

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/Triratna as Sangharakshita opened up for the still very young community what it might mean to live a life in the Dharma.

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

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

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

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

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

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the 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 Songs of Milarepa Seminar

Rechungpa's Repentance

Held at Padmaloka November 1980

Present: Ven. Sangharakshita, Upasakas Jayadeva, Kulamitra, Virananda, Aryamitra, Abhaya, Guhyananda, Devaraja, and Peter Martin, Ken Chandler, Mike Chivers, Simon Chinery, Bill Moffat. Day I Tape I Side A

Devaraja: When the Jetsun Milarepa and his son Rechungpa were approaching Drin on their way to Bouto, Rechungpa said, "I would like to stay in Drin tonight and meet the patrons." But Milarepa replied, "My son, let us first go to Bouto without the knowledge of our patrons, disciples or the monks. In a displeased mood Rechungpa obeyed, and continued with Milarepa to Jipu Nimadson at Bouto of Red Rock. Upon their arrival, the Jetsun said, "Rechungpa, fetch some water and I will make a fire."

Mmm. All right, so let's try to see what is happening here. I think it's pretty clear. It seems that Rechungpa is not a very obedient disciple. Jetsun Milarepa and Rechungpa are approaching Drin on their way to Bouto. Bouto, it seems, is their destination. But Rechungpa says that he'd like to stay in Drin that night and meet the patrons, that is to say the lay supporters. Ah, in some ways one might have thought it wouldn't be a bad idea for them to meet the supporters. But, you know, Milarepa's got different ideas. It would, sort of, mean turning aside- eh, if they were to, to, to stay the night in Drin and meet the patrons there. It's as though Rechungpa isn't really happy to go straight to their destination where presumably they are going to (to another long bout of meditation. He just wants to, to spend the night at this place, you know, and maybe, you know, spend a bit of time chatting with the patrons. It's like, you know, a bit like say if you come up, let's say for the sake of argument, from Aryatara, you know, for a retreat at, you know, at Padmaloka. Well you might have to pass through London, or at least you make it convenient to pass through London, and you might spend a night or two there, you know. Possibly even arriving at the retreat late. I can remember, you know, another rather amusing example of the sort of thing. In...eh,...when I was in Kalimpong, all my Tibetan friends and disciples every now and then used to go off on pilgrimage to Buddhagaya. So I used to be very impressed by this- all these people always going off on pilgrimage to, to Buddhagaya. They used to be away on pilgrimage quite a long time, sometimes three months. But I eventually discovered that they only spent a couple of days in Buddhagaya; the rest of the time they spent in Calcutta (Laughter going to the cinema and the

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S(continued): races. But officially for the whole three month period they were away on

pilgrimage.

You know, they left Kalimpong saying, you know, they would be going on pilgrimage and they came back saying they'd been on pilgrimage but actually they had only been two days in Buddhagaya and all the rest of the time in Calcutta. So it's a little bit like that. It's very easy to deviate, it's very easy to sort of linger, or to dally on the way. And it's as though this is what, you know, Rechungpa wants to do. He doesn't want to go straight to the place that they are heading for. He wants sort of to turn aside or to stop en route, spend a bit of time with the lay supporters. You know, maybe enjoy himself a bit, have a drop of (chhang) (Laughter) or something of that sort. But Milarepa says, "No." He says. " ...Let us first go to Bouto without the knowledge of our patrons, disciples, or the monks. Don't let anybody know. Just let us quietly go straight to our tination." So what is the reaction on Rechungpa's part? He is displeased. "In a displeased mood Rechungpa obeyed". He does not sort of disobey Milarepa. He does what Milarepa tells him but he is in a displeased mood. You can see his heart is not in it. He'd really like to stay on the way, he'd like to linger, he'd like to spend some time talking with the lay supporters. But nonetheless, unwillingly, you know, in a not very positive frame of mind, he obeys. And they continue on their journey.... mmm until they arrive at Jipu Nimadson at Bouto of Red Rock. So the mere fact that it's called Red Rock, it's clearly some kind of cave and they are probably going- '~ to meditate there as I said. So there is no little, sort of social outing for Rechungpa beforehand. So "Upon their arrival, the Jetsun said. 'Rechungpa, fetch some water and I will make a fire.' " Instead of the nice comfortable village house that, you know, Rechungpa was thinking in terms of, there is the cold cave and there is no water, there is no fire, there's nothing ready for them. So Milarepa sends Rechungpa to fetch some water while he makes a fire. So that is the sort of opening paragraph that sets the scene. So here is, you know, Milarepa sort of singlemindedly heading for the cave taking Rechungpa along with him. Rechungpa wants to linger on the way and he is quite displeased when Milarepa, you know, does not allow him to do that. So what do you learn about Rechungpa from this opening paragraph?

(Pause) Well, he is a very divided sort of person. After all, he is with Milarepa, he is his disciple. He is even described as his son, his son Rechungpa. But nonetheless he is not a perfect disciple and tends to want to do things his own way, and even though he does go along with Milarepa, it is not very willingly sometimes. There's clearly a sort of conflict, -he is with Milarepa but he is not with Milarepa, he goes along with Milarepa, but in a sense he does not go along with him. He is not so whole-hearted and singleminded as Milarepa himself is. So sooner or later there is bound to be trouble. So we shall see. All right, someone read that second paragraph.

Abhaya: On his way back to the hermitage with the water, He had reached a slope from where he could

see below him) the great, delightful plateau between Bouto ~ffA--~iu. He saw in the centre, a mountain she-goat giving

Abhaya(continued): birth to a kid. Then the mother and daughter each gave birth to another kid: they, in turn, bore more kids, until eventually there were two hundred of them. These wild mountain goats frisked about so happily with such innocence and a spontaneity that Rechungpa was amazed. He thought, "These mountain goats are even livelier and in many ways better than those of Baltan~." With great interest, he watched them play for some time.

S: Mmm. How many generations would have to intervene for two female...eh. ..eh...goats, two she-goats, to produce two hundred? It would depend presumably on the number of males and females produced but what would be the minimum number? And how old would they be before they in turn could give birth? In other words, try to estimate the amount of time that passed. (Laughter.)

Voice: ~uite a long time.

S: Mmm?

Voice: ~uite a long time. Several years.

~: Several years, yec, it's clearly several years. Let us say that a goat can produce young after two years. So, you know, if two produce four that takes two years, let us say. Four produce eight-supposing it is that sort of progression, each one producing twins as so often happens. So to produce eight takes four years, to produce sixteen takes six years, thirty-two takes eight years, sixty-four takes ten years, then a hundred and twenty-eight takes twelve years. ~o 0 K., it must be fourteen years to produce two hundred. So in other words, Rechungpa remains absorbed(laughter)watchin~~ the play of these goats, one generation succeeding another for fourteen years. So, you know, can one take this very literally? What is happen- ing?

Guhyananda: I shouldn't think he would be that concen- trated that he would be able to watch some- thing so intently for so long.

Voice: No.

Voice: Perhaps he is imagining it (mumble) you know, going along kicking himself that he has to go

and get the water and then he looks at these goats and sort of....

S: Perhaps he is fantasising.

Voice:Fantasising what....how long it will take?

It is like the old story of the milkmaid walking

along with, you know, her pail of milk on her head, yeah? And calculating. Well, if I sell this pail of milk, I'll get so much, and then I'll buy some eggs, I'll sell them at so much profit. In this way, you know, she is fantasising right up to setting up her own village store,

and she is so unmindful while she is fantasising , that

she trips over a stone and spills the milk. So there is

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S(continued): goodbye to all-her schemes. hi~ybe it is a little bit like that or maybe it is a touch of i; }~gic on Milarepa's part, who kno~~s?

Voice: (mumble)

S:But Rechungpa gets absorbed in this scene. So what do you think this scene represents? (Pause.) These goats?

Voice: Lower evolution. Mundane existence.

S: Yes, mundane existence, perpetuating itself. One can get lost as it were in the contemplation of the process of mundane existence, itself. You get caught up in it, you get wrapped up in it. This, I think, is what it represents. It represents the whole process of birth and death and rebirth. It represents the wheel of life. You see what I mean-he has sort of moved away from his guru. He has gone ostensibly to, you know, to collect water, but instead of doing what he is supposed to do, he has got caught up in this, this fantasy, this imagination, whatever it is. He has got caught up in the samsara. Re is seeing one generation succeeding another, he is absorbed he is fascinated. He has forgotten all about Milarepa and about bringing the water. So it is as though it's a symbo~ of the cosmic process itself. Do you see what I mean? The samsara, you know, proceed- ing. The wheel of life turning and it goes on turning and turning, time and time again. And you are just lost in that, absorbed in that, and you have forgotten the true purpose of your existence. (Pause.) That is what it seems to represent. So these wild mountain goats frisked about so happily, with such inno- cence and spontaneity ~tRechungawas amazed. He thought "These mountain goats are even livelier and in m~~wuwas better than those of Baltang." \ith great intTh~sthe watched them play for some time. He had forgotten, as I said, about Milarepa, about bringing the water, about you know what they were supposed to be doing. And this is what one sometimes finds happening. You can be distracted, you can completely forget the rca-i purpose of your existence. Sometimes you can forget why you c~~me on retreat. Certainly you can forget, you know, why you were born into this world, so to spe~k. i~oi.~ just become immersed in the play of s~dis~~ra itself. You forget that there is something else to do, that you cannot just sort of stand there watching it the whole time. atching it, not in the sense of being aware and mindful, but just in the sense of allowing your mind to be ca tured by it and taken away by it and c~~rried away by it. (Pause.) So with great interest he watched them play for some time. (Pause.) But one knows that this is a characteristic of the mind, isn't it? To be very easily led astray.

Voice: How do you think it differs from.. ..You say you can be absorbed in the samsara, I mean in the sense that he has not seen throQgh it. I mean he's.... I mean you have to see....I would have thought that you have to see through the S~msara in order to understand Nirvana.

So how does his....let's say how does his differ? Is he just superficial?

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S: He is differing in the sense that he is sort of taking delight in the process itself. He does not see its limitations. He does not perhaps see the painful or unpleasant side of it either. He sees it in a very one-sided manner. He is absorbed in it as something, well, complete in itself, something real, even something absolutely real, as something truly pleasurable. He does not look beyond it, he does not look into it any deeper. (Pause.) Well, all right, read the next paragraph.

Voice: ~eanwhileIAilareawhp had lit the fire, ~d the books that Rechungpa had brought back from India and said with great compassion: "I sincerely pray to all Dakinis. I pray you to save and keep the Formless Dakini's Dharma for which I sent from India-the teachings that will benefit the doctrine and all sentient beings! I sincerely pray to all Guardians of Dharma to destroy all heretical books of vicious Mantras that will certainly ~n great harm to the and to sentient beings!" After this prayer, Milarepa meditated for a short time; and then he burned most of the books until only a few incomplete folios were left.

