

General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

Hidden Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team

Sangharakshita in Seminar

Chapter Ten of "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation"

"The Training in an Enlightened Attitude"

[Taken from "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation" by Gampopa
- translated and annotated by Herbert V.Guenther. Published by Rider, London 1959]

Date: January 1980

Those Present: - The Venerable Sangharakshita (S:) Karola Adamczyk, [London - later ordained as Ratnamegha], Anne Murphy, [London], Annie Norman, [Croydon - later ordained as Ashokashri], Ulla Brown, [London - later ordained as Vajrapushpa - *easily confused by the transcriber as Suzannah as both come from Finland - apologies to both!*], Anjali, Srimala, Christabel, [Norwich], Sridevi, Dhammadinnā, Suzannah [Helsinki - *easily confused by the transcriber as Ulla as both come from Finland - apologies to both!*], Anne McMillan [Later ordained as Pārami].

Sangharakshita: Well, all right then, round we go.

"After an enlightened attitude has been formed, training starts in [A] aspiration and [B] perseverance. The following is a guide to the first type:

Five tasks complete the training in aspiration:

Not to exclude beings from our thoughts;

To be mindful of the usefulness of this attitude;

To accumulate the prerequisites;

Ever and again to purify this attitude and

To accept and reject the four positive and negative qualities respectively."

S: Mm. That is just a summary. So let's just go on and we'll deal with each one as we come to it in detail. So the first is....

"The first is the method of not violating an enlightened attitude; the second is the means by which that attitude does not deteriorate; the third is the method for strengthening it, the fourth for spreading and deepening it, while the fifth is the means by which it is not forgotten."

S: Yes. So the text now deals with each of these in detail, so we'll go on to the first of these.

"1. The method of not violating an enlightened attitude, which is called the training in thinking of sentient beings, is mentioned in the 'Ma.dros.pas zus.pa'i mdo. [Anavataptanagarajapariprcchasutra]

'When a Bodhisattva possesses one virtue, he has all the most excellent Buddha qualities. Which one? The attitude which does not exclude sentient beings from his thoughts.'

"So to exclude sentient beings implies adopting an attitude of determining not to think of a person who has wronged one, and even after cooling down not to help or harm him when the opportunity occurs.

Should you ask whether we can speak of excluding from our thoughts all sentient beings or only one, the answer is that except for Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas not even eagles or jackals can do it. Therefore, by excluding only one sentient being from our thoughts, if it is not remedied within one hour, the enlightened attitude is violated. To call ourselves Bodhisattvas while so excluding sentient beings and following another discipline is altogether unreasonable. It is like killing your only child and preserving his things. Therefore, since sentient beings are useful to us, how can we ever allow an enlightened attitude to be violated by excluding them from our thoughts? Since such an attitude may be violated by harming others, we must all the more develop compassion and establish the happiness and welfare of beings. This, indeed, is the nature of saintly people. As has been recorded:

*When harm has been done in return for a good deed,
Even then it has to be answered by Great Compassion.
The best men in the human world
Return a good deed for an evil one."*

S: Mm. Anyway the crucial sentence here is "Therefore, by excluding only one sentient being from our thoughts, if it is not remedied within one hour, the enlightened attitude is violated." The "Enlightened Attitude" by the way, is Guenther's own translation for *Bodhichitta* - "the will to", or as it's more usually rendered, "thought of enlightenment". It's that which really makes you a Bodhisattva, the "Enlightened Attitude", as he calls it. So, what does one mean by "excluding a sentient being from our thoughts"? Does it mean literally excluding him from our thoughts, or does it mean something else?

Ulla: ...not including..

S: Not including in what way, or in what respect?

Voices: ...in your mettā.

S: In your mettā, yes. - You say, "I'm not going to help that one, I'm going to help everybody else, but I'm not going to help him, or I'm not going to help her."

Voice: ...like rejection, because there's an emotional [reason?]

S: Yes, it is definitely rejection, exclusion, you will not be a Bodhisattva so far as that person is concerned.

Dhammadinnā: Therefore you're not a Bodhisattva.

S: Therefore you're not a Bodhisattva. It's not that if you want to be Bodhisattva, well...it's all right to exclude quite a large number of people, providing you are devoting yourself to a considerable number of people - well that is being a Bodhisattva. No! If you consciously exclude any one individual, any one sentient being, from the scope of your compassion, or your Bodhisattva activity, you are not the Bodhisattva unless you remedy it within one hour. That's quite a thought, in a way, isn't it?

Voices: Mm. Yes.

S: You cannot tolerate any violation of that enlightened attitude. This is quite difficult in a way, because you may be quite tempted if someone is very difficult or fractious, to think, well I'm just not going to have anything to do with that person, I'm just going to give up trying so far as they are concerned. They're outside my scope, you know, exclude them. You reject them. That is not the Bodhisattva attitude. You may feel, of course, for the time being, that person's attitude is such that I'm unable to do anything, but nonetheless you remain willing to do something as soon as the opportunity offers. But if you dismiss that person, so to speak, then your enlightened attitude is violated if you don't change it within an hour. They give you an hour's grace [laughter] since after all, human nature is a bit weak. You might get irritated, you might just say, you know, out of anger, "I'll just have nothing to do with you any more", but an hour is long enough to get over that, surely, and to say...

Voice: Is this once the Bodhichitta has really arisen?

S: Well, this raises this quite important question of "really arisen". One could say that that is in a way the test... if you can consciously think about anybody in that way, well, the Bodhichitta didn't really arise in the first place, or it did not arise with sufficient strength.

Dhammadinnā: Is that why there is an irreversible point with a Bodhisattva? That it arises, but it's slightly...

S: ...it cannot after that ever be violated. Yes. But that is quite an advanced stage. Until then one has to be very careful as in the corresponding context of "stream-entry". I mean, it is quite easy to get so annoyed with people that you just want to dismiss them. Of course you might feel like that towards a great number of people. But it points out, "Should you ask whether we can speak of excluding from our thoughts all sentient beings or only one, the answer is that except for Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas not even eagles or jackals can do it." What do you think is

meant by that? It's a bit obscure, but it seems to mean that it's possible for an Arahant or Pratyekabuddha to exclude from his thoughts - this is, of course, the Mahayana conception of the Arahant or the Pratyekabuddha - it is possible for him to exclude from his thoughts, totally, all sentient beings, because he is, supposedly, only concerned with his own enlightenment. Apart from those exceptions, even eagles and jackals can not do it. Even they have got some care for other sentient beings, at least their own young. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm. Yes..

S: That seems to be the meaning of the passage.

Dhammadinnā: It's like a natural human tendency. The potential is there.

S: Yes, to have some concern for others. I really think that the sort of standard Mahayana conception of the Arahant is of only theoretical significance. I don't think actually it is a psychological or spiritual possibility. I don't think that is so. It's as though the Arahant is symbolised as the theoretical extremity of spiritual individualism. I don't think you could actually find human beings of that sort. Yes, there could be a tendency to selfishness and appropriation of spiritual experience just for one's own benefit, but if one adopted that sort of attitude in the rigid way that the Arahant is supposed to, I don't think you'd get very far at all. I mean the way the Mahayana looks at the Arahant ideal, it seems to regard it as almost a sort of spiritual solipsism.

Voice: What's "solipsism"?

S: Extreme subjectivism. [Pause] It's quite a remarkable comparison, "To call yourselves Bodhisattvas while so excluding sentient beings and following another discipline" i.e. the Hinayana discipline "is altogether unreasonable. It is like killing your only child and preserving his things." Preserving his toys and so on in a sentimental sort of way, having killed him. So that is what it is like if you disown sentient beings and continue to call yourself a Bodhisattva. You could say, or I could say, "I'm a Buddhist, but I really do hate everybody." [Loud laughter] Well, is it possible?

Dhammadinnā: Can't you get away with that if you are a hate-type? (Laughter)

S: No. You have to hate unreality!

Voice: Ah.

Dhammadinnā: It seems as though it means you can't let communication slip. If there are negative things arising, then you shouldn't let it go on.

S: Yes, right. But if you do momentarily experience a breach in communication, you must repair it as quickly as you can. Otherwise it will continue to do you harm, what to speak of other people. I mean, just as it's said you need to keep your friendships in repair, in the same way, if

you do have any misunderstanding with anybody, well, you should just clear that up as quickly as you possibly can. It is so easy to become confirmed in one's attitudes if you allow them to continue for too long. It becomes a part of the established pattern of things that you don't like that person, or you don't get on well with that person. It becomes part of the accepted 'scene', so to speak. And the longer you leave it, I think, the more difficult it becomes to do anything about it. Within the hour it is comparatively easy. If you leave it for a few weeks or a few months, it just gets very difficult. So notice, the first of the quotations is "When a Bodhisattva possesses one virtue, he has all the most excellent Buddha qualities". It's a bit like one of the quotations in the previous chapter, or the other chapter, rather. But instead of compassion, it's, "The attitude which does not exclude sentient beings from his thoughts." Don't exclude anyone from your thoughts. Here, meaning, of course, your "Bodhisattva" thoughts, you know, your aspiration to help all beings. "So to exclude sentient beings implies adopting an attitude of determining not to think of a person who has wronged one, and even after cooling down not to help or harm him when opportunity occurs."

Voice: I'm sorry Bhante, what does the 'harm' mean?

S: Ah, no. It's a bit obscure. It's just careless English. "To exclude sentient beings implies adopting an attitude determining not to think of a person", that is not to think as a Bodhisattva with compassion of a person, "who has wronged one, and even after cooling down, not to help or harm him when opportunity occurs." You see what I mean?

Voice: Ah, right.

Dhammadinnā: So you cool down but you might still harm them.

S: You've cooled down so you haven't got the excuse of momentary anger or, being in a bit of a temper even after cooling down, you're still determined not to help him, or even to harm him if you had the opportunity.

Dhammadinnā: A more calculating revenge.

S: ...more calculating. Your anger has become from a hot anger has become cold anger, which is even worse. And sometimes we do have that tendency to "write off" somebody. Something happens, something goes wrong, there's a bit of a misunderstanding, there's a bit of a scene, and it's "I've finished with them!" You sort of mentally exclude them. You don't make any further effort to get on with them, you continue to cherish a quite negative attitude towards them.

Anne McMillan: Do you think, actually, that's less likely to happen if you express the thing at the time? I'm thinking of anger at somebody. Perhaps if you express it and then communicate later, maybe it is easier than if you leave it.

S: Could be. I wouldn't like to generalise about that.

Anne McMillan: Maybe it's just personal.

Dhammadinnā: Maybe that's too simple in this case. Maybe it's more things, a whole range of things which cause you to reject them. It's not so easy as just blowing up at them.

S: But do you think this sort of rejection of people is fairly common? I mean you don't have to be a Bodhisattva to have to beware of rejecting people. But is there that sort of tendency just to exclude people from your consideration, if not perhaps very explicitly, certainly implicitly. You're not going to have anything to do with them, or do anything to help them. Do you think this tends to happen?

Voice: In degrees, yes.

S: In degrees, yes. What do you think the reason for that is, apart from perhaps an actual quarrel with them?

Anne McMillan: Personalities.

S: Personalities? Mm.

Voice: Personality differences, yes.

Dhammadinnā: You don't try and sort out or face up to them.

S: Mm. In a sense you don't mind that you don't get on with them very well because perhaps you don't particularly want to. You don't find them personally sympathetic, or personally attractive, so there's no incentive from your point of view, to resolve any misunderstanding. You don't care, you don't especially want to get on with them. You don't especially want to be on good terms with them. They're not your sort, as it were. So probably one has to watch that sort of attitude, because it means attaching too much importance to purely personal subjective factors.

Sridevi: It's sometimes easier if it's somebody you find attractive.

S: Yes.

Christabel: Yes. It can be very subtle, because you can just compartmentalise somebody and put them into that group, and say "I don't have much to do with that group. I don't want to have anything to do with it", and shove it away, and then not notice if they change.

Ulla/Suzannah?: Or you feel you have something in common with some people and then other people you don't have anything in common with, and so it's just more of an effort to communicate with people you don't know very well, and with whom you don't have very much in common.

S: I think quite often we're put off by quite superficial things. In the way that a person looks, if they don't look quite right, or if they're not

especially attractive, even without the sexual factor coming in, if they're not very, well, they don't look very attractive, so to speak, as human beings. I think there is a faint tendency to just almost exclude them. Especially, maybe, if they're a bit old as well, something like that, or a bit ugly, you tend...eh? Isn't that so? Or a bit shabby even.

Voices: Yes. [laughter exploding at what is said]

S: Eh? What was that?

Annie Murphy: Shabbiness is worse, I think.

S: Shabbiness is worse, because you can do something about that. You can't do very much about your looks.

Christabel: Or if somebody reminds you, very superficially, of something unpleasant, you can write them off, because it conjures up things you don't want to feel about yourself.

S: Yes. There's an interesting little phrase here, "Since sentient beings are **useful** to us, how can we ever allow an enlightened attitude to be violated by excluding them from our thoughts?". "Sentient beings are useful to us".

Dhammadinnā: Well, they help us to develop the Bodhichitta. (Laughter) We couldn't do it without them.

S: Yes, yes. They help us develop the Bodhichitta. Just like these invaluable people mentioned in Shantideva's *Bodhicaryavatara* who actually beat you and attack you, because they give you that wonderful opportunity of practising patience. So they help you to be a Bodhisattva. If you weren't able to practise patience you couldn't become a Bodhisattva. So what enables you to practise patience? People, difficult people, [laughter] who actually sometimes do you the favour of attacking you and hitting you and speaking ill of you. But, foolish person that you are, says Shantideva, you reject this wonderful opportunity [laughter] of practising patience, which would help you to gain Enlightenment and you insist on becoming angry, which is going to do you untold harm. It's very rational, isn't it?

Anne Murphy: Should that be practised in respect of Buddhists or non-Buddhists, Bhante?

S: Everybody, well, yes. I mean, after all you don't want to miss any opportunity of developing. Well, there are some people who actually can look at it like that quite naturally, but for many it is difficult, isn't it?

Voices: Mm.

S: If you do look at it sort of rationally, well yes, it is an opportunity to practise the Dharma. Here you are demanding opportunities to practise the Dharma, demanding opportunities to go on retreat and demanding opportunities for study. Here you're being given the opportunity of

practising one of the most important of all the 'paramitas' , which is 'ksanti paramita' and you reject the opportunity! [Laughter]. Well, don't you want to develop? You see, a bit of ksanti paramita could make up for any number of missed retreats (Laughter) and missed study groups.

Christabel: It gives us an opportunity to be grateful to ourselves too.

S: Yes. Not to speak of other people. And as for those with children, they are well on the way to Enlightenment!

Srimala: I must say, I often wonder how much patience I have been developing over the years.

S: I must say I am sometimes surprised at the amount of patience that mothers sometimes have. It is quite phenomenal. I must say, because it's not just once, it's every day, regardless of how you're feeling, whether you are well, or whether you are sick, or whether you want to do something else. You've no choice.

Srimala: Right, exactly.

S: You've got to be right there and you've got to be patient.

Srimala: Yes, you're forced really to develop.

S: Yes. [Chuckles]. So sentient beings are useful to us, so out of gratitude to them, as it were, we should not violate our enlightened attitude. [Pause] Any further point emerges on that whole section? This is, not excluding beings from our thoughts because such exclusion constitutes a violation of the enlightened attitude. In principle, not excluding anybody.

Dhammadinnā: That reminds me. I was struck by that at the time. When you did the Death Ceremony, there's an article in the Newsletter about it, you were giving a talk about the importance of maintaining proper communication with people. You said to everyone, "Go home and make up any quarrels."

S: Yes, that's right.

Dhammadinnā: It struck me.

S: Yes. Because this particular person died quite suddenly and he wasn't all that old. He left a wife and two or maybe three children and he was a Mitra. So I made the point that you don't know when you're going to die, and how sad it would be if you died with that sort of "unfinished business". Or, for instance, if somebody else died and he died, or she died, before you had an opportunity to make up with them, then how upset you would feel because it is not possible to do it now, because they've gone. So that is an additional incentive to make up, you know, for any difference or misunderstanding as soon as you possibly can. Sometimes you find that with relations, especially with parents. You let it go on,

drag on, from year to year and then they're gone, and the opportunity is lost for ever, and you may deeply regret that. So the sooner the better.

It's strange in a way, how one, not exactly forgets things, but things go out of one's consciousness. I'd completely forgotten about that.

Dhammadinnā: Yes. It struck me quite forcibly.

S: But now you mention it, I remember that evening and that whole scene very vividly and how upset people were, you know, especially the family. I remember going there and how we had to wait for the whole thing to begin. Someone took us to his home for a cup of tea and we sat around a bit over that and then the proceedings started and gradually got under way. I remember it all quite vividly now. It was a quite solemn sort of occasion. People were taking it very seriously and quite often one finds in connection with this "after-death" ceremony people are in a really sort of receptive mood. I think that it is quite important to take advantage of these because one has to recognise that very often there is a different mood associated with a different function. For instance, just to take the extreme example, supposing we have a "Name-Giving", I mean, we've had two name-givings recently. I don't know how many of you attended either of them, or even both of them, but those who attended either of them will have noticed a particular kind of atmosphere. How could you describe that? Would you describe it as solemn?

Voices: No.

S: No. Would you describe it as serious?

Voices: No.

S: Would you describe it as positive?

Voices: Yes.

S: Yes. But it is a different kind of positivity. It would be inappropriate to try to give the sort of talk that I gave in connection with the death at a Name-Giving. On the other hand, it is quite inappropriate to give the sort of talk I gave at the Name-Giving at the After-Death Ceremony. So I think one has to accept that there are these different sort of occasions with their own distinctive atmosphere, and make of them whatever use is appropriate. You see what I mean? They are all positive in one way or another. You just have to be aware of, be sensitive to, the kind of positivity and say what is appropriate for the occasion. I think this is quite important. Be in tune with what is actually happening. For instance, suppose it is a name-giving. Well, if you're a bit insensitive, you might say, "Well, here we are, gathered for this name-giving of this little boy, so-and-so, of course he could die at any moment! [Laughter] We must always be aware of that. We must remember that we could lose our children at any moment." It's true! But it's not quite the thing to say on such an occasion. You see what I mean.

Sridevi: It's much more difficult to know the mood of your audience, if it's not so distinct as special occasions like that.

S: Yes. Right.

Sridevi: It is quite important to be in tune.

S: Right. But in the case of extreme occasions like that, it is very definite, as it were. I mean, there is a definite atmosphere of solemnity in connection with an After-Death Ceremony; there's a definite atmosphere of lightness and festivity in connection with the Name-Giving ceremony, so one has to adapt oneself accordingly and organise the whole occasion accordingly. So I couldn't help noticing that the atmosphere and all that at the two Name-Givings, especially perhaps the one we had in Norwich, was quite distinctive, let us say. You get the same sort of thing - Wesak has got its distinctive atmosphere; Padmasambhava Day has got a different atmosphere - it's a different aspect of the spiritual ideal. So we should be in tune with each one and do justice to each one, when the time comes for that, when the occasion arises for that, not confuse them. Also, if you celebrate, or observe, the Buddha's Parinirvana Day, that is rather a different sort of atmosphere than when you celebrate the anniversary of the Buddha's birth presumably. You wouldn't give quite the same sort of talk.

You notice I haven't mentioned the ceremony of Blessing Marriage. I'm not quite sure where that comes, or what's the appropriate emotion for that, because even in India I used to see that some people were quite happy and others were not at all happy. You usually would see the little bride was bubbling over with mirth and the bridegroom was sort of hanging his head and looking really upset. [Laughter] This was usually the picture. So one doesn't really know what to do under those sort of circumstances. If you see the relations of one party to the marriage looking rather pleased with themselves and the others not so pleased, you know who has got the best of the bargaining about the dowry. [Laughter] But anyway, as regards Name-Giving and After-Death ceremonies, it is pretty clear what is appropriate and what is the sort of atmosphere and what is the sort of line that one should take, as it were. So I think one should cultivate this sort of sensitivity on every occasion. If you go to see people who have lost a relation recently, well, just sort of tune in to or be in tune with their mood, their attitude, their feeling. If you go into a house where people are celebrating something, well, be in tune with that. Don't go in like a sort of wet blanket, or kill-joy or something of that sort. But remain mindful and always try to give the occasion, whatever it is, a turn in the direction of the Dharma. That is the main thing,

I mean, from wheresoever you find people, from wheresoever the occasion suggests. So, in connection with that After-Death Ceremony, yes I did feel that was a very suitable thing to say and especially bearing in mind, say amongst our Indian Buddhist Friends, what a lot of feuds and misunderstandings and party politics there are. It seemed a very appropriate sort of thing to say and people felt that. They took it very seriously. I felt that it made quite an impression on them. I wouldn't be surprised if a few of them didn't make up misunderstandings afterwards. But it is quite a thought - we don't know when anybody is going to die, or to be killed, and it would be a pity if they did die before we'd had an opportunity of resolving any misunderstandings, so it was left like that, as it were, for ever.

Oh it's tea-time so I think we won't go on to the next section till we've had our tea, but is there any further point about this section? "When harm has been done in return for a good deed. Even then it has to be answered by Great Compassion". The word 'Answered' is quite good here. Even if you do someone a good turn - they respond only with an inimical action, but even then you answer with compassion, with "Great Compassion". You don't give up. You don't write people off. You don't exclude people.

Anjali: But presumably you couldn't do that unless you really felt it.

S: Yes. You would have to... yes, you mustn't... there's no point just going through the gestures, that's worse. You know, sometimes you have that experience with people, they say "Never mind, I forgive you." but you know they have not forgiven you. They're just trying to put you a bit more in the wrong by themselves pretending to be so good and forgiving, when you know it isn't like that at all. Sometimes older people do that with children - "Well, I'm not angry with you. No! I'm not angry, but it's a very bad thing that you did" etc., etc. But you know actually they are really quite angry. They are just pretending not to be and claiming the superiority of not being angry.

Karola: Well, so in that case they should express it surely?

S: Well, admit it. Admit it. Sometimes people assume that you have to express a negative emotion, but I think it's enough if you admit it, if you say "Yes, I am angry", you don't have to be angry as it were, but certainly you should admit it. Be honest about your emotions and the way you are actually feeling.

Suzannah: Otherwise it's false speech.

S: It's false speech also, yes. I think sometimes parents do tend to do this a bit with children, don't they. They pretend they're not angry and that they're just acting out of strict impartiality and a sense of justice, when they may just be very angry.

Dhammadinnā: It's very confusing, the child will pick up the underlying emotions. It's a training disaster for the child.

Christabel: Sometimes they are just totally confused, they don't know what's going on.

S: Yes, because they are getting two contradictory messages. Was it in this group I mentioned about the "rejected" children?

Voices: Mm. Yes.

S: That was another example of the double message. If they only get one message, even if it's a message of rejection, it doesn't seem to matter too much. [Pause] How does this section, this chapter, tie up with what we've done before in the other chapters?

Christabel: Sort of practising what we've learnt is necessary to have.

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: It's a bit more specific, isn't it. We've gone a bit deeper into it.

S: Yes. There's also this point - "To call ourselves Bodhisattvas while so excluding sentient beings". This sort of emphasises the importance of

honesty, of not pretending to be something that you are not. In this case, not pretending to be a Bodhisattva when, in fact, you are excluding, well, even one sentient being. But it is a very easy thing to do to sort of present yourself as better than you actually are, or other than you actually are. It's happening all the time, isn't it.

TEA-BREAK. END OF SIDE 1, SIDE 2

S: [a bit missing at beginning of tape]...also. It's quite important sometimes in connection with the group situation. I was thinking more of the "positive" group. For instance you notice sometimes if a small group of people are talking and another person comes along, then the question is whether to include or not to include. So I think here, quite a bit of tact needs to be exercised on both sides. You see what I mean? If, say, three or four of you are talking and laughing happily together and another person comes along, sometimes there is a sort of tendency to close up and sort of exclude the other person and make it clear they are not wanted. So clearly this can be negative. On the other hand, sometimes say three or four people, or four or five people, who know one another quite well, may be into something quite deeply, which they ought to be allowed to continue and the new person ought to sense the situation and respect that and not expect, as it were, to be immediately included. You see what I mean? Or not to come so near that he or she creates an awkward situation. I mean, they've either got to appear to exclude that new person, or to break off their very positive communication, in which you can't immediately include a new person, because you've got to have a certain amount of momentum. You see what I mean? So one has to be careful on the one hand that you don't exclude anyone needlessly, but also, from the other point of view, that you don't, when approaching a group in that way, break up that communication by your virtual intrusion.

Dhammadinnā: This happens quite a lot after the lectures. It is a very social situation. Sometimes you'd be communication with one other person and someone else would come up and say, "I don't want to interrupt but ..", where they'd already interrupted, so you haven't had the chance to say, well, "No" or "Yes". I know in a big situation like that, it's very difficult.

S: Mm. Also I think in a big situation like that, as you call it, all Order Members certainly ought to be open to having contact with as many people, especially with new people, as possible. And bear in mind, that is one of the main reasons for their being there, I mean being there after the lecture has finished. They are to be open to the advances of new people.

Dhammadinnā: But that has quite a lot of applications doesn't it, in community situations or in any kind of positive group....

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: ...when one needs to open up to include other people.

S: Sometimes it is difficult to open up all at once, as I said, if the communication has gathered a certain momentum and you're discussing something of personal concern to the three or four of you, perhaps even sorting out something. You can't include another. You just have to break off your communication and start up again on a quite superficial level to include that new person and sometimes that may be almost painful.

Annie Norman: Why do you say three or four? Could it be just two people?

S: It could be just two people, yes. Or it could be even just disturbing one person. As we saw, - was it this group, no it was the other group -, it is a Bodhisattva precept - not distracting someone from their meditation. If you see someone is by himself or herself and is clearly immersed in thought, don't just sort of break in upon them, as it were. We should be quite sensitive to these sort of group situations, be like fishes, as it were, just sort of hover near and if it doesn't seem appropriate, well then...

Voice: Slither off.

S: ... Yes. Not sort of hover until, out of sheer embarrassment the other people include us. That is rather horrible.

Suzannah: I remember when I was about fourteen or fifteen, or so, it was very difficult. I had a quite strong feeling when my mother was talking with my sister and when I went there, they stopped talking and I had a really strong feeling, "Aha! They don't want me there".

S: Yes.

Suzannah: I still remember how I felt. Even though we talked about it later on and they just couldn't remember anything. They really didn't have this feeling that I'd been interrupting them.

S: Yes, quite.

Suzannah: But I still took it that way.

S: But sometimes one does. For instance it happened, I mean, I personally had the experience, that someone has wanted to see me privately, just to talk about their own maybe personal difficulties and we'd been talking, and then a third person comes and you cannot but just stop talking, because what you are talking about is something quite private pertaining to that other person's problem, which is not to be shared with a third person, as it were. So you cannot but just sort of break off and there is an uncomfortable silence. If the person is sort of sensible, they realise the situation and withdraw. If they are a bit obtuse they say, "Am I interrupting?", and I nowadays will say, "Yes, I am afraid you are, yes" and then that sort of settles it. But even sometimes it puts the person to whom you are talking, or who is trying to tell you their problem, quite off their stroke for a bit.

Voices: Mm.

S: So, I mean, quite a bit of awareness and sensitivity is needed in this area. [Pause] If you're just engaged in quite a social conversation, you should be able to include anybody who comes along. I mean, if you exclude anyone in those conditions, there is really no excuse. That is a definite and deliberate exclusiveness.

END OF TEA-BREAK.

S: Let's go on with that second section which is concerned with being mindful of the usefulness of this attitude.

"II. How to safeguard an enlightened attitude from deteriorating which is called the training in being mindful of the usefulness of forming an enlightened attitude, is mentioned in the 'Byan.chub.lam.sgron' [Bodhipathapradipa,12].

*In the Gandhavyuha
Maitreya has explained
The virtues of forming
An attitude of aspiration."*

In this Sutra the usefulness of forming an enlightened attitude has been illustrated by two hundred and thirty similes ..."

S: [interjecting] They really do things thoroughly in Indian Buddhism.

..." which however, can be summarized under four main headings.

[i] The words, "Oh son of a good family, an enlightened attitude is like the seed of all Buddha qualities" and "Because it extirpates all poverty is like Vaisravana [god of riches]", and other similes refer to the usefulness for ourselves.

[ii] "Because it protects all the world it is like an asylum" and "Because it is the support of all sentient beings it is like a foundation" and so on, refer to the usefulness for others.

[iii] "Because it overcomes the enemy of emotional instability it is like armour" and "Because it fells the tree of misery it is like an axe" and others refer to the usefulness in destroying all elements opposed to the enlightenment.

[iv] "By fulfilling all aspirations [64b] it is like a lucky jar" and "Because it makes all wishes come true it is like the Wish-Fulfilling Gem" and so on, refer to its usefulness in making available all elements conducive to enlightenment.

By being mindful of all such virtues of usefulness this enlightened attitude is highly appreciated, held to be the most excellent possession and protected against deterioration when these virtues have been taken to heart. Therefore we must be mindful in this usefulness hourly at all times."

S: So in this section we are dealing with the usefulness of the enlightened attitude. A usefulness of which we need to be mindful all the time, and the usefulness is of four kinds. Usefulness for ourselves - the enlightened attitude benefits ourselves; its useful for others - it's useful in that it destroys all elements opposed to Enlightenment, and it's useful in the sense that it makes available all elements conducive to Enlightenment, both for ourselves and for others, that is. So, first of all, its usefulness for ourselves. Quoting from the Sutra, "Oh son of a good family" - do

you know this expression, "son of a good family, daughter of a good family"? It's a polite expression which comes very often in the Sanskrit scriptures. There isn't quite an equivalent in English. As I say, it is just a polite expression. It's 'kulaputra' or 'kulaputri'. 'Kula' is family, a good family is understood, 'putra' is son, 'putri' is daughter. You could say it is like "Sir" or "Madam", as the case may be. "Oh son of a good family, an enlightened attitude is like the seed of all Buddha qualities" and "Because it extirpates all poverty like Vaisravana [god of riches] and other similes", [in the Gandhavyuha Sutra], "refer to the usefulness for ourselves." If you've got the bodhichitta you've got everything. Just as if Vaisravana, the god of riches, is with you, you've got everything - you've got all riches. If you've got the seed, you've got the whole tree. So if you've got the bodhichitta, if you've got the enlightened attitude, the "will to enlightenment", you've got everything. This refers to "its usefulness for oneself", so don't ever forget how useful the bodhichitta is to you, how much it means in terms of your development, your happiness, so don't ever let go of it. This is the meaning. If one isn't thinking, you know, in terms of the bodhichitta, the enlightened attitude specifically, well, one can think in terms of one's commitment to the spiritual life and if you are determined only to grow, everything else will follow. That is the most useful thing you could possibly do. So one needs to bear that constantly in mind. If I'm growing it doesn't matter what else happens, it doesn't matter if I'm poor, it doesn't matter if nobody knows me, it doesn't matter what other people think of me, if I'm growing, I've got everything, everything that I need. That is the most useful thing I can possibly have. So similarly with the enlightened attitude, or more specifically in the case of the enlightened attitude. Just think how useful it is to you. I mean, people don't usually think in terms of usefulness. This is something I remember with the Tibetans. It quite struck me at first. My Tibetan friends when talking about the Dharma, used to say, if they were speaking in English, they'd often use the word "religion" for 'Dharma'. They'd say "In Tibet we say religion is very useful". [Laughs] And this really reflected the Tibetan attitude. It made itself so concrete, it was like something handy you had about the house. It was very useful. It wasn't "Oh religion is sublime and religion is wonderful or fantastic" - no, it's "very useful".

Dhammadinnā: Very different to the Indian approach!

S: Yes, indeed! Very different!

Christabel: Part of everyday life and not set apart.

S: Part of everyday life, yes. It's like something you couldn't possibly do without, no well organised household could do without it. [Laughter]. It's useful...

Voice: It sounds like...

S: Something you'd always have on your shopping list. Well, yes, this is very characteristic of the Tibetan approach. They are really very down to earth, though the ideals are very sublime. So, religion is always useful.

Sridevi: Using this word "forming an enlightened attitude" makes it sound as if you do it, it's quite a different thing to the word "arising", the bodhichitta arising.

S: The Indian original, of course, would be arising 'utpana'. I don't know whether the Tibetans here have actually got a word which literally means "arising", or whether they render it more as "forming".

Sridevi: So you can't really "form". You do your best and then it arises?

S: Yes. One could say that. Yes, yes. It is, in a sense, not under your control. That is to say, not under the control of yourself as you are now. Yourself as you are now can do no more than provide the conditions. Independent of it, the bodhichitta arises. It's you, but it's not you, because it's a new you, or represents a new you, or it's the germ of a new you. So, in a sense, you don't form it, you can't form it. You can only permit it, or encourage it to arise. This is why, in one of the Sutras, the Bodhisattva who, as it were, stumbles upon the bodhichitta, is said to be like a blind man looking in a dung-hill, who suddenly discovers a jewel by groping around in the dung-hill. It's a bit like that. It's a bit extreme, but you can see what the simile is meant to convey.

So, "extirpates all poverty", presumably spiritual poverty, just as the god of riches extirpates all material poverty. So the bodhichitta, the "enlightened attitude" is very useful to oneself. So one must always bear in mind this. If you let the bodhichitta go it's like throwing away the most useful thing that you have.

Dhammadinnā: So in our terms that would mean not to give up working towards if you haven't got it. [laughs]

S: Well, in terms of the spiritual life it will mean....

Dhammadinnā: ...just keep going.

S: being involved with the spiritual life is the very best possible thing that you could do for yourself. Just to grow, or to try to grow. There's nothing more useful you could do than that. And this, of course, involves caring for oneself on all those different levels, including the physical, looking after oneself physically, cultivating oneself emotionally, trying to clarify one's awareness, etc., etc. So one must be constantly mindful of the usefulness of the enlightened attitude for one's own self.

