seem to be like that- some times it is like that, but what is the basic intention?

Sona; Just reflecting on how the lamas conduct their own life.

S: It's that yes.

John Roche; Seeking guidance perhaps.

S: Seeking guidance, but even before you can take guidance what must you be?

_____; Open.

S: You must be open, you must be receptive, so even though the Thnguage may be sort of petitionary or anything of that sort the intention would seem to be to place oneself in communication with the lamas and just to be open to whatever influence or whatever instruction comes from them.

So " These are the preliminaries without which no means exists."

What is the means that is spoken of here? It's probably the technical term 'upaya'. Means here means no form of spiritual practice because practice is the means to enlightenment. So these preliminaries are the foundation of any concrete spiritual practice whether it's in the way of meditation or visualisation, anything of that sort.

Maybe we should have a little break here. Is that clear, what we've done so far?

Sona; Going back to that strongly turning your mind towards taking refuge it seems sort of to really Indicate that you have to completely substitute in your life the Dharma as an object that the mind reaches out to instead of

S: In Pali there are tw~ terms which signify this. There's Karmachanda as distinguished from Dharmachanda. Karma being sensuous experience you could say and dharma being the dharma, you could say spiritual experience. Chanda is a very powerful word. It's much stronger than desire, it's more like urge, a powerful urge you could say. So a powerful urge towards sensuous experience has to be replaced by a powerful urge towards spiritual experience or a powerful urge towards the continuation of the reactive process or process of the reactive mind has to be replaced by a powerful urge towards the initiation of the creative mind or the creative process of the mind.

Sona; That comes out in the Four Mindfulnesses too. The first three mindfulnesses are connected with what you've got, the way you live your life and the fourth mindfulness is of the dharma. Always being mindful of the dharma.

S: Of the possibility of further progress. You notice the emphasis. To begin with pay urgent attention to impermanence and strongly turn your minds towards taking refuge or going for refuge rather.

S: It's as though the mind in the famous comparison, (Plato's) comparison, is like a pair of horses drawing a chariot, racing along full of vigour and energy and then you come to a fork in the road and they want to go this way and you sort of really rein them in and force them to go galloping along the other fork, It's a bit like that. It needs a very strong effort to redirect. But it's not a question of crushing the horses or stopping or hamstringing them or killing them, no, it's a question of redirecting those energies. This is very important and this is where the tantra is very strong indeed. That energy is to be redirected, trans-muted, not suppressed or repressed.

Sona; In that analogy you could say that the teaching of impermanence is the whip with which you stir up the energy.

S: Right yes.

John Roche; It's also like in a manner of speaking it also creates space for the dharma to come. I get that feeling talking about. . . you have to give up in order to create space for the dharma to come in, and likewise in terms of what we've been working on this morning you have to be able to give. The queen has to give in order to create the right atmosphere, the right area.

S: It's in a way fairly systematic. First of all the scene is set. The queen sets the scene. She invites the guru into the temple. Then there's the question of her attitude of modesty and non-assertiveness and out of that her request for the teaching and then the guru's very sort of short sharp powerful teaching giving the basic preliminaries on which any sort of spiritual approach would have to be based.

Sona; Do you think here that when he talks about taking refuge, going for refuge, that it's just a sort of like general going for refuge or is it sort of

S: Probably not. Because there's not just the exoteric and esoteric going for refuge, there are many others too of more obtruse natures as Milarepa describes in one of his songs. But it's going for refuge in the fullest sense. I don't propose to go into that this morning because we have gone into it in a whole study seminar not so very long ago which will quite soon be transcribed and edited. In fact it is being transcribed I believe. The one on the Threefold Refuge.

So these are the preliminaries without which no means exists. In other words if you try to take up any sort of spiritual practice without the preliminaries you're virtually wasting your time. If you're not aware of impermanence, if you don't really commit yourself, and if you're not open and receptive to higher spiritual influences.

Needless to say people of this sort don't think so much in terms of actually working on the ordinary practical level. They aren't usually very successful on that level more often than not.

Would someone like to read the next three lines.

Brian Duff; " After that disposing yourself physically to be calm, as in an empty house the raindrops slowly gather, relax - do not force your mind or body."

S: This is quite important. After that, that is to say after

completing the preliminaries, disposing yourself physically to be calm, that comes first, as in an empty house the raindrops slowly gather, relax, do not force your mind or body. I'm not quite clear about the point of this comparison. The basic meaning is clear, that you should relax but in what sense as in an empty house the raindrops slowly gather.

_____ ; (unclear) ... cleared out all your old ideas. You've come to realise impermanence and now you've cleared a whole part of yourself and you're ready to receive the teaching.

S: But how do raindrops slowly gather in an empty house and why Th an empty house particularly? Why doThaindrops gather. I suppose one must bear in mind the Tibetan house. Do they come down the chimney or the smoke hole or whatever. They didn't have much in the way of windows in traditional Tibetan houses. But anyway the meaning is clear isn't it basically that you should relax, do not force your mind or body. Why do you think this comes immediately after the preliminaries. First of all you relax physically, you sit comfortably and then relax physically and mentally. So why is this mentioned?

John Roche; The feeling I get is of this reliance on willed action. Once you've got things set up and you're ambitious for yourself it's quite an easy pitfall to fall into.

S: It's a question of overall growth and development, not just a conscious volition. It ties up with what I was saying earlier on about people's attitudes sometimes to ordination as a thing to be grasped, not just growing into it but trying to pull it down so to speak towards you. So do not force your mind or body. What is the difference would you say between making a real effort and forcing mind and body. How can you tell the difference. Should you not make any effort. Just sit back and let it all happen.

Sona; If you could sit back and let it all happen it would be alright. Nothing probably would happen.

S: Actually that is possible. But the thing is can you really sit back.. You think you can, you think but no, it's very difficult to sit back and let it all happen. Actually if you could really sit back it would all happen. The point is you can't really sit back. When you think you'l re sitting back you're not, you're as busy as anything. (Laughter) Sitting back from your ego, sitting back from your ambition, sitting back from the forcing, sitting back also from all these things.. So it's not as easy as it sounds to sit back and let it all happen. It's not even easy to relax. You can't make yourself relax. If you're not relaxed how do you relax? How do you bring it about, the state of relaxation?

John Roche; Consciouseffort in most cases.

S: Yes but it can't really be a conscious effort. That's a contradiction in terms. It usually means just at least to begin with, stop doing whatever you are doing and that might have to be a conscious effort. If you can sort of persist in that well after a while there won't be any sort of tendency and urge to do those things that you were doing, which you stopped yourself from doing. You'll be just able to sit there content not to do them and then you can begin to relax. So you have to just stop forcing things, stop even doing things. That's the first step before you can

start relaxing or even think of relaxing. You just have to stop and let things die down so to speak because sometimes they won't and sometimes they keep surging up again and again.

Sona; Most of us probably do it by getting into certain activities that have a more refined. ... you actually sit down and do something that's a bit more relaxing and that helps you to relax.

S: Something a bit more refined. That itself is not relaxing but it's on the way to it. It's a sort of intermediate stage.

John Roche; It's quite an ambition to be able to sit down and as you were saying do nothing. Things like a bit of nice music or preparing yourself finally to reach that stage.

S: You can't just sort of suddenly stop just like when a train is hurtling along at 80 miles per hour. You can't just apply the brakes. You have to slow it down gradually and I think people find that. Even when you go on retreat sometimes you find it takes a day or two to unwind, to adjust your pace so to speak especially if you've been working really hard and going all out right up to the minute that you left. It might have been a real scramble and then you go on retreat and you're expected to be all calm and quiet and mindful (Laughter). It takes sometimes a day or two to get into that sort of state. If it's a longer retreat it might even take a whole week. Even when people go on solitary retreats very often they say well when it's time to end the solitary retreat, say after three weeks or four weeks they really felt it was just beginning. They'd just really started settling into it. They'd just really started relaxing. It isn't so easy. It's a very important tantric teaching - relax, just relax but it's so difficult and clearly it isn't just sort of letting things go, letting things slide in the ordinary mundane sense.

Roger Jones; It is rather interesting how people have a tendency to think that listening to music is very relaxing where if music is doing what it's trying to do it really is just surging you around enormously.

S: Well it depends on what sort of music of course I suppose. You talk of relaxing but more often than not it's Beethoven or Mozart at his best sort of trumpeting forth. No doubt it's relaxation in comparison with what you've been doing during the working day but it's not relaxation in the true sense.

Sona; What I find you almost need is that to relax you need first of all just to integrate all your energies. Like for instance when I go to a concert and listen to music I find it quite a strain almost having to really concentrate hard. When you come out you feel you can let everything go. You've sort of like worked hard and you've brought everything together and then you feel as though you can actually do nothing.

John Roche; It is easier perhaps to relax if you have been working hard.

Sona; Yes if you've been doing something that is just one thing really. If you get dispersed and try and do too many things.

S: A lot of people have energies which it seems need to be used and

if those unemployed energies are just sort of whirling around you can't relax immediately. It's a question of relaxing at ever deeper levels until in the end you sort of relax at the level so to speak of the ego itself. The ego relaxes. It isn't concerned any longer to sort of keep itself going and to fend off attacks etc., etc.

Sona; Would you classify say entering into the dhyanic states as relaxing?

S: Oh yes. As mundane relaxation at least, oh yes.

Sona; Even though they're sometimes

S: Well they're so very much more refined. I think one could say though that if there was a lot happening in the ordinary psychological sense it wouldn't even be the first dhyana.

Sona; No I meant in the sense of sort of energies arising.

S: Energies and priti, yes that would be dhyanic. Though maybe you'd experience it more in terms of relaxation when you came out from it. You'd feel relaxed then perhaps. Perhaps you could say that there's relaxation when mental processes, thought activities cease and there's also relaxation according to one way of looking at it when the priti experience ceases and also when the sukhka experience ceases and there's only the upekkha left. So these are progressive stages of relaxation one could say at
higher and higher more and more refined levels.

So relax. People ought to be able to relax while working paradoxical as it may sound. Do you see what I mean? You can work in a relaxed way but usually we have to get things done and arouse our energy by means of some sort of ego insistence. We don't work smoothly and gently and relaxedly. So therefore we have to relax after which in a way is ridiculous. We shouldn't have to relax as a result of working in the sense of counteracting what you've been doing while working. You can work in a relaxed way and then you just rest. It isn't relaxation so much as just rest which then becomes appropriate. Ideally you relax while working. There's no tension. Sometimes it does happen doesn't it.

Sona; I notice it mainly when teaching yoga actually. Ways in which people work in yoga is often sort of like a willed force almost - a quivering of the body whereas when you do it, an asana, correctly there's a sort of like serenity that comes. So they aren't relaxed yet and they're putting in tremendous effort but the efforts just (natural energy?)

Roger Jones; It does seem that sometimes when you are relaxed you really are working.

Tony Wharton; I found doing manual work if you tried to be more calm while working you can keep going much longer.

S: I do remember reading somewhere an illustration of this sort. A young chap started digging and then an old workman showed him really how to do it, not sort of pushing the shovel in, you lean on it so that your weight pushes it in. You don't use muscular energy, muscular force to shove it into the ground.

Sona; This happened once with a carpenter who showed me how to saw. It's exactly the same thing. Not sort of getting tired out because you're having to shove. It's not like that. You let the

weight of the saw do it and he did it so smoothly as if there was no effort involved.

S: So a lot of life is like that you could say.

You just lean on it. You juSt lean on people (Laughter), you don't force them (laughter)

But anyway 'after that~disposing yourself physically to be calm, as in an empty house the raindrops slowly gather, relax do not force your mind or body.'

Alright carry on then from there.

Viramati; "Since the tranquility of Sunyata is the foundation, by forcefully turning your mind to emptiness, you chase misconceptions."

S: Since the tranquility of Sunyata is the foundation. Sunyata of course you understand. You could take it very generally as the Mahayana come Vajrayana word for reality and this is tranquil. Since the tranquility of sunyata is the foundation. The foundation of what?

Apparently it isn't altogether clear, the higher spiritual realisation, something akin to insight, to wisdom. Because by relaxing it suggests that you sort of experience the samatha level, the level of passification as it's called. And then the tranquility of sunyata is the foundation of the higher spiritual realisation, the higher spiritual insight into reality, into truth. Perhaps we shouldn't take the English here. It is after all an english translation of a French translation of the Tibetan original. Perhaps we should not take it too literally. But what do you think the tranquility of sunyata represents here? Why is sunyata said to be tranquil or in what sense is it tranquil?

Sona; It seems to me that all the objects that one normally

is desiring and going after suddenly, not actually disappear but the desire for them disappears and therefore you can relax again.

S: The state in which you are, the state of reality is one of Tranquility. No particular desire, no grasping after this or pursuing that.

Sona; Whatever happens you just experience.

S: So since the tranquility of Sunyata is the foundation by forcefully turning your mind to emptiness, you chase misconceptions. Emptiness translates sunyata. So how is this? By forcefully turning your mind to emptiness you chase misconceptions. Since the tranquility of sunyata or since sunyata which is an experience of tranquility is the foundation of your higher spiritual realisation by forcefully turning your mind in the direction of the concept of emptiness you chase misconceptions. It's inconsistent, it's self contradictory. You've stirred up so much disturbance in your quest for tranquility. In other words by forcefully turning your mind not to the real emptiness - you can't do it that way - but an artificial idea or concept of emptiness as something to be reached, something to be realised, you make it impossible to realise emptiness, sunyata, because it's essentially a state of tranquility and how can non tranquility be a means to tranquility? But this is what is happening all the time. How can you make an attempt to grasp the ungraspable?

So if you forcefully turn your mind to a mere concept of emptiness, trying to realise that concept by brute force so to speak, you're undermining the very foundation of any higher spiritual experience or attainment. Any attempt to sort of capture tranquility

in a willed ego-directed sort of way is doomed to failure. It's self contradictory. It's totally inconsistent. There's no taking the kingdom of heaven by storm here. It's like trying to force somebody to communicate with you. It's the best way of shutting them up..

John Roche; It's almost in a way, I'm picking up this thing of not being too reward orientated. You can't chase the reward for your efforts, seeking the tranquility.

S: Yes right. I got that impression too a bit say in New Zealand. People thought that they'd been so good say for one year, two years, three years even four years in some cases since my last visit they should now be rewarded with a trophy called ordination which they could put on their sideboard or mantelpiece and show to all their friends. Yes. It was almost as though it was a long service medal. Mitras' long service medal. I'm citing these examples from New Zealand. We mustn't blame them too much but I did encounter these misunderstandings in a rather strong form there. Maybe because there are so few order members there with experience of the order here, because it is so peripheral as it were in a sense. So among quite a few people there were these sort of misunderstandings which were quite strong. Which is not to say of course you shouldn't make an effort, of course you must. But one should think much more in terms of a natural process of growth and development and evolution which reaches its natural term so to speak rather than in terms of looking at something out there and trying to draw it towards you. It's more a question of you not reaching up but growing up towards that.

So it's as though so far we've had the preliminaries. There's the paying attention to impermanence, the going for refuge, the receptivity to the lamas, the higher spiritual influences, then becoming physically calm and then becoming mentally relaxed and then in a very natural, non forcing sort of way turning the mind towards or opening the mind to, the experience of sunyata as the basis of one's higher spiritual insight.

John Wakeman; I find that a little confusing. I thought sunyata was sort of the highest, the attainment of enlightenment whereas here it seems to be a preliminary.

S: Well there are levels of sunyata. There's the emptiness of the conditioned. You could say that corresponds to paying urgent attention to impermanence, that the conditioned is empty of the unconditioned. You do not find permanence for instance in the conditioned which is impermanent so there's a level of sunyata even there. But then of course there's the emptiness of the unconditioned. There's the emptiness of the very distinction between the two and so on. Again sunyata is not so much a specific thing that you can grasp hold of and locate in a particular place or the experience of it takes place at a particular time in your spiritual career. It's as though the experience of sunyata pervades your whole spiritual life at all the different stages in different ways and you ever more and more clearly realise it. You can look at it in that way. Not that at a particular level you suddenly encounter something called sunyata. It's there all the time and you progressively realise that or see it in different ways from different points of view.

But then there's a line,

"In the thoughts which arise, understanding will come without doing anything."

What do you think that means? It may not be very very accurate simply as a translation but just look at the broad general meaning.

In the thoughts which arise - presumably it means thoughts about sunyata - understanding will come without doing anything. What is this not doing anything do you think. Is it to be taken literally?

John Roche; Does it mean just seeing thoughts but not working on interpretations.

S: Yes not working on interpretations especially not working in a forced sort of way. Understanding will come without doing anything. Without your sort of wilfully trying to understand. If you just sort of reflect upon the concepts in which within the Buddhist tradition say sunyata, has found expression you just reflect and let your mind dwell upon them. Don't force it, don't try to sort of grapple with it and push your way into it and pierce it but just contemplate those concepts. Just be open, be receptive, be concentrated and understanding will come. So not so much without doing anything but without doing anything in an egoistically willed sort of way. If you are really desperate to understand you won't understand.

Roger Jones; It does seem it's like any thought that arises rather than a particular

S: I think it probably refers to sunyata, thoughts of sunyata. It doesn't actually say so. If you are sort of non-forcefully turning your mind to emptiness presumably the thoughts which arise will have something to do with that emptiness and that within those thoughts or by means of those thoughts there will be a non-willed understanding. Understanding is understanding, understanding is not doing. Understanding is not something that you can decide to do. It's something which so to speak just happens.

John Roche; Again there's a kind of ownership syndrome caught up with ideas. You kind of want to make them yours. Fit them into your categories.

S: Yes it's contemplative. It's even aesthetic. In a sense I spoke about when I discussed the greater mandala some time ago. Some of you might remember that. It's just looking. It's not even trying to understand but out of the looking there's a deeper looking, a further looking and that is the understanding. But usually we think we've got to appropriate the object and tear the heart out of it so to speak.

Sona; This is quite a different way of looking at things.

S: That's why we have to give ourselves time to make the transition from say operating in the world in a worldly sort of way by virtually egoistically willed action. We have to give ourselves time to make that transition say to anything of a dharmic nature. Otherwise we will be trying to use that same mind, that same attitude, that same approach, where it's completely or where they are completely inappropriate.

Sona; This sort of approach would sort of assume that there's a.... that the person to whom he's giving this teaching to has a certain amount of energy and life and vigour anyway. Otherwise it could be taken in a completely wrong way.

S: Well we've seen this happening. Let it all happen, let it all hang out and it'll all get done. Don't bother about the washing up, it'll get done somehow. Not that anyone will do it but it will be done

John Roche; But also too in the sequence of the teaching he has made it quite clear that this follows the preliminaries. That's quite important.

S: Right. He says these are the preliminaries without which no means exists and the means are the things that follow.

Sona; He does use the word strongly turn your mind.

John Roche; It also points out too the importance of the preliminaries.

S: In a way one can't even distinguish the preliminaries from what follows. They sort of shade into one another. And if you are fulfilling the preliminaries with sufficient intensity and awareness you'll find yourself in the midst of things which are supposed to belong to a later stage of progress or later stage of development.

Sona; He's just giving the teaching in the sense of sila, samadhi and prajna.

S: Yes. So in the thoughts which arise understanding will come without doing anything. Without you doing anything perhaps should be the emphasis and then there's another line; "Again and yet again work on whatever estranges you from meditation;"

What do you think this means? What place does this occupy in the overall scheme of spiritual development so to speak?

_____ Is it the fetters?

S: It could refer to those. But it's interesting that this comes after some experience apparently of sunyata. But clearly it's not a complete experience. You've had some glimpse or insight, some experience even of sunyata, but the tendency is to become estranged from that. This is something we find often happens. You do have a higher better, even a sort of peak experience whether in the context of retreat or back home or whether you're working, but the tendency is to become estranged from that. It doesn't last. It doesn't persist and in a strange sort of way even though sometimes you've got the opportunity of continuing with it or in it you don't take advantage of that opportunity. There's a strange sort of side of the mind which almost wants to be distracted, even though it is in a sense enjoying that higher experience so much but nonetheless any sort of little foolish distraction is sufficient. It's not as though Mara comes along with a big powerful temptation offering you three beautiful women or a whole kingdom, no, it's some silly little thing like a fly buzzing in the window, something like that that you will direct your whole attention to rather than that experience of sunyata even. So in this way you become estranged from your experience and this is because of the very deeply seated almost primordial tendencies in yourself and it's these that have to be worked upon - again you see there's a reminiscence of the eightfold path, the path of vision and the path of transformation - these still have to be worked upon for a long time even after this higher spiritual realisation of sunyata.

So therefore this is the follow up - 'Again and yet again work on whatever estranges you from meditation !' Not so much meditation in the narrow sense but meditation as the means, the precondition~ for this higher experience. Don't waste it, don't let it go to waste, don't throw it away. Preserve it, cherish it. Set up the conditions which will enable it to continue. Don't allow yourself to be estranged from it. Take it as your basis because since the

tranquility of sunyata is the foundation take it as the basis, take it as a foundation, and on that basis, on that foundation bring about a transformation of your whole being, your whole existence, your whole life.

And that is further made clear by what follows;
"Lay bare whatever arises, good and bad thoughts alike!"