S:Mmm. So, Meanwhile Milarepa, who had lit the fire, opened the books that Rechungpa had brought back from India. You may or may not know that prior to this Rechungpa went to India on a journey, his third journey, against the advice of Milarepa. He went with the intention of studying logic and science so as to be more powerful, more proficient in debate, and conquer the logicians. So Milarepa did not want him to go to India but since he insisted, Milarepa said, "All right, you go, but don't go just for the sake of science and logic. Go for the sake of obtaining the five Formless Dakini Dharmas which I did not obtain when I was there, you know, when I was with my teacher." So, eh, Rechungpa apparently has obtained these, he has brought these books or rather he has brought back the books dealing with those particular teachings.

Voice: His teacher would be? Milarepa's teacher would be?

S: Marpa. Marpa. ~o, Formless Dakini's Dharma. 'Formless' here means absolute or transcendental. So these are teachings pertaining to quite a high level of spiritual experience. So Milarepa says with great compassion, "I sincerely pray to all Dakinis. I pray you to save and keep the Formless Dakini's Dharma for which I sent from India- the teaching that will benefit the Doctrine and all; sentient beings! So it suggests that Rechungpa has not in fact brought the Formless Dakini's Dharma for which Milarepa sent, you know, from India. So what has he brought instead?

Abhaya: Academic works on....

Right, yes, yes. This is not openly stated but it seems, judging by Milarepa's actions, that what he meant was that Rechungpa should study those particular teachings, he should practise them, he should realise

S(continued): their fruits, but he does not seem to have done that, he has just brought back the books. So he has not brought back the Formless Dakini Dharmas at all really, not in the true sense. Uo therefore Milarepa says, "I sincerely pray to all Dakinis. I pray you to save and keep the Formless Dakini Dharma for which I sent from India - because Rechungpa has not succeeded in, in saving and keeping it, because he did not practise, he did not experience the results of the practice, he just brought back the books, which is quite a different matter. ---"I sincerely pray to all Guards to destroy all heretical books of vicious Mantras that will certainly bring great harm to the Doctrine and to sentient beings!" ~o that is the other side of Milarepa's prayer, that the Dakinis will save and preserve the Formless Dakini Dharmas, that they are not to be preserved by being written down in books and brought to Tibet in the form of books. And he also prays that they will destroy all heretical books of vicious mantras. Maybe that means books of black magic. There is also a sort of suggestion here that if you have not realised the fruits of the Formless Dakini Dharmas, well, the actual books dealing with those teachings are little better than books of black magic and they might as well be burned. There is that sort of suggestion, hmm? Because, you know, teaching of that kind, teachings coming from a very high level, if they are actually put into practice they do an immense amount of good. But if they are misunderstood, and misapplied then they can do a great amount of harm, almost as though they were books of black magic. So, -After this prayer. Milarepa meditated for a short time and then he burned most of the books until only a few incomplete folios were left. ~~~~~ It was quite a drastic action, yeah? But he is not going to compromise. He wanted the real Formless Dakini Dharmas. He wanted them to be brought back, so to speak, to Tibet. He did not want just the books, and he wanted Rechungpa to understand the difference between realising through practice the Formless Dakini Dharmas, and merely obtaining possession of the books dealing with those particular teachings, or allegedly dealing with those particular teachings. All right, go back to Rechungpa, next paragraph.

Kulamitra: Now while Rechungpa was watching the mountain goats at play. he saw a masterful goat take the part of a wolf and drive the flock across the ridge to the other side of the mountain. At this point Rechungpa thought, "Goodness! I have been dallying too long. I must go back at once, or the Jetsun will reprimand me."

S: Mmm. Why do you think it was at that point that he realised he had been dallying too long, and that he must get back? Why do you think it was at that point he thought again of Milarepa?

Voice: It's almost....I was thinking like, that the wolf, you know, how this one single body suddenly coming into the picture of many, many, many sheep, you know, and sort of, of driving them out. It's like a sort of a single thought coming in quite strongly and just cutting through whatever was going on. S:

- Well, you could say that the masterful goat that

took the part of the wolf and drove the flock across

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S(continued): the ridge to the other side of the mountain was a bit like, you know, Milarepa himself... eh, eh driving the sheep-like flock of disciples from one side to the other.

Voice. ~o you could say that, eh, so~ething, ferocious might actually be something beneficial.

~: Well, of course, it was a masterful goat taking the part of a wolf, it wasn't really harmful. ~o maybe there is a sort of reminiscence of Milarepa there, but at any rate it sort of brought Rechungpa to his senses, it reminded him of Milarepa.

Voice: I thought it was a bit also like in meditation, you can get sort of a build-up of many distractions almost, and it does take perhaps just one quite strong sort of reminder to yourself, and suddenly everything is dispersed and this clears the way almost again.

Kulamitra: Isn't it a bit also like if you are absorbed in a regular process. If there is ~n it~r~u:- t~on to Lh~ process and you regain conscious awareness. [3: 1 - {ight. It is sort of the regularity of the process that hypnotises you, like when you are watching a constant succession and flow of images. If there is an interruption, well, it gives you a sort of jerk, so you so to speak, remember where you are and what you're doing or where you're not and what you're not doing. All right read the next, eh....

Voice: He immediately started to return. When he reached a bridge leading to the cave. he saw smoke rising from it and smelled burning paper. He thought. "Are my books being burned?" When he entered the cave. he saw there was almost nothing left except the empty wooden covers! He felt as if his heart had been torn asunder. "Where are my books?" he cried to the Jetsun in great resentment. Milarepa replied. "You have been away for so long fetching water. that I thought you were dead and so I have burned all the unimportant books. As far as I am concerned. they were useless and are merely temptations to distract one's mind and hinder one's devotion. By the way. what made you linger so long?"

~. So, he has started to return and has really reached the bridge leading to the cave. ~e saw the smoke, smells the burning paper, and at once he thought, "Are my books being burned?" So of course they were, and he felt as if his heart were being torn asunder. Well, you can just imagine it! He had been to India on foot, a long way, many hundreds of miles. He had got these books. He thought he'd got the Formless Dakini Dharmas. He was very much attached to what he'd brought from such a long distance and which he'd thought was so valuable and so important. And here Milarepa has gone and burned well, not the whole lot, but most of them. So he felt as~if his heart had been torn asunder. "Where are my books?" he cried to the Jetsun in great resentment. So, Milarepa replied. "You have been away for so long fetching water. that I thought you

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S(continued): were dead and so I have burned all the unimportant books." Yes, so indirectly Mila-repa is rebuking him for being away so long. I mean he was supposed to go just, you know, a short time, just to get some water, but he's been away a long-time-maybe years and years. So Milarepa is indirectly rebuking him. "You have been away such a long time fetching the water that I thought you must be dead. Co if you were dead, you would have no use for the books so I've burned all the unimportant books, that is to say nearly all of them, leaving only a few folios, a few leaves. As far as I am concerned they were useless. were merely tempt'~tions to distract one's mind and hinder one's devotion." ?½~o you can see J~larepa has got a very sort of extreme attitude towards books. What do you think is the validity of this nowadays?

Voice: \~e are attached to....like....academic things; to people who maybe know the scriptures in and out but are not actually practising Buddhists.

S: Well, sometimes it is not even the scriptures. In Milarepa's day in Tibet , there was not really much to read except scriptures, but nowadays there is all sorts of reading matter. It's said that some people , in the absence of anything better, will read the telepThone directory. They would certainly read yesterday's news- paper, even last week's newspaper, you know, even last year's newspaper, if it comes to them wrapped round some fish and chips. They will read it rather than just not do anything.

Kulamitra: There's a copy of...unearthed by the building team in Sukhavati of a paper about ten years old which stayed in the common room for about a week. (Laughter.)

(Pause.)

Bill Moffat: Was Milarepa burning the books because the books themselves were harmful, or w~s he testing- ~echungpa?

S: Well, from what follows iL- does see-1 that he ~-as testing Rechung~pa. But you know one can say, yes, in a sense, even the books were harmful, because Rechung.pa had become over-attached to them, and it as better for Rechungpa that they should be out of way. I can't really say that the books, in themselves, were harmful, becuse the books, in themselves, were just wood and paper and ink. It requires someone to read them before there can be any question of harm or no-harm. But you see what happens here. You know, after all Milarepa is the guru. kYe is H~echungpa's guru. He is taking away something which lie knows is not good for Rechungpa or at least something that ~echungpa is misusing, in other words his precious book~. So, far from thanking %i~arepa

kc)(continued): for helping him in this way, ~echungpa experiences only resentment. 30 that's quite a strange situation. lie is so attached to these books that he cantt recognise that Milarepa is helping him in burning them.

Abhaya: I was just thinking that it's not the sort of thing you would do. (Laughter.)

~. Well, you don't know. (More laughter.)

Abhaya: No,I mean the emphasis seems to be certainly like improving one's knowledge of even one's own culture as well as the Dharma. Your emphasis woul1 seem to be that we need to know much more about the °Dharma.

S: Well, in this particular ca~e, the situation is rather different , because, first of all...eh...?~echungpa has brought th~se books from India. That is to say, he has secured them with great difficulty. Perhaps there is no other copy in existence. So once they are burned they are really gone. There is no possibility of his going back to India and getting another copy. Maybe there is no other copy. Maybe he couldn't make the journey anyway. S'ven if he could-tremendous danger and difficulty all over again. Mmm? Writh no certainty even at the end of the journey of being able to replace the books. :~0 supposinf one '~as to burn say, somebody's copy of "The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa", what would they do? They would just go and buy another one, yeah? But this is quite a different situation and therefore the significance of the action would be quite different. Because if you were to burn a book that someone was attached to, you would not be burning something that they attained with great difficulty and which was irreplaceable, yeah? You wot~ld be burning something that they had got very very easily, and could be very easily replaced. So if one is thinking in terms of cuttin~t off people's attachnent~ by burning, or getting rid of, the things to which they are attached, well, one must think of something other than a book. U~'o what might these be,you know, if one wanted to, to act in a corresponding way? Something that was irreplaceable or replaceable only with very great difficulty, that you had to go a long way to get it, undergo great hardship, it would cost you a lot of money. And, you know, if it was lost or burned by your teacher, well you just would not be able to get another very easily, if at all. So what sort of thing would there be? Iven if you burned someone's car, well, they only have to go out to work for a few months, you know know, just raise a bit of money, and they would buy another one just as good, a new one. %ven if you were to burn their car, same if you were to burn their suit, well they could go and get another one, maybe almost immediately.

Alike Chivers: Probably be insured.(Laughter.)

S: Yes, you see. So what would you have to do to produce that effect, the effect that Milarepa produced on Rechungpa by burning his books. Would you have to burn them practically!

Kulamitra: You'd have to burn their wife and children. (Laughter.)