And then it's usefulness for others, because it protects all the world "like an asylum" - I don't quite like the sound of that. [Laughter]. There's a note there, oh no, it only gives a reference. Well, an asylum means a place of refuge, let us say. It gives refuge to the whole world "Because it is the support of all sentient beings it is like a foundation". These similes in that Sutra, refer to its usefulness for others. I mean, if you have this enlightened attitude you are very useful to others obviously. You are always prepared to help others in every possible way, as many of them as possible. This is why it is said that a Bodhisattva is an infinitely valuable being. If you harm a Bodhisattva you harm everybody indirectly. So it's a great offence to harm, or even to annoy a Bodhisattva. So one Bodhisattva should be very careful about annoying another Bodhisattva. [Laughter]. Yes! You as a Bodhisattva, are aiming to help all, he as a Bodhisattva is aiming to help all. If you even annoy him, or her, you are preventing them from carrying out their mission, which is your mission. Therefore you're preventing yourself from carrying out your mission. Indian Mahayana is very fond of these sort of arguments and these ways of looking at things. But it seems very logical, doesn't it. But human

beings are only too often just illogical creatures, just as in the case of being so reluctant to take advantage of the opportunity of practising patience, even though we're clamouring for opportunities for practising the spiritual life. So, here also, you annoy a Bodhisattva and prevent him doing the very thing that you are trying to do. Well, how ridiculous! So the enlightened attitude is "the support of all sentient beings, it is like a foundation". I mean, you're supposed to be quite firm and strong in relation to others if you possibly can be and certainly if you have the bodhichitta. So there's also this point, if you are leading the spiritual life, you are useful to others. I think this is quite an important point to press. We did talk about this, perhaps in the other group, about the objections to Buddhism as escapism and all the rest of it. Not only escapism, what else?

Voices: Selfishness.

S: Selfishness, and there was something else too, what was it? Sanghadevi was asked this in a school she went to. It wasn't just selfishness.

Anne McMillan: Actually harmful?

S: No. No. Something like "escapist" but it wasn't escapist.

Karola: They asked whether it was "brainwashing".

S: Brainwashing! That's right. Yes. So far from being anything of that sort, I mean, the fact that you are leading a spiritual life; the fact that you are meditating; the fact that you are devoting yourself to your, supposedly, own spiritual development, is useful to everybody. I mean, this is what often isn't realised in the world today, that if you are trying to grow in any sense, even if you are not a Bodhisattva and don't have the enlightened attitude, that is useful to everybody. You are having directly, or indirectly, a positive influence upon everybody. So, yes, religion is useful. Spiritual life is useful for others. Your efforts to lead the spiritual life are useful for others. I mean, at least just the immediate family circle, or community circle. I mean, Lokamitra was writing about one of our Order Members in India. He's the youngest Order Member there. He's about thirty-two or thirty-three and he's part of a big joint family. They live just two or three doors down the road from the vihara in fact and he lives there with his parents, his own wife, I think sundry brothers, perhaps their wives. Well, there are a whole lot of them. Usually, I think there are fourteen of them in this tiny three-roomed bungalow, but they seem to live there all quite happily. This is Dharmodya, and Lokamitra is firmly convinced that the fact that he is spiritually committed and is an Order Member is good for the whole family. He's convinced of this and he has convinced the family of it too. Yes. So if you are leading a spiritual life, or if you are trying to be a more positive individual, it does affect everybody you come in contact with, so you never lead it actually just for your own sake. It is useful. It is a contribution to society, you could say, the fact that you are trying to grow and to develop. And there is no doubt, in the case of this particular Order Member, that, well, the fact that he is so committed to the FWBO, to the Order, has certainly had a positive effect on his whole family. They all feel involved through him. They all feel something positive through him. So you never do it just for yourself, even if you don't explicitly take the Bodhisattva Ideal, or Bodhisattva Vow. It does have its repercussions on your immediate circle, whatever that may be.

But of course, you have to be very firm. In the case of this particular person, he's not only very committed, but he's convinced that his

commitment is for everybody's benefit. And they feel that too. They feel it's a gain for the whole family that he is an Order Member. So, "usefulness for others" - one shouldn't ever forget that the enlightened attitude, or more generally one's effort to lead the spiritual life, is useful to everybody. So all the more reason for you persisting, from the Bodhisattva point of view, because if you don't persist with your own spiritual life, well, so many sentient beings will no longer be benefited. Like here say in the case of this particular Order Member, if he was ever to lapse from his commitment, the whole family would suffer, because he would be that much less positive, etc. So an additional reason for him keeping it up is it's for everybody's benefit, not just his own.

All right then - three. The enlightened attitude is useful because it destroys "all elements opposed to enlightenment." "It overcomes the enemy of emotional instability", therefore "it is like armour". "Emotional instability" is Guenther's usual translation for 'klesa', more usually translated as "defilement" or "passion". If you have this enlightened attitude, or if you commit yourself to the spiritual life, well, sooner or later, everything that is opposed to enlightenment is overcome and that is its great usefulness. All suffering is overcome, all defilement is overcome, everything negative is overcome. So there is great usefulness of the enlightened attitude in this respect also. I mean, what else would be able to do all of those things for you? Or for others, or for anybody?

Anjali: That translation of 'klesa' seems quite clear, Bhante. It's always confused me a bit that it's translated as "passion", because it can seem to be quite positive to be passionate about things.

S: But emotional instability is never positive.

Anjali: No.

S: What about "defilement"? The word 'Klesa' literally means a sort of, not only a defilement, but a sort of affliction. Something that torments you as well as defiles you.

Dhammadinnā: Yes. It does.

S: Sometimes it's translated as "defiling passion". They could also be "afflicting passion". It disturbs you. So Guenther's translation "emotional instability", is not bad, but it doesn't convey that element of suffering that goes along with that sort of emotional turbulence. It's more like emotional disturbance than emotional instability. Do you see what I mean? So if you say, "Oh, I feel very disturbed", you are suffering a bit, as it were. There's emotional disturbance, or emotional turbulence. Disturbance is probably better. Well, what does passion suggest? Passion also suggests suffering, because that is literally the meaning, isn't it? Passion, as you speak of "The Passion", with a capital P.

Dhammadinnā: It could mean strong positive emotion, passion for enlightenment, like strong aspiration.

S: Mm. Sometimes, colloquially, it does have that sort of somewhat positive suggestion.

Voice: Do you know if a Pali term is sometimes translated as 'passion'.

S: 'Raga'

Dhammadinnā: Raga.

S: Raga. Mm.

Dhammadinnā: That's the positive?

S: Oh no! Not at all. No. Though again in the 'Vajrayana' they speak of 'Maharaga', "Great passion" in the positive sense, but not in the Pali.

Dhammadinnā: What does "Maharaga" mean? Does it mean a passion for Enlightenment?

S: Yes, something much more like that. Or the energy that is in passion transmuted by the experience of 'sunyata', and sublimated as it were into something much higher. [Pause] Blake has something to say about passion. He says something to this effect, that it's good if you are in a passion, but not good if a passion is in you. [Laugh]. Do you see the point of the distinction? If you are in a passion, it suggests that the passion, the energy, is under your control, but if a passion is in you, it sort of possesses you and it goes out of control, or you go out of control. So here he was using the word passion, or when being in a passion, in a comparatively positive sense.

So, it's useful because it destroys all elements opposed to enlightenment, and we should constantly remember that, and therefore cultivate it and preserve it all the more carefully.

Then "By fulfilling all aspirations it is like a lucky jar", [the wish-fulfilling jar], and "Because it makes all wishes come true it is like the Wish-Fulfilling Gem or Tree and so on. These refer to its usefulness in making available all elements conducive to enlightenment". If only you've got the bodhichitta, the aspiration towards enlightenment, all the other things that help in the process of the attainment of enlightenment will sort of come gathering around. If you've got that, then spiritually you've got everything, at least potentially. Everything else will come to you sooner or later, all virtues, all the positive qualities, all the attainments. So it is so useful. Therefore under no circumstances should you allow yourself to lose it.

It's quite important, to turn aside just for a moment from the enlightened attitude specifically, just one's own aspiration towards growth and so on. I think perhaps, if we've been in the Movement, in the FWBO and especially in the Order for a while, perhaps we don't always remember how easy it is to lose that and get out of touch. You see what I mean? For instance, you can come along to a few classes and get quite enthused and have a definite feeling, but then, due to circumstances, you may have to miss a few classes and so on, and you get out of touch, and it's quite easy to lose that aspiration, or that inspiration. So it becomes all the more important in the early stages to safeguard it and not to lose it, not to let

it slip away or be dissipated. I think this can happen very easily. I mean, perhaps we can all think of people who have been around for a few weeks, a few months, or even a few years, with a genuine aspiration and genuine feeling for individual development and so on, but who afterwards have gone out of touch and seem to have lost it.

Anjali: We were talking just this morning about the 'bodhichitta', Bhante, and I was saying I found that I had not just heard the word 'bodhichitta' for months on end, and I'd just forgotten all about it. And just hearing the word again, just awoke something quite magical, and I'm sorry it wasn't actually in the Puja where the words "will to enlightenment" have been translated, there seems to be something about the word 'bodhichitta' that is much nicer.

S: Mm. Ah. There seem to be at least two opinions about Sanskrit and Pali terms. Some people like them and feel them very evocative. Others don't, they prefer a translation. 'Bodhichitta' is really quite untranslatable. Neither "thought of enlightenment", or "enlightened attitude", or "will to enlightenment" really, is adequate. "Enlightened attitude" I think frankly, is particularly weak.

Anne McMillan: You said quite a bit about that in the tapes on the Bodhisattva Ideal. We had them on the Christmas retreat. [Pause]

S: It's more like the "enlightened consciousness-volition", but that's so clumsy isn't it? So "by being mindful of all such virtues of usefulness", that is to say, the usefulness of the enlightened attitude for yourself, for others, for destroying all elements opposed to enlightenment, or making available all elements conducive to enlightenment; so if you're being mindful of all such virtues of usefulness, "this enlightened attitude is highly appreciated, and held to be the most excellent possession and protected against deterioration when these virtues have been taken to heart. Therefore we must be mindful of this usefulness hourly at all times." In some later forms of the Mahayana, the bodhichitta is sort of hymned and lauded, almost like a sort of god, in a sense, if you use the word colloquially. You see what I mean, because it is so important. And the Bodhisattva, as it were, represents a sort living embodiment of the bodhichitta and the different great Bodhisattvas represented in the thankas represent different aspects of the bodhichitta at a very high level of its development. In one of the Sutras, the "Dasabhumika", there's a whole series of similes about the bodhichitta. Do you know that? The process of refining the gold. First of all the gold is dug out, then it is smelted, then it is made into a certain shape, and that is made into an ornament, and that ornament is further decorated and then jewels are inserted etc. etc. until you get the "Crown of Enlightenment" as it were. [Pause]. "Tiara of Enlightenment".

Christabel: What was that in , Bhante? That sounds lovely.

S: That's the "Dasabhumika Sutra" - the Sutra of the ten Bodhisattva stages. I think I refer to these in "*The Survey*", actually in chapter four. 'Dasa', D-A-S-A, 'bhumika', B-H-U-M-I-K-A, the ten stages.

Anjali: What does it mean exactly, Bhante, when it says "When these virtues have been taken to heart"?

S: Do you mean what is meant by "taking to heart"?

Anjali: Mm.

S: Well, taken really seriously, with great depth of feeling. It's just an old-fashioned idiom, to take something to heart. Do you sometimes find difficulty with English idioms or not?

Ulla/Suzannah?: To some extent, yes.

S: Mm. They are the most difficult part of a language in a way, aren't they?

Ulla/Suzannah?: I sometimes have a feeling I'm not "inside" the language when I'm speaking or listening to English, as I am when I'm speaking or listening to Finnish. I have no feeling for those expressions in some cases.

S: Going through say Dr. Conze's memoirs, it was noticeable that his English is quite accurate, almost pedantically accurate, but once or twice he goes astray with his idioms and then you can tell that he hasn't been born to the language, as it were. For instance, there was one - he spoke of a certain teacher in his younger days, taking him, Edward Conze, under his wings. Mm. Do you get the point? (Laughter) Whereas the idiom is "under his wing". We never say "under his wings", we always say "under his wing".

Suzannah: In Finnish it is "under his wings".

S: Ah!

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes, It's in the plural.

Dhammadinnā: That implies a different emotional attitude. [Laughter]

S: Sounds a bit "henry", doesn't it, "under their wings"?

Anne Murphy: Is that not the root anyway, Bhante? Under the wing with the hen, with the chicks tucked under the wing?

S: If you're referring specifically to hens I think you would use the plural.

Dhammadinnā: Whose wing are we referring to?

Voices: [murmuring]

S: "Held to be the most excellent possession" - the most valuable thing you've got. If you're a Bodhisattva, the most valuable thing you've got is

the bodhichitta, or in more general terms, if you are an individual, the thing that you most value about yourself is your individuality. If you are really trying to grow and develop the most, the thing you value most about yourself is your urge to develop, your urge to grow, thus the thing you preserve most carefully. [Pause] One gets from many texts a feeling of great joyfulness associated with the bodhichitta. Do you ever pick that up?

Voice: Mm.

S: As though it's a sort of event. The arising of the bodhichitta in anybody's mind is an event which is of great significance for everybody, and over which everybody can rejoice. This is the sort of impression that is conveyed.

Dhammadinnā: That comes out in the Puja, doesn't it, rejoicing in merit, rejoicing in the nature of Bodhisattvas.

S: Yes. This is, I mean generally speaking, a very important sort of quality; a very important sort of attitude, this "rejoicing in merits", and rejoicing in the arising of the bodhichitta, wheresoever it arises, in whomsoever it arises. It's for everybody's benefit. If anybody is leading a truly spiritual life, or if anybody is really trying to grow, it's for everybody's benefit. At least even if they go away and live in a hut on the mountainside, it's for everybody's benefit. So how can it be selfish to try to lead a spiritual life, or to try to grow? It shows a complete misunderstanding to think of it in those sort of terms. You could even say that a selfish spiritual life is a contradiction in terms.

Voices: Mm.

S: You can't be selfish to the extent that you are leading a spiritual life, or to the extent that you are trying to grow. [Pause]

Dhammadinnā: Why do you think the idea has arisen that the spiritual life is selfish?

S: Why do you think it has?

Dhammadinnā: I don't know.

Sridevi: People don't believe in indirect influence, they want the rational and scientific. So if they don't see something very concrete they don't ...

S: But, for instance, stamp-collecting doesn't benefit anybody except dealers in stamps, but you wouldn't say you're being really selfish in being a philatelist, or in being a sportsman. But it's only the poor religionist or meditator who is picked upon, as it were.

Voices: Mm.

Christabel: Isn't it because of the misunderstanding of the real meaning of being responsible for yourself? People might say that the stamp collector wasn't bothering anybody, he was quite responsible for himself, but actually he could easily delude himself that he was responsible for himself, when really he was a pain in the neck to everybody.

S: Mm. I think, actually, in the minds of many people in the West, the very idea of religion is connected with the idea of sacrifice in a rather obvious and dramatic way, because Jesus is supposed to have died for everybody, sacrificed himself for everybody, so if you're not doing that in a very almost blatant sort of way, you're not being really religious. If you're sacrificing yourself in a very obvious way, well that is a religious life. You see what I mean? This is why I think a lot of people can understand and appreciate, say, what Mother Theresa is doing...

Voice: Ah!

S: And not so much because she is doing good, I suspect, to the extent that she is doing good,

[End of tape 1 Tape 2]

because she appears to sacrifice herself and almost make a sort of martyr of herself. I think this is how people take it[tape goes blank for a few words] ... someone was being interviewed, some Christian disc jockey who's got the idea of going around the discos and he does his bit, whatever disc jockeys do, I'm not very clear about this, [laughter]. In the middle, he has a two hour sort of programme playing the usual records, in the middle he has apparently, what he calls the "*Jesus Spot*", yes, so the interviewer, who was a young lady, asked him what this Jesus Spot was, could he give a little example of his Jesus Spot? So he says "Oh yes!", and he sort of rattled it off straight away. He said at the end of the record, you know, he just sort of says, "Now boys and girls we're now going to have our Jesus Spot". I forget what the actual phrases were, they weren't more than four or five very simple, crude sentences. Then he says, "Don't forget Jesus died for you." You see what I mean? So this is the sort of evangelical appeal. So sometimes this needs to be gone into, because in a way, this is the great strength of the Christian emotional appeal, that "Jesus died for you". So how horribly wicked and ungrateful you are if you won't give yourself to Jesus, because he's died for you. He's done such a great thing, such a tremendous sacrifice and there are you, wicked and ungrateful, unwilling to recognise it - so hard-hearted, so stony hearted, so closed to the influence of Jesus. But he died for you. Can't you realise that? So what's your answer to all that? [Laughter].

Anjali: I could never believe that he did.

S: Right! Yes. Well one must make that clear. How? Where has this idea originated of sacrifice, of one man dying for everybody else? Well, it goes back to the old tradition of animal sacrifice, doesn't it? Consider the idea of sacrifice in general. What happens? For instance.....

Voice:scape-goat.

S: ... you know, the scape-goat too, that's a bit different. But supposing you take something that is precious to you and you sacrifice it, say, to

God. You take a cow or a sheep and you sacrifice it, you offer it to God, what are you trying to do?

Anne McMillan: It's in proxy of you, isn't it? In a way you are giving him the best that you have.

S: I think that comes a bit later, but in the first place, what are you trying to do?

Voice: Just placate him.

S: To placate, yes. You try to placate, to please God, either to get some favour from God, whichever the god may be, or to turn away his wrath. You sort of give up something that you value. The sort of psychology is, that if you deprive yourself of something, or hurt yourself, well, God will be pleased, or God, this more powerful being, will have pity on you. You see, that seems to be the sort of reasoning.

Voices: [Laughing, murmuring] Isn't it stupid. What an excuse.

S: So the idea of Christian theology is that God is deeply offended with the human race, because of their sin. You know, first of all, he was offended with Adam and that sin of Adam has been inherited by the whole human race. God is angry with the human race. So there's got to be some sacrifice offered to God to appease God's anger, so that he doesn't punish the human race, so he ceases to be angry with the human race. So there's no human being, who could offer himself as a sacrifice, because, I mean, what use is a sinner's sacrifice to God? So the only person who can offer himself as a sacrifice to the angry God, is the Son of God. So the Son of God, that is to say Jesus, offers himself as a sacrifice to appease the anger of God. This is orthodox Christian teaching.

Dhammadinnā: It doesn't make sense.

S: You see what I mean! So God, as the Father, accepts this sacrifice of the Son, and as it were says, "Well, I won't be angry any more." So this is what Jesus has done for you! You see what I mean.

Voices: Yes.

S: Here you are, a miserable sinner, groaning under the wrath and anger of God, and Christ has redeemed you by offering himself as a sacrifice for all. So if you believe this, then that sacrifice becomes of effect, and you are saved! This is the Christian teaching. So hence this tremendous emotional appeal.

Dhammadinnā: But he sacrifices himself with the collusion of God, because ...

S: Oh yes! That's right.

Dhammadinnā: ... it says, "God so loved the world he sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ", as the love of God.

S: Yes! So then, because they are landed with this contradiction of a God of Power...

Dhammadinnā: ... and a God of Love.

S: ... who is also supposed to be the God of Love.

Dhammadinnā: It's silly!

S: It is! So you can only deal with it, repudiate it, by tracing it back to its origins and saying, "I don't believe that one man can sacrifice himself for another in a spiritual sense." You see what I mean? The Buddhist teaching is "No man can purify another". You can show another the way, you can encourage them but you can't do it for them. You see what I mean? So you can say, it's possible, say, to give your life for another person literally. Yes, that is possible. Someone is drowning, you dive in, and you risk your own life, even sacrifice your own life to save them. That is intelligible. Or someone is due to be shot and you offer yourself in place of that person, you sacrifice your life to them. But it is not intelligible on that sort of basis, that one man, living 2,000 years ago, by his death, can take away the sins of the rest of the human race. This is absurd! And it is clearly rooted in this old idea of sacrifice, including human sacrifice and in a very strange sort of theology.

Christabel: It has a very strong ...

S: Well, yes, because you are told that Christ died for you. That is put upon you, that you are indebted to Christ, so how ungrateful you are if you don't make some response. You are sort of emotionally blackmailed. And because, having been brought up in the West, you've got a sort of positive, er, even if you reject Christianity, that the "Christ" archetype as it were, has got a sort of positive appeal of some sort, it is very difficult to resist this underhand emotional appeal.

Dhammadinnā: Yes. It seems that when there were a couple of Catholic people on the Dutch retreat and Christianity came up, and they were obviously rejecting their Catholic background, but they, I felt, that they would defend Christ almost to the death.

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: I really couldn't quite understand it.

S: Well, you sometimes find this with people in England too. You can say anything you like about God, but you can't criticise Christ. You can't criticise him as say a morally imperfect character.

Dhammadinnā: Do you think that has an element of positivity in it, in that perhaps those people's Catholic background was so bad, that Christ is

also presented as an ideal, a positive ideal?

S: To some extent. But I think also, there is the idea of guilt, of being so ungrateful that you can think negatively about Christ who has done all that for you, which is actually sort of pure myth in the sense of fiction. He hasn't done anything for you. If he has done anything it is by giving a teaching which could help people if they practised it! But Christian evangelists who sort of hammer this home, "Don't you realise Christ has died for you?", they really believe it and so they can't help communicating some spark of feeling sometimes.

Dhammadinnā: It does seem as though it's the Christ figure that people find so difficult to give up. I was reading - Anthony Burgess has rewritten a life of Christ recently. I read a review of a book by him. It seemed that he had to create the qualities that Christ didn't have, more intellectual qualities, almost putting words into his mouth, to make that figure more acceptable, rather than rejecting the whole thing and starting again. It seems as though people are desperate to preserve something.

S: Yes, one does get that impression. They're not so much bothered about God now, but Christ, certainly.

Christabel: Well, fear comes into it, doesn't it, terror!

Voice: Terror of what?

Christabel: The consequences if you deny it.

S: Yes. I wrote in one of my letters to *Shabda* about an experience I had in New Zealand. Do you remember? In the course of our tour in the Southern Alps we had a cup of tea in a restaurant and there were some paintings by some woman around the walls. There were two or three religious paintings. They were very, very crude, but there was one painting of a city with lots of church spires in the background and there was a ladder coming down from heaven, and there was a whole group of people grovelling at the foot of this ladder, and there was Jesus coming down. And I wrote in this letter, "with what can only be described as a really nasty smile on his face". [Loud laughter]. Yes. The way they were grovelling as if to say well, "Don't damn us, don't hurt us". It was really terrible! Clearly whoever had painted it hadn't intended it to come out like that, but that is how it came out. Oh, such a nasty smile as if, "I've got them now, off to hell they go", and they're saying, "Please don't! Please don't!", grovelling at the foot of the ladder. So, really, our emotional experiences are bound up with Christianity in a very complex way, and it is still possible for Christians sometimes to sort of "get at" us.

Voices: Mm. Mm.

S: And it is very important to be able to know what to say. Or to say you just reject this whole conception of salvation and sacrifice, of one man dying for another in that sense.

Anne McMillan: I find, when that happens, I find it very difficult to argue as rationally as that. I just get really furious, irrationally furious. I suppose it's because there are still areas that I'm sorting out myself.

S: You probably feel just like blaspheming.

Anne McMillan: Yes.

S: And you still need to commit a bit more therapeutic blasphemy it seems. [Laughter] Yes?

Anne McMillan: It's quite interesting, because I think I went through quite a lot of that on the May retreat.

S: Which retreat?

Anne McMillan: The May Mitra retreat.

S: I thought you'd said the "male" retreat. [Loud laughter]

Anne McMillan: No, on the May mitra retreat! And afterwards it kind of reverted to somewhere further back in my consciousness and then just every now and again something comes up and I find myself getting blindly furious against Christianity, you know, and Catholicism in particular.

S: Yes.

Anne McMillan: So I find it difficult to be as cold and rational ...

S: For Catholics the figure of the Virgin Mary is very important. But not such strong emotion as far as I've seen, seems to gather around the figure of the Virgin Mary. Perhaps I'm wrong here.

Karola: Actually, I find that I feel quite emotionally about the Virgin Mary, actually, more so than about Jesus.

S: Ah!

Karola: I actually react and blaspheme. [unclear]

S: I must say I was brought up as a Protestant, not as a Catholic, so in my childhood the Virgin Mary didn't enter into it at all. I mean, but I did later on encounter the figure of the Virgin Mary in Western art, where it seemed a very positive figure.

Anne McMillan: Botticelli.

S: Yes, and to embody all the so-called feminine qualities, as it were. (Laughter) So I never felt any particular anger with regard to the Virgin Mary. She seemed quite pleasant and harmless, just sort of floating around in the Western consciousness. But perhaps those who have been brought up as Catholics would feel differently about the Virgin Mary. Were you brought up as a Catholic?

Anne McMillan: Oh, yes.

S: Oh, I see. What does the Virgin Mary sort of represent then, for a Catholic?

Anne McMillan: Saintly, soppy, frigid, ridiculously ...

Anne Murphy: [unclear] ... actually Bhante, really constricting.

S: Oh!

Anne McMillan: ...repressed.

S: Oh. That's quite interesting, because, as I said, not having been brought up as a Catholic, one feels it quite differently.

Anne McMillan: I mean I really tried to be the fucking Virgin Mary. [Loud laughter].

S: Oh, that is naughty. Oh, yes, yes. [Something under his breath].

Anne McMillan: I really tried to be the Virgin Mary when I was a certain age.

S: Well, what does it mean when a girl, I presume it's usually girls, I don't think they advise boys to be the Virgin Mary. [laughter] They might, you never know what they get up to, these Catholics. [Chuckling, laughter]. What does it mean, "being like the Virgin Mary"?

Anne McMillan: Well, terribly pure and undefiled by ... I suppose by man mainly, but ...

S: Immaculate.

Anne McMillan: Immaculate, yes. Immaculate conception.

S: But is this offered as an ideal literally, that you must, as it were, conform to that?

Anne McMillan: Well, I felt it was. I actually spent some time in a convent, training to be a novice nun. [Loud laughter, almost hysterical]

S: Yes, I would never have believed it.

Anne McMillan: I only lasted about five months, I ran away.

S: Oh, I see.

Karola: I see her just more as the perfect mother sort of thing. She has all these attributes ...

S: Well, traditionally, the Virgin Mary is supposed to embody the three attributes or qualities of the virgin, the mother and the queen. Because she is the Queen of Heaven and the queen of the angels etc. etc.

Voice: Is that the same as Tara?

S: Yes, you could say in the case of Tara, though I must say in the case of Tara, virginity, as far as I know, is hardly mentioned, but maternity - yes.

Anne McMillan: I mean, it's purity really in Tara, Bhante, isn't it, in a real spiritual sense, rather than virginity?

S: Yes. Mm.

Dhammadinnā: There's a double standard towards women

Voice: She's always criticised for that actually, that double thing...

Dhammadinnā: You've either got to be completely like the Virgin Mary, pure and immaculate and virginal, or if you're not, then you're a whore or prostitute.

S: Right. You're Eve! There's either the Virgin Mary, or there is Eve.

Dhammadinnā: There's no sort of space for just ...

S: ... to be an ordinary woman ...

Dhammadinnā: ... for the expression of her sexuality as she wants to. It's either one or the other and I think that is very strong in Western culture.

S: Yes. Well as of course in India, in Hinduism even more than in Buddhism, there isn't anything of that sort. There's no particular emphasis on virginity in the case of the female figure for instance. Sometimes they are shown in a completely differing, decidedly non-virginal way, extremely voluptuous way, but with, as it were, spiritual overtones. In fact the voluptuousness in Indian Buddhist and Hindu art becomes of, as it were, spiritual significance. The goddesses are not shown emaciated, etc., etc. They are shown physically very, very well-developed to say the least. So there isn't that sort of dichotomy. I was going to say "cleavage" but ... [laughter] ... you see what I mean!

Voice: Emasculated?

S: Emasculated is not the word either, but one knows what you mean. They are not deprived of those characteristics in the interests of a supposed spirituality. Those spiritual qualities find expression in those particular characteristics.

Dhammadinnā: I felt that very strongly when I was a teenager. I don't feel it strongly now, but you know, a view - how you either were a good girl or you were a bad girl - there was no kind of ...

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: ... medium ground.

S: You couldn't just be a girl. You either had to be a bad one or a good one.

Dhammadinnā: You couldn't have sex and that was O.K. It was either one or the other, you fell ..[laughs]

S: Right. Well there was the expression "a fallen woman".

Christabel: That virginity thing was a really mean trick to get power, wasn't it, because it was obvious that nobody would be able to live up to it. So it was a really easy way of having power over lots of people.

S: Yes, to make people feel guilty.

Christabel: Yes.

S: And then you relieve their guilt.

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: It just offers this absolutely impossible ideal, there's no way you can actually fulfil the ideal of being a virgin and a mother. Well nobody I know! [loud laughter], it's totally impossible!

S: Yes, yes! You can't be really like the Virgin Mary.

Anne McMillan: Absolutely not, and yet you're constantly being handed it as the ideal.

S: The only way of getting near that is to become a nun and look after children who are not your own. That is about the nearest one can get. So it seems that the figure of the Virgin Mary, or the Virgin Mary archetype, is quite important for the psychology, especially of the woman, in the West who has been brought up as a practising Catholic.

Anne McMillan: Absolutely.

S: I must tell you that I hadn't personally realised that the Virgin Mary could be such a central figure for people brought up in this way. I thought more ...

Anne McMillan: I think my conditioning specifically. My father was an Italian Catholic and I think Italians give a really central place to the Virgin Mary, much more so than say a lot of others, say the Scottish Catholics but ...

S: Mm. But you see if you go into any Catholic Church, especially on the Continent, that the Virgin Mary occupies a very important place. So in a way it's good, it's as though feminine qualities are recognised, but on the other hand, as soon as they're recognised, the recognition is withdrawn.

Voices: Yes.

S: You see. Because it is the Virgin Mary, the virgin bit which probably sort of undermines these feminine qualities, because those feminine qualities seem to be, regardless of what they say theologically, they seem to be inseparably connected with virginity. You see what I mean?

Voices: Yes.

S: And not only that. You might say that the figure of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, could be taken as positive, you know, for womanhood in the more ordinary sense, but no, they made, eventually, the birth of the Virgin Mary herself, also "immaculate". You see what I mean? So even that possibility ... you couldn't even look behind the Virgin Mary to her mother, because the Virgin Mary herself was immaculately conceived. There's another term for that, so don't take me up on that ... there's something else ...

Anne McMillan: It isn't "immaculate conception", it's something else.

S: It's not called "the immaculate conception", but it means the same thing virtually.

Anne McMillan: I was called after St. Anne, you see.

S: Oh, I see. I wondered why there were all these Annes and Therasas around!

Anne McMillan: I've actually got a cracker of a name. My full name. [Loud laughter].

S: Anne, Mary, Theresa?

Anne McMillan: No! Anne Theresa Maria Bernadette! [Laughter]

S: [Chuckling] Well, really! I hope sooner or later your name will be changed. [Loud laughter] It really is a load, isn't it?

Anne McMillan: It's a bit much to cart with you.

S: In a sense, it's stronger than in the case of men, because in the case of men, if a man is called John, it's so common. You don't really think of St. John and he's got to be a little St. John. But especially with Bernadette, it's so recent. You've got this film of "The Song of Bernadette", and you've probably got to be a little Bernadette, you know. It really sounds really heavy. [Laughter] I won't ask you to say it again. But maybe someone should write something about the role of the Virgin Mary, you know, from this point of view.

Anne McMillan: I wrote something ...

S: ... from the psychological cum spiritual point of view.

Dhammadinnā: There was a really good article in "Spare Rib" some years ago called "Hung up on the Cross", written by a woman about Catholic conditioning without, obviously, a spiritual perspective, but just the negative effect of Christian conditioning, including that of the Virgin Mary.

S: I must say, I hadn't taken the Virgin Mary very much into consideration because I'd been encountering the figure in art. I just saw it in a quite positive way.

Dhammadinnā: There've been several books written by feminists about the effects of the Virgin on women's conditioning in the West.

S: Ah. There have been several comparative studies about the myth or figure of the virgin, including the Virgin Mary, in Western tradition. I think there's at least three of them published quite recently. I don't think they look into this angle. I think they are all, as far as I know, written by men and they see the symbol in positive terms ...

Anne McMillan: There have been a few written in the past five years.

S: ... because men don't have to be Virgin Marys.

Anne McMillan: I think it definitely affects how men relate to women. I think it has a definite bad effect on how certain men relate to women because of the double standards.

S: Yes. So you think that, in a sense, there is this sort of double standard or double view, as it were?

Dhammadinnā: I don't experience it so much these days, but when I was younger, yes, I experienced it very strongly.

S: Mm. You encounter it in literature, don't you. You know, "the bad woman", "the scarlet woman", "the sinful woman", "the fallen woman" etc., etc.

Voice: Doesn't Barbara Cartland perpetuate this? [Laughter].

S: I think so.

Voice: ... quite pure and saintly.

Dhammadinnā: This comes up in romantic fiction. Presumably in other cultures you might go against the moral code. In India, when you get married, presumably they are expected to be virgins. It's not loaded in quite the same way.

S: No. Because they also ... for instance in India, there is prostitution, but they don't have the moralistic attitude and other women would not have that sort of moralistic attitude towards the prostitute. They would not conceive of ever living like that themselves, it would be unthinkable, but she is doing her job, sort of thing. They are so accustomed to this difference of caste and difference of duties and so many ways of living and so many different sort of roles, they can just accept that. That that's the way she lives, it's hereditary, her mother was, so of course she carries it on. [Laughter]. It's almost her "dharma" and they tend to think of it like that. Not with revulsion or anything of that sort.