Roger Jones; It's like actually in the meditation the experiences that you do have seem to be such a block to those very things, those very feelings which are to be worked upon, to be really felt. Because it is just that which actually of course is blocking you but you tend to walk away from them.

S: They can't just be dismissed or ignored. You have to confront them and this is why the Vajrayanic aspect comes in. They're your raw material as it were. The energy that is blocked up even in those negative emotions, that's your raw material. You can't alienate yourself from that. You'll have to deal with that, you'll have to come to terms with it sooner or later and better now than later on.

John Roche; I find in my own case it's like... the emphasis in the Movement lately about looking at our christian conditioning seems to me a major thing. Going back to this primordial self. It's very useful that. To realise just on what level to (), to get down there. Like you go into meditation and you get a block and you think I shouldn't be having that block, it's not a wholesome person that has those blocks so you try and dismiss them. (You don't just) let them be and look at them. You've got to get rid of the christian thing first and look at them in a sense.

S: It's no use saying get thee behind me satan. It isn't satan, it's Thou!

Alright what about these next two lines;

"The child who knows his way, carries along on the path, every harmless thing he happens upon and nothing that harms him." 11

This is a little obscure. What do you think it means?

Sona(?) He makes use of everything that is conducive to spiritual growth and rejects those that aren't.

S: It doesn't quite say that but it says carries along on the path every harmless thing he happens upon as though there are harmful things and harmless things, and as though he only carries along the harmless things he happens upon, and nothing harmful.

Roger Jones; Perhaps it comes from the experience of actually laying bare.

S: Yes. It refers perhaps to the good and bad thoughts.

Roger Jones; And once you've laid bare you realise you actually have to carry and you can't help it. ~ut if you want to carry something at least carry those things which you actually feel and know are harmless.

S: But is it intended then that the good thoughts are harmless and the bad thoughts are harmful and shouldn't be carried along?

Roger Jones; Perhaps it varies from person to person very much.

S: Perhaps the bad thoughts should not be carried along or harmful Thoughts should not be carried along as bad thoughts. Even a bad thought even though it's a bad thought it represents a certain quantum of energy. So you can't discard or dissociate yourself from that quantum of energy. It is your energy which has taken that particular form i.e. a bad form. So you may not take along the energy in its bad form but you've got to take the energy along in some form or other. So presumably you've got to change, you've got to transmute that energy into some other form, from a bad form, so to speak, into a good form so to speak. From a harmful form to a harmless form which you can then take along with you. It seems to mean something like this. But you cannot sort of except in a very sort of ordinary every day sort of way, you can't really leave behind anything. In a manner of speaking you can, yes. You can leave behind your bad habits, you leave behind your bad thoughts but if you go into it a little more deeply it isn't really like that. You certainly don't leave behind the energy which was in those thoughts. You change the form.

Dhammamati; The child who knows his way, so this is somebody who's found the way.

S: It suggests that a beginner does really understand the path and what has to be done.

Dhammamati; It's an attitude of mind more than anything in a sense that because he's found the way he sees things that are harmless around him rather than looking... it's almost like he's blocked in a sense but blocked from the negative. He accumulates good things because of that attitude.

S: He accumulates good things but without in a sense discarding the bad things. He discards the bad forms so to speak but doesn't discard the energy which can assume a good form as easily almost as a bad form. That energy which he withdraws or having withdrawn it from its bad form so to speak, he incorporates then into his overall attitude. He reappropriates the energy, integrates the energy.

So I don't think we can think in terms of a literal sort of not carrying along on the path, or even a literal carrying along on the path. The path is you also. You are the path. It's made up of your thoughts. It could be that there's some obscurity in the translation here but anyway the general meaning is clear isn't it.

What sort of general impression do you get now from these lines which we've done?
"After that disposing yourself physically to be calm, as in an empty house the raindrops slowly gather, relax - do not force your mind or body.

Since the tranquility of Sunyata is the foundation, by forcefully turning your mind to emptiness, you chase misconceptions.

In the thoughts which arise, understanding will come without doing anything.

Again and yet again work on whatever estranges you from meditation!

Lay bare whatsoever arises, good and bad toh~oughts alike! The child who knows his way, carries along~the path every harmless thing he happens upon and nothing that harms him."
What sort of overall impression do you get?

Roger Jones; It seems that he's offering on a much higher level something that she was offering originally. Just setting the ground very completely.

S : One also gets a~ impression like this. If one makes a distinction say between the group and the spiritual community, much as I

did in that talk on Authority and the Individual in the New Society, If you make a distinction between the group and the spiritual community and if you see that the group operates on power and the spiritual community operates on "love" for want of a better term, within lots of inverted commas, then you see that power is quite inappropriate within the spiritual community. To try to use power within the spiritual community is to disrupt the spiritual community. If there's too much of that sort of thing going on the spiritual community ceases to exist.

So in much the same way you've got your sort of practical willed appropriating intelligence with the help of which, through which you get things done in the ordinary everyday world and live your life. But if you try to carry that over into your spiritual life it's totally inappropriate. You cannot run your spiritual life on that model - working for goals, getting things done, getting your own way, pushing, forcing, planning, manipulating, - no, you cannot run your spiritual life on those sort of practical principles. But people do try. There's very much an analogy here of that sort. It's much more a question of growth, seeing, looking at, being aware, happening. Do you see what I mean? You cannot run your spiritual life on the model of achievement, success, competition, gaining, winning though we use that sort of language. In a way we can't help it. The Buddha gained enlightenment, well nonsense, he did nothing of the sort. He says so. He makes that clear later on so to speak in the Diamond Sutra, that nothing was attained. To counteract that sort of crude misunderstanding, that enlightenment isn't something out there to be grabbed. You could say that the whole of the Perfection of Wisdom literature was meant as a sort of antidote to that sort of grasping and appropriating attitude which is totally out of place in the spiritual life. It's like trying to stretch the smaller mandala to include the greater mandala which is ridiculous.

It doesn't mean you don't act of course, it doesn't mean you don't do things but it's so to speak spontaneous, it's the natural outcome of an actual realisation, an insight, an understanding. It's not yet the putting into operation of a plan that you worked out mentally.

Dhammami; you don't really know what you're going to achieve anyway do you. (Laughter)

S: Well if you knew what you were going to achieve you would already have achieved it (Laughter).

Tony Wharton; Also the importance of purifying your motives occurs to me.

S: Until in the end of course in a sense there's no motivation at all. Because to begin with we understand motivation as something as it were ego based. So really when your motive is thoroughly purified it's as though there's no motive left. There's only an understanding which results in a spontaneous activity of a certain type which you could regard as oriented towards a goal but you need not regard it like that.

Anyway this is the first half of what Padmasambhava has to say to the queen by way of an effective verse which she can memorise.

Alri9ht let's leave the rest until the afternoon.

Tony Wharton; "During the time of insight which is surrounded by a calm and gentle aura openness and appearance are inseparable."

S: Insight corresponds to vipassana. I take it everybody is Thai liar with the distinction between samatha and vipassana. Samatha meaning literally calm. This refers to the experience of concentration, the experience of the four dhyana states or states of higher consciousness whereas vipassana or insight refers to the insight into the true nature of existence. In this context especially insight into sunyata. So the traditional procedure is that one first of all by means of one or another concentration technique develops or experiences samatha especially the four dhyana states and then on the basis of that, on the basis of that concentrated and purified and elevated and more developed mind you develop insight. You make the samatha state or the samatha experience your basis for the arising or for the development of the insight. In more Mahayana terms the Wisdom. So therefore it says, during the time of insight which is surrounded by a calm and gentle aura. What do you think is meant by this calm and gentle aura which surrounds the insight. What is this aura? The translation is quite literal and accurate presumably. You get the general feeling anyway.

Sona; If you have experienced the four dhyanas especially the fourth dhyana you're in a state of radiation therefore energy's being radiated out like an aura.

S: It's not only that. It's not simply the aura of say the higher dhyana state but it's as though the insight itself has an aura. Because the insight itself has an effect on the whole of one's conditioned being so that it's transformed. It's not sort of sustained at a high meditative level by effort but inasmuch as it's been transformed it stays there. So it's as though the being is transformed by the insight. At least to some extent is permanently transformed and this sort of permanently transformed mundane or conditioned being surrounds the insight like an aura. The insight arises say in connection with your psycho-physical personality but inasmuch as that psycho-physical personality now houses so to speak insight that psycho-physical personality inasmuch as it is the medium of the insight becomes transformed, becomes a sort of aura of the insight. So it isn't simply that the aura of say the fourth dhyana surrounds the insight. They're not sort of completely separated without influencing each other. The insight as it were suffuses or permeates the dhyana state itself.

So during the time of insight which is surrounded by a calm and gentle aura, - calm and gentle also suggests that despite what might seem to be the connotation of the term it isn't something violent. Vipassana or insight suggests a piercing or a penetrating but again don't take that too literally. Therefore it's described as a calm and gentle aura.

Sona; But why in other contexts do we talk in terms of breaking through like Vajrapani.

S: Again you mustn't take it literally. Or rather yes take it literally by all means but in the right sort of context. In other words don't think of it as something forcible in the literal sense. It isn't a literal sort of using of a power. It is a breaking through, yes because there's a definite obstruction and resistance but you don't break through forcibly. You break through gently really. At least in a manner of speaking but again from another point of view neither violence or gentleness has any meaning at that level. It's a different mode of operation. Like it's when a beam of light passes through the glass, does it break through violently? It goes straight through. A stone might break through violently but not a beam of light. It's rather like that.

In a sense the beam of light is more powerful than the stone but

it goes through the pane of glass gently. It doesn't crash through like a stone. So during the time of insight which is surrounded by a calm and gentle aura, openness and appearance are inseparable. Openness seems to be a synonym here for emptiness. This translation has been revised as I mentioned at the beginning and some of these modern translators of Tibetan texts in America and Trungpa and Tarthang Tulku('s followers) translate sunyata as openness. I think they follow Guenther actually. Guenther sometimes calls it the open dimension of being you might remember. So openness and appearance are inseparable, appearance is rupa. So it is actually sunyata and rupa are inseparable as of course is mentioned in the Heart Sutra. Or voidness and form.

So during the time of insight which is surrounded by a calm and gentle aura you see the inseparability - if you like the non-duality - of sunyata and rupa as is outlined in the Heart Sutra. You have that sort of insight. It suggests an insight into a higher level of sunyata, the Maha Sunyata because sunyata as distinct from rupa suggests the unconditioned as distinct from the conditioned, the unconditioned being empty because it is empty of the conditioned and the conditioned being empty because it is empty of the unconditioned. So both are empty, both are void. So when you see both as void, both equally void you see openness and appearance as inseparable, as really being one and the same thing or as not two, and that is insight. That is wisdom. In other words you don't think at all in terms of dichotomies or polar opposites or anything of that sort. Again that is a mode of looking at things which you derive from your practical experience. You need to sort of break things up into pairs and opposites and dichotomies for practical purposes.

So during the time of insight which is surrounded by a calm and gentle aura openness and appearance are inseparable.

John Wakeman; "The six senses come forth, though appearance and voidness are inseparable; this is the real foundation, without which no means exist."

S: This isn't very easy to understand. The six senses come forth, but that they literally come forth, they're just there, they just appear so to speak. Though appearance and voidness are inseparable. Well here you have this insight, you have this realisation of the inseparability of openness and appearance but you don't find that your six senses are sort of swallowed up. There you are sitting there and the same psycho-physical personality realising it all but why should you not? If that psycho-physical organism also is empty. Where's the contradiction, where's the opposition? So the six senses come forth, though appearance and voidness are inseparable. It's like a sort of paradox and otherwise the ~Perfecti~n of Wisdom sutras are full of paradoxes. You realise the non-duality of form and void but nonetheless there are your six senses functioning. So the realisation of the inseparability of form and void doesn't mean that you're plunged into a sort of absolute in a negative sort of sense that wipes everything out, no. You're still there, you're functioning but there is a sort of transformation, to go a bit beyond the explanation here. It's as~though everything becomes sort of transparent but nothing offers any resistance to anything else. It's all there but it's transformed. It's the same but it's completely different.

Sona; It's like a state of pure experience without any grasping.

S: Yes. You get in Zen Buddhism some reflection of this sort of thing.

When the Zen Master says how wonderful, how miraculous I draw water and I carry fuel. It's not that some sort of strange sunyata type experience has replaced ordinary experience but the ordinary experience itself is pervaded and permeated by the higher experience. It is not as though your head and your body suddenly disappear and there you are in a void, no. You do experience the void but your head and your body and your senses are none the less there. Why not. Because what can obstruct the void, and then in any case they are void so how can they be obstructed, why should they not be there? In other words this is sort of introduced, the six senses come forth to guard against any sort of one-sidedly nihilistic view of that sunyata experience

Sona; Could it also mean that you actually experience things more as well, more sensuous in a way.

S: In a way yes. You experience things more vividly because you're less distracted by thoughts and ideas and the sense experience is purer as it were. You see things without them being bound up with your ideas about them or your reactions, therefore you see them more clearly. So in a way yes your sensuous experience becomes more vivid because less adulterated with mental preconceptions. It's a bit like the changeover to say impressionist painting.

I once noticed this very strongly once going round an art gallery which wasn't too big where all the paintings were hung in chronological order so you just go along from say the early Italian which of course were quite nice and bright and beautiful and then you go along and yes it's all still reasonably bright and beautiful. Then come the eighteenth century it all goes sort of brown and gravy like and then Victorian painting on the whole is rather dull, a bit sombre except for maybe the Pre Raphaelites. And then you come to the academic painters of that period. They're all rather dull and grey. And suddenly there's a tremendous explosion of colour and that's the French Impressionists.

It's as though you get the definite impression of a certain type of mentality which has been obstructing your vision of the world and the colourfulness of it all - suddenly being wiped out and you're seeing things much more vividly and clearly. That was the sort of impression that I got. It's rather like that. Your mental structure has acted as a sort of screen and when that is out of the way you see things much more vividly and that is the way perhaps many artists do see things, or poets see things. More vividly than ordinary people because the mental apparatus is interposing less. It doesn't get in the way so much. How many people really notice the blue sky. How many of them even look at it? They say I wish it was a nice day and give just a casual look. They don't really look and see or experience the blueness of the sky do they?

Sona; It's sort of like a difference between looking and experiencing isn't there. You look at some thing but there's a difference between just looking and fully experiencing it.

S: That's also why you see in these sort of thangka like paintings, the colours are very vivid and there are all sorts of auras and rainbows and halos and that illustrates that sort of thing. It is in a way like a rainbow. That is the sort of classic illustration. It sort of exists but it doesn't exist. It's there but it isn't there but even though it isn't really there it's sort of bright and beautiful.

So the great point here is that a realisation of the absolute truth does not cancel out the relative truth. It cancels out the illusory truth if you can use that expression, which wasn't

really there anyway but it doesn't cancel out the relative truth. So this is the real foundation without which no means

exist. It sort of repeats what was said before at a higher level so to speak. It seems, it appears that one is now experiencing voidness at a higher level, it's more like the great void whereas before it was more like the voidness of the conditioned which was being experienced.

Perhaps one could say - I don't know how correct this is but at least it's a possibility - when one speaks of pay urgent attention to impermanence this is the voidness of the conditioned, that in the conditioned you will not find permanence and then when you speak of turning your mind to emptiness this is the unconditioned you're turning your mind to because the unconditioned is empty with regard to the conditioned but then here it is the great void with which we are now concerned. That is that in which the whole antithesis of conditioned and unconditioned and rupa and sunyata is transcended. One could look at it like that. This is the real foundation without which no means exist. The real foundation is non-duality.

So then what comes next.

Sthiramati; "During the period of meditation, there is not anything- it is simply open. But when you waver towards appearances, delusions will arise.¹¹

S: So what does this mean? During the period of meditation there is not anything- it is simply open. So clearly one is not using the term meditation in the ordinary sense of trying to concentrate the mind, not to say struggling to concentrate the mind. Here meditation seems to be an actual experience of a higher reality so to speak. It seems to correspond to vipassana. Perhaps the original term in Tibetan corresponds to say samadhi. So during the period of meditation there is not anything. Now what does that mean?

Dhammamati; There's no discursive mental activity going on. You're sort of totally open to the experience that is happening.

S: Yes and not only that but it's a specific kind of mental activity, that is to say that which identifies things, classifies things as this or as that.

Sona; There's no subject object....

S : One could say that too. That being in a way the primary classification. It also is a bit reminiscent of something in the Buddha's own teaching as far as we can make out - in early Buddhism the higher dhyana of (akimsayatana) the state of no-thing-ness, not anything in particular, not this, not that, no specific thing. So it's as though that particular aspect of the mind which identifies things as this or that is in obeyance here. So during the period of meditation there is not anything. It's not that nothing exists, it's a complete blank but that classifying, identifying sort of mind is not present or is not functioning. So one is completely open. It is simply open. You don't superimpose upon things, upon reality, any particular pattern, any particular classification, any particular dichotomy. You don't impose anything on reality at all. You are completely open to whatever reality is, whatever it happens to be. But when you waver towards appearances the illusions will arise. So why should you waver? Well obviously your experience is not yet complete, your spiritual experience. You've

got so far, yes it is a genuine experience but it hasn't pervaded the whole of your being. So there is a reaction from that part of your

being which is not being pervaded by the higher experience and that so far is the greater part of one's being, so you waver. That other untransformed part of your being starts asserting itself so a tension is set up. On the one hand the pull so to speak of the unconditioned, on the other the pull of the conditioned. You experience that tension. You are pulled - now from this side, now from that side so you waver. So a wavering arises. But when you waver towards appearances delusions will arise. You start thinking well should I go in this direction, should I go in that. What should I do. Maybe this is the right path, maybe that. In this way delusions arise.

During the period of meditation there is not anything it is simply open. But when, that is to say as the meditation draws to an end you waver towards appearances. It's just a sort of a sense thing. Just a fly buzzing in the window or an itching sensation in your knee that draws your attention. That draws you away from the higher experience and then around that little sensation the mind starts becoming active, it starts weaving all kinds of ideas and patterns and then mixed in with those come desires and ideas and attentions and again you're back in the world. One knows how it happens.

Sona; It's quite frustrating really.

S: Any way read on.

vajramati; "After careful examination, understand not to discriminate, to neither accept nor reject. As anything can happen peace will arise from within."

S: Here one is trying as it were to maintain the experience of sunyata, the experience of openness. After careful examination understand not to discriminate, to neither accept nor reject. As soon as you discriminate you start accepting and rejecting. This is good and that is bad so obviously you accept the good, you reject the bad so just nip that sort of mental activity in the bud. At least at the time of that sunyata experience. Don't allow that sort of mental activity to arise.

As anything can happen peace will arise from within. Now what does that mean? When you're in this state of complete openness not imposing your way of thinking, your mental patterns upon anything anything can arise. You have no objection to anything arising at all. What is the result of that? Peace will arise. This is the true upekkha, when you've no particular preference, you don't discriminate, you don't mind what happens. You don't mind whether it rains, you don't mind whether it's sunny. So you're not upset whatever the weather is, peace will arise. Whereas usually we've all sorts of expectations and preferences and they're constantly being frustrated so how can we experience any sort of peace? So as anything can happen, and you accept that anything can happen and you're quite happy whatever happens. So of course peace will arise. So if you can accept whatever happens assuming that anything can happen well only one thing can happen whatever happens. (Laughter) In that peace will arise. You'll be peaceful and happy. It's so simple but it's so difficult to put into practice.

John Roche; The phrase after careful examination. Does that mean that one examines all that happens first.

S: I assume that it just means that one sees the way that that sort of process occurs. I assume that that is what it means.

John Roche; It seems to be encouraging one to examine that, to give it careful examination.

S: Maybe what you have to examine as I said is just the way in Which one wavers towards appearances and so subsequently delusions arise. You have to sort of understand, you have to carefully examine the process of the reactive mind and the process by which discrimination arises, acceptance and rejection arise and then to just not allow them to take place.

Alright next few lines.

John Roche; "Even when you do not meditate, for personal growth you need to exercise effort.

If you do so without accomplishing~ anything thereby,

know that at all times Realization is your own true nature, and from within act for the benefit of all beings!"

S: Even when you do not meditate for personal growth you need to exercise effort. It's as though Padmasambhava' 5 been talking about meditation mainly and then he is saying as it were don't think that your spiritual practice should be confined just to those occasions when you actually sit and meditate. Even when you do noL meditate,for personal growth you need to exercise effort. It's not the willed effort that's being referred to here of course. So don't think that your effort to evolve, your effort to achieve personal growth, can be limited or confined to set occasions and practices. It literally is a full time thing. I had a bit of an example of this which I've already related to a few friends because it rather amused me. A few days ago I had to go down to London to a funeral of an aged relative of mine and I attended the funeral Service which was held at a Pentacostal church. So I was quite interested to listen to what was going on. So there was a woman minister, a quite pleasant well meaning woman who gave a little talk and anyway she spoke at length about this deceased relative of mine and described what a wonderful christian he'd been and all that. Anyway towards the end she expressed a firm conviction that they all, that is to say members of the congregation, herself and others, would meet him in heaven and theywd all be there happily together. Anyway service over we went back to the house with some of the relations and some of the church people including this woman minister for tea and sandwiches. So over the tea and sandwiches she said, 'Ah well old Jack's gone. We won~t be seein9 him again!' (Laughter) Her mind was operating on two completely different levels or rather in two different ways completely. In church well yes officially she believed in life after death and we were all going to meet in heaven, ~ut out of church and over the tea and sandwiches she didn't believe that at all. So her belief wasn't sort of carried over into everyday life. Her belief and presumably her practice were ~ort of compartmentalised.

