

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

DISCLAIMER

This transcript has not been checked by Sangharakshita, and may contain mistakes and mishearings. Checked and reprinted copies of all seminars will be available as part of the [Complete Works Project](#).

**The Jewel Ornament of Liberation:
Chapter 7: Benevolence and Compassion**

Those present: Srimala, Ulla, Carolla, Anjali, Anne Murphy, Sridevi, Anne MacMillan, Dhammadinna, Anne Norman, Susanah Laurola, Christabel

Sangharakshita: all right we are going to try to do Ch. 7 of The Jewel Ornament on Benevolence and Compassion. Page 91. We will be able, I hope, to do the whole of the chapter. We are going to go into it pretty thoroughly. The material is very condensed anyway and it will need quite a bit of expansion and going into. But if we can do this chapter really well, then that will be quite an achievement. If by any chance we do finish it with some time to spare then we can go on and do a bit of the next chapter. But I think this will probably occupy us this week. I take it everybody is familiar with the work as a whole. You've dipped into it before, you know who it is by, and all that sort of thing, so we need not go into all that. We will just go straight into the chapter itself.

"The development of Benevolence and Compassion as a remedy against attachment to self-complacency will be discussed in this chapter. Self-complacency is to be understood in the sense of desiring to attain Nirvana for ourselves and not working for the benefit of others, because we have no affection for sentient beings. Those who do so are the followers of the Hinayana form of Buddhism. Therefore it is said:

For our own interest,
The interests of others, though they be many, have to be sacrificed,

When in this way we are concerned with our own interests They naturally grow supreme.

S: There's quite a lot to be discussed here. First of all, one or two quite elementary points. Do you know what the terms are- I mean the terms in Sanskrit- for Benevolence and Compassion

A. Macmillan: Metta

S: Metta, or in Sanskrit, Maitri and Compassion, what does that represent ?

Voices: Karuna;

S: Karuna. So how good do you think these translations are? Benevolence: what does that really suggest ? Do you know what the literal meaning of it is ?

: Bene is good and volare is that volition ?

S: Well, it's good will. But actually benevolence sounds rather different from good will. You know you have the word as an adjective, benevolent in connection with, benevolent old gentleman or a

Voice: It sounds a bit condescending.

Voice: Yes a bit weak.

S: Though it shouldn't be if it is good will. But it does have that weak connotation in fact. Do we have to try and bear in mind that behind this rather weak English word benevolence is the Sanskrit and Pali, Maitri and Metta. So we should try not to associate the connotations of benevolence with maitri. We should really try to think of Maitri, try to think of Metta, not as benevolence in the English sense. So roughly then what is maitri? What is metta? What sort of connotations does that term have? What does it convey in a very general sort of way?

Anne Macmillan: Warmth, Active.

S: Warmth, Active, well positivity. A sort of outward going positivity. It's quite a powerful word. It's not an emotional word as we usually understand the word emotional. There is nothing sort of turbulent about it. It's very strong, very powerful. It's very smooth, it's gentle, it's completely positive.

Anne Macmillan: It's clear.

S: It's clear, yes. So this is maitri. And then compassion. What are the sort of connotations of the English word? Well, Latin word really.

Christabel: Sentimental, a bit condescending.

S: Could be sentimental. How do we usually use this word? Do we use it much in English?

Christabel: Concerned with death we usually do.

S: Compassion.

_____: Well it's usually pitiful rather than compassion.

S: But we've got the "Party of Compassion", haven't we? I mean I

the Labour Party speaks of itself as the Party of Compassion. It's

got a sort of political ring. (Laughter) Oh yes, you hear it on the radio, in election broadcasts; and the Conservative Party, the Tory party that is, is the party that doesn't have compassion. (Laughter) So compassion here has got a definitely sort of socio-political slant. But in ordinary parlance we don't really use the word much, do we?

Anne Macmillan: I feel it's got rather unfortunate Catholic connotations for me.

S: Ah, in what way? BC/1-3 Anne Macmillan: Well I remember there's a sort of lady of compassion (Laughter). It still has that... when I first got involved in Buddhism and heard the term compassion used I did feel a bit....

S: Because compassion there is rendered the Latin "Misericordia" So compassion here

suggests a rather sort of artificial sorrowing over some ghastly torment or other. But anyway, behind the English word compassion fortunately there is the Sanskrit and Pali word, Karuna. So what do you think is meant by Karuna? What's the sort of feeling you get from Karuna, as distinct from compassion.?

_____ : It has wisdom with it.

S: Well, that is Maha-Karuna, strictly speaking.

_____ : Understanding ?

S: No, I would not say that that is the sort of connotation.

Anne Macmillan: It seems clearer somehow again to me. There is a clarity involved which isn't there in the English.

S: Clearer yes. I mean some of the commentators connect it with a verb meaning to shake, and to move "Compati". You move with, You are moved by somebody's suffering. You move with them, as it were.

Anne Macmillan: Empathy;

S: Empathy, but you notice, even empathy, compassion, it suggests passivity, as if something is done to you because the passion in compassion means to bear something, to suffer something. So in the way with empathy you're subject to something. But Karuna doesn't have that sort of connotation at all. You see there is no connotation of passivity in it. It's as though Karuna takes the initiative. It doesn't wait even to feel somebody else's suffering and then respond: it acts even before it feels in a sense, paradoxically speaking. So this is just to emphasise the point that we mustn't be misled by the English terms benevolence and compassion, but try to feel behind them all the time the presence of the Indian terms Maitri and Karuna. Incidentally, if one wants to be sort of technically correct the maitri and the Karuna, which have a sort of metaphysical dimension as when they are practiced by developed Bodhi-sattva, should strictly speaking be called Maha Maitri, and Maha-Karuna. Maha maitri is maitri as it were suffused with some experience of sunyata some insight and Karuna likewise, compassion to use that term, suffused with some degree of insight, some degree of Wisdom. But maitri and Karuna as purely meditative samatha type BC/1-4

experiences, dissociated from wisdom, these, of course, are mundane and conditioned and these are just maitri and Karuna. But associated with Insight and Wisdom, prajna, they become the Maha maitri and Maha Karuna. If you say, for instance the Buddha is full of maitri strictly speaking that is incorrect because in the Buddha's case is Maha maitri on the account of the transcendental realisation. But we are coming onto that a bit later on, the distinction between the different kinds of maitri and Karuna. So, "The development of Benevolence and compassion," Maitri and Karuna, "as a remedy against attachment to self-complacency will be discussed in this chapter"

Isn't this, in a sense, a rather surprising statement? Doesn't it seem to go against what one is sometimes told in other connections about metta and Karuna? Isn't it a contradiction?

U~LA: Doesn't it always mean taking into account other people ?

S: I wasn't thinking of that. The contradiction, in a way, is connected in the word "remedy". "The development of Benevolence and compassion as a remedy against attachment to self-complacency" Is that what one is always told ? When you teach people the metta Bhavana what do you tell them ? Metta Bhavana helps you get rid of

What do you usually say ?

Hate

S:Hate. I mean isn't metta usually considered the antidote to hate But here it says "remedy against attachment to self-complacency. so why the difference ?

Anne Macmillin: I suppose it's the specific context in this chapter

S: It's the specific context. Also, of course, you could say that it's because in the end what is going to be discussed there is the Mahamaitri and Mahakaruna of the Bodhisattva. But why do you think in more general terms, that the development of Benevolence and compassion are considered a remedy against attachment to self-complacency. Well, first of all, what is this self-complacency There is a note here, isn't there? See Ch. 4, page 41; "Self-complacency is a term for the Hinayana's egoistic Nirvana" That is what the note says. Of course, in a way, you cannot take that too literally because there cannot really be egoistic Nirvana. That is pretty obvious. But I think we know what self-complacency in a very general sort of way means. What do you think it means

_____ Delusion

S: Delusion. But more specifically ?

_____ It's when you're satisfied with where you are. BC/1-5 In a negative kind of way.

~: Yes, you're sort of self preoccupied. Self-concerned. Your attention, your interest, your energy is all directed towards yourself. You are sort of in love with yourself. There is an element of Narcissism: of self-approval, self-congratulation, self-satisfaction. I mean, do you realise the sort of state that the word indicates ? Are you familiar with this sort of state ~ (Laughter) You're wrapped in yourself;

SRIDEVI: And that means you cannot make any progress.

S: You cannot make any progress. Not along the Mahayana lines. And of course the Mahayana suggests that what is, at least, regarded as the Hinayana conception of Nirvana was only a sort of transposition of this kind of attitude to a very subtle and pseudo-spiritual level. There are people who think of the spiritual life in terms of pre-occupation with their souls: saving their souls. But from a Buddhist point of view this is a sort of self complacency. So how is it or why is it that Benevolence and Compassion can be a remedy for self complacency ?

_____ Because it is concerned with others.

SRIDEVI: If you try to be outward going with your compassion, then you cannot be pro-occupied with yourself.

S: Yes, right. So you could say, yes it is true that metta and karuna are antidotes to anger. This more on the level of the conditioned but perhaps in an even prpfounder sense, metta and kar- una are antidotwa to self-complacency. Toself-praoccupation,just being bound up with oneself. So therefore, the text says "The development of Benevolence and Compassion as a remedy againat atta- chment to self-complacency whether at a very ordinary lecel or the so called Nirvania level, will be discussed in this chapter." So This gives the sort of the subject matter of the chapter. The dis~ cussion of Benevolence and Compassion from~ this partivular point of view. That is to say, in as much as they are a remedy against attachment to self-complacency. But then it goes on to say, we~ sGam.po.pa goes on to say:"Self-complacency is to be understood i,' the sense of desiring to attain Nirvana for ourselves and not wor\$~ ing for the benefit of others, because we have no affection for sentient beings. So there are three things here. One it may not be very useful to consider it - to rest it on the, as it were, Nirvanic plane, but one can set iya~plyin~ throughout, at all levels right down to the most ordinary level. i?irfl of all, there is som~ BC/1-6

thing desirable, whether it is Nirvana, whether it is the positive emotional state, whether it is happiness, but here is som~thing desirable. Bu when we're self-complacent we desire to attain it just for ourselves0 That is point one. Tw0~ we don't want to work for the benefit of others. That is to sa~, we don't want to help them share that particular desirable object. And the reason for that is, Three, we just don't care for them. "We've no affection for sentient beings". So these are, this is the way in which, the threefold way in which sel-complacency is to be understood at any level. Ther's a desire of omething good for ourselves , There is

a lack of any desire to work for the benefit of others, so that they may share that desirable object with us. And we fail to work for the benefit of others just because we have no affection for them. No affection for sentient beings,so this raises some quite import- ant points. I mean the most, the main way , the most alarming is that we have no affection for other sentient b9ing5~ and this is shown by the fact that we don't want to work for their benefit. We don't want to share with them something desirable which we desire for ourselves. You con notice this: let's come right down to earth (laughter) You con notice this if you live in a community. Supp- osing someone has given you a small box of chocolates.(Laughter) Think what is your ()There a5 no question of working...you know it doesn't even come to that...But what is your first reSction With some people their first feaction is well ju~t to eat it all thems~lves. Another might eat one or two of them themselves and they'd share. Do you see what I mean ? They might even share not so °much because they'd want to. But because it occurs to them after one of two chocolates that they ought to.(laughter) Even a little struggle goes on asto how many they should have before they start sharing. Probably you all know this.(laughter) With other people they think first of sharing with others. They don't think of just having them themselves and not sharing with others. But again that can be two-fold. It could be that they'd into this habit of never thinking of themselves. On the other hand they could have a heal- thy care for themselves but at the same time, naturally , go out to other people. ~o you can see this sort of thing working at various levels. But the important factor here is ina way is the concern for others, the affection for others. So the little illustration that I gave illustrates the degree to which we have affection for others. And I think that if we examine ourselves carefully, we m~ght be suprised in fact how little actual affection we have for other living beings. What we usually think of as affection is a sort of

quid pro quo attitude, "Well you do this for me and I'll do that for you". BC/1-7 or that you want something of some kind or other from other people, so you are nice to them; not because you like them really, but because they have or they possess or can give you what you want. But a real genuine uncomplicated, straight forward affection for other so that you really want to do things for them, quite disinterested really want to work for their happiness; this is really quite unusual. But it's this that needs to be cultivated. This features as a central part of metta and karuna, which goes directly against self-complacency.

Dhamma dinna: It is almost as though you don't discover that about yourself until you do the metta. You can even fool yourself when you are not doing the metta Bhavana until you start doing it and you realise how much you don't care about other people.

S: But I remember in the very early days, I think practically before I started the friends quite a number of people used to come to meditation classes and would object to the metta on the grounds that they didn't need it because they felt love towards everybody else all the time. I heard this from a number of people, believe it or not. And they genuinely believed it. That they actually did feel love, metta for everybody all of the time. I mean it is quite clear that they didn't. If some of them did it would be absolutely phenomenal.

Anne Macmillan: Somebody who comes to the West London Centre told Anoma that we shouldn't teach the metta because it is totally impracticable. Totally impracticable to try and really love people was such an impossibility that he felt we should concentrate on the Mindfulness of Breathing.

S: But in a way you could equally well say that that is impossible (Laughter) Because if you say that it is impossible to teach or to change your existing mental state, which again means it is impossible for you to change. So if you can change a distracted mind into a concentrated mind, through the mindfulness, well you can surely change a hateful mind into a mettful mind through the practice of the Metta Bhavana. Well quite a lot of people know that you can make some progress in this direction. It may not be very spectacular and there may be many backslidings but you can change. And you see this. So I think if people make this sort of objection one just has to say: Don't think like that, the metta is based on the same principle as the mindfulness of Breathing. The possibility of change. But if you find that metta is difficult and the mindfulness is easy well alright certainly start off with the mindfulness BC/1-8

and concentrate on that. And hopefully that will give you confidence to tackle the metta sooner or later. But these two sentences are really underlining the degree to which self-complacency plays a part in our lives. And it suggests even up to quite high spiritual levels you can even get spiritual ideals which are really very subtle versions of self-complacency. And the Mahayana views the Hinayana Nirvana like this. Well neither that actually does justice to the conception of Nirvana held by the historical Mahayana, that is another matter. But we certainly do know that there is this tendency for the feeling of complacency with ourselves to take subtler and subtler and subtler forms and even to appear as a sort of ghostly spiritual ideal. And the Mahayana makes the point that that has nothing to do with real spiritual life or real spiritual ideals and the Bodhisattva ideal from a certain point of view was intended to counteract that. So it is very important to think of the spiritual life not only in terms of self-development and the attainment of more positive states by oneself. But also to think of it in terms equally of an outward going concern with and for other people. The two

of course are intimately related because if you feel genuinely positive as part of that you're going to feel like going out to other people. And if you are going out to other people, well that will surely be reflected in your mental state. But I think there is a danger even within the Friends that we think of spiritual life so exclusively in terms of our own development. In such a way that we're too exclusively occupied with "What is my mental state at the moment? What are my problems at the moment?" and so on. And not feel or show any concern for other people.

Ulla: Yes if you are over-concerned with your own development, then you don't develop.

S: Yes right because you can be quite blind to what is going on outside and to other people's needs and that means that a certain side of you is not in fact developed. I really feel that this sort of attitude is encouraged by some of the growth groups and growth movements. There is just so much concern with your own growth that in fact as Ulla says you don't grow; which seems strange. (Laughter) It is like you've got this little plant in the garden, you're so concerned that it should grow. You keep watering it and feeling its leaves and pulling it up by the roots to see how well it is getting on and in the end the wretched little plant just dies. (laughter) you sometimes have to leave it alone just to grow unmolested for a while. So sometimes you need to leave yourself alone for a bit. Just BC/1-9

let yourself grow unmolested, as it were.

_____ I think Right livelihood projects are very good for that.

S: Yes indeed. Because there is an Objective situation with other people in that objective situation with whom you have to work, whom you have to consider. I can see a few of you smiling..(laughter) So this is really a very good corrective. I don't say to all the meditation but certainly to all the introspection and you know sifting through of one's own personal problems.

So really self-awareness is something else? It is not preoccupation.

S: It is not self-preoccupation. It includes awareness of yourself in relation to other people also. Because certain aspects of yourself come up only in relation to other people. I mean if you just isolate yourself from other people in some ways you get to know yourself better but there are again certain aspects of yourself that you can know and study and understand only in the process of interaction with other people. So you have to give due weight to both of these. So: 1, Self complacency is to be understood in the sense of desiring to attain Nirvana or any agreed good for ourselves and not working for the benefit of others., because we have no affection for sentient beings" You notice "Working for the benefit of others. A pious wish is not enough. It is not enough just to wish that others may be benefited. It is an actual working for the benefit of others. Again we don't want to go to the other extreme, that there are people abroad in the world who so go around working for the benefit of others but they have gone to the other extreme because they are not in touch with themselves. They work for the benefit of others, as they think, as an escape from taking a look at themselves. So you really need both. Some people are prone more to one extreme, some to the other. What we really have to try is to balance a genuine concern with ourselves and for ourselves With a genuine concern for the benefit of others. We shall only work for the benefit of others if we have a genuine affection for them. I really think this affection for others~ this good will

towards- others-' in an even quite ordinary human way is a relatively rare thing, unfortunw~~tely. But I think we get used to it, not being there that we hardly notice it. Usually we just put up with the absence of it.

Dhanadinna: I mean do you think t~at is () or think that is also the culture.

S: I think it is. It does v~ a bit but only superficially. I BC/1-10

was quite interested in what Kulamitra wrote in Shabda. There is nothing confidential here so I can refer to it. He was writing about his experiencet in India, about his bke fact that t6e Indians are in many ways vey positive, say more positive than people are in the West. But only up to a point. It does have its limitations. For instance they are very hospitable, they are very happy to feed you. But they go on feeding you and feeding you and feeding you and feeding you until it becomed painful. It becomes almost an imposition. So this is not real positivity according to him. Because there is an element of blindness, an insistance which means that they are not really concerned with you. They are more concerned with going through this ritual of giving and hosp~tality to their personal satisfaction regardless of what happens to the unfortunate guest. (laughter) So when we suggest that in other cultures they maybe are more friendly, more positive we have to examine it rather carefully. But no doubt, yes, there are variations can be accounted for in various ways. But I think this self~complacency is very lurking, as it were. I find the Indians intensely Self~complacent especially the higher caste ones. They are intensely self-satisfied. For instance, they will ask you whether you ..."Do mangoes grow in England So you say "No". So they'll tellyou with an expression of intense self satisfaction" 11Ah mangoes grow in India" (Laughter) As though that establishes the enormous superiority of India over Britain. Or they ask you whet~~r you have, for instance, horses, or cows. If you say yes there are cows in England they are really quite sni,rised. ~~aughter) As if we didn't have cows. They actually think of course that Indian cows are better. So there is this very wide-spread self- complacency in India. Especially as regards to religion. India is the most religious country in the world. India is the guru of the world They are very self~complacent in this way. So you could say Indians are more emotionally positive than people in the West often are, but it has serious limitations at the same time. So real pos- itivity in the sense of metta and maitri must ,ecessarily involve an element of real concern for the other person.for his or hnr own sake. We are not talking metaphysically now, we are tlking as it were psychologically. Because we could say metaphysically in the last resort there is no 1,other".

But that is not our experience. Within our experience there is very much a self a~ thextis very much an other

So we have to operate within those terms. So operating within those terms there is no denial of Self~complacency There is no movement in tie opposite direction, no real positive emot- ion, no real metta or karuna unless you are really ,not centred(there is another word) but sort of focused on the other person. Bc/i-il And are really concerned with the o~her person's well being,hapin- ess, safety, without thinking of what it means in terms of the emot- ional state that you derive from it. Ifyou are really concerned with the other person for the sake of an e~otional state of your own, it's a sort of sentimentalism. ~or instance, you can hear about poor refugees in Cambodia etc, etc and you can be really upset and sorry and you can sort of revel in this feeling of being very sorry for them and even think "Well, how beautiful, I'm feeling sorry" . You don't do a thing about it . This is sentamentalism. This is

a subtler manifestation of self-complacency. But in genuine metta and karuna you really get the other person into focus quite sharp and clear and you forget all about yourself. At least for the moment, and this is the valuable feature so to speak of involvement with other people. You can even say the redeeming feature of involvement with other people because so often involvement with other people just goes disastrously wrong, but there is in the midst of it all the redeeming feature that you are up against if you like another person. You are sort of dragged out of your wretched self-complacency and you are made to really acknowledge, even if it may be painful, that there is some other person in the universe, not just you. (laughter) And that can be very salutary even though painful for the time being. ~o this is an essential component in metta and karuna, yes? This affection for others and working for the benefit of others, which means recognizing that others are actually there. That the world is not just an extension of yourself. And that the other person is there is as much a datum of your experience as your experience of your own self. Your life normally as a human being sort of operates between these two points of self and others. And ideally there should be an outward going movement of metta and karuna towards those others whom you envisage and whom you experience. But I'm sure this occurs in the Co-op situation with varying degrees of positivity.

1,hammadinna: Do you not think that the only way to finally get rid of self-complacency would be in something like _____ or the Bodhi citta arising. I presume that you can work at your metta and karuna but you're always going to have the tendency to sit back or let go.

S: Well yes, but only really through Insight. I suppose any sort of conditioned state especially negative states only come permanently to an end when there is Insight. Otherwise there is always the danger of slipping back. I think in this respect people becoming aware that there are others besides themselves I think it begins usually with a painful experience. Because however sort of self-complacent you are

are your needs you know bring you into relationship with other people. And to begin with you expect to relate to those other people on your terms for the satisfaction of your needs. But sooner or later you are brought up against the fact that they have their needs too. That they are expecting the same sort of fulfilment from you. So sometimes there's a direct conflict of needs so the result is that you forcibly painfully are brought to the acknowledgement that there is some other person in the world other than you. And then that may give you the serious thought. And then there can be the possibility of metta because you recognise and acknowledge the existence of another person. But not before that. So "Those who do so" that is to say those who desire to attain Nirvana for themselves "are the followers of the Hinayana form of Buddhism". One should learn what the Mahayana says about the Hinayana cannot always be taken as referring to the Historical Hinayana, especially when for instance you get someone as sgam.po.pa is doing writing in Tibet with reference to forms of Buddhism in India centuries before his own day. ~o you can take the Hinayana form of Buddhism as representing more a certain attitude than a particular school of Buddhism. For instance, I've met Tibetan Buddhists even lamas who technically were followers of the Mahayana and you know in their prayers every day they would be repeating the Bodhisattva vow but actually their attitude was Hinayanistic. So you mustn't go by the words you must go by the reality. In fact I sometimes used to say to my Tibetan monk friends "Well, if you've had this wonderful Bodhisattva ideal in Tibet in such force for all these centuries how come you didn't think of spreading the Uharma outside Tibet until the Chinese came and threw you out and you had to do it for the sake of your livelihood? You know I was quite harsh with

them in that respect But it is true. You can meet Theravada Bhikkhus who are technically Hinayanist, who are actually full of metta and karuna and very outward going in their attitude. But if you asked them they will probably say well we have to devote ourselves to our own salvation not to that of others", but in fact they don't quite follow that. And in the same way talking to Tibetan monks, they may say that we should devote ourselves to the liberation of all like a good Bodhisattva, but in

practice they may not really be doing that at all. So one has to examine real attitudes and not just be misled by labels. So you can

find followers of Hinayana even within the Mahayana.

Therefore it is said:

For our own interest, The interest of others, though they be many, Have to be sacrificed, When in this way we are concerned with our own interest~ They naturally grow supreme~0~~ BC/1-13

So the person with the Hinayana type of attitude says "For our interest, the interest of others, though they be many, have to be sacrificed. And this is what people actually do with without thinking of others. They sacrifice the interest of others even the interests of many other people just to their own single interest. You find this with very ambitious people who use and manipulate others even on a very great scale, on a political scale, national scale. They just use others. They are not concerned about others. They don't care what happens to others. They don't care how many other people die provided they fulfill their ambition. And that is a very terrible thing. This is self-complacency in a very negative form.

_____ The Jesuits thought that was a virtue, didn't they? If you can see that the means justifies the end, that can make anything acceptable.

Anne Macmillan: That was why the atom bomb was dropped, sacrificing two cities for the greater need of a nation~~~

S: But even that is different in a sense; even not so bad because there you are arguing rightly or wrongly that it is better to sacrifice a few rather than the many. But here, you are arguing, well you are not even arguing, you are just sort of stating your attitude that you'd rather sacrifice everybody else rather than yourself. (laughter) This is very strong isn't it? We all know that. So:

It When in this way we are concerned with our own interests,

They naturally grow supreme." (laughter) So what does that mean?

END OF SIDE A

What does that convey?

_____ The more you are concerned with your interests the more you just...the more selfish you get.

S: It just snowballs, yes. You sort of incorporate everything into yourself. And this is ~n~antile. The child starts off like this, the baby. I mean, I d~n't have much personal experience with babies. (laughter) I've read one or two books about them and observed them from a safe distance (laughter) But apparently, the baby, the infant does not at least to begin with recognise another person as another. It's an extension of the b~by itself. And He or she expects their needs to be fulfilled met and 80 on and the baby only dimly e~ntually becomes aware of another person. And then his little will or hers comes into conflict eventually with the will or interests or being o~ that other person. It's usually of course mother. And he or she begins to realise then well that there is another person. And event- BC/1-14 -ually if the development is healthy and natural, that the other has to be considered. So you can see how great are the chances of some- thing going wrong. Either baby maybe pampered and given into for longer than is really good for him. He may get into that habit. Or he may be not pampered long enough and maybe be deeply frustrated and become bitter. (tape broken) ...to be able to acknowledge the existance of other people. And really feel that other people are there. You know that their needs matter to them as much as my needs matter 0 me. And if we want something very much it's very easy to overlook that.

_____: So would that natunally come about: like if you had a reason- able healthy upbringing but naƒurally as you become mature it...

S: Yes I think it would and I think it would be sufficient for ord- inary social life. I mean, it wouldn't be that you had° a sort of inSight. There's always the possiblity of when there's a clash bet- ween your interest and other people's well you just sacrifice theirs to yours~ But at least if all goes well, the infant is sort of as it were socialised in the positive way into the extent that in ordinary cocial situations ana ordinary human relationships, the child or the growing person can recognise that yes ,others do exist and must be given a reasonable consideration. It may not stand very much strain but at least it should be there and adequate to the needs of ordinary social relationships. Otherwise you get the child growing up into a little monster of selfishness, if one isn't careful. And that child can become an adult monSter of self interest in various ways, either gross or subtle. It could be a sort of psychopath just going around robbing or murdering people or can be the sort of person who plays the martyr and sort of gets everybody around him or her in that sort of Way. So you see the Mahayana is getting at something very basic here in discussing this whole issue or raising, you know this whole issue; "So when in this way we are concerned in our own interest

They naturally grow supreme."

We are totally engrossed by them, we're prepared to sacrifice(?) any- thing to them, our families, our own friends, our own country, evety- thing.

_____ In Christianity, mattyrs who were () is that

a form of self-complacency. What were they in to ?

S: I think people like martyrs are rather complicated cases. I think in some cases, yes one feels there was an element of even self-comp- lacency, because sometimes they were pre-occupied with saving their BC/1-15

souls. And then there was the motivation for it all. I mean part of that motivation was their

particular conception of God, perhaps their fear of punishment, their hope for reward
~llthose sort of factors entered in. So one feels that the psychology of a martyr perhaps
belongs more to pathology than normal psychology. I don't think it can be taken as a model
for an ordinary, normal human being. It's certainly, yes the time may come when one might
have to give one's life for one's ideal. But it does seem that the martyrs were in many cases
obsessed with the ideal of dying for their faith. Even wanting to die for their faith, because if
they shed their blood in that way it wiped out all sins and they might have a very strong
conviction of sin and want to ensure that they would go to heaven. For instance, I don't know
if you are acquainted with this but in the early days of the Christian Church, when you were
baptised you were supposed never to sin again. You were baptised as an adult of course in
this case once and for all. All your sins were washed off in the blood of, in the water of
baptism. But a problem arose in the early Church: some people did commit sins (laughter)
even after baptism. So some of the early Church (he believed that if after baptism you
committed a sin, that is to say a mortal sin there was no possibility of redemption. You had
to be cast out of the Church and not be taken back. Some of the Churches believed this,
others did not. But then, eventually a belief grew up still in the days of early Christianity, that
there was one way of redeeming yourself and that was to become a martyr, to be killed for
your faith. If you had backslid at all and you had committed a sin, even after baptism that
could be washed out with the Baptism of blood. So you see the sort of reasoning. After a
while of course people started thinking differently. I mean there were lots and lots of
martyrs; people invited martyrdom. The authorities, more often than not, didn't want to
martyr them and gave them every opportunity of getting out of it. They didn't want to accept
that. They, behind this was a sort of feeling a conviction that if they didn't manage to get
martyred well they were damned, as it were, because they'd committed sins in some cases
after their baptism, so the only way to wash it out was through the baptism of blood. So they
insisted on martyrdom. And it was their guilt which was behind them. But in the course of
time, Christianity became the established religion in the Roman Empire, so Christ-
ians weren't martyred any more. So what were they to do? (Laughter) Well according to some
authorities this is one of the reasons why monasticism sprung up. Do you see? Monasticism
in first of all the form of self-mortification. Because self-mortification was a sort of

substitute for the martyrdom. There was nobody to martyr you. The State was
Christian, alright you had to inflict pain and suffering on yourself. You became an anchorite,
a hermit. You wore chains or you lived at the top of a pillar and this of course developed into
monasticism. You can see the connection. So therefore, even now in the West even people
who have got nothing to do with Christianity have got this idea of monasticism as being a
sort of life of penance self-torment and asceticism in that sort of sense. So when they hear of
Buddhist monks they associate all those sort of ideas. So it was not that the martyrs and the
ascetic monks were genuinely trying to get out of themselves and transcend themselves. They
were driven more..0. The self-complacency was there but it was sort of driven by feelings of
guilt and feelings of having committed sins which needed to be expiated and so on. There's
quite a different background. No doubt there were some individuals after all human nature is
very resilient. No doubt there were some individuals even under those circumstances who
did manage to manifest genuine concern for others. One cannot deny that. But the overall
picture doesn't seem so healthy or so positive.

Christabel; It's interesting that although that seemed to be a very introverted self-awareness
thing. Yet it seems to me that it was imposed from outside them. The rules were laid down
by some outside group or God or whoever and that they weren't really working for them-

selves; they were working to a set of rules beyond them.

S: Therefore not using the rules but in a sense being used by the rules. But you could say perhaps that the Mahayana Buddhism in general starts from the fact that we are involved with other people. You know human beings are essentially social. We wouldn't survive otherwise. A baby as soon as it is born is dependent upon being brought up by other human beings. It cannot survive independently. As some animals can. So in a way we cannot get on without other human beings and in a sense that isn't a bad thing, because we are forced to recognize that there are other selves in the world. You know perhaps an animal never gets around to this; certainly a reptile and a fish never get around to this. In most cases they are independent from the time that they are born or hatched. Maybe birds are dimly aware of other birds because they are raised by other birds. But even they are probably not. But a human being can become aware of another human being, aware of himself or herself in relation to another human being. Realise that here is a limit, that my individuality ends here. and from that point the other begins and therefore can get some sense of his or her contingency. And transcendence of that narrow self-hood in something wider and more expansive which eventually transcends the subject-object distinction altogether on a level of awareness.

What does contingency mean ?

S: A contingency is something bound up with causes and conditions. Of course there is one thing we need to bear in mind here, we must not be carried away. It is obviously true. The concern with and for ourselves is quite positive and healthy. We mustn't forget that, that metta begins with oneself. You don't necessarily feel more concerned for others by mutilating your self-concern. It must be an extension a natural growth as it were. Even though there may be sort of painful moment S is the process. But you must never lose touch with your own healthy self-regard and self-love. You are also a person, you are also a self; include yourself with everybody. Develop metta and karuna towards all sentient beings, that includes you. So it isn't a sort of attitude of deliberate self-abnegation. It's a growing of yourself which is required, not a crushing of yourself. But an enlargement of yourself.

Anjali: It seems very easy to go to one of the two extremes rather than strike a balance.

S: Yes indeed. Within the context of so called spiritual life you can either go out towards others involve yourself in social work and do good, forgetting your own mental state or as a result escape from that, or alternatively you can be so pre-occupied with your own mental states in an almost neurotic way that you just are oblivious to the existence of other people and your so-called spiritual quest becomes totally selfish. At every step, at every level to be aware of the double reference as it were. The inner and the outer self and other.

"however when Benevolence and Compassion are born in us, out of affection for sentient beings we cannot bear the idea of attaining liberation for ourselves alone. Therefore, Benevolence and Compassion must be developed. The teacher Nanjusrickirti also affirmed: the follower of Mahayana must not be without Benevolence and Compassion for a single moment. And, The interests of others are safeguarded by Benevolence and Compassion, not by hatred.

S: That is quite a strong expression "We cannot bear the idea" Well may

be we should discuss this at somewhat a lower level but "When Benevolence and Compassion are born", when maitri and karuna are born, Dc/1-18

we cannot bear the idea of attaining anything desirable or achieving anything desirable, just by ourself alone. I mean just sort of in the way we think, well supposing everything that you wanted was offered to you: a nice house, a car, food provided. But you would have to enjoy it all on your own. Would you really want that? I mean not because you need people other to administer to your needs but, you know, would you be really happy if only you were to enjoy that and others were to be excluded? If you couldn't bear that thought, well then you know metta and karuna have begun to arise. (laughter) This is quite a thought isn't it? That you cannot bear to enjoy something which others cannot enjoy with you. Of course you mustn't fake it to extremes. You mustn't deprive yourself because if you deprive yourself of everything that is not enjoyed by other people you might end up with nothing at all which would do no good either to yourself or to them. But you know generally speaking you should not be happy enjoying things which others are not able to enjoy. I mean it is not even a question of not wishing to gain things without others gaining them. But if you have them you are not even happy to enjoy them really if others are excluded from enjoyment. Well some people genuinely feel like that, at least to some extent. But if you don't feel like that well you are not really on the Mahayana path. For instance even say within the context of the Friends, one shouldn't really be able to completely enjoy all the facilities that one has of centres of communities and co-ops and possibilities of meditation and spiritual fellowship completely ignoring the needs of other people who don't have those things. One shouldn't have the attitude of just enjoying all those facilities and to sort of to hell with the rest of the world, to hell with the rest of society. If one did have that attitude well the whole thing would befall and come to an end. Because the right motivation would not be there. The sort of different selfishnesses would start getting in one another's way. therefore a spiritual movement one could say is essentially an expanding movement because you are never satisfied enjoying something positive if you can only enjoy it by yourself or with just a few people. You want, quite genuinely, without being a do-gooder or anything like that you want to share it with other people. So that means that if a spiritual movement to be a spiritual movement at all must constantly be expanding, because people who are already in the movement want to share what they have more and more with other people. And if they aren't doing that well clearly there is something wrong. Either they don't really value what they have of their attitude towards

it is one of self-complacency. So there are all sorts of implications here. So "we cannot bear the idea of attaining liberation for ourselves BC/1-19

alone" Well that is a bit far-fetched at the moment. But we cannot bear the idea of just ourselves say enjoying the Centre, enjoying the community. We really do want as many people as possible to share that. We don't have to have the idea of "Oh how nice there is only four of five of us today, nobody else has come. Well, you really wish that the whole place was full.

Sridevi: And one should want it for their sake. And (not that I need to take classes.

For their sake yes. That can be a dreadful attitude. It is so wrong. It's ... well I almost get annoyed when I hear people say "well I think it's time I took a class. I think it would be good for me". One does hear this and it is so self-complacent. You are not thinking of other

people. In the same way you hear someone say well I've heard, perhaps not heard for some time "well I think it is about time I had a relationship." (laughter) Yes, this is the expression of self-complacency. It's not that you see somebody and you are aware of that person as a person and wish to enter into a relationship, no the person hasn't (laughter) So you say "well I'd like to have a relationship" So you see the implications. So in the same way "I'd like to take a class". I mean the people aren't there. (laughter) They need to know about meditation. "I'd like to take a class. I feel that is what I'd like to do".

_____ A craving.

~: 'Well one could presumably put it as strongly as that. But certainly an expression of self-complacency.

Bridevi: Yes but I think there's this danger in Centres, you get so obsessed with running a centre that you almost forget why you are doing it.

well that is more often because you are just pre-occupied with the machinery. That is a somewhat different thing. But here, you're quite

so you would like to take a class but you don't even know of the people. A class is just a class. It isn't a means of contacting people, or a means of helping people it is a means of helping you which means that the self-regarding element the self development side of things has got out of hand. You know one has even heard sometimes people complaining that they've not been given a chance to lead a class. They were complaining because they needed they thought to lead a class in the interest of their development. Without any reference to any possible people who wanted to attend a class. So one must really watch this. . . .

"Therefore Benevolence and compassion must be developed. The Teacher ~enjusrikirti" which means the praise of Manjusri "also affirmed: BC/i-20

A follower of the Mahayana must not be without Benevolence and

Compassion for a single moment."

That's rather a tall order isn't it? (laughter)

Ohammadina: It's true isn't it? The moment you lose that perspective then you become self-complacent again and presumably we oscillate between a person who is outward going to self-complacency. You are not really treading the Mahayana path.

S: Out it means if you are treading the Mahayana path, you are concerned with all sentient beings or a certain number of them, including yourself. It's not that you are left out. No, you give objective attention to your needs too. But not exclusively. And not with any sort of self-complacency.

_____ Well, you can be doing something which appears to be more for yourself, like a solitary retreat, but it is a question of your mental attitude. You know somehow you become cut off emotionally from other people.

3: Yes, but even if you are on a solitary retreat, well you can do the metta bhavana. You know you can be genuinely aware of others in that way, wven if you aren't in physical contact with them.

it's a question of your emotions, not where you are, or what you are actually doing.

S: Yes, right. I have been feeling, perhaps more recently, as regards the movement as a whole, there still isn't enough awareness of the needs of people outside. I think this is especially so now that the movement has reached a certain size, in a sense that it consists of a certain, well several hundred people actively involved. It has become a world of its own which is a good thing. That is quite positive. But it is as though you can live your whole life within the movement with out bother- ing about anybody outside. So this is good. it is good that you have the Spiritual Community, an extended Spiritual community within which yo you can live out your whole life. That is really good. Out, at the same time, individually end collectively that movement must feel concern for those outside. And this IS where the question of expansion comes in Not that you just take refuge in that Spiritual community in a narrow sense. That is your base. That is your spring-board. it is not your hidey hole from the wicked world. Out I think since we have reached this stage, well in England anyway, the~e is a tendancy just to settle down on the part of some people and just sort of enjoy your contacts and your activities within the t"ovement without really any concern for people outside who haven't yet had the opportunity of coming in, in contact with the Movement. I think we need to be much more concerned with outside

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publicity and outward going activities and contacting people outside. netting to know people 0 tside, bringing them along. I don't mean in a forcible evangelising sort of way but there are lOtS of people, I'M convinced who if only they knew about the Friends would be overj yed to be in contact end to take part on whasoever level. Whe6her as a Friend or Mitre or ventually as an Order Member. 3o I think we need to be more aware of other people in that sort of wider sense.

Anne Masmillan: I suppose that in an individual's life end also perhaps in the mouement's life there is a necessity to be inward for a time..

S: Oh yes, one recognises that because very often when people come to the Friends, not always but very often, they come in after having been very much, as it were, overwhea~med by the world, the group. They might ven come in a pretty crushed seort of condition, so they're not in a position maybe for several years to think of going out. Th~y just want to get away from the world which has been far too much for them. So in that way they genuinely take refuge Within the Spiritual Community, the Friends in the widest sense. And they just don't want to have anything to do with the world for a while. That is quite understandable, just to give themselve time to recover from all the things that have been done t to them perhaps you ouknow outside for so many years, but as they do get more and more positive and more healthy, well they have to start sooner or later thinking in terms of tsking the offensive. But certainly 9ive people long enough witnin the mowement to patch themselves up and pull themselves together etc. That is necessary too.

Anne Macmillan: Yes, I was thinking maybe that happens with the movement as a whole as

well. But in a sense perhaps the Friends had to consolidate Not take that much part in anything other than get Centres together, sort of producing the situations for development. but possibly there will come a time where the Friends as a whole can take more of an offensive in sort of their approach to. ...

~ridev~; true, but it can almost happen without you noticing in London,

because we are so busy within the Friends, that you almost lose touch with how to communicate with people from outside. I think some people feel this. They react to the Friends being a group but they

We shouldn't do that. I think people should have, even private contact with outside people

S: Yes I would tend to agree with that. I know yes they are not. I'm fully aware of that, but I think none-the-less, especially contacts outside the Friends which are reasonably positive should be kept up, not as something completely separate, not that we never talk to those people or friends about our involvements with the Friends, but yes SC/L. .22 mention it, let it be known but I don't think it is a bad thing to keep up some contact outside the Friends. But maybe just with relations one's former family as it were. Keep*ting channels open.

So: "A follower of Maha ana must not be without Benevolence and compassion for a single moment ". I mean it must be an integral part of one's ideal and one's way of life.

"The interest of others are safeguarded by Benevolence and compassion, not by hatred."

What does it mean by saying that those interests are not safeguarded by hatred ? Is he being a bit ironical or is there some other meaning ? Perhaps it's just saying something which is completely obvious but which none-the-less we need to be reminded of. We know only too well that even if you start off by being concerned with the well-being of others, self-complacency creeps in and you may find yourself in a situation of conflicting, sort of almost fighting with and to do you know to them what you think is good for them. And your attitude can be motivated by hatred in fact rather than by Benevolence and compassion even though you are supposed to be safeguarding their interests. Any other way of looking at this.

Christobel: I was just thinking that if you come across something that you don't go along with and oppose it with hatred you actually are increasing the polarity, increasing the chasm.

S: Yes if it is a question of hatred. I think you have to distinguish between hatred and anger. How would you distinguish ?

_____ Hatred is actually out to hurt, to injure

Christobel: Anger could be quite positive.

S: Anger is as it were, you are accumulating energy just wanting to break through a certain barrier.

Sridevi: You can get angry with someone you still have metta for them. And then it is all right.

S: Yes I think you can. But you cannot feel hatred for somebody and still have metta for them. All right.

"Shall discuss the meaning of boundless:

Boundless Benevolence is dealt with

Under six heads of

Classification, frame of reference, causal characteristics,

methods of practice, measure of perfection and merits.

This is what we are going to go into. There is no need to deal with

them all together. But the~ is just one point. You notice so far reference has been made to Benevolence. But there is a little change BC/L. .23 in the next bit. What is the change ?

~boundless

O: Yes, any significance ?

_____ Does it mean Maha ?

S: No. ~or instance in Pali, metta and karuna are first two of the four Brahmaviharas. Well what are the Brahmaviharas also called. The Illimitables; which cannot be limited. So their essential nature is not to be limited, not to stop anywhere. Obviously you cannot start off with an unlimited maitri or karuna. Your whatever, aspiration may be your actual metta your actual karuna is limited to a certain number of people. Those presumably, or some of those with whom you are actually in contact. but the aspiration should be that it should be expanding and extending itself all the time. so one can say that one of the inherent, one of the essential characteristics of metta or karuna as of mudita and upeksa is that they are constantly expanding. There's no such thing as an actual infinity. For instance you cannot have an infinite number. So you cannot actually feel metta towards an infinite number of people, can you ? Except in the abstract, which doesn't count. You can only feel metta towards a finite number of people, but the point is that that finite number should be illimitable. It should not come to stop anywhere. So you say "Well I'm not going any further, that is my fraction as it were " (laughter) That is ineffective what people usually do. It's usually of course the family. And this is one of the weak points of the family, that that it is not wrong that you should love your family, obviously, but that it is wrong the love should be limited to the family. even though maybe for practical purposes your, the actual responsibility had to be given to the family. But you should be at least willing to go beyond that. So one of the essential characteristics of benevolence and Compassion is that they are boundless. ~boundless isn't perhaps a very good word because it suggests actual boundlessness. But it means a continued expansion. it is very active, not with regards, not only with regards to the people that actually are its object or objects but win as much as it's constantly taking in more and

more people. That is its nature. It doesn't wish to stop anywhere, with one particular circle of people. And this is why the F.W.B.o. must expand if it is the real thing. Otherwise it would mean that you're limiting your metta just towards the people within the movement, or this centre or that centre, or dare I say it just Women or just Men. [laughter]

Ohammadinna: Somebody I talked to recently tried not to have contact with people they liked or disliked. They tried to keep their contact with

people who they felt neutral towards because End of Tape.

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The Jewel Ornament of Liberation Seminar

Held at Padmaloka on January 1980

Present: Ven. Sangharakshita, Upasikas Dhammadinna, Srimala Anjali, Sridevi, and Anne Norman, Anne MacMillian, Una Christobel Butler, Anne Murphy, Karola and Susanna Laurola.

Chapter 7 Benevolence and Compassion

Day 1 Tape 2 Side A

S. Could you say that again please? (laughter.)

Voice Trying to make too much personal contact with people you liked or were drawn towards.

S. Mmmm

Voice Or people you felt aversion towards. How do you restrict this personal contact with people you felt neutral towards?

S. When he said 'restrict' does he mean develop metta towards.

V. Only have contact towards people you felt neutral towards.

S. Mmmm. Mmmm. I'm not quite sure about that.

V. If you like someone you're in danger.

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S. Well, it depends what you mean by like. If you are the sort of person who can latch on to others very quickly in an almost neurotic sort of way or develop a strong antagonism towards others and if you tend to oscillate between those extremes then perhaps you are better avoiding people who spark you off in that sort of way, in one way or another or establishing contact with people with whom you do not react in that sort of way. But it is very important

with regard to those other people you try to develop metta or don't just remain in a cool neutral state otherwise you're just cutting off contact.

V. But Bhante, by what you've just said the very fact is that you would have to have contact with them.

S. Yes.

V. I mean you'd have to have contact with the other two polarisations - people you are drawn to or people you feel antagonistic towards otherwise you are in cloud cuckoo land so at some point you're going to have to.