Anne McMillan: I also wonder if there's any difference in the fact that women get married very young in India, they tend to get married, say, well, about sixteen.

S: Well, the higher the caste, the earlier. Oh, say sixteen, oh yes, most certainly.

Anne McMillan: Whereas in this country say, a woman quite often doesn't get married till she's twenty-one, so she's supposed to maintain those virginal standards, you know, until she is twenty-one or twenty-two, which is perfectly unrealistic really. [Laughter]. Well, I mean, it's unrealistic to even call it the norm, to expect it in that sort of loaded way.

S: Mm. There is something called the "Madonna complex". Have you heard about that? When a woman feels she's all pure and Virgin Mary-like and so on. Or, presumably, that's what it means.

Sridevi: It seems lots of men are confused about it. They expect these two opposite things from women.

S: Well. Yes, in general, or else they divide women into two groups. They relate to these two different kinds of women in two quite different ways.

Dhammadinnā: You think of all the names there are for calling women who enjoy sex. You don't use those terms towards a man.

S: No.

Dhammadinnā: Like "slag" and "slut". There's loads and loads and loads of names for them, a whole vocabulary of words.

S: Mm. I don't think you find that in India. Mainly because there is not that sort of split. [Pause] I remember there was one representation of the Virgin Mary which was quite interesting - trampling the devil beneath her feet. [Laughter].

Anne McMillan: Yes, standing on the serpent!

S: The serpent, yes. Sometimes represented as actually a serpent, because Eve was not able to conquer the serpent, whereas the Virgin Mary, through her purity, is able to conquer the serpent. And sometimes he's represented as a serpent, sometimes actually as a sort of devil which she's trampling upon.

Dhammadinnā: I never get the idea from the Virgin Mary that the spiritual state is as a result of integrating or incorporating basic drives like sexuality. They are not there.

S: They are not there.

Dhammadinnā: Whereas for Buddhist female figures, you feel that they transform that energy.

S: Mm. Well, the way they are depicted. For instance you are not supposed to depict the Virgin Mary in a sensually attractive way, that just does not apply to the Hindu goddesses, or Buddhist female Bodhisattvas. They are depicted in a completely sensuous way, to the *n*th degree almost, which carries its own suggestion. That is, in Indian art anyway, and Tibetan art.

Dhammadinnā: That's why women in the West, or many of them, find it difficult to accept their sexuality and/or their femininity because of this kind of confusion in our conditioning. There's been a lot of confusion. They don't quite know what they're supposed to be, or what they're expected to do or

S: Mm. Yes. Well, you've got a choice. There's this idea or that idea, neither of which particularly attracts you. You're not interested in being a sterilised virgin, nor are you particularly interested in being a slut. I mean, these seem to be the two possibilities and neither seems especially attractive. But do you think this still holds good? I mean even now, in 1980, don't you think there has been quite a change?

Christabel: Men like to go out with prostitutes and marry virgins.

S: Do you think this still applies?

Christabel: I think there's still a little bit of it around.

S: I'm not so sure of that.

Dhammadinnā: Not so much, but I think it's still there.

S: I can't say I know many men who claim to have married virgins. [Laughter].

Dhammadinnā: They don't get the chance.

Anne McMillan: I think it's in subtler ways really.

S: It is subtler than that, yes.

Ulla/Suzannah?: And if you think about advertising!

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: The female body is used in particular ways which I'm sure comes from that. It's quite strong, actually.

S: Mm. Mm. I remember, maybe we will close on this little reminiscence, I remember that many years ago, this was about 1952, I was asked to advise about a Buddhist film that some Bombay film maker was thinking of making. So I got to know him. He was a quite well-known film star. He was known as the Clark Gable of India and his leading lady was known as the Greta Garbo of India. So I met her too, got to know her. So, anyway, in the course of conversation, he asked me, he'd been to Ajanta, and he had the idea that the Ajanta caves would be the background of his film. He was very taken by these caves. So he was talking and he said "There was one thing I just couldn't understand. I wonder if you could clear it up." He said, "These caves are all supposed to have been decorated by monk-artists." So I said "Yes." But he said, "there are so many paintings of voluptuous women," he said, "in some cases, with not very much on." So he said, "How do you explain this?". So I had to do some very quick thinking, but it flashed on me, so I said "Well, it's quite simple." I said, "They were just decorating their caves with pictures of all sorts of natural objects, so they painted lotus flowers and they painted leaves, they painted elephants, they painted monkeys, they painted horses, so", I said, "they painted women too. It's just another beautiful natural object and they didn't have any separate special feeling towards it - either specially to include it, or specially to exclude it". So I thought about that reply several times later on and I thought, yes, this was the correct reply. I mean, this is how they actually saw it. They depicted the female simply as a natural object, without any sort of moral implications of any sort. I think this would be practically impossible in the West.

Voices: Mm. Mm.

S: Even in modern times, because you've still got the consciousness of rejecting the traditional Western attitude. You're very conscious that it's a nude, or a semi-nude woman. You cannot paint a woman, in fact, as you would paint a fruit or a flower, but in India, they could do that. So perhaps it'll take a very, very long time to get rid of these sort of attitudes from our consciousness in the West. So, you know, you feel with the representation of a Tara, that the figure is depicted in the same sort of spirit as you would depict a fruit or a flower. You see what I mean? It's like that.

Voices: Yes. Mm.

S: There's no feeling of "Oh, it should be toned down", or "It shouldn't be so voluptuous, or so well-developed". Well, why not, that is the way it is! Just like the fruit is round, or the flower is many petalled, and that's the way it is, that is the way you depict it.

Dhammadinnā: It is a sort of natural voluptuousness.

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: In pornography in Western pictures ...

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: ... it's an assumed voluptuousness.

S: Yes. It's an innocent voluptuousness which is quite different. Yes.

Dhammadinnā: You can't have that, because you've got to be bad to be voluptuous in Western.....

S: Yes. Well, it's so ridiculous, this Western voluptuousness with it's black silk stockings and things like that. It looks so silly! Really! [Laughter]. Well, it does to me after twenty years in India, anyway. It's really absurd. You just want to laugh at it, it's so silly!

Dhammadinnā: It's serious stuff for people who buy those kind of magazines.

S: I really wonder why women lend themselves to it. But, you know ...

Dhammadinnā: To get at some money. [Laughs].

S: I suppose it's that, yes.

Dhammadinnā: I mean, they do. They don't understand ...

S: It really makes them look ridiculous. I mean, they talk about making women a sex object, well that's not so bad in a way, but this sort of thing makes them look ridiculous. It really does.

Anne McMillan: It's a case of them not seeing cause and effect. They don't see the effect that it causes in that sense. Like what we talked about the other day. We don't actually see any relationship between what they do and the effect.

S: Yes, right. They might even be feminists up to a point. Or at least to the extent of getting equal wages for equal work.

Anne McMillan: So we should experience mind training ...

Dhammadinnā: But I think, like the Women's Movement demonstrating say against "Miss World" or sexism or adverts, they project in that kind of way. The usual male response it "Oh, you're jealous", or "You're very plain", [laughs] or you know, they come back at you with that kind of attack, "You'd really like to be like that but you can't". It's not being accepted as a genuine protest against those kind of things.

S: Do you think there is a very strong feeling among many women about, you know, as regards things like "Miss World" contests?

Voices: Yes.

S: Again, it seems just silly to see them parading there and prancing around like that. It seems so silly and so sort of non-human, in a way, that they're looked at and paraded up and down. It seems quite undignified.

Voices: Mm.

S: You can't imagine that in India, it would be unthinkable. Though the Indians aren't prudes or anything like that. It's a different sort of attitude.

Dhammadinnā: I think it does have significance for most other women. I can see it is silly, but it affects me more strongly than that.

S: Well it's so silly that it makes you annoyed.

Dhammadinnā: But it's disgusting ...

S: Disgusting, yes.

Dhammadinnā: that runs so much through society, dehumanising, and women do lend themselves to it and that's how it perpetuates.

S: Yes. Right. Well, it's also big business, which in a way, makes it worse.

Dhammadinnā: ... you find yourself, whether you are directly involved in doing something like that, which I'm not, you find yourself involved in it. The attitude of men you meet in the street, you meet in the tube, you're not really free of it. It runs through everything. You can't be free of it.

S: Mm. But it is strange. I mean, it's an appreciation of the voluptuous only in a distorted sort of way, not in a natural, healthy sort of way, as you get more often than not in India, at least, traditionally.

Christabel: It's so de-personalised.

Dhammadinnā: You very often see pictures of women in adverts in London, naked, with their heads chopped off. [Laughs]. It's quite common.

S: Yes. I've noticed that. I've sort of noticed, seeing these sort of advertisements, how ugly they are made to look. How ugly the stance is. You see what I mean? Not as though they are being shown to their advantage, but shown actually to their disadvantage, at least in human or aesthetic ...

Voice: Not graceful.

S: It's not graceful. It's ugly and awkward ...

Christabel: Its the real meaning of perversion, to me anyway!

S: Mm. And exaggerated, you could say. There is nothing beautiful or graceful or harmonious being displayed. But that seems to be the current taste almost, a taste for ugliness. And sometimes the expressions of women in advertisements, and clearly they are expressions which they are made to assume ...

Voices: Yes. Right.

S: ... most dreadful expressions.

Karola: It's interesting who actually takes these photographs. It's male photographers.

S: Well, presumably.

Karola: The assumption is that's what people read into it. That's how they see it.

S: It's not only how they see, but it's how they want to see.

Voices: Yes.

S: Because they presumably know that women don't always look like that. Some models are carefully selected for certain features and even certain expressions. One gets that feeling. So reading, say, looking through the colour supplements, one gets the impression that a certain type of model is in vogue, a certain sort of "looks" is in vogue at present and it's not at all pleasant. Just as say, at the beginning of the century, a certain type of looks was in vogue, the buxom female, etc., etc. Well, now it's a different sort of thing. It's almost something sinister.

Voices: Mm.

S: Almost a sort of sophisticated gangster's moll sort of look. This is the sort of impression you get. This is found attractive by some people, but it's really quite awful. But it's very pervasive, it's very general. But it looks as though the Virgin Mary is responsible [laughter] for most of it! So you're really lucky if you're brought up as a Protestant. Maybe you are brought up in a cold-blooded Calvinistic sort of way, but at least you miss out on the Virgin Mary! [Laughter]

Voices: [All together]?

S: No. You don't.

Anne McMillan: I was going to say the poor old Virgin Mary in herself probably didn't even exist. Probably some guy that ...
[Laughter]

S: Well, I mean, it's only a few lines, it's only a few lines about her in the New Testament.

Anne McMillan: And yet she's been all sort of ...

S: Yes, It's all been built up.

Anne McMillan: ... totally out of all proportion.

S: She just says a few words, "Let it be unto me according to Thy will". [Laughter] "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord".

Anne McMillan: If she says that, she deserves it.

S: "Eco ancilla Domine". This is what she says. It comes out of her mouth in a sort of balloon. (Laughter) But if you dissociate it from all these sort of social and cultural things, then you can, ... if you dissociate yourself from, say, Western history, the figure of the Virgin Mary can be regarded as very positive. But it hasn't sort of worked out like that in practice.

Sridevi: There's a book about it. This woman who wrote these two books about women, she goes into pagan myths about virginity. She comes out

Voice: Yes, Esther Harding.

Sridevi: She comes out with something quite positive, how you resolve this conflict between mother and virgin.

Voice: I found it quite interesting.

S: Mm. Well perhaps someone will have to write a little study. But it does seem to be of some importance, or some significance, doesn't it?

Voice: Yes, because it does have such an emotional effect.

S: Especially on those who have been brought up as Catholics.

Voices: Mm.

S: I'll have to ask some of the men Order Members and Mitras, who have been brought up as Catholics what effect the cult of the Virgin Mary had on them.

Voice: Mm.

S: I don't remember any of them every mentioning it. There's Abhaya for instance, there's Kuladeva, I don't remember any of them mentioning it.

Anne McMillan: I think it's much less conscious in men.

S: Mm. It could be.

Anne McMillan: I think they're not so aware of it because they don't associate, you know, they don't suffer from it in quite the same sort of way. I think, if they did think about it quite deeply, they probably would be able to see where it had affected them.

Dhammadinnā: What their attitudes to women are, which they don't give much thought to.

Anne McMillan: Yes.

S: Mm. All right. Since you've let your hair down a bit over that [laughter] which has no doubt done you all a lot of good. [Chuckles]. But perhaps it would be useful, seriously, if someone did write an essay or an article on what it means, psychologically, to be brought up in this way, influenced by this particular ideal, so called. It might also be useful, if more men knew how women felt who have been brought up as Catholics. It might help to explain some of their attitudes.

Voice: That's true.

S: Or why they feel uneasy or unhappy about certain things, or react to certain things. Because in Finland you don't have this because it's a Lutheran country, so you don't even see the Virgin Mary.

Dhammadinnā: I think it's one of the reasons why you get what you call flirtatiousness and sex games. Actually, I think, if you've been brought up with a sort of conflict, because you're supposed to be pure and not attractive ...

S: Ah!

Dhammadinnā: ... and on the other hand ...

Voices: Ah, yes!

S: Ah! Right!

Dhammadinnā: ... you're trying to get married and have children.

S: You hover between the two.

Dhammadinnā: So you create a conflict. You can't naturally say what you want in terms of sex or in terms of getting married. You're caught in this kind of middle ground and feel very uncomfortable, so you say, "No! Stop! [Laughter]

S: [Laughing] So you say "No I don't! Yes I do! No I don't! Yes I do!" [Loud laughter]

Dhammadinnā: ...and men find it very difficult because they get led on and then they ...

S: Well, they find it really annoying.

Dhammadinnā: But I mean, there is a reason for it and I think the reason comes down to ...

S: Do you think it is partly that, apart from the sort of animal shyness of the female? "Alleged", um!

Voice: I don't know.

Voice: I don't think it's that.

Dhammadinnā: No. I haven't thought about that. I think it comes back ...

S: Mm. It could well be.

Anne McMillan: It isn't a natural shyness that's stopping at that. It's more a whole sort of ...

Dhammadinnā: You're forced to play games, because you can't be straight forward.

S: You can't be straightforward, mm. Because you don't really know what your actual feeling is supposed to be. You've been brought up, in a way, almost with a double standard.

Anne McMillan: It's these double signals again, yes.

S: Oscillating between the Virgin and the whore all the time.

Dhammadinnā: Your natural feelings arise as you grow up as a woman and it may be explicitly stated in your family or the church, but it quite often just seeps at you from under the carpet or somewhere, that you're just not supposed to be a sexual being, so you are in conflict.

S: Mm. Whereas, in the case of the Indians, they do insist on virginity in their wives, but, on the other hand, they are considerate enough to marry them very young.

End of Side 1, Side 2.

S: You see what I mean? Yes, you must be a virgin until you marry, but we're not going to keep you hanging on year after year after year.

Voice: Yeah. That's really good.

S: I mean, I know it in Hindu families. As soon as they start to feel the girl is getting a bit restless, they marry her. That's that. They know that you can't expect her....

[Break in tape. The next part of the seminar was recorded wrongly and is therefore no longer in existence (if it ever was!).]

[Tape Three Side One]

S:we're concerned with the training in the aspiration in the enlightened attitude first of all. It consists in not excluding beings from our thoughts and to be mindful of the usefulness of this attitude. And now, thirdly, we come on to "the accumulation of the prerequisites", which is the method for strengthening the enlightened attitude. So would someone like to read from the bottom of page 143.

"III. The method for obtaining a strong enlightened attitude, which is called the training in the accumulation of the two prerequisites, is discussed in the 'Byan.chub.lam.sgron' [Bodhipathapradipa,38]:

The accumulation of merits and acquisition of spiritual awareness is the perfect cause."

S: Mm. Inasmuch as one is concerned with the Bodhisattva Ideal, one is concerned with the attainment of Buddhahood, and in the Mahayana this is very often spoken of in terms of "the accumulation of the two prerequisites". That is to say, "merits", 'punya' and "spiritual awareness" or 'jnana'. These, very roughly, correspond first of all to, in the case of 'punya', you could say not just merits, but emotional positivity carried to the very highest possible degree, and 'jnana' representing the transcendental awareness. So these two things together result in the attainment of supreme enlightenment. These two things, as they are cultivated, gradually coalesce and interpenetrate each other.

Dhammadinnā: What did you say 'jnana' was?

S: Pardon?

Dhammadinnā: Can you repeat how you define 'jnana'.

S: 'Jnana' is the Transcendental Awareness. It's J-N-A-N-A. So "the accumulation of merits and acquisition of spiritual awareness is the perfect cause", that is to say, of supreme enlightenment. So what is "accumulation of merits". In what does that consist? This is explained now. Would you like to go on with that.

"Accumulation of merits' is the method of behaving in accordance with the ten fundamental rules and produces the four expedients by which sentient beings feel themselves attracted by us, while 'acquisition of spiritual awareness' belongs to the category of discriminating awareness born from wisdom which is the knowledge that our motives are pure. In this way the strength of an enlightened attitude develops by acquiring these two prerequisites which can, and should, be accumulated and then strengthened by muttering the prescribed mantras hourly at all times. In the 'Tshogs.kyi.gtam' [Sambharalkparikatha] it is stated:

*A Bodhisattva must always think:
Today I will accumulate
Merits and spiritual awareness
And bring merits to all beings."*

S: Mm. Mm. So one is concerned with two things, "accumulation of merits" and "acquisition of spiritual awareness". So first of all, "The accumulation of merits is the method of behaving in accordance with the ten fundamental rules". So we'd better turn to the notes at the back and see what they are and go through those. First of all "Perfection in right views" Why do you need perfection in right views before you can develop merits or emotional positivity, let's say? What bearing does that have?

Christabel: Well, perhaps you wouldn't recognise those things until you had the right attitudes?

S: Mm. Yes, right. Practice depends upon theory in a sense. Mm. Wrong practice is the result of wrong theory and the result of wrong views. We had a good example of that yesterday, didn't we, towards the end of the discussion? Do you remember? Yes? [Pause] Perhaps you don't

make the connection. Well we were talking about the Virgin Mary being upheld as an ideal, and clearly there is a sort of theological wrong view here which results in a wrong course of conduct being inculcated.

Voices: Oh. Yes. Mm.

S: You see what I mean? So in this way "right views" has got to precede the "right action". You've got to get wrong views out of the way in order to be sure you will accumulate merits and develop a positive emotional attitude. So, first of all, "Perfection in right views." You've got to achieve that before you can develop merits or before you can accumulate merits.

But then it says, "Proper conduct". It's not much use having the right views if you don't act in accordance with them. You've got to put the right views into actual practice in the form of proper conduct. And then "Spiritual interest", I don't know what the original technical term here is, but it seems to correspond to something like 'priti'. It is not enough, so to speak, to have right views and to put those into practice, it's as though you've got to enjoy doing that ...

Voices: Mm.

S: You've got to do it with zest and enthusiasm and interest, spiritual interest. And then, "The joys of an enlightened attitude", that's taking the same line of thought, so to speak, even further isn't it? You've got to rejoice in having, in the fact that you do have, the enlightened itself, rejoice in your own spiritual aspiration, not feel it as something imposed upon you. Feel it as something that you really want to do, that you thoroughly enjoy doing. As the "*Bodhicaryavatara*" says, "Just as the elephant plunges from one lotus pond into another, so when one work is finished you joyfully plunge into another".

And then, "Of giving concentrated attention to the unfoldment of an enlightened attitude and in the Dharma". "The unfoldment of an enlightened attitude", that is something more like, more literally, the arising of the 'bodhichitta'. So to give concentrated attention to that, to foster that, to safeguard that, that enlightened attitude, and one's interest in the Dharma. And "The pursuance of the Dharma in its spirit", not paying attention simply to the letter of the Dharma. And then, "Living in accordance with it", which is somewhat like the earlier "proper conduct". And then, "To abandon pride and other selfish motives and to comprehend the inner meaning of the Buddha's teaching", what the Buddha's teaching is really all about, not to be misled by specific applications, or particular contexts. To understand what it is really all about, To put aside all pride and selfish motives and selfish interests [Pause]

So these are the ten fundamental rules in accordance with which one should behave in order to accumulate merits. What's the sort of general impression that you get from these ten? Are they all that different from the Bodhisattva precepts themselves?

Christabel: It doesn't specifically say, " with reference to other sentient beings".

S: Though that is implied because the enlightened attitude itself refers to other living beings.

Christabel: Mm.

S: It's as though throughout this whole chapter you are getting basically the same ideal, of course the Bodhisattva ideal. It's being exhibited in its different facets, its different aspects, from different points of view, in different contexts, according to the classification. Do you see what I mean? In a way it isn't a subdivision of the subject, it's more like a looking at the same subject from so many different points of view, ...

Voices: Yes.

S: ... you are getting, basically, the same qualities and the same attitude all the time, but each time you're seeing them in a slightly different way. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: You mustn't be misled too much by the rather scholastic divisions and subdivisions. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: You know, the "a's" and the "b's" and the points "one" and points "two" and all the rest of it. So in a way there's a lot of repetitions, a lot of overlapping, but also that's good, because it prevents you from looking at the subject in too much of a cut-and-dried way, as though it really is subdivided into all these different sections. This is why, I mean, sometimes it's ... all these works are very useful in a way, for study, but sometimes it's helpful to get back to the original sutras and just to read the descriptions of the Bodhisattva Ideal in those sutras, even though the descriptions are more haphazard, if you see what I mean, not so neatly sorted out, more poetic. They sometimes give you a very vivid picture. All this work of sort of classification comes at a later stage and it's all right for piecemeal study, but in the end you have to put it all back together again in an organic sort of way.

Dhammadinnā: Otherwise you tend to lose the spirit ...

S: Yes, right. So sometimes a beautiful poem can give you the spirit of the whole thing better than the more analytical treatment. The analytical treatment is good, because you do go into the subject thoroughly, but you mustn't lose sight of the whole and not lose the feeling for the whole thing.

Voices: Mm.

Dhammadinnā: Seems to be necessary to break it down for actual concrete practice.

S: Yes. That too, yes, or just to check up on one's own practice. Am I doing this ? Am I putting that into operation?

Dhammadinnā: If in that you lose the spirit then you're not actually practising. [Laughs]

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: Is that what happened in the Hinayana? That ...

S: I think one can say that yes, they became over-analytical.

Dhammadinnā: They had a positive reason to do that in the first place.

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: And then ...

S: Analysis is for the sake of a more thorough understanding obviously, but then it becomes an end in itself, and you lose sight of the whole. You forget that there is a whole at all.

Voices: Mm.

S: So, "Accumulation of merits is the method of behaving in accordance with the ten fundamental rules and produces the four expedients by which sentient beings feel themselves attracted to us." [That is thirteen. Here the note says. "*They are liberality, affability, conscientiousness and adequate interest*"]. Do you recognise these? You've heard all about them, most of you, quite recently. Think back! [Pause, noises off!] Mm? Worked it out?

Dhammadinnā: Annie knows! [Laughter]

S: The bright girl! .

Voice: We both tried to work it out, but I felt it was about 'maitri', benevolence, ... our interest is safeguarded by our benevolence. If we are interested in them, then these things should be apparent ...

S: That's a brave effort. [Laughter] But no-o-oh! [Laughter] This illustrates something which is quite important, or at least relevant. If you're studying Buddhist texts, or Buddhist sutras and other scriptures through translations, translations vary. So you haven't got the original Sanskrit here, so you are at a complete loss, because translations are so arbitrary and differ so much. These are the four 'Sangraha-vastus', yes? Oh yes,

you know!

Voices: Ah. No. I haven't heard of those before.

S: Oh yes you have! [Laughter]

Dhammadinnā: Have I?

S: Yes! Right, yes. The last series of talks.

Dhammadinnā: I can't remember what they were.

S: In the "*Survey*" these are listed without being fully explained as "The four means of Conversion". I said in the course of one of the '*Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra*' lectures that a better translation was in fact "The four means of unification", especially unification of the spiritual community. Perhaps you missed that talk then?

Dhammadinnā: Which one was that in?

S: I don't remember, frankly

Voices: [Questioning]

S: And I dealt with them at some length. I did that because I'd never done it before. In the "*Survey*" they are merely enumerated with a few words of explanation, but I've not really gone into them properly. But they are quite important, so in one of those talks I decided to make up that omission.

Dhammadinnā: Was it in "*Being all things to all men*"? Was it in that one?

S: Yes. I think it must have been that one. We'll soon have a new edition available. [Searching in a book for references] In the ... among the ten 'Paramitas'; the original list of six is extended to ten [this is all explained here], "*the seventh 'paramita' is 'upaya-kausalya', skilful means and this consists in the Four Elements of Conversion, the Four Analytical Knowledges and the Magical Formulae.*" I've explained all of these. Yes it was in "*Being all things to all men*". So there's "giving", which is translated as "liberality", 'priya-vadita' which I translate here as "loving speech". Guenther renders it as "affability", and then "doing of good", arthacarya' or 'arthakriya', in the technical sense of exhorting and encouraging others to lead the holy life or like inspiring others. And then, "exemplification", which I've explained here as practising ourselves the virtues we recommend to others. But in that talk I went into it much more thoroughly and deeply, as I said, because I hadn't done so on any other occasion. So that was rather a gap in my exposition of the traditional Buddhism. So if anyone wants to follow this up, well, they can just

listen to that talk.

It only goes to show - presumably you were there on that occasion, or many of you were there - that it's very easy to miss something, because perhaps you are still thinking about something you had heard before in the talk that's occupied your mind and you're dwelling on it a bit and you miss what comes afterwards. This is why, sometimes, one needs to hear and rehear these things at different times.

Dhammadinnā: There was a lot in that particular tape, a lot of different lists and things.

S: Mm.

Voice: Sorry, what was the fourth one?

S: The fourth one is "exemplification", 'samanarthata'. What is Guenther's translation?

Anne McMillan: "Adequate interest".

S: "Adequate interest". He's really wide of the mark, isn't he! And "conscientiousness", well it's fairly approximate, but it's always good if whoever writes these sort of books gives the Sanskrit terms because they are your only means of finding out whether different translations are referring to the same thing, otherwise you'd never know in some cases. You see what I mean?

Anne Murphy: Because I'm not aware of it at all. It's not at all familiar to me. That's why I didn't, ... I had nothing to pick it up from.

S: Right. You might be able to work out "liberality". Yes 'dana' possibly, but "loving speech" and "affability"? That would be quite difficult, and as for "conscientiousness" and "adequate interest"! You'd never be able to do it.

Dhammadinnā: They sound quite dry, the last two especially in comparison with "inspiration"

S: Yes, right. So, "accumulation of merits is the method of behaving in accordance with the ten fundamental rules, and produces the four expedients by which sentient beings feel themselves attracted by us". If you are equipped with those four means of conversion, or those four means of unification of the spiritual community, then sentient beings feel themselves attracted to you, or attracted by you. [Pause]

Christabel: Bhante, in what sense do you mean "conversion"?

S: Mm? Well just as a translation of 'sangraha-vastu'.

Christabel: Ah!

S: You mustn't put into the English word "conversion" the connotations which belong to it as an English word.

Christabel: Ah, yes.

S: It's just an indication of, or a rough equivalent of, the Sanskrit 'sangraha-vastu'. "While 'acquisition of spiritual awareness' belongs to the category of discriminating awareness born from wisdom which is the knowledge that our motives are pure". 'Prajna', Guenther tends to translate "wisdom", 'prajna', as "discriminating awareness". He sometimes calls it "analytical discriminative awareness", [You must remember that when reading Guenther's translations of other works], "which is the knowledge that our motives are pure". And the note in here says, "*which is the knowledge of the purity of three aspects. In other words, there must be no vested interest in the person who acts, the person towards whom the action is directed and in the action itself*". I don't see quite how that works out, do you? "There must be no vested interest in the person who acts." Well, that is clear enough. "The person towards whom the action is directed", well, how does the question of his not having a vested interest arise in the case of your wisdom? Do you see what I mean?

Anne McMillan: Could you say that again?

S: How does the question of the other person's vested interest, or the other person not having a vested interest arise, in the question of, or in connection with your wisdom? How does the fact that they have no vested interest make your wisdom pure, which is what Guenther seems to be saying? Always keep a close eye on these scholars, you see what I mean! [Laughter].

Dhammadinnā: Isn't it that you don't have ... you're acting but you have no vested interest in the action in yourself, or in the other person. Is that what it's saying? Not that the other person doesn't have a vested interest in you?

S: I don't see what it does say. First of all, "no vested interest in the person who acts, the person toward whom the action is directed". It could mean that. That you don't have a vested interest in that person, but then that is really inseparable from your action towards that person.

Christabel: Could you give us an example?

S: No. I think actually he's a bit muddled. I think actually what is usually said is this: when something is pure ... your wisdom is pure in the sense that you have no conception of self, no conception of other, or no conception of the relation between them as two quite separate mutually exclusive entities. As in the case of 'dana', you have no conception of yourself as the giver, the other person as the person to whom you're giving, or of the act of giving. Similarly with regards to ethics, you have no conception of yourself as the person who is not committing violence, others to whom you are not committing violence, etc.. I think this is what it is all about, and Guenther expresses himself in a rather muddled sort of way. The threefold purity is usually explained in this way. Its '*trimandaliparisuddha*' in Sanskrit. The mandala or circle of threefold purity. The purity with respect to the subject, the object and the relation between them. So "the knowledge that our motives are pure", it means this. We don't have a dogmatic idea about ourself, or about the other person, the object, or about the relation between the two.

Sridevi: So is the Buddhist idea of conversion that you're not trying to convert anybody, but if you are practising you attract people naturally?

S: Yes! Right! Yes. You could say that, yes.

Srimala: Is it until 'prajna' arises, or until we've developed 'prajna' that we have conception of self, other and the relation between the two?

S: Yes, as absolute entities as it were. It is not that when one develops 'prajna' subject and object are wiped out, but that they no longer ... they lose their rigidity, so to speak. Do you see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: There is in a sense still, you know, the Buddha teaches the Dharma, apparently, there's some sense of self, some sense of others, but not in the hard and fast, rigid, mutually exclusive way we usually experience these things. It's rather difficult to describe, in a way, isn't it? Not that they just cancel out and you're left with a blank, a sort of featureless unity. Not that! Perhaps you can look at it in this way. If you get on with somebody very well, well, there's a sort of ease and relaxation, your personality as it were, your being and the other person's do not clash. Mm.

Dhammadinnā: There's a softness.

S: Yes, there are no sort of hard edges between you. It's more like that carried to a very much further extent. [Pause] "In this way the strength of an enlightened attitude develops by acquiring these two prerequisites which can, and should, be accumulated and then strengthened by muttering the prescribed mantras hourly at all times". It's rather a bad translation, "muttering" ... [Laughter]. "By repeating softly" ... but why "the prescribed mantras"? How have the mantras suddenly come in?. [Pause]. Can you really do it just by repeating mantras?

Anne McMillan: Does it connect with the translation of "mantra" as "that which protects the mind"?

S: Could do, could do. But it suggests here that "the muttering of mantras" is the spiritual practice. Why do you think muttering of mantras is shorthand for a whole sort of practice?

Dhammadinnā: It is keeping you in touch with the Bodhisattva Ideal at the highest level, with the mantra of the Bodhisattva you're trying to connect with that.

S: Yes, that's true. It suggests that there's also the visualisation of the appropriate Buddha or Bodhisattva, and that you're not only visualising, not only repeating the mantra, but you are aware of the significance of that. I mean, there is not only the visualization, the vivid experience of the form of the Buddha or the Bodhisattva, but the realisation of its non-difference from 'sunyata', so there is a 'samatha'-type experience corresponding to 'punya' and a 'vipassana'-type experience corresponding to 'jnana'. You see what I mean? So it's as though the visualisation and

mantra recitation though at a higher level corresponds to 'samatha' and 'vipassana' on the one hand and 'punya' and 'jnana' on the other. Because you visualise, say, the Bodhisattva adorned with all sorts of ornaments and qualities which are different forms of 'punya' and you are trying to develop and to assimilate those, and at the same time there is the clarity and luminosity and transparency and non-difference from 'sunyata' which is where the element of "insight" or 'prajna' comes in. So all this is really comprehended in mantra recitation, or visualisation and mantra recitation.

Probably why, simply, this very brief reference is made is that they consider this is something which has to be explained personally.

Voices: Mm.

S: Here, at this point, you are supposed to receive personal instruction. It is not just all written out in a book meant for say general reading. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: "The prescribed mantras hourly at all times." At all times here meaning any day of the week, any month or whatever.

Dhammadinnā: Did visualisation begin in Tibet or did it begin in India?

S: Oh, very much in India. Oh, yes.

Dhammadinnā: In the Mahayana?

S: Even more to speak of the Vajrayana in the Mahayana, yes. You even get some visualisations mentioned in the Pali scriptures. There are references to the Buddha as it were "appearing" in front of monks who were meditating.

Dhammadinnā: Is that the basis of it in a sense?

S: It seems to be. And also in the Theravada one has abstract colour visualisations. Not visualisations of the forms and figures but of colours, discs of colour. So there is a connection there as well, I think.

Dhammadinnā: So to begin with would it have been a spontaneous meditative experience.

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: And then it developed?

S: Yes. Right! It would have been a spontaneous meditative experience, which someone who had had such an experience recommended to his disciples as something to be actually practised. I mean, you find this with all the teachings, that someone's actual experience is made into a precept or practice for others who wish to experience that for themselves. You see what I mean? As with the precepts of Bodhisattva behaviour. Here is a Bodhisattva, you see how the Bodhisattva behaves, so you see a Bodhisattva is doing this, a Bodhisattva is doing that, so if you want to be a Bodhisattva, well, this is what you do, or try to do. In that way the precept is derived from someone's actual behaviour originally. So similarly with visualisations. They were originally somebody's spontaneous experience, due to the fact that they'd reached a certain level, so they then recommend those to be developed or practised by those who want to create within themselves the same or a similar state of mind. But here we have to be aware of imitation in a sort of clumsy, literal way.