So it is just this that we must not do. We must not confine our religious practice or religious attitudes to set occasions, set places, usually sacred or consecrated places, they must pervade everywhere, otherwise you see the spiritual life just becomes something that we do within a very sort of narrow area. It doesn't really affect life as a whole, which means we don't take it seriously. This is why the great Danish thinker and theologian Kirkegaard said that the whole of modern christianity is based the assumption that god is a fool (Laughter) because the priest or the minister gets up into the pulpit and advises people to act in a certain way which he knows that they have no intention whatever of acting in, and they know that he knows (Laughter)

that they've no intention of acting in this sort of way but they go through this sort of performance every Sunday in church and they think that god is not deceived! (Laughter), that god is a fool! The minister says and what does Christ say, turn the other cheek my brethren, forgive even unto the seventy seventh time. They've no intention of doing anything of the sort in their ordinary everyday life. If someone slaps him on the cheek they'll jolly well sock him on the jaw! (Laughter) They know that and he knows that they're not going to take what he says seriously and they know that even though he's telling them all this he knows that they're not taking it seriously and they all believe that god accepts what they are doing as their sincere practice of christianity. So they think that god is a fool. So you see what happens.

You make this sort of division, you set up this sort of compartment, this sort of compartmentalisation. So it, S in this sense that you can use the word ritual in the approbrious sense. Your religious or spiritual life just becomes a sort of ritual which you don't take very seriously. You do it just for good luck or to ward off some sort of harm or danger. You're not sure which. It's a sort of investment of some kind. It's something you might as well do just to be on the safe side. It's not much more than that.

John Roche; Hedging your bets.

S: Hedging your bets, yes. It can't do any harm. This is often what people say about religion or about going to church. It can't do any harm but actually it does quite a lot of harm to have this sort of attitude.

So even when you do not meditate for personal growth you need to exercise effort. Meditation is a valid spiritual exercise clearly, but don't think that your personal growth should be confined to those times when you meditate. Again I remember an interesting story. Some friends of mine went to Japan some time ago and they went on these Zen sesshins and they were quite surprised to discover that at the end of the week long or ten day sesshin the masters, the Zen masters, who'd been taking it all had a spree and all got drunk and apparently this was the thing they normally did at the end of a sesshin. They had quite a wild party and they all got drunk. It was almost sort of traditional. So I thought about this, why was that. Why did they need to drink and to get drunk and by that time it was accepted as part of tradition and so everybody just participated and even ordinary r'onks just got a bit tipsy but the Zen masters got really drunk.

So I thought about this and I came to the conclusion Zen after all is a meditation tradition, if there's no meditation there's nothing, you put all your money on meditation so to speak so that's what you've got to do. So they'd inherited this tradition of sesshins and lots of meditation, twenty hours a day maybe, so OK they belong to that tradition, that's their livelihood almost so two or three times a year they've just got to go through it whether they like it or not so they do it. They meditate twenty hours a day maybe for ten days but their hearts aren't really in

it. So at the end of the ten days there's the big reaction, and by practice they know they can just about manage from time to time these intensive sesshins if at the end they're permitted really to let themselves go. So they do it by getting a bit drunk. This seems to me to be what happens. So what does this mean? The ten day sesshin has become a sort of ritual. Even though yes, they are doing it in a way, but they're doing it perhaps more because it's part of the tradition to do it than because they really want to do it and because their hearts are in it, and therefore they feel

the need of indulging in that strong reaction against it so to speak afterwards. I think we always have to beware of this, that we do something good and as a reward for doing something good we allow ourselves to do something bad. Oh I've been a really good boy this week, I've meditated every day and I've helped out with the Centre I think I can go to a party tonight. Doing something unskilful is your reward for doing something skilful. It seems absurd, it seems crazy doesn't it but this is what happens. Which means to some extent your heart wasn't completely in what you were doing, at least you were to some extent external to it. It was something that you had to do in a way, something imposed upon you so you were a good boy and you did it and now you're claiming your reward. Again it's a bit like some people with regard to ordination. I have been so regular, I've attended the mitra study group every week without fail, I've helped out at so many jumble sales and now it's due to me - ordination. The reward so to speak. Maybe you didn't want to go to the mitra study group, you didn't want to help out with those jumble sales but that was the price to be paid.

This is, to change the subject slightly, one of the things they say in connection with Catholic priests and their observance of celibacy. One of the things that has been said by Catholic priests is that a lot of priests do not want to be celibate but they want to be priests, either because they have some genuine religious feeling or because they want that sort of position in society so that is the price they have to pay, celibacy is the price they have to pay. They pay it but they pay it rather unwillingly.

So there's not much value from a spiritual point of view, in their observance of celibacy. Their heart isn't in it. It's just the price they pay for that sort of vocation, that sort of position in society. They'd rather not pay it but the church insists, society insists, Catholic society insists, therefore they do. They go along with it.

So so much of conventional religious life is of this kind. I've done my bit so now I can forget all about it. At it's most paradoxical you're rewarding yourself for having done so much to evolve by letting yourself backslide. It's not so to speak that you just backslide because you can't help it but you almost deliberately allow yourself a bit of backsliding just because you have made so much progress. This really seems ridiculous doesn't it. So it really means that if you go for refuge - the queen has already been advised to do that right at the beginning practically, then you can never have a holiday from an effort to grow, an effort to evolve. It may not be in this way but it should be in that way. You may not be actually meditating but that doesn't mean you're exempt from all efforts to evolve.

Whatever you're doing not in too self-conscious a way of course, you just have to ask yourself well what bearing does this have in one way or another, directly or indirectly on my personal growth and the growth of those with whom I'm associated. Otherwise you become a bit like some of those Zen people, you do your meditation so I've done my bit so for the rest of the day you maybe do pretty much as you like so that isn't good enough. That doesn't work. Whatever you gain during the meditation you immediately throw away in the remainder of the day. Perhaps you throw it away several times and then when you sit to meditate again you wonder why you can't get on with it very well. Because you're not starting from where you left off, far from it.

John Roche; It also feels like the importance of putting yourself and your heart into things like jumble sales whatever. There's no

point in doing it unless you are really into it.

S : I suppose the only point is objectively that it needs to be done but so far as you are concerned there's probably very little benefit indeed. This is something that I do think is very important, that one should put oneself into whatever one does wholeheartedly. This is why sometimes it's said it's easier for a great sinner to become a saint than an ordinary person because the great sinner at least throws himself into whatever he does completely. That's why he's a great sinner, not just a (Laughter) backslider. So when he does change his direction he continues really to put himself into it. But with most people they're all sort of dull grey. They're neither very good or very bad. They couldn't be either very good or very bad. So wholeheartedness is very important and this is I think what the third fetter is really all about, the (silapataparamasa), It doesn't mean just not engaging in rights and ceremonies which is the usual translation, but sort of not thoroughly putting oneself into anything so that you're just externally mechanically going through the motions under the impression that that is going to help you without being totally involved. There's a division, there's a split in you. Part of you is doing that, part of you is not, part of you is meditating, part of you is not, part of you is with somebody, part of you is not, part of you goes for refuge, part of you does not. That's no good at all really but very often you have to start off like that and then work on it. So there's very few things we do wholeheartedly. If you just look back say over the last few days or weeks or months, you might find it very difficult to think of anything that you've done completely wholeheartedly. You've put yourself into one hundred percent and were really glad to do so.

In modern life this seems to be becoming more and more rare. Even the possibility of a completely wholehearted involvement with anything. very often because there are so many things to do and so many things to think about that one thing just distracts you from another and while you're doing one particular thing you're aware of something else needing to be done. There are lots of things like this so it becomes really difficult to put yourself into just one thing completely wholeheartedly forgetting everything else. This is more possible in India despite all their sort of noise and confusion. I was quite impressed actually on the occasion of all the three retreats I attended in India to get to the retreat place, to organise it, to get the vehicles and the transport and all the people and the pots and the pans and the food and pick up people from here and pick them up from there there was such a confusion and Lokamitra rushing around, you can just imagine it! But we got there and everything was unloaded and the shrine was set up and after about an hour ready to start and they got right into the retreat just like that. There was no sort of getting settled in, they were right there as soon as they sat in that shrine for their first meditation the retreat was right away. There wasn't a tremor, wasn't a murmur, right into their meditation. So the Indian conditions seem to favour that more. Things are more chaotic but it also means you can sort of forget about them more easily just because they are less organised. The more organised things are the more they can get at you and the more easily they can get at you and get hold of you.

Sona;Telephones.

S: Yes right. If things are more chaotic it's more difficult

for those things to sort of catch hold of you. So I was quite impressed by the way they got into the retreat so quickly and it

really contrasted with the confusion which prevailed such a short time before. So no time was wasted on the retreat itself none whatever. They'd got onto a good start and they'd kept it up without any difficulty right till the end. I think also it's very frustrating for a lot of people when they never succeed in finding in their lives anything that they can really wholeheartedly with complete conviction put themselves into, or throw themselves into.

I mean there are things th~t they throw themselves into for a bit but then they start losing interest and as they get older they find that there are fewer and fewer things, maybe nothing at all that they can put themselves into in that sort of way even temporarily. They just don't find anything very much in things in that sort of way. When they were young they so much enjoyed a trip to the seaside maybe but when they get a bit older it's nothing, just go and look at the sea, walk up and down the beach and that's it. But when you are a child it's a wonderful experience and you can be so into it and the day seems so enjoyable and so long but as you get older you lose that and if you don't find anything to take the place of that then life can become quite dull and boring and a bit of a drag almost. Or again when you're young and you start reading literature, reading poetry you can get really into it but as you get older that's more difficult. So again it needs to be replaced by something of a greater capacity for your commitment, a greater capacity to receive a wholehearted commitment from a mature or a relatively mature person but you may not find anything. So I think a ~ot of people are in this state, in the position of not having anything that they can really live for in any deep and genuine way, so they just pass the time. They are mainly concerned just wit~ getting through the day and ensuring that the time doesn't pass too slowly which seems really pitiable.

Sthiramati; people are quite often fascinated by others who do seem to have an idea.

S: Yes this is natural.

Brian Duff; Energy seems to attract people incredibly.

S: Oh yes. There's nothing like energy for attracting energy. The bible even seems to quote it once in a way - 'to him that hath will be given.' The more energy you've got, the more you'll get and the more people will -'come to you. The bigger and better an~d more energetic your centre the more people will come. They won't go to a little dull unsuccessful centre if there is such but these people, no , they'll go to the centre that doesn't need people. Naturally. Why not. They want to satisfy their need, not your need.

Anyway let's carry on.

"If you do so without accomplishing anything thereby,
know that at all times Realization is your own nature, and from within act for the benefit of all beings.11

So even when you do so without accomplishing anything thereby. Do what? Even when you exercise effort for personal growth without accomplishing anything thereby never mind, - know that at all times realisation is your own nature and from within act for the benefit of all beings. I mean very often people meditate, they do this and they do that and then what do they say? No results. I don't achieve anything - nothing is happening.

So what is Padmasambhava saying as it were? He says when this happens, that you don't seem to be achieving anything, you don't

seem to be realising anything, well just reflect never mind, realisation is my true nature! ~Laughter) At some deeper level well I am realised so if I don't have much success what does it really matter! (Laughter) But there's also a suggestion that you are perhaps a bit-too achievement oriented. Your usual way of thinking about things¹ your ordinary mind, is coming in here and that's why you think in terms succeeding, not succeeding, accomplishing, not accomplishing. So as an antidote to that when you do feel a bit disappointed, you haven't realised anything, well just reflect well never mind - realisation is my true nature. In a sense I don't need to realise anything. It's all there all the time anyway even if I haven't succeeded in really establishing contact with that. Know that at all times realisation is your own nature and from within act for the benefit of all beings.

There's a sort of contrast there. Don't think so much about your own development. It's bound up with the development of other people. You can't really separate yourself. You need to develop for the sake of your own personal growth qualities which can be developed only through association with other people. How can you develop patience really without associating with other people even though patience is a quality you need for your personal growth.

So don't think too much in terms of your own personal realisation otherwise you'll feel very disappointed when you don't make progress or maybe overjoyed when you think you have, going to the other extreme. Just reflect that deep down you are realised and just act spontaneously for the benefit of others. Don't think too much about your own benefit, even about your own spiritual progress because In any case your growth and your development is bound up with that of others. Don't take yourself too seriously.. If you have a bad meditation it isn't the end of the world.

An over preoccupation with one's own spiritual progress in a narrow sense is sort of self defeating. It's like the man who's interested in physical culture and sort of body building and all that sort of thing who spends more time measuring his muscles and Weighing himself than actually doing any exercises so he doesn't actually get very far. Or again you might say it's a bit like the gardener who plants a flower that doesn't seem to be growing very quickly so he keeps pulling it up by the roots and looking at the roots to see how he's getting on. (Laughter) Too much introspection can have that sort of effect and too much sort of measuring of oneself against some sort of spiritual yardstick to see how much progress you've made, it may be self defeating.

So know that at all times realisation is your own true nature and from within act for the benefit of all beings!

"Unceasingly do Dharma actions;
when you purify yourself of your faults, Realisation will naturally come from within.¹¹

So it's not so much that realisation is something that you achieve. Well purify yourself of your faults. Don't bother too much about which stage of spiritual progress you've achieved. If you purify yourself of your faults then realisation naturally manifests itself. Alright next few verses.

"Seal your virtuous action with prayers and a dedication for the purpose of all beings.
Without such prayers and dedications, no means exists."

S: This is quite important. What are the means referred to ~e~e?

Without such prayers and dedication no means exists.

Sthiramati; Means to enlightenment.

S: Means to enlightenment but enlightenment in what sense? Brian Duff; For the sake of all sentient beings.

S: For the sake of all sentient beings, that is to say enlightenment in the Mahayana sense or Buddhahood. So seal your virtuous actions with prayers and a dedication for the purpose of all beings. Supposing you perform some virtuous action, some punyakarma, then from the Mahayana point of view one should aspire or wish that that particular action may (redound) to the benefit of all living beings. In other words you don't appropriate that good action just

for your own exclusive use, that it may help you in your personal development, it may help you get to nirvana, no you dedicate it so to speak to the cause of universal enlightenment. And in this way it becomes a means to your enlightenment as a Buddha for the sake of all. In other words whenever you do any good action or do any good deed or do anything that contributes to your own growth you should see it within a wider context, not only see it but sort of want to see it within the wider context of contributing to the spiritual development of all and then paradoxically because you are concerned about the development of all that will have a positive effect upon your personal, your individual development. Otherwise your attempts to develop individually from a wider point of view may be self defeating. You're so occupied with your own spiritual development that you can become guilty of a sort of spiritual selfishness and selfishness in any form will hold you back from any kind of enlightenment more quickly than anything else.

You can meet people who are so concerned about their own development or their own leading of a religious life they become quite indifferent and callous towards other people. So that isn't very helpful even where oneself is concerned.

Therefore seal your virtuous action. Taking this word seal literally what does that suggest, when you seal something? when you seal a document or seal a letter, what does that suggest, what does that make it, that letter or that document?

Brian Duff; Sort of making it complete.

S: Complete. A bit more than complete.

Sona; Irreversible.

S: Irreversible. Not quite that. Genuine. If something is sealed it's completely genuine, authentic. So in that way seal your virtuous actions with prayers and a dedication for the purpose of all beings. It's that sealing with that prayer and dedication which makes them genuine from the Mahayana or from the higher spiritual point of view. Without that seal they're not really worth very much. Seal them with that prayer and dedication. For without such prayers and dedications no means exists.

Then the next line is ;

"Not falling into the errors of excitement or passivity, be filled with confidence."

Excitement and passivity. These are the two extremes so far as meditators are concerned in particular but they apply to

the spiritual life, even human life generally. On the one hand they

is excitement, hurry and flurry, worry, anxiety, restlessness.

On the other there is dullness, sloth, torpor, passivity and so on. These are the two extremes. Some people tend more to one some more to the other. If you tend more to the first e-xtreme when you sit and try to meditate you'll be distracted by all sort of thoughts. You'll be very restless. If you tend more to the other extreme you'll be dull and a bit torpid and find it difficult to arouse your energy. The text says not falling into the errors of excitement or passivity be filled with confidence which suggests that confidence represents a sort of middle way. The energy is there but IL is not a restless energy, it's calm, it's steady. But because it's calm and because it's steady it doesn't mean that it's passive or dull or inert or torpid, so confidence or faith is seen here as a sort of middle way between excitement on the one hand and passivity on the other. You must be receptive but that doesn't mean you should be passive. You should be full of vigour but that doesn't mean you should be excited.

Very often people just go from one extreme to the other don't they. They're either sort of carried away with excitement or they become dull and bored but you should have confidence, faith, which is constant, which operates, which functions all the time. That's the middle way.

John Roche; It's possible even to motivate oneself by trying to generate an excitement for one's practice or a calming down for one's practice. It seems to be dispelling that kind of approach. Be confident.

S: And sometimes it is said that those, as regards meditators, those who have a natural tendency towards restlessness should meditate in the dark and those who have a natural tendency towards passivity should meditate where there is bright light. Light is stimulating whereas darkness is calming, it reduces mental activity. There are fewer things for you to look at and think about anyway. So if your mind is very restless meditate in the dark, if it's very dull and torpid meditate with the light on.

Sona; Maybe that's why some people prefer (Unclear....)

S. If you're full of confidence and faith you can meditate happily at any time.

Alright read the rest then

Sona; "Here in few words of preparation, enactment and fulfillment. the Doctrines deepest reaches of this life as of the life to come."

Thus (flid he S eak. And Queen Nan Chun was led to salvation.

S: So here in few words of great importance, because this is what the queen has asked for, preparation, enactment and fulfillment. These are the three stages into which Tibetans divide all these sadhana texts or spiritual practices. There's a preparation, then there's the middle portion and then there's the conclusion. So here it's rendered as preparation, enactment and fulfillment.

The preparation is of course the three things, the paying urgent attention to impermanence, strongly turning the mind towards going for refuge and directing prayers to the lamas. These are the preliminaries. Then all the rest is the enactment down to seal your virtuous actions with prayers and the dedication for the purpose of all beings. That is the fulfillment.

Dhammamati; Is this something like foundation, path and goal?

S: It is quite like that, yes. It's not quite the same but it is 7imilar.

So thus did he speak and queen Ngang Chung was led to salvation. The word salvation probably is moksha in sanskrit, emancipation or liberation or freedom.

Anyway just look back over what we've done this afternoon. We won't start any other section today.

Dhammamati; Where it says during the period of meditation there is not anything would it be better if that was separated as any-thin~~ rather than anything.

S: Yes right yes. It's not any discriminated thing.

Just to come back for a moment to this prayers and dedication. The Mahayana generally attaches great importance to this. This is supposed to conclude any kind of spiritual practice. That's why it comes at the end of the sevenfold puja you remember, You shouldn't so to speak replace worldly selfishness by pseudo religious or pseudo spiritual selfishness. Not that of course, supposing you are meditating and not holding down an ordinary job, you're just being selfish, no, not that because at the end of your meditation you dedicate it to the cause of the enlightenment of all,

Dhammamati; So it shows the wholesome motivation to your virtuous action. To people outside the action would appear the same but if you didn't sort of dedicate it to the purpose of all beings then there would be no sort of seeing that it was for the benefit of other beings. It wasn't just purely selfish.

S: Right. Because other people may not be able to see, may not be able to appreciate your dedication, they may just see whatever you're doing as purely selfish or self indulgent. So it's not possible to make them understand that it isn't so unless they share one's outlook to some extent.

We didn't have very much to say about unceasingly do dharma actions. Padmasambhava says unceasingly do dharma actions. Presumably that is to be taken quite literally. Not once in a while with big gaps in between. But dharma action. It doesn't mean necessarily a specific type of action. More importance is attached to the spirit in which you do something, even though what you do is also objectively speaking ~uite important. So you never have a holiday. Well you transcend the distinction between working and play. You wouldn't want to do anything rather than what you are doing.

Dhammamati; Weekends. I was thinking of the whole distinction between weekends and working.

S: Yes and the Friday night and Saturday night or Sunday night syndrome. It still seems to be at work here and there.

Dhammamati; Sometimes that can be a problem if you are actually running a business that depends on the outside world for income. Like running a shop.

S: Right. You have to close on Sunday. The law requires you to close on Sunday anyway.

Dhammamati; So that you're sort of gearing yourself to that, even though really you know that Sunday's no different to any other day.

S: It's the Sunday trading law system of course.

Yes. Just a quick association of ideas. I came across quite

a strange concept, at least it was strange to me reading the Newsletter reporting (looks at Newsletter) "ICOM Co operatives conference¹¹. You've all~ad this report I'm sure.