S: Almost. But you see the situation. We are so well looked after now, we're so cosseted. It is as though you can't, you know, harm people. You know, you can't even teach them a lesson in this sort of way any more, yeah? Because, you know, possessions are so easy to come by that, you know, people will replace them almost immediately. So, you know, it is not open to you to teach disciples lessons in this sort of way. It's rather difficult. It makes life rather hard for the guru. Even Milarepa would be hard put to it if, well...you know, if he, Milarepa, had lived nowadays; and Rechungpa, well, Rechungpa would not have been so attached to the books to begin with, because they were so easy to get hold of. And even if Milarepa had burned them, he wouldn't be all that bothered because he'd just go off to the bookshop and buy another one. So, you know, it's as though people's attachments nowadays are spread over a much larger number of much more easily replaceable objects. So you can't even teach them a lesson by getting rid of, or burning, or otherwise destroying a material thing that they are particularly attached to. Even if you were to burn down their house, well, as Mike said, there is insurance. It would probably cause them a certain amount of inconvenience but no more than that. It would be replaced fairly quickly. So you see how, in a sense, invulnerable we have become. We can't be got at in this sort of way any more. It would seem the irreplaceable things always seem to be more in the area of persons, people. At least, they are irreplaceable for the time being. You feel that way about them for the time being. But then it's not open, even to the guru, to go and burn them. Perhaps there is another way of doing it when the guru quietly detaches someone, you know, from you, and then sends them off in another direction. There has been an instance recently, I won't mention any names, somebody that we know, who was married for quite a long time. She decided to live apart from her husband for a bit and the husband has taken it very, very badly indeed, taken it very much to heart, yeah? So it's as though that sort of...the sort of experience that Milarepa gave Rechungpa is only possible nowadays in that sort of area. Do you see what I mean? And it's not very easy of course to take a particular person away from another one, even for their own good, and much less still can you burn them for the sake of benefitting the first person. That isn't really allowable unless, of course, you really are a Tantric guru and can, you know, release their consciousnesses after burning them...eh, you know...on a higher plane of existence. Tibetan Buddhist, Vajrayana teaching does maintain that this sort of thing is possible. It's not within the

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S(continued): powers even of the ordinary guru, you know, not to speak of others. So it's not very easy to teach people a lesson any more, is it? So it is really the age of darkness-the Kali Yuga, mmm? So what is it that people are attached to nowadays? Where is their concentration, their attachment concentrated? (Pause.) I mean ordinary people, not pop-stars who would suffer if their records didn't sell any more, or they lost their fame and popularity;- ordinary people?

Voice: Comforts.

S: Comforts0 If you deprived them of all their comforts. I think the nearest we get to this ?~ilarepa type of treatment is when people are sent away on solitary retreat to not a very comfortable place, with not too many books, ~nd not too much food, in winter. (La~ughter.) And not to

Greece, to northern Scotland or somewhere like that. That would seem to be nearer to it, mmm? Also of course you note that Rechungpa 'as carry- ing these books around with him. They must have been quite big and heavy because of their wooden covers. Perhaps he didn't have much else. Perhaps he just had these books and his whole attachment was concentrated there. And so, as though at one stroke, Milarepa practically removed it- he burned nearly all the books. And it's as though...i mean, perhaps Rechungpa thought his attachment was justified. Perhaps he thought of it as devotion, that he as devoted to these books. Perhaps he even thought he was devoted to the Formless Dakini Dharmas. ~o,"\~ere are my books?" he cried to the Jetsun in great resentment. Milarepa replied. "You have been away for so long fetching water, that I thought you were dead and so I have burned all the unimportant books." So what is the significance of this? Milarepa says, "I thought that you were dead." That is he really saying?

Voice: That you'd lost complete faith.

S: No0 That00.I mean after all he's gone for water and he has not come back even after a long time. \)ell, after all, he is Milarepa's disciple. A true disciple should do what his guru tells him. So, if he hasn't come back?

Voice: Jell, I ~ould have thought it's quite literal. It just means that he might have been attacked by some bandits, might have fallen over a precipice and suffered some bad injury and wa~ unable to come back and had died in one way or another.

S: Yes, yes. So therefore, that's what I am saying,, ~ince he is a true disciple, if he has not come back within a reasonable period there is only one explanation-that he ia dead.So if he has not come back and is not dead, there- fore the implic--tion is that he is not a true disciple. flo you see what I mean?

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S(continued) So when f~ilarepa says...mlnm, mmm... 'You have been awa for so~lon-; fe~tch.in water that I thought you were dead'.'....he is really ~s~~ ng that ..~*"You have not be~n a true disciple because, had you been a true disciple you would have been back long ago. And since I took you for a true disciple, I thought you must be dead and therefore I burned the books. Uo it's as tb~oug~h Lilarepa is sa~ying-- what is the use of having these books, and prizing these books, and being attached to these books, if you are not even behaving-, as a true disciple. You are not even coming back within a reasonable time when

you have been sent to get water. So this is the sort of indirect rebuke that, you know, Milarepa seems to be giving him.

Voice: It's not quite as bad as that, though, is it; I mean, I can imagine we've got the story where they are just coming along to set up camp for the night, I mean and we can believe that there is certain friction. I mean that has probably been going on quite a couple of days on their journey. So Milarepa almost mischievously says, "I thought you were dead."

S: Well, "I thought that you were a real disciple". This is what he is saying. That is to say, in behaving in the way that you are, you are not being a real disciple. That is "hot" he is saying. I mean, he is saying it in a pleasant, friendly, even playful sort of way, but that is his real meaning: "You are not behaving as a disciple ought to behave. You are not behaving in a way which is conducive to your own growth and development".

Mike Chivers: How would he have said it like that? Because the, very much the tone of the impression we get is very much how you say it, you know, which implied when you said it almost a playful mischievousness. You know, but eh....

S: Well that is Milarepa's style. Milarepa does not as it were come heavy. He is quite humorous, he is ironical, he is even playful, but he is very serious nonetheless. In order to be serious, you don't have to be heavy unless the people you are dealing with are really fools, then you may need to come a bit heavy with them. So Milarepa knows that Rechungpa may be disobedient, but he is not a fool, he can take a hint. At least he can understand a hint, even if he won't actually take it. Uh-o, So, you know, Milarepa speaks like this: "That I thought you were dead. Well, of course I thought that, what else could I think, if you don't come back? Because if you had been alive of course, being a good disciple, you would have come back with the water. So if you did not come back, I could only think that such a good disciple, disciple, you know, could only be away that length of time just because he was dead. So I've burned your books. 'What else could I do? I had -JV% on.' That is his

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£L~~~continued): sort of attitude which of course, no doubt Rechungpa found quite difficult to deal with.

Kulamitra: Is there also a suggestion that he is treating Rechungpa as if he was a good disciple, that if he was a good disciple he would not mind the burning of his books either?

S: One can say that too. "rasIarnconcernedthe were useless. and are merely temptations to distract one's mind and hinder one's devotion. By the way. what made you linger so long?" Now he is being a bit more, as it were, open. He is saying: "Well, you did linger didn't you? That's the truth, isn't it? What made you linger?" He is giving him the opportunity to make a clean breast of it all. Mmm? (Pause.) All right, read the next paragraph. Mike Chivers: In his pride, Rechungpa thought. "i~y ~%uru has now become very bitter and e~oistic. he has affronted me sorely. Should I return to Dipupa and stay with him again or should I go elsewhere?" Thinking thus. Rechungpa lost all faith in the Jetsun.

He sat there deadly au~et for some time. Then he sai~, "I was watching the wild goats at play. that's why I was late. iNow the gold you gave me and the hardship I underwent in India have all beconie meaningless and wasted. I am leaving for another country now." Saying this, Hechungpa became hostile and disdainful to the Jetsun out of his bad faith toward him. Milarepa then said, fIMy son echungpa, you do not have to lose all your faith in 'tie. All this should be bl'~~~med on your dalliance. If you want to be amused, I can entertain you. Now watch!"

End of Side A, Tape I.

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Rechungpa ' 5 Repentance

Tape I Side B

S: So:In his pride, Rechungpa thought, "My Guru has now become very bitter and egoistic. He has ~ffronted me sorely." So you see the strange situa-tion; that Milarepa is doing really what is best for kechungpa, but Rechungpa does not understand it like that. He thinks iivJiThare~a has become very bitter and egoistic and that he has affronted Rechungpa, insulted him as it were, done him a grave injury. So what do you think is really happening here?

Voice: He is reacting.

S: He is reacting and also he is projecting some of his own~negative qualities on to Nilarepa. After all, who is being bitter and egoistic? Who is affronting whom, one could say. But, you know, if you are attached to something really badly, and somebody else deprives you of that thing for your own good, you are unlikely to feel gratitude. Your initial reaction is likely to be very negative indeed. You are liable to attribute the worst of motives to the other person even though they may in fact be trying to help you.

Voice: Sounds very much like criticism in the context of one person pointing out, maybe quite directly tn another person, what they feel they are doing and, you know, the reaction is almost inevitable to come....you just see that other person as coming on heavy.

S: Right, yes, or putting pressure on you or something of that sort.

Voice: i!~specially if it's an area where you feel stron~ly about any way, you identify with quite a lot.

3: ~uite, yes. (~ause.) So, Rechungpa thinks, "Should I return to Dipupa and stay with him again or should I go fle~sewhere?" Thinking thus. Rechungpa lost all faith in the Jetsun. He sat there deadly quiet for some time. This 'deadly quiet' is really significant isn't it? He is so angry he can't even get angry. He just goes all cold and quiet. This is a very negative state, you know, for anyone to be in. So cold....well, it's not even anger, it's so cold, you don't even feel it as anger. It's something much more deeprooted, much more negative....well, the text says "deadly". He sat there deadly quiet for some time. Then he said, 'I was watching the wild :~oats at plaj-, that's why I was late. Now the gold you gave me and the hardship I underwent in India have all become meaningless and wasted. I am leavinA for another country now." So you can begin to see what has upset ~echungpa so much. He is thinking all his labour, not to speak of the money that Milarepa gav gave him, has been wasted. Mmm? So what does th~t suggest? I mean where is he going

Abhaya: Well, it suggests he put all his heart into his achievements. lie's feeling very proud of them.

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S: Yes, as though he really got something in getting those books.

Kulamitra: It seems to go right back to when he left Milarepa, do you think? And wasn't able to take his advice at that time.

S: It's connected with not getting his own way. Well, Milarepa in a sense permitted him to go to Indea, yeah? And he went to India and he got the Formless Dakini Dharmas, at least he got the books, yeah? You know. He had his own way, but in burning the books it's as though he hadn't had his own way after all. It's the check to his self-will that's upsetting him so badly, yeah?

Kulamitra: When he originally left, is there any suggestionyou said that Milarepa told him that at least if he went he should get the Formless Dakini Dharmas because W[ilarepa hadn't been given them by Marpa.

S: Yes, not all of them, only four out of nine.

Kulamitra: So is there a suggestion that Milarepa is saying at that point (almost like) well, those are the only things that you can't get here and now, from me. So if you are going to leave, the only point in leaving me is to get something that I actually can't offer you.