Voices: Mm.

S: "In the 'Sambharaparikatha' it is stated:
A Bodhisattva must always think:
Today I will accumulate
Merits and spiritual awareness
And bring merits to all beings."

In other words, from this particular point of view, the whole of the Bodhisattva life and practice is summed up in the accumulation of merits and acquisition of awareness for the sake of all living beings. This is a sort of alternative way of describing the Bodhisattva life and career, usually described in terms of the six 'paramitas' or ten 'paramitas'. Here in terms of accumulation of 'punya' and acquisition of 'jnana'. It amounts to the same thing. In some ways it is good to have these alternative descriptions because they prevent one from thinking, "It's this." or, "It consists in that." in an over rigid sort of way. [Long pause]

Dhammadinnā: 'Punya' is merit. Can that be something you have been, perhaps, born with this lifetime, your talents, or your ...?

S: Yes. It's not 'punya'. I've gone into this quite a bit on I think, two previous study groups. I don't remember exactly when or where.

Dhammadinnā: Probably in London?

S: Ah. Yes. 'Punya' can be regarded almost as either cause or effect. You see? If you live in a certain way, then merits, 'punya' accrue to you in the form of certain blessings, or certain advantages, even a certain charisma, let us say or a certain aura that surrounds you. You see what I mean? But 'punya' is also at the same time, those skilful, positive actions that you actually do here and now. 'Punya' seems to have that sort of double connotation, because it's an accumulation. You see what I mean? You're not only performing merits, but you are carrying along with you merits in the sense of the consequences of merits you have performed. It's all snow-balling, eh?

Anne McMillan: Didn't you mention that at Punyavati's ordination?

S: It could be, yes, indeed, it could be. So 'punya' has got a quite different connotation, a much richer connotation than the word 'merits' or 'virtues' etc. in English.

Voice: Right.

S: It represents a sort of emotional positivity that just goes on accumulating and accumulating. On the one hand you are experiencing the positive results of the 'punya' that you've done; on the other hand you are actually doing, you're committing 'punyas' in the present which is going to bring about further merits in the future. Do you get the idea?

Voice: Mm.

S: So it's much more than merits, it's much more than goodness, it's much more than virtue, it's not quite the same thing, even, as positivity.

Voices: Mm.

Dhammadinnā: Is that where the idea of a Buddha having a perfect body comes from? Is that an expression of merit?

S: Yes, this is a result of, an expression of his accumulation of 'punya'. His mental state is of 'jnana'. So, yes, it also ties up with beauty. It's a part of 'punya', as it were, as a result, everything is beautiful, attractive, fine, splendid etc.

Annie Norman: Does this tie in with the positive 'nidanas'?

S: Not specifically, no. It ties up in a general way, of course, in as much as the positive 'nidanas' are to be cultivated, just as 'punya' is to be accumulated, but there doesn't seem to be a point by point correspondence.

Dhammadinnā: Can it tie up with certain talents you have which are ways of expressing yourself?

S: Yes. Well these are merits in the more resultant sense ...

Dhammadinnā: Yes.

S: Talents with which you are born, so to speak. Say, the talent for speaking.

Dhammadinnā: When you haven't got 'jnana', then those talents don't actually go very far.

S: Mm. You don't make the best use of them. They need to be guided and be clarified by 'prajna'. So you get the sort of picture of the Bodhisattva as someone who is the complete embodiment of all the positive, especially the emotionally positive, and attractive characteristics and qualities, but that those are, at the same time, also suffused with a transcendental awareness. This, again, ties up with something that we were saying yesterday, in connection with, let's say, the 'dakini' figure, or the figure of a female Bodhisattva or even Hindu goddess, in comparison with the Catholic figure, say of the Virgin Mary. You see what I mean? There is the full accumulation of merits in the form of the actual figure, you see what I mean? It represents the sublimation of the mundane. Not its annihilation, not its distortion, not its crushing, but its full and perfect development to the highest possible degree. But at the same time, what shall I say, infused with the spiritual, even the transcendental significance, the two blended together. The mundane carried to the highest possible pitch of refinement and development, and there becoming suffused with the transcendental awareness. So 'punya' represents the one and 'jnana' represents the other, except that at this level you can no longer really distinguish them.

Voices: Ah!

Christabel: It makes the Christian ideal seem so flat doesn't it? Incomplete ...

S: Mm. Well not only flat and incomplete, but even distorted ...

Christabel: Yes.

S: ...that is the most unfortunate aspect of it all. [Pause] All right, let's go on to section four. [Pause] Maybe we should just go back and remind ourselves what that is really all about. It's one .. two .. three .. "Ever and again to purify this attitude", and the method for that is "strengthening", strengthening the enlightened attitude. Would someone like to read?

"The method for spreading and deepening the enlightened attitude, which is called the training in its purification, is mentioned in the 'Byan.chub.lam.sgron' [Bodhipathapradipa,18]:

*After having formed an attitude of aspiration
One has to increase it by many endeavours.*

The training in how to do this is threefold: purification of mind as [i] the motive, [ii] the substance and [iii] correct conduct in and of enlightenment. By this triple purification an enlightened attitude is made to grow."

S: All right. There will be a few words on each of these three, but first of all, something more general. "After having formed an attitude of aspiration", that is "aspiration" in the sense of the arising of the bodhichitta, "One has to increase it by many endeavours". This is the significant word, "increase it by many endeavours". That doesn't only apply to the bodhichitta, on its first arising, but to any good quality that has started

emerging.

Voices: Yes.

S: I mean, this is so important, that you don't just allow it to flicker out, so to speak, that you have to increase it by many endeavours, when you see yourself just beginning to be a bit more

[End of side one side two]

mettā-full towards people, or a bit more aware, a bit more mindful, don't just ...

[BREAK IN TAPE]

Anne Norman: ... as soon as you become satisfied ...

S: Mm!

Anne Norman: ... with the quality, you lose it.

S: Right! Yes. At least you start losing it, unless it's something transcendental, if it isn't being increased, it will decrease. So, "The method of spreading and deepening an enlightened attitude, which is called the training in its purification, is mentioned in the Bodhipathapradipa,

After having formed an attitude of aspiration
One has to increase it by many endeavours.

The training in how to do this, that is to say in increasing it, is threefold: purification of mind as [i] the motive, or as to the motive, [ii] the substance and [iii] correct conduct in and of enlightenment. By this triple purification an enlightened attitude is made to grow."

So the first, what is that?

"The first means always to think benevolently and compassionately of sentient beings, even every hour."

Mm. That's quite a tall order isn't it?. This is how one purifies and also increases the enlightened attitude, just the way you think about living beings. We've encountered this before, haven't we, in a slightly different context, or from a slightly different angle?

Dhammadinnā: Not excluding human beings.

S: So there must be this constant exercise, as it were, of benevolence and compassion to all sentient beings. It must be actively felt, as it were. No "moral holidays"! [Laughter] Don't allow yourselves a "hate everybody week". [Laughter] Not even an hour, in fact. [Long pause]

Would someone like to read number two?

"[ii] The mind is purified as the substance of enlightenment in the following manner. Thrice by day and by night, in the desire to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, and once an hour to form an enlightened attitude, we should repeat the following words:

*Until I have attained enlightenment I take refuge
In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the noble Sangha.
By performing acts of liberality and other virtues
May I realize Buddhahood for the benefit of the world."*

S: Mm. What is this in fact? What is this a form of, would you say?

Voice: The Bodhisattva Vow.

S: The Bodhisattva Vow, yes. I mean, in the first, you are simply, so to speak, thinking benevolently and compassionately of sentient beings, but here in this second section, you are actually, explicitly aspiring towards that which will enable you to be benevolent and compassionate in the highest degree, that is to say, enlightenment for the benefit of all. So until one has attained enlightenment you Go for Refuge and you aspire, that you may practise the 'paramitas' until you realise enlightenment or Buddhahood for the benefit of all. [Pause] In a way you can see here the difference between the Going for Refuge and the Bodhisattva Vow. Do you see that? Well what is the difference really? In a sense, they amount to the same thing, but there is a sort of difference between the Going for Refuge and the Bodhisattva Vow.

Anne McMillan: Going for Refuge by yourself. I mean as a Bodhisattva, you're doing it by yourself but it's bringing the element of others in.

S: Yes. That is true, so in what way does that make a difference?

Anne McMillan: It widens your perspective.

S: It widens your perspective. In what sort of way? [Pause] Well, it's you're more aware of the consequences of enlightenment, especially so far as they affect others. I mean, for instance, in the Going for Refuge, you say well you Go for Refuge to the Buddha, you commit yourself to the state of enlightenment which suggests you want to attain enlightenment, but in the case of the Bodhisattva Vow, the implications of that

enlightenment which you aspire to attain are more fully, or more clearly brought out. So you express your commitment bringing those implications into the picture, as it were. Do you see that? If you gain enlightenment, then of course you will be of great benefit for others. But in the case of the Going for Refuge, you simply say, "I go for refuge, I wish to gain enlightenment". In the case of the Bodhisattva Vow you say, "I wish to gain enlightenment so that I may help all living beings". In other words, you bring out the implications of the Going for Enlightenment more fully. That is the difference between the two, or the distinction between the two. In a sense, there isn't a difference because even though you don't explicitly state it from the beginning, if you do commit yourself, you do gain enlightenment, then, as a Buddha you will surely know what to do, even if you haven't explicitly stated it beforehand. You see what I mean? But in the case of the Bodhisattva, it's as though he knows in advance what will be the implications of his gaining enlightenment so far as other beings are concerned.

Dhammadinnā: It is brought out in the Ordination Ceremony, isn't it? I read through it today. The last verses, "for the benefit of all sentient beings, I accept this Ordination."

S: Yes, right! Yes, indeed!

Dhammadinnā: It brings in that, that element.

S: So you can from the beginning emphasise the implications or consequences of what you are going to achieve, or not. The Hinayana tend not to emphasise, the Mahayana does. You could make a sort of modest comparison. It's like someone who wants to go to University and get a PhD. You could say, "It's my aspiration to get a PhD", but somebody else might say, "Well, it's my aspiration to get a PhD and to teach after that in a University". You see what I mean? So the Going for Refuge simply is like the first, and the Bodhisattva Vow is like the other.

Dhammadinnā: It seems quite important to make it explicit, actually.

S: Mm. I think so. I think actually the Mahayana here is correct, that it is good to make it explicit from the beginning, because that, in a way, gives you a right motivation and a right attitude from the beginning which has some bearing on your actual attainment.

Dhammadinnā: And on your practice.

S: And on your practice. Mm. [Pause] So sometimes I mention, in connection with the ordination, that if somebody is ordained, everybody benefits. You see what I mean? And, sometimes those being ordained, those committing themselves in that way, they are aware that it benefits everybody, so in that way it sort of takes on a tincture of the Bodhisattva Ideal, or the Bodhisattva Vow, even. You're aware it isn't just for you.

Dhammadinnā: I'm sure I'll feel this this time. I felt that very strongly with the last ordinations when I was at the Norwich Order Meeting, when the three from there told us what their names meant. I think that particular batch of names, I felt as though I was getting a new name, somehow, because those qualities - overcoming obstacles ...

S: Mm. Yes.

Dhammadinnā: ... [laughs] and having a joyful approach.

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: Actually, there wasn't a 'Teja' present [fiery energy], but I could see I actually needed all those qualities quite strongly and that I'd be helped to get them by having those people in the Order.

S: Yes, around.

Dhammadinnā: I really felt more involved in ordination than I had felt for some time.

S: Ah. Mm.

Dhammadinnā: Maybe it was because those particular names and qualities grabbed me, for specific reasons. [Laughs]

S: Yes, yes. Quite.

Anne McMillan: I feel certainly aware in that way (when I meet Hilary and Cathy) - almost part of the fact that they are going for refuge (at the weekend) That seems quite important to me.

S: Mm. It is. I've spoken about the Order as a whole as being a sort of embodiment of the Thousand-armed Avalokitesvara, with each Order Member representing a particular hand, but in a way, you can see the whole Movement functioning a bit like that, because, in a way, each individual expresses something, as it were, on behalf of - I was going to say "the group", but that isn't the word obviously! - But you see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: If someone commits themselves, they commit themselves with the moral support of the whole Movement. It's rather like on a mountaineering expedition. If you want to scale Everest, you've got your great team, maybe two or three hundred people, and you establish your base camp and your next camp, and the next, but maybe only two or three people actually get to the top, but they get to the top with the support of all the other people. The back-up is also necessary. You see what I mean?

Dhammadinnā: All the way down the line, to whoever does most menial and simple tasks.

S: Yes. Exactly. So I think it is very much like that. So in a way, when the man gets to the top, you've all got to the top, even though you're not actually standing there, but you've helped to make it possible. So I think it's good to think and feel in this sort of way too, because this is how it actually is.

Christabel: Well, everybody is part of the Sangha even if they're not ordained.

S: Well, In this sense, if you take the Sangha in the sense of embracing degrees of commitment, well then, yes. Not everybody is standing on the top, literally, of the mountain, but then the whole structure, so to speak, helps some to stand on the top who might otherwise have found it difficult, not to say impossible, to do so. You see what I mean? Though in the last resort, it does depend upon them, because those you send to the top, they are your most skilled mountaineers. You don't send anybody. So there is that aspect too, but nonetheless, even your most skilled mountaineers, they need the support of the rest of the team. You're all roped together sometimes, aren't you? So that's the 'maitri'.

Dhammadinnā: That's a very positive approach, because it takes away individualism, expecting to do this which sometimes clash quite fiercely. Again, it's like being soft to other people rather than battling with people going in the same direction.

S: Yes.

Anne McMillan: Harmoniously proceeding.

Sridevi: Also you can see it as a process, new people coming in all the time, supporting anyone slipping.

S: Yes. Right. Analogies always break down at a certain point! [Laughter] But it is, in a way, everybody's movement, everybody's being promoted from base camp to next camp, and then up to the next. So sooner or later it's their turn to get to the top. You see what I mean?

S: But then, of course, they come back again and help to push a few more people up to the top.

Dhammadinnā: Some of the supporters are actually Bodhisattvas who've been

S: Yes, right! [Laughter obscures words]

Dhammadinnā: But you don't know that.

S: ... even your mules may be Bodhisattvas. Right, where have we got? Yes, to the Bodhisattva Vow. "Acts of liberality and other virtues.", those are of course the 'paramitas', 'dana' and so on. "May I realise Buddhahood for the benefit of the world". All right, let's go on. Would someone like to read three?

"[iii] The purification of mind acting correctly through enlightenment is twofold: that by which [a] others are benefited and [b] our own life is made pure."

S: Another aspect, so to speak. So that's explained in detail. Let's just go into it.

"[a] The first is to adopt an attitude which transmutes into the happiness and welfare of others all the good and wholesome we have done in the three divisions of time [past, present, future], our own body and the wealth of our enjoyments."

S: Yes. This word "transmutes"; did we touch on this in this group, or was it this morning in the other group? This is sometimes translated as "dedicate", sometimes as "transfers". Whatever merits we have acquired ourselves, we transfer them, we dedicate them, we transmute them for the benefit of others. That is to say, by virtue of all these qualities, these merits, may I gain enlightenment for the benefit of all. You don't want to keep the merits which you have acquired, you know, in an way simply for your own exclusive use. So there should be this constant attitude.

Anne McMillan: Mm. It strikes me that "transmutes" sort of means, I don't know if this is right, doesn't "transmute" mean to "make better" as in the alchemy sense?

S: To make more refined?

Anne McMillan: Yes. And so, in a sense, the good and wholesome things that we did, were good and wholesome and that's all, until they've actually been..... once they've been used for the happiness and welfare then they take on a more refining and new quality.

S: Yes. Because you could say an element of insight comes in there, because to some extent you've overcome the dichotomy, the exclusive dichotomy between yourself and to others. So,

"The first is to adopt an attitude which transmutes into the happiness and welfare of others all the good and wholesome we have done in the three divisions of time [past, present, future], our own body and the wealth of our enjoyments."

Anne McMillan: It's interesting that it says "we have done in the future". [Pause, laughter].

S: I suppose you could say it's the future of the past, so to speak, which is the present now. You should have the intention, perhaps you should say, of transmuting even those merits which accrue to you in future; which in that sense, exist now. [Pause] How do you think you'd transmute your own body, or dedicate your own body, or transfer your own body?

Voice: By your action.

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: By giving what you do to other people. In the more physical ...

S: Yes. Those good things that you practice, or those services that you perform with a physical body, are not simply skilful, but you perform those actions as a means of gaining enlightenment for the benefit of all. In, of course, the *Bodhicaryavatara*, Shantideva goes a bit to an extreme almost and he says you should actually place your body at the disposal of others. If they want a servant, you should be that servant, etc., etc. I don't know whether you would regard that as taking it a bit too far? But what's the general spirit here?

Karola: It's like not being attached to your body.

S: Not being attached to it. It clearly involves that, but sort of being ready to put it where it's needed; that it is at the service of the cause of universal enlightenment. And that you're going to make the best use of it to that end. It doesn't literally mean that you're going to do anybody's donkey work, because supposing somebody does ask you, "Do you mind emptying all those dustbins?", well, yes, you could, but then you might have something better to do, from a purely spiritual point of view. You might have a class to take, which would be more conducive to the welfare of other living beings. You see what I mean? So don't be too literal-minded. All right, someone read [b].

"[b] The second is always to rely on ethics and manners and to shrink from evil and conflicting emotions."

S: So you see the sort of overlap, the subdivision coincides with the whole, you see. This is subdivision [b] of item three in section four. You see what I mean. But it coincides with the whole. This is a good thing, that there is this constant overlapping.

Voices: Mm.

S: I mean, if you go into any particular subdivision deeply enough it just means practising all the Bodhisattva virtues. [Laughter] You can't really separate them from one another.

Anjali: Where it says, "to shrink from conflicting emotions", Bhante?

S: Mm?

Anjali: Don't you have to go into your emotions if they are conflicting?

S: Well, what do you think is meant by "shrink", and what do you think is meant by "going into"? "Conflicting emotions" is the term for 'klesas'. So in what sense should you shrink from 'klesas'? What does that actually mean? In what sense should you shrink?

Anne McMillan: Don't give them energy. Don't, um, ...

S: It doesn't mean that you've got conflicting emotions and having got them you should shrink from them in the sense of refusing to face up to the fact that you've got them and refusing to do anything about them; it doesn't mean that. You should shrink from having them, the idea of having them or entertaining 'klesas', "conflicting emotions", should be repugnant to you.

Voices: Mm. Yes.

S: But perhaps we could look into this question of "going into the conflicting emotions", because I suspect there might be a little 'micchaditthi' lurking here!?! [Laughter] What does one mean by "going into"? Let's say, one's negative emotions to put it, you know, still more into the open. Sometimes people say this, you should go into your negative emotions, well, what do you mean by that?

Dhammadinnā: It could mean that you examine them, or it could mean you indulge in them.

S: Yes. So you've got to be very clear which you are doing. Examine, certainly. Try to understand, certainly, but not indulge. Do you think people make that distinction sufficiently clearly, very often?

Anjali: Well, it's very difficult to do.

Dhammadinnā: Once you're in it, it's more difficult to be clear.

S: Well, someone was reported as saying a year or so ago, that he was "getting into his body". [Laughter] You see what I mean? One could take that in a positive way and perhaps in a not so positive way. [Laughter]

Dhammadinnā: Where was he before? [Laughter]

S: He was quite a decent lad before!

Sridevi: It's a popular phrase, almost like "Friends" jargon, "getting into"!

S: Getting into, yes, quite. What does it actually mean, when you get into something? It's a very obscure little phrase.

Sridevi: When you face up to an actual experience.

S: Well, I would take it to mean something more like "fully participating". Get into something, fully participate, fully experience.

Dhammadinnā: If someone says, "I'm really getting into my meditation" they mean they are putting all their energy into it, they feel really

involved in it.

S: Mm. Yes. Or, "I'm getting really into philately, [laughter], I'm getting really into collecting stamps.". But they don't usually use it in that sort of way, "I'm getting really into my feelings.", or "I'm getting really into communication."

Dhammadinnā: That has a slightly alienated sound, hasn't it?

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: Because you're not really into it. Otherwise you wouldn't have to say that you were getting into it.

S: Yes, right. It sounds a bit self-conscious, doesn't it. A bit too deliberate.

Dhammadinnā: The same as "getting into your body".

S: Mm. Some people even speak of "getting into Buddhism", don't they.

Voices: Mm.

S: It suggests that, I mean, that here you are sort of unchanged and you're getting into something, like going through a door or something like that. We should watch these catchy little phrases. Have you any way of saying that in Finnish?

Ulla/Suzannah?: No.

S: No, so there is no corresponding idiom?

Ulla/Suzannah?: No.

S: Well, you are lucky then. So you have to be more clear. How would you translate it if, say, someone was to say talk about "getting into your feelings"? Would it be "fully experiencing your feelings"? It's more than that, it isn't quite that even, is it? It's almost like sort of getting every drop of feeling out of your feelings.

Christabel: I think it's got to do with identifying the problem hasn't it?

S: Mm. I said idioms were the most difficult things to translate. Anyway, just refuse to translate it. That's probably better, not to contaminate the Finnish language. [Laughter]

Sridevi: [Laughing] There may be a new slang word for it.

S: Who knows? You might find that the young Finns just use the English expression in the course of speaking Finnish.

Anne McMillan: It's like saying you're "going through something", that's another one.

Dhammadinnā: Once you've "been into it", you can "go through it"!

S: "Been into it", "going through it", yes.

Anne McMillan: As long as you come out the other end!

S: Right, yes. Anyway, it's about teatime so we won't go on to the next section until we've had tea, so let's look back on what we've done so far this afternoon.

Anne Murphy: Bhante, when you were talking about 'punya-jnana' and 'samatha' and 'vipassana', I couldn't make the connection there.

S: Ah! 'Punya' means "merits", "good qualities", 'samatha' means the development of higher states of consciousness in and through meditation, especially the 'dhyanas'.

Anne Murphy: Yes.

S: So these represent those good qualities from the, as it were, subjective, mental, meditative point of view. This is what they essentially are. They are highly positive mental states, which can also be looked at as qualities, as merits. So these two correspond. So 'vipassana' means "insight into reality" which you develop on the basis of your 'samatha'. So, similarly, 'jnana' is that clear awareness with which you suffuse your 'punya', your positive qualities. In that way, there is a parallelism between the two sets of terms. Sometimes it's said that in Tibetan paintings of the Buddha, the halo or aura around his body represents the 'punya samvara', the accumulation of merits, and that around his head represents the 'jnana samvara', the accumulation of awareness.

Dhammadinnā: Do different Bodhisattvas have different coloured halos from each other?

S: It seems ..., there doesn't seem to be any great regularity about it. There seems to be a certain convention. I'm not quite sure exactly what it is. It probably isn't completely consistent, and it's sometimes governed by aesthetic considerations anyway. But you certainly do get those two halos as it were. In say the case of Padmasambhava, the body halo has grown, you see, but more often the body halo impinges on the head halo just at the side.

Dhammadinnā: If you are very positive, presumably it does radiate - that's a pictorial representation of that radiation.

S: Yes. And you may remember that I've spoken of the fourth 'dhyana' as the stage of radiation, where the emotional positivity becomes so strong, so intense, that it sort of radiates outwards and it can be perceived by others, which in fact, is what one experiences, at least to a limited extent. When people go back after a retreat, other people often say they seem quite radiant, they are giving out a light just because of the accumulated positivity. You could say that they develop their 'punya-samvara', their accumulation of merit. In the course of the retreat they have accumulated merits. They have become more positive and sometimes to such a degree that they radiate something of that. [Pause]

You notice the word "evil" is used here, "to shrink from evil and conflicting emotions". Do you think this is a quite appropriate word in a Buddhist context? Or do you think it doesn't matter?

Anjali: I think it's got Christian overtones, but I think it is quite strong.

Dhammadinnā: What else would you say, "unskilful"?

S: "Unskilful". There was quite a discussion about this once. I'm not sure if it was on ...

Dhammadinnā: I think it was the "Puja" Seminar.

S: I'm not sure whether it was on a seminar entirely, or in some other discussion context. But someone was saying that "evil" should be replaced by "unskilful", but somebody else, I think it was Manjuvajra, insisted that there were certain things, he mentioned the Nazi concentration camps, for which the word "unskilful" wasn't really strong enough. You couldn't really speak of them as being "unskilful", not with the sort of connotation we attach to that English word, but only as being "evil".

Voices: Mm.

Christabel: It's almost as though something like that has a negative aura..

S: Yes. Indeed!

Christabel: ... so strong ...

S: Yes, right.

Christabel: ... it can effect you just from being there.

S: Yes. You can find that with some individuals. I remember an experience which I had which was quite interesting. When I went to Rome, and went to see the Colosseum, and I stood in the middle of the Colosseum and I definitely experienced a very negative aura, as though all sorts of very negative things that had happened there, which of course they had. And I'm quite sure it wasn't just a suggestion in my own mind, brought about by the fact of the historical associations that I knew that those things had taken place. It definitely wasn't that. It was a tangible, objective atmosphere actually present there. Anyway, let's have tea.

The "unskilful", that seems to derogate from the seriousness of it. You see what I mean? When actually one has done evil, something really bad and harmful, of which one ought to be thoroughly ashamed, you can gloss it over by saying, well, you just did something unskilful, or you were a bit unmindful, or something like that.

Dhammadinnā: I think sometimes you do things which you can say are unskilful, but you feel they are evil, in that you can see how they have affected you and how they have blocked your growth, and you feel it very strongly, say in the confession, say, in the Puja and I think it should be quite strong.

S: Mm. Yes. Mm. Right.

Dhammadinnā: It's not just a few unskilful actions you've done yesterday, it's a whole accumulation through, maybe loads and loads of lifetimes, and in a way, you don't know what you've done.

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: You could have done something really dreadful.

S: You guess by the results. Well, just as there's a 'punya-samvara', you know, the accumulation of merits, there is the 'papa-samvara', the heaping up of evil. Well, in the Seven-fold Puja, we say, "The evil which I have heaped up" ...

Voices: Ah, yes.

S: Yes. You've gone on accumulating it, carefully, as it were, [laughter] not throwing the smallest bit of it away.

Anne McMillan: I was quite shocked by hearing that you heaped up evil through ignorance. That seemed a bit "off".

S: Yes! Well ...

Anne McMillan: If you're ignorant of it, how can you be responsible for it?

S: Well, yes, you're responsible for your ignorance.

Anne McMillan: That seemed really strong actually. That there's no excuse whatsoever and you can't step back and say, "Well, I didn't know", and that ignorance isn't innocence.

S: Yes.

Anne Murphy: So that means there is no such thing in Buddhism as "culpable ignorance"?

S: No. You mean the opposite of that.

Anne Murphy: Yes.

S: I suppose not. There's no such thing as completely innocent ignorance, all ignorance is culpable.

Sridevi: Isn't foolishness just that? Is being foolish to be ...

S: I think so, yes. But of course sometimes, due to the accumulation of evil, you've reached a point where you cannot reverse the process, not without outside help, you see. I don't know, again, if it was this group or the other, but I gave the example of the alcoholic. I mean you do have a measure of choice as to whether you start drinking, but a time comes when you've deprived yourself of your freedom of choice and you're not in a position now to give it up, at least not without outside help.

Anne McMillan: Maybe, if we had feelings of having really heaped up evil, it would give us a bit of a shake in a way, which we don't get sometimes. If you think, "Oh ...

S: Also seeing the unskilful as unskilful, and the evil as evil and the demeritorious as demeritorious, and seeing what a pickle one is really in. What a mess! You see what I mean! [Laughter]

Anne McMillan: Why don't we?

Dhammadinnā: We don't understand the law of cause and effect.

S: Mm. Yes. Sometimes they just don't see the connection.

Christabel: It makes you really realise the importance of that precept about stimulants. It could be a "mind" thing as it could be a physical thing.

If you are going to lose control, you've really hit the slippery path.

S: Yes, right.

Anne McMillan: It's quite odd, because at times one thinks that one has seen the cause and effect, and then one repeats the pattern. [Laughter]

S: Well, there's the force of habit. [Laughter] The force of habit!

Dhammadinnā: That's what you're working against so much.

Christabel: That's a sort of addiction, isn't it? The force of habit?

Dhammadinnā: It is a bit, yes, addicted to a habit. We are addicted to our habits.

Sridevi: Or perhaps we haven't seen deeply enough.

Anne McMillan: Yes. We haven't made the real connection.

S: And just seeing isn't enough, you need a long period of counter-action forming a counter-habit, you see.

Anne McMillan: Ah. To actually swing the balance.

Christabel: Could you, ... what do you mean?

S: Well, for instance, to give a simple example; supposing you've seen quite clearly that you ought to get up early in the morning. Just seeing that is not enough to counteract the habit of getting up late which is the product of so many hundreds of mornings that you've got up late. [Laughter] So it's not enough just to see and then hope that you'll get up early. No! There needs to be that deliberate effort made to get up early to form the counter-habit. So if you really struggle, in the course of a few weeks or a few months, you will develop the counter-habit and you'll actually bring your getting up early into accord with your insight into the need to do that.

Dhammadinnā: And then you let ...

S: But you can't just expect the insight just by itself to have an effect. There has to be the struggle to build up the counter-habit.

Dhammadinnā: That is the path of transformation.

S: Right! Yes. That requires an additional persistent effort. Just the mere seeing it is not enough.

Voices: [Murmurings]

Anne McMillan: That does seem to be a difficult part, doesn't it. [Loud laughter]

S: "I ought to get up early". That is not enough. You see it quite sincerely. The insight is genuine as far as it goes, but insight just by itself like that, very often, isn't sufficient to bring about a change.

Anne Murphy: It's an awful shame.

S: You have to, on the basis of that insight, you have to take definite measures to introduce the contrary habit, little by little.

Voices: Mm. Right.

Anne Murphy: Just like taking control of something.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: I suppose it isn't always as easily seen as that one?

S: Mm. Yes, well it's very often very much more complex than that. For instance perhaps you see that you're devoid of positive emotion and you need to develop a lot more positive emotion. Well it's not enough just to see that and to hope that the positive emotion will therefore just start coming. No, you have to take positive measures. "All right, I'll practise the Mettā bhāvanā", "All right, I'll participate in the Seven-fold Puja", "All right, I'll communicate more", and carry out that programme. The insight doesn't do the trick by itself. The insight only gives you a lead as it were, and makes it possible for you to decide to do certain things, to take certain steps which you can see the necessity for.

Anne McMillan: So you make an effort to do that, but what if your insight was that you can't make effort? Or that what you need to do is to make an effort, more,...I mean...?

Dhammadinnā: [Laughs] Well, you have to make the effort.

Anne McMillan: Mm. I mean.., you see what I mean?

S: Well, you need to call on your spiritual friends. If you feel that you can't make the effort, or initiate the effort by yourself well, call upon them to, you know. If you know you're just not going to get up in the morning, just say to someone the night before, on the basis of your insight,

"Please come and get me up, disregard my protests, pull me out of bed." You see? [Laughter] Or, "Pour cold water over me." [Laughter]. You see? So in the moment of your insight, set that process in motion, which will then function independently and counteract your inveterate tendency to remain in bed. You see what I mean?

Anne McMillan: Yes!

S: In that way you call on your spiritual friends for help to help you to do what you can't altogether do for yourself. You can see the need of it yourself, you've got enough strength to call for help [laughter], but not enough strength to actually make the change yourself. Anyway, let's do a bit more

[End of Tape 3 Tape 4]

S: Right. Someone like to read five?

"V. The method of not forgetting an enlightened attitude, which is called the training in accepting four positive and rejecting four negative qualities is mentioned in the 'Byan.chub.lam.sgron, ['Bodhipathapradipa',18]:

*The training will have to be kept as it has been taught,
So that it may be remembered in future existences."*

S: Mm. Well there are two points that arise here immediately.

"The training", the siksa, that is to say the Bodhisattva training, "will have to be kept as it has been taught." What exactly do you think is meant by that?

Anne McMillan: Does that relate something, that in studying the "Stability of the Order", there was something about ordinances and not creating new rules and...?

S: Yes, you could say it like that, but then, why shouldn't you create new rules?

Sridevi: You have to preserve the essence of the Dharma.

S: You have to preserve the essence. New rules shouldn't represent a departure from the essence, but only a different expression of the essence to meet changed circumstances.

Voices: Mm.

S: So, "The training will have to be kept as it has been taught". Well, in the sense of the essence of the training will have to be preserved. But for what reasons does one not do that? For what reasons does one not keep the training as it has been taught? What is happening here?

Voice: Wrong views.

S: Wrong views. Yes.

Anne McMillan: Self-complacent attitude?

S: Self-complacent attitude. Gravitational pull. I think this is quite important, that one should keep the training, or a training, a teaching as it has been taught, in the sense of carefully preserving the essence in a living sort of way. I mean, if any changes are needed, be quite sure these are not made in accordance simply with subjective preferences ...

Voices: Mm.

S: ... and really do represent adaptations of the unchanging essence to changed circumstances.

Anne McMillan: When we talked about the self-complacent attitude ??? I thought that some people seemed to be able to accept the Dharma in a self-complacent way. They almost re-adapt to fit in with their own existing attitudes, and it seems to me that could happen here.

S: Yes.

Anne McMillan: You could make changes, but it's almost a sort of modifying the Dharma with you, instead of you changing.

S: Yes. One used to notice this a lot when I returned from India and was at Hampstead and going to the Buddhist Society. One saw a lot of this sort of thing. Well, one sometimes sees it even now. In a way it's a natural tendency to want bend the Dharma to suit your own preferences and prejudices and conditioning. So therefore, hence the importance of "The training will have to be kept as it has been taught." It doesn't mean just handing down those very words, but preserving the essence, the spirit, the life of the training, of the teaching.

Ulla/Suzannah?: It's a bit like translating. You use another language, but try to preserve the meaning and the spirit of the original text.