S. Well presumably if you have any sort of contact in the world at large - I suppose say broadly one could avoid those to whom you felt naturally, instinctively drawn in perhaps not a very healthy way and also those you felt naturally antagonistic to you could, I suppose, relatively avoid them. Although sooner or later you've got to be able to deal with people generally. But it might be a sort strategic withdrawal as it were, to try to develop metta towards and relate positively with, people who with regard to whom

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S. you don't feel definite subjective attraction or definite subjective aversion, that could be a meaningful strategy. But I think the danger would be that one wasn't just avoiding people. That would be the danger and to remain very neutral, to remain very cool. And then, one should in any case develop metta towards those people. (pause)

It just depends on one's own personal state. Some people do take very strong, sharp likes and dislikes to some other people.

(break in the tape)

O.K. All is well Are we on the air? V. Yes.

S. Yes, so there are these subjective factors and objective factors we have to give some weight to each. We can't all together ignore our subjective preferences. On the other hand we mustn't lose sight of the objective situation. This is one of the things that we've emphasised constantly with regard to the Order especially, but it applies to the movement as a whole - that when you're ordained you find yourself within a spiritual community along with a number of other people who've made the same commitment as you have, but you may find you experience a strong personal incompatibility with some of those other committed people, that on the purely personal level you just don't get on. Or you don't even really want to get on, you just don't want to ignore each other. But in a way that represents a challenge because you have really to ask yourself, well, how much weight do I attach to these purely personal reactions

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S. and how much weight do I attach to the common factor which is the common spiritual commitment. Which (10) I really make the basis of the way in which we relate. So if you

are all equally, let's say, spiritually committed that should be the most important thing and the fact that you have that in common should outweigh all these other things and you should be able to transcend the purely personal differences. That one is an extrovert, and the other an introvert, one is a science person, the other is an arts person, one is aggressive and the other is something else. One should be able to transcend all these things as well as subtler, intangible differences and one should be able to relate simply or mainly on the basis of the common spiritual commitment. And one should n'ak--a genuine effort to do that. The same applies within the residential communities. The fact that you're all there for the same reason, the same niirnnq.e should enable you to transcend what are comparatively petty personal differences.

V. And also people do change on the level of personal differences, on a psychological level. If you think that you are what you are at the moment and the other person is something else it's very reactive, I think ?

S. It is extraordinary how important quite small, or seemingly small, differences often are. But they shouldn't be. Not within this sort of framework, this sort of context.

V. It does seem as though sometimes some people work better together or live better together ? whereas if there's too much contact-

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S. They might not be necessarily, as it were, drawn to each other. They may be able to work together well, none the less. They may have complementary talents or capacities. Judging by the discussion we've been having for quite a while now in the Friends, it does seem the experience of working together with someone is very important and that you can almost say you don't really know someone unless you've worked with them. In a sense you don't even know whether you really like them or dislike them because the working together situation is so different (pause)

Some of the people who have to work on retreat at Sukhavati were talking about this and said what a positive experience it was. That it was really a retreat and at the same time they really worked together - people who normally, in some cases, didn't see much of each other for various reasons. I think if you work with someone you see them in a different sort of way and perhaps the personal subjective differences very often matter less than when you're able to relate in that positive, practical sort of way.

(pause)

All right let's go on on 'Classification'

V. Where are we? 'Classification if threefold'

S. That's right.

Karola 'Classification is threefold:

(1) Benevolence with reference to sentient beings (11) the nature of the whole of reality, and (111) without reference to any particular object As stated in the (I can't pronounce that) BCI Page 6

S. Aksayamatipariprcchasutra - the sutra of the questions of

Karola 'Benevolence with reference to sentient beings is found in Bodhisattvas who have just formed an enlightened attitude; with reference to the nature of the whole of reality in Bodhisattvas who live practising good; and without reference to any particular object in Bodhisattvas who have realised and accepted the fact that all entities of reality have no origin.'

S. Let's just go into that a little. Actually the text itself tells us in a minute. We're only going to be discussing or the text is going to be discussing, Benevolence of the first kind: 'Benevolence with reference to sentient beings.' This is found in Bodhisattvas who have just formed an enlightened attitude. 'With reference to sentient beings' - 'sentient beings' meaning here, all living- not even all conscious beings - strictly speaking it would include animals as well, would include even insects, would include even plants. So this is also quite a thought isn't it?

V. Do you include plants ?

S. Yes, plants are traditionally included in sentient beings that is because they are alive.

V. I've sometimes heard it in people teaching the metta bhavana 'beings with feeling' - sentient beings translated - 'beings with feelings.' BCI £0 Page 7

S. As the metta bhavana is actually practised and taught, it's confined to human beings. It's confined in the sense that one is not explicitly directed to direct one's metta towards animals and plants. This is partly because it would make the whole practise much longer and more complex and also for people who really have yet to develop metta towards human beings - to develop metta towards animals and plants is a bit unnecessary. But, no doubt, that is the end, that one feels metta toward q ~nim~~.q ~nd nl~nts ~~ well as to~all sentient beings. Some people claim to mean - some people we know feel affection to animals. I think that's a bit suspect if it's to the exclusion of human beings. I think in England, therefore, what is good is that we don't encourage people to develop metta towards doggies and pussies

(laughter)

because some people I'm sure would go straight onto that ignoring the human beings, straight On to the real thing which is metta towards the dogs, cats, donkies and other sentient beings. quite happily by passing human beings.

V. Some people really feel a lot of affection towards their ?S. I think if one keeps - it's in a way like any sentient thing - I think one gets used to it. Do you see what I mean? It's quite strange - you might have noticed this in communities. You might start off really not liking someone in the community very much but you get used to them so you accept them. From that a sort of affection does develop, because in a way you have no choice. There you

S. you're stuck with them so in the end you get used to them. You just put up with all their silly ways and in the end you don't even put up with them you accept, well, they're just like that, what can you do about it?, sort of thing, and out of that some sort of quasi- affection grows. So I think it's like that not only with human beings but with animals and plants. If they're there long enough you usually develop some sort of tolerance, some sort of affection for them. So I think that's a natural thing. As regards practise we need not go out of our way to develop metta towards animals and plants, it's difficult enough to develop it towards human beings. So we don't therefore teach the metta bhavana saying, 'all human beings, all animals, all plants.' No! we just stop at human beings - not that we definitively end the practise there. But it's enough for the time being if we can do just that. But as we said metta is of a nature to expand. I mean that the number of human beings is finite. When you've finished with them what are you going to do? You are going to return to the animals and the insects and birds, even lice and earth worms - all the rest.

V. I've found when people do say that in a class it sort of liberates more feelings, expands your mind and somehow it's easier to then feel metta towards human beings.

S. Ah yes! That's interesting.

V. Some people even say if you believe in other beings on other planets ? it does have some liberating

expanding effect. BCI Page 9

V Yes. I was told that.

S. Yes, when I was taking classes I always ended with all things in all the directions of space which certainly is as it were 'expansive'. But one must be a bit careful not to lose oneself in the distance with the neglect of the near I think also there is this question, a deeper more basic question of one's attitude towards life. I don't mean life in the philosophical abstract but life in the sense of organic life. Do you know what I mean? In the sense of basically to begin with, vegetation - the environment. How do you feel about that? How do you feel towards the woods and the grass and the crops? I think this is a very basic thing especially if one feels that man's ancestors originated in the forests and trees even if they did come down to earth eventually. Some people say there is an almost innate feeling for the woods and for vegetation and for nature. I think this is true. So I think there is a feeling a positive attitude towards all that of which, on a certain level or up to a certain point, we are a part. We're part of that earth system. So there's a question of this metta towards all sentient things - organic life, in this sort of way as a very broad basis for our metta towards more specialised, more individualised forms of life, that is to say the animals and human beings. People who live in cities are to some extent cut off from that positive relationship with and feeling for organic life. I don't know if anyone's noticed anything in particular - that is - when they go into, say, the greenhouses or glasshouses at Kew or places like that, when there are lots of plants all together, do you feel anything in particular? What do you feel? All these plants. BCI Page 10

S. massed together very often.

Pim I actually feel a bit

uncomfortable sometimes when I'm faced with that.

S. That's interesting because it could be a bit like when you're together with a lot of people.

Pim It is quite interesting. I remember when I was a kid putting my hand in a bag in a cupboard and finding an onion which had _____ and I just felt really upset. I don't know why. It really struck me that.

S. It's very tangible isn't it, a whole glass house full of vegetation. It's very dense, as it were.

V. Cuddly!

V. What?

V. Cuddly!

S. Oh! Did you say 'cuddly' or 'cuddling?'

V. Cuddly!

S. In a way

V. ? ?

S. It's environing, in a way it's 'embracing' you could say. BCI Page 11

S. We don't often have the opportunity of being right deep in a dense forest, - in the midst of really lush vegetation. I noticed this on my travels, especially in Malaysia which is a tropical country with very heavy rainfall. The vegetation is very lush, very green, very rich, very dense. You get a quite different sort of feeling. You certainly didn't get it in India because Poona and _____ deserts and even in New Zealand there was more bush - you get something of it there - but Malaysia was densest of all. So you get that sense of life in a quite interesting way. I always say - from my own experience - you get an experience of something on a certain level almost 'conscious'. It's not just alive in a sort of scientific sense. You can actually feel almost a sort of consciousness there, especially when there are flowers. I don't want to get fanciful or anything like that - but there is a theory or at least a belief by some people that flowers are brightly coloured to attract human attention, and one can almost believe this, if you see what I mean. Apparently it's quite unnecessary that they should be coloured. Insects don't see the colours that we do because they haven't got those sort of eyes. So why these sort of coloured effects? ~eems r~tTher sr-r~n~e? ~iit T bthink mere is ~ need nn a certain level for an awareness of all sentient beings, quite literally in the form of all organic life. When I've talked about the four dimensions of awareness and one 5 awareness of nature, awareness of the environment which includes this and which would include presumably a sort of environmental concern - a concern for the well being of the environment, not just on account of your relationship to it so it remains useful for you but

also BCI (3~ Page 12

S. because in a sense it has an intrinsic value and worth of its own, even apart from the part it plays in your life. In a way be concerned with the trees for their own sake, not just for your sake.

V. I think one can be tremendously optimistic about things in general. If you see what farmers , especially around here do, they'll spray everything with all sorts of poisons and in spite of that up comes a scarlet pimpernell or a in spite of all the things, the junk that can be chucked at plants - they overcome it and still go on growing.

S. Well this is something that people found during the war. All the bombsites immediately - this willow herb started to grow. It was almost symbolical - all these bombsites- they were sprouting with willow herb! I take it everybody knows what willow herb is? It's sort of pinky-purple tall plant. It's a sort of weed but it looks really very pretty, and covered some of these bomb sites. And it really does sort of suggest a recuperative power that is in nature. This is another thing one feels when there is a lot of vegetation, a sort of emanation of health. It may have a chemical explanation but this is what one feels. It may be something to do with breathing their oxygen or whatever.

V. Well they breathe carbon dioxide which is what our waste product is.

S. Yes. Thej~ take that in. BCI Page 13

V. We couldn't survive without plants or worms.

S. Right.

V. There'd be no earth without worms.

V. I think we should make more contact with ecological

groups. There seem to be so many people who have developed this feeling.

S. I raised this point for some time that giving an illustration of the sort of things we could be involved with. I/we mentioned the ecological movement. I think we've had one or two contacts but I think perhaps they could be extended. Perhaps they will when we've got more people who are free.

V. I'm sure some of those people would in fact be very open to the Friends, looking for something else.

V. That's how I came to the Friends from growing things and getting close to animals, from the city to there and then finding there was something else still needed.

S. Yes you need a human element in the midst of nature. Nature by itself is not enough, animals by themselves are not enough. A human being needs other human beings. A growing human being needs other growing human beings. So in the midst of nature you need your spiritual community. In the Buddha's day this was literally the situation because the

Buddha taught in the midst of these great forests, more BCI

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S. often than not. And there was the Sangha just sitting under the trees in the midst of the great forest. It was that sort of environment. We don't have that, quite, now in England. Even in India they don't have it. They cut down most of the Maha the great forest. It used to stretch right across northern India. Or even in this country were forests. The greater part of Britain was covered with forests at the time of the Norman Conquests. It's been steadily reduced since. There are only a couple of small forests left now. If you think, originally, man literally lived in the midst of nature. There were little settlements with tracks connecting them through the forests. (tape fault)

I got that impression from a book I read a couple of years ago; that was Thomas Hardy's 'The Woodlanders'. You really got that impression of human life immersed in this mass of green vegetation - quite extraordinary from that point of view. It gave a quite strange sort of sensation. Also they were living in a sort of garden of Eden. It really seemed like that, though they were living just ordinary rustic lives: but there was this extra dimension, this extra element because they were in the midst of nature in the midst of greenery, in the midst of trees. So all this sort of awareness is a dimension of the development of metta towards all living beings. It means that - all living beings! not just human beings! So I think this is something perhaps we need - though we don't bring it into the actual practise of the metta bhavana - we need to emphasise it in a general sort of way. It includes ecological concern. BCI

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V. I think being more responsible for your own daily needs, of say producing plants and food and elements - needing to cut wood to make a fire and so on, can help you to develop that aspect of being more aware of the outside world.

S. But there's also for instance the aesthetic aspect of it, that you're aware, even apart from the relation of those things to your own needs. You're not only aware of the earth as a source of crops. But you're also aware of them for their own sake, on account of their 'beauty' (for want of a better term) you appreciate them for what they are, irrespective of human needs and human attitudes. You're just as happy contemplating waste ground with lots of weeds as you are contemplating beautiful field of waving corn: and you're quite happy to look at the apples lying on the ground eaten by worms and wasps.

V. Even so about environment - it's become a political issue in lots of European countries: Germany, France, Sweden. It's really kind of very strong - but just because

S. It's become a political issue for obvious reasons, that is to say if you want to do anything to improve the environment, 1. you come up against various vested interests

2. you can only do certain things to the environment at a governmental level with governmental help.

so I think if you go very far beyond your own garden I think you need to get involved in

politics, which means intensive lobbying. If that doesn't work well one thinks of setting up a party, a political party which makes the environment, which makes ecology one of its platforms, or even BCI Page 16

S. its principal platform. I think the States and I think in Germany the amount of support there was from the voters for these as it were, ecological parties.

PIm I think there has been a small ecological party set up ? ?

V. But some people claim that the Friends isn't concerned with politics - why aren't you concerned with society and the environment?

S. There are several things to be said. The Friends, that is to say the F.W.B.O., the organisations, cannot be concerned with anything political because they have the status of charities, and according to law a charity is not allowed to engage in politics. So the F.W.B.O., as such, cannot become politically involved, but if people within the Friends, in their individual capacities, wanted to be involved there would be nothing to stop them, provided they were fully convinced and it was generally felt within the movement that it was a skillful thing to do. There'll be nothing to stop them banding together and setting up an organisation, even a political organisation, but it could not be a charity. It would have to be something else governed by the appropriate regulations, appropriate laws - you see?

V. I have a feeling that you could make the ecologists to see that human beings are part of the environment, as well raising ? ? in a way more important, only you need both. BCI Page 17

It's not enough to cultivate plants, we have to cultivate

human beings. We have a ~~arden in the Buddhist Centre -

a garden of human beings

(pause)

So the classification is threefold: Benevolence with

reference to sentient beings-

So benevolence with reference to sentient beings is found in

bodhisattvas who have just formed an enlightened attitude.

This translation is a bit interpretive. 'Just formed an

enlightened attitude' really is in whom the bodhicitta, the

thought or will to enlightenment has just arisen. In

a way that's quite a thought! That the actual feeling,

the actual experience of metta towards all living beings,

at least in principle, here is concomitant with the arising

of the bodhicitta. Of course, also it is said that the development of strong
maitre karuna is one of the

conditions precedent for the arising of the bodhicitta. One

should be careful not to draw hard and fast lines here: not

that you need so much metta and karuna and pop! up comes the
bodhicitta...

(laughter)

or anything like that. No, but the two are certainly intimately
related.

(pause)

So this characteristic of good will towards sentient beings -
on the quite ordinary, practical common sense level - it's
quite important from the Mahayana point of view. It almost
defines the follower of the Mahayana. As you go about I
think you can often feel that some people like sentient
beings, like human beings and others in a way just don't.

(pause)

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S. The 'liking' may be very mixed at first but at least there is as it were a positive attitude
towards other human beings, other sentient beings. One can work on that to refine it. But if
there's aversion there's not very much you can do except get rid of the diversion and then
perhaps develop more metta.

V. Do you think that can also be mixed? Don't you think those

two attitudes, liking and disliking ? ?

? ?

S. Oh yes of course.

V. You can feel both sometimes and some people can feel, I can feel just an aversion to human beings ? on a tube train and you think ugh! just really don't to know. You know it's going against the bodhisattva ideal but that's what what I actually feel at that point, and another time I might feel a lot of sympathy. It's not just an indifference it's an actual

S. ... repugnance! I was reading something about Swift, Dean Swift, the other day and there was a discussion of his picture of the Yahoos, as representing on his part, a very deep disgust with human beings; and a sort of feeling that he himself was a Yahoo, at least to some extent, and therefore a deep disgust with himself.

V. What was a Yahoo?

S. Oh you must read Swift. It's impossible to describe, but roughly, a Yahoo is a sort of bestial creature that Swift BCI

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S. lites upon in a distant country he visits, and he realises eventually that this bestial creature is what is usually called a human being. And in this particular country the Whinims are civilised. The Whinims are horses and they keep the Yahoos as sort of slaves. The horses, the Whinims are very rational and cultivated - benevolent.

? use of 'benevolent', benevolent creatures whereas the Yahoos are very ugh!, very nasty.

V. Yahoo's slang ?

V. For what?

V Yobbo.

S. Well the word comes from Swift. He coined this word, sometimes in England, you refer to someone as a Yahoo.

V. I've heard it used in Ireland.

S. Swift coined this word. It comes from Gulliver~s Travels - this innocent little book for the kiddies. Have you read Gulliver's Travels?

V. No.

S. This is the fourth part which is supposed to be the most powerful part, but the least read. First, you get the visit to the country of the little p~ple, then the visit to the country of the big people, then the visit to the BCI Page 20

S. country of the crazy people, then the visit to the country of the wise horses and horrible Yahoos. After which Gulliver goes home.

(laughter)

V. That's enough.

Dhamma-It does seem to be the more bestial aspects of ? ThMna make me feel more ? and sometimes even after a retreat

you can see it even more clearly.

S. Well that aspect is there so it isn't that one fools oneself or tries to sprinkle rose water on it all

V. You've got to ? ?

S. One sees that, yes you feel metta and karuna not only none the less but because of that; and you really wish that those people could be something better. In fact you may even see the potentiality of them. But admittedly it must be very difficult sometimes. When you see some of the people one can see on tube trains you can't help feeling somehow that they've not got much hope in this life. Perhaps they haven't but one should feel metta and karuna none the less or even more - that they're not going to be able to do very much in this life but perhaps they will in some future existence. (pause)

So 'Benevolence with reference to sentient beings is found in Bodhisattvas who have just formed an enlightened attitude' which really suggests how difficult it is in a way. You're virtually a bodhisattva when you've got, well I won't say an A

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S. unflinching, but at least a reasonably constant attitude of good will towards other sentient beings. You're very well on the path then. While I think most people can manage a quite positive experience of metta in the course of their practice of the metta bhavana but it isn't easy to keep it up in the midst of contact with other people. But when you can be at least reasonably constant in that, reasonably positive towards other people much of the time well you could say, at least the beginnings of a novice bodhisattva were there. So it isn't really all that far away - which in Hinayana terms one could say is tantamount virtually to Stream Entry. If your metta is constant and there is never any reaction, well yes, you've virtually entered the Stream. You can see, in a way, how big a thing it is to be positive towards others the greater part of the time - in spite of all their failings and your own failings etc. etc., - in spite of all the complications that may arise.

(pause)

And then 'with reference to the whole of reality in Bodhisattvas who live practicing good' That means Bodhisattvas who are practicing the first six or seven stages of the Bodhisattva path. They are capable of metta 'with reference to the nature of the whole of reality' That is to say there is a difference. You begin by developing metta towards all sentient beings, which is difficult enough, but you've got the conception of them as being separate from your self. But this second stage that feeling of separateness begins to be overcome. It's not that you reduce everything to a monistic metaphysical oneness but the sense of difference and separateness

definitely lessens. It's quite difficult to describe naturally because one can only use words BCI
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S. derived from dualistic experience. But it's as though without there being a cancelling out of self and others the experience of self, or the experience of self and others, begins to be permeated by something which transcends both, without as it were cancelling them or negating them on their own level. It's as though the distinction of self and others is no longer absolute but is contained within a wider framework as a result of which the tension, so to speak, between self and others is lessened. It's not felt as so important. For instance at the beginning there might be a conflict; 'shall I give it to myself or shall I give it to him?' So in the end with a tremendous effort you decide

'I'll be really noble and give it to the other person. But when you reach this level there isn't that sort of

conflict. You sort of feel, well, give it to myself, give it to the other person, well what sort of difference does it really make? In the end it just comes to the same thing so you just give it to the other person quite freely and happily. You don't feel that sort of conflict because you don't feel that there is such a real difference between you and the other person. It's more like that! Not that you're both equally reduced to a sort of blank, or a sort of void in the ordinary sense. So then there's not such an element of conflict or choice or sacrifice in it.

(Pause)

Then thirdly 'without reference to any particular object in Bodhisattvas who have realised and accepted the fact that all entities of reality have no origin?' This occurs in the eighth of the ten Bodhisattva bhūmis or stages and this is very, in a way, metaphysical. It's anūpaticca dharma

shanti ? BCI Page 23

S. the patient acceptance of the non-arisenness of dharmas - that dharmas do not in reality arise. They do not in reality pass away. In other words you go beyond conditionality, you go beyond causality. You see that in reality there is no conditionality, no causality, and you patiently accept that. You are receptive, spiritually receptive to that sort of realisation even though it goes against all your suppositions. It's connected with seeing the whole of existence in a way, like a mirage. A mirage doesn't really come into existence and therefore it doesn't really go out of existence; so you accept the whole of existence in a way like a mirage. I touched upon this in one of the lectures didn't I? Recently?

V. Yes, one of the recent ones.

S. But nonetheless you're compassionate or all the more compassionate! But this is something quite difficult even to think about.

So one has got these three different stages. Do you see what I mean. The stage where you're compassionate, or benevolent and compassionate towards sentient beings, seeing them as sentient beings. And very often, therefore there's quite a tension between you and others, quite a conflict of interest which you try to overcome. Then on the second level the

distinction between oneself and others is considerably relaxed. There isn't that sort of conflict; preferring other's interests to your own isn't nearly so difficult, becomes much more natural.

In the third level you've arrived at a different stage all together, a different experience all together. When all BCI Page 24

S. worldly conventions and ways of looking at things are transcended and your compassion becomes something which is very difficult to describe, indeed, just because you see the whole of existence in a completely different way. The categories of self and others are completely transcended. They're part of the dream. They're part of the mirage. So you're not bothered any more. But it's not well to think too much about that stage because it's really, for most people, quite academic. But none the less Sgam Po Pa lists these three, for the sake of completeness so that we shouldn't think that compassion, or benevolence and compassion for sentient beings as we actually experience them now is the last word on the subject, however necessary it may be for us now. There are dimensions of experience beyond: but they'll be there as it were waiting for us when we're ready for them.

V. Bhante, in the second stage you actually said 'preferring' other people's needs to your own - so this definitely. ...

S. If there's an objective need to prefer other people's needs to your own, you can do it quite spontaneously not that you, not that you actually prefer their needs to your needs. No. But if the occasion arises you are quite relaxed about it because you don't really feel that there's all that difference between you and the other person; all that difference between you're getting an extra slice of the cake and their getting it. I mean you could put it analogously in terms of the mother and the children. If there's an extra piece of cake, let's say, the mother usually gives it automatically to the children. She doesn't feel - BCI Page 25

S. admittedly it's not on a spiritual level - it's on a different level - but she doesn't feel all that much difference between herself and the children for obvious reasons. So analogously the Bodhisattva in the second level feels rather like that.

V. Oh. That's sort of quoted in the ? just like

a mother her only

S. So clearly it's an analogy, one must be careful of that too but nonetheless it is a genuine analogy. I think we're going to be coming on to that in a big way shortly, not this morning though.

I think this morning we'll think of winding up partly because my throat is getting a bit sore and I've got to keep some voice for the afternoon and partly also that seems a good place to stop anyway. But just go back over what we've done this morning and see whether anything still needs to be attended to.

(pause)

Perhaps we could just read that next paragraph that closes that sort of section 'in this book'

Anjali Down to where, Bhante?

S. Down to 'sentient beings'

Anjali 'In this book I shall discuss only the first type of Benevolence because of its practical importance, and you have to bear in mind that its frame of reference is the total it of sentient beings' BCI Page 26

S. So Sgam Po Pa says 'I shall discuss only the first type of Benevolence because of its practical importance' he means for the reader, for us, for the actual Buddhist and you have to 'bear in mind that its frame of reference is the totality of sentient beings' That's the ideal! However small the number of people you're actually developing metta towards, here and now, you've got to have the ideal, you ought to have the aspiration of extending it gradually to all. It must be 'on the move' the whole time and include more and more people, at least in principle, at least in your meditation, because it's not easy to get to know a lot of people well. At least when you are with them, you are in contact with them your relationship, your contact should be completely positive.

Anyway, any points arising on what we've done so far?

(pause)

Perhaps we ought to look at this word 'sacrificed'. This is used in the quote that is to say needs to be realised 'for our own interest, the interest of others, though they be many, have to be sacrificed.'

These words are put into the mouth of the self-complacent person. Essentially the self-complacent person thinks in terms of sacrifice. This isn't, as I've said before, a very Buddhistic way of looking at things. It suggests an absolute gulf between you and the other. But the less you feel that, the less you think in terms of 'sacrifice'. So Buddhism doesn't speak in terms of 'sacrificing yourself for others' or the Bodhisattva 'sacrificing himself for others, that sort of language, that sort of imagery of sacrifice (break in the tape) BCI Page 27

V. If you were growing for yourself would you be you'd be growing for others as well, though, wouldn't you, because you'd presumably you'd behave in different ways. It would help other people, wouldn't it?

S. Certainly! One needs to be aware of that dimension, and make sure also that any change in oneself is relayed, so to speak, to other people it affects your relationships with them. It should do eventually. We know or many of our friends know that it does have this effect, does work out in that way. So with regard to our relations, very often, even if we don't actually live with them, changes take place, and when we go to see them, well, they seem rather different to us - we seem different to them and that means a mutual adjustment in the relationship. If someone has to adjust to a change that has taken place in a person who has grown, it means that that adjustment will more likely than not involve growth for that other person. In other words if you have to adjust, or if you are to adjust to a person who is growing you have to grow too. Otherwise you can't keep up the connection, you can't keep up the relation, whether it's with parents or brothers and sisters, whoever it may be, old

friends (pause)

But at least it seems that parents and others, and old friends usually have to acknowledge that the person who has become involved with the Friends at least is happier and more positive than before. Usually they can't help acknowledging that. You had something to say about that in the last

? ? Didn't you?

V. My mother was criticising the clothes I wore, saying they were sort of drab and stuff. At the same time she couldn't really BCI Page 28

V. help but recognise that I was quite positive.

S. ?

Well, there's no reason why you shouldn't be bright sartorially.

V. It was almost like she was trying to sort of find some sort of fault with what's going on but at the same time couldn't help but see it was all for the good.

S. I think since we just mentioned this subject - the way people dress does reflect to some extent their attitude towards themselves. If you just haven't got any money well obviously you can't have any pleasure in anything like that. Aside from that the way you dress does, to some extent at least without emphasising it too much, reflect the way you feel about yourself.

(pause)

Any further points?

V. When you mention quasi-affection, earlier Bhante, do you think that's what we generally believe we feel towards most sentient beings? I can't remember....

S. I think very often we do feel positive towards others but I think if we look into it, I think we ought perhaps to

recognise that a great deal of our positivity is a result of a certain measure of gratification - even sense gratification, which links up of course with the self complacency. There's a rather cynical observation in this connection by Somerset Maugham somewhere. He says a man is never - I suppose this applies to women too - He says 'a man is never in so highly BCI Page 29

S. sniritual a mood as just after a good meal!" See what I mean? So sometimes our positivity towards others is just because things are going our way, we're getting the things we want. Our needs are being satisfied. I think the test comes when we are having a difficult time, our needs, maybe, are not being met, well we can still feel really positive towards others. It's not difficult to feel a bit pleasant towards others when you're living in a nice house, you're warm, you're well clad, you're well fed, you're comfortable, you're not being

pushed or pressed, well it isn't very difficult then to feel a bit positive towards others - I would say that that is not genuine, positive positivity. But if you're living under difficult conditions and maybe you haven't had enough to eat that day, maybe you're not very well and maybe you haven't got any money and there's all sorts of worries - but still you're positive with other people! - well you could perhaps claim that that was real positivity.

We know some people show remarkable positivity even when they're quite ill but others. - things go a little bit wrong just in one particular way - they get into a very nasty mood. So I think a lot of our ordinary social positivity is just simply due to the fact that things are going well for us for the present, and our needs are being met, usually quite basic needs - food, shelter, amusement and so on.

That's the real test of positivity. It doesn't depend upon conditions, of that sort. When I was in India among the ex-untouchables I really marvelled at their positivity. I agree, as I said before, with what Kulamitra wrote in a more general sort of way. But nonetheless it was quite astonishing BCI Page 30

S. to see how positive millions of people, especially our own Indian Order Members and mitras, can be, under what we would regard as very difficult conditions. If you were there this would be a house and you'd all be living in it with children. You really would! This would be divided into four rooms at least, or five or six. One would be the kitchen and there'd be all of you, and your menfolk and your children possibly. That's a bit extreme but it can happen like that. Dharmaratchita and Dharmaratchena live in one room with four other people, their own two children, a sister of Dharmaratchita and somebody else.

V. I was never quite clear who lives in that house and who doesn't 'cause so many people come in and open the wardrobe and take out some possessions

(laughter) you just don't know.

S. This is an upstairs room. There's a kitchen downstairs which serves several families in several rooms but there were six of them sleeping in that room which is not very many by Indian standards and that's where the children do their homework under those conditions.

Parami Gosh! How on earth do they do their practice?

S. But they remain positive. One girl, one mitra was coming along and she was sleeping at night in a room which, I gathered, was much smaller than this with twenty-four people all together and she slept on a shelf and she meditated every morning.

(gasps) BCI Page 31

S. And she was a bright, cheerful, happy sort of girl.

Parami Sounds like the Glasgow mitras. There are apparently three of them living in one room.

S. In a cupboard flat? If you can keep up positivity under difficult circumstances that one can say is real positivity. It's easy to be positive when things are going well, going well in

the sense of going 'your way' and you're comfortable and well fed etc. etc. In this country, I was going to say, even within the Friends - even within the Friends - from a material point of view - we have things so easy compared with how people are in India and so many other places. And yet we grumble sometimes so much and don't appreciate what we've got both materially and culturally and spiritually. I really felt this when I came back from India this time. People have a heavenly life here on the whole. They don't know it. I mean if you look out into the country - they don't realise it - they're grumbling and muttering and wanting more money, going on strike and all surly, and resentful. They don't realise how lucky they are if they devoted themselves to their individual development in addition they'd have an even better life.

V. Why do you think there's that difference? That seems to be a cultural difference. Where does it all come from?

S. I just don't know. I suppose one could blame it all on Christianity, but probably that wouldn't be quite fair.

V. They don't know anything else. BCI

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S. They don't know anything else, perhaps.

V. It's better to accept ? positive than

S. In India tradition is very strong in quite a good way as well as in some bad ways. One felt that their cultural tradition under Hinduism quite strongly gave them a lot of support. We don't seem to have that partly because we've rejected our Christian tradition, and quite rightly, but it hasn't really been replaced by anything equally powerful but more positive. A lot of it could be due to that.

V. The children in India look much happier than, for example the children in England. English children are healthier, fed better but they are just

S. They pick up on the attentions of their elders. Indian children are happy even when they are not very well clothed.

V. Tibetan children are happy.

S. They're very happy aren't they - very happy!

V. ? ? so strong and happy.,

and those in refugee conditions ? ?

S. Yes, yes, anyway let's leave it there.

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1980 Chapter ? Day 2 Tape 1

Side 1

S: Alright, who hasn't read yet? Start off with the Causal Characteristic

~ The Causal Characteristic, is the desire that all beings may find happiness.

S: The Causal Characteristic of

Anne Mc: Benevolence.

S: Benevolence and Compassion Causal characteristic means something like the essential characteristic. What really distinguishes it. The desire that all beings may find happiness. This is in a way mm, its very obvious, it's very clear, but at the same time it's something that people,~ don't dwell upon very much, this idea of actually desiring that all beings may find happiness,because this isn't a desire that is usually very operative in people. You usually desire that, you know, you yourself, you know, should find happiness and perhaps 2 or 3 other people but the desire that all beings may find happiness is comparatively rare,isn't it?

But this is what has to be aimed at. Even if you arn' t able actually to do very much to help others at least that should be the strong desire~that they may be happy. So~you can't experience any kind of secret satisfaction, you know, when something goes wrong for somebody. Yeh? Often people do experience that. It's very very strange. You hear that something goes wrong,or somebody's plans go awry, you feel a sort of little sneaking satisfaction, which isn't very pleasant, but it does often happen because the isn't that desire that all beings may find happiness. Why do you think it is that were sometimes almost pleased when things go wrong for~other people, at 57

least sometimes, as though quite gratuitously. Not that we really wish them ill or wish any harm may befall them, but we can't help feeling a little satisfied sometimes, a little pleased when things don't go quite right for them, or something goes wrong.

Anne Mc: I suppose it's this self complacent attitiile again - something &to do with self-satisfaction.

So that Srimala ~They're not better off than you are.

S: They're not better off than you are.

Sanghadevi: It comes from competition.

S: It comes from competition. As though there's a competition in happiness.

Voices: Yes

S: As though if others are less happy, you must be more happy.

Christabel: There's a Christian phrase, "There but for the grace of God go I'. It might be too

if that evil is happening to somebody else ,Ait'5 not happening to you.

S: Yes, right. Its like the light~ning striking the ligh¼iing conductor. It doesn't strike you. Yes. It hasn't hit you. So you sort of can't help feeling a bit gleeful and congratulating yourself.

Anne Mc: Its the opposite of sympathetic joy.

tL

S: Yes. right. So, the causal characteristic is the desire that all

"

beings may find happiness. Alright then ,carry on with the method of

"

practice.

Anne Murphy: " The method of practice, is pondering over the benefits that stem from sentient beings, because the root of Benevolence lies in the memory of benefits received. In this life here on earth the greatest benefactor is our mother, because she (i) provides us with a body, (ii) suffers for our sake, (iii) gives us life and (iv) shows

"

us the world. As is recorded in the

S: Ill let you get away with that (laughter)

Anne Murphy: "Why is this so? Our mother raises us; undergoes hardships " for our sake; gives us life; and shows us the world. 58

S: Alright, let's look into that. The main point here is, "The method of practice is pondering over the benefits that stem from sentient beings.because the root of benevolence lies in the memory of benefits received".