(Reads) "There was some contentious debate on the issue of real wages. The left wing presses~~generally felt that the kind of wage structure we use in the PLC (Pure Land Co-op) whereby we receive the basic support amount of £19.40 per week thus remaining just below the taxable threshold constitute self-exploitation." (Laughter) What an abstract artificial idea!! Self exploitation. It really seemed typical of this sort of academic pseudo-liberal thought. This concept of self exploitation. "It was pointed out that this voluntary poverty in fact excluded those involved from eligibility to various sources of outside funding. The government logic here is that a business that provides average to high wages is more economically viable and hence more deserving of capital support than that which does not. " Well that really is beside the point. The whole idea of the possibility of self exploitation should have been challenged. Do you see what I mean? So perhaps the Bodhisattva is guilty of self exploitation.

Brian Duff: The two words are contradictory.

S: It's really interesting to see how a purely artificial concept is created and then life so to speak is geared to that. Everybody agrees that exploitation is very undesirable, exploitation is a dirty word. It's a word which occupies a prominent place in the left wing vocabulary. It's one of the worst things you can possibly be guilty of. But self exploitation! It suggests something like self (Unclear). If you give anything away or you do something for other people, you only draw what you actually need you're guilty of self exploitation and so your good deed is not really a good deed at all. It's a bad deed. But why do you think they see things in this way? Why do they think of working as we work in the co-ops and receiving the sort of wages that we receive, is self exploitation?

John Wakeman; It's just a form of rationalisation actually.

S: Why the need to rationalise?

John Roche; It's like the protective nature of money and that gets identified with protection so if you give people enough money that means you're letting them be safe. Once that safety valve is dropped away there's no yardstick to be protected by.

Dhammami; They see things in terms of what you can get rather than what you can give. All business is geared around taking, making something, there's no actual giving.

S: And if you're employed you're not giving your services, you're taking wages. The emphasis is on that.

Brian Duff; It's similar to the point Schumaker makes in his book - the whole sort of economic structure of the world at the moment is geared totally to the production - output as it were in terms of money rather than what's actually going in.

Dhammami; I think people have deluded themselves that the reason they work is for money. That seems to be a really common thing, that people work for money and that isn't the reason that people work. Not at all.

Roger Jones; But on the more positive side as far as they're concerned it is quite clear that when we say we're talking about what the Friends

do and the Pure Land Co-op do they are really rather small and quite manageable and people are quite dedicated and do things within the co-op because they're very happy to do them. They come in contact with spiritual etc., etc., etc. As things actually get bigger as they have done in the world outside there is a feeling that if you start off on the wrong foot rather like having celibacy in the Priesthood, it could get to a stage where people could ~ quite genuinely exploited. Actually exploited by having co ops which are paying rather low wages.

S: How would that be possible because in the co op the workers are the management? Then you come back to exploiting yourselves i.e. to self exploitation. The same artificial idea.

Sona; I get the impression actually that most people that run co ops actually know that the workers don't really run the co ops. That the running of the co op is in the hands really of just a few people.

S: They don't draw what they just need. They draw the wages that they expect compared with the wages that people are getting in other sort of set ups. In other words they don't really believe in the co op system at all.

Sona; They don't really believe in socialism.

S: They're going through the motions of co operative society, yes socialism.

Sona; It's almost in a co op you actually see that people aren't equal.

S: Well one begins to suspect that in a co op people aren't free. Sthiramati; Some people also fear ideas.

S: Well in a way if certain people are guilty of what is regarded as self exploitation in a way it's a reflection on those who don't practice self exploitation. It sort of shows them out doesn't it. That they're taking more than they really need etc., etc.

Sona; It must be quite a blow to people who are involved in ICOM and are not in the Friends actually to see that people don't need as much as they (thought they did). It smashes their ideals.

S: But did you notice for instance in Kalimpong according to Padmavajra's letter in Shabda, Dharmo Rimpoche is only able to pay his teachers - I think it was 175 rupees a month. Do you realise how much that is? There's at present seventeen rupees to the pound so how much would that be?

Roger Jones; Ten pounds.

S: Ten pounds a month. Because the cost of living isn't quite what it is here in England but it isn't all that much lower. It's terrible actually. So no wonder he can't keep his teachers and he wants to pay them ten times as much.

John Roche; Why can't he?

S: He hasn't got the money.

Dharmamati; This has got nothing really to do with it but there used

to be a lot of restrictions on currency going into India. Is that still the same?. There used to be something about bringing in foreign currency.

S: I think India welcomes foreign currency. It's usually getting U out of the country of origin rather than into the other country. Some countries of course don't allow their own currencies to be exported. India doesn't for instance.. You cannot take Indian currency out of India but if you have any problem with transferring a large amount from England to India then just consult Subhuti. (Laughter).

Anyway any final point or question on what we've done today? You could say just by way of connecting what we've said at

the beginning of the day and what we've just been talking about now that Padmasambhava as the transformer and transmuter of these basic promordial rather turbulent energy you could say that so far as the external world is concerned one of these is money and you must be able to make it work for you. You must be able to use it, not just give it up or run away from it or be afraid of it. It's quite a challenge in a way.

John Roche; Could you say a bit more. I'm not quite with you on that.

S: A lot of spiritual people. Perhaps we could even say pseudospiritual people are afraid of money. They think there's something very unspiritual about money and if you're a spiritually minded person you shouldn't want anything to do with it. you shouldn't have anything to do with things like businesses. I think Subhuti and Manjudevajra and Nagabodhi encountered a little bit of this sort of attitude at the European Buddhist Congress or whatever it was that they attended. There was a bit of a stir when our businesses were mentioned and it was rather as though somebody had farted or something of that sort. (Laughter) At a Buddhist gathering to mention businesses!! Do you see what I mean. Because money and businesses are dirty unspiritual things.

John Roche; (How does that tie in with Padmasambhava transforming??)

S: Part of the transforming process is transforming money. Getting U out of the hands of these capitalists etc., etc., and using it. Not regarding it as an enemy to be avoided. It's an enemy perhaps in the way it functions at present. But to get your hands on it and use it and not be taken Over by it. It is one of the demons of the modern world. Demon gold.

viramati; The money itself is neutral. it's how you use it. The energy is neutral and you use it in a positive way so you can use the money in a positive way.

S: But it does represent a tremendous potentiality. I really shocked someone some years ago by saying that if someone offered me a million pounds I'd unhesitatingly accept it. I knew exactly what to do with it. (Laughter) They were quite shocked. They thought the proper reaction would be to say get thee behind me Satan and temptation and all that. Then it would be wine, women and song, you know (Laughter). I assure you it wasn't that that I had in mind! (Laughter)

Roger Jones; But it does demand a lot of skill using it.

S: Yes and getting your hands on the stuff 1! (Laughter) even before you can use it, just laying your hands on it!

Roger Jones: Which is a great co~ollary with padmasambhava. Stir it

up and then it does require a lot of skill.

S: And you notice there are people who are afraid of money. I came across an example of this -I won't give full details but I came across an example of this very recently. Someone seemed to be really scared of being involved in anything of a remotely financial nature. Actually he was quite an old man but he was quite scared and just wouldn't have anything to do with it, or be seen to be associated with it in any way. The idea of money was scary. Or any sort of financial transaction used to throw him completely out of his depth it seems. As though it would drag him in and he'd be held up in court or declared bankrupt or something of that sort or he'd be arrested. He was a quite irrational sort of (man) and he was a man who admittedly hadn't had much money passing through his hands in the course of his life.

There are others who feel completely at home with it. Give them a wad of £20 000 and he'll just stuff it in a pocket and forget all about it. They don't bother in the least. Handling it and spending it. They just take it in their stride. It's nothing at all to them but others are really quite worried even like a few quid in a box. Some people are very worried of course if they don't have any money, if they don't have a few pounds in their pocket they feel uneasy. They don't feel they can go anywhere or do anything. They can hardly go for a walk. Some people put money in their pocket before going out for a walk, just in case. Suppose you got knocked down and you were taken into hospital and you didn't have any money in your pocket, well what will you do?!

Anyway it's tea time. We'd better wind up.

Alright then let's start reading round. Page 690.

~ellMcEwan; "Then to the Crystal Grotto of Yarlung,
°The young Himalayan woman Mangala the dog keeper,
the Dakini of Jo ousness, and Yeshe Tso al invited the Guru, and surrounded him with one hundred ganacakras."

S: So in a way you've got on a smaller scale or reduced scale Thather the same kind of scene that you had at the beginning when the queen invites padmasambhava. Here it's the young Himalayan woman Mangala the dogkeeper, the Dakini of ~oyousness and Yeshe Tsogyal, one of the twenty five principal disciples . YesheTsogyal who according to tradition was responsible for recording the life and liberation of padmasambhava. So they invite the Guru and they surround him with one hundred ganachakras which means something like circular offerings, that's the translation that's given in an appendix at the end. It's a special kind of tantric offering. But you can see that the general significance is the same. They invite him and they make offerings and their attitude towards him is reverencial.

So then what do they say.

Sona; "When the Master has gone away to the Land of the Ogres, what are we to do?"

S: Who are these Ogres? The Tibetan word corresponds to the Sanskrit raksasa. Raksasas are sort of canibal demons so according to the biographies having spent quite a number of years in Tibet this biography says a hundred and eleven years. Others give various other estimates. Modern scholars are inclined to think that Padmasambhava spent eighteen months in Tibet but quite a lot can be done in eighteen months and no doubt somebody like Padmasambhava could do in eighteen months more than other people could do in a

hundred and eleven years. But whether he spent eighteen months there or whether he spent a hundred and eleven years there he produced an extraordinary effect which continues right down to the present time and then he left Tibet and according to the biography he went to the Land of the Raksasas where he still is. Now what do you think is meant by these Raksasas, these are Indian, even Hindu if you like mythological figures. They're a kind of asura in a way. They're the most difficult and dangerous type of asura, the sort of cannibal demons. The females are supposed to be particularly dangerous. They're very very beautiful and (~ seductive in appearance but in the end they eat you. just like the widow spider eats her mate. So the Raksasas are the cannibal demons. So how could you perhaps look at them if you don't take that quite literally as mythological figures. When you bear in mind Padmasambhava's overall function. His bringing the gods and demons of Tibet under control,

Dhammamati; Could these be primitive man or uncivilised.

S: You could look at it like that but the Tibetans of course at that time were uncivilised. Sometimes they are called metaphorically speaking Raksasas. But couldn't you look at it in a more symbolical sort of way do you think.

_____ Going to spread the dharma elsewhere.

S: Going to spread the dharma elsewhere. Yes the country of the Raksasas is located very vaguely somewhere in the south. Sometimes the country of the Raksasas is identified with Ceylon, though whether it's the present island of Ceylon or somewhere else some accounts seem to speak of another sort of area, another sort of island even off the South West coast of India and that's where the Lankavatara sutra was taught you may remember. There's a mountain Mount Malaya rising out of the ocean in the land of the raksasas in that sort of region.

But how could you look at the raksasas perhaps?

Viramati; Greater primaevial powers.

S: Yes greater primaevial powers of some kind, rather negative destructive dangerous sort of aspect. So when Padmasambhava goes to the land of the Raksasas it's as though Padmasambhava represents a sort of force or sort of power himself which when it's finished it's work on the human plane so to speak continues working, sort of burrowing so to speak elsewhere on some other plane, some other level. It seems a little bit like that. Because if you take it quite literally well it takes a little bit of swallowing doesn't it and many of the representations of Padmasambhava in Tibetan art depict him seated in or on the copper coloured mountain in the land of the Raksasas. So this is a quite sort of common sort of theme. Padmasambhava in the land of the Raksasas sitting on the copper coloured mountain teaching and converting the Raksasas. Perhaps we could say transforming these very primordial even destructive forces which are working at that particular level.

So therefore the two ladies ask when the master has gone away to the land of the Ogres, the Raksasas what are we to do? You've been spending time in Tibet, you've been teaching us, you've been spreading the dharma. We've been depending upon you. We have received guidance from you, instructions from you, inspiration from you. So when you have gone to the land of the Raksasas what are we to do? This is their question.

So what does the Guru say.

John Wakeman; "Thus did the Guru answer, "In this way From within transcend the desires of body, speech and mind!"

S: Well what do you think is meant by this. What about this expression transcend the desires of body, speech and mind. Doesn't that seem a little strange, that particular phrase? Can you have desires of body, speech and mind? I thought desires were only of the mind. What is the significance of desires of the body speech and mind?

viramati; You can curb those desires more on the outward level with the body and the speech.

S: There are desires which find expression in terms of action, others which find expression in terms of speech and others which remain within or even are entirely satisfied within the mind itself.

So from within and this applies apparently equally to all three kinds of desires, from within transcend the desires of body, speech and mind. I don't know how literally we should take it, this being a translation of a translation but the word used is transcend so what does that suggest? Transcending desires.

Sona; It suggests to me sort of moving out or growing out of the kamaloka into higher lokas.

S: The language which is used is not the language of control or repression. This is one of the points that Subhuti made last night. He spoke in terms of transformation and sublimation. Here the word used is transcend. Though again one must be a little careful. It isn't as though one transcends the desires in the sense that you are on some higher level and the desires are down there below somewhere. Do you see what I mean? You transcend the desires in a sense but also you raise the desires up to the level where you now are in a refined and sublimated form. You leave behind the desires as desires but you take the energy that was embodied in those desires with you. That you incorporate.

So from within transcend the desires of body, speech and mind. Body speech and mind being of course the well known triad. How literally do you think body, speech and mind can be taken? Guenther goes into this quite a bit doesn't he especially with regard to the body. Body is not so much the physical body of flesh and blood and so on. It's more like your present existential reality. Concretely considered and your mind is your overall attitude towards things and speech is not just vocalisation but the principle of communication.

Alright carry on then.

Dhammamati; "Teachers who do not gladden others and who are morose themselves - give them up!"

S: Well that's interesting isn't it. Why especially this particular criterion. Teachers who do not gladden others and who are morose themselves, give them up. Why pick on those unfortunate teachers. Why not say teachers who are ignorant or teachers who are not learned or teachers who are selfish. Why teachers who do not gladden others and who are morose themselves, give them up. Why that?

John Wakeman; I imagine even if a teacher is quite ignorant in some ways that if he gladdens others he'll be putting something over.

Viramati~ No inspiration.

S: No inspiration. I think that is the important factor. Wo inspiration means no energy So why are inspiration and energy d'you think so important?

Sthiramati; To actually achieve those things.

S : To actually achieve, yes. Or even before that It is difficult to attract people without inspiration and energy. In a sense Padmasambhava' S advice is unnecessary in a sense because you'll soon drop away from it or fall away from those who don't gladden you, who don't give you any energy and inspiration or inspiration and energy unless you really are neurotic and maybe a bit masochistic or something like that. You do find people being attracted to very dull uninspiring teachers for all sorts of strange reasons but a healthy potential disciple would not be. So this is very important for all those who are in any way concerned with the running of centres isn't it. The most important thing that you can do in respect of those who come along is to gladden them, to make them happy or to inspire them or to help- them feel well there's some energy around to spark off their energy.

I moan you might have given them a very good and sound and correct explanation about the four noble truths but it might have depressed them, they might not come again. So there might not have been anything wrong with your Buddhism but there wasn't very much right with you and it's in the end you that count. Not the words that you say or your correct exposition of the doctrine or anything of that sort so much. The overall impression that you make and the most important thing because even when you just greet a newcomer and just give him some elementary information about the centre or about the dharma, just for those few moments you are as it were in the position of a teacher because you're the one who knows in relation to that particular person who does not know those simple things. So it's very very important and in~ense the lower the level and the more of a beginner the newcomer is the more important it is that you should gladden him, make him happy, give him a bit of inspiration and send him away happily. His overall impression should be well that was a nice happy sort of place, that was a lively lot of people. There was a good atmosphere there. That's the important thing, not that he's actually learned so much about Buddhism specifically but that he feels drawn to return because the general feel of the place is so positive and happy and inspiring.

I think the three Order members who went to that conference in Europe can tell you quite a lot about Buddhist meetings that are not very inspiring or at least Buddhist individuals who are not very inspiring but this is really important. So teachers who do not gladden others and who are morose themselves, give them up, because the starting point is not there, certainly not for the beginner. When you're quite advanced and you have enough positivity of your own and you're quite solidly established in the dharma yes you might choose to go and study with a particular teacher who is even morose because he happens to know perhaps a particular text quite well and you're interested in studying that text, but you know that you won't be able to rely upon him for much in the way of inspiration. you just go to him for that particular purpose.

Sona; Just going back to that sentence before-from within transcend the desires of body speech and mind. Do you think he could be giving actual advice to take up meditation without actually saying so?

S: In a way it amounts to that because the question arises how do you transcend. You don't just transcond, you don't just do it on

the spot. presumably it would include or involve some kind of meditation practice. It would be very surprising if it didn't.

But it doesn't specifically mention that.

Sona; He doesn't seem to mention it anywhere else in the rest.

S: But anyway, even though Padmasambhava says teachers who do not gladden others and who are morose themselves, give them up, it's not enough that there should be at the centre so to speak just a cheerful friendly social atmosphere. That's got to be backed up with something more substantial. So to speak the teacher has got to be a teacher. At the centre there has got to be behind the friendliness and cheerfulness, finding expression in the cheerfulness and friendliness something of a genuinely spiritual nature so to speak because new people no doubt will be attracted by , yes, friendliness, cheerfulness, inspiration, energy but those who are serious and those who are really inquiring will want something rather more than a sort of refined party atmosphere. So one has got to be in a position to provide that. It isn't enough just to be a happy social group however good, however positive that may be as far as it goes. So even the gladdening so to speak has got to be kept under control or even within limits and the underlying seriousness of it all in a positive sense, not a gloomy sense, must be sensed as it were. It's not that all these people at the centre just happened to be luckily provided with cheerful optimistic temperaments and would have been equally cheerful and optimistic almost anywhere else, no. It should be sensed that their cheerfulness and their positivity really does spring from a comparatively deep level. That is to say from their spiritual involvement and even their spiritual commitment. That is the source and the origin of it all.

So as you start feeling the positiveness and the cheerfulness you also get a sort of feeling, ideally if you're a beginner, of

something even better even more satisfactory so to speak underlying the happiness and the cheerfulness. A sort of content and a sort of stability and clarity which is finding expression in the positive atmosphere of the centre. There's something more than ordinary sociability there.

Vajramati; I heard the story of some people describing "Oranges" restaurant and they said it always seems that the people that work in there know something that we don't. (Laughter)

Sthiramati; Very often the only way that kind of positive atmosphere can be maintained is if it does come from that deeper level. If it doesn't come from there it doesn't last.

S: Oh yes, it doesn't last. Unless you've got just this cheerful temperament and it might be difficult to get a sufficient number of people of naturally cheerful temperament in any one place. Yes you have to be able to replenish it sometime.

Dhammarati; Also it indicates that the teacher is practising what he's teaching.

S: Yes indeed, yes right. If you are studying the Buddhist scriptures all day and you're still morose (Laughter) something must be seriously wrong. (Laughter)

One of our friends visited a Buddhist centre in Calcutta and there was a whole lot of monks newly arrived from Ceylon apparently on pilgrimage and he was quite appalled He said they looked like a lot of gangsters (Laughter)

Airight what is the next line.

Brian Duff; "The books and letters which you do not practice ~them!"

S: So what do you think Padmasambhava means by that?

Why does he say that?

Dhammamati; Not to clutter your mind with useless information that you're not going to actually use or put to use. There's enough sort of information to put to use anyway.

S: Because a lot of what one... a lot of one's reading very often, a lot of one's study is not so much an introduction to practice as a sort of substitute for practice. You can see people doing this not so much within the Friends I am glad to say but I used to see a lot of it but for quite a lot a people getting more and more into Buddhism meant reading another book and another and another and they never got out of that. They never got away from that. They seemed unable to make the transition from study to practice. Study was their practice. Study in some ways and rightly approached can be practice though it can't be complete practice in its own. In their case it was just reading. It was just adding to their information about Buddhism and they seemed never able to break out of that into the actual practice of the dharma. So if you just go on reading and reading and collecting bits of information about Buddhism it can obscure the fact that you're not really concerned with Buddhism at all. You're just extending your intellectual territory, nothing more than that.

So the books and letters which you do not practice - give them up. In a sense you've given them up already in any real sort of sense because you are not practising but you don't realise that. You think you are very much into the dharma, you're very much into the perfection of Wisdom or you're very much into dana come to that because you're reading about them. But for some people their sort of total life experience so to speak is so mentalised, it's so much identified with their mental understanding that to think about something for them is equivalent to doing it. They're unable to make the distinction strange as it may sound. If they've read say about the Bodhisattva Ideal intellectually understood it then they are practically Bodhisattvas or at least followers of Mahayana Buddhism. It sounds extraordinary but actually this is the attitude, this is the state of mind of quite a lot of people in the west with regard to Buddhism. That one is actually unable to distinguish between a theoretical understanding and a real so to speak existential understanding. They think they really do know all about it in the fullest sense.