S: Right, yes indeed.

Anjali: Something I noticed in "TM" that the Maharishi was trying to preserve the teaching that he used in India, but he was doing it specifically by people learning things word for word.

S: Mm. Ah! Yes!

Sridevi: Do you think somebody can translate Buddhist texts if they aren't practising Buddhists?

S: Well, they can't necessarily translate texts just because they are practising Buddhists? [Laughter] I think you need a combination of the two, ideally. I don't say that someone who isn't a practising Buddhist couldn't possibly translate, because sometimes, if you're a bit sensitive, you pick up a bit more than the translator himself was aware of. You see? But I think it would certainly help very, very much if, in addition to having a command of the languages involved and an understanding of the subject, you are also a practising Buddhist. I think that would give you an additional sensitivity ...

Sridevi: Like the Pali Text Society.

S: ... depending on the sort of text. If it were say a Jakata Text which is mainly a story, well, a sort of literary sensitivity would probably be sufficient. But if it is something about meditation or the Bodhisattva Ideal, I think it would be very, very helpful if you were also a practising Buddhist. If Mrs. Rhys-Davids had really practised meditation, could she really have translated "dhyana" as "musing"? You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: Musing! What a weak little word! Have you come across this? It's one of my favourite examples. "Musing". Instead of saying he was experiencing the 'dhyanas', the 'jhanas', 'the absorptions', or states of higher consciousness, the monk was "musing". [Laughter] And "He spent the whole day musing". [Laughter] Well, clearly the good lady, though she was a very good scholar, she hadn't meditated. So I think meditation would have helped in this case.

Anne McMillan: It's like art, isn't it? Like 'thangkas' and things. I suppose they could be painted by an artist, but if it's painted by a Buddhist artist ...

S: Well, there is the feeling there.

Anne McMillan: Well, it's the experience, presumably ...

S: Yes, right! So, "The training will have to be kept as it has been taught." We've noticed this once or twice, in the way that people chant the Sevenfold Puja, or even the precepts, or lead the chanting. Do you remember this sometimes? Sometimes it has happened in the past, that people leading have introduced little twists and quirks of their own, which subsequently has to be corrected; something which is purely subjective - not adapted to the needs of the occasion - but just their own sort of personal thing. Either they like it very, very fast, or very, very loud, or with a funny little jump [laughter] at a certain point.

Voice: It seems as if everybody does it differently though.

S: I noticed one or two changes when I went down to Sukhavati a little while ago. They were doing the Refuges differently, they were saying, instead of say, 'samadyami', [chanting deliberately, evenly and slowly] it was 'sa-ma-di-a-mi' ['a' short and pitched up - laughter] with this little sort of skip. So I said, "What is this little skip?", you know, to liven it up? 'Sa-ma-di-a-mi!' [Laughter]. Maybe someone was trying to get them all moving as it were. It had infiltrated into the Puja, or rather the Refuges and Precepts, in what I thought was a rather undesirable sort of way. And sometimes you get, in some centres, people dragging it out in a really dirge-like sort of way, you know, rather heavy and sad.

So this is usually due to quite subjective factors, sometimes quite unconscious. So don't change anything unless there is a really good, skilful reason for doing so.

Dhammadinnā: Have you heard anything floating up from the Shrine Room?

S: No. I haven't, no.

Voice: Not any?

S: Just a rather sweet and silvery sort of note. [Laughter] There is a difference in the chanting of course, in that respect, difference in tone. All right, "So that it may be remembered in future existences." That is a rather interesting thought, that your Bodhisattva life and career extends over a whole series of lives. This is the traditional Buddhist teaching, which clearly, one will be able to accept only if one is able to accept the whole idea of karma and rebirth as extending over a number of lives, not just as applied to one.

Christabel: Bhante, would you say that in the transcendental sense, the past, the present, and the future are not as obviously delineated as we think of them?

S: Well, do we even experience them as so obviously demarcated?

Christabel: No, I don't think so.

S: Because you can say, "Well, yes, there is such a thing as past, yes, there is such a thing as present, there is such a thing as future", but if you analyze it, where do you actually draw the line? How big is the present? How long does the present last? Does the present last a minute? Well, no, you can have past, present and future within the minute. But if the "point instant" of the present is infinitesimal, how can any sum of infinitesimals make up an actual quantity? So how can there be any time? It's a bit of a mystery, isn't it? So it isn't quite like it may appear to be.

Christabel: It just seems as though it is a sort of notation to help us express things.

S: Yes. It seems to expand, it seems to pass quickly sometimes...

Voices: Mm.

S: Other times it seems to pass slowly. So there's subjective time as well as objective time.

Voices: Mm.

S: What about the time in your dreams? You can dream a dream that seems to last for years, and you wake up and it's only a few minutes that have gone. Strange, isn't it? So one, in a sense, is not to take time all that seriously. We touched, the other day, on the point, that the young person seems to experience time differently from an older person. We expressed that by saying for them, time passes more slowly. In a sense also, at the same time, more quickly. They experience more within what seems to be, objectively, the same amount of time, so in a sense it is more time, because there is more experience.

Anne McMillan: Sometimes one actually experiences something of a feeling of continuity, like it's actually outside time. At the opening of the LBC on the Opening Day, you said a bit about what had been put in the rupa ...

S: Yes.

Anne McMillan: And you had put in a small rupa which somebody had given you, Dhardo, I think.

S: Yes, that's right.

Anne McMillan: When you said that, I just got this incredible feeling of sort of er, ... like real expansion of time, like you'd been given it by a teacher who had a teacher who ...

S: Ah. Mm.

Anne McMillan: ... and there was this real sort of ... I have experienced that on other occasions, where time actually seems to move outside of itself or something. That's a rotten description but ...

S: Yes. There's a sort of experiment one can perform, or just something that one can do. For instance, supposing you are on solitary retreat and you are meditating. So in the course of the meditation, or towards the end of the meditation, you can just sort of tell yourself that you are meditating say at "Pundarika" three years ago. You see what I mean? And convince yourself that when you open your eyes, you're going to open them in the Archway Centre and actually you can feel that, as though you are back there, as though you can move backwards and forwards

in time. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: Have you ever done anything like that? Sometimes people do it spontaneously.

Anne McMillan: I do get "flash-backs" quite often.

S: Because if you don't actually open your eyes, you can really feel, "Well, yes. I'm right there!" Not say, three years ago, but "Here I am in Archway". And you can, depending on your age, stretch it by fifteen, twenty years and so on. But especially in connection with the meditation, because your eyes are closed and you don't see your surroundings. You can quite easily convince yourself that when you open your eyes you're going to find yourself in such and such a place. Feel that before you open your eyes, that there you actually are, in that place, in that room, with those people sitting around you. So that helps to create a feeling of the relativity and in a sense, the illusoriness of time.

Christabel: Sometimes in the last section of the mettā, when I'm trying to think of infinity, I get some very strange feelings about the fourth dimension, the one of time, and you can start thinking about infinity and other worlds and other galaxies and other things that you can't even begin to think of. And then you think of time coming into that as well, and you can get some very strange, watery, fluid feelings of what you are and what you aren't.

S: Mm. For instance you can think of what might have happened say, in this very spot, say, three hundred years ago ...

Christabel: Yes. Or look at a tree and see what it's ...

S: ... and in a sense, it is happening now.

Voice: Yes.

Anne McMillan: You do sometimes experience that in certain places. Was it you, Anjali, that said you felt like that at Glencoe? Or something like that. Some places seem to actually ... it's easier to do that. You almost feel you've stepped back in ... because there was something very specific in Glencoe that happened there.

S: Mm. Or if for instance, the particular aspect of the spot hasn't changed very much in centuries, you can very well imagine yourself back - it is the sixteenth century, or whatever, because there is nothing to suggest the twentieth century, there is no motor-car, etc. etc. And you can imagine, or feel that you are just living in the sixteenth century or whatever.

Anne McMillan: There's quite an interesting kid's book about that called "*Red Shift*", by Alan Garner. I actually ...

S: Mm. Anyway, we mustn't get fanciful, must we? [Laughter] Let's go on. "The training has been explained" ... "Which are the four negative qualities?"

"The training has been explained in the 'Od.srunskiyis zus.pa'i mdo' (Kasyapaparivartasutra):

"Which are the four negative qualities? Kasyapa, when a Bodhisattva possesses them he will forget his enlightened attitude. They are in brief, [i] to cheat spiritual teachers and persons worthy of worship; [ii] to make others feel ashamed without cause; [iii] out of spite to say improper things to a Bodhisattva who has adopted an enlightened attitude and [iv] to behave meanly to sentient beings."

S: So, "to cheat spiritual teachers and persons worthy of worship." How do you cheat them? How do you cheat spiritual teachers and persons worthy of worship? What is being got at here?

Dhammadinnā: Pretending you're something you're not in relation to them.

S: Mm. Certainly it would include that.

Sridevi: To profess devotion when you don't really feel it.

S: Yes, yes. That too, yes.

Anjali: Not follow their advice and teaching.

S: Yes. Not following their advice and teaching or pretending to do so. Mm. It would seem to cover all those sort of things. To mislead them about one's own actual spiritual attainments or practice. I tell a story in this connection. I've not told it for some time so I hope you haven't heard it before. [Laughter] This concerns an old friend of mine whom I mention from time to time. I'm afraid, more often than not, as a dreadful warning. A French nun [laughter], the French nun again. She was a person I knew in Kalimpong for quite a number of years. She had an academic background, but she'd become a nun, partly I think with some sincere motive, but I think mainly to help further her academic research. She thought she might be initiated into some esoteric Tantric cults if she became a nun, and she would then be able to study them and write a thesis on them. But anyway, she had a rather difficult time, or she made things difficult for herself in all sorts of ways. She was that sort of person. She was her own worst enemy! Well, anyway, she got through several teachers [laughter], she quarrelled with several of her teachers.

One of them was Dhardo Rimpoche, who one would have thought it would be impossible to quarrel with. Anyway she managed it! [Laughter] And in the end rather annoyed with him, rather displeased with him and the practices that he had given her, she went up into Sikkhim to Pema Yangtse, which is a Nyingmapa monastery and, ah yes, as far as I remember, they wouldn't allow her to stay there because it was for monks and they didn't have women overnight, under the same roof. So she camped some distance from the monastery in a little clearing. She was a quite hardy self-sufficient sort of woman - she had a little tent and a few utensils. She managed quite well in the summer time I think.

So, she was camping there for some days, and really - she told me all about this herself subsequently - feeling rather sorry for herself, that her guru, that is to say, Dhardo Rimpoche, had not understood her needs, and Sangharakshita also was sometimes quite unsympathetic and all that sort of thing. So she told me that one day a lama wandered into her little camp, as it were, a man of about forty or forty-five. She was quite surprised. She knew some Tibetan, so she asked him who he was. So it turned out that he was the new abbot for the Pema Yangtse monastery and according to Tibetan custom he was supposed to enter the monastery on an auspicious hour, or at an auspicious moment, so he was waiting for that. It had been fixed. So he had come on several week's journey from Tibet. So the moment for his entering the monastery as the abbot had been fixed according to astrology, he was waiting for that. He had a couple of days to go, so he was camping also in the forest, not very far away with his attendants and so on, and he'd just sort of wandered about and he'd come across this little encampment with this nun. So she started feeling really quite overjoyed that maybe providence had sent her a new guru. [Laughter] So he asked her, she told me this herself, "Who is your teacher?", the standard enquiry. She said, "Dhardo Rimpoche". So he said, "What has he taught you?" So she mentioned the visualisation practices that he'd given her to do and then this lama said, "Well, do you practise these regularly every day?" So she said, "Yes, every day." So then he said, "You are telling a lie. You haven't practised them for about three months." And she said it was true! So this made her all the more convinced that here was the Great Guru, etc. etc. [Laughter] But that's another story. He also became well-known to me. He became one of my own teachers also some years later. So I heard from him also about her. He himself told me this part of the story, that she had lied. So this, in a way you could say, was an example of "cheating spiritual teachers", misleading them in this sort of way, about your own practice, or about your own spiritual experience. I think it also covers cheating them of what they are entitled to in the way of service and support from you. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: If you don't feed them properly and provide other such things, that is cheating them, because they are entitled to it, it belongs to them in fact.

Anne McMillan: And respect.

S: Mm?

Anne McMillan: Presumably, respect.

S: And respect. And not only spiritual teachers, but persons worthy of worship. Not only just your own spiritual teachers but anyone who seems to be on a higher spiritual level than you are yourself. [Pause] So why do you think cheating spiritual teachers will cause you to forget

your own enlightened attitude, your own Bodhisattva aspiration? Well, it is so mean and unreceptive isn't it? It just seems so opposed to it.

Anne McMillan: Even on a perfectly practical level, if you're doing that to your own spiritual friends, in a way, you're cutting off the chance of them responding to you in a genuine way.

S: Yes, cheating them. There is some sort of block to the flow of communication, either by a sort of hard, narrow, mean attitude on your part, or by deliberate falsehood or deceit. So the channels of communication are no longer open between you.

Anne McMillan: In a sense it's you that's suffering if you have that kind of attitude.

S: Again, this is something I have mentioned before that it's customary in Tibet that at the end of the Tantric Initiation you make offerings and this will include some cash. This is quite interesting from a psychological point of view, because people will ask, "How much should I give?", and sometimes, instead of "How much can I give", it becomes "How little can I get away with?" You see?

Voices: Mm.

S: So in a way that represents at least a tendency, well not exactly to cheat, but to give as little as you can get away with. Well, sometimes we experience that when we're asked to contribute to something. In a way we want to, but at least we think we ought to, but we try to quickly calculate how little we can get away with. Sometimes it's justified in the circumstances, but very often it isn't. So how little we can do, how little we can get away with, rather than how much we can do, how much we can give.

Voices: Mm.

S: So you can apply this in all sorts of ways. It indicates a sort of lack of generosity. [Pause] Anything further on this, "to cheat spiritual teachers and persons worthy of worship"? [Pause]

All right. The second one, "to make others feel ashamed without cause." This is also rather mean, isn't it? How do you make others ashamed? Give a sort of illustration. What is he really talking about, "without cause"?

Anne McMillan: Sort of attitude of belittling others.

S: Belittling others?

Anne McMillan: Usually to boost yourself up a bit.

S: And not only belittling them, belittling them in such a way that they also feel little, or that they are in the wrong when perhaps they are not. It

does say, "without cause". Because if someone has done something of which they ought to be ashamed, well, it can be a positive and skilful thing to point that out to them and make them feel ashamed of what they have done for their own good, but if you make people ashamed without cause, well, this is really quite despicable.

Anjali: It's going against the idea of bringing the potential out of people. In a way you're squashing them.

S: Yes. Perhaps, in the West, it occurs in an even stronger form, not just making people feel ashamed - making them feel guilty. It's guilt as a technique of control. What's the difference between feeling ashamed and feeling guilty, do you think?

Christabel: Guilty is very negative. It's more negative. You could be quite positive and ...

S: It's said there are shame cultures and guilt cultures.

Dhammadinnā: The Japanese way is a way of shame.

S: Yes. The Japanese are very shame prone. Losing face is concerned with shame; and guilt is connected with sin. Shame seems to be more a consciousness of what others think of you, but guilt is more a consciousness of how you feel about yourself. When you are made to feel ashamed, you are made to feel that others are thinking badly of you, with or without justification, but when you are made to feel guilty you are made to feel bad about yourself. In the case of shame you may be made to feel that others are rather angry with you, they think you've done wrong, but you may not think that yourself in your own heart; but in the case of guilt, it's as though you yourself are made to become your own accuser. You feel bad about yourself.

Anne McMillan: Guilt seems to have an element of fear in it which shame doesn't necessarily have.

S: A fear?

Anne McMillan: Yes.

S: Yes, one could say that perhaps. But what is guilt? Can you analyze this emotion? What is it made up of?

Anne McMillan: I could describe it rather than analyze it.

S: Yes, describe it.

Anne McMillan: It's a shrinking horrible feeling like you want to crawl under the carpet ... or is that shame?

S: Yes, that's a bit of shame, yes.

Dhammadinnā: You feel a loss of confidence in yourself, actually.

Anne McMillan: It feels like a great weight, guilt.

S: You feel bad, sort of inherently bad and unloved ...

Dhammadinnā: You feel you're worthless, not worth anything.

S: Worthless! You've forfeited love. I think this is connected very much with it.

Anne McMillan: And maybe this is where fear comes in, fear of having the love taken away.

S: Mm. Yes. So guilt is a sort of consciousness that you have been so bad, or that you are so bad that you have forfeited all love. So you play upon people's susceptibility to guilt by saying, "If you don't do that, if you're not a god boy, or a good girl, I won't love you any more." You see? Or "God won't love you any more, or Jesus won't love you any more."

Anjali: But it's not often expressed so explicitly as that though.

S: Mm. Yes.

Anjali: It's much more insidious somehow.

S: There's a slight change of attitude if you do certain things.

Dhammadinnā: Yes. It's not that when you feel guilty you think that nobody loves you. Maybe you do sometimes feel like that, but it's not so clear-cut.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: The fact that you, .. Well, the Christian church teaches that you are born in original sin - the Catholic Church certainly does - that's always puzzled me actually. If Jesus died for your sins, why are you born in original sin? That sounds so puzzling.

S: Ah! Because you have to avail yourself of his salvation. You have to believe.

Anne McMillan: Oh! I see.

S: ... that he had died for your sins. Only then does it take effect.

Anne McMillan: How silly! [Laughter]

S: You have to accept his ...

Anne McMillan: It's not much of a bargain really, is it! [Laughter] Anyway if you're born with original sin, in a sense, you've got that guilt right away.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: So it is there all the time.

S: You can imagine what a strong point it is for the Christian that first of all he loads you with guilt, makes you feel guilty, and that creates the need for relieving the load of guilt and then he tells you that Jesus has done it for you and died for you and you ought to feel grateful to him for doing that. And then you just feel so relieved at the prospect of getting rid of this load of guilt that, yes, you just surrender yourself to Jesus and believe in him, etc., etc..

Dhammadinnā: So if you are saved, as it were, does that person then not experience guilt? I mean ...

S: I think actually it does happen in some cases that people are actually relieved from the feeling of guilt. But then there is a bit of a catch. I think that feeling lasts for some time. I think in the case of Catholics, I think some Catholics do report, that after going to Confession and confessing everything and being absolved, they do feel much better afterwards, but then they can't keep it up ...

Dhammadinnā: It's so strong ...

S: ... they can't keep it up. But in the case of the Protestant, there is no repeated confession to renew you. You are sort of saved, or born anew just once and then that's that. And you may be able to ... I mean the lift that you may get, may suffice to keep you at least on the moral path, which is what they are usually thinking in terms of, for a good while, if not indefinitely; but if you do happen to fall, well, there is not very much you can do about it, as you can in the case of the Catholic Church, by going again to Confession.

Sridevi: They tend to preach that, I mean, every sermon the preacher says, "Now you now believe and you are saved." I think that you can feel that every Sunday.

S: Mm.

Sridevi: You really need it.

Dhammadinnā: Especially in the more fundamentalist traditions, but it's just the Church of England which is a bit more wishy-washy.

S: Right. In these Evangelical groups you're supposed to have this tremendous conversion experience and get rid of all your sins and hand it all over to Jesus, accept the fact that Jesus has died for, or as they say, "Accept Jesus as your personal Saviour." and after that, that's supposed to be sufficient to keep you on the right path. And sometimes it is to some extent.

Dhammadinnā: How do you think Christian missionaries manage to convince people born without that conditioning of guilt that they should, er ...?

S: I think constant iteration, because I've seen this in Kalimpong with Nepalese.

Dhammadinnā: So you can actually induce guilt?

S: Yes, I think you can.

Dhammadinnā: Even if they've got a healthy pagan attitude?

S: You can induce it in a dog or a cat ...

Christabel: Ah! [Laughter]

S: ... not to speak of a human being!

Sridevi: I think you can see the tendency in human beings, their weakness, one tends to do bad things and if you manipulate that ...

S: Yes. For instance, if you get into contact, say, with a Hindu or uninstructed Buddhist and you do things for them they start feeling a sort of gratitude. So in a way they rely upon your love, and then you do something which is against the Christian ethic and then the missionary says, "Oh, how could you do that, it really has upset me so much. I feel so bad when you do something like that." Then you start feeling guilty, and in this way the seed is planted and you say, "How do you think God feels. I'm just an ordinary human being, an ordinary Christian, and I feel so upset when you do that, so how do you think God thinks. God died for you, and He looks down and sees you doing this horrible thing. Don't you feel bad? Don't you feel guilty?" This is how they operate! I used to claim in Kalimpong, that I could recognise by their facial expressions, those Nepalese who had been converted to Christianity. They had what I described as a "hangdog" look. Yes. The Nepalese left to themselves

are very pagan indeed! [Laughter] A converted Nepalese has got this hangdog look and you can recognise it halfway down the street.

Dhammadinnā: It's like a horrible disease, spreading through the world, horrible!

S: Yes. And the missionaries would be marching up and down the main street in Kalimpong with their black Bibles under their arms. It's really dreadful! And the way they used to pressure people. I've seen missionaries standing with a crowd of hungry Tibetan refugees around them, with a sack of rice and a spoon in one hand and a Bible in the other and making them wait, you know. They are waiting with their little bags and what-not, make them wait until the sermon is over. "Don't you love Jesus and aren't you grateful for Jesus, it's because of Jesus ...

Anne McMillan: ... you'll get this rice.

S: ... that people's hearts have been moved to send you this rice. Don't you think you should thank Jesus? And the poor Tibetans say, "Yes, yes, we thank Jesus." And then it's doled out. I've seen all this.

Voices: Mm.

S: So it's really so strange that this is their attitude.

Christabel: And the way people, for instance, in Africa, are made to feel shamed of their bodies and cover themselves up ...

S: Yes, yes. Right.

Christabel: ... and made to feel guilty about exposing their bodies.

S: Yes, mm.

Anne McMillan: Do you think there's anything you can actually do in this country? [Laughter]

S: Well, the first thing we have to do is start on ourselves.

Voices: Yes.

S: Because, you know, everybody's got a residue of this conditioning, so just make quite sure one does not have it oneself. And just talk to people whom you meet and then you can see how dangerous it is when Western Buddhists start mixing Buddhism with Christianity.

Voices: Yes.

S: And speaking well of Christianity and being afraid to criticise. I mean, this is one of things that has happened in New Zealand. Some of our Buddhist friends there were not very happy that we criticise Christianity and were thinking of having a separate Buddhist Centre where those sort of things don't happen.

Anne McMillan: The Manjusri Institute published a book ...

S: Yes?

Anne McMillan: Um ... what is it called?

Voices: "Silent ... "?

Anne McMillan: "Silent Mind, Holy Mind". Yes.

S: Yes, but we refused to stock it.

Voices: Yes.

S: They asked us to stock it in our bookstalls, but we refused to. We made it clear that we would stock anything they published which was purely Buddhist, but not anything of that sort.

Anne McMillan: Mm. I wrote to them from West London, because I was in the bookshop there ...

S: Ah, good.

Anne McMillan: I said I thought they were spreading 'micchaditthis' and we did not wish to take part in the process.

S: Did you get any reply?

Anne McMillan: No.

S: Oh.

Anne McMillan: I was really furious when I got that book.

Dhammadinnā: They had a visualisation of Jesus [laughs] as a practice [laughter], as a compassion practice.

Anne McMillan: It seems that maybe they don't feel quite happy with Bodhisattvas because they aren't actually your culture.

S: Not happy with Bodhisattvas! [Loud laughter] In other words, what they are saying is, "You've got a purely intellectual grasp of Buddhism; all your emotions are with Christianity so you've got to have a Bodhisattva in a sort of Christian form as Christ. Well, they might as well have the Virgin Mary. I hope they don't publish that. [Laughter] I don't know what sort of letter they'd get from you! [Laughter]"

Anne McMillan: The thing that's really dangerous is that they sell that sort of thing. You can see it in the shops ...

S: Yes, right.

Anne McMillan: We saw it in "*Watkins*", didn't we.

S: Yes. I've seen it all over the place.

Anne McMillan: It's really awful. I just ...

S: You can understand, if Christianity had been more like paganism, just a different tradition with certain symbols that we'd got used to. It would be a different matter. But it isn't, in fact, not like that, because along with those symbols and traditions and teachings are all sorts of very unskilful mental attitudes that have been instilled into us. But then they would say that we were very narrow-minded and intolerant. This is what is said about me, for instance. It's been said for about thirty years now that Sangharakshita is very intolerant. He is the enemy of the Church. This is what I was called in Kalimpong. "The enemy of the Church". [Laughter] Young brothers, that is to say Catholic brothers, were at one stage forbidden to come and see me and to talk to me. They were getting a bit influenced and it was felt ...

Anne McMillan: I'm sure my mother would have forbidden me to come near you if she knew. [Laughter]

Sridevi: There is that essay in "*Path of the Inner Life*" about Buddhist tolerance.

S: Mm.

Sridevi: I found it quite a good lecture. There was a lot of discussion about Christianity that came up. Have you written anything else about tolerance?

S: No. I think I should, perhaps, write a bit more. I think what I wrote then was all right as far as it went, but I think I hadn't sort of plumbed the depths of Christian intolerance at that time. Also I had

not encountered so many Buddhists, or pseudo-Buddhists, I would say, who are against criticising anything that comes under the label of religion, as though it's sacrosanct. You mustn't touch it because somebody believes in it and you might hurt somebody's feelings if you criticised it. So you can't even criticise anything that is unskilful if it's taught by some religion.

Dhammadinnā: It would be good if you did.

S: It's as though you can't criticise stoning women for adultery. It might hurt the feelings of the Muslims! You see what I mean.

Voices: Mm.

S: It's almost saying you can't criticise burning people at the stake for heresy. It might hurt the feelings of the Roman Catholics.

Voices: Mm.

S: This is what it amounts to.

Sridevi: It's a bit confusing, because in the lecture "*Religion, Ethnic and Universal*" you classify Christianity as a universal religion.

S: Why yes, I have. This is true. I think one needs to make some distinctions there and say that by Christianity one means, in this respect, it means certain teachings in the New Testament which, if acted upon, would certainly tend in the direction of individuality, but these teachings make up a very small part of the total tradition which we call Christianity.

Sridevi: And if you see Christ as Teacher rather than Saviour.

S: Yes, indeed. You would have to see Christ as Teacher which most Christians do not. They definitely see him as Saviour.

Anne McMillan: It is actually sometimes quite difficult to come back at people when people say to you, you are being intolerant by not allowing them to ...

S: Mm. Well you do allow them, you just refuse to allow them to do things to you, or to misrepresent Buddhism, or to have the last word on the subject.

Dhammadinnā: We allow a Christian to be a Christian. There's a point beyond which you're not going to give in. So it's not intolerance in that sense.

S: But they think nowadays that intolerance is not accepting any religion on its own evaluation and not agreeing that they're all good or even all

leading in the same direction. If you don't accept that sort of stance, you are labelled as "intolerant".

Dhammadinnā: When did you first realise the iniquity of Christianity? In India presumably there isn't, ... is there a lot of it around?

S: In India I mainly saw it through the missionaries, and my eyes were opened to their attitudes quite early on. Especially, I had a friend, an Indian Buddhist friend, who wasn't an ex-untouchable, - a caste Hindu, who had become a Buddhist some years earlier- Dr. (Nyogin?), who ended his career as the Chief Justice of the then Central Provinces State, which is now included in Maharashtra State. He, after his retirement, was the Chairman of the "Christian Missionaries Activities Inquiry Committee" and I still have a copy of the report. [Ah, that reminds me, I didn't see it when I reorganised the Library, I must check on that, but I should still have that report]. And he took evidence, he toured around Madhya Pradesh taking evidence about undesirable means of conversion on the part of Christians, especially Roman Catholics, and even their political activities, and how they had the idea of trying to get, especially just after Independence certain areas to break away from the Indian Union, and set up as independent Christian states. There was all this going on. So he reported fully and certain restrictions afterwards were placed upon Christian missionary activities in India. I saw so much of this! And the way they take advantage of children and refugees, people in any sort of trouble and difficulty, they had a really intolerant attitude, so this opened me to the

[End of side one side two]

iniquity of these things. I was already familiar from my teens with what the Inquisition had done, though when I came back to this country, and when I was staying at Hampstead, I came into contact with various Christian groups and Christian clergymen, because I was invited to give lectures here and there, and I felt they weren't quite as bad as the missionaries. But at a later date still I came to the conclusion that "the system" as a whole was as bad as ever still and that those that I had come into contact with were from the relatively tolerant minority, who were a bit interested in Eastern religions, but that the system as a whole was as bad as ever, as intolerant as ever. It was just restricted by the secular authorities from doing the sort of things that it wanted. And then we had the "Mary Whitehouse" phenomenon which opened one's eyes a little bit more, and so on.

Dhammadinnā: Did you come up against, in your own practice, resistances you put down to Christian conditioning, or did you not have much Christian conditioning?

S: No. I don't think I had much Christian conditioning. I certainly didn't have any pressure from my parents. My grandmother was a bit upset I'd never been confirmed, but I refused to be confirmed. But on the whole, my experience of Christianity seems to have been fairly positive, and I was interested in art and I couldn't help encountering Christian art, but I saw it just in terms of art, as I mentioned yesterday. I mean, I saw pictures of the Virgin Mary. To me it was just an attractive symbol. I'd not had this inflicted on me as a child in any way. So on the whole, my personal experience of Christianity has been relatively positive in the sense that I haven't actually suffered from it very much. So, I mean, the attitude that I have towards it, which is quite strongly critical, is as a result of study and seeing how other people whom I've come in contact with, especially within "the Friends", have been affected by it. And the more I study and the more people I come in contact with, the more I am convinced of the thoroughly negative affect which Christianity has had in so many respects. And I get really a bit concerned nowadays because

Christianity seems to be staging a bit of a comeback in this country.

Voices: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: ... along with the right wing Government and the return to ??????

S: And people seem to have forgotten all those negative aspects and they are claiming all sorts of virtues and all sorts of achievements for themselves, that Christianity achieved this and Christianity achieved that, when it wasn't so at all! They were never usually opposed to those changes but only sort of took the credit afterwards. They are standing up for human rights now! It's laughable! The Catholic Church standing up for human rights! [Laughter] What nerve! What cheek! What impertinence! [Laughter]

Anne Murphy: They've excommunicated some of their priests that were really on the ball and turned them over to the Fascists.

S: Mm. It really is like the wolf declaring himself to be the protector of the lambs. [Pause] Well, you'll be interested to hear that only today, a news item, the six Roman Catholic Archbishops of England, Scotland and Wales, have issued a pronouncement on the subject of abortion. And you can guess what they have said. They want to step up the campaign against the present abortion laws. They want them to be tightened, or actually they want abortion to be made completely impossible.

Dhammadinnā: Really! To be completely impossible?

S: Well, this is what they would like to do. They know that this is being unrealistic, but they urge people, all Catholics, to take a strong stand against abortion. The law is going to be changed probably anyway. John Curry has introduced amendments, so I think it is in relation to this, they want to muster support for those changes.

Dhammadinnā: There seems to be something quite sort of odd about the whole...

S: Mm. One can't help wondering what's gone wrong and where.

Dhammadinnā: I was thinking more specifically about the Christian's attitude of the sanctity of life which is quite different from a Buddhist. The reasons why a Buddhist wouldn't have an abortion are quite different to why a Christian wouldn't have an abortion.

S: Yes, right. But they've never been against war. The Church has never been against war as Buddhists have been.

Dhammadinnā: Yes. I was in a cinema recently when they were collecting money for children. It was "Year of the Child" still and it was a film on disabled children called "The Variety Club of Great Britain", with Vera Lynn singing, taking a lot of disabled children out. It really made me feel sick, the whole film, because it was laced with guilt. It made me really think about a whole attitude in our culture towards this, particularly

disabled children, about preserving life at all costs in a very sick sort of way. I couldn't make out why I felt so strongly against it. I almost felt that we shouldn't preserve that kind of life. I got a reaction, in the way that that film seemed to portray ...

S: Yes. It's a sort of sacrifice. We were talking yesterday, perhaps we can go, as we've only got a few minutes left, go back to this a little bit without overdoing the "Virgin Mary thing" and all that. [Laughter], I remember hearing a nun talking on the radio, being interviewed, and she was asked how she actually found it possible to lead a life of virginity. So she said quite frankly that, as a nun, she didn't repress sex, she didn't sublimate it, she simply sacrificed it. You see? So I think there is this idea of sacrifice that you sacrifice your life to care for these disabled and deformed children and so on. Yes, there is something admirable, in a way, in sacrifice, but it's as though sacrifice is given a quite unpleasant flavour in Christianity, something quite morbid, not that it's a overflowing of your mettā towards people and that you're happy to do it, but you sort of mortify yourself. You do it because you don't want to do it. It's good for you to do it, because you don't want to do it!

Voices: Mm.

S: Not that you do it because you really want to.

Dhammadinnā: It seems to be an attitude towards life itself which is strange. You prolong life in people who are ill and on machines and also you prolong the life of some disabled life forms, because they might have consciousness. It seems to be overdone in a certain sort of way.

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: From a Buddhist point of view ...

S: It's almost as though you just want to be awkward!

Dhammadinnā: Yes. From a Bodhisattva's point of view, if there are disabled, helpless people, you'd help them, but that seems to come from a completely different emotional place.....

S: Yes, indeed.

Dhammadinnā: ... from so much of what goes on, and it's quite hard sometimes to sort out what your emotional responses are ...

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: ... where exactly they come from.

S: Yes. Mm. I referred, some years ago, to a Salvation Army advertisement which I had seen which I thought quite unhealthy and unskillful.

You might have seen it. It was five or six years ago. There was a big picture of a Salvation Army officer, an elderly man, with a child in his arms wrapped in a blanket and the caption said "Now, will you care?" You see? I saw it as appealing to your feelings of guilt.

Voices: Mm.