Now to what extent do you think that is universally true? "The root of benevolence", that is to say what starts benevolence off what sparks benevolence off "lies in the memory of benefits received".

~~~~~"" ,~"~.~~ Presumably if you're had a really horrible upbringing, ks,tt~ cruelty you'll find it much more difficult to feel positive or happy (voice fades)



S: Mm. But first of all the general principle, I mean, assuming you have received some benefits somewhere from somebody, is the root of benevolence to be found in the memory of those benefits received? Is that how you get benevolence going, as it were? Is that really the way? I mean, the assumption being you start off devoid of benevolence, yeh? You've no feeling of benevolence, no feeling of compassion. How are you to start developing that? According to this passage you start developing it by recollecting benefits which you have received from some other person, and starting to feel grateful for that, and in that way developing the feeling of benevolence and compassion. Do you think that this is usually how it all starts? Anne Mc: Maybe it's not quite as conscious as that, maybe it's more like the feeling that's inspired, like you recognise warmth because you've had it given to you and you can sort of regenerate it, rather than sort of t~in about it.

S: Yes, it's not perhaps so much that you think, well, I have received benefits from this person therefore it is only right and proper that I should feel benevolent in return. But it's as though psychologically if you have received benefits, or let's say, if you have received affection there will have been, as it were, naturally developed in

you the capacity to give affection. Yeh? Though no doubt in order to ai'~ develop benevolence compassion towards others, if you recollect benefits which you have received from another person the chances are

that that will help you in developing your metta towards that other

"~ rYe~," person, yeh? ~ have you ever noticed this in connection with~etta

bhavana practice?

Anne Mc: It sometimes seems to be a mixture of thought memory and a feeling that comes from sometimes you have to use the thought or I find I have to use the thought memory to get in touch with the feeling that

S: \Cause very often yes you use the thought to get in touch with the feeling. But it's as though some possibility, some residue of the feeling has to be there, you know for you to get in touch with through the thought. Because often we find that, you know, we may be a bit careless or even a bit callous with regards to other people.

not feel for them very much, not have much metta towards them. But then we start thinking, well look, they did this for me, they did that for me. I mean, there is a good relation between us. They have treated me well, in the past. In that way you can, you could say, get in touch with your own feeling towards that person, or even generate a positive feeling towards that person. Yeh?

: It can't help, it often seems easier if you already have a

feeling rather than thought, and then comes to the person who you think

you want to do it?

S. Well, I think you start off with the feeling if you have had probably a very fortunate

childhood and upbringing that has left you in a positive state so that you can respond positively even with Metta towards anybody that you may happen to meet. That is comparatively rare perhaps. But if you stray from that then you can be recalled to that by just recollecting that you have received benefits, you have received affection. And since you are let's say, a healthy positive person you know as soon as you become aware of that, well, that will be enough. You'll consciously feel goodwill benevolence and compassion towards other beings. Mm? In other words, its as though the feeling of gratitude, you know, was being used as a sort of bridge to the benevolence and compassion. Mm?

Srirevi: I think more often it happens that people think I should be grateful but they don't feel anything. It's unfortunate.

S: It is, yes. It may be partly because of, or to some extent because you know, we are sometimes brought up to regard gratitude as a duty and we start rebelling against that. We are told we ought to be grateful, you know, that is not really the way to develop gratitude in someone, to tell them that they ought to be grateful (pause).

Anne Mc: like you must feel grateful or else!! (laughter)

S: But this is something we have talked about in the F.W.B.O. from time to time. That is to say, this question of gratitude. And, I think some years ago we talked about it, you know, in connection with the Centres. Especially I think it was pundarika, when people were coming along and apparently benefitting from, you know, from coming along, but also apparently not feeling any gratitude towards the Centre, or the people who were making it possible. And we did talk quite a bit, you know, why this was. Why people didn't feel what one would have thought, was a natural gratitude.

Anne Mc: I wonder sometimes, that people feel it but they have an inability to express gratitude, maybe in a centre situation to go up to say to somebody, well, thanks.

S: I wasn't 50 much thinking of saying thank you, but when someone is being coming along for months, yeh, but in some cases, as it was, even years. (laughter). Well they seemed never, you know during the whole time, willing to do anything that expressed their gratitude, by helping out in any way, so that they only wanted to be on the receiving end. And this struck us as a bit odd, a bit surprising.

Anne Mc: Do you think that is still the case? S: I don't think it's like that, you know, to that extent. Maybe just here and there with some people. But on the whole things have changed as regards with comparing pundarika with the present L.B.C. Things have changed very much. Quite radically (pause).

Voice: It seems very much a materialistic society to want to be given all the time

S: This is one of the conclusions we came to I think. That people, especially, well, I was going to say especially young people, but maybe not 50 much so because it applies to very old people too to some extent, are so accustomed to being given everything, having everything laid on for them that, you know, they just seem to regard it as their right and their due and they won't they are so accustomed to everything, you know, being provided by an impersonal state and an impersonal agency because it's obviously difficult to feel gratitude to

the state, or impersonal agency - that they didn't realise that when they came into contact with the E.W.B.O. that all those things were being provided by individuals. I know that in the early days of lundarika there was a strong feeling among the people who came along, (I sometimes used to think that they wanted to believe this) that there was a very wealthy foundation behind the F.W.B.O., that was just paying for everything. And the people who were actually doing the work were simply administering the funds, as it were, so no particular gratitude was due to them. And I think that only quite rightly that people were convinced that there wasn't, you know, a wealthy foundation behind the F.W.B.O. But I think some of them wanted to believe there was so that they could be excused, you know, from doing anything. They seem to think it only right and proper that just as the state provided various services, well, these various trusts and foundations, provided you know, things like the F.W.B.O., which were just laid on for them. Yeh. They were just a facility, they were just a service, and that going along did not involve you in any responsibility in any way. Dhammadinna: It also stops people from communicating (inaudible with Bhante saying yes, yes ... for a longish time) - because someone on the Summer Retreat, no the Christmas Retreat, sorry a new woman who, I think was complaining about the price of the Retreat, saying 'Well they must make their money somehow while we were up at an Order Meeting so literally - (inaudible) as though we were making a vast profit out of the Retreat. That seems to be an idea that something is being provided but also it is too much.

S: Mm. That seems a very odd attitude though I think it is very rare.

Dhammadinna: Well, I suppose if you just turn up on a Retreat and you don't know very much about the Friends you might think that people leading the Retreat are taking all the money that how most other groups work.

S: I think if you had any common sense at all and any idea of what things cost nowadays then you'd realise that you're ("getting a bargain" (Dhammadinna)) getting it cheap. If you ever tried to stay the night at a hotel or, you know, anything, you would know, if you had any idea of food costs, for instance, you'd know that it wasn't expensive by any standards. I think there is this idea that Religious things ought to be free, they ought to be some big foundation, you know. There should be some lady Abbess, you know, behind all the with a vast, you know, monastery, with lots and lots of Revenues and she is sort of dispensing it all because it's all been provided by people who'd died a hundred years ago. But, you know, it isn't like that, is it.

Voice: It's dispensing attitudes as well.

S: Yes, right (pause).

Anne Mc: I think this particular girl was just quite resentful, actually, and looking for something.

Dhammadinna: Yes. looking for something to criticise. It was really quite strange. I haven't had something like that on Retreat for a long time

S: Well, what you want to say is 'You're not dying yet and I'm not Mother Theresa' (laughter).

Anne Mc: I didn't quite say that but T said a few things. It was quite difficult to get through to her. It was also interesting that she wouldn't say it to any of the Older Members. She waited until they had all gone away and picked on a couple of people that she thought she could complain about them. There was a real feeling, actually, of them and us. It was quite odd.

Sridevi: Most people seem to be very surprised that we teach Meditation free. They ask you how much does it cost you tell them it's free. They are very surprised. But when they come they don't render the Dana bowl.

S: Mm. Well, again, this is something we've talked about again and again in the F.W.B.O. It's as though, if people are told you have to pay so much they are quite happy with that. But if you say, well, give whatever you can, then it sets up a conflict in them.

Sridevi: (Inaudible).

S: Well not just that. It sets up a conflict between ) ) together Dhammadinna: They have to decide how much it's worth )

S: Yes. Between, also, their rather weak, perhaps, impulse of generosity and their meanness. And also their wanting, their not wanting to do, you know, what isn't expected of them.

Dhammadinna: Expected of them (interrupts)

S: They don't know what is expected. They don't know if they are meant to

Dhammadinna: Put in Five Pounds (interrupts)

S: Five pounds or put in Ten Pounds. They want, essentially to do what everybody else is doing but they don't know what everybody else is doing.

Dhammadinna: They might not be able to take individual responsibility in their act.

S: So I think a lot of people prefer to be told how much they have to

pay. U\Anne Mc: We're just decided in West London to charge for a Meditation Course. We had quite a long discussion about it. We decided, in the end, to try charging

S: I think it's not a bad idea to charge for courses.

Sridevi: I think Prakasha (inaudible) suggests we charge 50p for everyone to come in, for the Centres.

S: I'm not sure about that but anyway that'll have to be thrashed out on some other occasion.

Voice: They do that in Norwich, They charge for classes in Norwich. 50p.

Srimala: Not, not beginners. Regulars.

S: I think there will have to be free occasions because a lot of people will not just come initially unless they can just walk in and sample it without say sort of obligation of any kind. But certainly people who come regularly, who seem steadily to benefit, in a way, should be expected, in a way its part of their involvement, or part of their training, if you like that they start developing or trying to develop qualities like gratitiile and awareness of the needs of the situation. And the non-exploitive attitude, not simply taking without giving. (Pause). But do you think as the text claims here that "The root of benevolence lies in the memory of benefits received". Do you think that this applies substantially you know, in our modern society in this country, let us say? Could it, is it true, of sort of healthy human beings?

Dhammadinna: I think it's probably true of healthy human beings but I don't think were very grateful for benefits received.

S: Mm. I think sometimes people feel, I think this is, you know due to their own psychological weakness, that the fact that they received benefits places them under an obligation and they do not like to be under an obligation. You find this sometimes with very old fashioned people, mostly elderly people. They don't even take what thy consider charity, even though they are legally quite entitled to it. I don't want to be beholden to anybody. So what is this sort of attitude?

Dhammadir~a: Pride.

S: It's pride. A false self-sufficiency. Yeh. A false independance (pause).

Dhammadinna: It seems to be one or the other, doesn't it, People not wanting to take from charity, from other people. A welfare state then comes in, on the other hand, and people expect things to be giv"n to them. They don't seem to have a healthy balance.

S: Mm. A rational attitude of taking what you need if you're entitled to it and giving what you can if you are in a position to do so. At any rate I do think that in the movement generally speaking now, I mean, you've got london. Obviously being the biggest Centte, so far, attitudes do seem more healthy than they used to be, say, in the old Archway days. (pause). But if you, let's suppose you are a sort of reasonably positive person, and you do re-call, you do re-collect someone has benefitted you, what is your usual response to that? How do you feel towards that person?

Voice: You feel grateful, you feel warmth.

S: You should feel grateful. You feel warmth towards that person. Yes. So I think this does work for someone who is reasonably healthy. And it is one of the ways of, you know, developing Metta, even in the course of the Metta-Bhavana towards a certain individual by recollecting occasions on which they've benefitted you. I think I've mentioned sometimes, you know, explaining the practice, that one could recall the good times in a healthy positive sort of way. And how well you've got on with each other. Well, I mean, that is also recalling a certain benefit. You benefitted from their company. It doesn't necessarily mean that you've got to recall the occasion on which they came and brought you a bunch of flowers when you were ill. Yeh? It is not necessarily that sort of thing. But just the positive effect that t() all

your family, your background, your upbringing, education, all that you have received without making any effort yourself.

S: Right, yes.

Anne Mc: That's presuming that you've benefitted from all those things. (laughter).

S: Anyway, mother seems to be considered the centre of all that because mother "provides us with a body" Well the family doesn't, Its definitely mother. Yes? "Suffers for our sake". Well its definately mother who has to put up with this mainly for the first year or two of life. You know, as some of you know. So, you know, you have to, you can't sort of, put mother on a sort of equal footing with all the other relations, for better or for worse, you know, usually. So, you know, do you think people can genuinely feel that "in this life here on Earth the greatest benefactor is our mother".

Well, first of~all, quite apart from how you actually feel towards mother herself, there is a question of how people feel towards life itself. Because you can only feel grateful to mother for providing you with a body, and giving you life if you're sure that the gift is worthwhile.

General agreement.

S: Nowadays, I mean sometimes you hear people say, I didn't ask to be born. Well, this, I think~ this sort of sentiment will be unintelligible to a traditional Tibetan. The assumption being despite all that Buddhism says about suffering etc, etc, that life is a good thing. If pressed from a Buddhist point of view, the Tibetan Buddhist would say, well, because its only as a human being that you stand a very good chance of gaining Enlightenment. But we don't believe that life is a good thing so why be grateful to mother for giving you this thing that you didn't want anyway, and two, they certainly don't believe very often, or usually, that human life is a wonderful opportunity for gaining Enlightenment. So, you know, the whole question of gratitude their company has had on you and that has been a benefit conferred.

Dharmadinna: So in a way, Metta can build up because your being (kind) to other people and they can benefit from that and that can advance your own efforts and the whole thing can expand quite a lot.

S: Mm. AAlright, so "The method of practice is pondering over the benefits that stem from sentient beings, because the root of Benevolence lies in the memory of benefits received. In this life here on Earth the greatest benefactor is our mother".

Now this might be a bit controversial nowadays. Well, anyway, lets go into it and see. Three reasons are given:- "because she

(i) provides us with a body

(ii) suffers for our sake (iii) gives us life and (iv) shows us the world"

Now what do you think? First of all in a general sort of way. I mean, do you think people feel grateful to their mothers? And therefore this sort of recollection is a good lead into the development of feelings of benevolence and compassion. Because this is a sort of key-note of Tibetan Buddhism, it must be said, on ordinary practical level, that you should regard all

living beings as your mother. Because I mean, the assumption being that you have a tremendously positive feeling towards your mother, out of gratitude, yeh? And if you only recollect that in the course of the round of rebirths all living beings have at some time or other been your mother and that therefore you should feel this tremendous gratitude towards them. This is, this is the root, you know, of the development of Metta and Karuna and therefore the root of Bodhisattva, well the root of the Bodhicitta and so on. So this is very very crucial for Tibetan Buddhism. So we have to be quite sure where we stand with regard to this and whether it could work in the same way. Yeh?

Sridevi: Maybe it's not just your own mother as opposed to, you know, towards mother or anybody, hardly arises if you don't value life

itself. How can you be grateful to mother or anybody else for

giving you something that you experience as a burden, you know, rather than as a benefit.

Dhammadinna: But doesn't that experience come somewhere from your conditioning maybe something that you picked up from your mother.

S: I think it must.

Dhammadinna: If somewhere that relationship was positive surely you would appreciate life even though not in a Buddhist context.

S: (Interrupts). Even on the ordinary animal sort of level. You'd enjoy being alive. So in a way, you're not able to give, because you haven't received. I mean, not in the sense, of a sort of quid pro quo attitude but sort of process has not been sparked off in you, in that sort of way. (Pause).

Dhammadinna: I suppose you could have been given by your mother but growing up in a less traditional sort of society you get knocked by (inaudible)

S: But I think the early years are crucial. I mean if you're sort of hit badly as a child by your mother or your other close relations and also by society later on you don't stand much of a chance.

Dhammadinna: You've got nothing to back it up.

S: No. But however badly society batters you if you've had a positive childhood I think you can pull through in the end.

Ann Mc: Do you think this bit here about mother applies differently to men from how it does to women?

S: You mean men children

Anne Mc: Well take modern psychology into consideration do you think that applies at all?

S: I doubt it. I doubt it. Because the fact is - whether you're a boy or a girl mother provides you with a body, she suffers for your sake, she gives life and shows you the world. At least to begin

with. That holds true of both boys and girls. I mean the text doesn't bring father in at all. That's something we can go into later. Actually the Tibetan tradition doesn't. You might think, Well why not bring father in. But no its all put on to Mother. Whereas in the Indian text they usually speak of mother and father. Though mother is always put first. Though the text from which they quote here is an Indian text. The Astasahasrika, here also mother is specifically mentioned but none-the-less in the Indian tradition some place is given to father. But the Tibetans seem to have concentrated on mother more and more. From this particular point of view (pause).

Christabel: In the Western Society mothers, at the moment, don't seem to have very much spiritual concept to fall back on so its as though the children start off with a negative conditioning, from the moment they are born sometimes before.

S: Well, its the mother herself, very often, doesn't have a positive concept of being a mother. She's got the second best sort of job. She sort of slipped into being a mother. She didn't have a career. She could have had a career instead. So she doesn't think much of being a mother. I mean sometimes. I mean one mustn't exaggerate this because there are lots of very conventional people left, you know, in Britain, who don't feel in the same way that people in, as it were, most progressive circles feel. who do feel positively about being a mother. There are still some left but a lot of people don't feel like that.

Christabel: But even conventional people with those sort of attitudes make tremendous demands on their children.

S: Yes - Well one can't help returning to the Indian culture where one finds that the mother is very much a mother. In a quite positive way and where those attitudes are sort of supported by the cultural underpinning of society, as it were. So if you want to be a mother well you've



got the full support of your society and your culture. And if you haven't got that, you know, it's very difficult for you to project a positive image of motherhood, you know, to your children. And therefore it's presumably difficult for your children to feel that mother is something positive therefore gratitiile towards mother and goodwill towards mother, and therefore, perhaps difficulty in developing Metta-Bhavana eventually. Because there is no doubt, in one way or another, for better or for worse, whether you like it or not, your mother plays an important part in the child's early years. The positive mother has a positive effect and a negative mother has a negative effect. And sometimes it's very difficult to supplement or undo that. Sridevi: whatever a mother's like it still applies. She has given you birth.

S: Yes, right.

Sridevi: She has raised you. I think doing metta-bhavana has changed my attitude quite a bit. Mm. like feeling more gratitiile and feeling less resentful for what she didn't give me because it's no good feeling resentful for what she couldn't give me.

S: Right. Also, perhaps, seeing mother also as a victim of society. It's not just you. You know, it is mother also who was a victim of society.

Ann Murphy: Yes, my mother was terribly unhappy.

S: So perhaps it is good, I mean if one is going to, sort of look at things in this way at all, sort of just concentrate, as it were on the basics. That, after all, I am here now. Yes. Whatever I might have felt before, I am glad to be alive now. I am glad to be involved with the F.W.B.O. I am glad to be treading the path. And if it hadn't been for my mother I wouldn't be here. Yes. And maybe she was well, a bit of a bitch. (laughter) Maybe, but none the less, she did give birth to me, she did look after me, she did bring me up. She did quite a lot for me, as a result of which I might not be here. And also, not only that, there were all sorts of difficulties. She also didn't have much guidance. She also was suffering from the effects of the social system, but none-the-less she couldn't have done so badly, because after all, I'm here, not too badly off. So, yes, at least some gratitude I feel towards her. Yes? If one can feel positively towards one's mother, in this way, it does help. You know, it does help oneself. Rather than, you know, being negative towards her, and blaming her for everything, you know, which is hardly fair. (Pause).

Christabel: From what you're been saying it seems that we need a special section of the Metta-Bhavana for our mothers. (laughter) My mother seems to always get stuck in the fourth section. (laughter).

S: Mm. Well. I think people find, you know, with the Metta-Bhavana that people get promoted, as it were. The person that you regarded as inimicable, as an enemy even, you can eventually feel quite friendly towards. Even try putting them in the second stage. You know, immediately after yourself. Maybe not exactly a near and dear friend, but at least someone towards whom you now feel quite positive.

Dhammadinna: I think you could include that in the first stage. Just that very basic inaudible that probably, that may push your mother out of the fourth stage (laughs).

S: Well, what you also, what you can do, is you know, when you have done the four

persons and you've equalised them, then you start expanding, well you can then start going back, you know. You can think of all the members of your family. Then people that you knew before you came in contact with the Friends, and then go onto people that you know, within the Friends. Yes? One can do this. Because one has to transform, as it were, retrospectively one's past relationships at least from one's own side. You know, one's own end. Yes? So, I think, maybe one of the things that we can do, in just, in this respect, try to be more objective. So, our mother did give birth to

us, and after all now, whatever we might have felt before, we are glad to be alive. You know, we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for her. And she did, after all, undergo a lot of trouble, you know, on our account, etc. Yes? So you can understand for the Tibetan, the Tibetan Buddhist, all this is quite important because, the fact that the mother provides us with a body means that we have the opportunity for Enlightenment in this life. The fact that, you know, she suffers, for our sake, means that she's done so much for us that it's only natural we feel very grateful and gives us life itself. And don't forget how difficult conditions were in the old days. Well, in this country too. I mean one of the things that you realise, reading History in how things have changed in this respect. If you read History, say European History, or history of England, or even read biography one of the things that strikes you, is how often women, after marriage died in childbirth. Yes? It's really quite shocking in a way. So until quite recently, you know, when a woman gave birth she was risking her life. So leave aside modern medical science, which is a very very recent thing, your mother you could reflect, risked her life so you could come into the world. Yes? And that is in a very real sort of way. I mean, very often, in the past the woman did not know, she could not be very sure, that she would survive childbirth. So many things could go wrong which, you know it was not possible, very often to put right, in those days. So perhaps one should recollect that. That, well, even today, a woman risks her life when she becomes pregnant, when she gives birth to a child, because things can always go wrong. So then you can recollect, well, in giving birth to you, your mother actually risked her life. Yes? So you ought to be grateful to her that she was able to do that otherwise you would not be here.

~li: Do you think (inaudible) in days before

modern contraception that a woman didn't have a choice whether she conceived or not.

S: Well she had a choice but it was an unrealistic choice, let us

say. So, no, she didn't have a choice. So she didn't well you could argue from that therefore she didn't have a choice about giving birth to you. You could argue along those lines but it would be, perhaps, a bit hard-hearted to say. Anjali: No, I was going to go on to say that these days, when women had got a choice you'd think that it would be more of a conscious choice to have a child and therefore they would value

S: Therefore you ought to be more grateful because you are a result not of a happy accident (laughter) but of a happy deliberate choice. My mother decided to have me so, you know, it's a more, sort of, individual thing, and presumably one should be more grateful, therefore. I mean, depending upon, of course, how one does value the gift of life. Yes?

Anjali: But it seems like concurrent with that, I mean, that could be something that would produce even more of a value in life, would make mothers value motherhood even more.

S: You mean, its a matter of choice?

Anjali: Mm, but it doesn't seem to be like that. (pause)

S: What do others think?

Sridevi: Well there are so many other choices for modern woman and they value them just as much. So there's this conflict.

S: Also, perhaps, its because there isn't, I mean, motherhood is not projected in a very positive way, taking into consideration the fact that it does now represent a free choice. I mean, usually the way in which it is projected is, that a woman ought to accept it because it is her destiny. This is the old view, isn't it? (Agreement) That there is no real alternative, this is a woman's destiny. A woman was meant to be a mother born to be a mother, this is her mission in life. Yes? So, whether one agrees, with that or not, it is, at least, a very clear definite statement. But if you don't accept that, and you regard motherhood as one option among many, that particular option, that is to say the option of motherhood, doesn't have a very strong, as it were, philosophical support, as yet. Yes? So I think that is what helps to create a difficulty. For instance, I mean, there could be a philosophical support in the form of, say, it is a very noble career, it is t~ best career of all, to take upon yourself the responsibility of bringing human beings into the world and bringing them up in the very best possible way, and to prepare yourself for this by stily and meditation and so on. Well this would be a very positive, as it were, bolstering up of the idea of motherhood taking into account the changed situation. But actually we don't see that this is done. We don't 50 you've got only the old fashioned ideal, well, if you can call it an ideal, that motherhood is your destiny as it were, just because you are a woman, and on the other hand you've got motherhood as one sort of possibility among dozens of others but with no sort of, supporting ideal behind it. Yes?

Anne Mc' And, in fact, its quite often presented as a substitute for

something else, or to fall back on

S: (Interrupts) I think that's when the lingering ideal of the old fashioned sort. That it's your destiny. Not that it's your free choice.

Anne Mc: If all else fails you can always do that.

S: Well one even hears women say that, that they are getting really bored. That their older children are five, six, seven, they don't know what to do, have another child to keep oneself occupied. So it would seem, at the moment, that, you know, that motherhood tends to fall between two stools. On the one hand there's the stool of motherhood as a woman's destiny, and the other as motherhood as one option among many. You can either be a secretary, or you can be a business woman, or a saleswoman, or teach or you can be a mother. Yes? But, then, in that second case, being a mother doesn't have the support of any philosophy of life. But it will seem that something like that needs to be developed, in a way.

Motherhood as a vocation which you consciously adopt like you decide to be a doctor or a teacher and for which you prepare yourself, and which you take very seriously. Which is your contribution to society Not just, in a sort of, you know, what shall I say, assembly line sort of sense, that there the women all dutifully turning out the babies to which the state will then take over and bring up in its own way. Its not just producing babies, no, it's very much more than that.

Sridevi: And also, as part of your own growth as an individual.

S: Well that is implicit in the very idea of its being your conscious decision to adopt ~hat particular path.

Anne Mc: I think one of the things that puts certain women off having children, is the idea that once they've had them, in a way, they lose control, in this country, at a certain point. like with education, and with certain other conditions. And it seems almost impossible to keep the child from them. I think that's women who maybe, I don't know how to say it, at a slightly higher level of consciousness than the average.

S: But it isn't very difficult to get round that because actually it isn't very difficult to educate your own children provided you are reasonably qualified or provided you can make alternate arrangements. I don't think that is a very great problem. Side 2 S: You'd better repeat your question (laughs)

Sridevi: Well, I wondered if it follows from idea it would be good if all of us started having babies?

S: Well, put it the other way round (laughter). Whether or not it would be good for you to have the babies it would be very good for the babies to have you. Yes? Do you see what I mean? Because, after all, children are going to go on coming into the world. And it is better they should come in under favourable auspices than unfavourable ones. So in some respects you could say, I mean, looking at it from this point of view. Obviously there are other points of view and other considerations to be looked into. But looking at it from this point of view, or, as it were, from the child's point of view, what could be better than to be ushered into the world as the child or the baby of a woman who meditated, was part of a Spiritual movement, who had clear ideas about the purpose of human life, and how human beings ought to be brought up in such a way that later on they could become really positive individuals. So what could be better than that from the child's point of view. But there are other considerations (laughter) as I said, how one is going to arrange that. You know, in the absence of the nuclear family set up in which most people incliiling most women in the Friends, disbelieve anyway. So there are these other you know these other factors to be taken into conside~ation. And it isn't easy being a single parent family. Just you a~ baby, however beautiful baby might be.

Dharmmadinna: A single mother doesn't seem to be ... (inaillible) much of an advance of a nuclear family. I think it is actually an advance on a nuclear family but it's not very much of an advance.

S: But in a way perhaps it is a great advance because at least you're not looking to one other person 50 you are, or you will, I would imagine if you were a woman alone with a baby that you would be looking for contacts. So you would be more likely I think to be looking for

a whole range of contacts rather than to just one other person to bring into your nuclear situation.

Anne Mc: We did talk a bit about that at the end of the retreat didn't we? About how some women, single women with children seem to give them a healthier upbringing.

Dhammadinna; Because they are forced to have a wider range of contacts.

And not just cling to

S: And also the tension that you very often get between the husband and the wife is not there. There is also an interesting factor that emerged from India. As you know, there are a dozen Indian Order Members in India. All of them are married all of them have got heavy family responsibilities, all of them have got, with the exception of one retired person, full time jobs. Yes. Many have got grand-children that they have to support. So far there has been tension after Ordination only in the case of two Order members. That is to say tension within the family because he, you know, the new Order Member spent so much time with the Friends. In both cases they happen to be nuclear families. That's interesting, isn't it? (agreement). In both cases, there's the husband, the wife and the children living by themselves. Not as parts of a joint family. In all the other cases they are a part of a joint family of ten, twelve, fourteen people. So lokamitra says that when the husband, who is an Order Member spends too much time, you know, with the F.W.B.O. in the case of those belonging to nuclear families, the wife feels lonely. She then starts resenting his participation in the F.W.B.O. In the case where the husbands, the Order Members are part of joint families, of extended families, however much he takes part in the F.W.B.O. activities, the wife is not left alone. She does not feel lonely. She's got plenty of company. She doesn't mind, she doesn't bother about him going off to F.W.B.O. activities. In fact she's quite pleased (laughter) because she also is a Buddhist and she accepts the whole situation. But the wife who is part of the nuclear family, even if she is a Buddhist, at least technically, she resents her husband spending so much time away because it leaves her on her own. So it would seem that a nuclear family is out. But the same problems don't exist with the extended family. Whether it would be possible to have, you know, the extended family in the Indian sense in England is quite another matter. Probably very difficult but one needs an extended set up of some kind.

A voice: Probably when we get to be grand-parents.

S: Mm?

A voice: We can do it when we get to be grand-parents.

S: That's true. Yes?

Sridevi: what do you think of women's communities having babies? No men around.

S: Well, I think it would be alright initially as regards to the child. Child psychologists seem to differ as to whether a child needs a father around or not. We certainly know, within the Order there are examples of people who have not had a father around, and doesn't seem to have affected them at all. But it does, maybe in some cases it does and some it doesn't, it's

very difficult to say. But I think in the case of the boys, when they reach a certain age, that they need a certain amount of masculine company and all that sort of thing. But I see no reason why, you know, there shouldn't be women, within women's communities, you know, with babies, by mutual agreement. That is to say, not that you saddle the women's community with your baby. It must be generally agreed, or perhaps there should be separate communities for people who want to live in that sort of way. Well, or take up that vocation, let us say. Which in any case, should be a deliberate decision and not the result of one of those happy accidents. In other words, it does suggest mindfulness, it does suggest awareness and thinking things out and conscious choices. Not making the best of a bad job. Though, you can even, though you can make the best of a bad job. It's not to say you can't. You can.

A voice: Accidents do happen (laughter)

S: So if they do happen it's best to make the best of them and turn them, well, in such a way that, well the end result is as though it was, or had been, a conscious choice.

Dhammadinna: I think, quite a few of the babies in the F.W.B.O. are the result of a happy accident rather than

S: I think also, that sometimes the happy accidents, if the truth, were actually not altogether accidents. But anyway that's another matter.

Anne Mc: Take what Bhante says that it would be good for the babies to have us. Well I suppose it follows. looking for an auspicious birth (laughter).

S: But you know, it's different I mean so far we haven't had any children actually growing up, or who have grown up, let's say under the F.W.B.O. auspices. It will be quite interesting, you know, when the few that we do have, reach that point, we can look back, well we can compare, and say well look how our children have grown up in comparison with others. Are they happier, are they healthier? I hope that we'll be able to say that they are. Even though, perhaps, their parents were brought up, you know, under any other system except the old one. But, you know by the fact that they've been in the F.W.B.O. for a number of years, well, it should mean they are reasonably healthier and that should rub off onto their children. One would hope. We will just have to see. Well that will take time. You might see the end results I may not.

Anyway get back a bit to the text. So it would also almost suggest that a future generation of Buddhists maybe able to look back and feel really grateful to their mothers. Yes. They came into the world out of deliberate choice on their mother's part, and yes, they can see how well they've been brought up and how lucky they are to be brought up and how lucky they are to be brought up under those auspices compared perhaps with the way that children are very often brought up. They could look back and feel very grateful. One hopes one can't be absolutely sure because, you know, they might look back and think that they were deprived of all sorts of things I mean, the force of the outside society might be so strong, that they were brought up deprived of T.V. and they never had their own motor car and you know, you didn't let them do this and you didn't let them do that etc. etc.

Anne Mc: They'll probably all become Catholics (laughter).

S: One would hope that by that time there wouldn't be any Catholicism

(laughter).

Dhammadinna: I've seen that happen with children brought up in Steiner Schools. I know they're Christian but they are also quite positive the way they educate children. I've met several kids who, when they grow up reject them because they didn't get their 'A' levels, couldn't become pilots

S: (Interrupts) Yes. So you have to watch this. So you have really to establish the child's co-operation. You mustn't bring the child up feeling that, you know, that he's just a member of some narrow little group, and shut off from the wider society. One needs to be really careful about that. It isn't easy.

Anne Mc: It isn't just winding another set of conditions on it.

S: Exactly.

Anne Mc: It's more, sort of, I suppose, creating the circumstances where the child can develop and learn by themselves. Positively.

Sridevi: It isn't you wanting something out of this child. You want to make him or her into something.

S: Yes. I've told in my memoirs the story of the man in South India who wasn't able to become, you know, a Hindu Sadhu, so he brought his little boy up as a Yogi. Do you remember reading that? Yes. And he became famous as the boy Yogi until he had a nervous breakdown. And the father when the boy was only six or seven, shut him up in an underground cave and made him meditate all the time. And people started flocking, you know, as they do in India. This wonderful boy Yogi. So you don't want to do anything like that. (laughter) And you must be very careful not to give the child a totally negative impression of the outside world. Oh, you know, you mustn't go, have any contact with that. That's wicked, that's bad, you know. Because that would arouse the child's curiosity. Especially if it's a boy I suspect or maybe I'm wrong here. But when he reaches the age of thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, he'll want to go out, and he goes out in the park, then he'll think the world's not so bad. What are my parents talking about. Or what's mother talking about. What does she know? The world is fun, you know. You don't want that sort of thing happening. But it isn't easy to strike that balance. You require a great deal of tact, and experience and understanding. Therefore to be a mother of this sort, in this way is no joke (laughter) It's not just sort of, you know, of giving birth, to the baby (laughter) and (inaudible) (laughter and lots of it)

S: Who am I to speak. It really is, well, a job that requires preparation and training and thought. Yes, as much as any other. Yes? It really is surprising to me that in the modern world people can, sort of, denigrate motherhood at all. However bad it might be in certain respects because it is a very very difficult thing to do. I wouldn't like to take on the bringing up of a child. Seems to me an awful responsibility. Yes? So, you know, all the more reason why those women, I mean, all women are biologically equipped to be mothers, but it doesn't mean, because you are equipped to do something that you are necessarily going to do that

particular thing.

Dhammadinna: Or be good at it.

S: Or even be good at it. Because it not only requires the biological equipment. It requires all sorts of psychological equipment, and education equipment, and in the context of the Friends we might say Spiritual equipment too. And you've got also to acquire all that by

81a certain age. Its no use putting yourself into a course of motherhood which would be completed by the time you're sixty (laughter). You've got to complete it certainly by the time you're thirty, preferably by the time you're twenty-five.

Anne Mc: Forget it! (laughter)

S: Do you see what I mean? Also, another important factor is that the women who say (I'm talking now within the context of the Friends) the woman who undertakes you know the responsibility of becoming a mother in the full sense with the idea of bringing up her child as a potential individual, needs the support of everybody else in the movement. (Agreement) Especially if she hasn't got, let's say, a full-time husband. If she isn't a member of a nuclear family, or even an extended family, she needs the support of the whole community.

Kay: She needs a lot of help if she is a member of a nuclear family

too.

S: Yes. And even practical help you know, in things like baby- sitting so that she can go on Retreats when the child is old enough and so on. So she is not cut off from the Spiritual life of the community by that responsibility.

Dhammadinna: That seems to be one of the most difficult areas in the Friends, at the moment.

S: Which?

Dhammadinna: Well, providing that support (inaudible) its getting better but people with children still find that aspect difficult. Being out of touch, out of contact, isolated.

S: I think it's partly because there is so much happening in the movement everybody is very busy. People on the whole are working very hard and sometimes, I'm sure it isn't easy to find someone who is just free, however willing people might be but still it needs to be born in mind. (pause).

A voice: Bhante, can you say something about what a new baby brings into the world with them. 82S: Oh its very Well I'll tell you one just has to observe.

I think its quite interesting to see this, because, one of the things I've noticed is. Over the years I've observed babies, you know, very cautiously (laughter) at a safe distance but if you observe them, you know it's quite interesting because what I've noticed is, it is remarkable how early a definite personality emerges. I mean, I don't want to generalise too much, but I



would say, by the time the baby is well, I was going to say eighteen months. By the time this child is quite young a definite personality is there. Which does not seem to be the product of circumstances or conditioning. Which does not seem to be derived merely from the parents, it seems to come, as it were, from somewhere else. So I think one of the things one has to do is to observe and study that. To try to, especially the parents, to try to understand one's own child. Who have we got here? Who is this little stranger. Yes? I mean don't assume that because he's your own baby you know him already, or you can just look at him and say, Oh well, he's got that from his mother or he does that because his father does it. No. There is an X-factor which is not in fact reducible to anything in the way of inheritance or social conditioning. I think I should like to establish contact with that. This is one of the things the Steiner people, I think, emphasize, that each baby is already of a particular psychological type, and if you want to educate the child properly you have to know, you have to understand what that psychological type is. Maybe it's not so cut and dried as that. I'd prefer to say you have to have an open mind about what sort of individual or potential individual you've landed yourself with in having that baby. Maybe totally different from you. I mean, something quite innate in that baby may go against all sorts of things that you believe in or accept.

Dhammadinna: That must account for the feeling that people often have

that they don't belong to their family (agreement) (inaudible) I used to have that feeling. 83

S: The old sort of legend of the chargin (agreement). Its as though the child doesn't belong. A voice: But isn't it true in the Tibetan tradition that you choose your parents?

S: Well, yes, this is bringing in the traditional Buddhist doctrine of rebirth and so on that you are naturally attracted but again it isn't so simple. It isn't necessarily that like attracts like. Opposites can attract. Yes? There can be all sorts of factors of that kind. So, yes, you have gravitated, so to speak, according to Buddhist tradition to those particular parents to that particular genetic inheritance to that particular social environment but none-the-less there is something that is irreducibly you, which is not to be, you know, reduced to any of those factors. So I think the parents, especially in the mother, especially, has to very early on to try to become aware of the individuality of the child and to respect that at the same time that she's educating it.

Dhammadinna: Do you think that happens in Tibet naturally because they believe so strongly in re-incarnation so there's a, although they look after their children, there's a space, its not the kind of possessiveness that we get sometimes in this country, where it is your child and you're going to do, make it into something (inaudible. Bhante interrupts).

S: Well, I, yes, but that again it's not quite so straight forward because in the East generally the influence of the group, the community is very strong. It's not your child it's the communities child, yes. For instance, in India, I'm sure in Tibet, if a child misbehaves any elder can correct it. In other words in this country the mother would rush up and say 'Who are you to talk to my child? Who are you to reprimand my child?' That is not the attitude in the East. Any person of an older generation has got in a way, the right and the duty.

Dhammadinna: So there are certain common standards in common. S: Yes.

Dhammadinna: I know people who have said, in this country, they have tried to form

communities that it is difficult because they bring their children up so differently even so

S: Yes. But it shouldn't be so in the case of the Friends. Because there should be something which is sufficiently common. But that assumes of course, the parents have been within the Friends for sometime, and are really imbued with positive ideas in this respect.

Anne Mc: I read an article, quite recently, about some women who'd got together and formed a play-school type thing. All women (inaudible) just with the children. And trying to bring them up in a sort of group, community sense, rather than a one parent family sense. And they said that the area that was most difficult was authority. The area then that was most difficult was allowing the other mothers to reprimand their children, or to feed the children to take anything to do with the children when they were ill. Because somehow when a child is ill it's natural biological mother felt that nobody else could actually give it what she could give it, and they really had to work on that and learn actually any of the women, in fact, anybody there, could actually help.

S: Mm. You certainly see this happening in India, in the big joint families, because, for purely practical reasons, children have to be passed from hand to hand. I mean, a woman may have ten or twelve children, and you know, if she's pregnant, she can't do everything for them so automatically they're farmed out to elder sisters, grannys, aunties, and this is, you know, quite an accepted thing and it works perfectly well. There isn't that exclusive reliance on the biological mother. If she's got a lot of children she's only too glad to have somebody else looking after some of them, some of the time.

Anne Mc: It was really interesting, because these women said that when they'd broken through that they felt such liberation, actually that in fact the children just seemed to feel much easier. S: I think it's a great strain on the child, this kind of possessiveness on the part of the mother, or the father, come to that. I think it's much healthier for the child to feel that he or she belongs to the whole group, the whole community. Of course the child will know, well that's my mother, that's my father, but not such an exclusive Anne Mc: Because sometimes kids feel guilty, they feel that they actually sometimes like other people more than their parents.

S: That's right, they're made to feel guilty. I don't think they normally feel guilty. But what a little monster he likes his aunty more than his mummy. Then there's something perverse about the little devil. Yes? You know, it happened because there maybe something in the child that cottons onto something in the aunt or the grandmother, rather than the actual mother, and I think one has to accept that. But very often mother feels betrayed or let down as though her child has, sort of, stabbed her in the back.

Kay: That's because she's not integrated herself.

S: Yes, exactly (pause) It is well known that some children like staying with their granny, rather than with their own parents. But I think that should be accepted, that the child develops quite close relationships off his own bat, so to speak, with people other than his own mother and father. I think it's only to be encouraged. (Pause). There's another thing. This is a bit by the way but it struck me as quite interesting, I read quite recently, someone, a few years ago, an American psychologist, did a study of rejected children. It had been discovered that this was in the States, I think in New York, people who had got into trouble with the police, were those who had been rejected as children. So a psychologist was investigating into this.

So to establish the connection he studied people at a quite, sort of, low social level, but he came across a lot of children who had been definitely rejected but who weren't in the least psychologically disturbed. And this really puzzled him so he found out then, why it was. He said actually it is not rejection as such which disturbs the child, it is rejection which is not overt. If your mother rejects you, well off you go. And this did happen with many families. They went off and they established other relationships, but if they didn't know whether they were rejected or not, which was usually in the case of middle-class families, yes, this is where all the trouble started.

Dhammadinna: The appearance is kept up but emotions (inaudible) S: Right, yes, where as in the case of the working class mother, on a certain social level, she'll just throw them out, quite literally. Go on, go and stay with your father I don't want you here. And they go happily off. Because it was quite open. Yes. So I think this was quite extraordinary. Said it, you know, completely upset some of his ideas. So its quite good, you know, with a child things are clear, and if a child prefers to go and stay with his friend, O.K. fine, go and stay with granny. I don't mind, off you go. But all this, Oh don't you love mummy, and wouldn't you rather stay with mummy. Granny is only granny but mummy is mummy. (laughter). Well it's awful isn't it. So it means more positive emotion, less sentimentality. (Pause) So it would seem to sort of summarise this discussion, it would seem that this sort of gratitude towards mother, thereby stimulating feelings of benevolence and compassion is only realistic for us to any extent, you know, within the framework, within this context of this, as it were, new conception of motherhood as a vocation. Yes? But you can't very well feel like that towards mother if I/You feel that mother didn't want you anyway, that you were an accident. She'd rather have not had you. That she didn't bring you up in a particularly good way. You were glad to get away from her and you see her as some sort of monstrous figure. I mean that sometimes does happen. So you can't base your Buddhist practice, you know, of benevolence and compassion on that sort of background. Not until you've sorted it out anyway. Perhaps you can in the long run, but it isn't easy. (Pause). And you know, you can certainly re-call as I said, the basic facts that, well regardless of what went wrong mother did give birth to you. She did even nowadays, take some risk in giving birth to you. She did take a lot of trouble bringing you up, and assuring your survival. You would not have survived without her perhaps. So, you know, even taking the blackest view you've some course for gratitude.

Anjali: Did you feel there is some sever of false independence. And is this still a good basis of development?

S: In the sense of false independence?

Anjali: To feel gratitude (inaudible)

S: Yes, I think its very difficult to feel gratitude if you've got this sense of false independence. Or false sense of independence. But what is a false sense of independence. I think this usually consists in, sort of pretending to be independent, when, in fact, you're not independent, and also in not wanting to be dependent in ways that it is quite normal and even human for you to be dependent. You cannot be totally self-sufficient. You cannot do everything for yourself. Its impossible. I mean, look at the food that you eat, who produced it? Who brought it to you? You've not done it yourself. So, you know, if you live in human society, or if you're a human being at all, you've been through a whole network of mutual dependencies. The sort of dependence that is wrong is ne~rotic d~pendence, expecting

others to do for you what you, as a human being, in terms of your own development should be doing for yourself. Others cannot make you happy. Others cannot make you free. Others cannot give you personal fulfilment that you must create for yourself. But you are dependent upon others to some extent, for food, for clothing for shelter. So in a way you should feel grateful to the society which surrounds you, even if it is in many ways, distorted and corrupt. It does make possible some sort of life for you. I mean, it's very easy to run down the materialistic society but where would we be living without it. We would be living in caves or under the roots of trees, and, you know, all that sort of thing. It is said, you take a person from any of the undeveloped Third World countries, give them the opportunity of living in England or better still, America, they'd take it like a shot. They don't want their picturesque thatched villages, and their, you know, primitive water supplies. They would just want to get shot of that as quickly as possible. It is alright for us to sort of idealise the simple life, and run down materialistic modern civilisation, while we are enjoying the full benefit of it in most cases. We live, nowadays, more comfortably than a monarch in Britain would have lived in the Middle Ages. They didn't have central heating. They had draughty old castles. Damp running down the walls. Even members of the Royal Family were cold in bed at night, so we read, in some accounts. (Pause). Not to speak of modern medical science. It's very bad in certain respects. But we do live longer than we used to. It has wiped out all sorts of diseases. Life expectancy now is sixty something. Not twenty something as it was in the Middle Ages. We do not have this enormous infant mortality that we had then. We have to be a bit, sort of common-sensical (long pause). So, you know, we are dependent to some extent and must accept gratefully our dependence in certain respects but we should not be dependent in those respects where a human being needs to be free and autonomous. Some forms of dependence are quite conventional. (Pause) (Long pause). Alright, what's the time. It's nearly coffee time.

Alright, let's eh. Mother provides us with a body, yes. Suffers for our sake, yes, gives us life, yes. Shows us the world. Now what do you think is meant by that.

A voice: She teaches us how to grow up into the world.

S: Yes. Because you know, language. One's first words are generally learnt from mother.

Dhammadinna: She probably shows us certain skills.

S: Well how to feed ourselves. Things like that. So basic that, you know watch you slopping (inaudible because of laughter) Dhammadinna: (Laughing) I was thinking of a thing a bit more elaborate than that.

S: I mean, toilet training (a laugh) is mother's responsibility. So this is all part, the very first steps in socialising the child who is in some respects a little animal to begin with. Making it possible for the child to live in society. To communicate with other human beings. So in that way the mother shows the child the world. I mean Father, no doubt, especially in the case of the boy will have to take over at some stage, or at least co-operate at some stage but the very first steps seem to be the exclusive responsibility of mother. So, in this sense, in this respect, mother does show us the world, introduce us to the world. That is a very important function (pause). Anyway, this might be the point at which we could raise the question of why the text doesn't mention father. Why do you think this is? Is he just not sufficiently important at this stage? or (pause).

Ann Murphy: Is it something to do with Tibetan society at that time?

The father wasn't very involved.

S: I doubt that. I doubt that. Though the Tibetan woman has always been quite independant it seems.

A voice: Quite often the Tibetan marry more than one hausband.

S: Yes, polyandry was practised but it was a minority practice, especially, as you remember, so many men going into monasteries. There wouldn't be very many (laughter) left for a polyandrous family set up.

Christabel: Well those that were left would be very busy providing the basic necessities. They, wouldn't actually be in the house during the day would they?

S: There is that, that in some societies the man is very busy outside.

The inside work is very much left to the woman.

A voice: It does seem strange that he sort of mentioned providing the body. The woman (laughing) can't do it without the bloke.

S: Yes. Well then again the contribution on the part of the woman is much greater, in a sense. You know, genetically, of course, you need the co-operation of both sexes. But it's the mother, as it were, who gives of her physical substance, all during the period of pregnancy in a way

that the father just doesn't.

Anne Mc: Is it because of that, actually, that

S: I think it refers to that. I think this is what it is referring to.

Not that the woman is exclusively responsible for the physical existence

no. But the body of the, once conception has taken place, then the body of the child is built up with materials transmitted through the mothers

body. (Pause) I think father isn't mentioned because the text is

dealing with a quite basic level of emotions. Do you see what I mean?

That feelings of benevolence, positive emotion, go very very deep. I

think its as though the text is suggesting that you have to get, to

establish the connection on the most basic possible level. You know, which is on the level of your relationship with your mother. Your original relationship with your mother. Its as though, if that is not right everything else may go wrong. If that is right, well, everything else goes right.

A voice: Even the basic physical contact is so important. (Bhante interrupts).

S: Well, you can even say in the case of some of our friends. Especially in the case of some of the men, they had a bad relationship with their father, but the fact that they had a positive relationship with their mother meant there was at least a measure of, you know, psychological stability, emotional positivity because the relationship with the mother is so basic, on account of the, you know, the basic physical tie, and so on, that, as it were, even a bad relationship with father can't upset the balance completely. (Pause) So I think, probably, the Tibetan tradition is concerned to link the practice of Benevolence and Compassion with the deepest level of human feeling and emotion, which relates to mother rather than to father. So father, in a way, isn't relevant here.

Dhammadinna: Have you read the Continuum Concept.

S: Mm? Dhammadinna: Have you read a book called the Continuum Concept. S: No. What's that about?

Dhammadinna: It about (inaudible) S: No, i've not heard of it.

A voice: It's by Jean Liedloff.

Anjali: She visited a community of Aztec, was it Aztecs?

Voices: South American indians.

Anjali: Ani she found them much more positive. The way they brought up their children quite differently from English families. S: Different in what concrete respect?

Anjali: Well, the mothers carried their babies right next to their skin. A voice: Always at the front, rather than behind them. (something inaudible). S: Indian babies are handled quite a lot.

Dhammadinna: That was the basic thing in the book that the babies got a long physical contact, only from the mother, not from anyone else and that the children themselves~ decided when they wanted to move away from mother. She had these naturally independent children. In the culture everybody was treated as an individual. It was quite interesting book. Very short.

S: What's it called?

Dhammadinna: The Continuum Concept.

S: Mm. Not a very attractive title. Sounds as though its about modern physics.

Anne Mc: I suppose its the continuing from mother.

S: Yes its the human contin~ing. It sounds a bit abstract.

Dhammadinna: She talks about ways in bringing this into Western life.

S: I don't really think that that is enough. I don't think one can engraft something of that sort, derived from a totally different culture.

Dhammadinna: Apparently people have tried to do it. Western mothers who have read the book have tried to do it, it produced even more exceptionally neurotic children. But they've done it, rather than in a natural way, they've done it in an unnatural way.

S: So the children are getting two sets of messages, all the time. So this is what, in a way is worse. As in the case of rejection (general agreement). Nummy loves you but it is for your good that you should go away. Well, two messages. Mummy loves me, mummy doesn't love me. (Knock) So I think one just needs to (come in) to rebuild everything from the bottom upwards.

Alright Text books down for five minutes (laughter) General chatter and clatter Is it on O.K.

Right, let's just go on to this next section which explains these four ways in which our mother is our benefactor in detail. We probably won't need to discuss them very much. We have already discussed them quite a lot. But lets just read them one by one and maybe make any comments that maybe necessary.

Dhammadinna: (i) This is the benefit of providing us with a body. It did not start fully grown, complete with muscles and of a pleasant complexion. In our mother's womb from its

stages of an oval spot and oblong lump it has been built up in a special and gradual way by the nutritive essences of her flesh and blood. It has grown bigger by the nourishin~ properties of her food; and it has been produced by the endurance of all kinds of acts we feel shy about, of indispositions, and of pain. Even after birth, by nursing us from a tiny little infant to a big, strong person she contributes to the forming of our body".

S: That's quite straight forward isn't it? Anything that requires discussion? (silence). No I think we've all been (inaudible) Right next. Tho.

"(ii) The benefit of going through hardships for our sake means that she not only dressed and adorned us, but gave us her inheritance, keeping nothing of her own, not even a crumb, giving us all her food and drink, so that when we get out for foreign parts we should not suffer from hunger and thirst, giving us clothes to keep out the cold and money to prevent our pining in poverty. Unlike people who, because, they do not want a thing, give it to a child, she allows herself a minimum of food, drink and clothing. A mother does not do things for the sake of happiness in this life, nor refrains from action for the sake of enjoyment in the hereafter, she just nurses and protects her baby. When for instance she has done evil and unwholesome things, such as fishing and butchering, she brings him up on what she earns in that way: or, when her circumstances are unpleasant, after going to market or to work in the fields, day and night with the coarse soil as her shoes, wearing the stars as her cap, riding her legs as a horse, using the wollen threads of her torn frock as a whip, offering her legs to the dogs (to bite and bark at) and her face to men (to gaze at) she gives whatever she has gained by her efforts to her child".

S: Maybe there is a point or two (laughter). This sort of picture is drawn against the Tibetan social background. But what sort of picture do you get of that background, and of, you know, woman's place in it, from this? I mean, there are several little points of interest. For instance, gave us her inheritance. What does that suggest?

A voice: That brings a dowry to her

S: That a woman inherits independently, in Tibet. Or did. I don't know under the communist system. Probably nothing to inherit. I mean, what sort of general impression do you get.

A voice: I get a feeling of quite powerful imagery.

A voice: Its a hard life.

S: Its a hard life. Yes, you get the impression that life in Tibet is hard. I mean the old Tibet. That a woman's life is hard. That a woman works hard and also that a woman has at least a measure of independence. You get that impression.

Ulla: She does whatever has to be done. Also sorts of things.

S: She seems to work independently. She may fish or butcher. Yes? She goes out to work in the fields etc. etc. And she herself works to support her child. I mean there does not seem to be any man in the picture. No doubt, he's deliberately left out of the picture but no doubt, also, that Tibetan women, you know, were economically quite independent. As the Burmese and Thai women are. They very often have their own business or trade or whatever, which is



theirs. The scene there is quite different from India. Where that would be very, very unusual indeed for a woman to have a business or engage in trade on her own behalf. But among Tibetan women, Burmese and Thai women it is very common. In fact it is said in Burma that practically, or in Thailand too, that 90 per cent of retail trade is in the hands of the women, I mean, as their own business. Quite independent of their men-folk. ooo0ooo THE WOMEN'S SEMINAR 95

The Jewel Ornament of Liberation - Chapter 7

Held at Padmaloka on Jan. 1980 "Benevolence and Compassion"

Present: Ven. Sangharakshita, Upasakas Dhammadina, Ann Norman (Ashokasri), Anjali, Sridevi, Susanna Laurola, Ulla Mikkonen (Vajrapushpa), Ann McMillan (Parami),

Srimala, Anne Murphy, Karola Adamczik, and Cristabel Butler. Day 2 Tape 2 Side A

Ashokasri (?) reading: "(Recording begins in the middle of this passage).... "The benefit of going through hardships for our sake means that she not only

dressed and adorned us, but gave us her inheritance, keeping nothing of her own, not even a crumb, giving us all her food and drink, so that when we set out for foreign parts we should not suffer from hunger and thirst, giving us clothes to keep out the cold and money to prevent our pining in poverty. Unlike people who, because they do not want a thing, give it to a child, she allows herself a minimum of food, drink and clothing. A mother does not do things for the sake of happiness in this life, nor refrains from action for the sake of enjoyment in the hereafter, she just nurses and protects her baby. When for instance she has done evil and (recording begins here) unwholesome things, such as fishing and butchering, she brings him up on what she earns in that way: or, when her circumstances are unpleasant, after going to market or to work in the fields, day and night with the coarse soil as her shoes, wearing the stars as her cap, riding her legs as a horse,~ using the woollen threads of her torn frock as whip, offering her legs to the dogs (to bite and bark at) and her face to men (to gaze at), she gives whatever she has gained by her efforts to her child."

S: Hmm. Maybe there is a point or two... this sort of picture is drawn against a

Tibetan social background. What sort of picture do you get of that background and little of woman's place in it? from this. There are several/points of interest for instance,

"gave us her inheritance"; what does that suggest?

Voice: That she brings her dowry...

S: That a woman inherits independently in Tibet . . . or did I don't know about in the Communist system - there's nothing to inherit what sort of general impression do you get? page 2 96 Karola: I just got quite powerful imagery S: Hmm. Srimala: It's a hard life. S: It's a hard life. (chuckles) You get the impression that life in Tibet is hard.

I mean, the old Tibet. The woman's life is hard. The woman works hard and also that a woman has at least a measure of independence. You get that impression.

Ulla (Vajrapushpa): She does whatever has to be done.. .all sorts of things...

S: She seems to work independently. She may fish or bute her. ..yeah?..she goes out to work in the fields, etc, etc. She herself works to support her child. There does not seem to be any man in the picture. No doubt he's deliberately left out of the picture. No doubt also Tibetan women work economically quite independently as the Burmese in Thailand are. They very often have their own independent business or trade or whatever which is theirs... .The scene is quite different from India where that would be very very unusual ideed for a woman to have an independent business or engage in trade on her own behalf. But among Tibetan women and Burmese in Thaliland, it's very common. In fact it's said in Burma, practically 90% (in Thaliland too) of retail trade is in the hands of the women. It's their own business, yeah?, quite independently of their men folk.

Cristabel: What happened to the extended family in Tibet? Where are the grannies and aunties in the story? You don't seem to hear them at all.

S: Uh. In Tibet they don't seem to have developed the..(Tape damaged - cut off)... in England until recently, You have quite alot of them living out in the wilds. Tibetans didn't seem to have much in the way of villages. You've got maybe a few houses clustered over the foot of the hill where the monastery was. You've got a few market towns but not much more than that. So you tended to have these sort of isolated farmsteads, I think, in Tibet with these relatively small families, uh, and even when a woman was married to two or three brothers at lleast one of the brothers would be out trading or collecting something or other or making a living in that sor t of way. So it seems the women took a much more active part in the economic life and had to work also like the men or alongside the men and therefore they were generally more independent.