S: Yes, not only offer you, but offer others, because he said if Rechungpa is able to obtain the remaining five Formless Dakini Dharmas, that will benefit many sentient beings, he says. So if you are going to, you know, be away from me, you might as well get something which you can't get from me. At least, formally speaking, eh? Because he does say that even though he hasn't received those remaining five Formless Dakini Dharmas, he has gained full enlightenment. So it is not as though they represent something which is essential to the attainment of enlightenment for all, but they are certainly teachings which can help quite a lot of people, even though it can't be said that they are not, as it were, duplicated essentially by other teachings. (Pause)

Voices: It would seem that Rechungpa hasn't quite got the Bodhi-attva spirit.

S: No, not at all, because when he left for India, Milarepa does say, as it were reminds him, so to speak, that if you get these Formless Dakini Dharmas, that will benefit many sentient beings; as though Rechungpa had not looked at it in that way before. So Milarepa is just reminding him of that way of looking at it. (Pause). So, saying this, Rechungpa became hostile and disdainful to the Jetsun out of his bad faith toward him. So it's as though, you know, Rechungpa's self-will goes very deep, mmm? It's a sort of obstinacy, huh? And one does find this in people. I mean, everybody has got something of this in him, and it's only when this really starts coming up against it that, you know, any real spiritual progress

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1/2-continued): begins. Usually one does not come up against it, because one is having one's own way all the time, or most of the time. You're doing the things you want to do, living the way you want to live. Thinking the sort of thoughts you want to think. But, you know, when when you are really deeply frustrated and your self-will is frustrated, then you really come up against it, then you experience your self-will, you experience how self-willed you are. In other words, you experience how bitter and egoistic you are. These were the qualities that Milarepa attributed to....that Rechungpa attributed to Milarepa, but really they are Rechungpa's own qualities. He is experiencing actually how bitter and egoistic he is, because his self-will has been frustrated.

Mike Chivers: But doesn't self-will have its place at the beginning of spiritual development in applying to oneself positive conditioning?

S: But that is not self-will. There's self....I mean, self-will, here at least, is just the urge, the wish, the determination, just to go on as you are, without making any progress, without developing. Just going on as you are now, indefinitely. That is what self-will is, just carrying things through because they are what you want to do, huh? (Pause.) ~o I, I think that people are very rarely brought up against themselves, their own bitterness and egotism, by having their own self-will really frustrated. You get this a bit in the Zen tradition, you know,

when the Zen master frustrates you in a way. I mean, you could say that the koan is a sort of mechanism for frustration, because everything you do with it, all the solutions you offer, are all just rejected. It means your self-will basically is being sort of beaten down in a positive way. But usually we just do what we want to do.... eh....we might sometimes, you know, come up against conditions and circumstances that do not permit us to do what we want to do, at least not just yet, and not in the way we want, but we manage to sort of circumvent, we find our way around them. Or we try to ignore these sort conditions, just pretend that they are not there. I mean there are objective limiting factors, like death for instance. Well, we usually don't think about that because if we did, we would really find our self-will, our egoism, coming up right against it, because we don't really want to die. So we just sort of alleviate the situation and not allow ourselves to be brought right up against it by not thinking about death. For if we did think about death, well, we'd realise we didn't want to die, hmm?-but that we have to die nonetheless.

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Voice: Well, what aspect is it of ourselves which, em, denies....the grosser aspects of ourselves (because) something, say yo'l feel violent-or you feel angry towards a person-and you consciously repress that aspect coming out. I mean is that self-will again?

S: It's fear. Usually it's fear of consequences because very often you want approval, you know, from that person. So even if you feel angry towards that person, you can't afford to show it in case you lose that approval. Or it may be something much more simple than that-you are just afraid of the consequences in other ways, afraid of the law.

Voice: Well, what mechanism is it within us, as evolving individuals, ah whereby, wherein....you know, there isn't the....you haven't developed these transcendent qualities that will overcome sort of conditioned existence, conditional (one word, indistinct). What aspect of, what mechanism is it within us which practises the precepts?

S: Well, it isn't a mechanism. Well, what happens is first of all, you can see the desirability of, say, controlling yourself, say, developing. First you can just see it in a quite detached sort of way. You might have no urge at all to actually act, or behave in that sort of way. But then you know it gradually dawns on you that, well, it is not something to be thought about, or something to be theorised about, it is something to be actually done. And then of course you have to face the question of how to get your energy flowing in accordance with what you see, what you see to be the truth, and then how you will do that will depend upon your own particular constitution and exactly where you are. You may find, you know, by say the method of trial and error that meditation helps you do it, you may find that participation in the Arts helps you to do it, but in one way or another you find some means of putting your energy behind what you actually see. Of course eventually that, that seeing can become

an actual vision, and then of course you can put your energy more and more behind what you

see, behind that actual vision as it has now become. But that is the way it usually proceeds—we see first, but we bring the rest of ourselves, our energies, our emotions, into harmony with what we see, later. That is broadly the distinction between the path of vision and the path of transformation. (Pause). So, at the present moment Rechungpa can't even see. He is quite blind, that is why he is so obstinate, he is struggling against Milarepa. You notice this in animals, well you notice it in cats. I don't know if you have ever observed cats. Have you ever tried for instance to stop a cat 'jumping up on a table and, say, taking something it shouldn't? ~upposing, all right, the cat jumps up on the table and before it c~n take what it wants, you put it down on the floor. Very often what does the cat do?

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Voice: It will come back (at the same time)

3-: It will come straight Mt come yes, and again you put it down again, but again it jumps up. So it's as though the cat just does not consider, well it can't consider, the significance of your action; the fact that you do not want the cat to take whatever it wants to take has not communicated itself to the cat, at all. So that urge, that sort of blind, obstinate will is just still there. You have to physically prevent the cat and either in the end the cat gets tired and goes off that particular item or you, you know, inflict some punishment on it which it finds painful, then it, you know, no longer tries to get that particular object. But it doesn't learn, it is sort of unteachable. You know the sort of thing I mean, yeah? You're just up against that blind, unaware obstinacy. You get that in children, you get it in women in certain respects, but you also get it in men in certain other respects. You come up against a blind, unthinking, unreasoning obstinacy and self-will round which you cannot get. You can only forcibly obstruct it, yeah? ~ou see what I mean? And this is what Milarepa has come up against in Rechungpa, or rather i~echungpa has come up against it in himself, yeah? And for the time being at least there is nothing that Milarepa can do about it. He has frustrated it and this has reduced Rechungpa to a state of 'deadly quiet". It's as though he could almost murder Milarepa, yeah? It goes as deep as that. It's not as though a parti- cular wish or a particular desire has been frustrated, it's his whole egoistic being that has been arrested and frustrated, yeah? So he's gone "deadly quiet" and he feels this deep, terrible resentment and he just wants to leave Milarepa. He feels very bitter because all his efforts over so many years perhaps, have all now been wasted, or so he thinks, mmm? So, you know, basically there is this blind, obstinate self-will in everybody, and one doesn't really start evolving, one could say at least from a cert~in point of view, until you come up against this and recognise th~is and start doing something about it.

Kulamitra: Are we talking~ about something very particular or can it have degrees? Well, like, I'm thinking of....well, I can find say with work, that you can get into a narrow sort of state of mind, immature, you direct it on a particular object. And even if some- one, a friend, happens to get in the way, your immediate urge is just to push through them without taking them as a person into regard.

S: This is comparatively superficial. This would seem to involve just one particular aspect of your being, one particular interest, but what one seems to have come into contact

with in Rechungpa is something which is much more basic, something even primordial.
-The sort of thing, for instance, which is represented by the blind man with a stick, you know, at the very beginning of the Twelve Nidānas. He represents, of course, ignorance, which is not just a state of not knowing. He is an old man, he's a blind man, with a

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S(continued): stick, that is to say he is walking and feeling his way forward with that sort of blind obstinacy, blind egoistic obstinacy, and it is that which keeps the whole samsaric process going. It is the sort of essence of reactivity, and as I've said, you can sometimes come up against this in people. You can come up against it in people sometimes when you are arguing with them, and you come to a sort of rock bottom, or you come to a sort of wall of rock, and that is their deeply ingrained conviction which is intimately connected with their deepest conditioning, and you just can't change it. There is nothing you can do about it.

Voice: How can one eradicate that aspect within oneself?

S: Well, it isn't even an aspect, it's just you as you are, totally, which has got to be totally transformed, and which starts off by recognising where you are at and what is happening, just seeing that, being aware of it, and then gradually trying to enlist the energies which are keeping that reactive process going, trying to enlist them in the interest of a more creative development.

Voice: So it's not force that's wrong; it's merely the fact that it is a blind force.

S: It's the blindness -you could say which is the unskillful or negative factor, but the blindness goes very deep.

Devarala: So, just to reiterate that: that has to be kind of recruited into transforming oneself?

S: Yes, yes.

Voice: The way that I've experienced that a little bit, is like, in the end that blind self will get so tight, get so obstructed, that actually you have got no choice but to get out of it. Otherwise you become so ice-like that it's incredibly painful. You almost have to break through it, maybe by just sort of talking to someone, just sort of overcoming that, breaking out of it because it just feels so crushing.

S: Yes, one has to be careful, of course, that you don't just break out in one part of yourself, not just in one aspect of yourself. It must be a total thing and that is, of course, much more difficult.

Voice: So did we... do you think we actually come across this sort of just in certain areas, but

that what Rechungpa has is a much deeper, more total experience?

S:

- Yes, in a way we should try to come up against it in the sort of way that he has come up against it, or even allow ourselves to be brought up against it in the way that he hasn't allowed maybe Milarepa to bring him up against it. Milarepa has just done it whether he liked it or not. You could go and ask somebody to burn your books for you, so to speak.

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Voice: You said with Rechungpa it's more his total egoistic being. It seems to suggest that, in a sense, that's more healthy because the environment in which we live, the society in which we move, is so alienated from its emotions that we don't have that kind of total experience to, to make a breakthrough.

S: Well, it was certainly difficult enough for liechungpa. I mean you could say it's more difficult for us, more difficult because it's more easy. We have an easier, softer time. We are more cushioned, more carpeted.

Devaraja: Can you say more about that sort of partial breakout and breakthrough, because I wasn't quite sure what you meant.

S: Well, it's just when, say, one particular interest is frustrated and we can recognise that that is what is happening and maybe get over it. But it's not a total thing, it's not our whole being that is, you know, being frustrated and therefore that we get over, but just a part of it, just one particular, one specific interest or activity or expression of ourselves.)We may not have our own way in that particular respect, but after all, we have it in lots of other ways. So, you know, we don't feel so bad, but if we're totally frustrated, and maybe we've

put all our egoistic energy into just one thing, and are totally identified with it, and when that is frustrated, then we really are brought up against it. Just as sometimes people have invested all their emotional energies in one particular person and that person either dies or leaves them or betrays them and then what happens? Well, we know, maybe not from our own experience, but at least from observing our friends in such situations, that people get into a very terrible state indeed. (Pause.)