S: That you are responsible for the child having the accident, or whatever it was, it wasn't clear. So it was trying to make you give out of feelings of guilt. It was a blatant appeal to your latent feelings of guilt. "It's your fault that this all happened. Now, will you care, now that it's come to this!" And you're not really responsible. You're not even told exactly what happened. This seems really terrible and also characteristic. They plastered it all over the greater part of London some years ago, these big, big posters. [Pause] Raise money for worthy causes by all means, but not by playing with people's negative, unskilful emotions. There seems so much of this to be cleared up in our society. [Pause] Anyway, how did this all arise? "To make others feel ashamed without cause" - from "ashamed" to "guilt"!

Anjali: Bhante, how can you get rid of guilt, apart from blasphemy?

S: Well, most of you have done it, so how did you do it? [Laughter]

Dhammadinnā: Still struggling. [Laughs]

S: I think the only way, the only practical way is that you are assured of people's, as it were, unconditional affection. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

S: Not that they will let you get away with anything, just because they love you in a silly, foolish, indulgent way, but if they don't allow you to get away with it, it is out of love and you must be assured of that. I think that this is one of the functions of the spiritual community to assure everybody within that community and anybody who comes into contact with it, that they are loved, the people do feel mettā towards them, for their own sake, as it were, and that they're never going to forfeit that. That will never be withdrawn, whatever they do, that will never be withdrawn. No one will ever say, "Well if you do that I won't love you any more." They'll say, "Yes, what you've done is thoroughly wrong, thoroughly unskilful, I'm really angry, but I love you still, never mind, and because I love you I therefore tell you you've done something unskilful and please stop it." You see what I mean? But no one ever threatens the withdrawal of mettā. Well, that's a contradiction in terms, isn't it? You can see it at once as soon as you use the word mettā. So that within the spiritual community you can be assured that mettā will never be withdrawn from you whatever happens. So if you have that as a sort of basis, you can get over guilt.

Anne McMillan: That makes confession possible, actually, ...

S: Yes, indeed.

Anne McMillan: ... in a real sense, doesn't it? Because ...

S: That's right. I said, I think in my lecture, you can't confess if you feel guilty. It's a different kind of thing.

Voices: Mm. Right.

Anne McMillan: I can't confess to something if I think that confession is going to make them withdraw their affection from me. I won't do it and that's that. I wouldn't.

S: Yes.

Anne McMillan: So therefore you don't actually really overcome whatever that thing is because you don't confess it unless ...

S: As I said, I think it's really important that every member of the spiritual community feels this unconditional mettā from everybody else. I think that's the only way in which, or the only basis on which, one can build in such a way as to get rid of one's feelings of guilt, to have that sort of confidence. So there must never be any sort of pressure on people to conform; any sort of suggestion that if they don't, well, mettā will be withdrawn. It means if you can withdraw mettā it means perhaps you didn't really have mettā in the first place, the real thing can't be withdrawn, you could say, to the extent that it is the real thing. But people so often feel this, that affection, or love, or mettā is conditional.

Voices: Mm.

S: And of course, very often it is. But that's unfortunate. But then you want it, very often, so desperately that you'll do almost anything to retain it. So, in a way, it is one of the most terrible things that you can do, to threaten withdrawal of mettā or love from anybody. You are really trying to get them at your mercy then.

Voice: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: It seems to bounce off, if someone has guilt in them. They will trigger that in someone else, they won't be able to maintain unconditional love.

S: Mm.

Srimala: So, so long as we don't actually feel mettā, we're feeling that love is conditional?

S: I'm not quite sure what you mean.

Srimala: Well, if, to the extent that we don't feel mettā....

S: Feel it ourselves towards others, or feel it coming from others?

Srimala: Can't you only feel it from others if you feel it yourself?

S: That's true.

Srimala: So, to the extent that you don't feel mettā, what you feel is that love is conditional.

S: Mm. That's true. Yes. That's true, yes. It is something given as a reward for good behaviour, yes, and which is withdrawn for bad behaviour. Mm. [Pause] Anyway, let's look back over what we've just done since tea-time, to see if there's anything that required further attention. [Long pause]

[To Dhammadinnā] You're a bit sniffy today.

Dhammadinnā: I've got a cold.

S: Oh dear.

Dhammadinnā: My brain's just given up as well!

S: Well make sure you have a nice hot water bottle tonight, and a good hot drink.

Dhammadinnā: And no parties.

S: Mm. Pepper. Pepper tea.

Dhammadinnā: Mm?

S: Pepper tea. Black pepper tea.

Anne McMillan: Sounds horrible!

S: I take that when I have a cold, with sugar and lots of ground black pepper. [Laughter] It's a Nepalese remedy.

Dhammadinnā: Ordinary tea?

S: Ordinary tea with sugar, a bit of sugar and quite a bit of ground black pepper, so that it's really quite strong. And it does give you quite a boost. [Laughter]

Anne McMillan: Keeps everybody away from you so you get lots of rest!

S: I'm quite fond of it.

Dhammadinnā: Does it actually stop your cold?

S: It seems to have an effect on the cold itself. You feel better, certainly, after taking it. At least that is my experience. [Pause] Oh! There's a ladybird, there's quite a lot of them about at this time.

Voice: Mm.

S: There's been a ladybird, ... well, not "epidemic", because they're quite useful little things. There was something in the paper about them recently. [Pause] Anyway we've been accumulating quite a bit of material haven't we, and there's still some more to come.

Anne McMillan: I find it much more difficult to absorb things in the afternoon.

S: Does everybody agree with that or not?

Anjali: I feel the opposite.

Voices: [murmurs]

S: It's not as though we have a heavy lunch.

Dhammadinnā: It's probably going in the sun.

Anne McMillan: I just feel much less alive.

S: Mm. One can understand it in the summer when it's really hot. I remember on the Women's Study Retreat that we had at *Aryatara*, it was so hot in the afternoons. I still have some slides of that retreat, did you know? Did you ever see those?

Dhammadinnā: Yes, I think I have seen them.

Voice: What did you study?

Dhammadinnā: "Songs of Milarepa"

S: Part of that has been transcribed.

Dhammadinnā: Not very much.

S: I expect Anne Rowlands will get around to organising it.

Dhammadinnā: I've done some of it. And I've asked someone in New Zealand to do some. They've got all the tapes.

S: I've completely forgotten what sort of points ...?

Dhammadinnā: There was some quite good stuff.

S: Good. I remember the "Songs" themselves, but not so much of the discussion. I don't remember the discussion at all in fact. I don't usually remember, you know, there are so many study topics. Anyway, that's that for today.

END OF SESSION

End of Tape 4 Tape 5

NEXT SESSION

S: We're dealing with "The method of not forgetting an enlightened attitude", which is called "The training in accepting four positive and rejecting four negative qualities". We've dealt with the first two positive qualities so we come on to the third and fourth now. Yes, the negative ones come first. Would someone like to read the third one, middle of page 145?

"[iii] out of spite to say improper things to a Bodhisattva who has adopted an enlightened attitude."

S: Mm. The assumption being one is oneself, or one has oneself adopted an enlightened attitude and is training in that, so it would seem to be rather odd if out of spite, one would say improper things to another being in a similar position. You see what I mean? It's rather an extraordinary state of affairs if Bodhisattva is coming into conflict with Bodhisattva. So in more general terms, it means that it's really strange if there should

be any conflict or even any disagreement, personal disagreement, between those who share, those who have adopted the same spiritual ideal. This is what it's really getting at. In this case, of course, the Bodhisattva Ideal. You are allowing personal things to override the things which you have in common, which belong to a much higher order. You're letting personalities get in the way of principles and commonly held principles. But obviously, one sees that sort of thing happening, it is so strange in a way and so foolish and so unnecessary.

Anne Murphy: Bhante, does that mean you are letting the subjective dominate you?

S: Well, the subjective in the sense of the personal. If say you can't get on with, let's say, another Bodhisattva because of the colour of his hair, or the way in which he speaks, or the way in which he holds his knife and fork. Sometimes people are quite affected by these little things and they get in the way.

Voices: Mm. Mm.

S: Or it may be a difference of opinion about something relatively unimportant. Certainly unimportant relative to the common spiritual ideal. Someone may rub you up the wrong way, or you may be annoyed at what you may take as a criticism of you on their part, or you may feel that they have not understood you, or they are not doing you justice, or that they don't appreciate you, or that they are not aware of you, or that they are undermining you, or they're not being fair to you, or they're not being direct with you, [laughter], etc., etc..

Dhammadinnā: I feel all these things!

S: So even if those things do happen, they should not be allowed to obscure the fact that you do have, you do hold, a certain spiritual ideal in common. It's really so foolish. Well one example, it's not exactly in this case, of course, a spiritual ideal that has brought you together, I'm thinking of the case of a husband and wife. They're supposed to be together for their mutual happiness and to enjoy life together and to bring up children together, but, you know, so many little things get in the way, very often, and they forget their overriding purpose. So in the case of the spiritual life, when it happens, how much more sad is it! There is also the fact that in the course of the spiritual life and in the course of your spiritual life with other people, past conditionings are being worked on all the time. And that is a rather painful and difficult process. You may become sensitive and it may be quite easy for people to rub you up the wrong way, or for you to rub other people up the wrong way, because it isn't a question, as it is, very often, in worldly life, of sort of just adjusting and having a sort of working arrangement. It's a question of really getting on together in a much more honest and much more fundamental sort of way, without compromises.

It's not too difficult to get on with people if you're prepared to compromise, but if you've got a spiritual ideal in common, it rules out the possibility of compromise. So, in a sense, you have to fight it out honestly if there is a difference. And this makes it all the more likely that they will be just personal differences. In a sense, in the spiritual life, you are fighting for your life. The old conditioned self is fighting for its life, so it puts up a stiff resistance, even in relation to spiritual friends and others on the same path.

Anne Murphy: So it's not the subjective you have to watch, it's the personal?

S: Well, the two overlap obviously. I don't want to suggest that your subjective feelings are necessarily always wrong, or necessarily always a source of trouble. It may not be so. When I say "personal things" I mean little oddities and whimsicalities that you attach undue importance to and which you allow to obscure the common spiritual ideal that you have. The fact that you take breakfast, that you for instance take coffee for breakfast and she takes tea, or she takes Weetabix and you take Cornflakes becomes more important in your eyes than the fact that you are both trying to lead a spiritual life. It's that sort of thing that I have in mind. Or suppose you had to agree that either it's going to be Cornflakes for both, or Weetabix for both and if you disagree over something like that to such an extent that you forget that you're leading a spiritual life in a spiritual community together, well, then it means there's a certain wrong emphasis, a certain disproportion. Or if you quarrel over the same man for instance... [laughter] ... it isn't worth it. [Laughter] That's such a trivial thing! If you see what I mean?

So, "out of spite to say improper things to a Bodhisattva who has adopted an enlightened attitude.", what to speak of doing anything to such a Bodhisattva, even just to speak in the wrong sort of way to somebody with whom you share a spiritual ideal, even that is a serious matter.

Voices: Mm.

S: What to speak of any action actually taken against him; even to disagree verbally, even if there's only verbal conflict!

Anjali: But Bhante, if two conditioned selves are fighting for their lives there'll have to be this conflict.

S: That's why I say it should be an honest conflict. And one should understand what is happening. You don't necessarily have to come into conflict in that sort of situation. In fact, you should try to avoid it. But it sometimes happen. Just because the conditioned self gets really desperate, sort of can lash out in any direction, as it were. But overall, and in the long run, you should certainly not attach disproportionate emphasis, or give disproportionate importance to differences which are actually of a minor nature in themselves and are only being used by these other forces of reactivity within. I mean, for instance, to go back to this example of the Kelloggs and the Cornflakes, it's not that you really care about the Cornflakes or Weetabix, it is a case of asserting yourself. Why should I give in to her? Why shouldn't she give in to me? That's what it's all about! It's not about Cornflakes or Weetabix.

Voices: Mm.

S: Mm! You see what I mean? So be very careful about disharmony with those with whom one is supposedly leading a common spiritual life, in the light of a common spiritual ideal, and especially when it's the Bodhisattva Ideal.

Anne Murphy: Bhante, reactivity within one, what is that due to? Is that incipient hatred? Or is it due mainly to conditioned ...?

S: I wouldn't say that reactivity is an expression of hatred. Hatred itself, I would say, is a form of reactivity. Reactivity is the fundamental way in which one functions, in which the mind functions when you are not functioning creatively. It's the way we usually do function. I mean, the

reason for it just lies in our primordial ignorance, in our primordial unenlightenedness, as it were. In a sense, there's no reason for it.

Voice: ... for it, yes.

S: But nonetheless, it can be changed. [Pause] All right. Four. The fourth negative quality.

"(iv) To behave meanly to sentient beings."

S: What do you think it means, to behave meanly to sentient beings.?

Anne McMillan: To act without mettā.

S: To act without mettā ...?

Dhammadinnā: Not with generosity.

S: Not with generosity. I think it means more than that, bearing in mind the specific context. It means not keeping your promises, not giving them what you promised to give them. Not helping them in the way that you promised, i.e. by gaining enlightenment and leading them to enlightenment, so to speak. I mean, forgetting one's vow, not living up to one's vow. But also it includes these other things. I mean, sometimes it is said being mean is much worse than being wicked. You see what is meant?

Dhammadinnā: Wickedness is a bit more direct in a sense.

S: Yes. Mm.

Dhammadinnā: Being mean is a bit ...

S: Well, it's just mean! It's just nasty and underhand ...

Dhammadinnā: ... underhand, yes.

S: ... and sneaky!

Anne McMillan: And also if it's "mean" in a sense of ungenerous, it's like going against the very basic principle of 'dana', the first 'paramita'.

S: Yes. Indeed. Well the Bodhisattva Ideal itself suggests something big and generous and overflowing and expansive and large-hearted and

noble-minded, well - the antithesis of meanness. So, if you are mean with sentient beings you are very, very un-Bodhisattva-like indeed.

Anne McMillan: So a mean Bodhisattva is a contradiction in terms.

S: Yes. A mean-minded Bodhisattva. "Mean" means also being unforgiving.

Anne McMillan: What is it ...?

S: ... or taking petty advantages of people.

Anne McMillan: So what is it that Guenther's translating here?

S: I don't know here. I think probably "with a small mind". Something like that. But "mean" is quite expressive, the English word "mean" isn't it? It's clearly, as I said, the antithesis of what the Bodhisattva should be. It's small-minded, petty. [Pause] All right. On to the four positive qualities.

"Which are the four positive qualities? Kasyapa when a Bodhisattva possesses them, an enlightened attitude will become manifest as soon as he has been born in any existence whatsoever, and he will never forget it until he has reached the quintessence of enlightenment?"

S: Mm! That's quite important! When a Bodhisattva possesses these four positive qualities, then the enlightened attitude, the bodhichitta, will manifest in him as soon as he appears in any existence, that is to say wherever he is reborn. If in his previous existence he has practised these four positive qualities, he will be born, so to speak, with an enlightened attitude, he'll manifest that, as soon as he's able to manifest anything. Perhaps this has some bearing on the Tibetan tradition of the incarnate lamas.

Voices: Mm.

S: Perhaps this is one of the signs by which they can be recognised. So what are these four? Let us see what they are.

"They are, in brief, [i] not to tell a lie willingly even to save one's life."

S: Ah! Now why do you think this is considered so important? After all, it can't be all that important to tell a lie, just a little white lie occasionally, or even a little grey lie. Is it so important? What is the significance? What is a lie?

Christabel: Self-delusion.

S: Yes, self-delusion. But what is a lie? What does it sort of represent in a general way?

Anjali: Misrepresentation of yourself.

Sridevi: Going against something that you know better.

S: It's a lack of straightforwardness isn't it? And inasmuch as it does mean going against something that you know better, there's an element of duplicity. There's even an element of conflict.

Voices: Mm.

S: For instance, it has been pointed out that you don't have to teach children to tell the truth. I'm subject to correction here, of course, but you do have to teach them to tell a lie. A child does not naturally tell a lie, so we are told. They have to learn how to tell a lie. Because what is involved in telling a lie? Why should you say that something is other than actually it is as you see it. What motive can there be? So you say, "You see, red, yes, it's red, I saw a red flower." Why should you say you saw a yellow one when you saw a red one? The natural tendency is to say what you saw, to say what you thought, so it's as though you start telling a lie only when some outside influence comes in, or when there's some sort of split or division within you. So it's as though telling the truth is natural and that telling a lie represents some sort of deformation and once you get into the habit of that, there's no end to it, and I think this is why speaking the truth is so important in the case of the Bodhisattva, because he should be a completely truthful and straightforward person.

Ulla/Suzannah?: And also others can trust such a person completely.

S: Yes. It creates trust when others come to know that you never deviate from the truth, that you always speak the truth. You yourself have self-confidence. There are people who can tell a lie without blushing, you know. I wonder whether they have any real self-confidence.

Dhammadinnā: It really destroys communication when you discover someone has lied to you.

S: Right! Indeed!

Dhammadinnā: More than if someone has lost their temper or done all sorts of other things.

S: Oh yes. Well, losing their temper is almost the opposite of telling a lie. However unskilful at least it is right out in the open! There's no mistaking it!

Dhammadinnā: I've known a couple of people in my life who I discovered were ... what's the word ... consistent liars. It's one of the most awful things

S: Yes, because then you don't know what you can believe.

Voices: [speaking at once]

Dhammadinnā: You cease to believe them at all.

S: Mm. you cease to believe them at all. Yes.

Dhammadinnā: Also you feel you've been make a bit of a fool of. It's a quite horrible feeling.

S: Though there are certain areas of life in which telling lies is supposed to be permissible and I think that probably is quite dangerous in a way. Even the so-called conventional lies, "Oh, I'm sorry Mummy's not in." You see what I mean? You train the child. The mother says, "Go and tell the man at the door Mummy's not in, come again next week." There's quite a bit of this sort of thing, isn't there?

Ulla/Suzannah?: Generally too, children are taught to lie, either because the parents want to protect them from certain facts or other things.

S: Or they come to know that the parents are lying. It is well-known they hear the parents talking and saying, "Oh, what a drag, so-and-so is coming this afternoon. I wish they weren't coming." The child overhears this, its little ears are always flapping, and then the person comes in the afternoon and the same little child hears Mummy and Daddy say, "Oh, we're so pleased to see you. Oh isn't it lovely!", etc. etc. You see? So the child is picking this up all the time. So it really does sort of vitiate the moral sense, you could say; vitiate the psychology of the child or the person.

Anne McMillan: I think it also goes back to what you were saying yesterday about unconditional love because most lies seem to come from the fear of Mummy's love ever being taken away.

S: Mm. Yes, right. When you tell a lie, it's usually for the sake of gaining something or...

Anne McMillan: Or to protect ...

S: Do you think there ever can be a truly white lie? I suppose there might be. The hypothetical case is if somebody is looking for another person to murder them and you say you haven't seen them, well this is pretty extreme. The Mahayana usually considers this to be justified. "Not to tell a lie willingly." Well you wouldn't be telling it willingly, presumably, but to save somebody's life, you would. Some might argue that that is just the thin edge of the wedge, but one has to use one's own judgement.

Dhammadinnā: I can remember the first time I can remember lying was to protect my brother from the police.

S: Ah!

Dhammadinnā: I said he didn't live at our house.

S: How old were you? Two?

Dhammadinnā: No. I was about eight.

S: You must have been quite a knowing child. Mm. But in the olden days - probably not so much now, the children of the poor were brought up telling lies automatically, very, very quickly. If the landlord came or the tax man came well, "Mummy's not at home. She's been away for weeks.", sort of thing. [Laughter] In India, I'm afraid people lie constantly. It is regrettable, one of the most regrettable aspects.

Voice: ... on that level, Bhante ...

S: ... to please you, usually, to please you.

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: They say what they think you want to hear.

S: Yes. I mean, there's the well-known story about a traveller asks how many miles it is to such and such a place and the answer is "It's as many miles as Your Honour pleases." [Laughter] And they'll tell you whatever they think you want to hear.

Anne McMillan: Where do you think exaggeration comes in in all this?

S: That's interesting. Exaggeration. Sometimes I think it is merely artistic, as when you tell a good story and you just doctor it a little bit, you put a little more here and a little less there. You see what I mean?

Dhammadinnā: Dramatic.

S: Dramatic effect. Otherwise exaggeration is usually to impress, isn't it?

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: I was just thinking, the Mahayana Sutras are a classic of exaggeration. But I suppose, in fact, they exaggerate so much that it's something different?

S: Well, they are trying to express the infinite in finite terms. It's no exaggeration at all, actually. [Pause] It falls far short of the reality, yes! [Laughter]

Anne McMillan: [Unclear]

S: Well, who says it was really exaggeration.

Ulla/Suzannah?: It was really funny, about half a year ago I lied and I was really sort of shocked to ... It was really sort of self-protection and it was quite a stupid thing. I just couldn't ... I confessed about five minutes later and I can still remember because it was really sort of unskilful, because it was just the person ... No, I didn't, it was just sort of reaction.

S: Mm. Sometimes there's an instinctive reaction, a sort of fear of punishment or disapproval ...

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes.

S: ... as with the child. Mm.

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes. It was even quite an unimportant thing. I had just seen something that was not for me, and, you know, I can still remember that act.

S: Yes. So, "not to tell a lie willingly, even to save one's life." You know, that stresses how important it is. Sometimes, people's whole life is a lie. Sometimes people lead a double life, don't they?

Voices: Mm.

Ulla/Suzannah?: One's heroes, they have a sort of ...

Dhammadinnā: Double agents.

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes, yes and ...

Christabel: I was also thinking of people like pop stars who don't really know who they are any more because they're acclaimed in one way, and yet they may themselves have a wrong view, or people who are well known generally.

S: Yes. I found this when I got to know some well-known film-stars in Bombay some years ago. I found they lost the capacity to distinguish

between reality and unreality. They didn't know when they were acting and when they were not acting.

Voices: Yes.

S: They didn't really know when they were on the set and when they were off the set. So there was a sense of unreality about them all the time. And you could see that extending into their private life and their personal relationships. They didn't know, for instance, almost whether they were having an affair with somebody or whether they were just acting. They actually didn't know!

Voices: Mm.

S: And this seemed really strange. Even if they felt upset, they didn't know whether they were really upset, or whether they were acting. For them, truth and falsehood had become completely blurred so they didn't know who they were.

Anjali: Is that why acting is traditionally not "right livelihood" Bhante?

S: I think it is not unconnected with that, yes. And one of these people whom I knew quite well used also to get quite drunk quite frequently. That seemed to be connected with the same thing. So if you were to find, say, someone who from their childhood onwards had been very reluctant to tell a lie, or who just wouldn't tell a lie, you might start wondering if, in their previous life, they hadn't developed something like a Bodhisattva-like attitude. And some children, I think, are more difficult to condition into the ways of the world than others.

Dhammadinnā: So a Bodhisattva would consider it more important to lose his or her life ...

S: It is put as strongly as that, yes.

Dhammadinnā: ... regardless of that importance to the world, than to tell a lie.

S: I mean, allowing for the Mahayana's typical exaggeration, but still it stresses the importance attached to speaking the truth, and clearly, this becomes more and more important in the context of the spiritual community. Saying what you really think and in some cases this may be possible only after years as it were. I think it is not very often that people are able really to speak the truth to one another. I mean, when I say truth, I mean "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." You might tell a bit of the truth, but to tell the whole truth is sometimes very difficult.

Christabel: It's pretty complicated too, isn't it? Because you can be lying to yourself and really believe that you are telling the truth. You could really believe you are such and such a person acting with integrity because you hadn't ...

S: That wouldn't be quite a lie. That wouldn't be true but you wouldn't be telling a deliberate falsehood ...

Christabel: Oh! I see.

S: ... because first of all you would be believing that. You would be mistaken.

Christabel: The qualifying thing for a lie is the word "deliberate"?

S: Well, I think that is an essential part of the definition, that you know.

Voice: The volition.

S: Yes. That you intend to deceive. Well, we can all be mistaken, that's very easy, but ...

Christabel: When you said "living a lie", that was what I was really thinking about but that's not what you mean, is it?

S: Deceiving. When you deceive, for instance, you lead a double life, maybe you are a man with two separate wives and two separate families ...

Christabel: Oh, I see!

S: ... and you keep the one completely separate from the other and tell a whole series of lies to cover up the truth, you see?

Christabel: Yes.

S: I mean a double life in that sort of way.

Christabel: Because actually sometimes actors simply don't know, so it wouldn't really be a lie for them.

S: Well, in a way, they've sunk below the level of untruth. They're not even capable of untruth, what to speak of truth. It's worse!

Anne Murphy: Is that similar to the alcoholic, Bhante?

S: Yes. Right!

Christabel: Out of control.

S: Out of control. Mm.

Anne McMillan: It's quite confusing actually, when you come up against that, because I spent quite a bit of time in the music business and I was constantly, in a way, getting involved in other people's lives and it was really difficult to keep level with it because people would just sort of involve you in their lives.

S: Yes. I remember a case of this sort some years ago. I had a friend who was divorced from his wife and his parents were very conventional people and they were quite distressed by this divorce. So he used to go home every other weekend to see his parents and he said it was very uncomfortable because sometimes they would warn him that such and such a friend is coming [and they'd say], "If they enquire about your wife, don't let on." So he had to pretend they were still married and maybe they'd not been together for about two years, he and his wife, but if somebody asked "How is so-and-so?", "Well, how's your wife?", he'd have to say, "Oh, she's all right." and go along with that conversation and pretend that they were still together because his parents were so insistent that nobody should know that he'd been divorced. So this is what happens and the way you're caught up. He would have said, left to himself, "Well we're no longer together." But his parents wouldn't permit him to say that, they felt it such a disgrace. So he actually had to fabricate a whole false conversation.

For instance, they'd ask about his child and he could not let on that the child no longer was living with him, but was living with the mother, and that he didn't actually see the child. So he had to pretend that he did and make up little incidents and things of that sort. So this is how some people live and he was doing it very much against the grain. But if he ever suggested telling people that he was divorced, his parents, especially his mother, got so upset he just had to go along with it. Or sometimes, remaining within the family circle so to speak, when children don't know whether they are legitimate or not. Sometimes you get that, they don't know they're ... their mother never actually says "Well, you know, I wasn't actually married to your father" And they are left in uncertainty and sometimes they start wondering about it and mother always fends off questions and it never comes out into the open. You see?

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: Or children who're adopted ...

S: Yes. Indeed!

Anne McMillan: I've known that happen. Children find out that they've been adopted, but without actually being told by the parents.

S: Yes. You can understand, in a way, under such circumstances, you know, those foster parents or adoptive parents, with the best of intentions, never tell the child, "Well, you're really not my own." but I suppose when they reach a certain age, one has to say, "Well, you are my own, but you were actually adopted, technically you're adopted." so to speak. But you know, if it involves telling lies in order to conceal the truth, the situation just becomes worse and worse with the worse reaction when the child concerned actually finds out.

Anne McMillan: I've known that actually happen and cause quite a rift in a family.

S: Mm. So I think there is quite a lot of things that society forces people to conceal, for one reason or another, and that leads to an unhealthy life, just because of dishonesty and all the lies that have to be told. So you know the Bodhisattva is expected to practise complete honesty and openness and truthfulness, directness of communication, straightforwardness, all these sort of virtues.

Anjali: Bhante, about lying ... um ... [laughter].

S: Yes, own up!

Anjali: We'd never have been able to start the type-setting business if we hadn't been willing to lie, because ... ah...

S: How's that?

Anjali: Well, if you haven't been in business for a certain length of time you won't get any work from anybody. So we had to say we've been in business for a certain length of time and it did lead to complications.

S: But are you sure that that is in fact the case, because, surely people do understand that new businesses do start up.

Anjali: Yes, but they won't give you any work until you've been in business for a certain length of time.

Dhammadinnā: Who's they? How then can, I mean ...

Anne McMillan: How do you start?

Dhammadinnā: If you've been in business for six months without any work, what then? [Laughter]

Anjali: You would have gone bankrupt, you see.

S: Mm. I'm not quite sure what the situation is.

Anjali: Well, like normally ...

S: It is understandable that people do trust more an old established firm.

Anjali: Mm.

S: But I don't think that means they should necessarily distrust you just because you are only just now set up in business.

Anjali: Mm. Well, we wouldn't have got much work. I mean ...

S: I would say, under those circumstances you could start with people who know you.

Anjali: Well, we did.

S: For instance, if you take business from the FWBO, well, when you've done that for six months, well, or two years as the case may be, then you can quite truthfully say, "Well, we've been in business for such and such a length of time."

Anjali: Well, now we have so we haven't got that problem. But I suppose, normally, people wouldn't be, in a way, so foolish as to set up in business with as little, knowing as little about it and with as few contacts as we did.

S: Yes. Usually people do set up in business often knowing what they are doing and also other people know that. You see what I mean. In some circumstances, I think, they might even prefer to give a new firm the business, knowing that they are new, they are trying to create a good reputation and so they'll try all the more hard to please and you know, to get business and keep it. Whereas sometimes the old established firm just doesn't care very much because they've got enough business and they're not hard-up for customers etc., etc. So I think perhaps it isn't always so difficult to be truthful.

Anjali: Mm. Well, we have struck that advantage you know. People we have gone to have had trouble with their regular typesetters and so on.

S: Mm. You can just say, "Well, we are new, but we believe we are good, give us a chance."

Anjali: Mm.

Karola: Perhaps it's a matter of self-confidence.

S: Yes. Yes, that's true.

Karola: If Anjali and Kate felt really self-confident it wouldn't matter.

S: Yes. I think that counts a lot in business life.

Voices: Mm.

S: It's why the salesmen need to have a particular sort of character and approach. Well, it occurred to me that one of the things about the spiritual community is that it represents, among other things, a situation within which you can be completely honest and not only that, but in which there's no pressure to be anything else. You know, you may succeed in being completely honest in the world and in always being truthful, but there's always pressure on you to be otherwise.

Voices: Mm.

S: Or in the family circle too. If your Auntie says to you, "Well what are you doing in London, Anne?", you will maybe, have to dress it up a bit to make it a bit acceptable to her, especially if she starts wondering, "Have you got a job?", etc., etc. Mm. "Are you still going to church?". [Laughter].

Anne McMillan: I'm afraid I would have to be honest about that one!

Ulla/Suzannah?: So I've found it's been quite interesting. I've been selling "*The Three Jewels*" and when I started I knew really nothing about how to sell a book and I was quite honest and I went to different places, was quite honest, well, I don't know about it ... ah ... and people were so helpful, and you know, it was just fantastic, their attitude. They really wanted to help me and to explain to me what to do, what's the best thing to do and I really learnt a lot.

S: Because if you had pretended you knew, it would just create a confused situation.

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes, yes.

S: You did go with a very nice looking book. This helps.

Ulla/Suzannah?: And I believed in it!

S: Yes. [Chuckles]

Dhammadinnā: One point I wanted to make. You were saying you've bluffed your way into lots of jobs. That's kind of not being honest.

Anne McMillan: It's downright telling lies. But I don't do that now.

S: Yes. You don't need to.

Dhammadinnā: So many things seem to be quite acceptable even though actually they are quite dishonest.

S: Well people seem to quite admire it even.

Voices: Yes.

Karola: Would you see a lie as a sort of subtle means of control? I mean ...

S: I think that is one of the reasons why you want to tell a lie. It is to control, yes.

Dhammadinnā: There seem to be lots of different aspects to lying. There's sort of deliberately lying, then there's being evasive, not actually saying, not deliberately lying, but ...

S: Yes! Holding back.

Dhammadinnā: ... and there's deception where you tell somebody something much later which can upset people because you've acted falsely in that meantime.

S: Yes, in between.

Dhammadinnā: You do own up eventually to something, but there's been deception.

S: I think, worst of all, is when you deliberately and actively deceive people, when you spin tales which are not justified or do things in order to deceive somebody.

Christabel: Oh. That is like alcoholism because you have to go on and on and on.

Anne McMillan: You get really tied up in it.

S: Because you can't ever tell just one lie. I mean if you feel you can't speak the truth to someone, it also means, very often, among other things, you don't trust them, and within the spiritual community there should be a situation of trust so that you feel able to tell anything, anything about yourself, to other people, that you can trust them with that. Even if it's something that you have to confess, something unskilful, well, you can trust them, you can tell them. They're not going to take advantage on that account.

[End of side 1 side 2]

Ulla/Suzannah?: I think to be open and honest, I think it's the best protection actually, because you know that you are being truthful and nobody can catch you.

S: Well it's not only the best principle, but it is the best policy, because it saves trouble.

Dhammadinnā: "Honesty is the best policy." [Laughs]

S: Yes. It isn't only the best policy, it's the best principle.

Anne McMillan: When I was quite little, I mean under school age, I used to fantasise quite a lot. I mean, I had a whole family that I made up and things, and I used to tell people about them and it was all right within the family circle because they knew I was pretending and fantasising, but I used to get quite carried away and I think I actually believed it myself quite a bit and I think that was quite, ah ...

S: Children often do that. They don't distinguish between fact and the imagination in the way that an adult does.

Anne McMillan: I was going to say I think a lot of adults actually don't either.

S: Ah! That is if their wishful thinking is so strong. Yes. They refuse to recognise that what they're talking about is not in fact, fact.

Voices: Mm.

S: I mean, the "Baron Munchausen" type of person. The teller of tall stories. [Pause] All right, let's go on then. So, "not to tell a lie willingly, even to save one's life". Two?

[ii] *"To set all sentient beings on the path of the good and wholesome in general, and of the Mahayana in particular."*

S: Mm. This just represents a very broad attitude, of aspiring after whatever is best for the benefit of all. This is your sort of settled attitude.

Anne McMillan: When it says "the path of the good and wholesome in general and of the Mahayana in particular"?.....

S: As though the Mahayana is the most concentrated form of the good and the wholesome, the skilful, because it's concerned with supreme Buddhahood.