Ulla (V.P.): That's exactly how it's been in Finland; both the wife and the husband would be working together in the fields, etc. page 3

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S: Umm, umm, yeah. Or course in India you do get the women folk from the villages working in the field very often with the men but it seems to develop in quite a as in Tibet

different ~ort of way, there. Perhaps, because the hardships aren't so extreme/or just perhaps because the woman/has more ehildren,more babies there; but the Indian woman

broadly speaking, is not nearly so independent as the Tibetan woman or the Burmese woman or Thai. Some people put it down to the influence of Buddhism, because Buddhism is prevalent in Those ar~as. Others to racial characteristics of the Mongol peoples. It 'S difficult to say. But anyway you get quite a vivid picture of social background from this paragraph and that the picture that emerges is more of a hard working, rather independent sort of woman supporting and bringing up her own child, without much help or without any help even from anybody else. That's the sort of picture you get here. But maybe that is just to stress what

your mother has done for you. But I'm sure this did correspond to the facts in some cases.  
(long pause) Alright then, the next paragraph...

Suzanna: "She loves the helpless unknown baby more than her own benefactors, than her father, mother and teacher; she looks on her baby with eyes of love, wraps him in gentle warmth, dandles him on her ten fingers, calls him with words of kindness: 'Oh, my joy, my lovely one, lu, lu, how you delight Mummy.' (laughter)

S: Don't you think this is psychologically true or do you think it's silly sentimental exaggeration (laughter throughout). What do you think? How do you personally react to it? does it . . . (Voice: ooh, argh) (laughter)

Sridevi: It's not sentimental. It's put forward as something very positive.

S: Umm. To what extent does it correspond to the facts?

Anne MeM. (parami) I haven't got one. I'm not a Mummy. (laughter)

S: You've observed.

Ulla (V.P.): I think it is true.

S: I think it's true. I think it is, as it were, the norm (one hesitates to use the word), the normal woman's reaction. I think here, this is something I've noticed, that I've observed, that the reaction of women to a baby usually (there are exceptions) (there are even women who don't like babies~Cbut leave those aside) the reaction of women to babies is quite different from men's. Have you ever observed this? I don't think it's just social conditioning, though that may enter into it. It's partly page 4

instinctual. I've studied women when they meet babies of other women and just how they react. It's as though they get infatuated. You know. It's as though women fall in love with babies. Almost in the way that men fall in love with women. It's a bit like that.

Dhammadina: There's been an experiment on it where they measure the dilation of the pupils (laughter) as a measure of pleasure and women react to babies under the age of three in the same way that men react to topless blondes. (laughter)

S: I'm not surprised because I've observed that, you know, a woman meets another woman, say in the street and the other woman is pushing a pram. There's a new baby. "Ch, isn't he sweet" and this sort of thing at once and the woman is sort of stimulated and experiences intense pleasure in communicating with the baby. A man just doesn't react like that. huh? So this is at the bottom of what Cam papa is describing here

and I think one can't sort of not acknowledge this. huh? and clearly it's biologically~ our indispensable. If / mother~hadn't been infatuated with us (why) we were unlovable,

unattractive little brats, as we surely were, we wouldn't have survived. .. It's a biological necessity. yeah? So there's no point in either, sort of idealizing it or reviling it down. It's a sort of fact...

Dhammadina: There's a woman on the Christmas retreat who has twins and she's shocked she had twins. ..and she said she thought when she had her baby 'she'd get to know it and

maybe like it and she was quite shocked by the instant passion she felt when she had (loved) two babies - which one she liked most. . she said it was just like that; a strong

passion rather than my baby won't be nice(?)..

S: That's the father's attitude more often than not. Sometimes the father cannot connect with the baby emotionally. He starts connecting when the child becomes a bit older, and when he can communicate with it more as an individual.

Dhammadina: You can see why the father feels very left out sometimes

S: Yes indeed'. Especially if his own attitude towards his wife has been infantile. There's one baby being replaced by another. (laughter) The first baby doesn't like it This is what sometimes happens. huh? It's another love affair. The mother does seem to have very often a love affair with the baby. huh?

Parami: natural father... (unclear)

Karola: I was just thinking of child welfare clinics. There is that sort of special feeling there. page 5

Voice: And I sort of gravitate toward them as well...

S: Nooooo. (laughter) Again it's necessary. Otherwise what a mother's got to do for a half a century for so many years if there wasn't the sort of infatuation how could she do it? You couldn't do it on a purely rational basis because it has to be done. I don't think she could. That's why I think it's very difficult for a man to have one because he'd have to do just out of objective reasons and it has to mean more than that, to carry Dhammadina; A father doesn't look after his children just out of objective reasons

S: No there's feeling too surely but there isn't that sort of infatuation. It may be very strong. . what I mean is that the mother establishes an instant relationship and rapport with the baby in a very active practical way on the basis of this sort of feeling~ whereas the father very often is a bit lost for a while until he can relate to the baby more as an individual.. (pause) . .50 I think that most women need to take into consideration the fact that they have this potential. I don't think one can ignore it. One might regard it as something to be overcome or transcended but

usually as a datum of one's makeup it is there. You can't usually ride past it, definitely usually. you've got to make up some clear cut attitude towards it, that either yes,

it's going to find a specific outlet or it is not for certain definite reasons. This is quite a difficult question that faces most women in the course of their quest for personal development. I think it's dangerous to wobble off and not be able to make up one's mind one way or the other and now be pulled this way and now be pulled that way. Yeah? I think there has to be some stage in the proceedings a clear cut decision one way or the other, and that

may be a quite difficult decision to come to for obvious reasons. I'm sure you must all discuss this quite a lot so maybe there's no need to discuss it too much. (pause) But the facts of the situation, any situation always have to be known. Let's go on to this third point:

Sridevi (reading): "The benefit of giving us life, means that we have not come into the world knowing how to use our hands and our mouth and how to perform difficult tasks with all our strength. While we were feeble like a worm, of no importance and silly, our mother did not throw us away but served us, took us on her lap, protected us from fire and water, held us back from precipices, removed what might harm us, and made religious offerings for our well-being. Out of fear that we might die or page 6 100

or fall ill, she did things that nobody else would think of or could be enumerated, such as casting dice, consulting astrologers, observing omens, reading the lines in our hands, and so on, thus giving life to her child."

S: I remember when I was very ill as a child my mother consulted a fortune teller

who read a crystal ball and told my mother what was going to happen to me, so in\*

you feel so this is psychologically true because in a way; when you're/quite sort of desperate called in a situation you don't know which way to turn you consult these as it were\* so

supernatural and often find that mother's...

Parami: Did you crystal ball say anything about the (laughter drowns it out)...

S: Not in so many words (laughter) (Voice: unclear amusing remark - laughter)

S: I don't think my mother would have bothered at that stage, she only wanted to be reassured that I'd get better.. (pause).. Anything more to comment on that? I think it's pretty obvious. I think one tends to forget all the trouble that one's mother did take, to ensure that you did actually survive.; to survive your perilous childhood; not to get run over, or fall into the fire or knocked down or trampled under foot or. .. even battered by father... Alright, on to the fourth point... Cristabel(?) reading: "The benefit of showing us the world means that we did not come here, knowing and understanding everything merely by seeing it and having keen senses. When we cried for friendly company, when we could not use our hands and feet and knew nothing, she taught us how to eat, dress, walk and speak. Having taught us all sorts of crafts by saying Yes or NO, she made the uneven even for us and the unusual usual."

S: What do you think this means "having taught us all sorts of crafts by saying Yes

or No"? what to do; Ulla (VP): I think a child has to be very sure, it has to be very clear.

Yes, N S: (First few words unclear).. that's the way to do it or/that's not the way to do it, when the child tries to do something. She doesn't just ignore what the child is doing, yeah?

AnnMcM. (Parami): I can't help feeling there's a bit where it starts going wrong

somewhere. (S: Yeah? In what way?) Well, in a sense up till then, (I suppose I'm being (S:

Why not?) very personal),/in a sense up till then Mummy did all this sort of things, but somehow

when it starts coming to what she taught us, in a sense I suppose certain things that she started to handle as facts turns out aren't actual facts\* Somewhere it seems that'

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the area where I feel it starts

S: Well, as you say it can start going wrong here- how to eat , dress, for instance to give you an example. She might have said to you 'I You are a little girl, you ought to be pretty and clean and neat always. That's not how a little girl dresses. A little girl doesn't wear trousers.'" Well, it could start going wrong at that stage in that sort of way, at least within our modern context, couldn't it?

A. McM. (parami: I think it's somewhere opinions that starts coming into it like her personal views on things

S: Yes, and the fact that she's a creature of her society- in a sense she cannot be any other than that.(Farami:....it starts to come in there)

S: Hummm. Right, I think when one starts developing as an individual one cannot blame others who have not been individuals. You see what I mean? (Voices: Mmmm.) Because the group is the group. The individual requires a group to grow out of. Yeah? So you can't blame the group for being the group. Just as the group can't blame the individual for being an individual. So I think there's no point in blaming your mother or anybody else who was a member of the group for not bringing you up as though she was an individual. The poor woman wasn't an individual. Yeah? (laughter) At some

stage or other the individual has to emerge from the group, yeah? That is to say, to

thatte individual has/emerge from among people who are not individuals. So how can

you blame people who are not individuals for not bringing you up as an individual? You can't blame them. That is the crux of emergence into individuality itself. Yeah? AMcM (Parami): I suppose there's a stage one goes through when you're knowing things that you felt unhappy about. Maybe you do blame for a bit.

S: Initially in many cases you cannot help blaming or even justifying, You see, you have to go beyond that. So you say. "Look, my mother wasn't an individual; my father wasn't an individual. I was not born into a society of individuals. Of course, they blundered. Of course, they went wrong. It's surprising they didn't go more wrong. Anyway, I have emerged from that. I am now an individual. I can look back.'. So you just have to forgive them for, in a sense, for all that.

Cristabel(?): You can feel compassion for the awful things they went through.

Jo~ ANoN: (P): I think~where it goes a bit funny with me as well is that both my parents

\*:ii'£ 6;/~ are dead and sometimes when I think of I feel that I went to kind of communicate

and the ability to communicate is away (S: Right) and that's quite difficult. page 8 S: ~ecause had they been alive you could have gone on "well, this is how I feel; do you remember such and such happening"

A HeM: I actually wrote a letter to them about two months ago just to get it out of being in there and I wrote a lot of things that came up in my meditation but I feel that still things are happening that. . but it seemed quite good actually to sort of - Anoma suggested it and it really worked so I just pretended they were in Glasgow and I was sending them this letter..

S: You can even write the letter and then burn it so to se~~ it to them (pause) Because actually in a way it's not the parents themselves it's the impression of the parents left on you and still influencing you that you have to come to terms with and resolve.

A MoM (P): Something I almost by the way from the text that I meant to ask you at one point was, in the prostration practice that I do when you put your parents... should you do that if your parents are dead? Do you think it matters?

S: Oh yes, because from a Tibetan Buddhist point of view, there's really all the more reason ~or doing it because you put on one shoulder all the men headed by your father, all women headed by your mother and of course the majority of them are dead anyway...

A MoM: Yeah, except it brought up certain painful things when I did that but it's some- thing to work through by doing it...

S: This sort of suggests that in a way whatever the individual achieves retrospect- ively or retroactively it effects the whole group. Hmm? (pause) Just as when you change now you change your whole past, because your past has now led up to something different. .hmm?. . the meaning of your past, the meaning of your whole life is changed by changing the present.. .hmm? . .50 you can include your parents in that. In a way, you sort of redeem your parents if you want to put it in a very extreme sort of way- sort of poetically, not taken literally (Parami: That's really helpful actually) You change your relationship with the parents in the past, yea?, by changing now.... so it isn't as though what has happened in the past cannot be changed. It can be changed by changes in the present because there is a causal connection between the past and the present so by changing the present you make the past lead upto something different, hmm?, you change therefore the whole meaning of the past so in the end you can even end up feeling grateful to your parents for having behaved like that.... page 9 look where (03 because it's led you in the end.

A McM: I do sometimes experience that... (S: Hmmm.)

Cristabel(?): In many ways it's harder if they're still around because you go back and have changed and your recollections of the past are changed and they're still the same (Long Pause)

S: This is interesting in a way: The benefit of showing us the world, means that we did not come here, knowing and understanding everything merely by seeing it and having keen senses. When we cried for friendly company, when we could not use our hands and feet and "I didn't know nothing" etc. it's as though however well equipped you may come, you have to be taught. Hmm? You can't find it all out for yourself. You haven't got the time; you wouldn't survive perhaps in the case of these basic matters. And it's the same on the cultural level; it's the same on the spiritual level; we have to begin by being taught. So we should be very grateful for that, you know, what we contribute by our own efforts is very little by comparison. Hmm? The mere fact that language is there waiting for us; we don't have to create a language with which to communicate to others like that. A whole medium, that very important medium is there already created by other human beings. We have only to learn it and take advantage of it and use it.

A: So we just need to be receptive

S: Yes, our whole culture is there. Works of art are there. Social institutions are there; all for us to take advantage of. We're introduced to these things and they're available to us. Hmm? So mother is, as it were, only the thin end of the wedge. She just makes very simple things available to us but then bit by bit the whole society takes over and introduces us to more and more of what has been discovered by people in the past. Hmm? We can enjoy Shakespeare or we can enjoy Shelley or we can enjoy Mozart. You know, we haven't created all that; it's been created by all those other people. We are introduced to it by our friends and others who bring us up. A: That's something that we in the Friends have quite a responsibility actually to communicate things that we discover or that we... (S: Right) I think that's why the publications department should be a little bit (that's just something I've been thinking about).. It's just important that people who have vision in fact make it available to everybody (S: Right) page 10 to S: Well, there needs to be generally more outward goingness (Pause)

A: It's interesting actually that was the mark of the Renaissance wasn't it, was that people started actually to make notes of things, make communication in that sort of way, make available knowledge (S: Hmm.)

S: Well yes, there was a tendency before that on the part of the church to confine knowledge to the clerical class because it had to be handed out to the masses in very carefully calculated doses. That is why the ordinary people didn't read the Bible until the time of the Reformation. It was only then that it was translated into the vernacular anyway. Very often the priests did not know the Bible, did not possess a Bible. He only possessed his service book with short extracts from the

Bible for certain liturgical purposes. He had the Lord's Prayer, he had a few that's passages from the Gospels and the Epistles and all he needed to conduct services

in church. More often than not the priest himself had never read the Bible. never read the Gospels. That came only with the Reformation. So nowadays, everything is available. We can read not only a Bible, we can read the Scriptures of all religions. There's so much available that was not available before. But we've not created any of this. Hmm? This has all been handed down to us, by the human race, so to speak. So very often people don't realize how much they've got to be grateful for. Even things that we use like electric light, plumbing,



printing, these have all been invented by other people and we now reap the benefit of them  
(pause) alright let's

go on. (reading) Srimala: "But this does not exhaust what a mother is always doing and has always done

since beginningless Sainsara. As is said in the ....."

S: Just to stop at that.. "A mother is always doing and has always done since beginningless Sain~ara.." You get emerging a sort of Archetypal j~other. Yeah? You see what I mean? First of all there's your individual mother, then all beings have been your mother at some stage or other, so all are Mothers. It's as though you had this one great jThther, as it were, from beginningless time. So do you think this is a legitimate development or is becoming a bit too, as it were, Archetypal? Hmm?

Do you think it's a helpful way to think? (Parami: I think it's really quite relevant S: It's almost as though Nature becomes Mother or Mother becomes Nature. We speak of i~other Nature anyway. So it is the whole of existence as produced you page 11 105 in a way, doesn't it? So you can regard the whole of existence and the whole of the mundane as Mother in relation to you, in that sort of respect. (pause) Alright carry on then...

Srimala (reading): "If one individual were to transform all the earth, stones, trees, and groves in this world into single juniper kernels, another might well be able to finish counting them. But no one can count what his mother has done for him."

S: Why the juniper kernels? Well, juniper bushes grow in Tibet.. it's a familiar image. The Indian would say the sands of the river Ganges but they don't have Ganges in Tibet they have juniper trees. Anyway, you get the idea don't you? It's rather strange to hear Mother praised in this sort of way, isn't it? (laughter) Airight there's soithingrore in the same strain, carry on...

Srimala reading: "If a man were to count the times a mother has come to him by grains of soil not larger than juniper kern~; the earth would not be able to produce a like quantity."

S: Or come to him when he cried or called out presumably something (unclear)... airight next.. paragraph of just one sentence..

Srimala (reading): "In this way the benefit of a mother's every single action is to be counted."

S: Ummm. You see, her coming to you, her wiping your nose etc., etc. There's an awful lot of it. (laughter)

S: Anyway, I think there's some possibility of people even in this day and age thinking and feeling in this sort of way. If they look even a bit objectively as they sit in their room, someone has done all these things for you at some stage of your career. In your cases that was ?£other. No doubt she's blamed for a great deal perhaps quite rightly but nonetheless has succeeded in bringing you safely through childhood, without too much damage... even under modern condtions....

Srimala: I remember a few years ago Z suddenly being amazed at what my mother must have gone through, bringing up three children. I suddenly felt overwhelmed with gratitude, and on her own. I don't think I had children then. You're much more conscious of it when you have children yourself..~just aware of all the things that need to be done (S: Hmm) page 12 just S: There's more than one realizes, even when your two/pay a little visit here

for half an hour it makes one realize what it must be like to handle that all the time. (laughter) It can't be easy even if it is fun~ at the same time it's demanding at the same time. Hmm. So every mother has done that, with some, whether well or badly it's been done. The mere fact that you have survived shows that. She must have fed you - I don't know how many thousands of times (laughter) - she must have done it otherwise you wouldn't be here. etc, etc. She must have dressed you so many tens of thousands of times; she must have sort of pulled your little boots on and pulled them off again so many times (laughter) She lost count long ago.. well also perhaps this suggests that there's a greater awareness of how indebted you are to your environment.1 You're so ready in the West, I feel, to blame.. to say why haven't we got more; "why haven't we got this; why haven't we got that". You see this even, with things like.. since we're talking so of children, toys. A child in India will play with a rag or with a stone or a bit of stick and be quite happy with that. Only our children here- they've got expensive electronic toys which cost as much money as an Indian family will live on for several months. Yea? But they're dissatisfied, they want something bigger and better. Usually they're encouraged by adults because a child is quite easily satisfied. Hmm? We're so discontented. The unfortunate thing is that we think we're discontent because we haven't got this or we haven't got that. We don't realize that it requires a change of attitude and a change in our whole way of life and ideally the whole way that society functions. We need a new society; to help produce the new individual - to provide the best conditions for the emergence of the new individual. Well, anyway, coming from a place like India, I really feel quite - there's so much paranoia with people in England, so much dissatisfied wanting more of this and more of that; going on strike and grumbling and complaining; scrutinizing their differentials and all that sort of thing, and not being thankful for what they've got and trying to make it the basis of a more truly human life.

Cristabel: And always blaming somebody else

S: And always blaming somebody else - hmm, hmm. (long pause) Anyway, the next point

the next paragraph..

Karola reading: "Thus, since a mother's kindness is immeasurable, we should ponder about what makes her heart full of happiness and bliss, and this is not all. Since all beings have been our mother (from time out of mind), they have all benefitted by page 13 Io~ what a mother has done. Should you ask what is the limit of sentient beings, the answer is that they encompass the bounds of heaven." (Shall I go on? S: Yes)

As is stated in the "What is the end of the sky is also that of all beings."

S: So you see the reasoning, you see the line of thought. "The mother's kindness is immeasurable"- that point is regarded as having been established. . .you ought to be overwhelmingly grateful to your mother for everything that she's done to you but don't forget

what it said at the beginning (it all develops out of that). Let's go back to that: "The root of benevolence lies in the memory of benefits received" This is the point that it all developed from - you have received so many benefits from your mother, huh? that you ought very easily to be able to develop love towards your mother.. out of sheer gratitude. But all beings have been your mother at some stage or other therefore, you ought to feel that overwhelming gratitude and therefore,

benevolence and compassion towards all living beings. huh? huh? Therefore, you ought since to reflect that/she has done so much for you what can you do for her? That would

make her happy? What would make her most happy? Well, to become Enlightened. Yea? So therefore, to repay your debts to all beings who have all been your mothers, you

should try to lead them to Enlightenment, therefore, you should be a Bodhisattva. Huh! we

So for traditional Tibetan Buddhism this is a very strong sentiment which recurs

perpetually...You see the line of reasoning? yeah? Could you perhaps generalize it? do you think? Sort of dissociate it a bit from that exclusive emphasis on mother? (pause) Well you could say you've received so much from life; you received so much from the human race; you've received so much from your own society, you see? They've enabled you to be what you are now...surely you should now repay - surely you should now make some return to the highest degree that you can and should not that be by trying to improve things even further, huh? and they can only be improved in the direction of individuality. The best return that you can make is by helping as many beings as possible to become individuals - to carry the whole process on a stage further. You've been helped to come so far so out of gratitude you would like to help others to go to an even further, higher stage of development You see what I mean?

A Tibetan (Parami): It has a sort of feeling of inevitability. It seems almost common sense like that. Like evolutions gone this far and therefore... page 14 to

S: Now of course with the individual it's a voluntary process. It has to be an individual choice and decision. The individual can block the whole process. he can frustrate, if you like, the whole process - most individuals do or most people do - yeah? but if one can only awaken gratitude, well gratitude if you like, for the human race, for human culture, for society for having brought you to this point - where you're reasonably healthy, yea? you're fed, you're clothed, you're warm, you're comfortable, yea? you're able to support yourself - you are in contact with people in a positive way yea? You've got inspiring books to read. You've not created any of this for yourself, it's all been laid on for you by other people basically - whether individuals or met. So if one realizes this, well one feels very grateful and well, "surely I should make some return" - not in a sort of quid pro quo sort of sense, but you feel like giving because you have received so much and this can only be in a way by carrying the whole process one stage further. . .and making it possible for others to be individuals if they want to be by providing them with the facilities. So one can look at it more in this sort of way; in more general terms rather than "Yes, mother did all this because you were born millions of times in the past - all beings have been your mother and therefore you ought to repay all these mothers for

what they've done for you with Enlightenment, huh? Maybe for the modern mind, this is a bit too, as it were, specific, or even a bit exclusive. But certainly you can feel a genuine gratitude towards the human race and towards all those people in the past who contributed to your cultural and spiritual enrichment. And therefore, out of that gratitude try to perform a similar function by at least to the extent of transmitting to others what you yourself have received... even if you can't add to it. You know you might intensely enjoy reading Shelley.. you can't add anything to that? you can't write anything like that- at least you can tell others "well, look - here's a wonderful book. Read these poems"; you can pass it on. At least you can do that. . You may not be able to teach anybody meditation - at least you can say: "Well, look - there are classes; come along" huh?. At least you can do that.

So it all in a way seems to hinge on gratitude. A sense of if you have received so much how should you not in your turn give or at least pass on - huh? The sense of gratitude seems very important. And that seems to stem from the sense that you have received . The fact that we don't appreciate that we have received means that we're just blind most of the time. We don't think. It's not because of any depravity or page 15

or even negativity. it's just we don't think. We just don't see - that it has been provided for us by others. 99.9% of what we use and benefit from is provided by others. i[ven what we provide for ourselves, is usually, as it were, due to the cooperation of others.

Ai(P): I think sometimes people realize that on retreat - maybe they've been there for a week or something and they realize that actually they are really benefitting from it and the facilities have been supplied and...

S: The preparation has been laid on, the retreat has been organized. I must say, that I've noticed within the Friends, within the last couple of years a far greater sense of gratitude as regards the Li-qBO itself. The first, (I was going to say few years but it was the greater part of the time) people weren't grateful at all. They hadn't realized that anything was being done for them. But the last two years it's become relatively common for people to express gratitude and to express the feeling that they're really glad that the Fi-E3() exists and are grateful, you know, to it as it were, for existing.. quite a few people compared with earlier on have expressed that sentiment in the course of the past couple of years. Before it was unknown. They might have felt it but they never expressed it. At least not for 5,6, even 7 years.

maybe now more, it is more tangible- the benefits are more tangible. In the early days it was perhaps a bit problematic; it was just a little tiny basement in Lonmouth St. Hmm... . . . Gratitude is mentioned in the langala Sutta, isn't it? Katanyuta as it is called in Pali - Gratitude. It's one of the Nangalas. Gratitude and as it were, sort of not humility; a sort of lowliness of mind as it were. A lack of pride and conceit. Hmm? Don't you remember that? (pause)

A IJcIJ (Parami): Sometimes if you're going to be grateful, you have to acknowledge something, which is sometimes in the sense that you're talking about being grateful.. It's like being grateful for... you have to acknowledge a hierarchy somewhere...

S. You have to at least acknowledge the hierarchy of benefitter and benefitee and sometimes people feel that if you are benefitted by somebody they are in a way in a superior position.

End of Sida A page 16

Side B it means S: Sometimes we're reluctant to acknowledge benefits because/we're acknowledging that someone is in a way, ~ even if fairly superficially superior. And they don't like that.

A r~'vt: Because they're in a position to give you this benefit or something. That sometimes blo~ks people feeling gratitude. (S: Yes.)

Cristabel: I think when people are giving things they think that person should be grateful, but they forget that they're getting something back from giving it. They're getting a terrific feeling of well-being back, Because you can't give something unless somebody agrees to accept it and then you get-some~ng back. It's got to be

two-way. Because you have a contract. .~(S: Hinin.) regards S: As/the person who is objectively receiving anything, I think that difficulty

still persists. huh? Even if the benefit is mutual; the poson who feels that he

or she is on the receiving end is a bit reluctant sometimes to acknowledge that they current have received a benefit and I think this is be~ause of our/pseudo-egalitarian

ideology.. that everyone is equal and that therefore~ no body can really benefit anybody else. (pause) Anyway, that's such nonsense; we can leave aside, you know, spiritual things, What about literature? How much we've been benefitted and inspired by it. Like poetry and imaginative writing of all kinds. By all the arts and music and so on... So I think it's a quite positive thing that we realize in a sense our dependence in this respect and don't resent our dependence.. and this will enable us to feel gratitud~. ~Jhen we start feeling gratitude we will start feeling a certain warmth and a certain willingness to reciprocate and therefore, this benevolenco and compassion I mean also there is this practical question with

regard to mothers and old people, generally. When they get ~lly old they may was need help yfrom you. Huh? Someone once raised the question - maybe~t/a bit

premature now: "What are we going to do with our old Order Members~ (laughter) Well, you might think one day, 'Well, look when that old Order V~mber was young and spritely I got so much inspiration from him or from her, and it's only right now that they're old and decrepit, I ~uld help out and do what I can for them. Oh, sure, he or she gave that inspiring talk, you know, 50 years ago (laughter) and it really turned me on.." See what I mean? (Pause) So in India for instance as in all traditional societies, sometimes people quite explicitly expect their children to do for them when they are old what they did for their children when they were young. page 17 Because a very old person often becomes helpless in the same way that a child is

helpless.

A HcM (Parami): I think actually where I was brought up that happened quite alot. ~cst people I knew, well grandparents were at home. Say a grandfather died, the grandmother always moved in with, say, one of the aunts or something.

S: Don't you tend not to find that now? Among young people....

~j(P): Yes, still our generation don't do that so much but still when I go home most of my friends at home have. I suppose my friends of my generation live by themselves and most of their mothers have an older relative or something living with them. That's the last generation.

Ulla (VP): The social security is so good now, you don't have to have so many children to support you in your old age. (S: Yes, yes.)

S: Children were regarded~as a sort of investment because if you consider in India even now there's no social security, if you haven't got a relation to support you when you are old you starve. It's as simple as that. You beg, if you can.

A MCM(Parami): I suppose it used to be like the working class didn't have the money to pay people to go into nursing homes or things so they just had to take them in. There was no actual alternative. (sentence unclear)

Cristabel: We may have all the material things (break in tape) The state provides money and sometimes bedding and meals on wheels but it doesn't provide contact with people or any kind of cow~assion.

S: It doesn't provide love on wheels. (laughter) But then the relations can sort of well clear their own conscience and think "Well, they're/looked after; they're not starving"

But this is the materialistic outlook, if you've got the material things, you've got everything.. .50 they may believe this, the relations may do, or they may just profess to believe it. But it comes to the same thing that the old person is left very often without human contact. I think what a lot of old people resent is the loss of autonomy. I really saw this in the case of an old friend of ours or an old friend of a friend's. I saw a friend in the old days who used to go to the Brighton Centre, before it was the Brighton Centre, the Brighton Buddhist Society, and she'd been a nurse all her life and a very independent strong-minded, rather hot-tempered old woman - or short-tempered certainly, and she reached the age of 77 page 18 remaining in full possession of her health and strength and was quite able to look after herself. And suddenly it all changed. She had a fall, first of all and then she got a little illness and after that very rapidly she became completely helpless or virtually helpless and had to be moved into a Home. It was a very difficult experience. I used to go and visit her regularly in various Homes and she had a lot of trouble and difficulty and one of the.. the main thing was (unclear) she'd been deprived of her autonomy and used to go into absolute rages because of this. She got so frustrated, she'd through things at the nurses and the women looking after her and she lived until she was over 85 or 86. She was nearly 10 years in these Homes, in various wards and constantly moving because she wasn't satisfied but it was the loss of autonomy. She had this false sense of independence. She'd always done things for herself. Well, she'd done things for other people. No one ever had to do anything for her and she couldn't accept that she was in a position of dependency.. that people had to do things for her. If they didn't do them in exactly the way that she wanted, oh, she'd get so angry.. and in the end they got pretty fed up with her, where- ever she went, though they understood obviously what old people are sometimes like. But she was particularly trying. So I think when we get old, if we do outlive our strength and our health, we have to accept (unclear) we do revert to a sort of

almost childlike condition and are dependent on others . . . and there's no room for the exercise of extreme self-will. But on the other hand, those who are looking after us need to be patient and understanding. Not actually treat us like children because we're not. I mean the intelligence and the psychological maturity is there so anyway it can be deeply humiliating to someone like that to be treated as though they were an irresponsible child. And just parked here or parked there, according to your convenience... without regard to their wishes. But it's something that at least some of us will have to face, one day. (pause) I mean so that also should give us food for thought, and cause us to be more considerate to other people...remembering the

condition we ourselves may be in, also one day It isn't easy when we're very young really to think that we may one day be old. It's quite unreal; maybe there's/not much

point in talking too much about it. I don't think you really begin to realize one may one day actually be old till you're past 40, I think actually. Because until then it's uphill all the way, not downhill Anyway perhaps we should stop there for this morning and just going back and seeing if there's any point that needs page 19 (13

further discussion. But you can see the general trend of the Tibetan thinking; traditional Tibetan Buddhist thinking. The purpose of the whole passage is to try to harness all our emotional energies, even at the very deep level - all our emotional positivity in the interest of the Bodhisattva ideal. This is essentially what the text is trying to do; mobilize all our deep rooted emotional energies.. in the direction of the Bodhisattva ideal. And even if one doesn't accept everything that the Tibetan author says about one's feelings with regard to one's mother, well one cannot ignore that because a lot of one's emotional energy~~, for better or worse, is invested with mother and we have to do something about it...(Pause) And also in the case of those who are women, biologically women, they've got these, for the want of a better term, maternal instincts? in most cases and they have to take some sort of attitude towards them too.. one way or the other. And if they do decide to embark upon motherhood it must be, you know, within the context of the Feminine so to speak, in a positive way. . .in the support of a positive ideal of motherhood, ~ as it were. Even motherhood doesn't sound very good, does it?.. You know what I mean. (Long pause)

Cristabel: Bhante, I've got a sort of tangential question. We were talking yesterday about feeling related to all sentient beings including plants and animals. In the Tibetan book of the Dead where it talks about beings talking about a place to settle, does that include plants and animals?

S: As far as I recollect it doesn't. It applies only to human beings, that being the normal course. Someone is reborn as a human being. In fact some writers, are doubtful whether the Buddhist stories of rebirth of human being being reborn as an animal can be taken quite literally. Certainly not in the sense of a human consciousness imprisoned in an animal form - this is quite impossible. But if you degraded your consciousness to a purely animal level, which I think would be quite difficult to do, because even if you are trying to do it, the fact that you tried means that you were not an animal. You were just a corrupted human being. But supposing that you managed to reduce yourself by insensible degrees to a level of animal consciousness, well, you'd be reborn as an animal. But it would be an animal consciousness reborn in an animal body, not a human consciousness trapped in an animal body. Page 20

Dhammadina: If it's very very difficult to become a human being, does that mean you've got to be something else before? No I think this statement must be taken also with caution. ~that it seems to mean~ in view of the illustration given, is that amongst sentient beings, the statistical probability of any individual sentient being being a human being is very remote. You see what I mean? So in that sense it is difficult for a sentient being to rise to the level of being a human being. In the mere fact that human beings are outnumbered by other forms of life, hmmm? It's not as though here you are poised on the frontier of existence and struggling to get into a human body and that is very difficult and you're dragged back into an animal body.. it's not to be taken in that sort of way. (pause) But the value of human life, self-conscious life is difficult. So in way if you find yourself as an intelligent aware sentient being, well that's a great achievement... ..and the greater part of that is not due to anything that you've done - here you are -; you're like that. It's due to everything - to life, to nature, the human race, to evolution, to society even poor old mother (laughter) even she has played her part. Suzanna: (?) What's the root of the word "sentient"?

S: I think it's connected with the word "sense":, endowed with senses, in English Jiva that is. In Sanskrit it's Jiva which is literally, what is alive - not only

alive but in a sense also mobile, to some extent.

Suzanna: So that it's very difficult to include plants.

S: Well, they are mobile to some extent. They're rooted, they cannot move from place to place but they do move - when they close they move but it's very restricted movement, yeah? (unclear)

Suzanna: So you can translate it as "all that lives".

S: Yes, all sentient beings, all living beings - things, it means really the whole of organic life, yeah? It doesn't include stones, it doesn't include minerals. There are some ancient Indian philosophers, the Jains, regarded all things as

organic. They regarded even water and fire and air as organic, -sort of organisms. really It's quite interesting... you could go as far as that. Can you draw a hard and fast

line, you can't. There are some forms of life that scientists haven't decided if they're organic or inorganic . . . forms of existence let's say. What are the names of these things (unclear - laughter) There are certain things like rusts and so on page 21 (I~ they're not sure whether they're (Voice: Unclear in background answering) In the

same way there are things they can't decide whether they're minerals or whether they're animals...or whether they're organic or inorganic, minerals or plants. There are even some kinds of viruses - they're not sure where they come (pause)

Voice: I have a theory they come from outer space.

S: Lots of things do come from outer space. There are certain minerals which come from outer space, in meteors. It could be that if there is organic matter in other parts of space, fragments of it could have reached this Earth. That is not impossible. It's said that it would be



very difficult for organic life to survive passage through, not only through space, but through several layers of the Earth's atmosphere.

Cristabel: If we could get to the Moon, it would be very arrogant to think there wasn't someone, something going on in other worlds...

S: Think of how many millions of worlds there are- all the millions of years in which various possibilities like that can come to work themselves out. We shouldn't be too confident about there not being other forms of life in the Universe even more highly developed than we are.

A: I still think "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" was interesting.

S: Well, who knows. (long pause) Someone said that in the FWBO we have "Close Encounters with the Fourth Kind" (laughter).. we go a bit beyond all that.... Anyway, you get the general sense of this whole passage- the general trend, huh? It's as though the author of Buddhist Tibetan tradition wants to enlist very basic emotions in the service of the spiritual life. They can't be left out of consideration, they can't be ignored. They are there. So it is best to enlist their cooperation rather than to go directly against them.

Ulla (VP): They're a tremendously important basis..

Cristabel: It's very inspiring, isn't it?

A: The most basic and the most cosmic are together in the same text.

S: Huraram? Another and nature on the one hand, and the Bodhisattva ideal on the other. And it's as though Dharma, Benevolence and Compassion and Gratitude are the links.

(pause) A: Right, let's leave it there. End of Side B

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TAPE 1.

S: I think we didn't quite finish dealing with the last section that we read. So could we go back to the line: 'Should you ask what is the limit of sentient beings', near the top of the page. The answer is that they encompass the bounds of heaven. As is stated in the Bhadracharyapranidhanamaharajaparibandha: 'What is the end of the sky is also that of all beings'.

So this suggests that this stage, this level of practice of benevolence and compassion, when your object is sentient beings, those sentient beings are without limit. Just like the sky, just like space. It's not as though you'll ever have a set number of sentient beings to develop your benevolence and compassion towards. At the same time you can't actually have an infinite number so that means that your benevolence and compassion must be constantly expanding, ever taking in more and more and more people. They should never, as it were, settle down at a particular number of people, however great. You see what I mean? It's inherent in benevolence and compassion that it is expansive, it is not exclusive, it is not limited, it doesn't

set any limits, doesn't fix any limits. So that supposing, in the course of your metta, that you are able to develop metta towards four people and then you can expand it, with great effort, to 10 or 12 even, it doesn't mean that you should sort of heave a sigh of relief and say, "Ah, now I've developed metta." No, it must be constantly expanding all the time. It's a movement essentially. Well, of course, in a way the natural tendency of the mind is just to settle down at a particular point and feel that you've done enough. That's my whack, that's my quota. Well, maybe it is for today, but not indefinitely. So maitri and karuna are inherently expansive. So, "What is the end of the sky/Is also that of all beings." Well, the /r 117

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S: point is the sky has no end. Likewise sentient beings have no end. In any case, they are being produced all the time. Therefore, the text continues, we should develop concentrated attention to the growth of a worthy mind, desiring all sentient beings to profit and to feel happy. So you notice here that it's as though the two aspects of the spiritual life are taken into consideration, the self-regarding and the other-regarding. We should develop concentrated attention to the growth of a worthy mind. You are devoting yourself to the development of your own mind, desiring all sentient beings to profit and to feel happy. You can't really separate the two. If you desire that you should become loving, well, that doesn't just concern you, it concerns other people because other people are the objects of that loving state of mind. (Pause)... All right, let's carry on then. Let's continue the reading round in a circle.

ANNE MURPHY: Shall I start, Bhante?

S: Yes, if we've gone round once. Have we gone round once? We've mixed up the circle, have we? All right, carry on.

ANNE MURPHY: Shall I start at "Such an attitude...?"

S: "Such an attitude...", yes..

ANNE MURPHY: "Such an attitude leads to real Benevolence. In the

'Mahayana-sutralankara' also is declared:

A Bodhisattva is towards all beings As to a child. With great Benevolence out of his innermost heart He always desires to procure their happiness."

S: Well, this section, especially this verse, this quotation, raises several questions, doesn't it. "A Bodhisattva is towards all beings/As to a child..." What do you think is the point of the comparison and what 118 3

S: are its possible dangers? First of all what is the point of the comparison? In what sense does the Bodhisattva regard all beings as like a child?

VOICE: They're helpless.

S: They're helpless. yes. However capable or able they may be from the worldly point of view, spiritually speaking they're helpless. Yes, there's that. Any other aspects?

ANNE McMILLAN: Is it back to the mother and child thing...?

S: In a way it is, yes - but in what way?

SRIDEVI: This intense well-wishing...

S: Intense well-wishing. Just as the mother desires the happiness and well-being of the child, in the same way the Bodhisattva, you know, desires the happiness and well-being of all sentient beings. This goes back to the historical Buddha himself, when he said, sending out the first disciples, "Go forth for the happiness and well-being of all people". So the Bodhisattva is towards all beings as to a child in that sort of way. But are there any sort of dangers in the comparison, at least, you know, from a modern standpoint?

VOICE: You might do too much for people....they have to stand on their own two feet...

S: Yes, there is that..

VOICE: They might be being too mothered.

ANNE McMILLAN: I think there's possibly a danger as well of not taking the person seriously, looking on them as a child. In a way, under-estimating them.

S: Yes - but again, what is the point of the comparison? The point of the comparison between the Bodhisattva and the mother is surely that the Bodhisattva is being compared with the wise mother, the ideal mother, not with the foolish mother. You see what I mean? ~In a sense those

points are taken care of, just as a wise mother, if she wants the child to grow up, she doesn't want to smother the child. In the same way, the wise Bodhisattva - and a Bodhisattva by definition is wise - is not going to be over-protective, is going to encourage people to stand on their own feet. Do you think there is any possible danger in using this sort of phraseology? Supposing you - if you were an Order Member taking a meditation class - and you were to sort of start off looking round the class and saying: "Well, my children..." (laughter). Well you see, what sort of response do you think that would spark off? (laughter). You see what I mean? The point of the comparison is not that you treat people as children, it's only an analogy. (pause).

And this raises a quite important point that I have been emphasizing from time to time recently, that is the starting point of communication. That is to say on what sort of ground do you meet when you meet, say, new people, new people, especially, coming into the Movement? Is it

sort of understood from the beginning that you are, as it were, in the

bar position of parent and they~in the position of child, or what is under

stood? What is the basis? Do you take any particular stand, as it were, in relation to them?

VOICE: To whom?

S: To them. That is to say, to the new person.

ANNE MoNILLAN: You...(inaudible)..meet people on their own ground.

S: Yes, but one could go a bit further than that, perhaps. Or one

could even examine what do you mean by meeting them on their own ground, because to begin with you don't know what their ground is, do you? I mean you could guess perhaps, to some extent, from the way they dress, or the way. - . (coughing). You might think someone who comes along 5

is a stockbroker because he dresses in a certain way. You might find he's a revolutionary poet. It's difficult to tell. So you don't always know what their ground is.

ULLA: I think it's probably dangerous to take any particular stand.

S: Yes.. right... .yes.

:OICEi I think you should just be yourself.

S: Well, even that....' (laughter) Well, what does one mean by being oneself? In what sense can one be completely oneself the first time you meet a particular person? Yes, one shouldn't take any particular stand. I think this is quite important. You shouldn't assume, you know, when you meet someone under those sort of circumstances, that the relationship is, or is going to be, of any particular type. You see what I mean? For instance, you do not relate to them on the basis of "I know all about Buddhism and you don't know anything about it." It's as though you sort of wipe the slate clean and you meet them as though you knew nothing about Buddhism, as though you are, as it were, on a level with them, whatever that level may be. But in the course of communication it may well emerge, as you get to know each other, that, yes, you do know and you do understand certain things that they don't and then they should be able to accept that. But it should not be made a point, as it were, to begin with. Do you see what I mean? It should emerge naturally, if it emerges at all.

VOICE: That applies to our communication generally...

S:

- Yes, indeed.

VOICE: ..... (inaudible) adopt any particular stance.

S: I mean, you shouldn't assume that since he's been in the Order, or she's been in the Order for eight years - you know - they must be immeasurably superior to you spiritually. Or

inferior... (laughter)... gone of the old has-beens. (laughter). You see what I mean?

VOICE: (inaudible)

S: Where you actually stand, in relation to each other, can only really emerge in the course of actual communication. Nothing can be assumed in advance. I think it's a very important principle: all the more important in view of, you know, various happenings outside the Friends. When you see that so many claims are made on behalf of certain people. You see what I mean? So that if you were ever to meet them you would never be actually able to meet them as they were, and to find out for yourself what they were like. You are told in advance. In other words you are not allowed to make up your own mind or to experience for yourself. You are told that this is the great Master, or that this is the Enlightened - you know - somebody else. Or that this person is the greatest ever that has. etc. etc. Do you see what I mean? So, you know, you get this sort of advertising and everybody is supposed to accept that person according to that sort of rating which means, in a sense, that nobody is allowed to know that person.

ANNE MoMILLAN: I think that happens even within the Movement. I've quite often heard things like such and such an Order Member does such and such a thing and, you don't mean to, but you~ assume a fixed view because -

S: Well, if someone does something well, that's a sort of objective statement about them. But what you've got to be careful of is assuming what that person is like, relative to you. If you say, or if you just hear that Order Member so-and-so gives a very good lecture, well, that's all right. If that is the consensus the likelihood is that, yes, he does give a good lecture, and you can take that as a fact. But if you hear that Order Member so-and-so is immeasurably superior to you spiritually, 7

well, this is something you cannot take because the unknown factor is

where you stand.

ANNE MoMILLAN: I think this relates to people's attitudes as well. I mean, I've been told that so-and-so doesn't like women.. (laughter) ..

or.. (inaudible) .. or red-headed or something like that and, you don't mean to, but when you do meet that person - well, I meet people with

a slightly defensive attitude. &r'a ~+ktnk ~'S 9tAA~ ~~Cvu'd~

S~: - It is, I mean as a more general point, it is important that when you

do meet people about whom perhaps you've heard, to meet them so far as you can with an open mind and not meet them, as it were, defensively, thinking of them in terms that you've heard them described by other people. I mean - other people - all right, they've had their own experience, you're not impugning or invalidating that. But you should be allowed to have your own experience of that particular person. It shouldn't be insisted that you experience that person in the same way that everybody else has experienced that person. It may be so, you know, with regard to the Great Enlightened Master who ... (inaudible), he may be the

Great Enlightened Master for some people, they may genuinely think that. But you should be allowed to make up your own mind. You shouldn't be expected, right from the beginning, to regard him as such, and behave accordingly. You see, otherwise they say: "Why aren't you down on your knees, it's the Great Enlightened Master." Well, you don't know that. And if he really was the Great Enlightened Master he wouldn't expect you to get straight down on your knees as soon as one of the disciples - of the disciples - had

~Idou.

In another context, I think it was in the Ti Ratana Vandana I think you once said that whenever two people communicated

they could always learn something from each other, no matter what the levels are. 8

S: Yes. It may not even be something very important but still there is something to be learned. One shouldn't be too concerned about where you stand in relation to each other. If there is any great difference of level that will inevitably emerge and, as it were, happily emerge, in the case of genuine communication. You don't need to sort of make it a condition of the communication itself. You just have to be quite open to the other person. (Pause)

So it's here that you, as it were, have the best of both worlds, you know, the world of hierarchy and the world of ~ let's say - democracy and equality. You don't deny, you don't insist as a sort of hard and fast rule that everybody is equal and that you're not going to discover that anyone is superior to you - you don't insist on that. But you don't insist on relative, as it were, inferiority or superiority before the actual communication has started.

~Al50 there must be more than one lot of levels going on. S': Indeed. Well, when one says 'level' in a more absolute sense it means overall level of human consciousness. But within that, yes, there are various levels of. ~"~~~~, with regard to different spheres of different subjects. You may be better at gardening, someone else may be better at philosophy, etc. etc. But I think on the whole, perhaps over a number of years in the course of genuine communication, you may come to feel that somebody is more experienced, on the whole, and a more developed human being than you. But I think this will take quite a time because people do change, in the sense that people have their ups and downs. You know, today you may communicate with someone when they're having an "up" period, tomorrow you may communicate with them when they're having a "down" period, so if you will, sort of, over the years, strike a balance with regard to that person, and even though they may have (~~~~b~~...) down periods which go further down than any of ~ down periods, you may, on the whole, in the course of a few years, decide that someone is actually more developed than you, notwithstanding those down periods. Or vice versa, you may feel that some person has experienced certain heights, momentarily, that you've not experienced, but on the whole they are not perhaps so matured or developed a human being as you are. You see what I mean? But you can't really strike that overall balance very easily or very quickly, nor should you be in a hurry to do so, or think about it too much. As you get to know people, and as you communicate with them generally you will feel, you know, where you stand with regard to them and sort of feel whether you can lean a bit on them when necessary, or whether you have to allow them to lean a bit on you, when necessary. It may be no more than that. You might be hard put to it to say ~ are more developed than you or less developed. You might say, "Well, I just can't say - it's not as clear-cut as that." And

that is very often the position. I think the general principle is very important; not to approach anybody from a position of either inferiority or superiority but, you know, to be quite open and to genuinely communicate and to let that side of things sort itself out in process of communication. You may of course sometimes find difficulties with other people, especially people coming in from outside. If you're, say, an Order Member, or even if you're just a regular, you might find people approaching you in a certain way, or regarding you in a certain way, so you have to try to resolve that, or make it easy for the other person to resolve that.

:~: I think it's quite important for them - new beginners - to feel that they are accepted as they are and not that you are expecting them to behave in a certain way. 10S: Well, of course, in a way you are expecting people to behave in a certain way. For instance, at the L.B.C., you ask people to take their shoes off which is quite unusual by English standards. You see what I mean? In a way you are, but after all they have come to a Buddhist Centre, they know it's a Buddhist Centre, and they must surely realize things are going to be a bit different in certain ways. But even so one should make it easy for people.

~: It was quite nice in the Autumn there was an elementary course for meditation and there was a girl who was really shy. Then, after the course she said to me that it's funny, this is the first place she ever went~where she feels that she is accepted as she is, and not that she should behave in some way or..~.(inaudible) she should play some role.

S': Do you think this is the usual state of affairs, that people are expected to behave in a certain way or take on a certain role? Do you think that usually happens and do you think it tends not to happen when people come along newly to the Friends? It shouldn't - they should feel

that it isn't happening. , '~4 Ib&n~SoCt~

ANNE McMILLAN: I think what I experienced was in a

way something quite difficult, because I didn't know quite what was

expected, in a sense. I sort of wasn't quite sure how to respond to ~b't' ~ei',t

certain things. I felt a lack of response A....the

usual reactive responses you get in certain situations. It knocked me back a bit, in fact, and I've heard other people say that as well. S: Well, what does one mean, perhaps, by just being accepted for what you are: Because when you come along newly people in a way can't really know what you are~ Perhaps it's a more negative thing - that they are not expecting you to be - well, they don't even know what you are, so they can't know - you know - whether it's not you that they're expecting 11 \~Lt

you to be.

Anyway, they don't have any expectations of you, in a sense. You're just left free to be yourself, whatever that may be. Of course, I think the assumption is that you'll be yourself in a reasonable sort of way. You see what I mean? There are always some assumptions, I

think.

D~~ \_\_\_\_~: That you won't smash up the shrine room.

S: Right~ (laughter)

\_ I think that kind of openness is very rare outside (inaud~ble)

,~,~people meet you with a whole load of preconceptions (i~au~tle)

~ class, all sorts of things....

S: Well, perhaps you notice, when you go out to give talks in outside groups, in schools, you know, people regard you with all sorts of expectations and put all sorts of things on to you.

- ~: Just because you're a Buddhist.

S': Yes. That's unfortunate in a way, isn't it? But I suppose that is just something we have to try and resolve whenever we come up against it.

ANJALI: I've found it quite difficult at Beginners' Class sometimes, when somebody asks me how long I've been meditating. I always try to play down that it's four or five years because they instantly latch on to that: "Ah." - you know - and up you go in their estimation. (laughter)

S: Yes, you're expected to be virtually levitated. (general laughter, voices 'yes' and general agreement).

S: Well, actually~~don't mean that. When you say you've been meditating for four years, you don't mean that you've been meditating uninterruptedly for four years. You mean over a period of four years you have, from time to time, attempted - with varying degrees of success... (laughter). You see what I mean? So you can make that clear. If 12

someone says: "How long have you been meditating?" you can say: "I've been meditating, in the sense that ' , You see what I mean? On the other hand, one doesn't want to sort of play down what one has actually achieved or experienced. You must be honest about that. Yes, you've achieved some measure of success. Yes, you have benefited. You can say that, quite modestly, so to speak, that is true. But when you say you've been meditating for four years you do not mean that you've had four years of~uninterrupted high. (laughter) You probably wouldn't have wanted that, anyway. You wouldn't have been available. (laughter) (Pause)

S: How important do you think it is, sort of, this feeling of being accepted for what one is, when one comes along. And why do you thizik' people find it so important, if in fact they do?

VOICE: Well, then you're not restricted

SRIDE~~: (inaudible)..to a classification. If ~feel they ~



oarespeci~ as a human being, you feel you could change.

S: That's the positive side of it. You are being regarded as a human

being. You're not being regarded as a member of the capitalist class, or the proletariat, or -- You're not being categorized as a middle- aged housewife, mm?

-- 7: I also found that, when I first went into the Norwich Centre, because nobody expected anything of me I could concentrate on what was available, instead of projecting whatever it was I thought was expected of me, which usually takes up an awful lot of energy, or used to.

S: So this does suggest that, you know, in the world generally, there's an awful lot of expectation with regard to you. Do you actually find this? Because I must say I've been out of touch with these things f~r some time

because I usually only meet people within the Friends, with just very~-few exceptions. 13J It seems to start in the family, doesn't it? They have

expectations of you, which aren't necessarily to do with what you really are, and they spread out from there. In work situations....

S: Yes.

ULLA: I think...(inaudible)..they get roles and they're stuck with their roles....(inaudible)...in a situation...

DHAMb~INNA: )U~:seems to me to be to do with people who need that kind

of security. They don't want to have to approach somebody afresh every time they meet that particular person. Every time they meet somebody fl~~~J they like to have -

S: Well, it's quite a strain, in a way. Perhaps one shouldn't overlook the fact that there may be some positive aspect to having, in a way, set ways of approach. It does give, perhaps, a feeling of, say, confidence. To know how to behave socially, or what is expected of one in a given situation. But then I think sometimes things get out of hand and that is taken far too seriously.

ANNE MoMILLAN: There's a nice... (inaudible)..~ D.H. Lawrence poem where somebody says "What does he do?" "He doesn't do anything". "Oh, he must do something." "Well, he works in wood". "Ah.' He's a carpenter.'" They're constantly trying to classify you, so that you're familiar.

S: In a way that's all right as a sort of starting point, that one does work in wood, is a carpenter in that sense. That'll tell you something about him. But if you've got a stereotype of what is a carpenter, you know, comprising a whole set of attitudes, and you proceed to apply those to that particular person just because he's a carpenter, then that can lead to a great amount of misunderstanding and blocktcommunication. Mt.

\_\_\_I .. ' .~basis of... C, ..widely-held prejudic~

You have certain ideas about black people....

S: Classes..(inaudible).. yes, certain ideas about black people, certain ideas about Jews...

And if you..sometimes theyti~'\$~~ one and they say, "Oh, he's an exception, he's not like --- what they think, and they still hold the prejudice...e)~~4ko~~k ~Is ~

S: Even though all the people they meet are actually exceptions. (laughter, murmurs - inaudible) ~ 4

~: Sometimes one gets a situation in which, for instance, some~ne is quite friendly with Jews individually but is almost an anti-Semite in ~inciple. That is in fact quite curious. So it does therefore, within the spiritual context, become all the more important just to approach everybody, or allow everybody to approach you, just as an

individual.

\_\_\_ Not in terms of. ~"~~ S: Not in terms of any sort of group categorization. Then if people do feel, when they go to a Centre for the first time, that they are given, as it were, space to be themselves, that is a very good thing, that is anyway how it should be. And perhaps any lack of confidence people may feel, due t~the uncertainty of the situation for them, you know, one can make up for,by being very definite about what one is going to do. You see what I mean? With regard to the activities of the evening. There should be a very definite announcement that this is what we are going to do. Or that these are the things available and you can take your choice. There should be that sort of definiteness. That will give people a bit of perhaps needed reassurance. You can either meditate or you can listen to a talk. (Pause) 15

S0~ when you see a new person coming~at the Centre, you don't think: "Ah, here comes another little spiritual case..." (laughter). I've heard some TheoBophists talking in this way. They talk about non- Theosophists as "young souls". (Laughter) But this sort of thing is quite common in these "Festival of Mind and II~b4" circles. I mean someone came to see me (I don't want to go into any details, someone from right outside the Friends but who comes to see me from time to time)4 she's a fairly elderly woman interested in spiritual things. She's connected with the Order of India~and she showed me, in all seriousness, on her last visit, a reading of her aura which had been given by another of her spiritual friends. It concluded by telling her that she was spiritually a highly-developed person and she was showing me this as though it were a sort of certificate. She just didn't see the humour of it or irony of it at all. It seemed so strange. She took it very seriously. But you know there is a bit of this sort of thing in those s~rt of circles. They think sometimes of themselves very seriously as highly developed souls, or older souls, and others as young souls, undeveloped, and they really do as it were ~late to people outside their own circle in that sort of way. But it's not so straightforward as that.

~ffi Didn't someone once say to ~ou.~~~~'.~~~~"'~'"&'~1 ANNE McMILi£Aj~: Somebody~ ~~~"ar','. ~.~.....

~ and he said at the end that he ha\* to climb down the ladder of his consciousness' to communicate with us (laughter) and~we sort of said "A,~-h"

S: Well, that's what he was talking about. Well, it's very nice of him... (laughter)

S: Maybe this sometimes does happen. But it doesn't happen in that way. It happens in the sense that you are not able to communicate fully what you are or what you experience. There is a certain limitation which is in the other person, not in you. But I don't think you have the sensation of climbing down a ladder of ~consciousness, into the basement as it were. (laughter). That means, you know, it's not anything he's experiencing, it's just a concept, something he's convinced himself of, on other grounds. ANNE MoMILLAN: It was actually to justify things that they were doing. He said we couldn't understand why they were doing them because they were done on a higher level of consciousness. It was actually taking money from people to do Tarot readings and palmistry. We couldn't understand because we were looking at it from a really low level of consciousness.

S: Yes. There was a sort of occult reason for it which you couldn't understand.

ANNE MoMILLAN: And a charge of three for 10 minutes (laughter).

S: Well, this is humbug, really, but there's a lot of this sort of thing around, unfortunately. (Pause)

Anyway, "A Bodhisattva is towards all beings/As to a child./With great Benevolence -" (b° oause~with some things you are a~Bodhisattva to ~-4 begin with, anyway. ~apply to you). "With great Benevolence out of his innermost heart/He always desires to procure their happiness". All right, let's read the next little paragraph.

~~"When through the power of Benevolence out of our eyes tears spring forth or when on our body the hair rises in delight, then there

is great Benevolence. When the latter is enjoyed by all sentient beings, then it is immeasurable."

S: So what is the criterion? It's a very sort of concrete criterion. "When through the power of Benevolence out of our eyes tears spring forth or when on our body the hair rises in delight, then there is great Benevolence". In other words, the emotional experience must be so over-whelming that there's a sort of physical repercussion. So it suggests - 17 -

that there is an element of ~, to use the technical term, in the

experience of benevolence and compassion. Priti - are you familiar with? ~~~  
~~~?Rapture~ A And t e characteristic of priti, it is a psycho-physical