Abhaya: So, would you say that that's the sort of situation in which, either in the spiritual community or in the Friends, where you've seen this sort of thing? Do you think it happens quite a bit in the spiritual community? Or do you think....(indistinct)

S: No, I don't think it happens very much at all. I mean just as in the case of, well, the books because, yes, books are so easily replaceable. Nowadays even wives are replaceable, not to speak of other things. I mean people might feel quite upset for a while, but they'd get over it. So that we're not so wholehearted either you know in a skillful or in an unskillful way. We don't suffer so much but also perhaps we don't break through as much, mmm?

(Pause.) There is a sort of wisdom in concentrating your attachments. Don't take that too literally. (Laughter.) I mean it's like Nero said, he wished the people of Rome all just had one head,- he-co-uld just cut it off, but what made it so difficult was they had so many heads,you see. So if all your attachments had just one head, if there was just one attachment, it would be a really terrific attachment, but it would be comparatively simple if not easy to get rid of it. If all your

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S(continued): attachments were bound up, say, in your stamp collection (la~ght~r)~~

~upposing you cared about nothing in the world, nothing in life, except your stamp collection. Maybe you even had, you know, a Penny Black (laughter),then somebody else came along and burned it. Well, think of the terrific effect, you'd feel terrible or you might feel just like Rechungpa,but you might have a breakthrough, a total breakthrough then it would be. But our attachments are spread out over so many many things,you know we are in a sense invulnerable,and that is in a way our weakness. Just as in the case of the books,you can't get at a man through his books unless of course he collects out-of-print books,or rare early editions or something like that, then he is a bit get-at- able. But not if it's just things which are in print and which can be immediately replaced or if he's got hundreds of books like them anyway, it doesn't matter. (Pause.) I've noticed one of the things that can bring you up against your own,you know,egoistic will,in a way that can be positive,as well as perhaps in a sense negative,is when someone doesn't believe you when you're speaking the truth,yeah? I don't know if you've ever experienced this in....when nothing that you say can convince somebody that you are speaking the truth. And maybe it is someone that you very much want to convince that you're speaking the truth,and, that maybe you care for, but they can't believe that you re speaking the truth. In fact they say quite unambiguously that you're not, maybe that you are a liar. That can bring you up against it. I wonder why?

Abhaya: It's a sort of denial of your whole being.

S: A denial of your whole bein~. Yes. I mean especially

when it's not a question of opinion or judgment about which there can be some room for difference. But when it's a matter of....they say,"You did that!"...; . "No,I didn't.".. "No, you did it,you're telling a lie. \~')ell, what can you say,what sort of position does that put you in? It puts you in a very terrible position because you're....I mean the situation objectively is that you are in the right ,but subjectively it is this blind egoistic will asserting itself. "But, no, I did not do it." And then you're told,"Yes, you did." So that's, yes,as Abhaya says,it's like a negation of your whole being, but of course it's your e~oistic being, your unilluminated being. So you can suffer very much in th?t sort of way. It c~n be very,vPry frustrating,especially if it's about a matter that you care and in relation to a person about

whom you care. Though the thing itself can be very trivial: "I did not take the shirt out of the drawer, dear" ,.... "Yes, you did, you must have done." You know? Well, many marriages have been wrecked by that sort of thing. (Laughter. Because it's so basic in a way.

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Abhaya: I was thinking when you were saying that it was the sort of situation where, well I have experienced and a lot of other people have, is when you're talking to your relations about your involvement in the spiritual life.

S: Yes, ah yes.

Abhaya:And that's what I've experienced. Like they just don't see at all....

S: Well, they just dismiss it as escapism....

Voice: ..., Yes they just completely....

S: ..., A little hobby you've got into~

Abhaya:Think you're a little crazy or mad. So that one gets sort of more and more frustrated that the other person can't see it at all.

S: Yes, yes, so I think one has to be very careful there because instead of trying to be more open and really trying to communicate, you can try to force things, and insist and emphasise and assert, which of course is counter-productive. I was also thinking that it's, you know, very important not to do this with children. That is to say, sometimes children make statements which are not believed and then mother or father say, "No, that didn't happen but maybe on the child's terms it did, yeah? So subjectively you give the child the experience of its being being negated. Maybe the child comes and says, "Why Mummy, I saw a fairy at the bottom of the garden." Mum says, "Well of course you didn't, there aren't any such things as fairies." But in a sense the child might have seen a fairy. Not that you would have also seen a fairy had you been standing beside the child, but that the statement that he or she saw a fairy at the bottom of the garden makes sense for the child, is a meaningful statement; no less meaningful than that "I see you standing there, Mummy." But if you negate that - "No, you are telling a lie" - it can make the child feel very frustrated because you are negating its being. So one has to be very careful in those sort of situations. If, as a guru, you are skilfully negating somebody's being that is another matter. But if clumsily 'n out of ignorance you do it, especially, you know, with regard to a child, that is a very different matter. You can, you know, be doing great

Well, you could say that it is the will to live, such as one sees in nature, yeah? You can see it in plants, you can see it in everything, the will to go on existing. And yes it's just like that in

human beings-the will to go on existing. Not the will to growth or development, you know, in the spiritual sense, but just the will to go on exist- ing, to go on living, in the way that they, they were. (Pause.)

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Voice: What about people, who seem to constitute the vast majority of society, who are of a very sort of anti-septic nature and there doesn't seem to be anything that you can even relate to. I mean it's just like passing through a cloud, there just doesn't seem to be anything there. I mean, you know, better to have some self-willful nature-I mean that is what creates the pop stars, the inventors, the glamour boys of society. But I mean the vast majority of society is made up of these vague characters.

S: Well, I think one must be a little careful, I wouldn't say that was true of people in India. I think they are quite different. i~h? It's only perhaps true of a certain section of society even in this country, maybe even in a part of this country. I don't know if they would agree with you, say in Glasgow, that it was like that, or that people in general were like that. Ibybe it's only a certain class of people and in certain parts of the country for, you know, certain historical reasons, but certainly in India people don't impress you as being like that. They are very, they tend to be pushy and assertive and, you know, to make their presence felt without any hesitation depending on their position in the caste structure and so on.

Voice: It does come out doesn't it though? ~v~rhen people have really got their backs to the wall, then that, that kind of will to survive really comes out. You see that at, you know like political rallies, those kind of movements, mass movements. S: M - mm, yes, indeed. Well, sometimes in the movement, in India in Pune, we have a bit of trouble and one can

see how it all comes about. When after all we are working with people who are ex-Untouchables, who have been suppressed a long time, and they are being sort of de-suppressed now. You know, the spring 15 uncoilin~, the pressure having been removed, the pressure being the caste system. So of course they are sort of asserting~ themselves in relation to one another rather than in relation to the true enemy, so to slje~k. But you know they are far from being vague or, or colourless. You only need to go out there and spend a few weeks with Lokamitra; you know I think you'd have enough of, you know, self- will, to last you quite a while. They are very self-willed people, especially Maharasbtriens, they are famous for their obstinacy and persistence, dog~gedness, their sort of somewhat military qualities. But, you know, even your sort of dull, passive people, they have got it too, but in their case it is just a sort of passive resistance, but it's the same thing, yeah?

Voice: Dig at the right places....

S: Yes, right. Scratch them in the right sort of way and you find its

flevaraja: It's worse in fact isn't it? It's impervious. You can't scratch it, it refuses to acknowledge

or notice.

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S: Mmm, but you can get at it. You can sort of pierce through, you know, the skin and touch this weak spot and, you know, they, they will react sharply and viciously.

Voice: Sometimes quite unexpectedly that happens.

Kulamitra: Isn't it also like they are living in conditions which just don't press them too hard? I mean, you know, put someone from a nice little bungalow in Norwich in India and they really will have a tough time. Or, you know, just at the standard British cafe~, you can't even get a decent cup of tea. Things which are really very different really do get through.

S: Mmm. Or you have to queue up for a railway ticket for two hours.

Voice: That's one of the good things about travelling abroad,

S: Or you've spent hours and hours in a bank, you know cashing a traveller's cheque. Hours and hours; and going to dozens of different people; and great ledgers are being passed around and signed. (Laughter.) Well, Lokamitra and I had this experience in the Bank of Maharashtra in Pune. Now it wasn't hours and hours, I mustn't exaggerate, but it was a full 45 to 50 minutes and the transaction must have involved at least four or five people, you know, including the bank manager. This is a great, big new building with maybe 50, 60 people working in it but just to cash an ordinary traveller's cheque for a not very big amount involved amongst other things nothing less than the signature of the bank manager himself. And it took 40 to 50 minutes. But meanwhile they sat you down and offered you cups of tea and chatted with you and all the rest of it. (Pause.) But, you know, this same self-will, this egoistic self-will, the same, this same bitterness and egoism that one sees in Rechungpa is in fact present in every person. I mean, you could perhaps also say that there are good qualities too hidden

away, but no doubt the blind obstinacy is there, and it is that which keeps them going through life. To go the path that they want to go, whether they are breaking through obstacles or just circumventing as most people do, and sooner or later one comes up against it in oneself and then the struggle really begins. If it has not begun yet, it's not that you are more evolved or more spiritual, it's simply that you are having a fairly easy comfortable time, and you are not being brought up against it.

Well, it reminds me of the illustration which occurred to me quite spontaneously, is maybe a typical community situation where, you know, you've made your plans to go out and see a film, you know, that you've long wanted to see and you're all set to go and, you know, in two or three minutes you're going to be off to see this film and somebody says "Oh, you've forgotten it's your turn to do

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3(continued): the washing-up". So you can't go to the film. So your sort of will to go is just checked like that in full career and you can feel quite frustrated and even resentful and thinking that community life is quite a drag after all. Mmm? But it's going to happen in this sort of way. And then what you experience is your own self-will and I mean maybe in Buddhistic terms, your own *avidya* and your own *trishna* and your own *samskaras*. But I think most people have not ever been really frustrated or they have been frustrated in just little tiny bits, but they've never been suddenly brought up against one great big frustration all at once, at one stroke, just like that, mmm? The people in this country anyway. Perhaps they could have experienced it sometimes during the war. Maybe people in Belfast experience it. I don't think they experience it in Norwich. I'm pretty certain they don't experience it in Surlingham. But anyway you see what is happening with regard to Rechungpa. It seems that the books, maybe apart from his clothes, are his sole possessions. They cost him so much. They mean so much to him. He has identified with them, yeah? And *Jigme* has just burned them, nearly all of them, so look at the state he is in. *Milarepa* has really brought him up against himself. Oh dear, I think we'd better stop there then. That is to say, just to have our cup of tea.

Voice: I'm getting it. So who wants what? Who's for.....

S: Mmm. Yes, but usually what happens is you don't develop a vision. A vision is presented to you. Someone comes along who has a vision and, you know, tries to share that vision with you. This is what usually happens, eh. And at the same time that they share that vision with you, they try to communicate something- of their feeling- to you. And you have after all that potential and so you respond in some measure and then you see that you are

responding, you feel that you are responding, and you feel and you see that that is a better way of living. So you begin to make a conscious effort to, to grow and to develop in accordance with that vision and with ;~ ~enuine need to adopt that vision as your own.