Anne McMillan: It makes me think. Sometimes I wonder. I mean, I honestly believe that Buddhism is the right path for everybody, but people argue that that isn't always the case, that in fact people have to find their own path and maybe what is yours isn't right for them, kind of thing, and I think ...

S: What do you mean by "your own path"? Because there is a sort of "path principle". It's not that literally there are different paths - that is pressing the analogy - different paths to the mountain top, too literally. It's the same principle that is involved, but from different points of view and under different aspects. So, in a sense, there is one path for all, but not in the sense of one particular way of doing things.

Dhammadinnā: It's the spiritual life.

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: I think, when people say they want to follow their own path they mean they want to follow their own reactive path through life. They don't really mean they've chosen any particular spiritual path. It's a cop out usually. "I'm on my path, you're on yours."

S: Yes.

Dhammadinnā: But usually it is not a spiritual path.

S: Sometimes they even say that it's their spiritual path!

Voices: Yes.

Anne McMillan: I'm thinking, in particular of a sort of woolly-minded thing that you come across. Sometimes people say, "Well it's all one anyway and it all gets you to the same ..."

S: But does it? Well, one just has to say, "Well look, and see." Ask them, "Are you really positive? Are you really progressing? Are you becoming more aware?" They might say, "Yes!" Well, you say, "Fair enough, I have nothing to say." Or you might not.

Anne McMillan: I think sometimes there's a bit of a reluctance perhaps, even in the Friends, for people to come out and say that yes, they do think actually the spiritual life is the right path, even that the FWBO is in fact a really good way of treading that spiritual path. I sometimes find ...

S: They're beginning to be a bit bolder, they used to be quite apologetic about it in the old days, but they're becoming a little bolder now.

Anne McMillan: I feel it's quite important actually, because, I think that comes through, if you have an apologetic air and you're talking about something that's as important to you as your development.

S: You're not likely to impress or convince other people.

Anne McMillan: Not at all.

S: Mm. Well, in the old days, I mean when I was at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, most people, even if they considered themselves Buddhist, you know, whether rightly or wrongly, they used to take pride in the fact that they didn't tell people about it. [Laughter] I mentioned in a lecture, that one woman I know told me that she was quite proud of the fact that she worked in the same office for twelve years and no one even suspected that she was a Buddhist! [Laughter] That's really strange. I remember sometimes people used to say, "Well, if someone asks me if I'm a Buddhist, I always say, well yes of course I am in the sense that I follow the Buddha's path, but of course I respect all religions and I believe all ... [Said quickly as if reciting a creed]. [Loud laughter, obliterating words]

Anne McMillan: I must say, actually, one of the things that impressed me when I first made contact with the Friends in Glasgow, was the strength of conviction actually of the people up there.

S: Good. I think if anything, it's a little stronger up there than it is down here. A bit of the old John Knox perhaps, you know, re-straightened, of course.

Sridevi: If you are really convinced, then you don't need to come out offensively.

S: Yes, that's true. But it's really strange when people, after stating that they are Buddhist, that the first thing they say after that, that they're also Christians, or that they're not against Christianity, or that they also believe in Christianity, or haven't in fact left Christianity, even though they are Buddhists. Well, this is what one used to hear all the time. One was expected to say this, as though it was a sort of good manners as it were, not just to say that you were a Buddhist, and certainly not to reject all these other things.

Sridevi: It's this woolly thinking about tolerance.

S: Yes. It's mainly that, yes. I mean certainly be open to other possibilities of spiritual expression other than those which are conventionally known as Buddhism, but not allow yourself to be bluffed into recognising or saying that something is spiritual, is like Buddhism, just because it bears the label of some religion or other.

Christabel: I think it is the question of the "Middle Way" again because sometimes it's possible to get quite zombie-like and say without any explanation just.... I'm thinking of Mormons, that's right, who are just absolutely convinced and you can see the sort of shutters come down. And they are positive in what they say, but they are totally closed. It's a different sort of approach isn't it?

S: Well, they are not emotionally positive I would say. They are just emphatic, which I think is a different thing ...

Christabel: Yes. Really zombie like

Voices: Mm. Yes.

S: ... insistent.

Christabel: Sort of, ah ...

S: But all extreme Christian sects seem to be like that, Jehovah's Witnesses and so on. So if one can convey conviction with flexibility ...

Voices: Yes, yes.

S: ... that is a great thing.

Sridevi: And as we said earlier, with respect for the person as a human being ...

S: Yes, right.

Sridevi: Avoid jargon, what may sound to the other person as sort of groupy.

S: Mm. Yes. There were one or two things I wasn't happy about in The *Newsletter* in that respect. I keep reminding Nagabodhi that - "Remember the audience", as it were. For instance, there were a couple of examples that came into my mind in the editorial. They are all right in a way, but I felt that they were a little bit jargonish. Where are they? [Pause] Yes, talking about, ah, "*True, they had not contemplated the idea of working together or sharing all their wealth*". [That is an early community]. "*True, they thought it would just be nice to sit together occasionally.*"

Voices: Ah! Mm.

S: "Sit". Eh? That's jargon. You see? To sit in meditation together. Who is going to understand that! They certainly wouldn't in India, even though they are quite familiar with the idea of meditation, or of sitting in meditation. Well, they don't have the idiom just "to sit". This is something that belongs to ... well, it's not especially specifically FWBO, it's the sort of the "mystical movement" jargon.

Karola: It's interesting that, because I'd only been involved with the Movement for a short time, people saying "I'm just going to go and sit." and it sounded quite exclusive to me, like I wouldn't be able to sit.

Voices: [Laughter] Oh! Yes.

S: There's another one here.

Christabel: I must say, as a beginner, I really appreciated your tapes because every single one, a complete outsider could have listened to and known what you were on about, which you don't always get when you're ...

S: Mm. I think one has got to be very mindful of that and not just use jargon.

Sridevi: It's quite difficult to avoid. I hear people talking about LBC and I'm sure that nobody knows it. It's London Broadcasting Company. [Loud laughter]

Anne McMillan: Presumably, if they've got there, they'll have the sense to know.

S: I thought there was another example which I wasn't quite able to find. But anyway that is the sort of thing I have in mind.

Christabel: Yes. It is quite alienating actually to outside people.

S: Mm. I also had a go a Nagabodhi about what I call "English humour", which is not readily intelligible to people in foreign countries, certainly not in India.

Dhammadinnā: Something about wolfing down their breakfasts.

S: Wolfing down their peppers? Yes. He meant it sort of humorously-cum-ironically, but I think there is a strain of negativity there. But people in India would take that as you meant if as a deliberately derogatory comment. That they were swallowing their food greedily, not that it's a bit jocular. They don't have that sort of humour. You see what I mean? So one must bear in mind that too. So, "To set all sentient beings on the path of the good", that is to say, to be as positive as you possibly can in relation to people. To encourage them in positivity. This is the broadest way of looking at it. Be a source of encouragement and inspiration. Never be a wet blanket. Never be discouraging. Never be dispiriting.

Anne McMillan: I suppose it is making available as much as possible rather than going out, dragging people in off the streets, sort of thing.

S: Well, it's letting them know what is available.

Voices: Yes.

S: What the facilities are, what the possibilities are.

Anne McMillan: We talked about that the other day, about advertising. That is really another aspect that's important. That we actually do let people know that Centres exist, what happens in them.

S: Yes. Otherwise you are virtually keeping them to yourselves when they could be of use and value to so many more people.

Anne Norman: Yes, I think. when we first opened our shop, we didn't particularly say we were Buddhist or anything, but now it gradually it just comes out quite naturally in talking to people.

S: Mm. I think the same thing happened at Sukhavati. The locals came to know that we were Buddhists.

Voices: Yes.

S: In a natural way, they just accepted it. They didn't seem to think anything of it particularly.

Dhammadinnā: Sometimes that's a better way. I know if I work outside in an office or something and on the first day someone ... I have to say I'm a Buddhist, I find somehow they just shut off and then you have a barrier to communicating, whereas, if they have known me for three days [laughs] and then they discover I'm a Buddhist, they accept me as a human being. [Laughs].

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: ... and then they're interested.

Voices: Yes. [Many talking at once] Not after twelve years, like that other lady. [Laughter]

Dhammadinnā: Oh no! I only work in places a week at a time! [Loud laughter]

S: You haven't worked anywhere for twelve years, even twelve months!

Voice: Or less! [Laughter obscures words of speakers]

Dhammadinnā: Sometimes, you know, you don't want to lie, so you say quite early on that in that kind of encounter that you're a Buddhist, you can see their eyes glaze.

S: Well you don't usually announce your religion right at the beginning of an acquaintance, not in England anyway.

Dhammadinnā: Well if you work with people and they say, "Did you watch the telly last night?" So quite quickly it emerges that you live in a community, that you were at a meditation class and ...

S: Oh, yes.

Dhammadinnā: ... because that takes up so much of your life.

S: "What were you doing yesterday evening?" You have to say straight out "I was meditating". "You were what?" [laughter] Well at least that is familiar ground now, comparatively, isn't it, compared with even a few years ago. Its not so wildly eccentric. All right, let's go on to three.

"(iii) To consider a Bodhisattva who has formed an enlightened attitude as The Teacher, The Buddha, and to proclaim his virtues in the ten regions of the world."

S: Yes. One of the signs that you are a Bodhisattva is that you are overjoyed to meet another Bodhisattva.

Anne McMillan: I suppose even the fact that you recognise another Bodhisattva. [Laughter]

S: Yes. Yes. And that you rejoice in his merits and really proclaim them. We had a bit of an example of this when Subhuti was given his send-off, because Devamitra gave a speech which rejoiced in his merits to a quite superlative degree, so that Subhuti ended up almost covered with blushes. It was very genuinely meant by Devamitra and thoroughly agreed with, and agreed to, by everybody present. So that was very positive.

Anne McMillan: Does that mean Subhuti and Devamitra are both Bodhisattvas!

S: Oh, he didn't go as far as that! [Laughter] But he said he'd been a jolly good chairman anyway, and a jolly good friend. Yes.

Christabel: It takes one to recognise one. He was a good chairman for us.

S: Yes. Indeed.

Sridevi: I asked Subhuti if he'd enjoyed that. He said it was very embarrassing but very wonderful. [Laughter]

S: Yes. When he replied to this little speech, he said he felt very embarrassed. He said when he came to know that something had been planned, which wasn't till quite late actually, he really was dreading it. When he was actually in the midst of it, it wasn't so bad. [Pause] And "to proclaim his virtues in the ten regions of the world". You don't allow him to hide his light under a bushel. If people don't appreciate him, well, you sing his praises so that they do. [Pause] Right. Go on to four.

"(iv) To love all sentient beings without ever behaving meanly to them."

S: Yes. We've covered this ground to some extent already, haven't we? Here it says, "to love all sentient beings", that is to feel 'maitri', without ever behaving meanly to them. I mean, a Bodhisattva being mean with sentient beings is a bit like, you know, on another level, a mother being mean with her children. It's almost a contradiction in terms. All right, let's go on then to the next one.

"(i) The first negative quality means that if out of a deceiving attitude we tell lies to and cheat spiritual teachers, learned elders, instructors, donors [66a] and others who are worthy of worship, regardless of whether they hear these lies or not, feel flattered or not, are enhanced or humiliated and are deceived or not, the enlightened attitude is violated if this evil is not remedied within one hour. Its remedy is the first positive quality, namely to keep to the truth and never willingly tell a lie not even for the sake of our life."

S: Mm. So here, the two, the negative qualities and the positive qualities are brought together. But the new factor is, the new point is, that it must be remedied within the hour. In other words, if by any chance you do make any mistake or do go wrong, or are unskilful, especially within the context of the Bodhisattva life, the Bodhisattva Ideal, it is very important that you put it right very, very quickly. It says "within the hour". Perhaps that isn't to be taken completely literally, but very, very quickly. Don't delay: lose no time; because the longer you leave it, the worse it becomes, the more difficult it becomes to put it right. And if you do happen to tell a lie, to correct yourself within five minutes is relatively easy, but to correct yourself and to admit that you did in fact tell a lie after a week, or two weeks, or a month, or a year, is very difficult. It becomes more and more difficult. So put it right quickly, whatever goes wrong.

Anne McMillan: It's interesting, it says that the first positive quality is actually the remedy to the first negative quality ... it isn't enough just not to tell lies ...

S: Yes, right!

Anne McMillan: ... but you actually have to also ...

S: Yes. You could say that in the Mahayana there is no such thing as a purely negative virtue. You see what I mean? Every negative virtue is only the negative side of something that is positive. The abstention from something negative is only one side of the practice of something positive. Virtue is never merely negative in the Mahayana. It's not just a matter of abstaining from this or abstaining from that, from not doing this or not doing that, as sometimes it appears to be in the Hinayana. But in the Mahayana it doesn't even ever appear like that.

Anjali: When you say "appears", to be like that, is that because of the greater rigidity in ...

S: And also the fact that the terminology is often negative, and also that, in fact, there are a lot of negative precepts and you have to look rather for the positive ones, although they are there and the Hinayana itself, or the Theravada itself, tends to neglect them in favour of the more negative formulations.

Anne McMillan: I find it's helpful that we do the positive precepts in the Puja.

S: Ah.

Anne McMillan: Because it kind of shows another side.

S: Right, yes.

Anne McMillan: And, in a way, it's the more practical side almost.

S: Mm. Mm. I think it's probably psychologically impossible to practise a purely negative virtue. You can't really abstain from something negative, without getting some hold on the corresponding positive quality. I mean, can you really not tell a lie without actually speaking the truth? And the positive includes the negative, and the negative implies the positive.

Anne McMillan: It's just an easier way of looking at it, to have it stated. [Pause]

S: And in respect of the first negative quality, that is to say, the cheating and the lying, it still counts as a fault even if it isn't successful, because you've intended to lie, you've intended to cheat. So, irrespective of its success or failure, it is still a violation.

Anne McMillan: I think it does have an effect even if it didn't get back to the person. I think, on any level, if you tell a lie and even if it doesn't get back to that person, it could have set up a chain ...

S: Mm. That has an effect on you also. [Pause]. Right. Let's read two.

"(ii) The second negative quality is that the enlightened attitude is violated if, when you have caused, or even only tried to make, someone feel ashamed at the good done by another, you do not remedy it within an hour. Its remedy is the second positive quality the attempt to set all sentient beings on the path of the good and wholesome in general and of the Mahayana in particular."

S: What is this "someone feel ashamed at the good done by another"? It doesn't seem quite clear, does it?

Anne McMillan: Isn't it holding someone up, pointing to them and saying you should be like that?

S: You could look at it like that. We've got back to that old friend of yours, eh? BVM.

Dhammadinnā: G.U.I.L.T.

Anne McMillan: Oh, yes!

S: You see what I mean?

Anne McMillan: "You are not like that", not just "You should be like that", but "You are not like that!".

S: Yes, sometimes, you know, as it were, perhaps even unintentionally, make someone feel ashamed by holding up an ideal that they're only too conscious that they themselves know only too well they fall very far short of. Any other possible meaning? Or if the good has been done to them, make them feel ashamed by saying "Oh, you didn't deserve so much good."

Anne McMillan: Mm. By just constantly reminding them ...

S: Yes. I remember as a child, my sister and I were constantly being told by one of our aunts that we didn't deserve to have such good parents. We didn't believe her, fortunately. [Laughter].

Christabel: I'm afraid I was thinking of a really convoluted one, where you yourself feel ashamed that you did not think, or you didn't practise the good you saw someone else practising and so you try to drag somebody down with you so that you're not on your own in your shame.

S: Yes. Sometimes people do. It seems quite straightforward actually, though unfortunately so.

Sridevi: Could it also mean belittling somebody, somebody's virtues instead of rejoicing in them?

S: Yes, yes. It includes that, though here the crucial point is that you make somebody feel ashamed on account of the good done by some other person.

Dhammadinnā: That quite often happens in families, doesn't it? Children are played off against one another.

S: Yes. Right.

Dhammadinnā: It happened a lot in my family.

S: I remember a woman telling me about this years and years ago, someone I knew in Kalimpong, she was about fifty-five at that time. She'd had a very unhappy childhood and she said her elder sister was the beauty of the family and her mother's favourite. She said her mother disliked her so much that if she, that is the woman who was telling me all about this, planted some flowers her mother would pull them up. And she said when her brother was killed during the war, that is the First World War, when her mother got the news of it, she said "It is a pity it wasn't you, we

could have spared you."

Voice: How awful!

S: So, you know ...

Dhammadinnā: That must have affected her whole life.

S: Yes! And I could see that this had embittered this woman's whole life, and she was then fifty-five. And this was her own mother treating her in this way. The mother favoured the other sister and the brother so much in comparison with this daughter, it seemed extraordinary! So when it's your own mother, well, it must have very serious repercussions indeed! So I could understand, well, after she told me of this, I could understand why she was sometimes bitter and unhappy and so on. And she died unfortunately, some time later as a result of an accident, but I was really pleased that six months before she died she became a Buddhist and those last six months of her life were clearly the happiest she had ever experienced.

Voices: Mm.

Ulla/Suzannah?: My father has had a, well, not that strong, but, his mother has never loved him. Well, they were twins, his brother and him and you can really see it in him, he is quite unable to love anybody and really very unbalanced.

S: Mm. Mm. This woman had difficulty getting on with other people. Though strangely, she got on very well with all my young students. Yes. She like them, she used to invite them to tea and all that sort of thing, all the Nepalese and Tibetan students. But it was only the last six months of her life that she was able to feel happy and positive. At least she, so to speak, died happily. But she had had fifty-five years of comparative unhappiness.

Dhammadinnā: Presumably she was made to feel guilty for being alive.

S: I suppose so. She used to pick her face a lot, perhaps that was symptomatic. I knew somebody else who used to do that. Not anybody present [Laughter]

CONTINUITY BREAK IN SUBJECT. TEA BREAK DISCUSSION.

[Subject is discussion of some text involving Christmas Humphries.]

S: It's just a slightly different philosophy with meditation added all right. You've got all the beautiful ritual, the robes and the rest of it, just as in Catholicism. You see what I mean. So, yes, I am sure that many English Buddhists were attracted to Theravada because of its negativity or apparent negativity; to Zen because of its apparent irrationality and iconoclasm; and to Tibetan Buddhism for its apparent resemblance to

Catholicism.

Voices: Mm. Yes.

Sridevi: He says they identify the Buddhist ethics with "ahimsa", that that was all, and being vegetarian.

S: Mm. Well this isn't altogether correct because when I arrived in Britain, the majority of Buddhists were not vegetarian. It was very noticeable at the Summer School, the majority were non-vegetarians and vegetarians were rather scorned by the powers-that-be of the *Buddhist Society*. They were a bit of a joke. [Pause] Many Theosophists, of course, were vegetarians and perhaps he's mixing them up a bit because there were sort of Buddhist Theosophists and theosophically minded Buddhists and so on. But Mr Humphries isn't a vegetarian and never has been. He is supposedly both a Buddhist and a Theosophist.

Sridevi: He mentions the influence of Theosophy and then he says Mahayana and Zen came during the World War.

S: Mm. I think it's quite out of date. It doesn't come right down to the present, does it? How far does it come?

Sridevi: Ah. There's a sort of vague paragraph in the end saying that there's a subtle influence through the mass media in Britain, of Buddhism on everything, more than other countries, because of its history.

S: Ah. Could be.

Sridevi: Would you agree with that?

S: To some extent perhaps. I mean at this Conference in Paris, the impression that people from other European countries got, Buddhists from other European countries got, was that Buddhism was very strong in Britain in the sense that it has been quite widely diffused with many little groups, far more than in any European country. But perhaps there is a very thin - I'd say thin rather than subtle - diffusion. A lot of distorted ideas about Buddhism are quite widespread.

Voices: Mm.

S: It doesn't say anything about the FWBO does it?

Sridevi: I think he wrote this manuscript, ah ...

S: I think it is quite old. It sounds about fifteen or twenty years old.

Voices: Yes.

Sridevi: Maybe around the Second World War.

S: One wonders why they published it, in a way.

Sridevi: Well, he's just died and ...

S: Oh, I see.

Voice: Who's just died.

Voice: Evans-Wentz.

S: He wrote a book about Buddhism and Communism, didn't he?

Voice: Is Lama Govinda's group quite strong in Germany?

S: Apparently not. Lokamitra was quite surprised how small it was. It's been established much longer than the FWBO. Lokamitra said, because he stayed with the head of the Order. [He was an old friend of mine from my Indian days, that is Abhayavajra, Dr. Godman.] Lokamitra said there weren't more than about forty of their members and they were mostly older people and they were socially quite conservative. They met periodically, but they had no permanent centres or regular activities, nor anything like a community or a co-op. They all lived at home with their families.

Voice: Where was the house, the country house where they had retreats.

S: You don't mean the house of the Still?

Voice: Yes.

S: That doesn't belong to the Aryamaitreya Mandala, it belongs to a trust which I believe is now managed by some Sinhalese Buddhists. I think other Buddhist groups can hire it, so they probably hire it too. But they don't seem to have any place of their own, so they are very much smaller. I mean I was, until Lokamitra went, I was under the impression that they were pretty much in Germany as we are here. But Lokamitra said, not at all, they were much smaller than you'd expect and much less active. And with very few young people. [Pause] You know Dr. Godman must be about sixty-five to seventy. I knew him in India. He was in Ahmedabad in charge of a hospital there and I, of course, used to visit Ahmedabad, so I got to know him. And his son, who is also now a doctor and a Buddhist, spent some time with me in Kalimpong and his

wife was also a doctor and also a Buddhist. But they've separated now and he has another wife, a much younger woman from India, a Gujerati, who seems also to be quite interested in Buddhism. We've kept up regular correspondence over the years and Lokamitra has been to see him, and stayed with him about two and a half years ago; had a very pleasant evening and found out all about the Aryamaitreya Mandala.

Voice: I think Lama Govinda was there himself.

S: No. He has been in the United States for about two years now. He seems to have shifted there permanently.

End of tea break end of side 2

Tape 6

S: All right. Let's go on to three then.

"(iii) The third negative quality is out of spite to speak about the faults of anyone who has formed an enlightened attitude. Whether you discuss some defect in his manners or appearance, or talk about one of his faults secretly, openly or in your imagination, civilly or rudely, audibly or inaudibly and with or without enjoyment, the enlightened attitude is violated if this evil is not remedied within one hour. Its remedy is the third positive quality, namely, to consider a Bodhisattva who has adopted an enlightened attitude as The Buddha himself [66b] and to try to make his virtues known in the ten regions of the world."

S: Mm. The main point is first of all that it is "out of spite", you see what I mean, that you speak in that way. But it is also an offence if you speak in that way, in a manner of speaking, only in your imagination, and even if you do it politely! That doesn't help you, that doesn't save you. Well you know there are some people who can be very, very vicious, as it were, with complete coolness and politeness, eh! Or do you not know this?

Christabel: Politicians.

S: Yes, there's a sort of suave venom, as it were. The politeness doesn't save you, eh! "With or without enjoyment". You may not actually take pleasure in it, but it can nonetheless be spiteful and to that extent, an offence.

Anjali: Does that include sarcasm?

S: I think yes! I think things like sarcasm and cynicism are quite unpleasant negative qualities. If you speak sarcastically about another Bodhisattva, yes, I think sarcasm is only negative, it cannot be positive. Mm. Mm? [Laughter] And cynicism. I've sometimes spoken at length about cynicism, that there's sometimes been quite a bit of it here and there in "the Friends" and I think it's quite unpleasant, quite unskilful. I usually jump on it whenever I encounter it. I think you know what I mean, eh?

Voices: Mm.

S: Cynicism is not quite the right sort of word, but if you encounter it, you know what I mean, eh?

Sridevi: It becomes habitual it seems, a manner.

S: Put it in this way. It's a negative jocularly.

Voices: Mm!

S: Ah! Now do you know what I'm talking about.

Voices: Mm.

S: Yes. A negative jocularly.

Sridevi: You know, sometimes I feel, you know, people laugh, but there's this negativity in the atmosphere ...

S: Yes.

Sridevi: ... you can feel it.

S: Mm. It's something connected with this I think. There were two or three people very prone to this, I won't mention any names, but I used to get at them repeatedly. In the end they got so tired of being got at, that they gave it up, more or less. But it is really quite unpleasant.

Anne McMillan: You don't think there could be such a thing as healthy cynicism?

S: No! [Laughter]

Dhammadinnā: Good try!

S: Perhaps a healthy scepticism, but not a healthy cynicism.

Anne McMillan: I think that is what I meant.

S: "Cynicism" is the attitude of reducing everything to its lowest common denominator, or its lowest factor. You see what I mean?

Anne McMillan: I think I was thinking of "scepticism", then, because I think sometimes it's not exactly wariness, but I think sometimes in life people can be quite gullible.

S: That's true.

Anne McMillan: And it's quite good not to be gullible, but I suppose that it doesn't necessarily mean to be cynical.

S: No. That doesn't mean you must be cynical. "Cynicism" means attributing, unjustifiably, low motives to somebody. Maybe someone gives some money for some cause, and you say "Ah, I suppose he only did it for the sake of the name and fame". That's cynicism. You can't believe that he did it out of generosity. You attribute a low motive.

Anne McMillan: I think I had a different idea of what I thought cynicism was.

S: Well, "cynicism" is a rather vague term. It comes from Greek philosophy originally. "The Cynics" from "Caenae" meaning "a dog", you see what I mean? So the cynics were those who chose to live like dogs. That is to say, without observing any of the normal human conventions. In other words they thought that to live like a dog was more real and more truthful, because that was what human beings were really like. They were "doggy". So it's this sort of "doggy" view of humanity, that there are no higher human qualities, so to speak. So that if anybody appears to act out of higher human qualities, that is not true. They are not so doing. They are acting out of these "doggy" qualities. It's all a matter of greed and sex and competitiveness. There cannot be anything positive and truly human in it.

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: I think, don't people sometimes come to have an attitude like that because they have been repeatedly knocked back? I mean, perhaps they had quite high ideals at one time.

S: It could be. Very often the cynics are the disappointed sentimentalists, or even idealists.

Anne McMillan: Oh! Sentimentalists?

S: Well, you could say idealists, but I think they are sentimentalists too. You start off a bit starry-eyed and then you become cynical perhaps. In other words your idealism isn't perhaps a very real idealism. Real idealism should be sensible and down-to-earth at the same time.

Anne McMillan: That makes sense.

S: So what I was talking about before was not exactly cynicism, it was something subtly different which I expressed by saying that it is "negative jocularly".

Anjali: That's very common in the world today.

S: Is it? That's an unfortunate thing.

Anjali: Just ... ah ... I was thinking of a film. I haven't seen it, but I imagine there's quite a lot of that in the film "*Life of Brian*".

S: Negative jocularly. I've only seen one of these Monty Python films. I was taken to see it while I was at Muswell Hill and the two friends who took me to see it had apparently seen it on TV when it was a serial before it was made into a film for the cinema and they assured me I shouldn't miss it. It was really brilliant and up-to-date. So I went along to see it with great expectations. I thought it dreadful! I thought it really sick. It seemed to take delight in, and make a joke of, violence and bloodshed. I just couldn't see the humour of that, really. But I think I wouldn't call that negative jocularly. That verges on sadism I think, which is worse.

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: Don't you think that kind of thing, not specifically that film, but that kind of thing is sometimes quite good at, well, just making people look at things, knocking them out of their complacency somehow?

S: I think it knocks them into complacency!

Anne McMillan: Well, how do you ...

S: For instance, I... in the course of this film, right at the beginning, you see an ordinary sort of country scene. There's a few people and suddenly **Wham!** Someone throws a bomb and all of the people are blown to bits and everybody in the audience laughs, Ha! Ha! Ha!. It's such great fun. It's such a great joke. I was quite just shocked, in my naivety. I didn't think it funny at all, but they were just rolling in the aisles, as it were, it was so funny, they thought. I didn't! I don't think anyone was shocked out of their complacency, they seemed to be reinforced in it, in some way; that this wasn't happening to them anyway, so they could sit back in their comfortable seats and enjoy it.

Christabel: I think you are absolutely right about that, stereotyping complacency. I remember there was a sketch about civil servants, making them look ridiculous. A lot of people think that civil servants are ridiculous, but they don't do anything about it, so they let the screen people do it for them and they can sit back and say they've been debunked on my behalf.

S: Yes. Right. As though that is an actual positive step, but really it isn't.

Christabel: The status quo is still there.

S: It's like what we were talking about this morning, I think. It's just a sort of dreaming. Instead of doing something, you dream. The dream is the substitute for action. If you really feel all that strongly about the bungling and inefficiency of civil servants, well, start a movement to correct it. Don't just make a film taking it off.

Voices: Mm.

S: It's as though the film is just a sort of safety-valve in a quite negative sort of way, because it precludes action.

Christabel: Let's you off the hook.

S: Let's you off the hook! It gives you the illusion of having done something, or struck some blow for some cause, when actually you've not done anything at all.

Sridevi: People who make those films and things like that, they think of themselves as great benefactors to society.

S: Right!

Sridevi: ... they are more subtle, they can show you what's wrong, but ...?

S: Mm. It's self-indulgent.

Ulla/Suzannah?: I haven't seen the film, "*Life of Brian*". It may make Christianity seem harmless and funny, you don't have to do anything about it. Totally harmless.

S: Mm. Mm. Anyway, we are hoping to see the film when it comes to the provinces. [Laughter] We couldn't get it in in London. Who has seen "*Life of Brian*"?

Dhammadinnā: It's been really booked up in London.

Voice: I haven't seen any of the Monty Python films.

Anne McMillan: I heard a couple of reports from people who have seen it. Last week, actually. They were mainly disappointed because it wasn't blasphemous enough, you know. [Laughs]

S: Well, there's a bit of a take-off of your friend, BVM [Laughter] You'll enjoy that bit, anyway. Apparently she screeches at the top of her voice!

Voices: [... so you've got an improvement...right...]

S: The Catholic books sometimes put BVM instead of spelling it out in full, **Blessed Virgin Mary**. The feast of the BVM. [Laughter]

Dhammadinnā: We'll have to make a film about BVM and send her up! [Laughter]

S: All right. Come on to four then.

"(iv) The fourth negative quality is committing frauds with intent to deceive any sentient being. Whether the individual concerned observes it or not, or is harmed by it or not, the enlightened attitude is violated if it is not remedied within one hour. Its remedy is the fourth positive quality, namely, to love sentient beings. In other words, to have the intention and desire to confer benefits on others without thinking of our own advantage."

S: Mm. You can see now each positive quality does remedy the corresponding negative quality. Again, "if not remedied within one hour." It's just the urgency of the whole situation, how quickly you need to put something right if it has gone wrong. Especially, perhaps, in your communication with other people.

Anne McMillan: Presumably by "committing frauds" it means any action which isn't coming from the basis of true ...

S: Yes. Any kind of deception, trickery.

Anjali: Where it says, "Whether the individual concerned observes it or not". Does that mean whether it is discovered or not?

S: Yes. I think so. Yes. Whether it is seen or not. The intention is what counts. [Pause]

Anjali: Then if you do have any of these intentions, and you have been born without.... you actually having the ability to tell lies, then it's just ...

S: The ability to ... ?

Anjali: ... to tell lies.

S: Ah! Yes.

Anjali: ... then it's just the conditioning of this life-time, that you've got to deal with?

S: Yes. Yes. Perhaps some people are even born with the conditioning to tell lies but it doesn't seem so. It's more the child, every child does seem to be born relatively truthful, compared with adults anyway, but perhaps the degree of inner resistance to subsequent conditioning does differ, does vary very much. Some children can be taught to tell lies quite quickly. They pick it up quite quickly and quite happily. Others seem to be very reluctant and don't like the idea at all. I'm sure none of you, those who have children, tries to teach them to tell lies.

Srimala: No. But they do pick it up. I mean, I'm sort of thinking, I'm sure I haven't taught them this, but I mean, I know ... well ...

S: There's also the question of creating a situation in which lying becomes inevitable. There's also that. You see what I mean?

Voices: Yes.

S: If you create a situation of conflict which the child can resolve in the resolution only by telling a lie, then, to some extent, you are responsible.

Srimala: Yes.

S: For instance, if you tell the child, "You are not on any account to go and touch that jam, Mummy will be very angry if you touch it.", but then you leave the cupboard open and subsequently you say, "Did you touch that jam!?", so you're almost asking the child to tell a lie. [Laughter] You see what I mean? You have to be careful not to create the situations in which, for the child, lying becomes virtually inevitable as a means of survival or technique of survival.

Voices: Mm.

Anne McMillan: Or possibly even having the expectations in a certain kind of way is creating the situation.

S: Yes, yes. Well here the expectation is that good little girls, if they're told not to touch the jam, they don't, even if the cupboard door is wide open.

Karola: It's interesting how many parents actually do say that, you know. There was a little boy who came ... and I've caught myself slipping into that ... I was quite shaken by it. "I should be a good girl" Putting qualities on to others.

S: Mm. Because you always say "good" in a certain sort of way, not that you're a very good child, it's not like that, but "You're a good little boy", or you're a good little girl." It's more like that. "Go and fetch Mummy the whatever it is like a good little girl." I suppose it's very easy to slip into this instead of just saying "Just go and get that for Mummy".

Anne McMillan: There's even subtler things like unspoken expectations that you're just aware of.

S: Oh dear, you're making it sound really difficult. It probably is. [Laughter] Sometimes the way that Mummy looks will convey so much in the way of expectation. Mm.

Anne McMillan: I was just thinking. I mean there were certain things that I knew my mother presumed, or that one's parents presume from you, that you either have to make a stance against or you're lying.

S: Sometimes it is very difficult to make a stand against something unspoken, just because it is unspoken. It hasn't come out into the open.

Anne McMillan: So you can't say, "No, I disagree".

S: Yes. You're not even given anything concrete to disagree with.

Anne McMillan: It isn't just parents, it's like there's certain presumptions in life.

S: Yes.

Anne McMillan: Actually ...

S: Especially in social life.