experience, it is not purely psychical. It has a sort of bodily resonance

in that, you know, you are so deeply moved that a lump comes in the throat, tears come to the eyes, the hair stands up. You sometimes experience something like this when you read, perhaps, very great poetry, or you're very moved by something emotional that you hear about or you see represented in some way. Some people are more susceptible to this than others,

aren't they, I think. In England we tend not to go in for this sort of ~

thing. ..too, perhaps.

____: And on those kind of levels the emotions are....~ ~ - ~.refined.. ,~-yAa'wbfl~ ~:
When you say we don't go in for this sort of thing, you mean-..?

S: Well, we don't encourage it, in a way, yes? I mean, I think there's a natural tendency for it to happen, but I think people tend to play it down or to disown it, or pretend that it isn't happening. You sometimes see them furtively wiping their eye at a concert or somewhere, but no one officially takes any notice, as it were. You pretend there's a speck of

dust in your eye. ..(laughter). Not t~at you've been moved by the music,

no.' You see what I mean?

They're sort of suspicious of emotional people....

S: A certain amount of latitude is traditionally allowed to women in this respect. Perhaps not on very positive grounds, but they can get away with a little bit of, you know, exhibition of emotion, but very often men are not supposed to. But it is very important, if you are really emotionally moved there will be some - at least in the earlier stages before you experience really refined spiritual emotions - there will be some sort of physical repercussion from your own emotional experience with other people in connection with hearts, and so on~ In your meditation experience, some people find their eyes watering, you know, they feel moved in this sort of way in connection with meditation. This is entirely natural. I mean priti is there.

-: But my understanding of priti is a lot different from sentiment or sentimentality. How can you tell the difference?

S: Ah - what is sentimentality? We did touch upon this. I don't know if it was in this group or the other group.....(background murmurs, inaudible). What is sentimentality?

~': Giving too much emotion, more emotion than is called for.

S: Yes, it is that, but it's also losing sight of the fact that the emotion is with regard to something or someone and sort of self-complacently wallowing in that emotion by way of self-indulgence, just for the sake of the sort of frisson it gives you. You see what I mean? Losing sight of the ob~ect.

:~: It could be that in the metta --

S: Yes. Then metta becomes just an exercise to benefit you and

doesn't have any relation to the actual people. Sentimentality is I--, something~ like that. With regard to feeling more than is, you know,

objectively justified, you get this sentimentality animals.

A~ MoMILLAN: Inappropriate.

S: It's inappropriate. It's even harmful for the animal sometimes. An animal is not a human being. How can you expect from an animal the responses which are to be expected from a human being? I have noticed, and perhaps some of you have too, that animals tend to resemble their owners. I have actually seen a dog that was made neurotic by its neurotic owners. Especially if the dog becomes a sort of baby substitute for a childless couple. Well, you can see the sort of effect it has on the dog. They don't really love the dog, they've got a sentimental attitude towards it. If they loved the dog they'd treat it as a dog and give it what was good for a dog to have.~ot what was appropriate to a child, which is quite unsuitable to a dog. But then again if, for instance, you read about refugees and maybe you start off by feeling genuinely sorry but then you forget all about the refugees and sort of luxuriate in your feeling of sorrow and don't do anything about the refugees. You're just almost enjoying this feeling of feeling sorry for somebody. That is sentimentality. People sometimes say that the English are quite sentimental. I don't know to what extent that is justified. Perhaps they are
bMA~AO) ~NA

___ In certain areas

S: In certain areas, yes. (Pause)

Vfl~nhAO(A'~~4A And the opposite of that's cynicism.

S: Yes.

- When you under ' , your emotions...(inaudible)... usually swing between the two, rather.~' °~" ...objective response.

S: Well, I think if you're sentimental or if you are cynical the root is the same. You are afraid of genuine emotion, you know.

VOICE: If you're what?

S: Afraid of genuine emotion.

VOICE: If you're cynical?

S: If,~ou~re cynical and if you're sentimental. Because the emotion involves not only the subjective emotion but the object. In the case of sentimentality you, as it were, withdraw from the object. You're afraid of the emotion involving you with the object so you withdraw from the object and you just occupy yourself with the emotion~ ~ich then ceases to become an emotion, actually. You see what I mean? 20~tt~~~~b~~~~not a genuine emotion. S: Not

a genuine emotion. It is not going out to its supposed object. ~S~IOLL~ Then in the case of cynicism you are denying something that you actually

feel in a furtive sort of way. You can't handle the emotion so you adopt a cynical attitude towards it.

ANNE MOMILLAN: Oscar Wilde said a cynic knew the price of everything and
4L

the value of nothing. That's~qu0te~.... (Pause)

3: Do you think there's a tendency among people to be, as it were, afraid of emotion?

VOICE£ Yes. (laughter)

S: In an honest, genuine sort of way, I mean. Afraid of real emotion, you know, not a perverted or twisted variety, the real thing. Do you think people are afraid of it? **°w' to~uniCs~~~~~ ~i-rcinS ~ C4~r~ ~C)1saM

- ' I think you get (~Ma~~e~~)Ain puja. Sometimes you actually~sort of fear I~vc ~ ~vN f&~~) ~"~;'

° I think sometimes in meditation ~obviously get
~~a~

in touch with the emotions.... ' . I remember having someone on a Summer Retreat, in the first stage of the metta, and then she got really terrified and had to go off to sleep. It was like it was too much.

END OF SIDE 'A' (it sounds as though one or two sentences did not record on the tape, since the first recorded words are as follows:-)

S: But what is it, so to speak, that loses control? What do you mean by losing control? After all, they're your emotions.

ANNE MoMILLAN: Your rational mind.

S Yes, it's the rational mind. It's a small part of you which has

established control which is, so to speak, afraid of losing it. It's

what Blake calls "the spectre". The spectre has been in charge so far, and the spectre is afraid of emotion. Your reason is afraid of loss

because it means a loss of control. (Pause). So one's concept of loss and of control is determined by where you put the locus of self. If you put

the locus on, or in, reason, let's say~ in the sense of the spectre, you think of it as a loss of control. If you put the locus of self in the upsurging emotions, you think of it as a gaining of freedom. Well, if you can, as it were, take an even wider view and give an equal, a just place to both, you can see it in terms of achieving a greater degree of integration. So people very often, I think, are afraid of emotion because it threatens, you know, the order and the system of control that they've painfully built up over a number of years, perhaps in response to an objective situation of some kind. (pause).

AMILLAN: Emotions seem to require a certain . . . of

courage. You have to have a certain courage.

S: I was reading a quite interesting book lately, called "The Courage to Create" by Waldo May, and the author brought out very well the point that one needs courage to create. Do you know this book?

VOICE: (inaudible comment)

S: It needs courage to create. He deals with this in quite a remarkable sort of way. But you could say similarly that you need courage to be emotionally positive. It's as though you're really afraid, just as you could be afraid to create, afraid of being creative, afraid of your own creativity, even if you're a practising artist. In the same way, even if you're a practising human being.. (laughter). You may not always be practising human beings - you see what I mean - just as all Catholics are not practising Catholics. But if you're a practising kind of human being even, you could be afraid of your own positive emotion. You need courage to be emotionally positive, because there are so many discouragements. There are so many wet blankets around. They think it's sort of strange 't

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to be emotionally positive. You know, when you talk you don't get much encouragement from other people. You get dirty looks, sometimes.

~Io'wI s.cbAUy °: It's not~acceptable sometimes to be too good. It's much more acceptable to complain and play do.....

S: You come down to breakfast all cheerful and someone says, "What have you got to be cheerful about?" (laughter). As if you need a cast-iron reason that you can give an account of. I've no doubt some of you have heard this sort of thing. But anyway this sort of positive emotion is sufficiently powerful to produce these kind of physical repercussions. It should be relatively - well, we won't say normal - but it should be usual - you see what I mean? It

should not be an unusual experience^{er} I think it is, actually. It's a sort of happy, so joyful, so exhilarated that tears come to your eyes. This is not the usual experience of most people, but it should be. Even this isn't, as it were from a meditative point of view, a very high level of experience. This is only priti, which subsides into something higher, something even more refined, without these physical manifestations. It doesn't mean that we feel less, we feel more, but I think you have to go through this as it were slightly more excitable stage before you get to that higher, calmer stage. I don't think you can bypass that sort of physical excitation.

VOICE: Are they animal manifestations that we've still got from being animals?

S: I wouldn't say they're exactly animal, even though they are physical. As far as I know, an animal doesn't experience them. They are a product of comparatively refined, you know, emotional states, but since we still have bodies they manifest themselves in a bodily manner. An animal does experience, perhaps, somewhat negative emotions in this way. For instance when an animal is enraged or ready to fight, the fur will bristle, well, our fur may bristle when we get angry but I don't think the animal has the experience of these sort of quasi-meditative emotional states which produce - as we are getting in touch with part of us that was on that level which we usually deny.

S: I think, in a way, it means more than that. I think for that sort of experience to take place we must already be in touch. If we are already in touch and we come to experience these powerful positive emotions, there will be naturally a physical repercussion, just because we are in touch with that side of ourselves.

ANNE MCMILLAN: Do you think possibly before we can experience even these feelings we maybe have to go through a stage of just allowing ourselves to experience emotion, almost in general?

S: Well, I think in extreme cases, yes. In the case of people who are very emotionally blocked, they've been perhaps discouraged from experiencing and expressing their emotions, I think to begin with they may well have to allow themselves to just experience whatever emotion comes, even if it is, as it were, a negative emotion. Sometimes you find that with people. They have to experience rage and anger and resentment for a while, you know, before they can experience anything positive. But we mustn't adopt an indulgent attitude towards that because this is, I think, what some forms of psychotherapy (for want of a better term) tend to do. They encourage you to experience that more and more, even to go over the same old ground again and again on the plea that - well - let it all hang out, come on, there's some more left. Well, you can go on like that indefinitely because you're going round and round in a circle, which you don't need to do. Well, go round once or twice to experience it but then please come out at the other end and proceed further. Yes, I'm sure that in the case of some people, before they break through to experiencing positive emotion, they've got to experience the so-called negative emotion; that which is, you know, very often the positive emotion in reverse.

VOICE: (inaudible comment)

1: And you do sometimes find that when people have allowed themselves to become angry with somebody (I'm speaking deliberately of anger rather than hatred here) they feel more positive afterwards, even towards the person they've been angry with. (Pause). So it's very important - I don't want to generalise too much about English people and all that - but certainly as regards quite a lot of the people that have come along to the various

~~ Centres, we've quite often found it quite important that they get in contact with their emotions. I think we can certainly say that, without necessarily making any generalization about people Certainly

who~ve~~ as regards people along to us, getting in touch with their

emotions has been a quite important thing in many cases. Once you've got in contact with your emotions, quite a big break--through seems to be possible. Very often the pathway to the positive emotions leads through the experience of the negative emotions, (Pause).

So, "When through the power of Benevolence..." You see - "power of Benevolence.." Benevolence is not something weak, despite the connotations of the English word 'benevolence'. "...through the power of Benevolence out of our eyes tears spring forth, or when on our body the hair rises in delight, then there is great Benevolence." Ah, great Benevolence. I don't know whether this is to be taken literally as the maha maitri. Perhaps it is heading in that direction. "When the latter is enjoyed by

all sentient beings..." That's to say when all sentient beings...(coughs, beco"t~, .the object of that sort of overwhelming emotional power,

then it's immeasurable.

ANNE MbMILLAN: Where it says "Through the power of Benevolence out of our

eyes tears spring forth", does it mean tears of joy, because I've taken it ½

25be fore to mean Compassion arising.

S: Well, just tears. It might be difficult to say. Positive emotion is positive emotion. Just as there is an element of priti, yes, there can be elements of joy. I think we shouldn't compartmentalize the positive emotio~too much. The experience of maitri can be a very joyful experience. The experience of Compassion can be a joyful experience, even though there is, in a sense, pain mingled with it. You know, when you experience the pain of others as your own. But it is a positive experience, it is not a depressing experience. (Pause). Let's read the next little paragraph:-

"The measure of perfection means that, when we only desire the happiness of all sentient beings instead of ourselves, then there is perfection Benevolence."

S: This suggests that very often there is a sort of clash between our own interests and the interests of others but usually what do we do when that happens? We just, you know,~ulfil our own interests rather than those of others. But Benevolence and Compassion are perfect when we as it were naturally, spontaneously prefer the interests of others to ourselves. When

you bring in the analogy of the mother....

.~ the mother usually, as it were automatically, without even thinking about it, just gives to the children and doesn't take herself. So it's like that on this sort of higher spiritual level. Not, of course, you mustn't also go to the other extreme, not that you leave yourself out altogether. You also are included amongst the sentient beings. You are also a sentient being. So for the Bodhisattva there wouldn't be, one assumes, that sort of conflict because there's already a measure of identification with other living beings. So the Bodhisattva, to the extent that he's a real Bodhisattva, doesn't go through this sort of conflict of "Shall I keep it for myself or shall I give it to others?" ¼26Do you see what I mean? He gives it to others. But in giving it to others he - or she - finds their personal fulfilment, too. It is not as though they feel deprived or are deprived, in fact. Here you're not dealing with something material, like food, which is actually divisible and if one has it, the others can't have it. You see what I mean? Certainly not on the higher spiritual levels. Or, there's the question of the Dharma. ' giving the Dharma to others, not just thinking about your own individual development, or keeping the Dharma for yourself, You lose nothing; the Dharma is not something material and therefore not something actually divisible. You gain more by giving the Dharma to others, more of the Dharma than you could possibly gain by keeping it just for yourself, because that is the Dharma. So this raises the question about spreading the Dharma. When you spread the Dharma you shouldn't feel that you're forsaking your own individual interests, your own individual development for the sake of~4~thers. You shouldn't be thinking, "Well, if I wasn't going around giving lectures I could be tucked snugly away in some nice little caravan in a field having a solitary retreat". You see what I mean? This is not to say that you could or should be moving around giving lectures all of the time. Because in order to give those lectures - willing as you are to give them - you need, as it were, (after all you're not yet quite a Bodhisattva), you need time to recoup your energy, time to study, time to prepare yourself, you see what I mean? But when you are actually giving, or properly preparin~ the necessary energy it is not that you are devoting yourself to the interests of others in contra-distinction to your own personal spiritual interests. But you must really be able to feel that, feel actually that you are benefiting. But you must really feel it.

I mean, again in pseudo-spiritual circles there's a lot of, what shall I say, smug talk, or "When we give a lecture we of course really benefit 27more ourselves than the people to whom we speak'1. This is a sort of expected spiritual gesture, or pseudo-spiritual gesture. One must be very careful not to get into it in that sort of way, that sort of spiritual humbug or pseudo-humility. You may benefit more than the audience but chances are ar~, especially if they've not heard anything like that before, they're benefiting far more than you, which in a way is as it should be and you shouldn't hesitate to recognise that fact, in fact what the position is. It may have been a bit dull and boring for you. If it has been, well, admit it honestly. At the same time you do see that it has benefited those other people quite a lot. But don't say to yourself, "Well, it's really benefited me far more", if you don't actually feel that. It seems, in view of one or two things that have come up this morning, that we have to beware of adopting spiritual attitudes which we don't actually feel.

(Pop music on tape drowns everything at this point. ~~~u~a0~1~ sfl,'me~,~i~~~~~. Bhante & voices murmur inaudibly. Pop music suddenly ceases. Voices heard making technical suggestions.)

S: Everyone just try to speak up a bit, please. Anyway, where were we?

VOICE: adopting spiritual attitudes...

S: Ah.' You know what I mean? It's very eas~I am feraanid I don't want to criticise other people but one really notices it in connection with the sort of people who would be around the Festival of Mind and Body, organising it, like the gentleman that you referred to, climbing down his spiritual ladder, you know, (laughter) in order to talk to you. That's striking a spiritual attitude. I'm sure it couldn't have corresponded to anything genuine in his experience. But how is one to deal with this if one encounters people? Because this is the difficulty: he is relating to you on the assumption that he has climbed down this spiritual ladder and is now relating to you on this very lowly level which you occupy 28 and you are supposed to accept this and relate to him as to a person who has climbed down this spiritual ladder in order to speak to you. Can you honestly do this? Clearly you found that you couldn't. But you were also saying you didn't quite know what to do about it, because you didn't want to be rude, being a nice girl (laughter) or perhaps you were so surprised you were lost for words.' So what should one do when one meets a person who is striking any sort of attitude, VOIC'. especially a spiritual attitude? may have to challenge them. /Y think that one should be quite careful how one does this because their

reaction is not that they're being challenged so much as that you're

sort of spiritually blind and ignorant. So they strike another noble attitude of, "Ah well, these undeveloped souls, they're not able to realize these profound truths..." etc. etc. But I think if one honestly feels real indignation and communicates that, perhaps in some cases it may penetrate. The person may realize, well, perhaps they aren't quite so genuine, or perhaps there is something genuine in you and in your objection, that you aren't just an unevolved soul who can't understand things.

ANNE McMILLAN: Well, we just said it was rubbish, and he sort of stopped talking..(inaudible). But what was quite interesting was that the same person noticed me at the F.W.B.O. stall later and I think he presumed we were visitors. And then he looked a bit
Maybe he thought: "They are actually..."

S: Perhaps they've also climbed down the ladder, as it were.' (laughter) ANNE MoMILLAN: He did look a bit shamefaced.

S: But sometimes people do that, they sort of... For instance, this person might well have conducted the conversation on the basis of we have to climb down our spiritual ladders to communicate with these rough

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29 people, these unevolved people who come. So that also, in a way, is asking YOU to adopt a certain attitude. So what is one to do then? One has to try to sort of break it up somehow, without giving him the opportunity of relegating you to the basement, as it were, and saying: "Ah well, you can't understand this because you're not evolved." For instance, you get it with Christians who come along and say, "I've found Jesus". The situation you have to accept is that they are someone who has found Jesus and you are someone who has not found Jesus. You see what I mean?

ANNE McMILLAN: You might be (?)...trying to get rid of him. (laughter)

S: Well, you could sort of say that, even, yes. There is a retort recorded. One of these people asks someone: "Have you found Jesus?" And he replies: "No, have you lost him?" (laughter) Sometimes you can deal with it in that sort of witty manner, but you need to think quite

quickly. DHAMMADINNA S: Well, what does one do when one meets people who claim to have been saved, as it were? They say to you: "You, by your own admission, have not gained Nirvana. You are not Enlightened. But we have found Jesus." try to I think one has to place the whole thing in a much wider context, and say,

"Well, according to us, what you experience as finding Jesus is not a very high stage of development at all. We don't claim ourselves to have reached a very high stage of development but we certainly don't feel that you have,

either, despite this claim that you make. In fact we feel that this

suggestion sort of claim, with its exclusiveness and of total dependence

suggests a rather immature person. " Maybe we have to say something like that. "Even though this might be your experience, we can't accept its claim to absolute validity. " But they sometimes make this so forcibly, 142 30this claim. It's difficult to be rational when they are so non- rational, or irrational.

ANNE McMILLAN: The Invisible Church students~4~a4 kind of approach.. ..(inaudible) almost everybody there seemed to choose the F.W.B.O. stall for some reason. They seemed to gravitate towards us.... (rest inaudible)

S: What is this Invisible Church then? DHAMMADINNA , MAYBE ~~:AIt means you can't see it. (laughter)

ANNE McMILLAN: .workers....(inaudible)..and what they claim is that the

visible church that we see and hear is a corruption of the original the original Christian doctrine and that' Jesus got directly in touch with christian doctrine . They don't rwm~ a visible church which can & have in call if the invisible church ~~ London S: have invisible money? (laughter)

ANNE McMILLAN: (inaudible)

S: Well, you should say, "I wish you were invisible, too. " (laughter). Or you could say something like, "If it's an invisible church, how come that you're so visible? Please fade away." (laughter). I think sometimes we have to be less on the defensive. I think we have to be on the offensive more, in a pleasant way, you see what I mean? Not get annoyed or anything like that, or rude, but just in a pleasant way take

the offensive. Even take the mickey out of these people just a little offensive bit, without

being to do that

ANNE McMILLAN: It seems to need a certain temperament~ Some people argue - I've heard some members of the audience do that, but.. (inaudible)

S: That's true. You need a sort of knack, I suppose.

VOICES: (inaudible comments)

S: All right, let's go on. Oh, it's very nearly coffee-time. Perhaps we shouldn't go on. It's only two minutes to eleven o'clock. Any little point arising out of what we've done so far? Any further points? 143

31ANNE McMILLAN: Well, there was something... Where it says "The

Bodhisattva is towards all beings as to a child". Something that struck +0 &CfJ~(I~ me was that a mother~sees her child as a potential....

S: Adult.

ANNE: Adult. So I suppose a Bodhisattva sees all beings as potential bodhisattvas?

S: Yes, very much so. Yes, this reminds me of something I was going to say yesterday, though I can't remember whether it was in this group or the other. I hope it was in this group, but anyway I'll say it. It must have been this group because I think it arose in connection with children. We were talking about Tibet and it occurred to me what I had svrt of learned about the way in whichAso~called 'incarnate Llamas' are brought up. You know about this, don't you? The little boy is selected when he is only, say, three or four at the latest, and he is taken away and he is brought up as an Incarnate Lama. Now it was pretty obvious to me - I mean, there are several thousand of these (or were, in the old Tibet). It was pretty obvious to me that they weren't all incarnate Bodhisattvas. One just couldn't accept this on the evidence of one's own experience. It really did seem a tall order that Tibet should have several thousand incarnate bodhisattvas. I mean, I could accept a few but not several thousand. On the other hand it did seem that, even though these incarnate Lamas were not incarnate Bodhisattvas, they were - in almost all cases - quite a cut above the ordinary monk. You see what I mean? They weren't incarnate Bodhisattvas, but they were a cut above the ordinary monk. They were emotionally positive, intelligent, friendly, outward-going, etc. etc. So the thought occurs to me - now why is this? So the answer that I found was this. They were brought up very lovingly and in a very positive way by people who believed that they were incarnate Bodhisattvas. So therefore they respected that potential. 32So then I thought, well, if you took almost any child and brought it up believing in that potential, in that sort of way, you would have excellent results. Anyway, grab your tea.

Pause: murmured conversation, off-mike.

ANNE: Did you meet any that you could clearly see were incarnate-----

S: To clearly see one would have to get to know them first.

VOICE: I remember reading

S: I mean, as a result of my personal contact I was convinced that, say, two or three could be. I wouldn't like to be too certain about it but there were quite a few that I met that I was certain were not.

___c There's this description in "The Way of the White Clouds" of this little boy that... -- It's interesting how he explains how his rational mind almost didn't accept it. He could see that the boy was, like,,,,,very mature. I think that's quite strange.

S: Well, I met the same person, that is Tomo C;e'she~ Rtmpoche' 20 years later and it was quite strange, though he was by that time 23 or 24, he did appear like a little old man. He walked like a little old man....

- - -- . It was quite strange.. (inaudible)

meeting him as a very young man but feeling that really he was quite an old man. That was definitely the impression that you got. So that when he was a baby it must have been even more marked, if in fact that was the explanation. But as I said it did occur to me that the fact that these Incarnate Lamas were definitely a cut above the average monk was due to the fact that they'd been brought up in such a positive manner by people who deeply believed in and were convinced of, not just their spiritual potential, but convinced that they were incarnate Bodhisattvas. So if you were convinced that your child had a real wonderful potential, and you yourself were a relatively mature person 1L+s

33you could certainly bring that child up to past the average level. I think in a general way this is the basis of the Steiner system of education. They believe very strongly in the spiritual potential of the child and take that into account in the whole educational process. The point is one must actually believe it. The Tibetan monks who were bringing up the little boy firmly believed that, and it worked. In a sense it's true. In a sense, well, everybody has that sort of spiritual potential, potential even of Buddhahood, even though they may not be technically here and now incarnate Bodhisattvas.

ANNE NOMILLAN: I think what struck me then was also that therefore the Bodhisattva didn't treat the people as a race apart, somehow. This goes back to what you said earlier, about treating people -

S: Whatever they may be like now, he acknowledges the great potential. Well, I think the Bodhisattva in the White Lotus Sutra, who went around, you know, saluting everybody, hailing them as future Buddhas, and in that way annoying them intensely (laughter)... You mustn't do it quite like that, of course. (Pause) I think it's very important to bear in mind people's potential, even though they don't seem to be manifesting it very much at the moment. I think it's quite important³ S~upposing a completely new person arrives at a Centre: I think it's quite important to remember that in two, in three years' time that person might well be an Order Member and far more advanced than you, whoever you are now, the person who is greeting him or her. I think it is quite salutary to remember this. You don't know.¹ Of course it's a great responsibility when meeting a new person. I remember there was an incident that occurred when I was at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, that there was one person at ~~~t time just staying there with me doing the cooking, and people used to come

and see me. 'This person used to open the door. So at some later stage someone had got quite interested and started coming

along regularly to lectures. Then one day he happened to remark to

this other person who had opened the door, he said that "you were the

first Buddhist that I ever saw". This person said it really sort of

bowled me over, really knocked him out almost. What a responsibility! I, the first Buddhist that this person had ever seen... Of course, there could be a lot of putting on of this, that and the other, but none the less, in a way it's inevitable. Someone comes along to a Buddhist Centre for the first time, it's the first Buddhist Centre they've seen, the first F.W.B.O. Centre, the first Buddhist they've met, the first Mitra, the first Order Member they've met. In a way, what a responsibility! It shouldn't make you self-conscious or awkward, but it should certainly make you more aware and more sensitive.

ANNE NOMILLAN: I was thinking about that yesterday, when we were talking

about gratitude, actually. It just suddenly struck me that I feel

incredible gratitude to the Order Members I'd first met, in

Glasgow...(inaudible)...because I'd been in London and never come across

the Friends and yet suddenly I did in Glasgow and. - .4 -

It happened to have a postcard at the right time.

(laughter). ,~'LgL

S: Yes, it really makes one think, because if - say you're having a

Council meeting and you're debating: "Shall we put up posters this time or not?" and someone says, "Oh, I don't think we should bother, we didn't get many people", but even if it only brings in one person who really becomes involved, it has been infinitely worth it. So it's only too easy to not realize the importance, or the potential importance for new people, or potential new people, of what you are doing and your publicity. Sometimes people think of publicity as a sort of drag, you know, something that has to be done, but it is, you know, a great adventure. In a way it's the most important thing, it's the point of contact between the Centre and the public. They wouldn't have heard of Buddhism, perhaps, they wouldn't have read about Buddhism, they wouldn't have heard of the F.W.B.O., and

then they see that poster. And even if it is one of those rather... C?~aa.-arat~'S I was almost going to say disgusting posters~laughter) but at least

they're easy...:~t~ ~~~I- aa& ~ &s'~L~~~~ ~W~~~~ ~° VOICE: (inaudible)...arrows (?)

S: But it catches the eye, it surrounds the tongue... ~

ANNE: It was actually one of...~ - ...an early one. A:

S~ An' early o:-. Before he got into his stride. Yes, it's really

important. We shouldn't under-estimate this or think of it as a sort of drag, that we've got to get publicity out and posters out and all the rest of it. It's our point of contact with the general public. I'm always pleased when I go somewhere and unexpectedly see F.W.3.O~ posters. It sometimes happens, in the odd corner of Norwich Qr somewhere in - well, not central London, but somewhere not quite as near to Bethnal Green as one might have expected, and you see a poster. Even here and there you see- - still - one of the old familiar posters, not yet torn down, round Camden Town somewhere, or Kentish Town, or even Hampstead, still there, sort of part of our history. People are still seeing them, side

by side with the posters f and all the rest of it. _____ ~t.t ~,~,~ grip 6'~~ ~c~oncerts ____ ____ dream of a ne;w ;o~e~~~

ANNE MoMILLAN: I've seen& '~. and I get really excited

and sort of grab people and say "Look~" Only people I know.. (laughter) Ik~~~~ ~~~~~ %b~eerk t~~~ k-a There's something quite exciting about seeing things that you know about...

S: I was quite pleased, I might almost say quite excited, when I was

going by tube, not knowing that any such thing had been planned, when I

just saw an F.W.B.O. poster. Something rainbow-like in it, a couple of 36years ago. Yes, it must have been for the..(I~~~6 when they started classes at the annexe about two, two-and-a-half, years

ago. And that really quite struck me because I saw the rainbow and the fact that it was a poster about something, as it were, spiritual before I realized it was the F.W.B.O. F.W.B.O. was in small letters whereas the rainbow was quite big and prominent. I was quite pleased. I looked at it a bit closer and thought: "An F.W.B.O. poster:~ So this is really very important. We shouldn't hide our light - in the biblical phrase - too much under a bushel. We've got something that a lot of people are going to be very, very pleased to be in contact with. In a way we're being selfish in depriving them of that if we just don't take enough trouble over ~~ publicity and letting people know what is available. We don't want to make it just a cosy little corner for the people who are already around. E~I) OF SII)E 'B' -- --- - - - - -
----- - 4; S~E

"J~WEL ORNAMENT OF LIBERATION". CHAP. 7: BENEVOLENCE & COMPASSION

Day 3 Tape 2 S: All right, let's go on from "The merits accruing from.... -ANNE M~: "The merits accruing from having practised it cannot be measured.

As is stated in the 'Candrapradipasutra':

"What ever immeasurable offerings there may be and however varied, Filling millions and millions of universes - Offering them to the most sublime being (the Buddha) Does not equal the merits of Benevolence."

S: Right. Carry on to the next bit, where it says the same sort of thing...

ANNE McM: "The merits accruing from having practised Benevolence only for a little while, also cannot be measured. As is written in the Ratnavali:

"Even if one were to give out food Cooked in three hundred pots, daily thrice a day, This would not equal the merits Of one moment of Benevolence."

S: We must, of course, make allowances for the rather hyperbolic Indian

style if you know what I mean. So Benevolence and Compassion, or the practice of Benevolence and Compassion, is being compared with two things. What are those two things? In the case of the first verse - with ---?

VOICE: Offerings.

S: Offerings, yes. The making of offerings, even to millions of Buddhas. Or, rather, offerings of millions of universes to the Buddha. And in the

second verse, offering or giving --

VOICE: Food.

S: Food. So it's dana that is... So, anyway, the practice, the development of maitri and benevolence - benevolence and compassion - is being said to far excel the practice of puja and dana. Now, why do you think that is? (Pause) Or what sort of puja and dana, do you think?

VOICE: It's the attitude that's being... S: The attitude, yes, one could say that. But, of course, bearing in mind

what benevolence and compassion really involve for the Bodhisattva, it's a sort of dedication or commitment of himself to the happiness of all sentient beings, in the sense of helping all sentient beings to gain Enlightenment. So presumably the making of offerings is the making of offerings out of devotion in the more -2- limited sort of way, and even the making of offerings as dana in a more limited sort of way. It's really good to do puja, to make offerings. It's really good to give dana. But that doesn't help nearly so much as the help through Benevolence and compassion, of all beings to gain Enlightenment. It's not that the making of offerings is being run down, it's not that dana is being run down. They are fully praised in all Buddhist texts, but maitri and compassion go even beyond that because there you are concerned with an even more radical practice for yourself or for the benefit of yourself and others.

M-E McM: Presumably, when you practise benevolence in a

way, puja and dana would be expressions of fl~~

S: Would be natural expressions. You would be natural; doing those things, anyway. You'd be giving the dharma, not to speak of pots of food. So the verses are intended to help one recognise the greatness and importance of benevolence and compassion, maitri and karuna. And, of course, it is hyperbolic, because - "this would not equal the merits of one moment of Benevolence" - you see? Indians are rather fond of emphasizing things in this sort of way.

VOICE: Hyperbolic means exaggerated?

S: Yes. A bit exaggerated, if you take it literally.

ANNE MoM: An over-statement.

S: A deliberate over-statement, yes. For instance, if someone says to you: "Anne, your eyes are just like stars", he doesn't literally mean it.' (laughter) It's a hyperbolic statement. You see what I mean? Not that he's telling a lie, it's not that either. One has to take the intention behind the hyperbolic statement.

VOICE: It's the feeling...

S: The feeling involved, yes. So here you take into account the feeling of the Bodhisattva. (pause) All right, let's go on.

- "When we practise Benevolence and until we reach Enlightenment, we possess eight qualities. This is stated in the Ratn~vali: -3-

"Be loved by gods and men, And also protected by them, Peace of mind and many other blessings of this kind, Not being harmed by poison or by weapons, Attaining our aim without exertion, And being reborn in the Brahma world - Even if we should not attain final liberation, At least we obtain these eight qualities through Benevolence."

S: So when we practise Benevolence, and until we reach Enlightenment, we possess eight qualities. We are beloved by gods and men and also protected by them. Now, how literally do you think this can be taken? Let's leave the gods out of consideration for the time being. But human beings: if you practise maitri and karuna~you are beloved by other beings and they protect you. How literally do you think this can be taken? Or to what extent can it be taken? In other words, what effect does your practice of maitri and karuna have on other people's attitude towards you? Quite a lot, one would imagine.