So therefore the Guru says the books and letters which you do not practice - give them up. It's more like throwing them away because they're just so much rubbish as far as you're concerned. You don't really possess them so in a sense there's no question of giving them up. You don't possess them at all because you don't really understand what they're saying. Though you might as well discard the paper and print which embodied them. You don't really possess those particular teachings at all. You've just got so much lumber cluttering up your room or whatever. So you know really only what you practice. Though of course there is a sense in which you can have a sort of knowledge prior to practice but it must at least be sort of consciously tending in the direction of practice for it to have any sort of value at all.

Sona; You do actually have to know... have quite a lot of information actually about Buddhism. I was thinking in terms of material to

reflect upon, there are some formulations at least that you can reflect upon. Otherwise you can tend to pull completely away from study and think you don't have to know anything.

S: I think one can look at it in several ways. One of the points that was made by Subhuti in his talk on Sila paramita, moral sila, which was interesting was that when one becomes involved with the Friends one becomes involved with a new society, at least with the beginnings of one, the nucleus of one. So that new society is structured in a particular way, in so to speak a more healthy way than the society outside is structured. So when you come within that more positively, more healthily structured society, the new society and adapt yourself to its ways then you are influenced in a positive sort of way. In other words this underlies the importance of institutions, using the term in the widest sense. The importance of positive institutions. So I think the more positive the institutions under which or within which you live or the greater the extent to which you live within the new society, the new society itself representing an embodied ideal, the less you need to study. But when you are right outside the new society and have got no possible contact with it where are you going to get your information or your guidance unless there's just one or two odd people not amounting to a new society because there's too few of them and they haven't been able to establish any institutions, the nearest you can get to the new society is just by reading about it. But if you are actually living within the new society then a lot of the things which you would otherwise have had simply to read about you are actually experiencing all the time in a way because that is the sort of situation within which you are living.

So you need to study less.

S ; You still need to study but again that can be exaggerated. What do you need to study? Do you need to study about meditation. It's as though... a class and everybody's practising say mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana and instruction is regularly given you don't need really to read about meditation, unless of course you want to go on to something or learn about something which is not yet generally current. Also I think it depends upon your type, your character type. I think people of faith temperament can get along within the positively structured society, the new society with the minimum of recourse to study but the people who are not faith followers but doctrine followers, dharma followers, it would seem that they are so to speak mentally more active and need a greater amount of mental satisfaction. They've got more inquiring minds and therefore need to read and study more.

Sona; But the path say in the four mindfulnesses which you mentioned yesterday of being mindful of the formulations of the dharma, isn't it necessary to actually know some of the formulations in order to be mindful which implies a certain amount of study.

S: Well very little actually because you can write down dozens of whose formulae just on a few pages which is what the monks did in the old days except they didn't write them down, they just heard them and committed them to memory. The seven bodhiangas and the eightfold path and the five spiritual faculties - they just reflected upon them.

Sona; But it almost seems as though if you actually ask people if they know these simple formulations most people don't and I just sort of wonder if the emphasis is not on study people won't even

bother to learn sort of very simple formulations.

S: But then the question also arises why don't people study, why are they not interested in study, is it for positive reasons or is it for negative reasons.

Sona; I get the impression it's more from negative reasons, a reaction against their education.

Dhammamati; It's also a sort of - what reason do you study. There seems to be this thing for study to accumulate knowledge or just accumulate it in your mind rather than just seeing the words as inspiring, some form of inspiration⁴

Sona; But within the context of the four mindfulnesses you do actually need to have this information in your mind. It has to be there and you may not find it very inspiring at first but you need it there to contemplate.

S: Yes. But for instance - this is a question people sometimes ask - to what extent do you need for the purposes of your own individual development, to know about the history of Buddhism? Do you really need to know exactly when and how say Buddhism spread from India say to Ceylon or from India to China. Is it necessary to know that?

viramati; You need a basis of Buddhism to communicate to other people especially if you're involved in centre activities. You can give your own positive state to someone else but you need something to back it up.

Sona; You don't actually need it for your own individual.

S: Yes you don't need it so much for your own individual development but you do need it as a sort of background at least to enable you to answer questions raised by other people so as to establish a sort of medium of communication with them. Because people are often concerned about these things. For instance about questions like well why did Buddhism die out in India. And in a way that is quite relevant to them because they might think something like well Buddhism is supposed to be a great spiritual teaching and here are these people saying that they believe in it and so on and so forth and trying to practice it but what happened in India? It started there and was such a success for hundreds of years and then it died out. Does that mean that it failed? Does it mean that it didn't work? It couldn't even work in India well how is it that these people believe that it can work in this country? This has a sort of practical bearing and you need to be able to deal with that sort of question and therefore you need to know quite a lot that has got no direct bearing on your own individual development.

But obviously not everybody has got the interest and the aptitude to go into these things in such a way as to be able to answer these sort of questions but I think connected with every centre you need at least one or two Order members who are able to handle questions of this sort.

Sona; Another point occurred to me is that through your own individual development you may actually need to be in a centre and have the sort of stimulation of meeting other people, communicating with other people, therefore sort of like study is in a sense, although not directly but indirectly necessary or helpful at least for your own individual development.

S: Well in the case of some people or in the case of some of the

people with whom you will be brought into contact, but again you could imagine that there could be say an Order member who knew nothing about the history of Buddhism and who was quite unable to answer any question in that sort of area but who nevertheless strongly impressed people because for instance, he was so much into his meditation and radiated positivity and confidence so strongly that that would have an even greater effect perhaps; and it is not a bad idea perhaps to have just one or two Order members connected with every centre who can function as it were non intellectually, who can make it clear, maybe for the benefit of people of a certain kind who are coming along to the centre, that in order to be a Buddhist and to develop you don't need to be 'educated' - single inverted commas -. We've got one or two order members like that in India, one in particular I'm thinking of. He's what the Indians call not educated, that is to say he doesn't know English and has a quite humble sort of job but he's very much into meditation, quite noticeably so and would like to leave his job and devote himself almost entirely to meditation and dharma work. Unfortunately this isn't possible. He does have to work though he's quite elderly but he still has a family to support but when he's on retreats Lokamitra and the others say it is quite obvious that he's more into his meditation than others are. He seems to be able to go more deeply into it more easily and that has its own effect.

He doesn't say very much, he doesn't talk very much with people but just the fact that he's so much into the meditation, he has a value of his own for others as well as himself.

So it's not a bad idea if there are at least one or two Order members around who illustrate in a way the entire dispensability of any kind of knowledge about Buddhism in the sort of historical doctrinal sense, for some people at least. He knows the basic teachings certainly but I can't imagine him wondering much about the history of Buddhism or why it disappeared from India.

Sona; I get the impression that if one talks about dispensing with study the whole lot gets sort of - the baby and the bathwater gets chucked out.

S: Well yes one might ask well why are people happy to hear about the dispensability of study. It's not so much they've got anything against study specifically it's just that they don't like working. They don't like making an effort so study represents hard work, it's

just one particular kind of hard work. So they're quite happy to hear that well you can get by and be a good Buddhist without hard work. This is really what they are hearing. This is really how they are taking it, which of course isn't very positive.

Sthiramati; Just to actually think very clearly is quite hard.

S: Oh yes. It means sorting out micchaditthis. But if people don't think naturally, if that is their type, they needn't bother so much about study. But in the case of those who do think and who because they think have got a lot of micchaditthis, study is very necessary to get rid of the micchaditthis. very often it's the people who've got the micchaditthis who say that study isn't necessary, study in the real sense. It threatens their micchaditthis. That is one of their micchaditthis, that study for persons of their type isn't necessary.

Study in the true sense is the medicine for the sickness of micchaditthis. I don't think you get rid of micchaditthis just with the help of meditation. Meditation in the sense of the samatha experience. No I'm certain of this. You just don't.

Sona; You could say that from dhyanic experience it does help you to learn to stop thinking.

S This is true yes b~t when you come out of your dhyana experience your thinking starts up again.

Sona; I thought you said once that it also acts like a sort of shock on the body, that sort of carries on. The more dhyanic experiences you have you gradually develop a sort of capacity for actually stopping thinking at will.

S: Well this is true yes, but you still have to learn to think correctly when you do start thinking again. The fact that you learn to stop thinking only slows you down which is helpful but of itself it does not assist you in thinking more correctly and more clearly. That has as it were to be learned separately. There are plenty of people who think clearly and correctly and have no micchaditthis but who don't have much meditative experience and there are people with lots of meditative experience including experience of the dhyanas but with very deeply entrenched micchaditthis. So I think probably the best way, I was going to say the only way but perhaps I should say the best way, of clearing up micchaditthis is through actual personal encounter with people who can see through those micchaditthis and who can help you to see through them because I think if you just read a book, even a book that refutes your micchaditthis, I think it doesn't have sufficient impact. You can just brush it aside so easily. You have actually to come up against someone who is able to expose your micchaditthis.

Also micchaditthis have got (so many) fine nuances and subtle shades of difference that you may think say reading a book well this doesn't apply to me, my thinking is a bit more subtle and those particular refutations aren't applicable in my case. You might think that. But if you were actually arguing it out with somebody who thinks more clearly than you then he can sort of force you step by step back into the corner until you've really got your back up against the wall and in the end have to give in. So this is probably the best way of getting rid of micchaditthis. You don't do it just by immersing yourself in the dhyanas. You don't do it by reading and studying by yourself. I think you do it

- I could almost say only, in this particular way.

Sthiramati; A sort of mixture of real thinking and t~rough communication.

S: And also your micchaditthis may be to a great extent the product of laziness. At an earlier more impressionable age you might just have accepted something without really thinking but it sunk deep and so many of your values are now sort of twined around that. You find it very difficult to give up that micchaditthis. But if you are actually confronted by somebody who is demanding reasons for what you think so that you are forced to think then the inadequacy of your attitude and your beliefs and your beliefs and your philosophies might then be exposed.

Sona; Is it not possible to eradicate micchaditthis through the arising of insight or could you say that micchaditthis actually stop insight from arising.

S: Well both. Micchaditthis are stopped by the arising of insight but how does insight arise? Insight doesn't arise automatically out

the dhyana experience. It means when on the basis of your dhyana experience you start thinking clearly with the help of supports in the form of doctrinal formulations which reflect on the intellectual level the Buddha's original insight. When you start reflecting on those on the basis of your dhyana experience then insight arises but you've got to have that clear understanding of the doctrinal formulations however simply expressed, first. This is a point incidentally that the Dalai Lama emphasises very strongly in some of his writings and it's a very basic point.

For instance if you want to develop insight into say impermanence you've got to have a clear understanding to begin with of the fact of impermanence, a clear understanding on the intellectual level, and then that becomes the basis, that becomes the support for your development of insight. Because due to your immersion in the dhyana experience your mind has become very steady, your energies have become unified, you are able to put your energy and your interest into the so to speak intellectual inquiry, in such a way that you are able actually to achieve a degree of insight on the basis of the intellectual understanding.

So the broad general tradition is no insight, no vipassana without samatha. There is talk nowadays in some quarters of dry insight, that is to say insight which is developed without being based on dhyana experience but that as far as I've been able to make out amounts to nothing really more than an intellectual understanding. Intellectual understanding has been confused with insight but intellectual understanding is certainly the basis for insight. Assuming of course that the deeper basis so to speak is also there in the form of the dhyana experience.

So when you've immersed yourself in the dhyana experience sufficiently you take up or you recollect call to mind your previous clear intellectual understanding of this or that aspect of the doctrine and with your poised and unified mind you reflect upon that and in that way insight arises. It can be that even apart from formal meditation you may be so deeply concentrated thinking about something that it does amount to a sort of dhyana experience and that both are actually present, both the dhyana experience and the insight.

Anyway so the books and letters which you do not practice give them up! Right on to the next one.

John Roche; "Those who compete with others and hoard possessions - give them up!"

S: Those who compete with others and hoard possessions - give them up! Dissociate your selves from them. This is almost a suggestion that you should dissociate yourself from the old society, certainly the old society in its capitalist form because it's based on competing and hoarding isn't it. This again draws attention to the importance of environment. It isn't a question of simply dissociating yourself from this competing individual or that hoarding individual. The whole society is based on these principles so really it requires you to dissociate yourself from the whole of society. You can't exist on your own, just one solitary you, so really it requires the setting up of a new society. Not based upon competing, not based upon hoarding. So really he's telling these two ladies to go away and start a new society or at least found a women's community.

_____ : Does this mean that there's one kind of person that's likely to do both of these things?

S: It could be the same kind of person who competes and hoards but there could also be two different kinds of person. A hoarding type and a competing type. Perhaps you don't always find the two together.

_____ He's always got things in pairs. I wondered why those two were put together.

S: Yes. Well they're both concerned with property, with gains. One with getting-in competition with others, and the other with hanging on to and preventing others from taking away once you've acquired them. So they have a sort of common basis.

John Roche; There's greed and hatred there.

S: Greed and jealousy.

John Roche; And delusion was the one before. The idea of worthless information.

S: The asuras embody competitiveness don't they in mythological terms. But what do you think about this. Competing. Why is competing wrong from the spiritual point of view. Or could there be ever such a thing as healthy competition?

Sona; It's a bit like you want to be in someone else's shoes as it were and you compete with them in that way to sort of get to be like them almost which is sort of unhealthy whereas if you're just having healthy competition you're being like your own (But it can be useful for sort of spurring oneself on).

Viramati; It can also be a sort of victor and a vanquished competing in a quite negative sense.

S: Competition is when you have to displace the other in order to guarantee your own achievement but in healthy competition you can achieve without the other person not achieving. You do not have to displace the other person.

John Roche; You can all win the race.

S: You can all win the race. You do not have to do the other person down. In a sense you sort of compete with the Buddha when you reflect the Buddha was a man as we are men, what the Buddha has achieved we too can achieve. That is sort of healthy, not exactly competition but sparking oneself off by the contemplation of what somebody else has been able to do. You think he's been able to do it, why shouldn't I. Or even if you're both engaged in it at the same time, trying to get there first. Your getting there will not exclude his getting there. His getting there will not exclude your getting there. But you use this sort of more mundane instinct which is slightly egoistic to get there first to induce your self to get there at all. But if there can only be one winner and you try to trip him up in the race so that you can win, then of course that is not desirable. So perhaps one needs two distinct words. Perhaps one should speak of rivalry and competitiveness or something of that sort. Make a kind of distinction. Because very often people are afraid to compete even in a healthy sense because they're lacking in confidence. Or sometimes you find that people who won't compete are the people for whom winning is so important that they cannot risk the possibility of not winning so they withdraw from the competition altogether. Not winning would be death and they don't dare to face that prospect. So they never compete. So you might think that they're very non-competitive, gentle, unambitious people but they're not. They're the most ambitious of all. You seem to have

met people like that.

John Roche; It rings bells.

Roger Jones; I think that's probably the first thing that most of us do actually come in contact with. The first sort of basic devils or whatever to start to transform is this sort of competitiveness or hoarding. We can feel quite plainly and it goes really quite deep doesn't it. What you were saying about trying to give it a different emphasis. It's very easy to actually talk about it but when it comes down to actually doing it that's when it becomes really interesting. It is at least something we can very readily understand.

S: Nietzsche pointed out that the dramas of the Greeks were

Wroduced within the context of a competition and each of the dramatists would try really hard to excel the others and that spurred him really to give of his best. So the competitive instinct can be harnessed so to speak in a positive way to subserve positive ends. We can't dismiss it altogether. We have to use it, in a way have to transform it rather than abolish it.

One sometimes hears this criticism from the women that men are so competitive as though competitiveness is something to be abolished altogether, that there's nothing good in it, but that isn't really quite correct. There is certainly definitely a very unhealthy, very negative aspect of competitiveness which is certainly quite incompatible with the spiritual life, but there is nonetheless a more healthy more positive from of competitiveness which can be utilised.

Viramati; It's quite a basic part of our make up.

S: I think it is.

Sona; It can be a very powerful thing too can't it.

S: if it is simply an effort to do better than the other person Th the true sense. Without involving any sort of doing down of the other person.

Roger Jones; I seem to think that the key to it really is to be able to do it without actually wishing the other person harm. You really begin to feel that you've almost sort of cracked it.

S: Yes, and this also involves being a good loser so to speak, because in a way you don't lose, you've done your best and playing with the other person say if it's a game, who's beaten you has stretched you as far as you can go, has stretched you much more than if you'd been playing with someone who you'd been able to beat easily. So you know what you can do and you know what you can't do and you know what you've got to learn to do to be better still. So you can be really grateful to the person who's beaten you.

Roger Jones ;You can rejoice with delight.

S: Yes right, what a good game it's been and how well he played and I played better than ever before even though I was beaten because he was such a good player that he forced me to play better than ever, so I've learned a lot. I've done better than ever. So even though I've lost the match I've not really lost the game. I've not lost. I've been noticing in the last year or two that this competitive instinct or attitude is very strong in men. Within the Friends itself I see it all the time. I think

most men are competing with one another all the time, even in very small matters. Little trials of strength. I think you probably know the sort of thing I mean. One doesn't find this among women. It's very very rare and I think this may be - here I'm only thinking aloud - one of the reasons why a group of women is comparatively dull compared with a group of men, other factors being equal, because there isn't this competitiveness going on. It's the competitiveness that very often keeps the men's group a bit alive. It may not always be very healthy but at least there's something going on. It's a bit active whereas a group of women can sometimes be a bit dull and a bit dead because that competitiveness isn't there. It's very pleasant, it's very warm and soothing so to speak, but not very alive. Anyway that's only thinking aloud.

John Roche; This healthy sense of competition almost gives the feeling of urgency it seems. Like you generate a sense of urgency about what you're doing through that.

S: It gives a spice to what you're doing. The fact that you not only get there but beat somebody else in getting there. (Laughter)

Roger Jones; What does happen on the more material plane, the more vicious that becomes to the extent that then actually there is someone who actually has won and someone doesn't. You either have the goodies or you don't. On the more spiritual plane it doesn't particularly matter because things are much more fluid and you can let things just actually move along and it doesn't particularly matter because they regenerate themselves. But where most of us actually live our lives it is a fact that in being competitive there is a reward in being best once one's minds are very focused and living in that area all the time then it becomes rather pernicious.

John Roche; It's almost like in the spiritual competition the winning post keeps getting moved. (Laughter)

S: All you can do is keep on running. (Laughter)

Tony Wharton I think there's great importance on what you said about being a good loser or not being afraid of failing. I know somebody who started a business and he just seemed to be carrying on because he just felt he couldn't fail. He felt that failure was a tragedy, it was awful.

S: Well it depends what one means by losing. What is losing? Even supposing this particular person say gave up his business, in a sense he wouldn't have lost. He wouldn't have lost the experience and the effort that he'd put into it. He would have lost in terms of goal achievement, maybe having set himself a particular goal he was not able to achieve that, so he'd only feel the loss if he attached too much importance, too much significance to that particular goal achievement. On the other hand there are people who try to devalue this whole question of gain and losing because of their own fear of actually putting all their energy into the competition. They say oh well it doesn't matter, winning and losing it's just the sake of the game. But that's because really basically they're afraid of losing but in their case it's a rationalisation.

On the one hand you've got to be able to believe it doesn't matter if you lose but on the other hand you've got to go all out to win. But if you say it doesn't matter if you lose and therefore you don't play very well it means that really you're afraid of losing.

It's a bit like the Bodhisattva to compare great things with small, the Bodhisattva firmly believes that all is void and that there are no such things as sentient beings but he's going all out to deliver sentient beings. In the same way you believe that winning and losing are totally irrelevant and insignificant but you're going all out to win and not lose.

So you can only genuinely say that winning isn't important if you're going all out to win. That's the paradox. It's the man who goes all out to win who has the right to say that winning isn't important. Not the half hearted person who doesn't really put himself into the game. That's the person lacking in confidence.

Perhaps we haven't dwelt this morning very much upon the more negative side of competitiveness but it's very definitely there. Perhaps just everybody knows it so well they don't feel any need to place any emphasis upon it (Laughter).

Sona; Often you feel that the negative aspect, you feel a need to compete often through a lack of confidence. You have to prove yourself.

S : Even that may be necessary in a not unhealthy way when you're comparatively young. In a way to begin with perhaps you do need to prove yourself to yourself, that you can do certain things and that involves competing because one of the things you want to feel is that you can do certain things better than at least certain other people. Differentials are very important! In industry why is so much importance attached to differentials in terms of planning.

Alright next line.

Viramati; "Women who create disturbances and hold grudges give them up!"

S: So what does this mean. Women who create disturbances and hold grudges. Well is it referring so to speak to particular types of woman who are particularly prone to create disturbances and hold grudges or does it describe the female sex as a whole? Is it women, who create disturbances and hold grudges, or is women who create disturbances, and hold grudges?

John Roche; He's talking to two women at the moment. So I assume he's talking about those who do disturb.

S: Who do happen to disturb. What about those women who do not disturb?

Roger Jones; I think you could equally say that there are men who actually create disturbance and hold grudges. It's not necessarily a female attribute is it?

S: Is it. Is he suggesting that? Is he giving them a ticking off, as women so to speak? It's not impossible. Or is there any connection with the line that goes before. Competitiveness is certainly associated more with men than with women so could perhaps this creating disturbances and holding grudges be more associated with women?