Anne McMillan: In social life, certain conditional attitudes, certain social modes of conduct that you're presumed to conform to and if you don't, you ...

S: Well, it isn't too bad when they're just neutral conventions which have got no particular ethical significance, but sometimes they do have such significance, and you're going along therefore with certain ethical or pseudo-ethical attitudes you don't really agree with. I mean, I've had one or two friends in the past, who used to say to me things like, "Well of course I'm sure that a man of your understanding will agree that ...!" [Laughter] You see what I mean? So you always have to say, "Well, no, I am not a man of understanding, and I disagree." [laughter] You see what I mean.

Karola: It's like a complicity.

S: Yes, complicity.

Dhammadinnā: Any right thinking person would ...

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: That's the latest one, isn't it ... would think so-and-so.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: I think there are quite big areas, actually, where sometimes you have to actually lie about things. [Loud laughter]

S: Oh dear! We seem to have a cuckoo in the nest.

Anne McMillan: I'm thinking for example about sexuality.

S: But do you have to lie? I mean, yes, there's a pressure to lie ...

Anne McMillan: Well, you don't have to lie, but to have an easy life ...

S: ... there's a pressure to lie from society. This is why I said it's important there should be at least one area, namely the spiritual community, within which there is no pressure to be untruthful, however untruthful you may have to be outside, or at least you feel you have to be.

Christabel: But actually, the more involved you are with the Sangha, the more likely it is to get the opportunity to remedy it within one hour.

S: That's true! Yes! Indeed! Yes. At least there will be someone around "within the hour". If not the person you have actually offended, at least somebody else that you can confess to. I really think it is extremely important that there are at least a small number of people, at least four or five people with whom you can feel you can be completely open, or at least one or two. Even that is a tremendous help. At least somebody with whom you don't have to hold anything back.

Voice: It's quite liberating.

S: Right! Indeed! To whom you can say anything and still have that complete acceptance. It doesn't matter what you say. Not that they will, as I said before, not that they will necessarily always agree with you, but they will accept you nonetheless. They might even argue and disagree, but the acceptance is there all the same.

Anne McMillan: Presumably that's actually one of the criteria of a spiritual community.

S: It's one of the criteria certainly, yes. There's that complete trust and mutual confidence and openness and honesty. It is quite a rare thing, unfortunately, in the world!

Anne McMillan: Because, in this area that we are talking about, it would be a group thing. If you felt you couldn't be totally honest, it would probably be because of a group element.

S: Yes. Well, in the case of a group you know that you cannot really give expression to anything which goes against the group norms without being rejected by the group.

Voices: Mm.

S: That you go along with the group norms is the condition of membership, otherwise you are expelled! And this is why you are afraid to be open within the context of the group. You can't be truly open. You can only be open about those matters which do not transgress the norms of the group and about which the group is prepared to forgive you.

Voice: Right.

S: But within the spiritual community there is no such limit. The spiritual community will forgive you anything, so to speak, if there is anything, in fact, to be forgiven. [Pause] Within the context of the spiritual community you can even say something like, "I doubt my own membership of the spiritual community." You can even say that! And the fact that you can say it means that actually, even though you say you that are doubting, you are re-affirming your membership of the spiritual community by showing that degree of trust, yes. Or say, within the residential spiritual community you say, "Well, I really feel like leaving sometimes." Well, if you can say it like that, there is a greater chance that actually, you are going to stay.

Voices: Mm.

S: If you can't say it, if you keep it to yourself, chances are, you will leave sooner or later.

Voices: Mm.

S: But I think one of the worst things that society does, especially nowadays, and in the West especially, is just to encourage people to tell lies, to make it so difficult to be open in one's communication.

Anne McMillan: It seems to be true of a whole sort of spectrum of issues from the smallest, almost insignificant issue, right up to something which could fundamentally affect your lifestyle.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: It's quite frightening.

S: Well, there are even some things that people sort of tacitly agree never to talk about, never to mention, there's a sort of unspoken agreement that those things just don't exist, and nobody, no one who is sort of in this unspoken sort of conspiracy ever mentions.

Sridevi: If you function in that way all your life, well, you can't live in a spiritual community really. It's like you're undoing it constantly, creating the courage to actually be truthful.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: And by tacit agreement not to talk about things, that's a lie of ...

S: Well, that means sort of short-charging on the truth, because truthfulness really means to be completely truthful, completely open, not keeping anything back, not anything that is relevant to the actual situation.

Anne McMillan: And most of the things that are tacitly agreed not to speak about are quite important things.

S: Oh, yes! Otherwise perhaps there wouldn't be this close conspiracy.

Anne McMillan: It's the taboos.

S: Yes. Like you're supposed to love your parents. I mean you wouldn't dare to say within the family circle that sometimes you really hated your parents. People would be scandalised. There is a sort of understanding that everybody shall love their parents and say that they love their parents.

Christabel: That's one of those expectations that I was talking about. That's the expectation that the parent puts on the child, that they will love them.

S: In some ways it is a reasonable expectation if it's just not insisted upon. It can be taken for granted as it were, unless something has gone seriously wrong, but not to be insisted upon, "Don't you love Mummy?", because, actually, the very small child doesn't because it's still completely selfish. Love will come later when there is an awareness of the mother or father as an individual and a feeling of gratitude and warmth and so on. A young child cannot possibly be anything but selfish, especially a little baby. So to train up the child to pretend love, or to express love without actually feeling it is a terrible thing. And sometimes parents do that. And if it isn't towards the parents, well "Don't you love Granny?", or "Don't you love Auntie?", and it's all that sort of thing.

Anne McMillan: I distinctly remember being told once about a cousin that I was having a small fracas, a small argument with, that "Of course she's nice, she's your cousin!".

S: Ah!

Anne McMillan: I couldn't see that as a criteria. Cousin? I couldn't see how that was relevant at all. [Laughter] "Of course she's nice, she's your cousin!".

S: Mm. You have to think that she's nice because she is your cousin.

Anne McMillan: Of course you like her! [Laughs]

S: Of course you like her. Yes. Of course you like the new baby, etc., etc. Well, you may hate the new baby, and want to tip it out of its cradle. [Laughter] Oh, yes, older children do.

Anne Murphy: When I saw my brother, Bhante, I was absolutely appalled by him, you know. I really thought he was disgusting.

S: Yes. Yes.

Anne Murphy: He was in such a mess, you know, it was really sad.

S: He was a supplanter also. It's almost as though, in some circumstances, the family represents a sort of conspiracy against honesty. So many families have got skeletons in the cupboard. The cupboards are full of skeletons. Not even that - skeletons under the bed, skeletons behind the stove and behind the door! All sorts of things which just aren't mentioned. You're treading on eggs all the time.

Christabel: Dodie Smith wrote a play called "*Dear Octopus*" about the family, its constricting nature and its tentacles strangling you.

S: Ah! That's what it's all about. I wondered what that title was, "Dear Octopus". Mm. Anyway we have actually come to the end, so just look back over what we have done, you know, this week. Just look through your notes perhaps and see whether there is anything that needs a bit of further treatment. [Pause]

Christabel: Actually, there's something out of today's work, Bhante. Section three, on page 146.

S: A hundred and ?

Christabel: Forty-six, the last page we've done. This negative quality, I think it has been brought home to me particularly since I've been in the Friends, about the difference between gossip and right speech.

S: Ah! Mm.

Christabel: And things that I would have passed as allowable before, I find are not acceptable.

S: Well, I think conversation very easily turns into gossip, which is not simply trivial talk about other people, but unkind, almost deliberately unkind talk, without any restraint or mindfulness.

Voices: Mm.

S: Yes. What one Indian teacher once called lingual diarrhoea. Not a very pleasant expression, but quite expressive. I mean, talk about other people by all means, but praise them more. I think there is almost a reluctance to do this. Dwell on their good qualities and let them be known.

Anne McMillan: I think you've said something like this before about heroes.

S: Mm?

Anne McMillan: It seems we are a bit unwilling to have heroes.

S: Ah! Right, yes.

Anne McMillan: It seem to tie in ...

S: It's connected with the pseudo-egalitarianism. You want to reduce everybody to the same level. You don't like the idea that there's anybody to whom you can look up to. [Pause, with coughing, sniffing etc.]

S: How's your cold?

Dhammadinnā: Doing quite nicely.

S: Sounds like it!

Dhammadinnā: [Unclear] ... sleep better.

Anne McMillan: You know, earlier during the discussion about one of the points you told a wee story about your friend who picked her face.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: Do you think ...? I am not sure how to put this. I'm not quite sure what I want to ask. It's something about physical manifestations of emotional states of mind. Do you think there's, er, I don't mean things like colds, [laughter], or kidney complaints or anything like that. I mean more directly, say like being overweight [laughter] or something like that?

S: Or underweight. With regard to the face-picking which I've observed in several people, I think, as far as I remember all women, it seems in all the cases I can recollect, to indicate a sort of unconscious making themselves ugly because they didn't like themselves. This is what I thought.

Dhammadinnā: When you say "face-picking", do you mean "spot-picking"?

S: Yes. They sort of had spots to begin with and they made matters worse by constantly picking them so that they just bled, and their face was just covered with these bleeding spots. And knowing these women, it did seem that they did this because they were just sort of disfiguring themselves. They didn't like themselves.

Anne Norman: I used to know a guy who used to keep a penknife in his pocket and used to chop his hands up. He used to sit in the pub and sort of cut himself.

Dhammadinnā: It sounds like a very extreme thing.

S: Mm. Oh dear! That sounds like much the same thing. Mm.

Anne McMillan: Yes. I mean, it seems, yes, I suppose it's just this inability to accept oneself.

S: Mm.

Anne McMillan: Or ...

S: Well, as regards physical manifestations as ultimately sort of psychological and emotional in origin, there's a great range of manifestations. It's being more and more recognised that there is a sort of psychosomatic element in many so-called illnesses or complaints. I'm not sure about things like being overweight or underweight, because it is, to some extent glandular, so they say. It's connected with one's metabolism, but then again, do those things not connect up, eh?

Voices: Mm.

S: You see what I mean? So if we were completely sound mentally, then would we not perhaps, be completely sound physically, as the Greeks seem to have been?

Voices: Mm.

S: So wouldn't it be sort of "mens sana in corpore sano", um? I mean the Bodhisattva in the scriptures is always described as well-built etc., etc.

Voices: Mm.

S: What is this illness that young women sometimes suffer from when they won't eat anything?

Voices: Anorexia.

S: Yes. So that is clearly psychosomatic isn't it? I think that's understood now.

Dhammadinnā: I had that when I was a child.

S: Did you? I mean, what is the cause as far as you've understood?

Dhammadinnā: I was quite young. It's usually a teenage thing. I think I was about ten. I think I was not getting enough attention in the family situation, which had other factors involved in it. That's how it manifested. I got over it quite quickly. I was being treated by a sensible GP. I mean you just cannot eat, it's not that you are starving, you just cannot get the food down you. It's strange.

S: It's as though the food corresponds to the affection, as it were.

Dhammadinnā: Something like that.

S: And you're not getting it, mm.

Dhammadinnā: There was competition with my brother. Sometimes it seems to be more common in women and I think it's young women.

S: Mm. We did touch on this, I'm not sure in this group or the other, whether women are more, as it were, sensitive to lack of affection or even perhaps have a greater need for it than men. Perhaps there is that possibility.

Dhammadinnā: I think that this particular complaint was that I didn't actually want to grow up and be a woman.

Voices: Yes.

S: You didn't want!

Dhammadinnā: That's a common thing there, I didn't know what I was feeling at that age anyway.

S: You didn't want?

Dhammadinnā: That's a common factor apparently in that kind of illness, you know, the desire to halt your growth and not develop.

Christabel: Well actually, one of the first things that happens is that you stop ovulating.

Voices: Yes.

S: Mm. Mm.

Dhammadinnā: There is a fear of womanhood ...

S: Right, yes.

Dhammadinnā: ... for various reasons.

S: Mm. Well you get that with some men, but it doesn't seem to manifest in the same sort of way. They just sort of don't grow up, there don't seem to be any particular physical manifestation. It doesn't seem to manifest in the same sort of way. They stay a bit Peter Pan-like.

Voices: Mm.

S: I think the sort of overall expectation is that the more mentally healthy you become, the more physically healthy you also become within your own constitutional limits. Mm?

Voices: Mm.

S: And I think one notices this within the Friends. People tend, as they get emotionally more positive, to look physically better and more healthy. One notices this, this is quite noticeable in fact.

Karola: I've just thought, I haven't had a cold since I've been involved with the friends. [Laughter]

S: It clearly isn't because you've lived in luxurious communities with central heating. [Laughter]

Christabel: That whole question of pain is subjective, in a very fascinating and untrod path way. The same thing afflicted to one person will create quite different symptoms.

S: It's interesting. Some years ago, I knew a woman who had various problems and she came to see me one day. She tends to be a "reading" sort of woman and she was looking round my bookcases and she made a bee-line for one book. She said "Oh could I borrow this book, I would like to read it?" So I looked at it and the title of the book was "The Theology of the Pain of God".

S: Oh, no!

S: So this told you something about this person. It was this particular book attracted her!

[End of side one side two]

S: ... That's just reminded me of something. I never got that book back! [Laughter] I know that woman returned it, but it subsequently went down, I put it in the Order Library, it went down to Aryatara. I've not got it back. Now, I don't know if there's any masochist around Purley, but I must look into that! [Loud laughter]. "The Theology of the Pain of God" - it's written by a Japanese Christian.

Dhammadinnā: How did you come by it? [Laughter]

S: Well how! Somebody gave it to me. They thought I ought to read it. Which I did. I took it to be a sort of Christian Japanese, nationalistic rationalisation of their suffering due to the atom bomb.

Dhammadinnā: Ah!

S: To try to give it some sort of meaning, that it meant ... the trend of the theology, or the trend of the book was that the Japanese, or the Japanese Christians are the leading Christians in the world because the Japanese have had the privilege of having the atom bomb and therefore in their national life, sort of imitating the suffering of God, i.e. Christ himself. So therefore Japanese Christianity is in the forefront of world Christianity and is leading. This was roughly what it said. You see what I mean? Mm. Not saying, "We suffered because of our foolish, nationalistic militarism", but to try to turn it in that sort of way.

Anne McMillan: It sounds like a self-complacent attitude.

S: Well, in a way one finds Christians doing this and identifying the sufferings that they've brought on themselves due to their foolishness, with the suffering of Christ and therefore trying to give some sort of pseudo-value to it. I've known people like this, yes. I mean, a friend of mine in India, who had a bit of a sort of Messiah-complex, used to say, "People are so bad, all these people that I know and my own pupils, they are so unreliable" and, "The world is like this, they always do this, they are very disobedient, they don't write the letters that you tell them to write and if you tell them to cook rice, they don't cook it, they cook something else." he said, "And they crucified Christ". [Laughter] That is how he used to go on. All this was connected in his mind, that he was a great martyr and a great sufferer. I think this sort of mysticism of pain and suffering can be quite dangerous. Anyway, we don't want to get back on that track. [Pause]

Sridevi: I was thinking yesterday, we talked about purification, like encouraging the Bodhichitta to arise, would you say that is like a constant purification process?

S: Well, yes, one can not exactly equate the two, but purification surely is an aspect of the arising of the Bodhichitta as a purification from all selfishness and all self-oriented spiritual ideals. So one can look at it in terms of purification.

Sridevi: Like the positive precepts are like the Mahayana way of looking at ethics?

S: Mm.

Sridevi: Is that why we do the two?

S: Well, it's a purification ... the Hinayana ethic represents purification in a quite individualistic sense, but the Mahayana conception of purification is purification from individualism itself. It does sort of strike me, incidentally this is by the way, that the three of you could well perhaps translate these chapters that we have done.

Voices: Mm.

S: Mm. They do sort of ... they are sort of independent, so to speak, if you know what I mean.

Voices: [Murmurs]

S: You could consider it, even though you are busy. It shouldn't be too difficult, since you've gone through it in detail. Even though you ... in a way, it would be a translation of a translation, but if you weren't very literal, that probably wouldn't matter.

Voice: Yes.

S: If you try to bear in mind the Buddhist idioms behind some of the English ones, and not be misled by Guenther's rather unusual translations and know that when he talks about "appreciative understanding" he's talking about 'prajna' for instance. And translate 'prajna' directly into Finnish without going through his translation.

Ulla/Suzannah?: You mean we should get all the Sanskrit?

S: Mm. Yes. Right. As far as that can be reconstructed. Sometimes it is clear that "yeshe" does mean 'jnana', that "sherab" is 'prajna'. Sometimes you are given those terms in the notes or in brackets. But anyway, that is just by the way, since you all are indefatigable translators. [Pause] We've done "Love and Compassion", we've done "The Training in an Enlightened Attitude", so, I mean, are you left with any sort of overall impression from what we've studied?

Anne McMillan: The basic importance of mettā.

S: The basic importance of mettā. Ah! It sometimes surprises me that there's so little of it around. I mean, I'm not talking just about the Friends, but about the world, that people aren't more positive towards one another. In a way, it seems surprising. I think I touched on this didn't I?

Voices: Mm.

S: It seems so silly that people are not. It also means, I think again this was touched upon, that forgiveness is important, because when you are living with people especially, you can't help treading on one another's toes. There may not be necessarily the intention of doing so, and you may be even full of positive goodwill, but there is such a thing as ignorance, you do make mistakes, so when you do sort of tread on one another's toes, well, there just has to be that mutual forgiveness, otherwise, as I've said in the aphorism, you can't live together.

Christabel: When we were talking about Christianity the other day I just kept thinking well, God doesn't have any mettā because his stuff is all conditional.

S: Mm. Mm. You could say that.

Voice: Papist! [Laughter]

Christabel: It's rather like the mother and the child thing again isn't it? If God didn't have any and the Christian teaching is responsible for the social upbringing and the social conditioning of lots of people, it's really not surprising that he didn't have any.

S: Yes. Mm.

Anne McMillan: You said just now, you're surprised that there isn't more mettā, you said not just in the Friends ...

S: Well, I meant in the world in general among human beings.

Anne McMillan: I just wondered if you were ...

S: There is more in the Friends than there usually is outside, but not nearly enough! [Pause] I think you also need space and sometimes people are rather short of space. I mean if you've got others impinging on you too much or crowding you too much, it's difficult to feel positive towards them isn't it? The natural tendency is to push them away. You may not actually hate or dislike them but you are pushing them away, and in a sense, you may need to, if you need a little space around you before you can fill it with mettā.

Anjali: From that point of view do you think there is more mettā in somewhere like New Zealand?

S: Oh. No, I think mettā is a bit different from ordinary, human, gregarious positivity. No. The New Zealanders are certainly easy-going, but I think there is... well a lot of the sort of positivity is ... suggests that the senses are reasonably gratified. I don't think there is this positivity in the sense of mettā. But certainly there doesn't seem to be much overt negativity on the whole. I can certainly say that. New Zealanders certainly don't seem to have too many rough edges.

Srimala: It seems very difficult, very often to actually appreciate mettā, to feel it from someone else.

S: From someone else?

Srimala: From someone. It seems as though we almost want conditional love, so that we know where we are. So that we know what we have to live up to. It's a sort of pattern.

S: Mm. Also one may say that mettā is actually quite a subtle thing, it doesn't manifest necessarily in a sort of very obvious positivity, eh? The sort of positivity with which people sometimes knock you over, so to speak.

Voices: Mm. Mm.

S: It isn't a sort of artificial heartiness.

Voice: It should be manifest in your actions.

S: Oh yes. But sometimes if it is just mettā, and as Srimala said, not meshing in with your needs in a more subjective sense, it is quite difficult to recognise. You might feel that someone is quite cool and a bit detached when it's mettā, because you are so much used to the warm, sticky

variety. You see what I mean?

Voices: Mm.

Dhammadinnā: I think you're looking for the warm, sticky type, you miss the mettā.

S: Yes. I mean, in ordinary life, it's fairly common perhaps, that you think someone doesn't love you because they don't get jealous.

Voices: Yes.

S: That's taken as a sign of love.

Voices: Yes.

S: Mm. And sometimes in a perverse way, you feel quite pleased when someone gets jealous because it shows they really love you!

Ulla/Suzannah?: I had a terrible , I was really shocked when I heard it, a girl told me how she had helped a man, well, it was at the airport, she had really helped somebody because he was so sympathetic and then she said that "But I couldn't tell it to my boyfriend, of course, well I wouldn't like to, you know, if he had helped some girl ... !"

S: Ah, yes.

Ulla/Suzannah?: ... "and so, I wouldn't like that, so I didn't tell him because he's so jealous".

S: Just someone passing through!

Ulla/Suzannah?: And you know, he couldn't understand that there was nothing behind it, and I was really shocked.

Voice: You assume that people are jealous.

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes, and she just ...

S: You assume it is in a way positive because it shows how much they love you, mm. I think jealousy is one of the most negative of all the emotions. It is really terrible! [Laughter] Well it is, it doesn't do anybody any good, least of all the person who feels jealous because they feel awful so much of the time.

Dhammadinnā: It's one of the most unpleasant emotions to experience.

S: At least craving you enjoy to some extent, in a way, but you never enjoy feeling jealous. It's really painful.

Dhammadinnā: Is it "the green-eyed monster"? In *Othello*?

S: "Jealousy, thou green-eyed monster!".

Karola: So how do you counteract it then? You say about anger that you don't indulge, or you say "Yes I feel angry.", but what about jealousy?

S: Well, what is jealousy? I think one has to go into that and understand what is happening. It seems to mean something like that you have invested part of your being in somebody else, so that if a third party appropriates that other person, well, they are appropriating or taking away a part of you so that you are no longer complete.

Anne McMillan: Or something that belongs to you.

S: Well, yes. Because if it is part of you, of course it belongs to you. So you've invested a part of your being in some other person. So you're not relating to them as one whole person relating to another whole person. Some part of you is projected onto, invested in, the other person and you regard them as belonging to you, as part of you, and you cannot bear that part to be taken away. So if a third party comes along and tries to take away that other person, they are trying to split off a part of you from you. They are trying to literally split you, to divide you. This is how you experience it. This is why the feeling of jealousy is so terrible. It's jealousy that makes people, quite often, commit murders.

Voices: Mm.

S: Mm. I mean it's the most common motive for the domestic murder isn't it? And the domestic murder accounts for quite a high percentage of all murders. I think it's said that in most countries, apart from wars and revolutions, most murders take place within the family circle. Jealousy is very strong, it's very widespread, and it's almost always associated with strong emotions of the "love" in inverted commas, variety.

Voices: Mm.

Sridevi: I went to see "*Othello*", the film with Lawrence Olivier, he was brilliant. It had such a strong effect on me.

S: Yes, mm. But jealousy is so irrational that one can end up wanting to make a complete prisoner of the other person because you want to make so sure that they remain a part of you and not touched or even seen by any other person. You want to lock them up, literally, have them under lock and key, and even then you don't trust them! Even then you don't believe them!

Voices: Mm.

Ulla/Suzannah?: This particular couple is really famous at the airport because they are really sort of ... When he isn't working and she is, he comes to the airport and stays there, and just you know, and if somebody says an extra word, especially if he's a "he"! [laughter] She's saying it's the same with her, and they have a really strong feeling, "This is the real love because we are so ..."

Voice: In pain? [Laughter] Masochistic!

Ulla/Suzannah?: Yes. It's really awful.

S: Mm. Well this is the sort of pseudo-romantic notion with which very often one is brought up. Well, I mean, it's like the standard old joke. The wife is supposed to say "I don't think my husband loves me any more, he's stopped beating me!"

Sridevi: It's got so confused, that's the worst thing. If you read "*Othello*", it's there. It's brilliantly clear, like Shakespeare saw it. But now ...

S: I mean clearly, in human relationships there is such a thing as loyalty, yes. That is there too, and one doesn't want to denigrate that or to disregard that, but that is quite a different thing from a feeling of attachment due to jealousy.

Srimala: Until I came in contact with the Friends, jealousy was a normal part of marriage. It was quite proper really, to ...

S: Even if you didn't feel jealous, you were supposed to pretend that you did.

Christabel: So it's mettā again, is it?

S: I'm afraid so! [Laughter] Well you know there's that terrible little saying I sometimes quote. You might have heard it and I apologise if you have, that if you want to do anybody real harm, fall in love with them! [Laughter]

Voices: [inaudible comments] Can you do it?

S: Can you make yourself fall in love, do you mean? I think some people can with just that very little tiny starting point [laughter]. You only need a little tiny spark and then you quickly fan it into a blaze it seems. Some people can almost make themselves fall in love.

Sridevi: Actually, I think it's quite common. You want to be in love.

S: Mm. You start off by being in love with love, so to speak. You very quickly fall in love. Some people are quite expert at it. They're doing it all the time. In and out, in and out. [Laughter]

Anne McMillan: What is it? You're in love and you like it, and then you're in love and you don't like it. And then you're out of love and you don't like it, and then you're out of love and you like it!

S: Ah!

Dhammadinnā: The four stages of a relationship

S: Mm. There's something in that.

Dhammadinnā: According to Samantha Steel in a James Bond book, I think.

Anne McMillan: It came to me via my Kalyana Mitra group! [Laughter]

S: There's even a further ... it's not even enough to be out of love and like it, but to be full of mettā. Mm? Mm? You could say that. That mettā gradually takes over from that sort of love. Not that you remain cold and you just stay clear so to avoid hurt which is what some people do. And that isn't good enough. You don't opt out of emotions all together.

Dhammadinnā: Is jealousy to do with people and envy to do with possession? What's the difference between those two?

S: It seems to be like that to some extent. Envy is, is, well, you would like to have for yourself, something that belongs to somebody else. You ... there's a sort of ill will towards that person on account of the fact that he has got it and you haven't. You look at them askance as we say. They've got something that you'd like. You're not happy that they've got it.

Ulla/Suzannah?: What about the feeling it's all right that they have it, but I'd like to have it as well? [Laughter]

S: Well, sometimes people don't like to share things that can be shared. Sometimes people think that love cannot be shared.

Voices: Mm.

S: Well, we know, yes, in a sense, the smaller the number of people involved, the more intense things do tend to become but mettā can certainly be shared. The fact that you feel mettā for one person doesn't mean there's less for somebody else even though, time and space being limited, you can't cultivate intense or close relations with more than a certain number of people. I think possessive love just does tend to be exclusive, not only is exclusive, it wants to be exclusive. It sort of wallows in the exclusiveness. I think also institutionally the exclusiveness is bound up with social security. You want exclusive rights in somebody. Because it comes back to material support and money even, you know, under some social systems. [Pause]

Sridevi: It must have been terrible when women were actually economically completely dependent on marriage.

S: Yes. It meant that sometimes they didn't dare to manifest jealousy even if they felt it, because it would endanger their whole position and security.

Dhammadinnā: I think sometimes people try and get over those feelings without developing mettā though, in a kind of progressive situation. I once lived in a house where the ideal was to sort of sleep with everybody and nobody was supposed to feel jealous and so these feelings were repressed.

S: Yes. This is what sometimes happens in these pseudo-liberal circles.

Dhammadinnā: And then you get an explosion much later on, you know, really terrible. And nobody ever speaks to anybody again. You know, I think that happens quite a lot of situations ...

S: Mm.

Dhammadinnā: ... as a result of the so-called sexual revolution.

S: Yes. Right. But I think if you're sufficiently emotionally positive, you know, to be able to practise mettā, there isn't this desperate search for affection and relationships with which jealousy is bound up.

Voices: Mm.

Anjali: Say that again, Bhante.

S: If you are able to feel mettā, you are much less likely to be involved in a desperate search for emotional security through relationships. And therefore much less likely to be involved in general, for want of a better term, promiscuity in your relationships. There will be a greater steadiness and loyalty and so on, whether they are singular or plural or whatever.

Dhammadinnā: I think people maybe feel that, if you take away possessiveness and jealousy, you'll get promiscuity and that will be a bad thing. You see what I mean?

S: I think if you ... yes ... but I think this isn't likely to happen, or is less likely to happen with mettā, because what drives most people to, again for want of a better term, promiscuity, is a general sense of emptiness. There's a desperate need to fill that. And they don't succeed, so it's just one person after another.

Dhammadinnā: Do you think there can be positive promiscuity?

S: I think there could be a positive relationship with several people in a way that the conventionally minded would regard as promiscuous, but which would not be promiscuous in that other sense. You see what I mean?

Dhammadinnā: Presumably in cultures where there is polyandry or polygamy, jealousy does not arise in the same way.

S: Apparently it doesn't. It might, in some cases, be so severely repressed because, you know ...

Dhammadinnā: You can't do anything about it.

S: But I mean, from instances which come to my personal observation, it certainly would seem possible for people to live without jealousy in situations that in this country, usually, we would consider inevitably gave rise to jealousy.

Dhammadinnā: Is monogamy, is it a Christian tradition, does it come from the Bible, from an actual teaching?

S: Well, it comes from the New Testament, not from the Old Testament, where many of the Patriarchs are represented as very polygamous, with many wives and many concubines, culminating in King Solomon himself.

Dhammadinnā: Oh yes. Is it actually laid down in the New Testament, then?

S: Yes. The Gospels don't say anything about it, in fact they seem to regard it as not of very much importance, because the question was asked Christ if a woman has been married to seven husbands in the course of her life, say successively, then whose wife would she be at the Day of Judgement, and they were all raised? And Christ said "In the Kingdom of Heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage". But St. Paul seems to have been responsible for making monogamy the norm. And even then as a second-best, very much a second-best, from complete abstinence. I think it must be increasingly recognised that there is a possibility of various patterns, let us say, of conjugal relationship. I mean Buddhism historically is not tied to any one exclusively. In Buddhist countries, monogamy is known, that is obviously the commonest for obvious reasons, but polygamy is also known, and polyandry is also known, and none of these particular systems is regarded as incompatible with Buddhist ethics.

Dhammadinnā: It seems again to come down to flexibility and inflexibility. It would probably have been quite useful in England, after the First World War, if it had been possible to have polyandry.

S: Yes, right.

Dhammadinnā: [unclear]

S: Yes. Because if you've got a surplus of men over women, or women over men, and if you insist on monogamy, the only result is that there will be some men without wives, or some women without husbands who do not wish to be in that condition. So it would seem commonsensical to permit polyandry or polygamy for those who want it, they'd probably be a minority anyway.

Christabel: Actually, wasn't that how the Mormons got the reputation? Because the men were being chased by the civil authorities and they had to go south and there'd only be some younger men, and older men were left to look after all the women and children, so they gathered two or three families together. Obviously they behaved sometimes as man and wives.

S: No. The Mormons originally believed in polygamy.

Christabel: They did? Oh.

S: They did not believe in polyandry, and it seems for some reason or other this system proved extremely attractive to a number of women. Oh yes, I remember! I read a life of Brigham Young who was the second great leader of the Mormons and apparently at one time, many of his wives were interviewed by a newspaper correspondent and one of the interesting things that emerged was that these women said they liked polygamy because they had a lot of companionship with other women, and this is what gave it such a positive aspect in their eyes.

Dhammadinnā: That's something which monogamy seems to have destroyed, especially since the rise of the nuclear family.

S: Yes. They have more contact and more companionship with other women.

Dhammadinnā: ... isolated in their home.

S: Yes. So they, many of them preferred living in that way, and of course, their group gave it religious sanction, so they didn't feel - though they knew it was disapproved of outside - but it was outside their group. Within their group it was fully approved and they got happier as polygamous wives because, well, one of the very important reasons apparently was that they had much more companionship with other women instead of being isolated. And this was way back in the last century in America. And they seemed to adjust to this system quite easily. So perhaps an aspect which is generally overlooked. They preferred that rather than being isolated, each one in her own little house.

Christabel: They had a very tough time when they first arrived in Utah ...

S: They did.

Christabel: They were real pioneers in a physical sense.

S: When Utah was incorporated into the United States as another State, one of the conditions was that they, like the other States in the Union, made polygamy illegal and ceased to practise it. But apparently some did continue to practise it underground illegally. Apparently just a few weeks ago, or a few months ago, the case came up and they discovered seventy Mormon families secretly practising polygamy. [Laughter] Because polygamy is illegal, I mean in the sense that there is no such thing as legal multiple marriage. You can have one legal wife and a number of common-law wives, but you can't have a number of legal wives. I don't think you could get social security for more than one. [Laughter]

Voice: Perhaps that's why the State enforces that!

S: But then it couldn't affect more than..... Well, what is the difference between supporting somebody as somebody's polygamous wife and supporting the same woman as some other man's monogamous wife?

Voices: Mm.

S: You're supporting the woman anyway in either case. So what difference does it really make? Anyway, I don't want you to go away from the study retreat with all sorts of ideas in your heads! [Laughter] But you know it's just to illustrate the greater sort of flexibility of Buddhism on all levels. It doesn't necessarily identify itself with, or think in terms of, exclusive patterns.

Voices: Mm.

S: I mean, as I said, in the case of the example I gave, well, if there is a surplus of men or women, what is the sensible social solution? It seems a matter of commonsense rather than morals. And also people, on whatever level, in whatsoever respect, just trying to live together happily as human beings without all the possessiveness and jealousy and all that sort of thing we usually see. It seems so unnecessary and such a pity that it just does bedevil human relationships of all kinds. It is not only a question of in families, it's in the office, the workplace, you know, wherever. It does sometimes seem a bit surprising, that people don't live together more happily and more positively. But anyway, if one takes the "*The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*" at all seriously maybe it will become more and more possible, at least for some people.

Voices: Mm.

S: Anyway, I think that must be it! And you are all going to be silent now, or we are all going to be silent now, except for chanting and one or two things like that. It's going to be a silent meal, isn't it?

Anne McMillan: Yes. Hooray!

S: Eh?

Anne McMillan: I said "Hooray"!

Voices: Thank you very much, Bhante. Thank you, thank you.

S: It's been quite a good study, hasn't it.

Voices: Oh, yes.

S: And it's all on tape also.

END OF SEMINAR

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