VOICE: They, too, respond. They don't go on demanding

S: Yes, right.

VOICE: They might even start practising benevolence and compassion towards you.

S: Well, that is, in a sense, implied. At least they wouldn't do you any harm. Of course there are people who remain impervious to your benevolence and compassion. Well, either

your benevolence and compassion is relatively weak or their negative emotion is comparatively strong. I think you have to beware of thinking of maitri and karuna as a sort of weapon that you can use, almost against people, to stop them doing things against you. It isn't really like that, though it may seem like that from some stories in Buddhism about, for instance, the Buddha stopping the mad elephant with his metta. But it is not a sort of weapon, even a positive one. It doesn't really work in that sort of way. But certainly, if you are in yourself benevolent and compassionate, that has an effect on other people, certainly those people who know you at all well, or who come into a

contact with you. So in a way that is an advantage for you, isn't it? -4- VOICE: It's quite obvious sometimes, with people who don't know you. If you go into a shop and you feel you have metta - oh.' How friendly they are.'

ANNE MoM: You notice that in the L.B.C. A lot of emotional people...

(inaud.) positive towards you.

S: Well, that is presumably that they feel they can be.

ANNE MCM: I can't help thinking about when you came back to England, Bhante, ~~~~~
~ (inaud.) and saw what was happening. Presumably you were acting completely from benevolence and yet you got a lot of opposition, didn't you?

S: Well, that's true. But then again it harks back to something that occurred earlier on, that people are afraid of positive emotion. You could say that. But there were rather a lot of other people. There was only just me. Also, another point was that a lot of them weren't in contact with me. Assuming I had lots of benevolence and all that sort of thing, you've got to get hold of them to ---- Well, anyway, a lot of people who were very much against what I was trying to do were people I didn't know. I didn't even know them by name. I didn't even know who they were. They certainly didn't come and see me and talk to me. They were against what they saw me doing from a safe distance, as it were. There was quite a bit of that, and in fact there still is, here and there, outside the F.W.B.O. a little bit of that still goes on, except that they can't really do very much now, just silently disapprove. But I know they're there, some of them, still disapproving. But to the extent that you can get into actual direct contact and communication with people, yes, you can affect them, you can influence them by your positive mental state. So, "Beloved by gods and men, And also protected by them...,' But.. "Peace of mind and many other blessings of this kind." Yes? Don't you really notice that, that if you practise ~~~, let's leave karuna out of it for a moment - just practise metta, doesn't it give you a feeling of peace of mind? Don't you feel happier? ~ -5-

If you're angry or full of hatred or jealousy or fear, don't you feel

disturbed and miserable and upset? But if you're full of metta you feel

at peace, with yourself and with other people. It says "...and other blessings of this kind". One occurs to me that is mentioned, or enumerated in the Visuddhimagga, where it says that if you practise metta

bhavana, you sleep well. (laughter) You sleep happily.' Now, what does

this mean? Why should you sleep well, sleep happily?

VOICES: (inaud.)..a clear conscience.

S: You've nothing on your mind. It means that metta doesn't only 'r~ce affect.
.k.o,i~doesn't necessarily say that you will slee~. If you sleep -

when you sleep - you will sleep well. You will not have fearful dreams. You will not have nightmares because the metta, the positive emotion, will have percolated down to those unconscious levels. It must do sooner or later. It's not just something to be practised with the conscious mind. So you will sleep happily, you will have pleasant dreams. You may even dream of hearing the dharma, or dream th~t you're on retreat.

VOICE: I've been imagining (inaud.)

S: I remember some time ago I had a whole series of dreams. I was ~reaming nearly every night of being on retreat. Ah, but wait a minute(1~~~) Everything was going well and then, for some reason or other, the retreat would go wrong and I was getting very annoyed with everybody and~elling them off in the dream. I don't know whether there were any retreats going on anywhere that I might have disapproved of, but I had this experience repeatedly. There I was, on retreat. It was usually in some quite different place, not~(~any place where I'd ever been on retreat at. It was quite a big house and there'd be lots of people arriving. Things would be going quite well and then for some reason or other things would start going a bit wrong. Not everybody would join in the meditation etc. etc. and then I'd start getting very annoyed and end the dream really telling everybody off. And then I'd wake up. (laughter) I mean, this only went on for a few months and then it stopped. I don't know whether it was connected -6- with any developments in the Movement two or three years ago, but this was what was happening. Anyway, that's a little bit by the way. But you might~ if you were full of metta, dream that you were happily on retreat, or that you were with friends, and so on. But you'd have pleasant, not fearful, experiences. So this is one of the "other blessings". I think - I don't know whether people have noticed - do you notice any effect, 'L say, especially when you're on retreat, you go to bed and to sleep immediately after the puja and meditation, without talking. Do you notice that you get a better night's sleep? I think very often you do,because, due to the meditation, thoughts have been calmed down and it is very often your thoughts that keep you awake, that give you a disturbed night. Due to the puja, positive emotions have arisen. If you go to bed and go to sleep in that state, you will have a good night's rest.

ANNE McM: The thing is, I usually feel an awful lot of energy, it does bring up a lot of energy. So, during the silences, if I just go straight to be, I have all this energy
(inaudible).. and feel quite restless.

S: Well, you probably need activities to absorb your energy. You might have more energy than other people so you just need more outlets for your energies. Join a building team or something like that. (laughter) People do differ very much in this respect. One sees it generally. Some people do have more energy than others and seem to need an outlet for that, otherwise it either keeps them awake at night or disturbs them in some other way. Anyway, other factors being equal, if you have a good meditation, with or without a puja, just before bedtime, the chances are you will have a

very good night's sleep. And if, you do the metta bhavana, well, you should as1t~ have a really happy sleep~and pleasant dreams. So this is one of the other

blessings of metta, benevolence and compassion as well as peace of mind.

VOICE: (inaud.) except for... wake up

feeling fresh.

S: Fresh, yes. Well, how many people do wake up like that? -7- How does one wake up usually in the morning? How do you feel as you open your eyes and there is a new day~ How do you actually feel?

VOICE: It varies so much. Once upon a time I used to be quite pleased (inaud.) which doesn't seem dependent upon any conscious circumstances.

S: That's interesting.

VOICE: The same as not being able to sleep. That's a new thing to me. (Same)

I mean, last year I can spend nights without sleeping. S: Well, that's - in a way - good. I think perhaps one shouldn't regard it as necessarily a problem. It may be that you're just not using up much physical energy. You've not got much to recoup. It could be that. If one is just awake without feeling tired, without feeling sleepy, there seems nothing wrong with that. Perhaps one has to revise one's ideas about how much sleep one actually needs. But how do others feel when they first

F wake up in the morning?

VOICE: I find on retreats I really do enjoy getting up and waking up, but at home (laughter) it's not quite the same thing.

S: Presumably, as you become more awake, after, say, a minute or two, or maybe even a few seconds, you become aware of things to be done during the day. I think that is quite important in many instances, whether there is something that you will enjoy doing or whether there is something to be done which you feel is a bit of a drag. But what about that instant, those few moments before you've actually started thinking about anything? How do you feel then, or do you notice? Before you even remember, say, where you are, what you've got to do that day. Is there not a little intermediate state, and what is that like?

VOICE: Pleasant.

S: So that's more near one's, as it were, real state of mind, before the thoughts and the practical activities start intervening. I think it is quite important just to consciously experience that. It really is an inter- mediate state. How do other people wake up? What are their first thoughts -8- tS4 as they become really conscious?

VOICE: Enjoyment... I enjoy the thought that I'm going to meditate.

S: Ah, yes.

VOICE: I'm woken up artificially (inaud.) by an alarm clock

S: I suppose if one is, or has to be, woken artificially, by an alarm clock, it means you're not getting as much sleep as you would like to get, rightly or wrongly.

VOICE: I'm sometimes quite happy but at the same time I am aware that physically I'm tired, so I wish I could have longer....

S: I think that is quite an important thing. It's a bit off the track but I think again quite important: that one makes sure one gets enough sleep. I mentioned a couple of days ago that sometimes people come on retreats, especially study retreats, and they arrive very late

and they stay up talking, so they're tired in the morning. I've become aware that in the F.W.B.O., especially in co-ops, very often they're very

tired. It's quite important that one should not allow oneself to remain in a state of being very tired. I think one can cover it up sometimes. One can ignore it, or cover it up with strong black coffee or whatever it may be, but I think this is not really good for one at all. It is a very basic thing that one should pay attention to and make sure that one is never really tired. Yes, tired in the healthy way. Healthy tiredness is the tiredness which can be made up for by a single good night's natural sleep. If you just go to bed tired in that way, that's fine, but there should not be an underlying feeling of tiredness all the time when you wake up in the morning. I think this is very important. If you feel tired, you might be able to do things, even quite efficiently, but you do them without spontaneity and without joy. You can't be creative when you're tired because creativity suggests, or implies, free extra energy, and you haven't got it. That is why you're tired. You haven't got even enough energy for ordinary purposes. So don't allow yourself, especially if you're in a position of responsibility, don't allow yourself -9-

to get into this tired state. It is really a basic thing, that you should be fresh and rested.

VOICE: That tiredness that you've described. Bhante, when it's quite a good thing, actually I've experienced that quite a few times on retreats, and it really feels good. You know what I mean?

S: If you're tired because you've exercised yourself. You've done things. You've used a lot of energy. That's very good. But if it is a tiredness of exhaustion because you've been overdoing it for several weeks, not to say months, that is not at all a good thing. You just have to attend to that. Make sure you go to bed early for quite a few nights. Have a good rest, even have a holiday, do nothing for a while, if you possibly can. I have become aware in the course of, well, a few months ago, that quite a lot of people in the F.W.B.O., especially Order Members and Mitras working in co-ops, were really quite tired, more than they should be.

VOICE: It's a pity, sometimes when you look around, everybody does look tired. And the newcomers look bright.

S: They are the lucky ones, in a sense. They haven't got anything to do, in the way that you have.

VOICE: Someone said that at Aryatara you can tell the F.W.B.O

~C~AA~ ~na'~) ..they're really shagged out... (laughter) (inaud.)

S: Well, no doubt sometimes you have to overdo things a bit. But it should only be a very temporary measure and you should take precautions to recoup afterwards, but not try to keep it up all the time and not sort of get into the habit of functioning like that and not be really aware of what you're doing.

ANT~ MoM: I seem to find it difficult (inaud) but usually I tend to have so much energy (inaud.) At other times I hardly seem to have the energy to get myself into the Shrine Room to meditate, or get myself over the road to do whatever I've got to do. There just seems to be an incredible gap.. (inaud.) I suppose -- - 10 - S: Another point is that it's not so simple as I might have seemed to suggest. Very often one has got energy but you use a lot of that energy overcoming resistance to doing certain things that you don't want to do. For instance, you might have been working during the day and feel really tired and think: "Oh, I don't want to do anything" and then someone says: "Come on, let's go to a concert" or "Let's have a game of ", and you've got the energy because that's what you want to do, that's what you enjoy doing. So I think we have to watch that, too, that we're not working too much against the grain. Sometimes we have to. It can't always be fun, unfortunately, but it should be fun for quite a lot of the time at least. (Pause).

So, "peace of mind and many other blessings of this kind,/Not being harmed by poison or by weapons...." 'low literally is one to take this? Buddhist tradition takes it quite literally, as in the ca~e of the Buddha turning back the mad elephant. Well, I suppose.. (you couldn't do it magically).. by its effect on the po'rson concerned. If you were permitted to get to close enough quarters, as it were, and enter into communication with the person, perhaps your metta would be able even to disarm the person. The only question is whether you could get into that sort of communication. If someone was aiming at you with a rifle, from a distance of seven-hundred yards, without your knowledge, even the most metta-filled person could well be bumped off in that sort of way. But if you had a chance to meet that person face to face and talk with them, you might well be able to dissuade them~by virtue of your sheer positivity. (Pause) What about poison?

VOICE: Your system could reject it.

S: Well, your system always rejects poison, in a sense, doesn't it? But what would be happening? Could you literally neutralize poison by~sheer emotional positivity? Again, Buddhist tradition would say "yes" but surely, if it is possible, one would need emotional positivity of a very high order indeed. - 11 -

VOICE: In the Scriptures, the Buddha says that the truffles he ate (rest of sentence inaud.)

S. Yes, but it's not in a sense that they were poisonous. There's a lot of discussion about

this quite mysterious episode. It's connected with -- for instance, the Buddha didn't speak about truffles in general but about those which had been offered to him. There is a discussion of this, pointing out that when something was offered to a spiritual person it partook of his, as it were, spiritual energy, ojas (phonetic) and that in the case of these truffles, having been offered to the Buddha first, they were spiritually enriched to such an extent that nobody else would be able to assimilate them. This is one explanation of what the Buddha meant, not that they would be affected by the poison. Though, again, some do say that it was as simple as that. The Buddha didn't want others to be poisoned in the way that he had been. It is a rather odd episode. One might say there must have been something wrong with the truffles, or whatever they were, to begin with. Well, could not the Buddha have counteracted that by virtue of his emotionally positive mental state? One could say that. But perhaps the Buddha didn't know~ perhaps you have to know, to consciously direct your metta for it to have that sort of effect.

VOICE: I read somewhere that it was meat that he ate.

S: Well, again, this is part of the whole discussion. What is sukara (phon.) mudava? It literally means something like "pigs' delight". So is it

"delightful pig" (in other words, pork), or is it something that the pig

delights in, i.e. truffles which the pig, of course, roots up? But it is

sukara mudava. They're still discussing this, what it might have been.

Well, whatever it was, it didn't agree with the Buddha and it was the

occasion, if not the cause, of his death.

VOICE: It doesn't mean quite literally poison, does it?

S: Well, you could - I mean, it seems to mean poison in the literal

sense because weapons are mentioned. But you could regard metta as

neutralizing the poison of even other people's negative states. You actually

do find this. If you encounter people whose mental states are strongly - 12 - 1~0

negative emotionally, you experience it almost like a poison invading you, especially if you are the direct object of it. But presumably if you had a really strong emotional positivity yourself, you would be able to absorb that. There is a sort of mythological story in this connection which might be interesting. It belongs to both Hindu mythology and Buddhist mythology, Indian mythology, that is to say. It's related (in the case of the Hindus) of Shiva, and in the case of the Buddhists, of Avolokiteshvara. They're both called nila-cunta (phonetic), which means "blue-throated". But why are they called blue-throated? So the story goes that once upon a time the gods churned the ocean, the ocean of existence, and all sorts of wonderful things came up. The gods used Meru (phonetic) as the churning-stick and the Serpent of Infinity as the cord with which they revolved it. So the gods got on one end

and the Asuras on the other, pulling back and forth, churning the ocean. Then out of the ocean came

the goddess of prosperity, so they fought and disputed over her. Then

came the wish-fulfilling tree. They fought and disputed over that, etc. etc. And then came an enormous lump of poison and nobody wanted that, neither the gods nor the asuras. So there was the danger that this great lump of poison would destroy everything and everybody. So Shiva (or Avolokiteshvara), as it is said, took it and swallowed it to save living

beings. But it stuck in his throat and turned his throat blue. So in

a way this is quite symbolical, the way in which the positive person absorbs the poison of existence, the poison in his or her surroundings and is able to assimilate it. It leaves some traos, yes, but it doesn't actually kill them. So it's quite a powerful story, in a way. But you

may find that you actually experience this. Sometimes you may become

very sensitive, through meditation. You may pick up on quite a bit of negativity in the atmosphere, so to speak, or directed towards you from

other people. You may have to absorb it.

ANNE McM: Sometimes I've been at the Centre, and certain people have come along, feeling, sort of

S: So you can feel drained by some people's company. But some

- 13 - people can, almost literally, inject emotional poison. You feel poisoned, especially if they've expressed a lot of anger and resentment, not necessarily towards you. But I think one has to be careful and just recognise how much of this you can take. It might take you several hours to absorb whatever they've pumped into you. You don't want to have that sort of~perience, say, just before you take a meditation class.

VOICE: (all inaudible)

S: I think it sometimes is the case. There is something you pick up in that person, quite unpleasant, though you may not be able to put your finger on it. Something at least that you don't want anything to do with. You may not be able to account for it rationally. It may, in some cases, be a purely subjective reaction. But I think quite often it isn't that and there actually is something that you are not happy to be involved with, or in contact with, even. So you just keep that person definitely at a distance. (Pause). Well, "Attaining our aim without exertion" - what about that? Row does benevolence and compassion enable you to attain your aim without exertion. Is an aim ever attained without exertion? What is meant by this?

VOICE: It becomes more like play.

S: It becomes more like play, In a way you don't need extra exertion. The energy is there. If you do something with metta, out of metta, out of compassion, the energy is there.

ANNE MoM: There's a lack of conflict.

S: Lack of conflict, yes. So it does become like play, you are only too glad to do it. You know, if you're in a happy, positive state of mind and someone asks you to do something, it's much easier. If you're tired, disgruntled, annoyed, it's much more of an effort. I think it's like people experience when they go back after retreat. Everything's so much easier. That's because, not only that they've got more energy, but they're in a more positive frame of mind. They can cope better, at least.

VOICE: When I've come back after retreats ~~~e found exactly the opposite.

S: Oh dear, what do you find? - 14- t6~

VOICE: Well, I think there seems to be a general feeling (inaud.) very hard to get down to earth. S: So what do you think that meant?

VOICE: I think it's something to do with (inaud.)

(laughter)

S: The whole situation.

ANNE MoM: I thought it was just me, because I've experienced that when I've got back I've been working But then almost everybody I've spoken to seems to think its (great chunks of the inaudible.)

VOICE: (nothing audible)

S: But is it, do you think, that people, so to speak, get so deeply into meditation? I can't help noticing (I'm not criticising or anything and I certainly haven't noticed it on this retreat) but I have noticed it on retreats on other occasions that people spend a couple of hours in the Shrine Room and apparently they have a good meditation. Then as soon as they come out, within a minute, they're talking, chatting, laughing, joking, indulging in horseplay, etc. etc. You see? So it isn't as though, I would imagine, people get so deeply into meditation that when they get back to the Centre or the co-op they can't function, they're still in a meditative state. I can't really believe that, frankly.

VOICE: (inaudible)

S: It might be the case with one or two people, but not generally, certainly. That contradicts the evidence.

VOICE: Sometimes I just begin to get into it, right at te end of a retreat and I'd just like to go and meditate.

S: It may be that youlve not had a long enough retreat - it could be that.

VOICE: Sometimes you feel --

S: The time has come to do something else, to go back, yes. Because quite a few people are able to get away only for a week. Even two weeks isn't all that long, is it? - 15 - VOICE: Depending on the person, probably not. If you've gone deeper and deeper into the practice, then possibly you'd be in touch with that

energy (voice inaud., due to coughs)

S: Which could do anything, yes. But I think also, as I mentioned, that quite a few people arrive on a retreat tired, so that they have to resolve that, have to get back their ordinary energy and sense of ordinary well-being, and that may take them a week. So if they're lucky they have another week of real retreat and if they're not, well, they just go straight back. So perhaps it is that they don't always have a long enough retreat.

VOICE: I think sometimes it's quite nice to think that being on retreat is your spiritual practice, and working isn't S: Yes~ I think very likely there is an attitude that work is something different. Work is something that is best avoided. They take the picture of the Pure Land quite literally. In the Pure Land nobody works.' That is the ideal situation. I think there's a lot of that still, amongst our own Friends. Perhaps it's a hangover from previous experience, that work is - well, at best it's something second-best. You'd rather not work, if you were given a completely free choice. Yes, you know It's good for you, it's part of your spiritual practice but if you're honest with yourself you'd say: "I'd really rather not work at all." Yes? Depending, of course, on what the work is. But work in the more tangible sense - one would really rather do something else, even if one doesn't quite know what that is. It may be that - just reluctance to get back to work. Anyway, reading the reporting-in (?) should be quite interesting, then, this time. I mean the account which I shall eventually see, no doubt in S (?)

VOICE: I think if there's a good balance between things, to have time for yourself, and Arts, and your meditation, things like that, it ~ould help people to - 16 - S: But again - "time for yourself". In what sense is work not for yourself?

VOICE: But you need to be alone occasionally, otherwise you can't (inaud) If you are deprived of that you become

S: Yes, that's true. It's not that work is not for yourself. But you need various forms of activity, or non-activity. I think you do need space in which you can be without other people. Not that that is your private space for yourself and work is public space for other people. No, it isn't really like that. But nonetheless you do need to be able, for your own sake, and for the sake of others, to be by yourself, regularly. That's as it should be. You should be able to get away from other people, from time to time. But, on the other hand, on retreat people aren't getting away. They're crammed together as often as not, five or six to a room, but they don't seem to mind that. I suppose you can always go for a walk on your own. Or in summer-time sit in the garden on your own. But on retreat people don't seem to mind about that.

VOICE: Other people are more sensitive, too.

S: That's true.

VOICE: If they see someone walking alone they don't chase after her

and talk about (inaudible)

2nd VOICE: I find sometimes I work harder than (inaudible)

S: Right, yes. To recuperate, as it were. And I think it's true to say that people' on the whole, compared with the way things used to be some years ago, people generally down in London and also in Croydon have been working quite hard, especially the people in the co-ops. So perhaps one does need correspondingly longer retreats, to restore some balance. But anyway if you can do something in a state of emotional positivity, whether it is the result of being on a retreat or through meditation or whatever, it makes it all so much more easy, more natural more spontaneous. ANNE MoM: Attending study sessions you're more able to absorb

(several inaudible bits) - 17 -

Sr Well, yes, in the sense that study requires effort, learning requires effort. If you are in a happy positive frame of mind I'm sure you learn more easily.

ANNE: You seem to be more receptive.

S: Well, you see, if you're not very pleased with things, if you're a bit annoyed, you're not receptive. One really notices that. You keep other people at a distance, other things at a distance. That seems to be the natural concomitant, you express your irritation in that way.

VOICE: You use your energy in a~very negative way. (Pause)

S: Also I think another aspect of this is (sounds like "business'1). You know, talking about retreats, we had a winter retreat

(at this point, the sound cuts out and there's just the hiss of the tape until the end of side 1. Side Two begins as if Bhante had been saying something which didn't get recorded on tape.)
SIDE TWO STARTS HERE

(starts in mid-sentence - see above.)

S: .or take one thing at a time. In the work situation, especially for people with a bit of responsibility, you're doing now this and now that. You're being asked to do this. Then, when you're half-way through it, you're asked to stop and do something else. And then maybe you're even asked to interrupt that. And in the end you don't really know what you're supposed to be doing. It's very difficult sometimes to retrace your steps back to what you were doing when you were interrupted, which was what you were doing when you were interrupted.' (laughter) You hardly know where you are, and it's this constant switching and ch~nging and not knowing quite where you are or what you're supposed to be doing, even though you're busy all the time. I think this is much more wearing than just plain straightforward work at one thing. I think quite a few people in the co-ops have this sort of experience of having to change from one thing to another interrupt one thing for another.

But on retreat you really just don't have that. Nothing is interrupted by anything else. - 18- There's a straightforward programme, you do one thing after another. Just one thing at a time. And this is one of the reasons why in "Peace is a Fire" there's this aphorism, what is it? I forget the exact words -- "The whole art of life" (or living) "is to be able to do one thing at a time. Isn't it a great blessing if you can? Don't you heave a sort of sigh of relief if you can just do one thing all day without any interruptions? No one asking you to do anything else, or to look for anything else or even to thix~k about anything else. You can just sit down, or stand up, or whatever it is, and just do one thing. It's almost like luxury, it's almost like a holiday. (laughter) So no doubt you experience that in varying degrees. I think it is this which makes the retreat situation for so many people so positive. It's an integrated situation. And this is one of the difficulties of work. Not that the work is difficult. If you were not interrupted, if you could finish this today and then tomorrow you~ that, it wouldn't be so difficult. But that very often isn't the case. You have to interrupt today's work to do something that someone should have asked you to do, say, three weeks ago and it's now become very, very urgent and you have to drop everything and do it~ and transfer all your mental energies to that new thing. You have to change gears rapidly and this is very wearing. So I think it's as much that, and sometimes it's inherent in the situation but sometimes it's bad planning on somebody else's part and then of c~urse yDu feel a bit annoyed. "They knew perfectly well that would have to be done, three weeks ago." Why didn't they tell you, why did they leave it till the last minute? You can't help feeling a bit annoyed.

VOICE: And you lose energy.

S: You lose energy in your annoyance. Sometimes you're so annoyed that you can't do the job. So it also means that it's not enough to be able to work or to have people who are working but sensible planning is necessary so that they don't have to break off one thing in order to do another. If it's your responsibility to ensure that, it's not fair to your workers that you don't do it. (pause) By the end of the winter retreat, Padmavajra was - 19 -

volunteering to take the next one, asking if he could be awake longer. Bnt again I could understand the situation, because he's a Chairman and he's probably interrupted and has to switch from one thing to another more than anybody else, so just leading the retreat - just one job - with everything directly related to that1 and just one thing after another, well, it was clearly almost like being in Heaven, much as he is comitted to the work at Aryatara and Kalpadruma. So when I penned that little aphorism I really meant it, and I couldn't help wondering at the time: how many people will a~preciate it? Perhaps some will think it a trite little aphorism which hasn't really got much content to it, but I don't think so. At least from a certain point of view - the whole art of life - just to be able to do one thing at a time. Sometimes you're not even allowed to eat when you're supposed to be eating. Some people are interrupted in the middle of their meal by a phone call, or something has to be given to them, or explained to them. They're not even allowed to finish their meal* Well, that's not very good either, for your ulcers, for your temper or for anything else. So I think one should be very mindful of this, especially at meal-times, in the course of the meal, while people are actually eating, not to try to have serious conversation, least of all business conversations, with anybody. Let them eat in peace and then discuss things. Ilve said in a lecture some time ago that the business lunch is a sort of nlon~tro~ity. I get quite annoyed sometimes if people try to ask me serious questions while T've got my mouth full even. (laughter) I really object to this. At the proper time, yes, ask any question you like, but not while somebody is eating, because you're doing a different activity and you should be allowed to do just that one

thing. I mean~ just a little friendly conversation, that's okay, but not any serious discussion or try to hold almost a council meeting over lunch. That's no good to anybody. Put your mind on one thing at a time, it's very important* Otherwise you just get scattered, your energy gets dispersed, then you become quite confused and - 20-

jagged. That's not good. Looking at it from a broader point of view, you need to do just one thing in a bigger sense over a definite period of time. I think people's temperaments differ in this respect to some extent. This is something I've been touching on lately, that some people like to plan out the day and do a number of different things, one by one, in the course of a day. Others would prefer to just devote a whole period of time, say several weeks, to one thing predominantly and then a few weeks to something quite different and so on. Not try to do a little of them all in the course of one day. You just have to find out which works best for you. Some people like two hours meditation every day, three or four hours work, two hours study, a couple of hours for exercise. They can change from one thing to another in the course of the day quite smoothly and easily. Somebody else might like to immerse himself in study for two or three weeks. Just do nothing except read and then go off and have a solitary retreat, nothing except meditation for a few weeks. And then come back and throw himself into some work project and just work for two or three weeks. Some people function better like that. And of course there are intermediate types. So you have to try to find out, if you can, if you are in the position of choosing, what works best for you.

ANNE McM: Actually, I find it difficult (inaud.) I suppose that's partly because that's how I~ used to functioning.

S: Well, if you can actually and happily do several things at once, that's fine. I've no objection at all.

ANNE: It's more like restlessness, actually.

S: If you've got a hundred arms - well, that's wonderful.' (laughter) But it can be restlessness, that you're not able to put yourself into anything fully, because you're thinking of other things that you could be doing. That is sometimes a sort of greed~ not wanting to miss anything, if you see what I mean. (laughter, and inaudible remark) - 21 - S: Yes, it is that, too. Too many tentacles. So one needs to learn to do one thing at a time. And when you are doing something, it means not having your mind on something else, otherwise you can't even do the first thing properly. But if there's something pressing on you and you know that someone's just waiting for you to do it as soon as you've finished what you are doing, you can't help being distracted and thinking about what you've got to do next. It's not good to be in that sort of situation.

(Pause)

All right. "And being reborn in the Brahma world. 'S ~ow, how does

one take that? What does that mean? What is a Brahma world, anyway? It's a higher heavenly world, corresponding to a higher state of meditative consciousness. It's about the Kama-l~ It's about the heaven of Tndira. It corresponds to the rupa and arupya lo&~ ~ (?). In other words, when you are full of metta and karuna, you're in a highly concentrated, integrated state, a very pure state of consciousness, actually corresponding to

that of the Brahmas, those beings which exist on those higher meditative levels. So when you die, the very least that happens, if you aren't on the way to Enlightenment, is that you are re-born in one of those higher spheres. Actually, the Bodhisattva tries to avoid that because it would mean that there would be a very positive and pleasant experience for him. He'd be out of action for a while, so far as other living beings. But nonetheless this is the natural result of cultivating benevolence and compassion, if you want to take advantage of it. Like the woman in the poem I mentioned. Was it in this group? There's a comic poem about the housewife and she's looking forward to her death and going to Heaven, doing nothing for ever and ever, because she's lead such a busy and harassed life. So if you feel a bit like that you'll rather like the idea that, as a result of your benevolence and compassion, you'll have a sort of celestial holiday for several aeons with absolutely nothing to do except enjoy positive blissful experiences, with nobody asking you to do anything and never being interrupted.

(laughter) t - 22-

VOICE: (unfortunately, inaud. comment)

S: I don't think everybody would agree with you.'

VOICE: (Inaud. very far from mike)

S: Well, it is said that one of the things that he does is to cultivate his very intense awareness of the sufferings of others, and direct a very firm resolution to being reborn on the human plane.

VOICE (inaudible) he'd be re-born in a very positive environment.

S: He'd be reborn in a positive environment or certainly be reborn as a very positive person.

VOICE: Would he be an actual Brahma?

S: Well, he'd be a Brahma in a sense, without actually being in a Brahma realm though that was his natural realm.

VOICE: Is that a Vimalakurti?

S: No, that is a little different, because a Vimalakurti is in a way a Bodhisattva who is more than a Bodhisattva and his house represents a Pure Land which goes beyond the (phon.) ramaloka. A little spot of the transcendental in the midst of the mundane.

VOICE: (inaudible)

S: It is even said in some Mahayana texts that the Bodhisattva doesn't meditate too much. Again, relatively speaking, you know, not so much that he, as it were, cannot help being reborn in the (phon.) bhamalokas. That that takes quite a lot of meditation, so it shouldn't be regarded as a general discouragement to meditate. (laughter)

VOICE (inaud0)

part of the human world the Heaven-world

S: I think it becomes part of the Heaven-world, so to speak, when you start taking it as an end in itself and become absorbed in it as an end in itself. As you could do with meditation. You could become absorbed in meditation, in a narrower sense, as an end in itself, just wish to continue enjoying those ~bre refined blissful states. - 23 - VOICE: It seems rather (inaud)

S: Human-cum-spiritual, one could say, yes. Because if it is human, it's as though it has remained open-ended. To be human is to be open-ended. ANNE MeM: It can seem quite a practical policy

It can actually make things more difficult thinking that people will be really doing it well in a certain state..

to be more static (quite a lot that is not audible)

VOICE: In a book seemed to stress that

people were very aesthetically aware, but S: Yes, this is true, in a way. But I'd like to enter a caveat here, if I may. You often hear this about the Renaissance, that, yes, the aesthetic sensibility was highly developed but that they weren't so good morally. You even hear this about certain Popes. All right maybe there were certain things that we can agree were immoral, were unskilful, let us say. The violence that was (word inaud.) But if you look at it more closely, especially in the case of the Popes who were regarded as immoral Popes, you find that the immorality boils down to the fact that

they did not conform to orthodox Catholic ideas of sexual morality. This

is what it boils down to. So you find even Rationalist and humanist

historians echoing these sort of charges, without really understanding what they are saying. If you look at it again you find that Pope Leo X is described as a very immoral Pope. Well, you find that actually as a younger man, maybe when he was a bishop, he had a mistress. That is what it really boils down to, but apart from that he was an amiable, genial, intelligent, kindly person, but he's classed as one of the immoral Popes because, some time before he became Pope, he had a mistress. Or he might have had - as in the case of some Popes - they had children, so they're e~assified as immoral Popes. On the other hand, you find that some of the Popes who are classified as good Popes, moral Popes, were the fiercest persecutors and were burning people at the stake. But they're still classified a~;good - 24 - Popes, even by Rationalist historians, which seems ridiculous. So therefore, before speaking about the morality or immorality of the

Renaissance, one must be quite clear in one 's mind what is morality and what is immorality. Sometimes they weren't being immoral, they were just not observing the rather narrow ethical requirements of the Catholic Church.

VOICE: There was a lot of violence then.

S: There was, of course, that is true. Whether there was any more than at other periods of history, more than today, is difficult to say. But, yes, one does get the impression, reading about the Renaissance, that there was a lot of violence.

VOICE: (inaud.)

S: It would seem possible, because one does know, in the Renaissance period, of individuals who seemed to have had a refined aesthetic sense but who definitely were violent characters. Like Benvenuto Cellini who, in his autobiography, describes how he produced his wonderful bronzes and also how he stabbed somebody. So one could say that there are certainly some instances in connection with the Renaissance of aesthetic sensibility apparently co-existing with ethical insensibility. I don't know if one could find any examples of that nowadays. Perhaps not, I don't know. There are none that spring to mind, of that type. I mean, specifically with regard to violence, a tendency to violence and even homicide allied with definite aesthetic sensibility. I think maybe we had a few poets who went off to the Spanish Civil War, that sort of thing~ but not much~ beyond

that.

VOICE: (inaud.)

S: No, not at all.

VOICE: He wrote "The Clockwork Orange".

S: It wasn't Dante Rossetti. (laughter) Was it - not Anthony Burgess?

VOICE: Yes. He enjoys Beethoven intensely and he goes out and starts -- ench?) - 25
- t~3 S: Well, there's the precedent of Ernest Hemingway, who enjoyed bullfights and hunting and shooting and all that sort of thing, but there seems to be something very suspect about all that. this very macho sort of attitude.

VOICE: (inaud.)

S: One doesn't get the impression, with Hemingway's writings, that he had much in the way of sensibility.

VOICE: (inaud.)

S: Yes, indeed. Well, one gets the impression, I think, from the autobiography that he was a, well, certainly not a very integrated character. Perhaps a rather disturbed character in some ways. Anyway.... We've a couple of minutes left, so we'll go back over what we've done this morning. (Long pause)

One can see the great advantage of emotional positivity in every form, both for oneself and for others. It seems a very important factor and there just isn't enough of it. In a way it's really surprising that human beings shouldn't be more positive than they usually are.

VOICE: It seems as though the more human beings experience positivity, the more they want

to experience it, but the less they experience it, the less they want it. It's as if it's self-generating, once it gets going.

S: Yes, that's true. When you do get into a negative frame of mind, it's as though you want to go on being negative. That's part of the negativity. You resist, perhaps, anybody's efforts to get you out of that. It seems extraordinary.

VOICE: I know I've noticed that with meditation. Though I want to do it, and I know it's what I want to do, sometimes I put everything in the way of actually going to sit.

S: It's as though, you know, I talked about "The Courage to Create" (was it in this group?) Well, it's as though one needs the courage to be positive. - 26 - F. Sometimes I think that if you feel very happy and positive, VOICE: the other people - if they're feeling very negative - they

think you're a bit stupid.

S: Yes, naive, perhaps.

F.VOICE: Yes, something like that. If you're smiling....

S: As if you've not seen much of the world, or are not very thoughtful. But, you know, a positive person can do more to help than someone who's not positive.

F.VOICE: They are just complaining all the time and not doing anything.

S: Yes, right. Being positive makes you more efficient, in fact.

ANNE MoM: You need courage to trust. If you're going to be positive you have to trust the people that you're ---- I think maybe it's just a matter of being positive, but maybe it's what we were talking about earlier, about experiencing and expressing emotion. You have to trust people, and you have to trust that they trust you. ...

S: I think if you're really positive that doesn't enter into it.

ANNE McM: I think I'm back in the stage before. I'm sort of getting in touch with emotions.

S: Yes, right, just to start letting yourself out a bit you need to

be able to trust other people. But if you're really positive the question doesn't arise. They can believe in your positivity or not, it doesn't affect you. You are positive and you know it.

ANNE MoM: There's something that struck me quite recently about metta. It seemed to be that it had a certain air of impartiality.

S: Yes.

M~NE McM: Impartiality isn't quite the right word for it, but there is a sort of air of impartiality.

S: Well, there is, in metta, and metta is not based on subjective preference. This is why you try to feel equal metta towards the so-called near and dear person, the so-called neutral person, etc. Some people

don't want this, as it were, impartiality. They want to be something -- 27- special, that you should have a feeling towards them that you don't have towards anybody else. In that way they don't quite like metta. They can't quite bear the thought that you should be just as positive with other people as you are with them. They want that they should mean something special to you. I think they want a sort of exclusive one-to-one relationship of some kind or other, or in some respect or other, but this is not positive. You see what I mean? You even encounter this at school, I believe. You like to feel that you are "best friends" with somebody and somebody likes you more than they like anybody else in the school. Well, perhaps it's natural, at that stage, that age, but it's certainly inconsistent with metta. The fact that someone has a lot of metta towards somebody else doesn't mean that there's any less for you. Perhaps you're just afraid of not getting enough. Or perhaps there's a bit of harking back to mother's exclusive attention, which wasn't metta, strictly speaking, though it was analagous to metta.

ANNE MoM: I think it's that impartiality when you're being told things by someone who tells you them from metta, it's easier to take, even if it's a bit unpalatable, than it is if someone's coming at you with (inaud.)

S: Oh yes, indeed.

ANNE McM: It's because it's not a way of getting at you...

S: They're just stating some principles, some general principles.

VOICE: Also, as long as your growth is (inaudible)

S: But because metta is not personally oriented in the exclusive way, some people feel metta to be a bit cool, or even cold. But it isn't really like that. What they want is the warmth of the exclusive kind of affection or emotion.

ANNE MoM: They don't actually want an experience, they want lots of

experience. -28- -S: Well, some people expect to be loved exclusively by quite a large number of people. It's a bit baby-like. A baby expects that everybody's attention is to be concentrated from all sides on him or her. I think one really has to convince oneself that you don't get any less because somebody else is also getting that metta. That's assuming that it's metta, of course. If it's really metta it can be directed equally towards a lot of people. It's personal but at the same time it's impersonal. It's warm but it's not stuffy. It's certainly not sticky. Warm but not stuffy - close but not sticky. (laughter). Anyway, that's all for this morning. I think we'll end on that note.

END OF

TAPE

JOL4. i/I 177 S: "Even if we should not attain final liberation, at least we obtain these eight qualities through benevolence." Did we touch on that? no. Alright what is there to be said about those two lines?

"Even if we should not attain final liberation at least we obtain these eight qualities through benevolence" It's like a second prize as it were. (laughter) That even if, by your practice of benevolence and compassion, or, in fact by the practice of any other stage of the path, you don't actually, yet, gain enlightenment, but there will be all sorts of good positive results accruing, not withstanding. Just as one might, say, by the practising of meditation, even if you don't gain Enlightenment, at least you'll have a degree of positivity and relative peace of mind, It's like a consolation prize. (laughter). But, obviously we are not aiming for the consolation prize. This statement is made I think, simply to indicate the usefulness, as it were, of the whole practice. Even if it doesn't attain its ultimate objective, real objective, it will still have been very worthwhile. (Pause) The second best is second only in relation to enlightenment itself. It's still far better than anything you would have got by following any other worldly path. (Pause) So you can't lose. (Laughter). Even if you don't attain final liberation you'll be loved by gods and men, protected by them. You'll enjoy peace of mind, and many other blessings and no poison or weapon will be able to harm you. You attain your aim without exertion. You'll be reborn in the Brahma world. Well it's a pretty good consolation prize isn't it? (Laughter) Alright, carry on. _____, "However, the practice of benevolence is good for preserving ourselves and for protecting others, as may be seen respectively from the stories of the great Brahmadata and of king Maitribala.

When benevolence has been perfected then there is no difficulty in practising compassion. S: I don't know these particular stories of Brahmadata and king Maitribala but you can probably guess what they are like from the very name of king Maitribala, which means power or force of Maitri. So clearly it must be some story in which the power or force of his maitri, or benevolence overcame all obstacles. It's clearly a story of

that sort. Yes? But there is quite a bit to be said about that little sentence that follows.

"When benevolence has been perfected then there is no difficulty in practising compassion".

Why do you think that is? We touch upon this in connection with the Brahma viharas. Ula; There must be a strong element of positive feeling or compassion. S: Yes that's broadly what it is. Yes. _____; Doesn't metta become compassion when it comes into contact with something outside? JOL4. 1/11 178 S: Yes right karuna, compassion isn't really a separate emotion from maitri or benevolence. If you have benevolence, if you have maitri then when you encounter someone's pain or difficulty or suffering, that emotion of maitri spontaneously becomes compassion. Well this is why maitri is in a sense, the basic positive emotion. You could say if you have maitri and it comes into contact with those who are less fortunate than you are, it is, not exactly transformed into, but it assumes the colouring, let's say, of compassion. If it comes into contact with those who are equally fortunate it assumes the colouring of joy. If it comes into contact with those who are more fortunate than you in a sense of having attained or realised a higher scale of values, then it can become faith or reverence. _____, Sorry I missed that. S: It can become faith or reverence. I mean if the maitri, your maitri comes into contact with those who are not simply more fortunate than you but who have attained a higher scale of values then your maitri becomes coloured, as it were, with the feeling of reverence. So maitri is really quite basic. (Pause) So if, for instance, well let's take them one by one. .Supposing you encounter other peoples' suffering and you don't feel any compassion it means there's no maitri. You don't under ordinary circumstances feel any love, any benevolence for others. In the same way, if you come into contact with others who are happy and fortunate and if you don't feel any sympathetic joy, perhaps you feel envious or jealous or resentful well it means there's no maitri towards others, and yet again, in the same way, if you come into contact with those more highly developed than you are and you don't spontaneously feel a sort of reverence, and a happiness that there are others more developed than you again it means there's no maitri. There is no positive emotion towards other living beings. So maitri is, in fact, quite basic. If you develop the maitri the other Brahma viharas will look after themselves. So you practice, in a sense, the other Brahma viharas not by any change in your mental attitude but by changing the object.

Do you see what I mean? If you are practising the metta bhavana, say, the maitri bhavana, and wish to pass on to the karuna bhavana what you simply do is to call up images of people in distress. And your maitri will spontaneously become karuna. If you call up images of people happy and joyful then spontaneously your sympathetic joy will arise. And if you call up images of - though this isn't a brahma vihara of course - Buddhas and Bodhisattvas well spontaneously a feeling of reverence will arise. But the emotional positivity, in the form of maitri, is basic to all these experiences. (Pause)

So therefore it says, 'when benevolence has been perfected then there is no difficulty in practising compassion.' Well that is quite literally true. Let's go on. Christabel; "Compassion is our next theme.

Boundless compassion is dealt with under the six heads of classification, frame of reference, causal characteristic, method of practice, measure of perfection and merits.

Classification is threefold: (1) compassion with reference to sentient beings; (2) the

nature of the whole of reality, and (3) without reference to any particular ~ut 4.1/III 1/4)e
e 179 object." S: I think we'd better go on because that is just the outline.
Christabel; "The first means that compassion arises by seeing the misery of sentient beings
in evil lives; the second that when we have practised the Four truths and thereby understood
the relation between cause and effect our mind turns away from the concepts of permanence
and solidity. Here compassion arises by thinking that other beings live in bewilderment,
ignorant of the relation between cause and effect and clinging, thereby, to permanence and
solidity. The third means that by having understood thoroughly the Sunyata of all entities
through immediate experience compassion arises in particular for sentient beings who cling to
the idea of immediate reality." S: Alright let's consider that.

The first means, that is to say compassion with reference to sentient beings -'The first
means that compassion arises by seeing the misery of sentient beings

in evil lives.' Well what do you think is meant by that? Well bearing in mind/the whole

process starts. That is to say you are imbued with maitri. You are imbued with that particular
positive emotion of benevolence. And then you happen to encounter, or you happen to see,
sentient beings who are suffering and you see that their suffering is due to their own unskilful
actions. So when you see it in that way then compassion naturally arises. It's not simply that
people are suffering but that they are inflicting suffering upon themselves. I mean if the
suffering is due purely to objective factors, having nothing to do with their own actions well
there's not much you can do about it. Of they are suffering for instance from the weather.
(Laughter) You are not in a position to change the weather. But if they are suffering from the
results of their own evil actions well that is something that can be changed. It's something
which they could change but they're not. I mean one of the Mahayana sutras says here are
beings who are in search of happiness, striving desperately for happiness but by their own
unskilful actions they are only producing unhappiness for themselves. So what a sort of
pityable situation. So if you have maitri to begin with you see people involved in this sort of
way, committing those sort of mistakes, performing those sort of unskilful actions and
suffering in consequence, then you cannot help feeling compassion. So 'The first means that
compassion arises by seeing the misery of sentient beings in evil lives.' (Pause) Sometimes
you see this in the case of people whom you know very well. You can just see how they
make things difficult for themselves. You can see how they make themselves miserable.
It's all in their own hands. They could put a stop to it. They could put it right but they don't.
They go on blundering, blundering along and make things worse for themselves. You can't
help feeling sorry for them, even if you haven't got a fully developed maitri, you've just got a
reasonable warm human feeling, well you feel sorry to see the way that they are behaving.
Maybe you try to do something about it. Try to help them with a few words of advice.
Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't. Ula; It's so difficult to make them see. It's
difficult to see something that you are JOL4. I/IV S: Yes. Well this is where the good friend
is really necessary. Because

the good friend may really have to take hold of you by the collar, as it were, and force you to
see what is happening. You may be thinking it's external circumstances. It's not

me - yes? But the good friend has to point out that no it's not external circumstances,

it is you. You are doing this to yourself. Nobody else is doing it for you, to you.