John Wakeman; Or the whole fact that he's talking to women

Roger Jones; It's very interesting isn't it (Laughter)

S: I mean I was staying in India - you all know this, in Pune. The little centre backs onto a housing estate and as you listen during

the day it's always the women who are quarelling. It's not the men. You hear the men's voices occasionally - very low and quiet but the shrieking and the howling and the fighting and quarrelling, these are entirely on the part of the women. In our society things are a bit more inhibited so to speak but in the old days in working class districts you'd certainly get women having an argybargy over the back fence and shrieking at each other. And in India this is still very common and men refuse to get involved usually. It's accepted that this is a women's thing. They shriek at each other and they really create a terrible disturbance, and maybe they hold grudges. They remember. They don't forgive and forget. They don't shake hands on it like men might do after a fight. So perhaps - I don't want to be too certain about this but perhaps - he's referring in this line to the characteristic weaknesses of women just as in the previous line he was referring to the characteristic weaknesses of men.

Roger Jones; And perhaps the feeling actually that you get through competition which is (more) masculine is rather similar to actually disturbance and the hoarding aspect which is in many ways on a similar level more like grudging.

Viramati; On the other hand maybe he is talking basically to women because he says women here as opposed to those who create disturbances.

S: Yes, it's as though those could refer to both men and women.

Dhammamati; I think it's specific advice to women because being women they'll get involved with groups of women. I remember when I was on an apprenticeship there were a lot of women workers and they were like that. They used to spend their whole day just gabbling and just sort of really creating (Laughter)

S: If they'd been men they'd have been talking Huh, (Laughter)

Dhammamati; Yes right. There was this sort of disturbance. You get one or two women who get the rest worked up. It was quite strange how you'd get these sort of peaks and I think he's just giving advice because these are women, to keep away from that.

S: It was quite amusing in a way in Pune to hear all this going on. Two or three times a day there'd usually be some uproar among the women. I've no idea what it was about but the men seemed to take no notice of it whatever.

Brian Duff; It's almost as if woman seems to delight in it.

S: Another point is you could say that looking at it for the moment from their point of view, in a more traditional society women stay at home. They've a much more confined life than men. Men have got a lot more outlets for their energies. So it could be in the case of some women a lot of energy accumulates and they feel a bit frustrated and when they have these sort of quarrels it's just a sort of letting off steam. It doesn't seem to lead anywhere. It doesn't seem to have any constructive or creative purpose but at least they seem to let off steam and to sort of quieten down a bit afterwards. It could be that a woman who leads a more active sort of life more like a man or a woman who's got say outside work to do doesn't get involved in these sort of quarrels and disturbances. You could even say, this is only

hypothetical, but you could say that it's at least to some extent due to a particular kind of social set up, in which the woman has fewer outlets for her energies.

Sona; I must say women I've met, who've worked with men tend to start trying to have arguments with the men!

S: Bang goes my little argument!! (Laughter) I was just trying to put in a good word for the women but I don't seem very successful.

Sona; It's only based on my own personal experience.

John Roche; Well that sounds quite healthy. I'm just thinking of say modern housing estates where the ladies aren't get at it over the garden fence and you get this awful.. - There can be icy silences for years.

Sona; You really get this sort of holding of grudges. That's almost a disturbance in itself. It sort of creates a certain atmosphere.

Roger Jones , But we then have to really look at it then as competition in a very similar sort of light.

S: Well women do compete in a gentle sort of way. If a woman's got a new three piece suite in her front room she likes to invite her friends round to see it because it's all new and it's better than theirs. Sometimes this point is made in advertising. There's ads of a woman showing her three piece suite to admiring friends who are clearly overcome with jealousy, and this is an inducement to you from the advertisers point of view, to buy a three piece suite.

Roger Jones; Advertisers if nothing are very subtle at picking up all those basic. ...

Dhammamati; Do you think holding grudges is a particularly feminine trait?

S: I think men do hold grudges but on the other hand I think perhaps there is a sense in which or at least there's a form of grudge that women would tend to hold more than men. Women can be very unforgiving. I certainly know this. I've seen this.

Dhammamati; I suppose in a healthy society men would tend to act on the grudge. They'd do something about it. They'd go out and even if it's just punching the other bloke's nose.

S: I've found that women often bear grudges against those who've got in the way of their husbands. If their husbands are competing and maybe someone has done their husband down they'll bear that person a grudge even long after the husband himself has forgiven that particular person and even becomes friends with him. The wife will sometimes cherish the grudge. I've seen this happening. She doesn't forgive him even though her husband has forgiven him.

Sthiramati; Maybe that arises out of feeling frustrated, not being able to act as much as the men can.

John Roche; If your grudges don't settle down between men and if they're actually participating in that competition we're talking about

it seems like you're on to the next round. If you're stepping back from it and resenting this then it builds up. It's almost an inducement to compete in the positive sense because you're getting it moving.

S: To get your own back. For instance after losing a game a man will often say well you'll have to let me have my revenge some day.

Roger Jones; But the reason why of course he mentions these things is that there's a reason for it. We're talking about all these competition and disturbances and hoarding. They're just rather crippling.

S: Yes and also they are quite general. Even supposing that creating disturbances and holding grudges is more common among women it's certainly not a monopoly of women. One finds this sort of thing widespread throughout society and it's that sort of society in the end that you have to get away from, the sort of society in which disturbances and holding grudges is a common sort of phenomenon. You just want to be out of that sort of atmosphere altogether whether it's created by men or women or even children. You want to be in a more positive society. A more positive environment. You want to be in the New Society. Though this is the meaning, this is the inducement so to speak. So give up women or whoever one might say create disturbances and hold grudges. This is not a very pleasant atmosphere within which to live.

Alright next line.

Tony Wharton; "Hopes and expectations for your own benefit give them up!"

S: This is clearly of very wide application. So hopes and expectations for your own benefit, give them up. So what is or what are the two women basically being asked to give up? Just self interest. Not only on the worldly level presumably but even on the so called spiritual level. Because the back of Padmasambhava's mind presumably knows the Bodhisattva ideal, that one's spiritual life itself should not be a form of individualism the needs of other people should be taken into account because they're inextricably bound up with your own and as a Bodhisattva or would be Bodhisattva you devote yourself or dedicate yourself to the liberation of all living beings. You're not after enlightenment or nirvana just for you. So therefore he says, hopes and expectations for your own benefit, the emphasis being on own, your own exclusive benefit, give them up. Don't wish for your self anything that you cannot wish for all. This is in a way the essence of the Bodhisattva ideal.

Lama Govinda I think somewhere defines it as the aspiration after the realisation of the highest that you can possibly conceive for the benefit of everybody, not just for your own benefit.

In other words you've got to do a sort of perpetual dedication of merits. Do what is good, do what helps you yourself to evolve, you yourself to develop but all the time bear in mind the needs of other people and let it be ultimately for their good too as well as for yours. So if individualism or if selfishness is not permitted within even the spiritual sphere how much less would it be permitted within the worldly sphere. Of course one could put that the other way round. It is not permitted in the worldly sphere, how much less will it be permitted in the spiritual sphere. It would be a pity if one gave up worldly selfishness only to become spiritually

selfish.

In the second case the weakness is or the mistake is that you think of spiritual experiences and attainments as sort of things that can be somebody's property and not somebody else's property. So that there can be a sort of exclusive possession and this is what you're oriented towards. The exclusive possession of this or that spiritual good. But on the worldly level, to leave aside the spiritual it's very difficult to give up hopes and expectations for your own benefit because much of the time this is what we're working for, we can't help it. We're working to support ourselves, we're working to support our families. So the very constitution of society and this is where the importance of institutions comes in again, is so structured. If you're working within a co op at least you can work for the benefit of the whole co op which includes you. You're not excluded. At least you're working for twelve, fourteen, fifteen people and through that for the Movement of which you are a part and towards which the profits of your co op perhaps are going.

Sona; You could say that about ordinary jobs. Say you're working for the benefit of directors.

S: Or the shareholders. But do you want to? Is that your intention in taking the job? No. You work for you, you work for number one and in a way from your point of view you exploit them, they exploit you and there's a balance of mutual exploitation and you just adjust that. If there's a greater demand for your services well then you've got a bit of the whip hand. If there's a greater demand on the part of prospective employees for that sort of job then they've got the whip hand.

So usually any sort of apparent unselfishness within the world is really only apparent. You're not really working for those share holders. You don't care a damn about them, you don't even know them. If you did you probably wouldn't like them. You're working for yourself.

Roger Jones; So subtly has that been realised especially by the western culture that that sort of selfishness has actually been (recognised).

S! This is the unfortunate thing. It's as though it's very difficult to motivate people without appealing to that selfishness. This is what the debate about incentives is all about. I think that on the purely worldly level where one is concerned with ordinary people without any sort of spiritual aspirations in the sense that we understand that term, it's very difficult to keep things going presuming that they have to be kept going, without appealing to that incentive. Because you find that when people's jobs are perfectly safe and guaranteed and it is virtually impossible for them to be dismissed they do not work well, in the majority of cases because they cannot generate within themselves the need to work well for their own personal satisfaction or to fulfil their sense of duty and responsibility. They're only interested in their wages more often than not so if they're going to get those whether they work badly or whether they work well, more often than not they'll work badly unfortunately. But if good work is geared to extra wages the chances are they will work better.

Sona; We seem to have had a better situation a hundred years or so ago say in the rural districts of England with farm situations.

People used to work a lot and not particularly for money. It was their way of life.

S: Work was just something that was there to be done and the money was not exactly irrelevant but it wasn't so directly geared or connected to the work.

But in a way it makes one a little sad and even a little cynical about human nature when you see that people will not work well without some personal incentive or personal gain or profit, but you have, it seems to dangle a good big carrot in front of their noses before they will pull the cart.

Roger Jones; But is that because they either don't want to work or they can't see the point in working or is it just....

S: Well for them the point of working before was that work got them the money. Now they can get the money without doing the work, at least not doing so much of it or doing it as well. So they don't really want to work. They only work because of the money. So if they can get the money without the work they will. In a way they're not altogether to be blamed because they are part of a system which existed before they were born and into which they've been born and it doesn't appeal to their idealism and it's doubtful in some cases whether there is much in the way of idealism to appeal to. But a better system or at least a different system let's say, might appeal to some idealism or at least it might mobilise some idealism. Sometimes even a worse situation. This is what happened in the war. A bit of idealism was mobilised. People were working for something beyond their immediate personal profit.

Sona; It's complicated even further in that people actually want a job but they don't want to work. Often I've met people who if you say you're not working they say Oh I couldn't stand not to be working but in actual fact they don't work very hard but they like to have the job as a social

S: Well that's usually the sort of most important thing in their lives from a sort of social point of view next to their family. Sometimes it's even more important than their family especially in the States I believe. So if you have no job you're cut off from social life to a great extent because even your off duty social life nowadays often stems from your work life not from your domestic life as it used to perhaps.

Viramati; I think people feel quite ineffective as well. Their job doesn't mean anything. They don't see any benefits even from the job. Whether they're there or not no one seems to care.

S: And within the context of the Friends again it makes me sometimes a little sad when you see well here are sometimes people within the context of the Friends who in principle accept the ideals of the Friends but they don't seem able in some cases to work as well for the Friends, which means for themselves and others, within the context of the Friends as some people work outside just for filthy lucre. Here you are supposedly believing that these ideals are far more important and valuable than any amount of money and that's why you're in the FWBO and not outside in the old bad society but you cannot work as well for those ideals as others work for money and this seems extraordinary if you really do believe in those ideals. And by working I don't mean working in the wrong way and straining yourself and

having a nervous breakdown. I mean really putting your energy very genuinely and sensibly into what you're supposed to be doing.

Viramati; I'd have thought people working from commitment would work

S: Would work better. So one can only assume that somewhere or other the commitment is lacking or is inadequate.

Sthiramati; Sometimes people don't understand the place that work can have in a new society.

S: There is that too, at least there used to be that too. I hope that isn't the case now because there have been enough talks on it, but perhaps it needs time to sort of soak in.

Sthiramati; I think in general people do now. Each person as they come into the Friends goes through a stage of not maybe appreciating.

S: I remember at the very beginning the attitude of anybody coming into the Friends was to do as little for the friends as for anybody else as possible. People almost resented being asked to do anything or if it was suggested they might help out. I have several famous anecdotes in this connection. You must have heard them, about making the tea after my lecture . . .no washing up, that's right. I'd given what I considered a beautiful lecture in my Bodhisattva series on Dana of all subjects and everybody had really enjoyed this and was really sort of enthused and apparently inspired and then we had the Sevenfold Puja, so it was a very lovely evening and then one of the women piped up at the end, 'Could a couple of people please stay behind and help me with the washing up' and nobody stirred. So she was quite taken aback, I could see that. She was quite an active girl who did quite a bit of that sort of thing. So she went downstairs into the basement and eventually one of our Friends not one of the visitors, I think it was David Austin actually, went and helped her. But amongst all the people who had been admiring and applauding my lecture on dana and participating in the Puja there was no one to stir. They were quite reluctant and almost sort of resented being asked. That was the situation ten years ago.

It's as though - I don't really know what it was - perhaps giving a very generous explanation of the situation perhaps it was that they'd been made to do so many things in the course of their lives that when they came along to a spiritual centre, to them spiritual meant or spiritual seemed to mean a place where nobody asked you to do anything.

So that may have been, as I said putting a generous construction on their case, it may have been something like that, though in some cases I sometimes suspected it was just sheer indifference and laziness and even selfishness. The way in which they were brought up had encouraged them that the world owed them a living, the world owed them everything. The world owed them enlightenment. So the centre was just a place where you went along, just like you went along to the labour exchange and got your dole - the centre was the place where you went along and you got enlightenment. It was just handed out to you like that. That was your right.

That was the impression I sometimes got.

Vajramati; I think people had that attitude about "Oranges" about a year ago. That if they got involved with the Friends in

Norwich they had a right to work there and when they went along there they didn't actually have to put anything into it. They'd just turn up there.

S: They had a right to a part-time job.

John Roche; With regard to getting into work it just strikes me recently, it seems one's got to engage one's emotional side. You can acknowledge the ideals but unless you can get emotionally ... somehow that seems to be the key to getting work going.

S: I think you don't get emotionally fired unless you really see the relevance and applicability of the ideals. I really notice a difference in this respect between the FWBO in India and the FWBO here. Compared with the FWBO in India, though in India it's so new, the FWBO here seems rather lacking in energy and enthusiasm~on the whole and life. But there Buddhism and now the FWBO which makes Buddhism practicable people see, means so much. It means a change in their whole way of life. It means a better life in every respect, socially, economically, culturally educationally, spiritually. So it means so much more and the benefits are so immediately obvious that people can really see the value of it and see the sense of it. But here from a certain point of view in this country people have already got things pretty good in a way.. They don't have to work too hard, They can get by without working. Life's pretty easy. Everything's more or less supplied, more or less laid on. So they can't really see in a vivid way in many cases the need for Buddhism.

We are living in a devaloka here and in New Zealand too in another sort of way.

Sona; When you come into the Friends from the world you actually have to give up a lot. If you've got a job and so on you actually become financially worse off than you were. So in a sense you have to sort of come down to the human realm.

~ Yes. If you go to India you come down to the Hell realm. But the hell realm is actually quite interesting. Though it's very painful and difficult there are all sorts of interesting possibilities and lots of things happening. Hell is always more interesting than heaven. We can see this in Western art. I was reading about this recently in a book by Allan Watts. He gives two illustrations by the same artist - Gustave Dore - who illustrated among other things Dante's Divine Comedy and he's given on facing pages an illustration from heaven which is very dull indeed - it shows God and all the angels and there's the angels arranged in neat sort of circles, thousands and thousands of angels, and there's Dante and Virgil, two little shadowy figures looking at them. It's a rather dull sort of composition. Then there Lucifer in Hell. His big bat wings and with his chin on his hand and brooding over it all and all sorts of strange and weird forms around him. that's really quite interesting,

So hell is more interesting than heaven because the heaven is only mentally conceived of course whereas the hell is something actually experienced.

So I think the Indian hell is much more interesting than the English heaven. It's a rather dull sort of puritanical sort of heaven. It's not a joyful pagan sort of Valhalla or anything like that. It's just a bit dull. It's a bit respectable. The saints all wear business suits. (Laughter) And have fountain pens in their breast pockets and cheque books!! (Laughter) and of

course it's raining! In English heaven you get rain but in the Indian hell at least you get warmth and sunshine and heat.

Roger Jones: The hell realms have more sort of Buddha seeds so...

S: Technically they do actually, yes.

_____ so there's more impetus to get out of that situation.

S: One really sees this in India. A strong impetus to get out of the situation. As regards the ex-untouchable Buddhists not out of the situation in the traditional purely religious sense but out of the existing social economic cultural and educational and religious situation into something entirely new. A new way of life. So it's completely open there as it were. They don't want to have anything to do with say Hinduism which means really Indian culture and social life in general. Some of our Friends there started listening to western classical music, because Indian classical music is bound up with Hindu mythology and they don't want anything to do with that. So they can make much more of a new start in a way than we can here because even though we've say suffered from christianity there's a lot of non-christian culture. We can still enjoy Shakespeare. There's a touch of christianity but not too much. We can enjoy Goethe, he was a pagan. They don't have figures like that in India. There are great poets. There are great artists and all that but they're very Hindu. Everything is bound up with Hinduism.

They want to dissociate themselves from Hinduism so they have to dissociate themselves to a great extent from the entire Indian cultural tradition in a way that we don't have to do this. We don't have to dissociate ourselves from the entire western cultural tradition. We can go back behind and beyond christianity. We can go back to the Romans, we can go back to the Greeks. They haven't got anything like that. The only thing they can go back to historically is Buddhism and you can't really go back to Buddhism, you have to go forwards to Buddhism.

But they've nothing in their cultural tradition which is non-Buddhist on which they can draw. If it isn't Buddhism well it's practically all Hinduism, and again they don't want anything to do with that. So some of them tend to turn a bit towards western culture. It's just very few. Those who are western educated but this is going to increase. Their own culture is so imbued with Hinduism which means the caste system that they feel that they can't have anything to do with it. They've very little sympathy with it. They can't identify with it.

Anyway hopes and expectations for your own benefit - give them up!

Alright next line.

~Jones; "Turn away from the ranks of men and the eight worldly concerns."

S: What are the eight worldly concerns? The word in Pali is Uokadhammas or Lokadhammas - worldly principles. The chinese translation usually has worldly winds because they buffet you and blow you about. So what are these. These are the pairs of worldly opposites. Gain and loss. Pleasure and pain, Praise and blame, Success fame and disgrace. You get these in the Mangala Sutta. The mind is free from these, not effected by these. Really it is true that our minds are really effected by

these things. Someone speaks nicely to you, praises you for something you've done, you feel so elated, so pleased. Then you get a bit of criticism, you come right down perhaps. Or there's a pleasure, maybe a nice meal that you thoroughly enjoy then there's a horrible toothache which torments you perhaps for an hour or two. And then maybe you get a good reputation in your job and then for some unaccountable reason you lose that and everybody is looking down on you as incompetent and useless and a bungler. In that way it goes on, day by day even hour by hour sometimes, all these ups and downs and your mind is never steady, your mind is always imbued with the effects of these things. It's constantly changing and you don't realise that. You don't have any mind usually independent of these reactions. Your mind usually is these reactions. It's not that here are you like a great sort of mountain and these sort of - the praise and the blame and the pain and t~::~e pleasure, they just come and touch you while you remain firm in the middle - no, you're completely overwhelmed by them. Whether they're from your point of view positive or negative and you identify with them and you are that reaction for the time being.

So you change, now you are happy, now you are sad, now you are elated, now you are depressed, but~there's no you in the middle so to speak. No mind in the middle which is unshaken by all this. You're at the mercy of these lokadhammas. The only time when you're not to some extent usually is when you're meditating, at least when you have a good meditation. Sometimes these reactions don't leave you alone even then.

Sona; What are these called in Pali again?

S: Lokadhammas or dharma in Sanskrit.

(Pali Quote) in the Mangala Sutta - Touched by the eight dhammas, the worldly dhammas, the mind does not move. That is the greatest blessing. It comes right at the end.

Anyway that's only half of it. "Turn away from the ranks of men and the eight worldly concerns." Are the ranks of men to be taken very seriously do you think. Is it just ranks in the sense of rows or is it ranks in the sense of a sort of hierarchy? Do you think a sort of worldly hierarchy is suggested?

Roger Jones; Yes. There are certain things which are embodied in manly human samsaric sort of ways.

S: Very often your loss and gain, your pleasure and pain is bound up with your position as it were within the hierarchy. Hierarchy not in a sort of natural spiritual sense but in a more artificial even worldly sense. You might be born into a family which is regarded by your society as a very lowly ~one so you suffer because of that because you're conscious of other people looking down on you on account of your dress or your accent or colour or whatever it may be.

Sona; Or conversely.

S: Or conversely yes, you're affected by that too.

Roger Jones; Or you happen to have a certain talent which happens to be useful.