Kulamitra: You know earlier on you said that in a sense until you have come up against that kind of egoistic will you haven't really begun to develop yet. But at the same time you know from a slightly different point of view, you need to develop to some degree before you can make use of that opportunity, for most people. Don't you? Ah, I mean like a lot of people do have the experience, you know, maybe not so much in ~ngland but stil still in other places in the world, in previous historical periods, of having everything taken away from them just in a single blow and, you know.....

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~. But you don't necessarily evolve just because that happens of course.

Voice: Right, right.

~. But if that experience befalls you when you are, you know, in a relatively positive situation o-r~even in a particular kind of culture or even in, you know, contact with spiritual friends, then you of course can make a much more positive use of it. And you c~~n be brought up against yourself or the limitations of yourself, but then at the same time see something beyond your present self into which even you can grow eventually. (Pause.) Tell me if this is in anybody's eyes. All right? (Pause.) So, Rechungpa became hostile and disdainful to the Jetsun out of his bad faith toward him. Milarepa then said, My son Rechungpa, you do not have to lose all your faith in me. All this should be blamed on your dalliance. If you want to be amused, I ca.n enter~~~~'nou.Nowwatch!"

--nd of Tape I, side B. (Rechung~pa's Repentance).

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RECHUNGPA'S REPENTANCE Tape 2. Side A. Day 1.

Sangharakshita: Ah - Milarepa has sort of compromised in a manner of speaking with Rechungpa. He'd given his permission for him to go to India but not given his permission to him to study logic and science in India. Instead he had asked him to obtain the remaining five Dakini Dharmas. So, you know, while not actually agreeing with Rechungpa, Milarepa has gone along with him to some extent. Do you see this? So much the same sort of thing is happening here. Milarepa says, If you want to be amused, I can entertain you. Because after all Rechungpa was delayed, he dallied watching those goats because he wanted to be amused. So Rechungpa - ah Milarepa, at least for the time being, is going along with that. Do you think there is any significance in this - Rechungpa's wanting to be amused and Milarepa going along with it, you know, to a certain extent?

Voice: Milarepa is obviously going to use that trend in Rechungpa skillfully later on.

Sangharakshita: But what about that trend itself? What is that trend? To what extent is it skillful? To what extent is it unskillful?

Voice: Do you mean to go along er....

Sangharakshita: No. This trend of wanting to be amused, wanting to be entertained.

(Pause.)

Presumably it can't be wholly bad if Milarepa is willing to go along with it to some extent. So what does it represent? -This trend or tendency to be entertained.

Abhaya: It's a very sort of passive role....

Sangharakshita: It's passive, one could say that, yes.

Voice:Because you don't have to do anything. You just sit there and watch and it all happens.

S

Sangharakshita: Yes.

Voice: It does allow his energies (4 or 5 words unclear).. ..kind of response.

Voice: It captivates the concentration.

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Sangharakshita: Captivates, yes. Rechungpa's mind was really, you know, captivated, wasn't it?

Devaraja: Well, perhaps it will show Rechungpa what is really captivating...

Sangharakshita: Really entertaining.

Devaraja:To the extent that he wants to have that kind of show.

Sangharakshita: Well, I think it illustrates the point that even in trying to help someone to grow and develop, you can't altogether ignore their interests. The spiritual life, you know to speak in these terms, has to be a bit interesting. It can't all be a matter of doing what you ought to do, doing what is good for you, doing your duty. Do you see what I mean? There also has to be something interesting, something amusing, something that is fun, something that is entertaining.

If that element is missing, then, you know, the spiritual life would just feel very dull, it would feel quite a drag and you wouldn't be able to put very much energy into it. Don't you think that this is so? So it's almost a sort of... .the playful element. I don't think we should put too much attention, too much emphasis here on the fact that Rechungpa was being passive, that he was only a spectator. I think the essential point is that he was being amused, that he was being entertained, that he was enjoying it so much that he became completely absorbed, you know, just like a child at play.

So I think the essential point is that, that sort of quality, or that need even in us, cannot be ignored within the context of the spiritual life. It has to be taken into consideration. It has to be enlisted. The mind has to be captivated. You have to feel that the spiritual life is fun not because you take it, you know, superficially, but because you take it very seriously indeed.

Voice: Mke (Abhaya) saying in his talk; the bhikku he heard giving that description about your mind being full of dust. It wasn't exactly very captivating.

Sangharakshita: No. Right.

Voice: You have to... .although let's say maybe a Mahayana scripture is more than just captivating, obviously, there has to be that sort of element.

Sangharakshita: You find in the Mahayana. sutras this captivating element very strongly represented, don't you? And of course we're going to get, in a way, a bit of a Mahaysna sutra from Milarepa.

Voice: Isn't it like that thing you said: "You don't give up, you grow up." I mean what makes toys boring is that you've found something more interesting.

Sangharakshita: Right, yes.

Voice: So if you want to give up, you know, your kind of ordinary pleasures, you need to find the spiritual life more interesting and more absorbing

Sangharakshita: More pleasurable, yes.

Voice:And more pleasurable.

Sangharakshita: ~mrn. All right, let's read on, let's see how Milarepa entertains Rechungpa. He says, If you want to be amused, I can entertain you. Now w~tch~ So someone read that description.

Aryamitra: Instantaneously, this wondrous vision took form:

Upon Milarepa's head the Translator Marpa appeared clearly as Dorje-Chang, sitting upon the sun and moon Lotus Seat of Gems. Encircling him were the Gurus of the Transmission. To the right and left of Milarepa's eyes and ears, shone two sizes and moons. From his nostrils streamed rays of light of five different colors like silk threads, from his eyebrows shone a radiant light. His tongue became a small eight-petaled lotus-seat with a sun and moon orb above it, from which sparkled brilliant and extremely fine letters - vowels and consonants - as if written by a sunlit hair. From his heart radiated forth other beams of light, which then turned into numerous small birds.

Sangharakshita: Yes, let's consider that. So Instantaneously, this wondrous vision took form. So what is essentially happening? What is Milarepa doing to himself?

Voice: ~e~s revealing his nirmanakaya.

Sangharakshita: Well, he is doing more than that. In a way it's more like the sambhogakaya.

Voice: Yes, the sambhogakaya, yes.

~arakshita: ~e~is transforming his whole being, or, if you like, he is showing himself as he really does exist. He is showing himself, you know, very much as the guru, or the founder of the line, is visualised, when one (?envisualises) the refuge tree and does the Going for Refuge and Prostrations practice. Upon Milarepa's head the Translator Marpa appeared clearly as Dorje-Chang. Dorle-Chang is (?Vajradhara), the founder so to speak of the whole Kagyu-pa tradition, or the originator, one might say, of the whole Kagyu-pa transmission.

Sitting upon the sun and moon Lotus Seat of Gems. Sitting upon a, a precious lot~is seat with sun and moon mats on it, representing the unification of the positive and negative, or if you like, the masculine and feminine forces of the psyche.

Encircling him were the Gurus of the Transmission. That is to say, the gurus through whom the specific teachings of this particular lineage have been transmitted.

To the right and left of Milarepa's eyes and ears, shone two suns and moons. From his nostrils streamed rays of light of five different colors like silk threads, -these representing the five winds, the pranas, even the elements which are correlated of course with the five Wisdoms and the five Buddhas.

From his eyebrows shone a radiant light. His tongue became a small eight-petaled lotus-seat with a sun and moon orb above it, from which sparkled brilliant and extremely fine letters - vowels and consonants - as if written by a single, split hair. -Representing ~ilarepa's power of speech, his power of communication.

You see, first of all, the body is described, now the

From his heart rayed forth other beams of light, which then speech is described, and finally the mind.

turned into numerous small birds. Yes, so it's as though ~ilarepa's ordinary, you know, body, speech and mind are completely transformed; they are turned into the body, speech and mind of a Buddha.

So that they are not any longer body, speech and mind in the ordinary sense, they become nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, and dharmakaya. So Milarepa is showing himself, you know, to Rechungpa as he really is; not just as an ordinary little old man wearing a piece of cotton, but

Sangharakshita(continued): as a Buddha complete with the three kayas. So this is the wondrous vision that Milarepa shows Rechungpa, so to speak to entertain him. So where is the connection?

I mean the connection between the play of the goats which Rechungpa saw and this vision that Milarepa shows him. ~?hat is the common factor, how does one lead on to the other so to speak? ~!hat is it that both appeal to at different levels?

Voice: With that sense of spontaneity and magic and playfulness- because the goats reproducing has a magical feeling and this has a magical feeling too*

Sangharakshita: Yes. Well, it may not be that the goats reproducing has a magical feel if Rechungpa actually thought, well, that was happening and he was watching over the whole period as it were.

But certainly it's the, you know, the quality of holding and fascinating the mind, it's the playful aspect, the spontaneous, in the one case on the biological natural level, you know, in the other case not just a spiritual, on a Transcendental level. But it's the spontaneity and the playfulness that are the common factor. If you like, freedom. (Pause.)

So previously Rechungpa had been amused and entertained by the free play of biological spontaneity. But now he is being amused and entertained in a much higher sense, by the free play of the Transcendental itself, mmm? So ~t~~ as though one can go from natural things, one can go say from flowers and bees and butterflies and trees to, let us say, the beauty and attractiveness of the visualised Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in a continually ascending scale in much the same way that Plato writes about, say, in the Symposium.

Voice: So it's the captivating....(unclear....)

Sangharakshita: Yes, it's the captivating element. If one goes a little further, there is a sort of a classification of Tantric functions, including Tantric rites. There are many classifications but the standard one is four-fold. These, these four represent the four main activities of the Enlightened mind, from the Tantric point of view. You must have heard about these at some time? I might have mentioned them in lectures.

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Sangharakshita(continued): There is the function of pacifying

all evil, pacifying everything that is unskillful, you know, causing it to calm down, bringing about its cessation, and that is symbolised by, or associated with, the colour white.

And then there is the aspect, or the quality, or the function, of bringing to fruition, - bringing to maturation, ripening~~ ripening beings. I mean the bodhisattva is spoken of as ripening or maturing the minds of beings, that is to say, ripening or maturing them spiritually, leading them to Enlightenment. So this aspect or function is associated with the colour yellow. This is also an aspect of the Enlightened mind from the Tantric point of view.

And then there is the aspect of destroying, of breaking through, of blotting out, - getting rid of, expelling, violently repelling, and this of course is associated with the colour black or with deep blue. And the wrathful deities are, you know, are manifestations primarily, at least as regards external appearances, of this particular function of the Enlightened mind which repels and crushes and overcomes ignorance and every thing that is unskillful.

And then there is the aspect of, or the function of, or quality of fascinating and attracting. And this is associated with the colour red and with deities, to use that form, that expression, like ~urukulle, the Red Tara as she is sometimes called, even the Red Dakini in a sense, with her flowery bow and flowery arrows. She represents everything that is attractive and alluring and fascinating on the Transcendental level. This is something we were talking about this morning - unless there is something interesting in the Transcendental you'll never be drawn in that direction. You have to see it or to think of it or to feel it or imagine it in that particular way, not just in a dry, abstract or conceptual sort of way.