You are making yourself suffer by your own attitude. It's your own attitude that you've got to change. Ula; It's quite depressing when you try to help someone. You think you can see what is her difficulty and you think she understood and then the next moment you understand that. No. S: Yes right. Christabel; Well sometimes even when it's pointed out to us we are too frightened to change. We can see it's our own fault but we can't.. we perhaps want to enjoy the pain. S: Well then the good friend has to give the positive model support, to give you courage to make the change. That is one of the functions of the good friend. Anne Mac; It is interesting that it is much easier to see other people doing that than it is to see yourself do it. Sometimes S: Amazing isn't it? -(Laughter) Anne Mac: Sometimes you sort of see something really clearly in other people and it's something you do yourself but you never make a connection with yourself. But you see it so clearly. If ~d that's really S: Well there's a little Scots couplet by I think, Robert Burns. Anne Mac Oh yes " get to give us to see ourselves as others see us." (: Laughter) S: Right. But I think we can even go a little further (looking at) the text here - 'The first means that compassion arises by seeing the misery of sentient beings in evil lives.' It's not only what people do to themselves. It's what they do to one another. Sometimes this is very pityable too. You think well here are these people. It may be a larger or a smaller group of people. It may be a family or it may be a community of some kind. I don't mean a community in the sense of a spiritual community. just a group of people living together or working together, or associated in some way. They could be so happy together. They could have such a good time but they don't. They just make things difficult for one another. They just torment one another and you just feel so sorry to see that. It seems such a ridiculous waste of human life, of human opportunity. JOLA. I/IV

They are just quarrelling and misunderstanding and at each others throats etc, etc. It seems so utterly foolish but very often they are very much into this. It's their life almost sometimes and they can't break out of it.

_____ Especially in marriage. (Laughter)

S: Why I know nothing about it.(Laughter)

_____, Nuclear families seem to be () to torment each other. It's awful . (unclear

S: We must be careful not to over generalise. I want to put in a good word here for the Indian families (laughter)

_____ There must be some happy families here in the West. (laughter)

S: I've been saying, well I'm sure there must be. I've been saying so since I came back from India that I was really surprised, I was somewhat surprised and pleasantly surprised on our Ahmedabad retreat - Order members might have heard this from me before - on our Ahmedabad retreat there were quite a lot of people and there were quite a lot of married couples with children. And quite a lot a married couples, again with children, turned up for the last day because that was the day of an ordination. And it was really noticeable that husbands and wives seemed on quite friendly terms and it seemed really strange, (laughter) Because in this country we usually - I won't say that husbands and wives are actually quarrelling but you only too often in society, in social life, notice there's a sort of strain or tension. And that seemed to be completely absent and they just seemed to be good friends

and just speak to each other in a friendly way and that seemed almost odd that husbands and wives were good friends but this is how it seemed. They are mostly Gujaratis but some were visiting Maharashtrians but again that seemed such a pity that well, if you do decide to spend your life, or the better part of your life together why not do it happily? (Laughter) and be good friends and have a happy life together. But it seems so difficult. And it's the same with the working situation. If you are going to work together why not work together happily. Perhaps this sort of comment applies most of all in the political sphere, where there is so much argument and controversy and all that sort of thing. You know even amongst people supposedly belonging to the same party, the same group and working for the same objectives. There are such bitter quarrels. Well look at all these diaries and revelations that are coming out in the Sunday Times month by month. People's revelations about their former colleagues and how they are always stabbing one another in the back all the time. You know it's really quite dreadful. And it seems such a pity that people trouble one another so much. And they can't get on more happily more harmoniously together. So it isn't just a question of, that you inflict suffering upon yourself, you certainly do that but people inflict suffering upon one another. And sometimes the two are inextricably mixed up together and you get a real tangle. That's the samsara, at least from one point of view. It does just seem such a pity. There are such highly positive potentials of human communication, of human relationships, but people just see~ not able to make the best use of them or take the greatest advantage of them. Ula; many people would tend to say it's the nature of life to be () problems and

that's it.

S: To some extent there are objective difficulties, yes but I think things could be much better than they actually are.

Caroline(?): Do you think that Indian people don't think so much about how I feel and you know, sort of psychologically.

S: Traditionally they don't think at all in those terms. They think in terms of duty. For instance, in the case of husbands and wives they think in terms of what is their duty. They think that it is their responsibility to discharge their duty. The wife thinks it's my duty to be a good wife. The husband thinks it's my duty to be a good husband, you know, how I feel and whether I want to in a sense or not - they don't even think in those terms because the influence of the cultural tradition is so strong.

Caroline; The Western world seems to ask themselves 'am I happy?' and sort of....

S: I don't think an Indian husband and wife, maybe I'm generalising a bit here but I think an Indian husband and wife, of the traditional type, would never ask themselves the question, 'Are we happy together?'. There is no question of that because you are together, you've been put together by your two families. It's your duty to discharge your functions - husband, wife, father, mother. There is no alternative - you get on with it because if you start asking, 'are we happy?' then the question arises well if we're not what are we going to do about it? Maybe we could change or swap around a bit. You know that doesn't occur to them, I mean there are exceptions now due to Western education and influence of Western films, attitudes etc., etc., but traditional influences are still very very strong as far as the majority of people are concerned. At least 95% of the people and probably much more than that. Maybe ninety nine

point something. As regards to their domestic arrangements, I'm not saying it always works out well for everybody - you do get unhappy marriages. You certainly do but I think.. my impression is that the percentage is very much lower, very much and you get a great deal more domestic stability.

Christabel; It's almost as if the beginnings of that gratitude we were talking about is still here. Beginnings of the spark.

S: Yes I think there is a lot of gratitude among Indian people and Indian families. I think there is. It is bad manners to express in the terms of thankyou for doing this and thank you for doing that. They don't. It just isn't considered necessary but there does seem to be a feeling of gratitude. Maybe often children do seem grateful to their parents, you get that impression. They like their parents, they respect their parents quite genuinely. (Pause) They really do feel that their parents have done their best for them and usually the parents do. There's no doubt. They go all out to do the best they can for their children at great JOLe~ .
1/VI

cost, great sacrifice sometimes. For instance it's not easy to become well educated, by conventional standards, and great importance is attached to that and if the father is working overtime just to keep the child at school, the child is well aware of that and is grateful for that. Or if an older brother leaves school and goes out to work so that younger brothers and sisters can continue to go to school that is know~, that is appreciated. They never forget. So there is quite a general feeling or spirit of gratitude, I think, in Indian families. Partly because there is such a lot of hardship and people make sacrifices and are seen to be making sacrifices and to be making them cheerfully so that certainly colours the whole sort of emotional atmosphere of family life. (Pause) But it isn't, as it were, easy to intervene but even if assuming you are a~floodhisattva, it's not easy to intervene in these tangled relationships. I mean it's notoriously difficult for anybody, with the best of intentions to intervene, say,between husband and wife when they have difficulties. It's almost asking for trouble to try to help in that sort of situation. In the same way where there is any group of people - relatively self contained group of people that gets into difficulties, when they are sort of hurting one another it's very difficult for someone from outside to come in and sort things out. Either you get involved or you become a sort of party to the whole conflict. Or you seem to be siding with some and not with others or they all think that you are against them. (Laughter)and they band together against you. So one has to exercise extreme caution. It's probably always best if one wants to help at all just to get, in the case of the married couple, either the husband or the wife on their own. Or if it's a question of a larger group of people just to get hold of them one by one and talk to them as individuals. Not try to talk to them all at once or as a group however small. Deal with each individual bit separately as it were. So if it's so difficult on the small scale what about on the national scale? (Laughter) I mean think of the sort of job Mrs. Thatcher has got sorting out all these, well at the very least, unions and employers, that's a big enough tangle by itself isn't it. So the national life is a sort of tangle or so many smaller tangles at least from a certain point of view. It does seem so stupid that people are so antagonistic and going about it all out for - a favourite phrase - confrontation instead of co-operating and trying to sort out things for everybody's benefit. _____; Isn't that because everyone is putting their own needs first. S: Well in a sense, everybody does that but one must do it sensibly. I mean it seems that sometimes without specifying any particular cases, people are going so blindly out of their own interests that they run counter to their own interests. _____; I mean you can see that in terms of large-scale strikes in this

country that eventually it's going to stop the economic situation. S: Not going to help anybody including the people who are striking. I mean it is very often as though there is a kind of negative emotion that demands an outlet irrespective of the objective situation. One just does get that impression too. There's a lot of frustration J~L4. 1/VII that has been building up for certain reasons whatever they may be. So people don't behave rationally, don't even behave sensibly, certainly don't behave in a very integrated or aware sort of way.

So all this has come out of 'compassion arises by seeing the misery of sentient beings in evil lives.' That is what they do to them selves and what they do to one another and you can really clearly see that as people, as it were, come in out of the world and get involved with the FWBO. Things become simpler and more straight forward, and more happy and more harmonious. It's as though there was a sort of little cosmos within the general chaos. So one must try to keep the cosmos a cosmos. That is always difficult because one brings in one's conditionings from the world and one's unskillful attitudes and activities. But the more one can keep the cosmos a cosmos or even a sort of miniature Pure Land the better. Alright go on to the next one.

"The second that when we have practised the Four Truths and thereby understood the relation between cause and effect our mind turns away from the concepts of permanence and solidity. Here compassion arises by thinking that other beings live in bewilderment, ignorant of the relation between cause and effect and clinging thereby to permanence and solidity."

I take it everybody is familiar with the Four Noble Truths. ____; I'm not. Could you repeat them please. S: There is suffering. The cause of suffering which is craving, The cessation of craving which is Nirvana or Enlightenment and the Way leading to the cessation of craving or the way leading to Enlightenment which is the Noble Eightfold Path. So as I explained in detail in the Survey, the Four Noble Truths are in fact a specific application of the principle of conditionality or if you like, though it doesn't really correspond quite, cause and effect. Within the framework of the Four Noble Truths you've got two causes and two effects or rather you've got cause-effect A and cause-effect B. Can you work that out for yourselves? Or you have also got, you could say a reactive conditionality and a creative conditionality within the framework of the Four Noble Truths. You've got suffering. What is the cause of suffering? - craving. That is the reactive process. You've got Nirvana or Enlightenment - what is the cause of that Nirvana or enlightenment - the Path. You've got the creative process but both the reactive process and the creative process are contained within the wider principle or general principle of conditionality - that in dependence upon A arises B. Do you see? So therefore at the bottom of the Four Noble Truths there is the law of conditionality. So to understand the Four Noble Truths deeply means to understand that principle of conditionality.

So here in this kind of compassion you go a little more deeply and you, as it were, ask yourselves or ask yourself why is it that people inflict suffering upon one another? They do not understand the law of conditionality, they do not understand the principle of conditionality or, if you like, the law of cause and effect. They do not understand that actions have consequences and they do not understand how it is that actions have consequences. So you feel compassion on account of their not having that understanding. Obviously you have got to have that understanding yourself first and see it for yourself. JOL4. 1/VIII The workings of the laws of cause and effect. See how reactive conditionality is working as well

as see the possibility of the more creative type of conditionality and because you see this and understand that and you see that others are not understanding that, because they are not understanding it they are acting in these unskilful ways and making themselves and others suffer, therefore you feel compassion, or the Bodhisattva feels compassion. So "The second that when we have practised the Four Truths", which means having some personal experience of the law of Conditionality, "and thereby understood the relation between cause and effect our mind turns away from the concepts of permanence and solidity." What about this 'permanence and solidity'? I mean this is the law of conditionality as an expression of becoming. Continuity. Neither static existence nor static non-existence. One of the reasons why people suffer because they don't understand the law of conditionality is they think in terms of permanence and solidity. They think 'I could hang on to this forever.' So they try to hang on to it forever. They don't understand the law of change, the law of conditionality, the law of impermanence. (Pause) You could say that impermanence is the most basic law of all, there's impermanence and then conditionality you could say. Then either reactive or creative conditionality. Yes you can see that very often people do not see the connection between what they are doing and what they are suffering. That they don't see how they themselves are bringing it all upon themselves.

I think I pointed out in the Survey it's important not to understand the Four Noble Truths just superficially, which is the way that they are usually explained

but to see that they do exemplify the law of conditionality. That Truths one and two exemplify the reactive form of conditionality and Truths three and four the creative or spiral type of conditionality. Anne Mac; It's quite interesting the way it's put here 'we have practised and thereby understood' rather than have understood and thereby practised. It's presuming that we have actually experienced it and then understood it intellectually rather than the other way round. S: Because the first of the Truths is suffering and that is something you start off by experiencing rather than understanding. It's not that one day that someone tells you that there was such a thing as suffering and then you try hard to understand that. (Laughter) You encounter a painful experience and then you often say well what is this? what is happening? And why? Experience comes first. But there is something else to be said. These are the Four Noble Truths. The Four Aryan Truths. So even the experience of suffering is not enough here. It's an insight into suffering. Do you see what I mean? You don't necessarily have an experience of the Noble Truth of suffering merely because you suffer. Anne Mac; Otherwise everybody would. S: Otherwise everybody would. _____; So to really understand the Four Noble Truths is quite a high level of development, in a sense. JOL4. 1/IX S: Yes, well the Theravada comprises the whole of the teaching in the understanding of the Four Truths. There is a great deal to be said for it, you know within the framework of the Hinayana at least. (Pause) But the way in which they are explained in many text books Buddhism is very dull and uninspiring. because they don't see the connection with the general law of conditionality and with the two principal forms of that conditionality.

So the second that is to say compassion with reference to the nature of the whole of reality, 'when we have practised the Four Truths and thereby understood the relation between cause and effect our mind turns away from the concept of permanence and solidity.' So it suggests that you really only sort out your problems, your personal problems and those problems which you have in common with other people, which you share with other people, when you have a deep understanding of conditionality, and the way things arise. The way things happen and no longer think in terms of absolutes, no longer think in terms of

permanence. Christabel; Do you think people cling to permanence because they think that change is going to be for the worst? S: I think not just perhaps for the worst but change takes away something. You don't think of change so much, perhaps, as bringing something. For instance if somebody leaves you you don't so much think in terms of the freedom that comes - you think in terms of loss. Don't you rather than gain. Well you might think or experience in terms of gain if that particular person has been a real drag. But even so if they have been a real drag and if you are attached to them nonetheless sometimes you can be in this contradictory position. (Laughter) Even then, when they by going hand you your freedom on a plate so that you can do just what you like now, just what you please, you feel miserable and resentful and your experience is of loss rather than of gain. I think perhaps because we see only one side of the picture - that there isn't ever loss without gain, or gain without loss. (Pause) But change also means the unknown. You can't be quite sure. I mean what you have now is the known. So you feel at home. You feel safe, you feel secure. You've got it all under control but if the situation changes well you are just wide open as it were. You're exposed. You're vulnerable. You don't know what is going to happen perhaps. _____; It comes back to courage again doesn't it? S: It comes back to courage again. (Pause) I mean it could be just a simple thing like, for instance, I mean sometimes it has happened that new people have been a bit hesitant about going on retreats. Why? Because they think I won't know anybody. They will all be new people. Well some people find this an exhilarating prospect but others don't. Because it's an unknown quantity. All those new people are unknown quantities and they are going to have to share a room with two or three of them perhaps or spend a whole week with people they don't know. So it's not a situation that they go into with very much confidence or even happiness. They have to be sort of pushed or encouraged or reassured that - no -

there will be some people there that you know etc., etc.,. JOLA. I/X Ula; I do think especially older people who have the sort of attitude, 'those were the days' and it was so much better before and now it's all

S: Well it may be true for them, subjectively, because when I think, on the whole, when you are young your experience does tend to be more vivid. You experience things more vividly. So, I think, your youthful experiences tend to register more powerfully. As you get older you definitely, if you don't take steps to prevent it, you become duller. So you are comparing your experiences as a young person with your experience as an old person and certainly your experience as a young person is more vivid, more alive, more interesting. So but instead of saying I've changed you say the world has changed. You experienced the world differently but you feel it as a difference in the world. You say well that the tunes aren't as catchy as they used to be it's just that you're no longer as you used to be. Do you see what I mean? You've lost as it were, your capacity for enjoyment. The present young people find the present day tunes catchy enough. I think it's something more than that.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

S: It is no time at all well speaking for myself anyway. (Laughter) But for you a month seems now just like a week or a few days seemed some years ago.

Ula; On retreats sometimes the days seem to be very long. Maybe because you feel more....

S: More happy. Though at the same time they are not dragging. So I think it's mainly a question of our own attitude and we do find as we get older there is a sort of slowing down in every respect. A sort of hardening of the mental arteries and we really have to

take steps () but it doesn't happen. I mean I'm sort of constantly reminding myself that it isn't that young people are impatient, three months is a long time. When young people have been involved in the FWBO for a whole year and they start thinking of ordination well to us it seems 'only after a year- give them time to settle down' but to them a year is ages. I mean if they are in their late teens and very early twenties. But that's how they experience things. A year is a hell of a long time. Here are these old fogeys in the Order expecting me to wait a bit longer and I've been in it a whole year. Well one young lady even told me she'd been in it a whole three months. (Laughter) And she seemed to think that a very long time. (laughter) Quite long enough for her to make up her mind about everything, where she wanted to go and all that. So one sympathises with that and one mustn't allow oneself to get out of touch because a young healthy, happy person can experience as much within the space of a year or even less as older people experience within a period of four or five years.

Anne Mac; Don't you think that is partly temperament as well?

S: It sure is biology.

Anne Mac; Don't you think some people are quite impatient right through till they're. (Laughter) JOL4. I/XI S: () spirit. It's biology because if you look back, I mean I'm not very well versed in this but I believe, I gather that the weight of cell multiplication is greater the further back you go. I mean to start right at the beginning. Isn't it so? Can anyone give any technical details? Well you know what I'm talking about. Dharmadina; Like the actual cell division in one cell to another is rapid in embryonic S: That's right and it slows down until in the case of the adult the replacement of cells is very slow indeed. Dharmadina; I think that after you're twenty-six it's started slowing down. (Laughter) S: Well in the same way on the psychological level, as I said, in the case of the very young child, a lot happens every day. It's crammed with events and experiences and emotional ups and downs. But as we get older (all) is slowing down and less seems to happen within a longer period. We even start getting a bit bored perhaps sometimes, which a child normally doesn't. So we have to bear this in mind and, as I say, try to counter-act it. Not just settle down, not just slow down. To keep alive your interests and so on and I think this cannot happen just on the worldly level. I think it only happens if you are involved in some kind of, for want of a better term, creative activity. Whether so-called spiritual or in the form of artistic activity or something of that sort. I think it's only that which, so to speak, keeps you going. I don't mean just sort of young in a sense of inexperienced and foolish but in a sense of lively and experiencing everything vividly.

_____ I saw a photograph of Anais Nin. I think it was taken a few years before she died. She must have been in her late sixties or seventies. It's the last photograph in

the series in the book and she's dancing on a beach in America. She's obviously her age but she has this sort of, it comes across in this photograph, an intense life and she's still very beautiful and useful and not made up or a facelift or anything like that. S: Not Barbara Cartland. _____' No (Laughter) Completely natural and I mean you can see that she lives a creative life. S: You do find this with some old people. _____; It's a very beautiful photograph. Quite inspiring. S: My grandmother always looks much younger than my mother actually. That's partly why I was saying was it temperament because she was much

more out-going and in a way much more philosophical about changing and things than my mother was and she lived to be 96 or some- JOL4. I/XII thing. ~ut she really had quite a zest for life actually.

But in a way it's quite pathetic to see people sort of just drying up as they get older but I think everybody has to watch that. I mean I keep putting down the age from which you should start being careful. (Laughter) I used to think from about 40, but then I started thinking it was after 35, no it's after 30. Then I started thinking no you've got to be quite careful when you reach the age of 25 (Laughter) But in a way yes you can push it. _____; Some people are middle-aged at 25. S: Some people are born middle aged. (Laughter) Dharmadina; I can remember years ago when my grandmother was in hospital and I ~d to go and visit her. I met all sorts of cousins that I hadn't seen for years, some of them were younger than me and they just seemed so staid, so set, so middle aged. There seemed to be no well like from another planet almost. Such a lot of difference and they were quite young. In middle twenties. S: Well I had a similar experience a few months ago when I met relations I hadn't seen for more than forty years in some cases (Laughter) at a funeral and some of my cousins, who were younger than me seemed much older. This is what I felt. They were bald anyway already and , you know, their whole attitude seemed so terribly middle-aged. Well they were nice enough and friendly enough but they were just so old and they were several years younger than me in some cases but this is what happens, isn't it if one is not careful. But there is no need for it to happen if one is operating more and more on the creative mode rather than the reactive mode. If you are operating all the time on the reactive mode of course there is going to be a stiffening of the joints in every sense. But not so if you are operating on the creative mode. And I think one of the reasons, perhaps, why young people aren't all that happy to be associated with old people is that actually they are old. And I say if the older people~that is who are older in age I were not really old, not old mentally young people would be quite happy to associate with them. _____; It's like a loss of spontaneity. S: Yes right. If you think that most, well perhaps I'm over~generalising but so many families have the same holiday every summer, they go to the same place. If possible the same hotel, the same pub in the evening and do the same things it's in a way quite pathetic. But we have to watch ourselves. There is this , sort of, tendency to inertia, to settle down in a rut. It doesn't mean that we should be rushing around all the time or change our place of residence necessarily but at least be spiritually alive and open and spontan- eous. I've ~ more changes than anybody else in the last ten years. Before I came here I counted up and I'd in either two or three years changed my residence, I think, it was either thirteen or fourteen times.(Laughter) So it doesn't necessarily mean external changes but certainly remaining alive to the possibility, desirability of mental and emotional changes JOL4. I/XIII Not just changes not in the sense of merely replacing one thing by another but a real development, a real unfolding, a real creativity. (Pause) But the tendency is to close ourselves against this as we get older.

_____; Do you think that (Blyth) and the national and global level people say. There is corruption in the Nation and then (it is) great and then there is decline and fall. Like the world seems to have changed if we feel creativity (unclear).

S: Well one does see this rise and fall of empires. This is very noticeable. In what sense is an overall improvement is very difficult to say. There is only technological progress. I don't think there's any overall permanent progress in groups. I think that that is a contradiction in terms. Groups must go up and down. I think it's only the individual who, if they get on to the creative path, can as individuals go up and up indefinitely. That brings me

back to something I was going to touch upon in connection with modern life. I think one of the complications is that in many cases, or one of the difficulties is, we have not succeeded in tracing through in many cases the exact connection of cause and effect. Do you see what I mean?

Anne Mac; On a national scale

S: On a national scale or even on a smaller scale. It's very difficult to know what will be the result, the effect of what you do or the action that you take if you go outside a very small area. That's quite a thought. So therefore we know governments take various measures thinking that they have certain results but they don't. And it's been suggested recently that economics is not, in fact, a science. You know we've been taught, haven't we that economics is a science but it seems... well either it isn't a science or it is a science so complex that it is virtually impossible to master it. I mean everybody believes that causes produce effects but which causes produce which effects? That is the difficulty. There are so many different threads.

_____ ; It's such a vast tapestry that you can't isolate any

S: Yes right you need a vast computer to keep track of all the possibilities. I suspect if you put modern economic problems into a computer it would simply jam. (Laughter)

Anjali ; One of the main problems of economics is determining peoples demands and that's getting more difficult in modern times because peoples demands

S: Well yes because that introduces a psychological factor which means that if to the extent that economics includes a psychological factor it cannot be an exact science. There can be no science of people. You can't quantify people. (Pause) So to the extent that in economics you are dealing with people it can't be a science. Just as history can't be a science. JOLA. I/XIV

19; Christabel; There's a lovely story told by (Schumacker) in his latest book which ~as published after his death, about the economist, surgeon and the architect arguing about who was the most important and the architect said, 'ah god the architect created the world out of chaos', and the surgeon said "god the surgeon created man and woman out of man" and the economist said, "Aha hut who created the chaos". (Laughter)

S: But this is why I have been quite interested to follow the workings of things within our co-ops. You see because co-ops are like little laboratories because (laughter) there are just a few people with just a few sort of identifiable factors. Where even there things don't, even in that very small simple scale, things don't seem to work out in a straight forward way, quite as had been anticipated. Isn't it strange. So what about the national economy.

_____ ; What sort of things haven't worked out as predicted in the co-ops?

S : Well perhaps predicted is too strong a word but the sort of thing I've been thinking about quite a bit recently is that in some cases membership of a co-op seems to lessen peoples sense of individual responsibility, which was not the original intention. You know the sort of thing I'm referring to? (Pause) I don't think that is the fault of the co-op structure as such, not the fault of the system. I think if one can speak in terms of a fault it is because within the co-op not everybody is equally committed to making a success of it. So some become a bit less

committed, others in comparison are a bit more committed. you get some people, not all the people, just some people taking responsibility for the success of the co-op and therefore they are taking responsibility for some of the other co-op members, when everybody should be taking responsibility for themselves and for the co-op as a whole. Do you see what I mean ? So you get a slight distinction between those who think and manage and look after the others and those who are looked after and thought for as, in a sense, managed.

Anoma ; There is such a big jump, in a co-operative structure, from the way one normally works. One normally works in that sort of way - you are a cog in a machine, Some people seem to be able to make the transition to a co-op more easily than others.

S: It will suggest that within a co-op people need to be roughly equal in capacity. Otherwise the more capable ones, as it were, take charge and look after the others. Which means it isn't really functioning as a co-op.

Christabel; People might like to read that latest book by Schumaker. It's called "Good work". Have you come across it? It's just been published.

_____, ...(unclear)... Christabel; Well he was a catholic but I think it was only because he didn't live long () to become a Buddhist. JOL4. I/XV S: How long would one have to live to become a catholic? (Laughter) Christabel; well he crammed so much in. S; He knew about religion. Christabel; He did. He quoted it, a lot about S: I mean Dr. Conze knew him quite well. He was a student of Dr. Conze's. So he had every opportunity to know about religion. (laughter) He used to go along to Dr. Conze's classes when Dr. Conze was in Oxford. This emerges from Dr. Conze's autobiography. There's a section about Schumacher. He thinks very highly of him. Anyway let's go on to the third.

"The third means that by having understood thoroughly the Sunyata of all entities through immediate experience compassion arises in particular for sentient beings who cling to the idea of material reality."

This goes a bit deeper. So deep in fact it's quite difficult to follow conceptually. But you get first of all the Bodhisattva feels compassion just because

others get into such a mess and then it goes a bit deeper. He understands why they get into such a mess. It's through not understanding the law of conditionality. So he feels compassion more deeply on that account and then, not only do they not understand the Law of conditionality, going deeper still, they do not understand Sunyata. They think in terms of mutually exclusive entities and so on. So he feels compassion on that account too. Basically he feels compassion because they suffer but the deeper he goes himself in his own spiritual life and experience the more deeply he sees into the reasons why people make themselves suffer. Bring suffering upon themselves. Dharmadina; Perception doesn't include compassion if you are in particular circumstances. Presumably that is including compassion? If someone is in an accident or something. S: Yes and no because I mean the Bodhisattva aims to relieve people's suffering. But what about that suffering that the Bodhisattva is not able to relieve which is inherent in existence itself, so to speak. You could say that he aims to relieve that too in the long run because once they are enlightened they would no longer be reborn anymore. They would be enlightened. But, as you say, yes, the text doesn't seem to take into account the suffering inflicted by circumstances or by other

people but to direct attention to that suffering which you bring upon yourself or, as I've said in addition, which you bring upon one another. Anne Mac; Wouldn't that just be included in the first meaning that when S: You could say that yes. You just feel compassion because they suffer, regardless of the cause. But perhaps you feel more compassion on account of the unnecessary suffering JOL4. l/XVI jthat they bring upon themselves just by their own blindness and stupidity.

Anne Mac; Because it's a sort of double suffering.

S: Mm It's double, it makes things worse than they need be. You could even say that things are bad enough as they are. There is old age, there is disease, there is death, there is separation. These things are sometimes inevitable but to make things even worse by creating suffering which needn't be created. (Long Pause)

"As has been said". Would someone like to read?

Srimala;"A Bodhisattva who has become perfected

Through the power of practising compassion Is particularly merciful

To sentient beings who are obsessed by the demon of material reality."

S: I'm not sure what words Guenther is translating as 'material reality', Don't take the material' too literally. It isn't just material reality - it's being obsessed by the idea

~hing as a separate absolute thing in itself whether material or spiritual.

So 'A Bodhisattva who has become perfected', that is who has personal experience of the truth of Sunyata, 'through the power of practising compassion is particularly merciful to sentient beings who are obsessed by the demon of material reality.' This is quite a strong phrase - 'obsessed by the demon'. Perhaps we can go into that a little bit in a general sort of way. What does this convey to you? 'Obsessed by the demon of material reality', obsessed by the demon of craving, obsessed by the demon of hatred etc.

Anne Mac; Almost suggests something outside.

Christabel; Possessed rather than obsessed.

S: yes it's like possessed by obsessed. But what happens? I mean we do encounter people who are not only obsessed but seem to be possessed. I mean it's quite interesting, this language of possession is used isn't it. So why is it throughout the world in all cultures. What does it represent? What is happening?

_____ ; Being taken over completely by the unskillful states.

Christabel ; Addiction to non-change.

S: Mm but no I'm trying to see what actually has happened when the situation has reached such a stage that one can adequately describe it only in terms of possession. Let's assume for

the sake of argument you do not literally believe in demonical possession.

_____ ; There's very little humanity left in that person. Because they are totally full JOL4. I/XVII of craving. S: But what has happened because presumably the craving which we speak of as possessing them is part of them. Christabel; They no longer take responsibility for themselves. S: Ah they don't take responsibility for themselves. That seems to be a very important aspect of it. That they themselves feel it's something outside. It's not me, it's something for which I'm not responsible. They refuse to take responsibility for it. But then why do they refuse to take responsibility?(Pause) Could be they want an excuse for indulging it. It could be that there is a genuine split in the personality. you know they are alienated from that part of themselves to such an extent that they actually regard it as something external to themselves, that is possessing them. So I think we can say that when there is this sort of experience of being possessed by the demon of this, that or the other, there is a very very deep alienation at the same time. Anne Mac; You sometimes hear people say 'oh I don't know what came over me' you hear that quite often. ... _____ That is giving up responsibility. S: It is giving up responsibility. But it is as though you have kept at bay, kept at a distance, a certain part of yourself until you can no longer recognise it as part of you. So that when it asserts itself you, because you identify yourself just with this part, this half, feel that you have been taken over or are being possessed. Not that a repressed or suppressed aspect of yourself is insisting on being recognised. You don't see it in that way at all. So the situations in which we are justified in using the language of obsession or even possession are very extreme ones indeed, where alienation has occurred and where there is a repudiation of personal responsibility. And it's interesting that the repudiated part feels like, is described as a demon. As it says it sounds quite negative. Sometimes it's described as god. I have actually known people, I've had friends, who repress a certain part of themselves and they won't accept it as their own and they repress it to such an extent that in the end it comes back to them as an external voice speaking to them which they then identify as the voice of god and believe that they are guided by that voice of god. Anne Mac; Presumably that's what happens in the case of people who have certain mystic experiences. S: It happens, perhaps with the prophets, and also, of course, the point is that by identifying this voice that comes to you, or which you hear, as the voice of god, you are investing it with an extra authority. Of you were to say well this is what I think no-one would listen to you but if you were to say that this is what god has told me and therefore JOL4. I/XVIII I'm telling you. I am the messenger of god, I am the mouthpiece of god, that comes across to people with tremendous force. Especially if you believe it to begin with. Christabel; It's really self-feeding because there those people divest themselves of any responsibility for their actions if they are following god. S: Right. I mean I had a friend who did this and he really. ... he had a small following and he used to insist that everybody obeyed whatever came through him, implicitly because it came from god. And he used to say to me I can't understand these blind people, they won't follow. They won't accept, they are so wicked, they are so disobedient even though I've told them it's the voice, it's god. They turn their back on the word of god, he used to say. He used to get so annoyed about it but I could see. I knew him, I knew his wife, I knew all about his history. I could see that he had suppressed certain ideas that he'd had as a young man and they'd gone deep down into his consciousness and they'd re-emerged in this sort of way. And periodically they took him over. He became sort of possessed, he went into a sort of trance state and wrote automatic scripts which his followers really believed were a sort of new revelation, like a new bible, a word of god. And a few of them, though not very many perhaps actually only one, implicitly followed everything and I could see the mechanism so clearly at work. His wife who was also a good friend of mine, she used to say to me, 'it's just his way of getting his own way'

(Laughter) If you'd say it's coming from god who could quarrel with that. But his wife quarrelled with it. She used to say well it's not coming from god, it's just his own mind, I'm not going to accept it, and he wouldn't have anything to do with her. He lives apart from her though he has supported her throughout thirty years. Because she would not accept his mission. She would not accept the word of god and they are both very strong characters and neither would give in and I knew them both. I used to stay with one in Bombay and with the other in Pune. (Laughter) So as I say I saw the mechanism, as it were, well almost of possession very clearly at work and I felt that this is perhaps how the old jewish prophets felt. They didn't feel like giving it out as what they thought or what they believed. No. The word of god came to me. The same with Mohammed and the same with perhaps some modern christian preachers. They say the word of god comes to them because you then invest it with that extra authority and weight. In other words you invoke the power mode really, as we were talking about the other day. A voice; Do you think that's how it works at Findhorn, you know, the voice? S: But it can be that sometimes these sort of what we might call deeper inspirations come from a level which you are unable to recognise as essentially your own. So you regard it as something from outside and if you regard it as infallible, because it comes from outside, because it is the word of god, then you are in very deep water indeed because it could mislead you or mis-guide you. Whereas if you accept it as something coming from a deeper level of your own mind, well then you can compare it and widen it with what comes from other levels of your mind, including your rational mind. Anne Mac; You sometimes get that kind of thing in dreams. That comes up like certain parts JOL4.1/XIX of yourself that you don't recognise on a rational level and they really demand attention. S: So I think it is quite good that those levels must be given attention but they are not to be given, you know, exclusive weight any more than, say, the rest of your mind. So I think what one needs to do is to sort of enter into a dialogue, so to speak with those unrecognised portions of oneself, whether encountered through dreams or any other way, and try to get a consensus, as it were, among the various parts of yourself. Not follow the verdict of any one part, whether the rational or the non-rational exclusively. Anne Mac; It does seem difficult if you invest all your trust, the majority of your trust in any one (action) because (there are so many things you add extra force to the others) S: That is quite dangerous. As I said if people believed that they are following the word of god or are inspired by god they can convince others because their own conviction is so strong and I think this is really quite dangerous. All the more dangerous because they are sincere. (Pause) We have for instance, at the moment I think, Billy Graham in Britain. Yes he's come from a very successful tour to South Korea where he addressed, apparently at one time, one million people. I remember a few years ago on a visit to London I saw gigantic posters with pictures of Billy Graham and he actually looked quite mad. It was really strange. The eyes were open and distended and the way that the eyes themselves were glaring at you it looked quite maniacal, well possessed. Christabel; I've been to one of his meetings and it's really horrible. The pull. People who just seem to go like lemmings towards him. It's very frightening. S: Well I remember when I was in India, this is many years ago, in the early fifties, I had a friend, an English Buddhist friend who was in Kalimpong for a while. He described how he'd been taken by some Indian christian friends to a Billy Graham meeting, I think it was in Lucknow, a few years before. That must have been in the late forties because Billy Graham goes to India from time to time, and he said it was really amazing. He said he was sitting there with these friends on either side and when Billy Graham made this appeal - all those who wanted to be saved, all those who want to give themselves to Jesus come forward. Stand, first of all stand up, put your hand up. He said that despite the fact that he was a convinced Buddhist and rationally repudiated everything, he found it very difficult to resist, And he said these Indian christian friends on either side of

him were sayir~~, 'come on Joe, put your hand up, you know you want to (Laughter)and he said he was actually holding on to the arms of his chair (Laughter) saying~~no, no I'mnot going to but he could feel something within him trying to pull him up or pull his hand up and his friends were trying to pull his arm up. (Laughter) And he said, no no leave me alone, I'm not going to put it up. But he said he felt the struggle within himself at the same time but he didn't. And his friends were very disappointed, just being difficult, not surrendering to the power of Jesus. But what is this power of Jesus. It's almost like a sort of mass hysteria that grips you. JOL4. I/XX

Ula; And those people manipulate other people. S: Yes I think they do. Perhaps in good faith. It's a very murky area. It's very difficult to say but they believe in what they are doing. I think one can't really say much more than that but this ~asses as religion. You know this passes as spiritual life. This is what makes one so dismayed. It is what makes one feel so sorry for those people including Billy Graham. They don't know what they are doing. They are mixed up in some- thing which they don't understand. They think they are spreading christianity, religion, they are helping the world but they are just making matters worse. They are preparing the way for dictatorships and totalitarian systems. This is what they are actually doing. They are softening up the ground really. Christaael. I was going to say the overall feeling was actually one of quite a lot of benevolence. This was in France and it had to be translated so you would have thought you might have lost something. Every phrase he said was repeated in French but there was a good feeling there but it was wrong, completely wrong. Anne Mac; Ten years ago when I was in Amsterdam I got involved very briefly there with the Children of God. S: Ah! Confession time has come.(Laughter) Anne Mac; And it was through meeting somebody that I found quite impressive and hypnotic and I went over to him in the meetings and actually I could really feel myself ready to, sort of, surrender everything and it was like a good feeling in a sense. There was a definite good but it was just so hysterical and it just felt wrong somewhere. S: Yes but what is this feeling.. .it isn't associated exclusively with religion. _____ It's a group identification. S: You get it for instance in communist China. The individual wanting to submerge him- self or herself in the group and I think for many people in the modern West the strain of individuality is so great and it is not even a real individuality. The strain Christabel; Alienation. S: ... of alienated individuality and the burden of responsibility and the complications of life are so great, you just, well, give it all up. Surrender it all to Jesus, which means get back to the group, be absorbed into the group, almost be absorbed back into the womb. I think this is essentially what it is. Dharmadina; I think it's interesting that a lot of people like in the sixties, who rejected authority, in the youth movement and so on, a lot of those people ~-ve ended up in those JOL4. I/XXI kind of totalitarian religious movements like Guru Maharaji and so on. It's a complete swing back again. Just given themselves up to that. S; I remember one of our Friends went, as a matter of interest, to the big Guru Maharaji meeting that was held at the Alexandra Palace a few years ago. Did any of you by any chance go? _____s; No. S: Well one of our, well my friends, rather, went and he reported back to me about this and he said one thing was very clear. Amongst guru Maharaji's followers there were distinctly two kinds of people. There was a majority of sheep like followers and there was a minority of very active, aggressive, authoritarian, in his view, Fascist like people who bullied the rest, ordered them around and were in charge So a movement like that would seem to attract these two kinds of people. Those who want to be bullied and those who want to bully. He further reported that there had been a few people mostly christian clergy and preachers present and tried to make some sort of protest in the name of Jesus (laughter) So quite near him there was a young clergyman who got up and who started trying to say that this against

jesus and it's all wrong. So he was quietly taken away, taken outside by a couple of stewards. So this friend of mine thought that's interesting. Let's try to find out what they do with him. (Laughter) So what so you think they did to him? Anne Mac; Beat him up. S: No they didn't. They were subtler than that. They took him to see the doctor. (Lots of 'ahhhh' s) They had a doctor and they took him to see the doctor because of course he was protesting against it all so there must be something wrong with his brain. So they took him there and this friend was sort peeking round the corner. (Laughter) They had their own doctor who was sort of treating him, as it were, almost as a mental patient. There must be something mentally wrong with him because he'd opposed guru Maharaji. That reminds you now of what they do in the Soviet Union. So I see, in my view, the most unfortunate development that has taken place recently is that ostensibly religious and spiritual, especially Eastern religions and spiritual movements have increasingly been associated with or even identified with these sort of attitudes and activities which have got nothing to do with the spiritual path, nothing to do with the development of the individual. That are group movements, at the mercy of group forces, and manipulated by individuals who have an interest in doing that sort of thing. Anne Mac; Did you read Devamitra's account of the Mind and Body in the last Newsletter? S: Yes. Anne Mac; He mentioned the foundation again and they had a definite feel - totalitarian, JOL4. I/XXII fascist overtone. Anjali; Do you think T.M. is in this category? S: T.M. seems a bit better I must say. It seems a bit more subdued, as it were, not so harmful. That's the impression I get. That seems to have got going before these sort of things really started happening. (Pause) It is certainly not the worst of these movements, I would say, and it certainly has encouraged a lot of people to meditate, There is no doubt about that. Sridevi; I have seen the Maharishi in the Albert Hall. Nothing dreadful at all. He seemed to be wanting to create this scientific cool approach. He had big scientists around him from S: Right yes. _____, (Inaudible)... S: Yes in a way yes, though the meditation... _____ It takes all the emotion out of it. S: the meditation must be right because it's scientific. Unfortunately some Buddhists try to push that approach. Anoma; Did you know that Anne and I had our brain waves read at the Mind and Body exhibition? S: No. Anoma; It was the only thing you could have for free so (laughter) S: The results must have been spectacular. Anoma; They were very good actually. S: 1A~~at sort of brainwaves did you have? Anoma; They were measuring Alpha and Beta waves. you get certain patterns depending on how deeply they think you go into meditation. S: Well maybe it could be that certain brainwaves can be measured but the whole question is interpretation of that. What does that mean? JOL4. I/XXIII Anoma; There didn't seem to be any point. Their approach to meditation didn't seem to have anything to do with change. It seemed to have to do with technique and achieving a certain calmness. Like I can imagine someone who did T.M. would come in and sit down and get a much better pattern than I would. Anne Mac; He said he could tell people who did T.M. as soon as they sat down because they had certain wave patterns they all had in common, every one of them. S: Well yes there was another experiment. Apparently they did some tests in the United States, I think, on a lot of people including those practising T.M. for among other things, creativity and people who were into T.M. and doing the T.M. came noticeably low as regards to creativity. lower than ordinary people (laughter). _____; Aren't they just replacing belief in god for a lot of people. S: I think some of them do. I mean some don't even replace it because some even evoke belief in god or make use of people's belief in god. Like guru Maharaji is god. If you don't believe in god you could hardly believe in guru Maharaji because he is god. He is god on earth, god incarnate even. So usually in these sort of movements except those which are definitely left-wing political you get a belief in god however vague it may be.

Go on with 'of the three types _____'; "Of the three types of compassion mentioned in this book the first is recommended for practical purposes.

The frame of reference, is the totality of sentient beings.

The causal characteristic is the desire to liberate beings from miser and its cause." S: Hmm 'So the first is recommended for practical purposes.' That is to say the 'compassion arises by seeing the misery of sentient beings in evil lives' which we've gone into.

'The frame of reference, is the totality of sentient beings'. We've also gone into that haven't we, previously. That is to say you don't stop at any given point with any given number of beings. Compassion like beneVolence is inherently expan- sive. (Pause) At the same time of course, it must be said that you have your own personal limitations, as it were. Do you see what I mean? It isn't possible to feel I think really solid for more than a certain number of people. In a realistic sort of way. Anne Mac; I think because of the effect it has on you. S: The effect it has on you. Sometimes you have almost to just blot it out. You can't afford to dwell on it. It is so terrible and also you feel your own impotence and in- adequacy, that you're not in a position to do very much about it. So one must take that into consideration too. I mean in principle yes don't acknowledge you do wish to set any limits but you also recognise that, at present at least, your capacities are definitely

J0L4.2/XXIV

limited. But there's no point in dwelling upon all the sufferings of people in China and Cambodia and just, as it were tormenting yourself without being able to help those people. Yes, in principle you wish to help them but you're just not in the position to. _____' Is it true compassion(that)does torment you in that way or would it be sentimental? S: I would say yes, there would be at least an element of sentimentality involved. _____' I know I used to be, years ago, really unable to read newspapers and things because I'd feel so bad about anything that was happening. I'm sure there was a positive aspect S: Yes that isn't necessarily sentimentality. I think it's sentimentality if you insist on reading newspapers again and again and sort of tormenting oneself. (Pause) I mean it does seem to me that our sensibilities are really blunted. Not only by reading these things in the papers but by hearing about them on the radio. I've been noticing recently - you know I don't, I never watch television - but I guess it's something taken over from television, the news reading has become, as it were, very light-hearted. In fact some time ago they had to apologise for a certain incident because one of the news readers (was) reading something in rather a light-hearted fashion and then he said, 'Er what have we got next, oh yes', he said, 'someones been killed in Birmingham - run over by a train and there was quite a reaction to that. But I've noticed it in subtle ways, or little ways since. That in the same tone of voice, the same sort of happy-go-lucky tone of voice that you read about something which is sort of ethically neutral, he got on to read about a dreadful accident in which people had lost their lives. Christabel; They have funny little musical jingles to introduce the news. S: And you know the tone of voice and the way they - now they've got male and female newscasters - the way in which they have their little bit of banter, even about these quite serious matters, is reducing it all to, well, the level almost of entertainment and it's peoples lives that you are talking about. And recently a few days ago they announced that an old announcer, BBC announcer, ~d died and just as part of their tribute they gave a replay of just a few minutes of him reading the news during the war. It was such a different approach and such a different sort of voice,

really serious. As if well this is serious news, this news about world affairs which really affects us. The whole tone and attitude were different. It wasn't solemn or anything like that but it was serious and weighty. But it's as though these people make light of the news and all the develop- ments in Afghanistan, developments in China, Cambodia - it's more like a bit of fun that you tune into and listen about. It's really quite dreadful. I just wonder how many people feel this. Anjali; But then if they do that all the time maybe they have to take into account, uncon- sciously, very passively. They can't give it such serious weight every day over and over JOL4.2/XXV again.

S: I mean I don't think it's a question of giv ing it serious weight but just not treating it frivolously. Well I think frivolous is the word. If I mean you have any sensitivity at all and, after all, they haven't got the same announcers on duty all the time, and you're not reading for hours and hours-It's only for a short period. It seems dreadful that you report about a train accident with lots of people killed in that frivolous sort of way. A sort of unfeeling sort of way.