S: Fashions have changed even since I returned from England. When

I returned it was the ad men who were the sort of aristocracy so to speak if you know what ~ mean. After that for a while it was those who were in TV. Now it seems to be those who are into computers. It's what fashionable well connected young men who come down from Oxford and Cambridge want to get into apparently.

Roger Jones; Or big stores actually.

S: Or big stores. Oh. (Laughter). This is the very latest is Th. Taking over Selfridges or Harrods. Right that's interesting.

Roger Jones; It's a whole new movement.

S: A whole new mythos. Now you know what you're missing out on! (Laughter) So there may be sort of subtle psychical links between say Harrods and Selfridges and our own modest little co ops and wholefood shops.

Roger; The shopkeepers are coming back.

S: We're going to be a nation of shopkeepers again.

Roger; On a much grander scale.

Dhammadhamma; He is talking to women though. That's what I can't understand.

S: That's true. Turn away from the ranks of men Don't compete! You're women. Don't compete. He could be saying that. Or he could be using men in the sense of human beings.

Dhammadhamma; I was thinking maybe even just sort of not get attracted to that, the ranks of men. Not get involved.

S: I doubt whether he is saying that. I think one could say That women who'd got this far and are having that sort of advice addressed to them, in a sense had ceased to be women and had become men, you could say I had become more like individuals.

Had lost perhaps the characteristic womanly weaknesses and could be considered just as individuals. But perhaps you could also say that for a woman who is developing as an individual the danger, the near enemy so to speak, is pseudo masculinity. Pseudo masculinity for a woman does not represent individuality. So you could consider it as a sort of warning. Turn away from the ranks of men and the eight worldly concerns. In other words don't, because you have as it were adopted a manly attitude, because you have become to some extent individuals, don't think that in order to develop further you've got necessarily to be involved with distinctively masculine activities. Don't think you've necessarily got to compete in the way that men naturally compete. That would be a near enemy so to speak. I see this. I see even with our own movement that for women who are thinking in terms of development a career and professionalism is the near enemy. That can become a substitute for the spiritual life. Do you see what I mean or is it not clear?

Roger: You mean they aren't allowing their so called instinctive nature to let play.

S: It's as though their urge to develop is side tracked into a

career.

John Roche; Within the movement do you see this.

S: There are a few instances. No need to mention any names but one sees this happening. In other words in the case of such women they see development in terms of doing the sort of thing that usually men do and having a career in the way that a man has a career. They see this as development which it may be even psychologically, but from a spiritual point-of view it's a sidetrack for them. Because they get this, they achieve a measure of success in that and they're satisfied and they don't want to go any further.

Viramati; You're saying they're getting out of touch with the fact that they're women and as women their development will follow a different path to that of men.

S: Yes, they also get out of touch in that sort of way. But even supposing that they are a bit masculine for the sake of argument it's as though their urge to develop becomes fully satisfied with a career. I mean the very thing that a man takes for granted and when he gets involved with spiritual life thinks in terms of giving up they regard as an achievement which fully satisfies them in some cases. And which they far from thinking in terms of giving up they want to hang onto it, to the detriment of their contact with the spiritual community, because their main sphere of activity is the world or their professional and business world and therefore they don't really develop any further.

Roger; Have you spoken at length with any women about this?

S: Oh yes. I've discussed it with three of them. Oh yes indeed. Roger; Do they readily recognise that?

S: No they don't. They resist. They put up quite a bit of resistance. They don't see it in fact actually. They don't see it.

Vajramati; They might have changed their role and they consider because they've changed they're sort of growing and that's sort of enough.

S: This puts it in a nutshell. Yes. They think that change of role is growing. Yes indeed. That puts it very well. Maybe to a certain slight extent but it's not enough in itself. Even if you change your role, yes you are enlarging your sphere. You're extending your capacities, fair enough that's good as far as it goes. But a mere change of role is a change as it were on the horizontal. So it's good as an extension on the horizontal but it doesn't represent a change vertically so it doesn't represent any growth or development.

John Roche; I suppose we could apply that to ourselves perhaps in terms of functions. I'm talking about men now. You find a function which you think is getting you somewhere and it would be quite a danger to get stuck with that function.

S: Yes indeed. You might be the chairman of a company and a good

capable chairman so you take it for granted when you get involved in the FWBO you become chairman of the nearest centre. Because you're good at being chairman. Well leaving aside other factors that could represent a merely formal change. It's not even a change of role. You simply change the terms of the role slightly but you're functioning more or less in the same way. Other factors being equal it's assumed say you're not getting on say very well with your meditation and not doing much study, you're just administering the centre well there's not all that much difference between that and what you were doing before.

Ideally that should never happen because by the time you get as an Order member to being chairman of the centre even if you were a chairman before of a company you should have been put through it to such an extent that you can be the chair man of the centre without it being just a continuation of your previous role. But I think we should beware of asking people within the Friends immediately to do the very thing that they were doing before. In some ways it's not been a bad thing that at the very beginning some Friends, some Order members had to give up their talents, had to sacrifice their talents when they came into the FWBO because there was no scope for them and subsequently after some years find that now there was a use and then go back to them.

So they had given them up and I think that is quite important. So I think we should beware of say bringing people straight in or catching hold of people who had come in and at once asking them to do within the Friends the very thing that they were doing outside the Friends. I think it would probably be good without say generalising too much OT too heavily. It would probably be good if they had a bit of a rest from what they were normally doing before. Not that they need permanently give up that particular activity but others especially should not just assume that because they were good at that therefore that's what they are going to do within the Friends. They might be very good at it. It may not therefore necessarily be the best thing for them, as individuals, to do. Perhaps they need to develop other aspects of themselves. Perhaps that would be the best thing for them. I think we just have to watch this. If you're a good bricklayer when you come into the Friends not at once put you onto bricklaying. You might have been doing it for fifteen years and were so fed up with it it's not good for you to continue even though you are pretty good at it.

Sona; The only way in which that falls down is that there aren't normally any other bricklayers.

S: You can teach. You can teach and then hand over.

The next section £(Psauas~~t different so we' 11 leave that until the afternoon.

Dhammamati; Did you say what Ganachakras were?

S: A round offering. I'm not sure what that means. A circular offering. I think simply offerings which are round in shape. It's a particular kind of Tibetan offering. It's not a (Tolma). Maybe I can look it up and see. ~ might have a book somewhere where it gives it. (Looks for a book and begins searching in it) I think it's in "The Cult of Tara 11.

In any case the making of the offering is an expression of

devotion.

Sthiramati; When you were talking about the Land of the Ogres it reminded me of the Sutra of Golden Light series when you talked about that battle between the asuras and the gods which effects the general atmosphere of the society.

Sona; His advice is quite uncompromising - give them up!

S: Yes. This is quite a point in a way. Sometimes people are so involved with their problems and they want solutions and what shall I do but very often it's quite simple, just give it up. But that is sometimes the last solution that they're prepared to consider. It's as simple as that, just give it up but they don't want to give it up, they want to preoccupy themselves with it. In a sense they want to be involved with it.

_____ : In a sense it's the hardest thing to do.

S: Even to give up something that is causing you suffering is sometimes quite difficult. It's not that people find it difficult to give up pleasant things. In some cases it's more easy to give up the pleasant things. You're less bound to the pleasant things than you are to the unpleasant things. That sounds quite odd doesn't it. You must be a very sick and neurotic person in that case but sometimes you are. You find this in the case of the so called relationships. If your relationship has been pleasant and happy in a healthy sense I'm thinking of say intersexual relationships, it's relatively easy to give it up but if it's been neurotic, painful, tense, difficult, traumatic, it's quite difficult to give it up sometimes.

Sona; Why is that?

S: Well the attachment is very strong. It's the strength of The attachment that has made it difficult and unpleasant. (murmurs of realisation) and therefore because the attachment is so strong it's also difficult to give it up. If it was pleasant well it's because you are a healthy cheerful objective not so very much attached person, therefore the relationship was pleasant and therefore you find it comparatively easy to give it up. Because there's been a measure of satisfaction in a pleasant relationship so you can afford to give it up but in the case of a difficult relationship perhaps or the pain fraught one you haven't had much satisfaction, you haven't got what you were after, you don't want to give up till you've got it. But perhaps the very terms of the situation prevent you ever from getting it, but you just go on. This painful relationship just perpetuates its~lf and you can't break away. This is what one sees with some people.

~er Jones; I have a feeling there's quite a difference in the advice to these ladies and the glorious noble queen. I'm not entirely sure that I can put my finger on it but I just feel that the whole feel of it is really quite.

Sona; It's more refined actually. The advice given seems....

S: Wellperhaps it's because the queen isn't going to leave home rust yet. Perhaps in the case of these two women there is the prospect of them leaving home pretty soon. So he gives in a way a

more radical, a more ascetic sort of advice which he doesn't give to the queen.

Viramati; This seems to be more towards the negation and the other seems to be more towards some (creating)

S : Their social backgrounds are different. There's the glorious noble queen and then there's the young Himalayan woman Mangala the dog keeper. And she comes from a border area and is probably not very cultured, not that the Tibetans themselves were all that cultured at that time. She keeps dogs.

John Roche; Is that professionally?

S: Apparently. Which isn't a very exalted occupation, but she's also described as the dakini of joyousness. She's a rather unusual or extraordinary person and there's Yeshe Tsogyal who afterwards became at least one of the twenty five principal disciples of Padmasambhava and who recorded this particular biography according to tradition. So they are rather exceptional. So perhaps he is giving them a more demanding teaching in a way.

Anyway we haven't finished with his teaching yet.

Sona; But if one just sort of quickly goes ahead and looks over what's to come it doesn't seem as though he's talking about insight and meditation and so on like he was to the queen. He's talking much more about, perhaps more about sila.

S: Well perhaps the way of life that these two women are going to follow is such that it'll be very much more easy for them to meditate and for insight to arise. Perhaps in the case of the queen he talked to her about it more because the conditions of her life were less favourable to its development.

viramati; Maybe they're also leading part of that path anyway. I mean they're his disciples whereas the queen may have just met him.

S: Yes the queen's more like a devotee you could say whereas They're more like disciples. Looking at it another way the queen may be is a sort of womanly woman. These two perhaps are more as it were masculine women. They're more evolved, they're more truly individuals. The queen is very devoted but perhaps in their case there's the possibility of commitment.

Sona; It is slightly similar because he sort of says just relax, in the previous section you don't have to sort of do anything and here he just says well give them up.

S: The teaching to the queen is more Tantric so technically it is more advanced but one really wonders about that. In the case of these other two women the teaching seems to be more well almost Hinayanic but that is the basis for an actual realisation of the Mahayana, an actual realisation of the Mahayana is the basis of the practice of the vajrayana.

Sona; It's interesting actually how this particular chapter is laid out. This canto's laid out in this way because it's sort of like, you read the first part and it gives you an appetite and then it starts giving you some practical (

which if that had come first you probably wouldn't have got on to the second thing.

S: That's true.

Viramati; Inspiration first.

S: Yes right. The mind is gladdened first.

~ger; Is the whole book actually done in these sort of chapters?

S: All these chapters which the translator called cantos and Thell the story of Padmasambhava's life interspersed with hymns and prophecies and catalogues of books translated and so on. Descriptions of exploits, lists of demons overpowered (Laughter).

Vajramati; Is it his whole life or just the period he was in Tibet?

S: It's his whole life. It's two volumes.

Sona; Is it similar to the Evans Wentz..

S: It's very similar, yes. It is practically the same version. We'll have a short session this afternoon and no doubt we'll be able to finish the chapter.

Vajramati; "Do not own even a needle or a thread: externally offer everything to the Three Jewels, internally make one hundred offerings to the pure field of the Buddha; mediate perform as man~ ganachakras as you can."

S: So that's pretty drastic! (Laughter)

_____ To say the least!

S: We mentioned earlier on or reference was made earlier on to The fact that there seems to be some difference between the teaching given to the queen and that given to these two women and clearly the teaching given to the two women does tend in the direction of renunciation one could say.

It says do not own even a needle or a thread. Why does he say not even a needle or a thread. Do you see any particular reason in this? Is it just because they are very ordinary insignificant things and he's saying don't own even the smallest thing, or. ...

Son a; Is it something connected with the Vinaya?

S: Ah yes. There are eight things which the monk is allowed to possess or to own individually. That is to say three robes, a begging bowl, a belt, a water strainer, a razor and a needle and thread. I don't recollect if the needle and thread come as the last on the list but these the monk or nun is permitted to possess individually. Those eight things are his or her personal property. Everything else which is in the vihara belongs to the local order, that is to say the local bhikkhu sangha corporately and members of the sangha are permitted to enjoy the use of those articles, that is to say the vihara itself, the beds, the tables, the chairs et~, but they do not own them. All that they own is their

eight requisites. But in connection with this matter of requisites it could be said or the question could be put that the Buddha, if it was in fact the Buddha, permitted these minimum possessions and did not permit anything bigger or more valuable to be possessed individually, in order to reduce the greed of the monks. This was the idea, but is it really as simple as that. Do you actually cut out greed by reducing the amount of personal possessions. It's almost as though the greed is a fixed quantity. I've mentioned this idea before. It's as though everybody had a sort of fixed quantity of greed psychologically speaking. I've mentioned this idea previously in connection with anger and hatred. It's as though there's a fixed quantity of anger and hatred in anybody which finds expression irrespective of circumstances.

So you don't become necessarily less irritated or less angry just because circumstances have changed. It isn't as simple as that. You continue to be irritable and angry and you find fault with good circumstances because of that quantum so to speak of anger which is within you just as readily as with bad circumstances. So if there is a certain quantum of greed within you you're just as greedy psychologically speaking whether you possess a palace or whether you possess a hovel. This is put forward rather strongly and crudely as it were but I think there is an element of truth in this. And it may be as difficult for you to give up your hovel as it is for a king to give up his palace. You are not necessarily more attached because you've got something bigger, especially if you've simply inherited it, nor are you necessarily less attached because what you own is comparatively little. You may not have the ability to acquire more. So it is true that by restricting the bhikkhus possessions to these eight minor articles, yes, the opportunities to adding to your greed are perhaps diminished but on the other hand, even though you own only those eight things, you can be very strongly attached to them.

There's a story in this connection- I hope I can remember it correctly - it concerns two monks, one of whom apparently had lots of possessions in a sense. He was an active monk and he was doing a lot of work so he had accumulated several viharas and they were well equipped and well furnished and all the rest of it, and he had an old friend who was leading a very simple life, and this old friend had simply these eight requisites and especially his bowl. So one day a bit of a discussion arose between them about giving up things and the monk who was living very simply in his cave with his eight possessions, his eight articles, he challenged the well to do monk who had all these things saying, I think you're attached and you couldn't give up, you couldn't just walk out straight like that out of the door leaving absolutely everything behind. So the first monk said yes I could. So the second one said, bet you couldn't, bet I could. Alright the second one said if I do it will you do it, thinking he couldn't possibly give up everything so the second monk said yes OK, come on let's go off together. So he started walking out of his palace and he walks along the road. Then suddenly the other monk who lived this ascetic life he suddenly remembered and said Oh there's my bowl back in my cave, I've got to go back and get it. (Laughter) So the other monk said. You see I could just walk straight out leaving everything, you can't even leave your own bowl! (laughter)

So you can be more attached to these few little possessions that you have than to quite extensive possessions. So maybe Padmasambhava is getting at this or has this at the back of his mind. To give up things like houses and lands and money is not

enough. You've got to give up your three robes and you've got to give up your begging bowl, you've got to give up your water stainer, you've got to give up even your needle and thread, which doesn't maybe mean so much a literal giving up of it because you need these things, alright, but being prepared to give them up, being prepared to lose them and not transferring your strong property sense from the big article simply to the small ones. It rather reminds me of one of these Zen sayings or poems where an old Zen master is supposed to say, 'last year in respect of poverty he came down to a gimlet's point, this year there's not even room for a gimlet!' So this is what one's got to be prepared for so to speak. And the sign of whether you're detached or not detached is whether you're able to surrender something when the time comes. This is the real criterion and hopefully time does come when you're called upon to give up that particular thing. There are people who stay in different places and can accumulate quite a number of things but when the time comes to leave they're quite happy just to walk out leaving all those things behind. There are other people who want to take everything with them all the time so they must go on accumulating. So you can see that Padmasambhava is stating the ideal of non possession which of course is essentially mental really, to these two women in a very uncompromising form.

He says do not own even a needle and thread. Don't consider that even a needle and thread belongs to just you. In other words in practice be willing to share it and let others use it and let others borrow it. There is a difficulty here because everybody knows common property is nobody's property. It's almost as though something needs to belong to somebody technically just so that somebody had the actual responsibility for it.

Supposing there are books say in the common library, well you can almost guarantee that some of them will go missing or some will be taken away or some will be mistreated and will become dog eared just because they're not one person's property so that he has the responsibility of looking after them or chasing them up and this is rather unfortunate. It's rather like not being able to get people to work without offering an incentive. Not being able to get people to care about looking after things unless at least technically they are their very own things, their personal property, but it should be possible. It should be possible to have a situation within a community where everything belongs to everybody and anybody can use anything but everybody looks after everything just as though it was their own property. But you know for yourselves how difficult it is to arrive at that state of affairs. At least there should be the attitude of well it really belongs to everybody. If anybody wants to borrow it they're free to borrow it. But you know maybe you'll have to just make sure that they do return it or they look after it properly.

So then there's the corollary, externally offer everything to the Three Jewels. In a sense it's not even that everything belongs to all the people in the community, everything belongs to the Three Jewels. Very often in Ancient India property was dedicated to the Three Jewels. In practice that meant the local chapter of the monastic Order but the monks themselves even collectively needed to remember that this has been dedicated by say pious lay people or offered by pious lay people for the benefit of Buddhism as a whole, for the advancement of the dharma, not just for our own separate enjoyment, even collectively.

So therefore Padmasambhava says on the one hand do not own even a needle or a thread. Externally offer everything to the Three Jewels. Just consider that whatever you own whether individually or collectively is held by you in trust for the Three Jewels

so to speak. It's easy of course to misuse this. Sometimes rich people say 'I don't own anything, I consider myself just a trustee. I don't really own anything. But those are just words. They act as though it really is theirs and it's only a rationalisation very often when they say that they consider themselves God's trustees. They may be God's trustees but they think that they're God.

So one should have the attitude that everything belongs to the Three Jewels. The Centre belongs to the Three Jewels. The Co op belongs to the Three Jewels even one's clothes belong to the Three Jewels etc., etc, You use everything, you utilise everything for the benefit of the dharma. You might even consider stamping inside library books "This book belongs to the Buddha" (Laughter).

But it does raise this question of ownership, whether people really do need to own things. Some people do it seems.

_____ - It's the same thing about money. It gives people a sort of certain confidence if they've got a number of possessions.

S: I don't think it's just a question of confidence though clearly possession of money does give you confidence. It also gives you freedom in a sense but it gives you the freedom to fulfill your desires which is not real freedom. It also gives you the opportunity or the possibility of doing positive and even skilful things which perhaps you couldn't have done if you hadn't got the money. I know of people who haven't been able to go on retreat sometimes because they didn't have the money.

Sona; This brings up the whole question of should an individual work for a co op so that the chairman can decide what to do with the profits or should the individual decide. Ideally in a co op situation the group come together in a collection of individuals and decide together.

S: Well ideally they should.

Sona; That doesn't seem to work.

S: Well it should work.

Sona;- Maybe people don't want to be too bothered with what happens to the profits.

S: That may be some sort of abdication of responsibility. Maybe They just want to be looked after and told what to do and when they can go on retreat and away on holiday or whether they can have a new pair of socks and all the rest of it.

Roger; The interesting thing is when the co op expands to some thousands of people how do you start deciding practically what they want.

S: This raises a further question. If you want to keep things on so to speak a personal level and have the possibility of individual participation in the decision making process you have to keep things small so therefore that suggests that if this is a vital principle for you, you will avoid those enterprises which involve too many people who are not able to have a direct say in the management of things.

Sona; Or alternatively if things weren't so small you could actually

pay people a realistic - actually share out all profits to the individual members of the co operative and they would decide individually.

S: But there are still decisions to be taken as to the running of the project. It's not just a question of what is to be done with the profits. It's a question also of how to run the whole project. The conditions at work, the hours of work etc. Even the question of the remuneration itself.

Sona; I sometimes wonder whether co ops are going a bit against the sort of natural hierarchy. On the one hand you've got sort of like taking away from the individual his responsibility for his life. On the other hand it's like assuming that everyone is equal in a sense; Everyone has got an objective view of what needs to be done whereas if you've got a natural hierarchy one assumes that some people can see a bit more clearly what needs to be done and therefore they could

S: Well in a sense we do have that in the co ops because membership of the co ops is restricted to some extent. One always has a predominance of Order members and mitras who are either committed or involved. So it isn't really, or at least if they are all say Order members and mitras, it doesn't matter if the process is democratic because the difference between them isn't all that great. But if you had people from outside who had no knowledge of or sympathy with the FWBO ideals then there wouldn't be any question of equality between them and the mitras and the Order members.

Roger; But where does that put them in the place in the co op.

S: They would be workers. They would be employees rather as distinct from working members of the co op.

Roger; But then how would you treat them as individuals. That introduces a rather interesting element.