I mean, the concept of Absolute Reality, does that really appeal to you? Or the Absolute, you know, with a capital A, or Infinity? If you were a mathematician you might be sort of carried away by the concept of Infinity but the ordinary person isn't. It's a bit cold, it leaves you cold therefore. Or even the concept of Infinite Consciousness or Universal Mind, does that ring a very loud bell, you know, in your own mind? Usually it doesn't. It's not vivid enough, not colourful enough, not poetic enough, not imaginative enough, not appealing enough, not fascinating enough, not alluring enough. You don't want the Transcendental you know just to convince you, you want it to coax you, you even want it to seduce you. That aspect - I'm not saying that just because, you know, Aryamitra is here! But, you know, that aspect - or just because he's wearing a red pullover.' (laughter.) - But that aspect has to be

here, or

Sangharakshita(continued): there, yeah? You see what I mean? One must not only think of Reality in that way, but see it in that way, because it is like that, as much as it is, you know, a matter of abstract concepts and so on.

Voice: It's not just the sort of like structural, sort of like beauty of ~ jewel that is fascinating, it's its lustre.

Sangharakshita: }~. Right. Yes. Thdeed. The (word unclear) colour is very emotive. I mean, if you have to choose between thinking of Reality as colourless or colourful - well, think of it as colourful. It's better to think that Reality is red or blue or green rather than to think that it's a completely colourless thing, for most people anyway. Do you see what I mean? Therefore a picture, a thangka, can give you perhaps a better idea of what 'Buddhahood' or Reality is really like than ~n ~bstract definition which makes use only of concepts. ~nm? Because a concept, or an abstract idea, for most people is not very~~~ inspiring. Unless you are inspired, well, what can you do? You can't move, you can't go forward.

Voice: It's like you said, a spiritual tradition that is lacking in good works or something is probably quite suspect because it

Sangharakshita: Well, in the same way, a tradition which is lacking in art - in good art - is no less suspect, in fact it's even more suspect. You could say that one of the things that makes you a bit doubtful about Christianity is the bad art that it has inspired. And you could say that you can always tell where Theridhism is weak because the art becomes insipid or mechanical or whatever. I mean some people regard as a bit blasphemous to describe a Buddha image as ugly, but there's lots of Buddha images that you can see that are really ugly. So what does that mean?-That the people producing them had no sensitivity, yeah, had no feeling of what Buddhahood was like, or what a Buddha, ideally speaking, might look like. So that would indicate a certain weakness in the tradition, yeah?-Or if the terrifying deities no longer look terrifying, if they merely look odd and ugly, they don't really terrify you, you know, if you don't really think, "Well, I wouldn't like to meet you on a dark night~ff (laughter), well, it suggests an element of weakness in that tradition. (Pause.)

So it's very significant that }ffjlarepa puts on this sort of display for Rechungpa. It's also interesting, you know, with

Sangharakshita(continued): regard to Rechungpa, because Rechungpa after all went off to, to Thdia to study to st~dy logic and science. So what does this tell you about Rechungpa, apart from the fact that he wanted to use logic and science to defeat the logicians in debate?

Voice: Rational.

Sangharakshita: Rational, yes. But is anybody completely r~tional reelly? So, you know, that comes out in the very fact that he is distracted by the play of the goats. If you are so excessively rational, so excessively logical that you don't allow any sort of room, any sort of space to, let's say, your more irrational, playful side, if it isn't given a sort of official place, it will sort of creep in somehow, it will take you unawares, it will catch you off your guard.

And this is what has happened with Rechungpa. So Milarepa is in effect saying, "Bring it out into the open. You want to play? BlayJ--~You want to be entertained? All right, I'll entertain you.' 1111 entertain you in the best possible wayi" You see what I mean? There i~ no need to just allow this playful element to creep in in a surreptitious unmindful sort of way. Lot it come in with a blaze of glory, as it were. It has a rightful place, it's very important. So you will find a person who is excessively logical will, if you look at him closely, if you study him carefully, will have also an oddly irrational side too, that is not acknowledged and that is therefore in a sense all the more dangerous.

Voice: Good works of art should be entertaining. There should be that element there.

Sangharakshita: Yes, oh yes.

Voice: Otherwise, it's just a willful creation.

Sangharakshita: Otherwise, it's just geometry.

Voice: Yes.

~ra~a: I was just thinking there was a nice little bit ah, here we are, near the end they turned into numerous small birds. It's like sort of a reflection back on

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Sangharakshita: Yes, well, ~t~a the freedom, you know, ~t~s as though Milarepa's heart gives birth to birds, it gives birth to influences and forces which he doesn't in a sense retain any control over. He just lets them go, they just fly away, they are independent, they are just birds, mmm'. So that expresses again the freedom, the spontaneity. You come back in a way to a biolo~ical, or maybe an ornithological image, yes?-Brom mountain goats to birds. So I think this sort of imaginative, if you like archetypal, element is very important in the spiritual life. And you get it in the Mahayana sutras especially and when you get it, where you get it, there's a peculiar kind of resonance that you don't get anywhere else or in any other sort of way. If you read a Mahayana sutra, especially those which describe all sorts of phantasmagoria, (that's an ugly word but anyway let's use it,) all sorts of phantasniagoria, you get a quite different sort of experience than if you just get a dull - well, not dull, but maybe it feels a bit dull - dry discourse even though it's the Buddha's.

I mean, if you are honest with yourself sometimes the Four Noble Truths or the Noble Eightfold Path do sound a bit dry, do sound a bit dull, they don't sound all that inspiring always. Of course, in principle,

yes, they are - we believe in them, we accept them, we try to base our lives on them - but put just in that way you couldn't say they were exactly alluring. You couldn't be quite seduced by the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. We approve of them, we might even be quite attracted by them but not very strongly. You need strong, powerful, vivid images if you are going to be really strongly motivated and strongly influenced and moved and transformed. Mmrr'?

Devaraja: ~at~~ sort of almost generally... that's a human desire, isn't it?-To want to be carried away and totally transported, just to be sort of com~pletely pulled... out of oneself.

Sangharakshita: But not only just out of oneself because that c~n happen if you get drunk, yeah? But to be transported out of yourself into some higher realm, and you sometimes do feel that when you read a Mahayana sutra. It's quite remarkable, you really don't have your feet on the ground anymore. I think some people - even people who are doing very worthy things like working in co-ops - they sometimes like to be sort of transported out of themselves even into a world like the Pure land where you don't have to work. There are no co-ops in the Pure land. (Th~ughter.)

You can say that the Pure land is a centre because people are coming and listening to the

3'.

Sangharakshita(continued): Dharma.~Ygu can say i~~s a community because they are all listening to the Dharma together. But they are not working - unless you can describe listening to the Dharma as work. You can say -- you can think of the Pure land as a centre, even as a community, but it's rather difficult to think of it as a co-op. Because, you know, the Pure land in a way is all fun and games - all Transcendental fun and games - you don't have to work for a living. Ah... food and drink and garments are just shaken down from the trees whenever you want them. You hold out a hand and at once there is an apple in it, or a peach or a pear or a flower. ~atever you want, it's just there. You think you'd like a clean shirt - it just appears on you....

Voice: It's interesting because....

Sangharakshita: . . .So people like to be - at least in imagination - carried away into this sort of world, occasionally.

Voice: Children only learn from playing. If you try and teach a child it won't learn anything. The same way that quality has to be enhanced if we're not, if let's say working in a co-op is not a sort of playful activity, it's just drudgery, you're not actually learning anything.

Sangharakshita: Right. Well D.R.lawrence says, he says Work, if it doesn't absorb you

like an absorbing game, don't do it! Well, that's easier said than done, isn't it? (laughter.)

Because if you ~o~t work you might not eat, huh? So you have to work in order to eat even though it may not be like an absorbing game. But if it is like an absorbing game then you are re~lly lucky, you are working the way you should work, whether you are turning out copies of Human Enlightenment in good time at Ink (laughter) or whether you are, you know, manufacturing window frames or whether you are packing bags of muesli or whatever it may be. If it's fun and you're singing as you are doing it - singing your muesli packing song or whatever it is - well, - it's play not just work. Or work is play, play is work, but that isn't very easy I'm afraid in the industrialised modernised world.

Devaraja: Wasn't it Oscar Wilde who said something about Work is the curse of the drinking classes?(laughter.)

Sangharakshita: He said a lot of things.(laughter.)

~~.

Voice: I just wondered what the colour green in that case represented.

Sangharakshita: Oh green. Ah, green is usually growth but again yellow is the colour for growth here in this four colour system. You've only got four ~spects, so you can only have four colours, you see. You d~n~t have blue either in this scheme. You have black, white, red and yellow.

Voice: Or dark blue for the wrathful deities.

Sangharakshita: Cr dark blue, yes, but it's very dark blue or sometimes even dark brown. But again you see what Milarepa is doing, he is seeing that there is an element in Rechungpa which perhaps he hasn't fully experienced, which has gone astray, which has been even ~ bit distracted, which comes out when his mind is captivated by the goats. And he wants to establish contact with that because he sees that that will be, as it were, the salvation of Rechungpa, perhaps, if he can only be m~de aware of this side of himself, but, you know,

it's quite hard going for Milarepa.

But anyway let's hear his song. Someone like to read that, read verse by verse.

~anda: Hearken to me, my son Rechungpa! Above my head,

Upon the sun-moon orb of the Mon Seat Sits my Gracious Guru Marpa - The divine embodiment of Buddha Dorje-Chang.'

Sangharakshita: Yes, Milarepa is just describing, in the form of a song, the vision that has appeared, the vision that in fact is Milarepa. One thing I didn't mention, which perhaps I should have mentioned, that Milarepa continues to address Rechungpa as "my son", yeah? Rechungpa has repudiated Milarepa - Rechungpa became hostile and disdainful to the Jetsun out of his bad faith toward him and earlier on it says Rechun~a thought, "Should I return to Dipupa and stay with him again or should I go elsewhere?"¹ Thinking thus, Rechungpa lost all~faith-- in the Jetsun. It's as though Rechungpa has broken off all contact with Milarepa. He has broken off the relationship with Milarepa. In a way he no longer considers himself as a disciple. But the relationship is not broken off so far as Milarepa is concerned, his attitude towards Rechungpa hasn't changed. Just as in, you know, the case of the father/son relationship, however bad terms they may be on they are still father and son, that biological bond, that blood bond cannot be abrogated, huh? So, you know, Milarepa say yes, by

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sangharakshita(continued): using the word "son" in relation to Rechungpa, that their spiritual relationship cannot really be abrogated or disrupted, you know, however Rechungpa may react. That so far as he is concerned, yes he is concerned for him, he still cares for his spiritual progress, he is still going to help him as much as he can.

Gu~~ananda: Would you say that there was anything which initially established that bond?