Ula; radio three is more traditional.

S: Yes this is radio four I'm talking about.

Ula; But all the other stations they try to be like American disc-jockeys or something.

S: Yes and another thing I really don't like this banter between the male and female announcers. You can't put across anything without introducing this almost, sort of, sexual element, which seems dreadful. The announcers, sort of , teasing each other between the news and all that sort of thing. It seems as though you are so childish. The listener is so childish that he can't take in a serious bit of news without having it, sort of, presented in this sort of way. It has to be made palatable by these silly goings on between these people in the studio. I assume it's been taken over from TV. Does anyone watch TV?

s; No

Sanghadevi; I think they have one newsreader instead of two.

Anne; Two, male and female..

S: Dut anyway it is symptomatic of general decline and general miccha-ditthi, you could say, and lack of feeling. But anyway let's leave it, it's a rather, not exactly depressing but annoying subject. So then

"The causal characteristic is the desire to liberate beings from misery and its cause". This is what compassion really is. Do you remember the causal character- istic of benevolence earlier on? What was that?

_____; Recognising the benefits.

S; Yes the causal characteristic is the desire that all beings may find ~ppiness. In the same way. the causal characteristic of compassion'is the desire to liberate beings from misery and its cause'. Not just misery you notice but misery and its cause because as long as the cause is

not removed the misery will be there and the more and more subtle the misery that you can wish to remove, the more and more deeply you must explore what is the JOL4. 2/XXVI Qo~

cause. (Pause) Alright read through that next paragraph then. "The method and its practise is our capacity for feeling deep compassion for our mother (the root of our being) if she is beaten~ burnt or boiled alive, or if in very cold weather blisters appear on her body, break and begin to ooze. So also, since all sentient beings who are now in hell have in fact been our mother, how should we not feel compassion for them when they are struck to the core by such misery? Compassion should be practised in the desire to free them both from it and its cause." S: So here we come back to the illustration that, or the fact that it is for Tibetan Buddhists that all sentient beings have been at some time or other your mother. So that in dealing with sentient beings, you are in fact dealing with your mother. In feeling compassion for sentient beings you are in fact feeling compassion for your mother. So the illustration, which is sometimes given is this - I think I've mentioned it in talks you might have heard it before - that supposing you're walking along the 'street and you see a crowd of people gathered together and you stop out of curiosity. You gradually realise that there is someone in the middle whom they are all beating. So you don't feel anything special. You just feel that they are beating somebody but out of curiosity you try to get to the centre to see what is actually happening and who is being beaten. As you get to the centre you see that actually it's your own mother. So what would be your feeling then recognising it's your mother who is being beaten. In the same way they say what is your feeling when you realise that this person who is suffering is actually your mother - your mother of some previous existence. So that is how you must feel. Yes? So this particular passage draws obviously from the Tibetan background that in very very cold weather someone could, your mother could be suffering from the intense cold. But what about those beings in the cold hells. Yes well you see they are suffering and you realise that they are, in fact, your mothers of previous existences, you feel the same compassion towards them that you feel towards your, well we would say your real mother but they would say your mother of this life. So the Tibetan Buddhist takes this line of thought very seriously and it means something to them. For instance for us with our much less firm belief in rebirth etc., etc., it is much more difficult to feel in this way. Where you can feel perhaps something of how the Tibetan Buddhist feels, even if you can't feel it yourself directly. And certainly if you do believe in rebirth and if you really believe that all living beings have at some time or other been your mother well you can imagine it could be a very strong basis for the development of this sort of attitude, this sort of feeling. You could even, of course, swish it around I don't think that the Buddhist tradition does - that all sentient beings have been your children at some time or other. Well perhaps that wouldn't work unless you'd actually had children whereas every body has had a mother, even a bad one. Well if there is such a thing as a bad mother.

'So also since all sentient beings who are in hell have in fact been our mother how should we not feel compassion for them when they are struck to the core by such misery? Compassion should be practised in the desire to free them both from it and its cause

Not only to, as it were, rescue them from hell but make sure they don't do the things in future which landed them there. (Pause) Anyway carry on because this is all JOL4. 2/XXVII pursuing the same line of thought or feeling. Anjali; " Again we feel deep compassion when our mother is pained by thirst or hunger, suffers from disease and fever and is disheartened by fear and anxiety. So also since all sentient beings who are now born as spirits have been our mother how should we not feel compassion for them, when they- are struck by such

misery? Compassion should be practised in the desire to liberate them from it." S: Spirits here, of course, means the Pretas, the hungry ghosts. So in the previous paragraph you are thinking of beings in hell as, in fact, your mothers. Here you are thinking of the pretas as being in fact, your mothers. So you see the point?

Alright then next paragraph. _____, Similarly we feel deep compassion when our mother has become old and feeble, is enslaved by others since she is powerless or when she is beaten, perhaps to death. So also since all sentient beings who have been born as animals have been our mother why should we not feel compassion for them when they suffer such misery? Compassion should be practised in the desire to free them from it." S: One can't help noticing that the Tibetan background which is really brought in here, which is the reference to one's mother not only becoming old and feeble but being enslaved by others or being beaten, perhaps to death, you know reminds us, as it were, that until fairly recently life was pretty precarious, I mean not only in Tibet but in other parts of the world too. This could happen to you. There was a bit of a reminder of this sort of thing when I was in Pune the second time. When I arrived I found that one of our Order members was quite upset because a couple of days before he'd been ordered by the local authority to vacate his house with his whole family because they were going to pull it down within the month and he had nowhere to go and no money. The authorities didn't care about it, -The Pune district or city council or whatever it was - they just didn't care about that. I mean if he didn't move out well the place would just be pulled down over his head and he's only a poor man, he's got no influence, can't pull any strings so he's got no choice but to put up with it as it were. And there he was on the point of being thrown out with his wife, his children, his grand-children, dependants the whole family and apparently nothing he could do about it. But anyway apparently Lokamitra intervened luckily and got a postponement but if Lokamitra hadn't been around probably a gang of men would have come along and just started pulling the place down. This can still happen to you in India. The poor have really hardly any rights at all especially not only against the authorities but against the rich. There's not much that they can do. You can get beaten up if you're poor and the police will not take any notice of your complaints. They will not take any action because they are hand-in-glove with the local well-to-do people, the landlords and so on. So this is the state of affairs still to a great extent in India and to a much greater extent in earlier times. In Tibet until recent years though it was a Buddhist country an old person could get beaten to death if they were somebody's servant or serf. They could be treated in that sort of way. You could starve to death. So life was much more precarious so also, perhaps there's a sort of seed of compassion which was there much more in people's hearts because something like that could happen to your own mother or someone near and dear to you and there wouldn't be much you could do about it. So you were perhaps if you were the sufferer more sensitive to suffering generally, more aware of it and more willing to help. There's a poem I read recently, I forget who it was by but it described - I think it was just a sonnet, might have been by Matthew Arnold, but it described a beggar woman with her child and she was destitute so she was begging. She ignored all the rich people passing by and she begged from the poor, instinctively because she felt that they would sympathise, they would even help though they were poor. The rich just wouldn't be interested. So you do find this and also, though yes it's good that poverty has been abolished and it's good that hardship has been abolished nonetheless it does seem well speaking about England certainly, that a lot of people had lost that sort of fellow

feeling, which perhaps they had in their poorer days. (Pause) No one needs help in that really basic sort of way much anymore but in the old days you could know people who were

destitute or who might be dying of hunger or might be kicked out by their landlord literally into the street, bag and baggage if they had bag and baggage. We don't have much of that sort of thing now, hardly any. So our sympathies aren't awakened, apparently, often. And I think they are not easily awakened by reports of distant disasters. I think we have to see it on our own doorstep. Anne Mac; I was going to ask that because you do still read in the newspapers of cases of things like that. S: Terrible things. Anne Mac; People being beaten to death and horrible things like that. Sometimes it's most impersonal. S: And I mean when you do see it on TV just on the screen well people get so used to it that again their feelings are blunted. Anne Mac; Sometimes when I go and visit friends and they are watching TV and the news comes on I get -sort of quite~~ shocked at some of the things because it's actually a visual image there of S: Right carry on. Anne Mac; " Again we feel the same way if our mother suffers great distress through finding herself on the brink of a precipice and about to fall into a very deep abyss out of which she could never climb." S: which could happen in Tibet I suppose. Anne Mac; "So also why should we not feel compassion over this great abyss of the bad JOL4. 2/XXIX existences of gods, men and demons, from which it is difficult for us to escape once we have fallen in, and in which we suffer through not having a spiritual friend at hand and so not knowing how to abjure evil. Compassion should be practised in the desire to liberate beings from this misery." S: Yes the states that were usually the lower states, not gods, but the lower states, that is to say the hell world, preta world, animal world, these are regarded as states of downfall. So sometimes symbolically these are represented as being a precipice and rebirth in those states as being like falling down a precipice. There is some reference to this in the Tibetan Book of the Dead - that in the intermediary states you sometimes have the experience of falling down a precipice as though into lower states etc., etc.,. There is something here that deserves a bit of comment. Yes speaking of this great abyss of the bad existences 'from which it is difficult for us to escape once we have fallen in'. I think this is~quite important point. It is what I sometimes call the negative spiral. The lower you get the faster you fall. You know the sort of thing? I mean a good example is that of getting addicted to alcohol. Supposing you don't drink, alright you have a little drink so at that point you've had the drink but you've certainly got the power to stop drinking and not have a second drink but suppose you take a second drink and a third. The more you take the less able you are to get ~ut of the practice or the habit as it becomes, of taking. So if you become a regular drinker it's very difficult to give up being a regular drinker and if you are an alcoholic it's correspondingly more difficult to give up being an alcoholic. So in respect of any unskilful action obviously it's difficult to give up all unskilful actions at once, you have to be very careful that you don't come to the point where your performance of the unskilful actions can only increase because they've reached a certain momentum. _____, Like a negative point of no return. S: Like a negative point of no return. So I think this is what we have to be careful of.

Well also to be careful of in the form of not getting so far away from the spiritual life, and the spiritual community that getting back - reestablishing contact - becomes virtually impossible. And of course the spiritual friend is mentioned in this connection. Usually when you've got to that point the only hope is that some spiritual friend takes drastic action, under takes a rescue operation, as it were, and takes strong and powerful initiative to re-establish contact with you. Even against your will as it may appear. (Pause)

So this is one of the reasons why~the spiritual friend is so necessary and this is why also you see in pictures of the Tibetan Wheel of Life the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, in the form of a Buddha, descending into all the six realms. Because sometimes you are not in a position to

make the first move yourself. I mean you might have been sometimes in that state yourself. You are so negative that you can't make an approach to positivity. Someone has to make the approach to you and sometimes it may be necessary to do that. To approach somebody who you see is not able to make the first moves themselves and you have to be quite patient sometimes. They may repel or reject you. You have to be very tactful also, not force yourself upon them. Be very gentle in your approach. Make quite sure you JOL4. 2/XXX

are operating in what I call the love mode, not the power mode. Yes make quite sure you really are motivated by love by compassion. (long pause) This is why we say that, at the time of the kalyana mitra ceremony that it is the kalyana mitras responsibility to keep up, or to re-establish contact with the mitra even if the mitra gets out of contact. The kalyana mitras have to launch a sort of rescue operation as it were. Because someone might have got out of touch for a long time. They might be ashamed of coming back even though they might want to. They might not know quite how to go about it. They might feel awkward walking into the Centre after so many months or even years. They might be uncertain what sort of account they can give of themselves, what they've been doing, why they've been out of touch. They might even start thinking, in extreme cases that they wouldn't be welcome, that no one wants them back. People won't be glad to see them so you know, the spiritual friend has to tactfully overcome all that. Some people remain, I'm afraid, convinced you don't want to see them and even when you go to see them.

Anne Mac; You can see how easy it is for that to happen. Maybe not such an extreme case but it is very very easy to feel out of contact even though physically you can be in contact.

S: Well what does one mean by being out of contact in this sense. I think perhaps an important part of it is feeling not wanted.

Anne Mac; I think of it as being out of sync. with people.

S: Out of synchronisation.

Anne Mac; Yes.

Dharmadonna; But there is usually some sort of negative state being emotionally out of contact when you're in physical contact.

S: Also some kind of alienation.

Dharmadonna- (unclear). growing at a different rate because you're not in contact with a positive way you're withdrawn - it can happen very easily.

Isn't it usually you are out of contact with yourself.

S: Yes I think I would say you can't be out of contact with others without being first out of contact with yourself. Assuming the others are in a positive state of course. Because when one speaks of being out of touch one means one doesn't feel. So the first thing that you stop feeling is usually yourself and if you don't feel yourself, how can you feel others. _____; You might not feel capable of taking the initiative. It might only be positive

communication but that would put you back in touch with yourself. You might not be able to do it yourself. JOL4.2/XXXI S: Yes right but if someone else is taking the initiative in the communication, taking some trouble to communicate with you and break through your alienation or whatever it is. Christabel; If you are aware of that then presumably it won't be a negation of responsibility. If you were aware that you needed something else to put back on the S: Yes and also if you were prepared to accept it when it came along. (Pause) I was sort of wondering the other day what it really was that caused people to go out of contact. Whether there were any definite identifiable factors in all cases, any common factors. Has anybody got any. When I say out of contact I mean someone who has been say in touch with the Friends, let's say for quite a while and seemed to be getting quite a lot out of it. But somehow or other they just get out of contact. So what is it that happens? I mean sometimes it's external factors intervening at least to some extent that is to say perhaps they're working and then they are transferred to another part of the country where there is no centre but even that doesn't altogether explain it. So how do you think it happens or why does it happen? I mean once people have established some degree of real contact they then get out of contact. I'm not speaking about those who have never established any measure of actual contact. Anjali; Some aspect of themselves, they become aware of that and they can't. (unclear) Then they become (angry) and that starts the process of alienation. S: The things that they have got involved with, I mean meditation, communication, have brought up some aspect of themselves that they are not ready to recognise so they stay away from the meditation or communication, in other words they get out of contact. This is one possibility certainly. Anne Mac; It seems also to be people come to what they experience as a point where they have to make, I suppose they make more commitment, but that isn't how it happens but somehow they feel they have to get more committed in concrete ways and express the commitment in a concrete way and that necessitates the changes that they are unwilling to make. I've known a couple who have actually gone out of contact with the Friends at that sort of point. S: Yes it's as though part of them wants to evolve and part is reluctant and the part that is reluctant in the end wins out. Anne Mac; (Inaudible) S: Probably with other groups. Dharmadonna; It seems to happen with more simple ones like retreats. People, if they don't regularly go on retreat they seem to forget the benefit they get from retreat and then there is a sort of resistance to go on retreat. JOL4, 3/XXXII S: One or two people mentioned this to me last year in connection with the men's summer retreat. At least two said to me afterwards that they had been quite unwilling to come on the retreat, almost had to be pushed by their friends to come on the retreat they said. They hadn't been on retreat for so long, it was because they were busy that they had forgotten they said, how good a retreat was and they were really pleased that they had been on the retreat. After all had been sort of pushed into going on it. Yes you can just forget. It's very easy to forget because you can have, say really good meditations, even really good series of meditations but if things go badly for a while you can actually forget what it was like to have a good meditation. Forget and be unable to recall the experience. And it's the same with other things like communication, like being on retreats. Anne Mac; I've heard Order members say that sometimes if they don't go to Order meetings every Sunday, if they don't go for a few weeks then they sort of forget the benefit of going regularly. Then they have to make a definite step to go back in and sort of think why on earth didn't I do it anyway. S: I think one often feels that in all sorts of situations. It's as though there is a certain basic inertia to be overcome and the longer you stay out of contact or whatever it is, the more that inertia builds up and the more difficult it is to overcome. (Pause) But, in a way it is quite strange to hear someone say they were unwilling or reluctant to go on retreats but this is what they have actually said. At least two of them - that they experienced a strong resistance because they had forgotten what it was like or they had

forgotten how good it was to be on retreat. I think one of them hadn't been on retreat for three years. I think because he was busy, in a sense not his fault, again in a sense it was his fault. But again it was interesting that both had only come on retreat because they were urged to do so by friends. (Pause) So it's as though one needs to take steps to keep in touch because there are factors operating all the time to keep you out of touch and more and more out of touch. (Pause) I mean some of the Order members in India and New Zealand have commented on how much they appreciated 'Shabda', how much that helps them to keep in touch whereas some Order members in England don't appreciate it so much. Don't appreciate the Newsletter so much~because they have so much of contact in other ways. But for people who are relatively isolated the Newsletter and 'Shabda' are very important. I saw, when I was in Pune myself, when everybody's 'Shabda' arrived they all seized it. They were so pleased to have it and go through it and know what everybody was doing.

Alright let's carry on. "Measure of perfection means that when we have broken the fetters that hold us to deem ourselves better than others and when the wordless desire to liberate all sentient beings from misery has risen, perfection of compassion is present."

Thy does it say 'when we have broken the fetters that hold us to deem ourselves better than others.' Isn't that a bit paradoxical because if you're going to liberate others, if you are a Bodhisattva, then aren't you better? JOL4. 2/XXXIII ~to

_____ Yes isn't that better without the basis of metta, a sort of superiority that you look with contempt upon other people. S: Yes but you could quite objectively recognise that you were full of metta and they weren't. (Laughter) Anne Mac; Well there isn't the same distinction of self and other, you don't experience... S: Yes in a sense objectively yes, they are superior. The Bodhisattvas are superior but they don't think in those terms at all. They sort of, in a way, function spontaneously. They don't think 'well here am I the great Bodhisattva helping these sentient beings' - No that is how we cannot but speak about it but actually the Bodhisattva's experience is not like that. The Bodhisattva is communicating with other sentient beings. The idea of superiority or inferiority does not arise in his mind. Anne Mac; I suppose going back to the mother-child syndrome, the mother doesn't consider herself better than the child that she's feeding. Well maybe they do but a natural mother just functions just because it has to be done rather than because she's better. S: She might think more of the children than of herself. Anne Mac; She probably does. S: And also it's interesting 'and when the wordless desire to liberate all sentient beings from misery has arisen'. Why wordless? He doesn't make a song and dance about it. (Laughter) S: Yes it's the same sort of emphasis. And it's not as it were, so sort of conceptualised or categorised that this is what you are doing. It is spontaneous not that it's instinctual or unaware as sometimes the way in which the mother functions is. It is aware at the same time as it is spontaneous but it isn't entangled in all these, sort of, conceptual categories. Christabel; Self-aware but not self-conscious. S: Not self-conscious in the ordinary sense of the term. I mean this is almost a sort of functioning of an unimaginable but this is how the Bodhisattva is supposed to function. Not that the Bodhisattva thinks, 'well here I am, a Bodhisattva functioning in the right Bodhisattva sort of way'. In a sense that is why one is so suspicious of people that are heralded officially in the newspapers as Bodhisattvas and Buddhas and incarnate world's teachers etc., etc., It comes back to what we were talking about, I think it must be in the other group about claims, or was it this group. No it's the other ~ne. Claims. It was the most heinous of all offences in Buddhist tradition, falsely to lay claim to spiritual attainment or spiritual position. JOL4 . 2/XXXIV

Anjali; You know when it talks about 'when we have broken the fetters that hold us to deem ourselves better than others' is it referring to any fetters in particular? S: I don't think so. I mean there is a general sort of teaching in the sense that, well it occurs in the Pali scriptures but I'm sure it must be repeated also in the Sanskrit texts, that one should not think of oneself as either being better than others or worse than others or even equal to others. One should not think, as it were, comparatively. Do you see what I mean? I think it refers to fetters in this sort of way. But in a way this is a quite important point because if you're concerned with your own growth, well, clearly you must be able to recognise growth in yourself. So that suggests that there must be some sort of standard so if you had the same standard of growth as others not only are you measuring yourself against that standard of growth but others are measuring themselves against that standard of growth. Therefore it should be possible to compare you and to see who has got further but this teaching suggests you shouldn't do that. Do you see what I mean? But in a way that is paradoxical. It's as though you could do it. You could make comparisons but you shouldn't. Do you see what I mean? It's as though if one cares to do so a comparison could be made, that one person is more evolved than another but it is not something to be, as it were, particularly insisted upon. If it is there at all it should be something unspoken, understood, just felt as it were, without being made a particular point of. Do you see what I mean? _____; Where your experiences just rely on receptivity to other people. ~: Quite. Yes though you don't even necessarily think of it in those terms. You can be very receptive to somebody but the thought that you are inferior and the other person is superior in that respect doesn't actually arise. You don't care to put the experience into those terms. It's a quite fine point, in a way, but I think it's - quite important. _____ It's going back to communication at different standpoints isn't it? S: But even if on a result of your communication it is established that one person is, as it were, superior and the other is, as it were, inferior, even so it is, as it were, not proper actually to think in those terms or to attach weight to those terms. Yes? (Pause) As I said one shouldn't even think in terms of equality because equality also is a quantity concept. But why do people want to compare? _____; I was just wondering if it's connected with some sort of competition. I know there is positive competition, but in the negative sense. I haven't thought this through but it does seem to be connected somewhere. _____; A power thing. _____; A form of security. JOL4. 2/XXXV S: But in a group you have to compare because the group is concerned with power, yes power can be measured, power is a quantity but in the spiritual community, and with regard to spiritual life and spiritual development comparisons in a way seem quite out of place. I mean I have said once that the only comparison which really should be made are between yourself as you are and yourself as you were. Sanghadevi; Otherwise it seems if you are trying to compare with anyone's spiritual content it seems to be an alienation, with your feeling you can't develop something within yourself. You see it in someone else and I haven't got that. I'm just not sort of matching up to that person or I'm not as something as that person. It seems to go against the idea that you can actually develop it and change it.

We did talk in one study group a long time ago about imitation and emulation where you can start by imitating a quality in some one but eventually you have to develop that quality. That seems to be connected as well. S: But it isn't that some people aren't more spiritually developed than others. They certainly are and certainly those who aren't so spiritually developed can derive inspiration from those who are more spiritually developed but such differences are not, as it were, to be dwelt upon or made the basis of anything in a fixed sort of way. Sanghadevi; Because presumably you can't fix it because it's S: It's temporary anyway or it may be temporary, you may overtake that person after a while.

Sanghadevi; You just don't know. Anne Mac; I suppose comparison happens for different reasons. Because sometimes we compare ourselves to people who we consider better or more advanced but other times we compare ourselves in a different way to people to whom we feel some superiority. It seems to be there must be a variety of reasons for comparison rather than just one. S: Well as I said, a comparison may be valid or even necessary within the group but as regards to the spiritual life, spiritual development, spiritual community, one has to be extremely careful about these things and, perhaps, only compare oneself as one was with oneself as one is. And everything else should be, as it were, unspoken or even unthought. If you can in fact refrain from thought. But at the very least, even if it was sort of mentally acknowledged or you mentally acknowledged someone is spiritually superior to you it shouldn't become, as it were, institutionalised. Do you see what I mean? That is your personal/private acknowledgement. You may agree in that acknowledgement with some other people. There may be a tacit agreement partly but it doesn't have to be brought out into the open and made official and fixed.

Christabel; Then you aren't integrated though sometimes it seems as though the () of JOL4. 2/XXXVI that acts as a block and it actually stops you from getting any, deriving any benefit from the person from whom you might really learn something if you didn't have this block. Whereas if you have joy in somebody else's attributes you might have a chance of picking some of it up somehow. S: You notice the tradition says you shouldn't think of yourself as inferior. Christianity tends to make a virtue out of thinking of yourself as inferior, not think of yourself as superior. Well yes sometimes people do that but not even think of yourself as equal which is what we are very much encouraged to do nowadays. (Pause) Otherwise the sort of logical consequence of the paradox is O(well's famous saying in 'Animal Farm' that 'everybody is equal but some more equal than others.' (Laughter) Actually that's quite logical because equality is, as it were, a quantitative thing and if you can have a quantity of it you can have more of it so it is possible actually for some to be more equal than others. It just shows how absurd is the concept of equality as applies to individuals. And some can be less equal than others therefore. You shouldn't apply that sort of concept at all to individuals. Dharmadonna; I'm never sure what is actually meant by equality in modern terms. Whether it is meant that everybody is the same or there should be equal opportunities. S: Ah well it should mean, if it means anything clear and positive at all that everybody should have equal opportunities. It doesn't mean the same opportunities, but not that everybody is equal in the sense that they are equal because they are the same in the sense of being interchangeable. I think interchangeability is the key to equality in this, sort of, quantitative sense.

_____ (inaudible)... S: Well for instance I mentioned that two half pounds of flour are the same as one pound of flour so they are interchangeable in all respects. One pound of flour can fulfill exactly the same functions as two half pounds of flour. But two human beings are not equal in the sense that they are interchangeable in all respects. They may be equal in certain respects and therefore interchangeable in certain respects but can you imagine two individuals who are completely equal in the sense of being completely interchangeable? Sanghadevi; If you are seeing it like that you really are denying their individuality. S: You are not regarding them as individuals. Sanghadevi; They are just sort of bits of machinery. S: Cogs in a wheel. They are just hands as in a factory. If one hand is actually interchangeable with another it means he's not there as an individual. He's not functioning as JOL4. 2/XXXVII an individual or not able to function as an individual in that situation. but that sort of idea of equality is quite different to equality of opportunity. That everybody should have the opportunity which he or she needs for his or her own life and development. That is a quite different thing or that is inherent in the conception of individuality. If you are to be an

individual you must have the space in which to be an individual, the facilities for being an individual. Anne Mac; Fluidity seems to be very important. To be fluid S: Fluidity. Well not to tie yourself down to fixed categories. To be open to the situation as it actually is not as it is supposed to be or is thought to be. (Pause)

I remember I think I mentioned in my writing some years ago I attended a meeting in India once where someone was present who had just started a Buddhist organisation and he had four categories of membership, which you could join as this sort of member or that sort of member according to what fee you paid. There were arahant members (Laughter), there were non-returning members, once returning members and stream entry members. (Laughter). So you see this is an example of that sort of thing - supposing that () essentially a spiritual attainment. So the level of ordinary group membership with fees for his members. _____; Which category had most members? S: Well I don't know whether he had any members. He was just trying to enlist some. (Laughter) All the monks whom he approached looked rather coolly on him. (Laughter) I remember he wore a suit, he had a western style suit but made in orange satin (Laughter) But he was the founder so even more than a Arahant perhaps. But this is the sort of transposition that one makes if one tries to apply what is essentially a quantitative category deriving from the group so to speak to the spiritual situation. They just don't apply. One shouldn't think in those terms. One can't help it to some extent, at least to get one's bearings. One shouldn't insist on those sort of quantitative classifications which don't really apply even though one may privately make some use of them provisionally but they shouldn't have any sort of official standing. Anne Mac; It's almost wanting spiritual materialism S: I'm not sure but it could be. Anne Mac; (inaudible). ..I've just seen it S: Yes it could be.

Any further points because we're going to close in a minute. Anything that we've touched on that we haven't finished with? Christabel; I was thinking about the difference between the approach here - 'compassion should be practised in the desire to free them from it and its cause,' from evil and its cause, and JOLA . 2/XXXVIII I was just thinking how in normal society we're terribly preoccupied with symptoms and never very interested in working hard to find what's going on underneath. Dharmadonna once gave us a talk in Norwich about the symptoms that were going on in society - strikes and things, and she said, actually, all politics were just fiddling about playing, interchanging one set of rubbish (Laughter) for another set of rubbish (laughter). There was never any progress made obviously because you were never looking at the cause and growing from it.

S: Yes and often what one thinks of as the solution is just another symptom. A symptom of something wrong at an even deeper level.

Alright let's leave it there.

END OF TAPE

TAPE 5.1

S: Can someone read?

Sridevi; "The merits that accrue from having practised compassion cannot be measured. As is stated in the 'sryan.ras.gzigs.kyi rtogs.pa brjod. pa':

'When there is one virtue present it is as if all the qualities of the Buddhas are in the palm of one's hand. Which virtue? Great Compassion.'

S: 'In the palm of one's hand is an Indian idiom which the Tibetans have taken over. 'in the palm of one's hand' is easily available. 'when there is one virtue present, it is as if all the qualities of the Buddhas are in the palm of one's hand. Which virtue? Great compassion.' You notice that it's Great Compassion - this is not simply compassion as an emotion, but compassion as an emotion conjoined with the higher spiritual realization of Sunyata, that is to say, the completely positive emotion conjoined with clear insight. (Pause) It's as though the text is saying concentrate on what is essential. Well go on to the next bit.

Ula; "And in the 'chos yan. dag.par sdud p'ai mdo' or 'Dharmasangitisutra':

'Exalted one, so it is. When there is the precious wheel of the Universal Monarch there are also his troops. Exalted one, so where there is a Bodhisattva's Great Compassion, there are all the other Buddha qualities also.'

S: Yes this is just a comparison; the universal monarch has a precious wheel. It is like the crown in western tradition. If he has that wheel, he has everything else belonging to the king; especially the troops, the force, the infantry men the artillery men and so on. And so in the same way when the Bodhisattva had Great Compassion, all the other Buddha qualities follow. That is the leading virtue as it were.

An~ali; So when we say that they text is saying 'concentrate on what is essential' then JOLS. I/XXXIX compassion is the most essential of the Buddha qualities? S: One could say that. On the other hand one has to look into it a little more closely. I mean what is compassion essentially? Compassion essentially is maitri. No? It really means to develop an attitude of complete emotional positivity combined with perfectly clear insight; into the way things really are. Compassion or Great Compassion isn't simply an emotion, it isn't simply positive emotion, however powerful. It must be suffused with clear insight, otherwise, however much you may want to help people, you won't really be able to do so. You won't really know what is good for them or how to help them. (Pause) So it isn't quite so simple as it appears. If karuna is there maitri is there, and if it's to be Maha Maitri well there must be prajna. But one could say that the whole of the spiritual life, the whole of individual development, can just be summed up in these two things. You know complete emotional positivity conjoined with complete clarity of insight. Mmm? (Laughter) Anne Murphy; If it comes in at all, I was very confused when I read the introduction to this book. I hadn't understood that there was a step on from prajna to jnana. What is that and what has that to do with Great Compassion? S: This goes back to something we were talking about this morning. I think we've touched upon it several times in both groups. That is to say the absence of the 'historical consciousness' in Indian Buddhism, especially in the Mahayana. W~ had touched on this in this group hadn't we? s; No. Well it's connected (in this case) with the whole development of Buddhism, and in particular with the development of the three Yanas and the Bodhisattva Ideal~as succeeding to the Arahant Ideal. What happened was - this is at least one way of looking at it, at least it is part of the total picture, the whole story; that is to say that the Buddha preached a certain path, a certain Ideal. After a while this became rather . . . rigid, let us say, at the hands of certain people, at the hands of certain followers of the Buddha. It became even a bit narrow , a bit dogmatic. It became what the Mahayana called the Hinayana. But the Mahayanists, not having this historical perspective, so to speak, were not able to see what had happened. You

see what I mean? They weren't able to see or they weren't able to trace the successive stages in the development of the Buddha's teaching and to see how it gradually had become, as it were, concretised. They just had the Hinayan~teaching. They felt it wasn't enough. At the same time, owing to that lack of historical consciousness they believed it was the Buddha's teaching. Do you see what I mean? So they couldn't reject it. They couldn't say 'well this is a corruption almost of the Buddha's teaching' or they couldn't say 'it represents a hardening of the Buddha's teaching, the Buddha didn't really put it like that'. They had to accept it, and carry on from there with further and higher teachings, or even Mahayana, which though they ~idn't realise it, represent, in fact, a return to the Buddha's original teaching, but put in a JOLS. I/XXXX different sort of way. So they tended to lay these different developments end to end, instead of rejecting the Hinayana as a sort of dogmatic version of what the Buddha really said, they accepted it, but only as a preliminary stage, and then went on to practise what they felt was the real Buddhism, which they presented as a further and higher teaching of the Buddha. The same thing happened with the Vajrayana when the Mahayana itself got a bit hardened. You see what I mean. Let's come back to the question.

Anne Murphy; It was because you brought up prajna and

S: Ah yes that's it. So t~~ Buddha had spoken in terms of Prajna. But in course of time in t~~Hinayana, prajna had assumed a rather narrow meaning and the Mahayanist wanted to go beyond that. So they tended to make a distinction between prajna which covered the Hinayana conception of prajna and Maha Prajna or sometimes they called it Jnana. So you see jnana represents the more Mahayanistic understanding of prajna. This is broadly the distinction. (Pause) For instance in connection with the five Buddhas of the Mandala - the Mandala of the five Buddhas - we speak of them as representing or embodying the five jnanas. This is definitely on the Mahayana level.

_____ ' It's sort of opening out.

S: Yes right but you can see the position of the Mahayana in the absence of any historical re

consciousness, it was not possible for them to attempt an historical/construction of the

development of Buddhism. There they had all the material and they had to accept it all, as it were, as the word of the Buddha, which they did, but the Hinayana teaching which they felt not so happy about, they regarded as - yes - a teaching of the Buddha, but given at an earlier stage of his career, and for people of lower spiritual capacities.

Dharmadinna; Has that happened throughout the development of Buddhism? Is there any other culture that has any historical perspective?

S: Well China did. But by the time Buddhism had reached China, and in their case the Chinese were sort of landed with a great mass of canonical literature. They did have a historical consciousness; they did to some extent try to sort it out from a historical point of view, but since they didn't have modern methods of research, and they just had to deal with material which had come to them in translated form, they weren't able to apply historical methods in the same way that we can nowadays.

_____ (unclear)...Tendai school,,,,,

S: Yes that did to some extent but even the Tendai school regarded all the Buddhist sutras as having been taught in that form during the lifetime of the Buddha so, for them, it was a question of distributing them among the different periods of the Buddha's teaching activity of which they enumerated five. Whereas it's quite clear that in their present form many of the Mahayana sutras belong to a later period. They certainly in spirit go back JOLS. I/XXXXI to the Buddha but one couldn't really say that the Buddha taught these sutras in that particular form. So I think sometimes it makes the situation in the Mahayana teaching quite complex because very often you've got two sets of terms, one representing the narrower, Hinayana understanding of the subject and the other the broader Mahayana understanding of the subject, but represented as two successive stages of a single path. You see what I mean? For instance the Mahaysna revised the:whole conception of the spiritual life including the monastic life, and you've got the Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva ordination, but they don't throw away, in most cases, the Bhikkshu life and ordination; usually you had one after the other. If supposing you were to take an example, for instance, from the history of, say, christianity in the West, supposing you take a Quaker who has decided he wants to return to the original christianity, but he doesn't want to reject anything. So you might get somebody who, say, accepts the ordinary catholic baptism, and maybe ordination as a C of E or catholic priest but after that, there's a further Quaker initiation; he doesn't want to throw away anything of the historical tradition. you see what I mean? Many Buddhist schools did that sort of thing which makes it in a way rather cumbersome, and some in effect, especially in Japan they tend to discard the earlier stages and not keep them at all. But again that makes things a bit difficult because they become a bit dissociated from tradition especially in the absence of the historical consciousness. _____ So you had to do both, going right to the beginning. S: So it doesn't make it very easy does it? _____' . . (unclear) you have the basic principles, you work from _____ S: But also see how they're being applied at different times, in different ways within the different yantras and the different schools. Otherwise, in a way what the Tibetans have done in developing the Triyana system; first you go through the Hinayana then you go through the Mahayana, then you go through the Vajrayana; that's very good, it's very sound, but it can become in the end, very cumbersome. _____; Quite a long path. S: A long path. Well that's alright, the path is long anyway (Laughter) but cumbersome and complicated, rather than long. _____, You can do some of those things side by side really using your ethical basis.. S: Well if you practise what is supposedly the Hinayana teaching very thoroughly and sincerely it becomes virtually the Mahayana. In the same way if you take the Mahayana teaching too literalistically, well actually, despite the label 'Mahayana' you're practising like a Hinayanist. It's basically a question of attitude rather than of label. I've mentioned this before, that I've met Theravadin Bhikkhus whose attitude to the Dharma is much more Mahayanistic, almost Bodhisattva-like. On the other hand I've met Tibetan JOLS. I/XXXXII monks and even Lamas who though ostensibly Mahayanist and following the Bodhisattva Path have got very narrow, almost Hinayana-like attitudes. So one has to see what the attitude really is not just what their profession is.

Let's go on and read the remainder of this chapter. Karola; "And in the 'De bzin.g.s egs. pa'i g.s an. ba'i mdo' or Tathagatacintyaguhyamidesa" S: Or the esoteric teaching of the inconceivable Tathagata. Karola; "Guhyapati (Lord of the Mystic Teaching), the spiritual awareness of the omniscient one has grown out of the root of compassion"

"In this way desiring that beings may attain happiness by benevolence and be freed

from misery by compassion we are unable to reserve the happiness of tranquility for ourselves alone. Thus a remedy is found against self complacency by the joyful realization that Buddhahood may be attained. When someone in whom benevolence and compassion are born praises others as greater than himself, he becomes filled with excellence. This may be seen from the example of the great Pram ze sbyin (Brahmadatta) and is taught in the following verse:

He who sincerely wants to dispel

All the misery of others

Is an excellent man

Because in the stream of his own being he has understood the nature of misery." S: So this quotation to emphasise the same point, that the spiritual awareness of the omniscient one has grown out of the root of compassion, that is the source, that is the root. What about omniscient one for the Buddha. How literally is one to take that? Does omniscient mean you know everything? S: Well does it? Literally the word actually means that. Omni-scient, all-knowing - but in what sense? Is the Buddha said to be all knowing? Is this question ever raised for instance in the Pali scriptures do you know? Anne Murphy; In that he knows reality not that he knows everything like the gods. S: There was a discussion in the Buddha's day as to whether the Buddha did literally know everything because~apparently Mahavira, the founder of the Jain tradition did claim to know every thing, or at least it was claimed on his behalf; that he knew for instance exactly how many leaves there were on any given tree (Laughter) Yes this is what we would call scientific knowledge or factual knowledge at least but the Buddha specifically or explicitly disclaimed that sort of knowledge. He said that he professed to have full knowledge only with regards to the path of Enlightenment. So the--Buddha is omniscient in that respect with regard to the path to Enlightenment. Well of course some Buddhists traditionally will tend to go a bit beyond that in their enthusiasm for the Buddha, or out JOLS. 1/XXXXIII of devotion to the Buddha, but the actual Buddhist teaching is that the Buddha is omniscient only in that restricted sense. _____, I was just considering if he could be aware of every leaf on the tree without actually knowing how many there were S: Then that raises the question what does one mean by awareness. (Pause)

In India of course they do tend to believe that, Indians, Hindus do tend to believe that the holy man knows everything. That's why they go to the holy man with their illnesses and their worldly problems believing that he actually knows everything which, if only he wishes, he can tell you and can give you the answer that you want. _____ Isn't that like seeing the holy man like a god? S: In a way yes, because he knows everything and many holy men seem to play along with that; they prescribe medicines for instance without knowing anything about medicine. They sort of feel that they know it. If somebody comes along and they say, 'What shall I do about my arthritis?' and they say 'Oh fl2b such and such leaves on'. That idea as it were springs into their mind and they take it that that's the answer. 'I'm sort of inspired' they really seem to believe in themselves in that way and sometimes it works of course which makes things worse~ There is this tendency on the part of the devout Indian or devout Hindu especially, to believe that the holy man or the guru or the avatar - he knows everything quite literally and you just have to ask him or to beg him humbly enough and he will impart that knowledge to you, or give you the benefit of that knowledge. _____ A bit

confused I'd say. (Laughter) S: Yes. Sometimes it happens that they do have quite a bit of experience in dealing with people and a bit of common sense and can advise about practical difficulties. That's a rather different matter, but they're often credited with access to actual factual knowledge by virtue of their super normal powers etc. They're regarded as sort of super- men in that sort of way and the holy man is expected to fill that sort of role, part of his social function. But you can understand in the society or in the culture where there is a lot of ignorance in certain areas and where people ~&ve a need for certainty and knowledge they turn to some such figure. In Tibet they tended to turn to the local Lama who acted as a sort of medicine man cum doctor, general adviser and, no doubt, sometimes he went beyond his knowledge whether knowingly or not. There is this tendency to credit the god-like figure with virtual omniscience. I mean people like Hitler came to feel they virtually knew it all didn't they? at some stage in their careers. And sometimes very successful people tend almost to think that they know everything, if things have gone their way for a long time, like big businessmen or financiers or politicians. They become over-confident, they seem to think that their passing thought or their passing inspiration

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is sort of infallible. They cannot but be right and they're sometimes encouraged by their followers to think in this way and that's very dangerous. Ula; I think they used science -or pseudo-science- to convince people. I think that nowadays people have a tendency to believe in science. _____; It's true because science says it. S: Mm because it's supposed to be supported by science. The Hindus are very fond of saying that Hinduism is supported by science. The vedas are the textbooks of all the sciences - 'it's all there' if only you could discover it. Many Hindus believe that the formula for making the atom bomb is to be found in the vedas. 'The Hindus found all this out thousands of years before it was found out in the West, but they kept it to themselves, realising that this knowledge shouldn't be placed in the hands of the wrong people.' They really believed that, because there are references in the Hindu scriptures to these spectacular weapons that various Hindu gods and heroes wielded - 'and there's the proof, there's the atom bomb, it's described and we had it'. (Laughter) 'Everything is in the vedas and that proves the truth of Hinduism'. Some Buddhists, Theravadin Buddhists do this with Buddhist scriptures. It's all there - modern biology, astronomy, it's all there in the Pali texts,; the Buddha knew it all because he was enlightened. Here of course they're beginning to credit the Buddha with the sort of omniscience which he disclaimed and using that to establish the truth of Buddhism. 'Because if the Buddha was right with respect to those things which we can now check up on he must be right with regard to all sorts of things that we're not in a position to check up on, therefore Buddhism is true.' But this seems a very dangerous sort of proceeding, to support Buddhism with what is really in most cases pseudo-science. So you take any sort of resemblance or anything which can be made to look like a resemblance and claim that Buddhism anticipated modern science. So the Buddha didn't have access to modern scientific knowledge so he must have got it all out of his supernormal knowledge and that proves that you can rely upon the Buddha so 'Science proves Buddhism' - This is a very favourite approach with some Theravadins, because they do have this one-sided intellectual approach to Buddhism already.

Right any other point that arises out of this passage? Anjali; What you were just talking about people who make those claims - is that to help them avoid the non-rational?
S: You mean in the case of the people in Theravadin countries? I think a lot of it has to do with nationalism and sticking up for your own national culture, especially against ,

western culture. In a way people like that are in an ambiguous position; they are often western educated but they don't want to feel that they've gained everything from the west; that they were backward until the west came along and taught them. They want to feel it was all there before in their own tradition. They want to make their own tradition, in this case Buddhism, intellectually respectable. I mean they're very fond of say, things like in Ceylon-when we built such and such monuments ft 400BC - in Britain they were dancing JOLS. l/XXXIV around painted with woad. They forget all about Stonehenge which was built 2 500 years BC. Earlier than anything that was ever built in Geylon. They conveniently forget that. But- it's as though they're trying to keep their own end up. You see what I mean? And exhort their cultural tradition, but they just go the wrong way about it. They try to glori~y Budhism in western terms, in scientific terms, instead of bel~evtng in it on its own terms or glorifying it on its own terms, in other words, spiritual terms, because they'--ve lo~t touch very often with that spiritual tradition. So more of ten than not the motive is quite narrowly nationalistic. 'But we are not inferior to the-westerner - this is what they're actually saying or trying to say by this means. That goes for the Indians, Hindus too - 'that we are not inferior I mean they adopt the western standard of inferiority and superiority and then try to justify their own tradition in those terms. 'We too were scientific or could have been scientific if we had wanted we too could have had the atom bomb. We didn't choose to but the knowledge is all there in the vedas or whatever.' This raises in a way the whole question of nationalism in connection with spiritual life and sometimes you feel this with Buddh ists who are now trying to spread Buddhism. It's much more their own national culture that they're trying to spread rather than the Dharma itself. Ula; Do you know if they are pleased to notice that westerners are interested in their religion? S: Oh yes. But unfortunately it's very often not for spiritual reasons. 'That they are following our culture' You see what I mean? And very often they don't have any feeling for Buddhism but they feel self-complacent because westerners, with their supposedly superior education are following their religion. And sometimes they tell you this in an almost unpleasant sort of way. They feel really flattered to know that weserners are following their religion because it proves their superiority. This is how they take it more often than not. They may not even care about Buddhism or may not care to follow it but they're quite flattered if westerners start to follow it for quite nationalistic reasons. I think on a purely political level you can't blame them when you consider all they've suffered at the hands of the western nations. But from a purely spiritua~ point of view it4s not an acceptable attitude.

Anyfurtherpoint that arises out of this? Anne Mac; Is spiritual awareness enlightenment itself? S: Where is that term arising from? Anne Mac; Where it says, 'the spiritual awareness 6f the omniscient one has grown out of the root of compassion.' S: I think spiritual awareness is something like jnana.

Alright probably we'll go onto another chapter but just look over what we've done in the chapter and see if there are any ~eneral points that arise. What sort of general JOLS. i/XXXXV feeling do you get from this chapter for instance now that we've gone through it pretty thoroughly. Benevolence andeompassion?

_____ ; The real importance of metta.

S: In a way the quite crucial importance of metta.

_____ ; It's something that everyone can develop.

S: Right yes, In a way it's quite simple isn't it. It's not anything extraordinary.

Ula; Sounds simple.(Laughter)'Yes it's simple but at the same time it's quite a thought that only metta can be the basis of your spiritual development and if you have got it () makes you... (unclear)..

S: If you're full of emotional negativity it does really make the spiritual life quite difficult. And sometimes you do see people coming along who do seem to be quite full of resentment in one way or another but it makes any sort of spiritual progress really difficult.
(Long Pause)

We're going to go on to Chapter ten 'The training in an Enlightened Attitude' which seems to tie up with what we've done quite well besides being quite a short chapter which we may get through before the end of the retreat.

BENEVOLENCE AND COMPASSION

THE END