S: Well you would treat them as individuals to the extent that they were individuals but it has to be recognised that not everybody is an individual. So if you are required to treat people who are not fully individuals as individuals it creates in fact a false situation and this is what we often find happening.

Viramati; So you do have a natural hierarchy within the co op.

S: So you do have a natural hierarchy. Well not technically within the co op because the employees are not strictly speaking within the co op.

Sona; But technically you don't but in actual practice you do don't you. For instance at the moment the chairman of a centre if he's also in a co op he normally has the sort of ability to sway things in the way that he would like things to be done and one can't really see a change in this assuming that everyone sort of goes on developing you've always got this sort of one person

S: Well this of course places a further responsibility upon the chairman really to see that each individual member of the co op

is really getting what he needs and that his individual interests aren't subordinated to the sort of as it were organisational needs of the Co op or the centre. Because after all everything exists ultimately for the sake of the individual and the development of the individual so that the live individual and the live individual's needs are not to be subordinated to the requirements of the administrative machinery.

So that is very important.

Sona; I just sometimes think that maybe like the co op... there's too much importance given to the word co op because in actual fact I don't think you can actually have a Co op in any situation. I think you've always got a company with some people sort of leading the way and others sort of being influenced by them. I think the whole idea of a co op is a bit silly really. That assumes that everyone is equal.

John Roche; I don't think it means necessarily . There seems to be some confusion that a co op has somehow got to be some kind of democratic organisation. I don't think necessarily that's implied is it. Doesn't it simply mean that people co operate.

S : That's true. I think it is interpreted in say non FWBO circles or would be interpreted as everybody having an equal voice but I think probably within the FWBO we shouldn't look at it in that sort of way, that everybody has a voice but it is recognised that all voices are not necessarily equally relevant. That it will be recognised among all those present that certain people have better experience and better understanding and better insight and that therefore what they say in the Co op meeting carries more weight.

Viramati; As the businesses seem to get more (Streamed?) different businesses within the Co op seem to have one or two people who have the overall view of the Co op whereas the other people are in charge of their various areas within the co op, the various businesses.

S I think the danger though is that the as it were weaker members of the co op get their individual interests neglected. Maybe they don't feel able to speak up for themselves and they feel they must subordinate themselves to the requirements of the Co op collectively considered or the requirements of the Centre and perhaps their own requirements as individuals are not therefore being met and that may have in the end a detrimental effect on them. They may even become conscious of it and start feeling vaguely exploited and become a bit resentful or even not work so well. Just because they are not getting what they need.

So therefore a greater responsibility still rests upon those who are stronger say within the Co op and who do have in fact more say, more influence and of course therefore more responsibility.

Viramati; It seems we want to keep in mind that the work situation is a situation therefore of growth, not just of....

S: Growth for the individuals, not a growth for the organisation as such. It's the growth of individuals that is to be considered, not expansion of the organisational structure, which is only a means of achieving certain goals for individuals.

And also one must be careful to see that the Co op structure doesn't deprive the individual members of their autonomy and their

capacity to make decisions about their individual lives. Anyway what are the next couple of lines?

"Internally make one hundred offerings to the Pure field of the Buddha". Do you understand this conception of the pure field? Do you understand the conception of the Buddha Field? The Buddha Kshetra.

This is an idea developed more by the Mahayana that every Buddha has as it were a sort of field of operations. He's like a sort of glorified Centre or Co op chairman if you like and he's responsible for the development or for helping in the development of all the beings within that particular area. In the case of Buddhas of course a whole system of worlds, a whole world system or even a number of world systems. So there's a distinction made between a Buddha's area of knowledge because in principle he knows conditioned existence as such, so that in principle his knowledge is conterminous with conditioned existence as such. A distinction is made between that and the more limited area within which he is so to speak the Buddha, the more limited area of which he is the Buddha, and for the beings within which he is spiritually responsible. So that area and the beings within it is called his ~uddha kshetra, his Buddha field. So just as in the case of an ordinary person he has a certain area of influence, so in the case of a Buddha there's an area of actual influence.

Now these areas of influence, these Buddha fields or Buddha kshetras are of two kinds, pure and impure. The impure kinds are worlds containing hells, that is purgatories, animals, hungry ghosts and asuras. Pure Worlds are worlds in which we have only men and gods. Or in a sense in which you have only well perhaps gods is not the right term, perhaps men is not the right term, where you don't have the distinction of sex also. Sometimes it's said where you don't have women but it isn't strictly speaking that, it is where the distinction of gender does not exist. So a world of that sort is called a pure world.

The most famous of all the pure worlds is Sukhavati, the happy land of Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite light. So it's as though a pure field or pure land as it's also sometimes called is a sort of sphere of a Buddha's influence from which he has succeeded over the aeons in eliminating everything that might hold back the person born into that world or into that land or into that sphere. Do you get the idea?

So it's as though really a FWBO centre on earth should be a little pure land. It should be an area from which those responsible, especially the Buddha- like chairman have succeeded in eliminating all influences which are detrimental to the spiritual development of the persons coming within that centre or within the sphere of influence of that centre. So for instance you eliminate things like TV, transistor radios, you try to make the place nice and quiet. You eliminate superman comics and anything of that sort. Oh what a disappointment! (Laughter) You might even in certain cases eliminate members of the opposite sex, well not eliminate them but banish members of the opposite sex from that particular as it were consecrated area so that within that area there is nothing distracting, nothing to hinder you. Everything helps you. So that is a sort of miniature pure land.

So the Buddha's pure land is a sort of whole universe organised along those lines, where you've nothing to do so to speak except listen to the dharma and practise the dharma. So this is a pure land or pure field.

So Padmasambhava says internally make one hundred offerings to the pure field of the Buddha. So why do you think offerings

should be made to the pure field of the Buddha. What is the meaning of making offerings to the pure field of the Buddha. I must admit it's not very clear but perhaps we can get some idea of it.

John Roche; Is it like contributing to that influence?

S: Yes it's contributing to it but I think also making offerings to it in the hope of being so to speak reborn in it.

D1: iammati; What form would the offerings take if they were internal?

S: Exactly the same as the external offerings except that you imagine them so to speak, you visualise them and multiply them indefinitely~ Supposing literally you just would offer a few say beautiful flowers but when you offer mentally you do a sort of meditation, a sort of visualisation practice and you visualise enormous wonderful flowers such as don't exist on earth, maybe flowers made of jewels. You imagine hundreds and thousands of these and then you mentally offer them to the Buddha or the Three Jewels or to the Pure Land. This is what is meant by a mental offering. Not just sort of saying under your breath I offer a lot of flowers and incense. It's not like that, it's this visualisation and offering of these visualised things that are on a very spectacular scale and much more beautiful than any earthly offerings. It's a means of developing the whole spirit of giving and offering and worship so to speak and reverence, faith and devotion.

Just as for instance when you do the metta bhavana by visualising different people whom you know, especially when you do it in ever widening circles you develop your feeling of metta, so in the same way when you visualise yourself making all these mental offerings, things that you've created with your mind and multiplied and then offered, you just enhance, you just develop, you intensify your feeling of sort of reverential worship and offering everything to the Buddha or to the Three Jewels or the pure land, whatever it may be.

It also may be that you offer with the aspiration that by virtue of these offerings may I be reborn in the pure land. This is a very common traditional Buddhist practice.

And then it says 'mediately perform as many ganachakras as you can.' I'm not sure what is meant by medially or what the relevance of it here is taking it quite literally because it's as though externally you offer everything to the Three Jewels, internally you make one hundred offerings to the pure field of the Buddha and medially, as if to say in between the external and the internal, which should be in a way where the speech principle is, you perform as many ganachakras as you can. I'm not really sure what that means. One could interpret it as the ganachakra being a sort of verbal offering, maybe chanting and so on but a ganachakra doesn't usually mean that. It means the round shaped offering, the circular offering.

_____ Chanting round the rosary? 108 times.

S: Possibly. But earlier on the two ladies have surrounded the guru with one hundred ganachakras which does suggest a hundred of these actual offerings laid out in a circle around him. So that will have to remain a bit obscure I'm afraid.

And then it says,
 "The ill-adapted and incapable reach the land of mercy".

The land of mercy I think is the pure land itself. It's as though Padmasambhava is saying even if you cannot sort of aim directly at Buddhahood in this life make offerings in this way and then even if you're ill adapted to the spiritual life and incapable of much effort, by virtue of that you'll be reborn in the pure land, reborn in an environment more favourable to spiritual development. At least hobble along to the nearest centre.

So you can understand the pure land principle. The pure land represents say the same principle that we follow in forming a spiritual community or even setting up a centre. The same principle applied on a cosmic scale. It's a sort of cosmic spiritual community, and of course it's a happy land. All pure lands are happy lands even though only one of them is actually called such. The pureland in the east is called Abhirati, the exceeding delight, which is much the same sort of thing.

Alright next lines.

Sthiramati; "Reflect on the great dry misery of the cycle!
 Exhort others who have not shaken off the demon's grasp and win merit for yourselves!"

S: What's this reflect on the great dry misery of the cycle? The cycle of births and deaths of samsara, but what is the great dry misery, why dry? Assuming that the translation is completely accurate.

Sthiramati; It doesn't produce anything.

Sona; It's not creative, it's not fertile.

S: It could be somehow connected with trsna, thirst. You feel Wry when you've got a terrible thirst and it is trsna, thirst or craving which keeps the whole cycle going. In dependence upon craving arises suffering or the cause of suffering is craving, that's the second noble truth or the first and second noble truths rather. So it could have that sort of connection. The general meaning is clear isn't it.

Exhort others who have not shaken off the demon's grasp and win merit for yourselves! Who or what is this demon? This is probably Mara. There are four Maras mentioned in the scriptures. Another list you ought to know and be able to reflect upon. I've mentioned it before more than once. Four Maras

Well there is klesa mara, mara as the defilements, mara as unskilful mental states or if you like the figure of mara as the personification of unskilful mental states, that's the first mara.

Then there is m~tyu mara or mara as death. Because death ~pears as a sort of demon. Maccu mara in Pall. So mara as death because death is terrible to most people.

Sona; You could compare this to Cupid the god of love.

S: That's right yes. Klesa mara is more like say the god of Vove, love being one of the klesas but the god of love is also the god of death. The same deity is both eros and (anatos) in

in Tre~&ia~ ~~rtaS.

And then the third is kandha or skandha mara, mara considered as the five skandhas, that is to say conditioned existence itself.

And then there is devaputta or putra mara, mara the son of a god, that is to say mara as an actual sentient being existing on one of the planes of existence. That's the one who tempts so to speak the Buddha or threatens the Buddha shortly before his enlightenment.

So exhort others who have not shaken off the demon's grasp. That is exhort, encourage,, inspire, those people who have not yet shaken off the graps of mara. Whether you consider Mara as the passions or as death or as conditioned existence itself or even as an actual being inhabiting a particular plane of sentient existence. Wherever people have not yet succeeded in overcoming mara in any of these senses,exhort them, encourage them, inspire them.

What about this next line.

Vajramati; "Though slain within the mind, desire returns from the outside."

S: Well how could that be? If desire is slain within the mind Vt returns from the outside.

Dhammamati; Isn't it something like you might have purified the mind but like on the twelve nidanas you've got contact and feeling so that you're actually still in sensory contact with the world so that in fact at any moment the whole cha~n can start up again.

S: But how is that possible if the mind is purified? You can come in contact with the world through the senses if the mind is pirified it doesn't matter, The mind will remain pure. Nothing wrong with the senses, nothing wrong with sense perception. It's the mind that creates the trouble. So if desire is slain within the mind how can desire possibly arise from the outside. This is what Padmasambhava seems to be saying.

Brian Duff; When he says slain-he's probably not meaning it in its ultimate sense.

S:Right. I think this is actually what he's getting at, that very oft~n you think that you've slain a particular desire so it may be alright while you're on solitary retreat or in the pleasant atmosphere of the community of the more bracing atmosphere of the retreat. You may be quite convinced that you've overcome a certain difficulty, a certain defilement but if circumstances are changed and you're put into a situation which encourage the arising of that particular mental state to your surprise, as though from nowhere, it comes. You thought you had eradicated it, you thought you had eliminated it but up it comes as though from nowhere.

So though 'slain' - inverted commas - within the mind desire returns from the outside. It isn't literally from the outside of course it is actually coming from within but you've driven it so deep that you can't perceive it any more. It seems to have gone, it seems to have been slain. It's only when you come into a particular situation that awakens it so to speak, that you realise that it was not really slain at all, it was only asleep. This is the sort of experience we have repeatedly. People might feel they've overcome their bad temper, they were no longer

irritable but put them in a particular set of circumstances and their temper flares up again much to their surprise, their astonishment, even their humiliation and sometimes it's quite a shock to people to realise that they hadn't succeeded in eliminating a particular unskilful mental state.

Alright what about the next two lines.

John Roche; "Not other than the Holy Dharma is the lineage of leading others. Think of others in solitude whom no one aids!"

S: So not other than the holy dharma is the lineage of leading others. This is a bit obscure but I think the general meaning is clear. What do you think is meant by the lineage of leading others?

_____ Other religions.

S: No I don't think so. I think it refers to rendering help especially spiritual help to other living beings. It suggests that it's only if you belong to the lineage of the dharma. It's as though it's only through the dharma that you can really help others. Not other than the Holy Dharma is the lineage of leading others. If you want to lead others, if you want to help others, if you want to help them spiritually then you have to belong so to speak to the lineage of the dharma. You have to be in the spiritual tradition. You can only help them by spiritual means. You can only help them with the dharma. The ultimate help comes only from the dharma. I think this is the general meaning.

Think of others in solitude whom no one aids! So this suggests that you don't even have to be in direct physical contact with people. If your meditation so to speak is sufficiently powerful you can reach even those who are living in solitude and who have apparently nobody to help them, nobody to aid them in their spiritual life.

So not other than the Holy Dharma is the lineage of leading others. Think of others in solitude whom no one aids!

Alright carry on then.

John Wakeman; "Do not be loud and boastful rather depend on solitude."

S: This seems to stand by itself. Its meaning's fairly obvious I think. Do not be loud and boastful. rather depend on solitude. Because if you're living in solitude there's nobody to be loud or boastful with unless you start writing letters to people telling them what a wonderful retreat you're having, what a wonderful solitary retreat you're having. What great spiritual progress you've made.

Alright then next three lines.

Dharmapala; "Having renounced relatives, friends, achievement, food, clothing, external, internal and intermediate contingencies, with nothing of your own left to you depend on only what is necessary.

S: Again that's pretty drastic isn't it. Having renounced relatives, friends, achievement, food, clothing, external, internal and intermediate contingencies, with nothing of your own left to you,

depend only on what is necessary. So it suggests that relatives are not necessary, friends are not necessary, achievement is not necessary, food is not necessary, clothing is not necessary and so on. Well perhaps we could sort of paraphrase that a little and say that there's a lot of things that you consider necessary but which aren't really necessary. Some people would consider relatives necessary but are they really so necessary? What does one mean by them being necessary, necessary for what?

John Roche; It's almost like they shouldn't be allowed to be central, they shouldn't be too important.

S: Actually the line suggests they shouldn't have any importance or any place at all. Depend on only what is necessary. Presumably it could be taken in two ways. Either actually necessary for the bare maintenance of your physical existence or necessary for your spiritual development which in a broader sense would include the first of course. But perhaps we should just take it as meaning that we can get by if we adopt a spiritual point of view with very much less than we usually think we can. There's a lot of things that we usually consider as needs but which are not really needs - greeds rather than needs. Some people are convinced they can't manage without a car or can't manage without a television set or can't manage without a wife. After all who'll do the washing up!! Or can't do without a husband to earn the money.

So it suggests that one should ask oneself what can I do without, what can I cut down on?

Dhammami; There seems a real confusion between wants and needs.

S: Yes, yes. There's a little picture, a little illustration by Blake of a man stretching out a long arm towards the moon and sort of trying to grasp the moon with this elongated arm and underneath Blake has written, I want!

Perhaps it also suggests that in the case of the majority of people at least sometimes we should put ourselves in the position where we have to do without those things on which usually we are most dependant in a way, and at least study what is our experience and what is our reaction when we are so to speak deprived of them, and in that way we can get to know ourselves better. Right go away from relations, go away from friends, presumably ordinary worldly friends is meant. Give up any achievement or any attempt at achieving anything. Give up food, at least for a few days and see how you get on without it. Even give up clothing on certain occasions if you can do that without fear of being prosecuted by the police and external, internal and intermediate contingencies - this seems to cover absolutely everything. With nothing of your own left to you depend on only what is necessary.

It's really amazing say in India when you see how little you can get by on. I'm pretty certain that apart from things that are needed at the centre say like books and files and typewriter - probably Lokamitra and Padmavajra don't have anything more than they could just put in a large sort of bag, just a very few clothes and maybe two or three personal books and a small tanka and that's about all. It's all you need in India.

Sona; Living completely without money and things....

S: That's right. I did without even money for a couple of years and you can, at least you could in India. I don't know about now.

Perhaps you could. I'm not so sure. Lokamitra remarked that when Yuvaraj left India to return to England he had only a shoulderbag! So Lokamitra was able to give him a whole lot of books to bring because he had all this extra space so to speak.

Also you feel very much more free in that sort of way. Otherwise it's a real drag when you want to leave anywhere to go to the next place to pack up a whole lot of things. If all you've got is a couple of spare shirts and maybe two or three pairs of clean socks and a couple of books and that's that well you can just pack up within five minutes and off you go. There's no problem then. You're very lucky if you're in that position. It takes a bit of doing though! A lot of people would have to sell their houses and it would take two or three years sometimes to give up the bits and pieces you've collected in the course of half a lifetime.

Alright carry on then.

Brian Duff; "Like the leper, take and reflect on the humblest share."

S: Mmmm, like the leper. So it's as though Padmasambhava is saying let it be your ambition to be like a leper. So how do you think a leper is treated in Tibet or in India? A leper is the lowest member of society. He's ostracised just as in the Middle Ages in England. He had to carry a bell and warn everybody to flee at his approach.

So like a leper take and reflect on the humblest share. People give very little to lepers. A few rags, a few scraps of food and that's about all. So just live like that, considering yourself to be so to speak the lowest, not in any christian sense of pseudo humility and just accept what you barely need, just what a leper would be living on and reflect on that. So Padmasambhava is going strongly against the grain of all worldly ways of looking at things.

Right carry on with the rest then.

Campbell McEwan; "Since one can not rely upon all the laws, in the same way as one is deceived by a faithless friend, until death comes, do without whatever is unnecessary!"

S: So since one cannot rely upon all the laws. Laws I think here means dharmas or things or principles rather like in lokadhammas. Since one cannot rely upon any worldly thing, just as one cannot rely upon because one may be deceived by and will be deceived by a faithless friend, until death comes do without whatever is unnecessary. Because the more you depend on things which cannot be depended upon the more you'll be let down.

Alright just read the remainder then.

viramati; "And since absolutely nothing useless will arise, the endless wandering~of the mind will be conquered.

Even unto poverty, misery and death, contemplate the Great Perfection.

Do not fail to call on me! Do not despair!"

S: And since absolutely nothing useless will arise, - what do you think is meant by this? Since within you, within your life, within your mind, nothing will arise which is useless from the point of view of your spiritual life and spiritual development, therefore the endless wandering of the mind will be conquered. You will develop or you will evolve so therefore even unto poverty, misery and death contemplate the Great Perfection. Even in the

midst of all the contingencies of life just keep the high spiritual ideal clearly in your mind and act so as to direct yourself towards the realisation of that. In some ways create for yourself an extreme situation within which you'll be forced to evolve. If you have it all easy and nice and comfortable and devaloka like, the chances are you won't evolve. I'm going to talk a little bit about that this afternoon. I'll just mention it. So create a difficult situation for yourself. The situation is basically difficult anyway, we just disguise the fact from ourselves.

So maybe one should say well just tear away those disguises, confront the situation as it actually is in all its difficulty. Face up to it and be mindful of the highest spiritual ideal.

And then he says do not fail to call on me, that is to say invoke me or open yourself to the influence of whatever it is that I, Padmasambhava, represent, the sort of transforming influence or the spiritual ideal in its transforming aspect. The aspect in which it subdues the gods and demons so to speak.

And do not despair. However difficult things may be maintain firm faith in the possibility of spiritual development. Maintain firm faith in your own spiritual potential and then they'll be nothing to worry about.

So this is the advice that he gives them. So I think it can be said that, yes, there is some difference between the advice he gives to these two women and the advice he gave to the queen. The advice he gave to the queen, the teaching he gave to the queen was very beautiful. It had a sort of Tantric flavour but it suggests in the long run that the queen was a devotee at least for the time being rather than a disciple.

It seems as though these two women - the dog keeper who was also a dakini and Ye she Tsogyal, had a greater capacity for commitment and therefore he gave them a very much more demanding teaching which in fact demanded virtually everything of them.

So the two are quite well balanced. One is more like a teaching for somebody who had decided at least for the time being to remain at home and the other is a teaching for those who are so to speak on the point of departure from home.

Anyway we've got through the chapter, through the canto, quite nicely haven't we.