Sangharakshita: Oh, there must have been. Clearly Rechungpa is a very mixed sort of person. He did in a sense become, well, the second most important disciple, he is very gifted,

but he is also a person of inner conflicts, he is not a very integrated person. So yes is very devoted to Milarepa, on the other hand he is capable of wild rebelliousness too and it is only someone like Milarepa who can handle a disciple like that. So, you know, Rechungpa doesn't give himself an easy time, Milarepa also doesn't give him an easy time. There's quite a tussle between the; pair of them be~f~re~'-Rechungpa eventually attains enlightenment. So anyway in this song Milarepa is describing what he is showing.

So that seems clear enough. All right, on to the next verse.

Voice: Round him like a- string of jewels

Are the- Gurus of the lineage.

If you behold them with faithful eyes You will be blessed by the rain of grace, And fulfilled will be your wishes.

Interesting it may be to watch the play of goats,

But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

San~harakshita: Mmm. Milarepa is, as it were, rubbing it in.~ He says, Interesting it may be to watch the play of goats,/But how can it compare with this wondrous game? If you were fascinated, enthralled by the play of the goats you should be still more fascinated and enthralled to see what I am now showing you. He also says, If you behold them, that is to say the Gurus of the Lineage who are round Milarepa's, around Narpa like a string of jewels, If you behold them with faithful eyes/You will be blessed by the rain of grace.

This is quite important in a way, in connection with the visualisation practices, I mustn't say exercises. It isn't enough just to visualise in the course of, say, concentration and meditation. It isn't enough just to have an eidetic image as it is called, there has also got to be the corresponding feeling on the part of the person visualising for, you

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Sangha.rakshita(continued): know, what is being visualised. It's not as though you have just created a picture in front of yourself, like a picture on the wall, which you just see without any feeling. You must not only create the picture, create the image, not only visualise the

Buddha or Padmasambhava or Milarepa, but feel the, but feel their qualities or as Milarepa puts it to "behold them with faithful eyes". You'll only then get a blessing from them, not that they literally will then give you a blessing but as it were you get from it what you put into it. Do you see what I mean?

So therefore you can't regard the visualisation just as a concentration exercise. That's why broadly speaking we link it to, these sort of practices, to the Order because Order members have as such committed themselves to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha and therefore have a certain feeling toward the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, in particular a certain feeling towards one or other of the aspects of Buddhahood as represented by the different figures in the Mahayana and the Vajrayana. So it isn't enough just to visualise like you might visualise a red disc or a blue square, you need to bring also to the visualisation the positive emotions of faith in the Buddhist sense, and joy and reverence and so on. Otherwise it isn't really a visualisation practice.

Abbaya: You were saying in some other context that to a lot of people the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas might just be like pictures on a wall and that one would have to develop this emotional response in some other way. How does that relate here?

Sangharakshita: Well, if one found that one was able to visualise in the sense of forming or creating eidetic images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas without any corresponding feeling. Well, you'd have to find out where your feelings were and make some sort of contact with them and lead them by degrees to the visualised figure by or through whatsoever intermediate degrees or practices or experiences were available to you. Perhaps those of the arts, perhaps those of communicating with other people, but you've got to establish contact with your feelings and then relate those feelings to what you visualise. Otherwise it's just a cold sort of exercise which is not even a Buddhist spiritual practice, anybody could do it.

Pl right, next verse.

Voice: It's interesting that, how he uses the word after that line rain of grace:-

And fulfilled will be your wishes.

Like up till now they've not in a sense been....

Sangharakshita: Right. That's true, yes, indeed. Your real wish, the wish of, as it were, the better Rechungpa. If you like, the real wish of the real Rechungpa will be fulfilled and he will not go on experiencing all the frustrations that he has experienced so far.

Voice: So it's faith that is the bridge between your lower self and your higher, would you say?

Sangharakshita: Well, you could put it that way. Or, more generally, that positive emotion is the bridge between the lower and higher self. Without positive emotion, as I think I've emphasised before, there is no spiritual progress at all. Because it's emotion, there's the link with the lower self; because it's positive emotion there's the link with the higher self. Especially if it's not only positive but spiritualised emotion.

Voice: What do you mean by spiritualised emotion?

Sangharakshita: Refined. Refined. (Pause.)

All right, next verse.

Voice: Rechungpa, listen to me for a m~~~~t~~

On the tips of my ears

A sun and moon shine, glowing as a radiant rainbow.

This reveals the Union of Wisdom and Skill, This proves my steadfast Illumination. Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

Sangharakshita: Yes, the sun and moon represent or reveal the Union of Wisdom and Skill, that is to say prajna and upaya. Sometimes of course it's represented as, or understood as wisdom and compassion; upaya and karuna, skill and compassion, being considered the same thing.

So on the tips of Milarepa's ears a sun and moon are shining, glowing just like a rainbow, and these represent the union in Milarepa himself of perfect wisdom and perfect skill, that is to say skillful means or compassion. And the fact that in Milarepa these two are united in the highest possible degree means that his Illumination, his enlightenment, is completely steadfast, that he has gained in fact supreme enlightenment, that he is a Buddha. You could say that Wisdom and Skill represent the theoretical and the practical, the internal and the external, the subjective and the objective, the intellectual and the emotional, but at this point; all

Sangharakshita(continued): those dichotomies have been transcended and all those pairs of opposites are completely unified, are completely blended on the highest possible conceivable level; samsara and nirvana, bodhi and klesa, all those pairs of opposites have been united. The five Passions and the five Buddha Awarenesses. This is the state of what the Vajrayana calls yuganaddha or sometimes it's translated "two-in-oneness".

So Milarepa has reached or realised that state of supreme non-duality which is not a blank or negative sort of state but which is a positive sort of blending of various sets of polar opposites, a state in which they interpenetrate each other. Not that both are cast away, both are abandoned; what is abandoned is only their separateness, they are unified. Both, well no longer both, continue to be present or continue to be both, continue to be present or continue to be experienced. You experience both - the samsara and nirvana but you don't experience samsara as samsara or nirvana as nirvana. You experience the samsara and the nirvana as that which is neither samsara nor nirvana while in a sense being both samsara and nirvana. This is the state of yuganaddha - two-in-oneness.

So here mention is especially made of Wisdom and Skill, prana and upaya. Milarepa has unified these. In this sense his illumination, his enlightenment is steadfast. He doesn't oscillate between the pairs of opposites. (Pause.)

All right, let's read the next verse.

Voice: Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment.' 4

The five-colored rays from my nostrils,

Streaming like jewelled threads, Are the essence of sound, a marvel. This shows my mastery of Prana Through the Vajra-reciting Yoga. This proves that I have entered The Central Channel of my life-Force.

Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

Sangharakshita: So Milarepa

END OF SIDE A.

TAPE 2, Side B, REt:HUNGPA'S REPENTPNCE

Sangharakshita: The five-coloured rays are streaming from his nostrils like jewelled threads, they are the essence of sound, a marvel.

They are the essence of sound because there is no sound, that is to say no human sound, no voice, without breath. And the fact they are turned into five-coloured rays like jewelled threads shows his mastery of prana, his mastery not only of breath in the ordinary sense but of the vital energies of his being, his energies themselves through the Vajra-reciting Yoga.

There's a note here. Usually (?Vajra-jappa) means the recitation of a mantra but the note here says:

A very important breathing exercise almost indispensable to all Tantric Yoga practices, it is also called the "Three Vajra Words Recitation." Describing this exercise briefly, the yogi recites the "Om" upon inhaling, "Ah" at the pause, and "Hum" upon exhaling, thus coordinating a complete breathing process with the recitation of three essential Vajra words. These Three Vajra Words represent also body, speech and mind, not in their ordinary mundane state, but in their state of potentiality with regard to the three kayas. Om Ah Hum are said to be the seeds of the three kayas. This is why one sometimes visualises oneself, or a Buddha or Bodhisattva, with Om here, Ah here, Hum here - that is to say head, throat and heart or chest. So this represents the fact that in one's body, one's ordinary mundane body, is present the potentiality of the Nirmanakaya;

in one's speech the potentiality of Sambhogakaya or transcendental communication;

and in one's mind or heart the potentiality of Dharmakaya.

So this, this (?Vajra-jappa), this Om P~ F~im, this represents as it were the gradual activation of these seeds in such a way that your body, speech and mind eventually do become the three kayas of the Buddha. So the fact that, you know, these five-coloured rays come from the nostrils, ah, means that he has mastered his Prana, mastered his energies through this Vajra-reciting Yoga and has in fact completely transformed them.

And: This proves that I have entered

The Central Channel of my Life-Force.

The Central Channel is... this is a reference to a particular kind of Tantric Yoga in which one visualises or imagines a median nerve, as it is sometimes called, in, not the physical body, but so to speak, the psychical body with. .. ah, this is usually visualised as pal~ green in colour.... and then on one side a red channel, on the other side a white channel;

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Sangharakshita(continued): the red channel representing the so-called~feminine forces and the white one the so-called "masculine", and the green channel in the middle represents the unification of the two. It is said that usually one's energies go either to the right or to the left. One must bring all one's energies together into the median nerve. This is perhaps a colourful way, you know, based upon actual visualisation practice, of saying that one should unify all one's energies. This is what Milarepa - has done, he has unified all his energies and he has transformed all his energies. So instead of ordinary mundane body, speech and mind, he now has the three kayas, you know, of a Buddha.

Voice: So those nerves, they don't actually exist in the physical body?

Sangharakshita: No, no this is what is generally said though sometimes they are described in such a way as to suggest that they are actual physical nerves within the body: but no, that is not really so. So when it is said that the function of a particular kind of yoga is to drive all the energies up into the median nerve, what they are really speaking about is unification, integration of energies. Though of course there may well be a visualisation practice in which you visualise, you know, a median nerve in your body as having a particular colour and actually visualise your energies in various forms actually entering into that. That is °ust to reinforce~9~he idea and to get you to experience it emotionally much more.

Do you see what I mean? - Instead of just thinking about it in abstract terms.

Voice: But it's still a bit different from feeling that you kind of c~n physically push your energies

Sangharakshita: Yes, yes, it is not a question of sort of taking that tickling feeling that you sometimes get at the foot of your -9 tine and sort of l~ading it up so that it goes creeping and crawling up, though sometimes it's described like that though it isn't really like that. You

may even get

those sort of sensations when meditating, but it is not that this particular process is talking about.

?i~ryamitra: Is there a corresponding... what would you call it.... physiological aspect to that? I mean in the sense that if this is talking about spiritual or psychical energies could the same not be applied to the physical system?

Sangharakshita: Well, one does have the spinal column and the spinal cord with the sympathetic and parasympathetic, ypu know, nervous systems.

People do try to correlate and sone try tp correlate the particular psychic centres, the chakras, with various nerve ganglias. Such correspondences can be established but nonetheless the yogic visualisation process - the central channel and the two other main nerves as visualised in this sort of yoga - are not to be identified with any nerves in the physical body, even though they may correlate w~th~such nerves and even though in these particular yogic practices may have repercussions on that particular level4 Mmm? - Even that; but nonetheless the two things are distinct.

Aryamitra: TTould you say the colours again?-"The middle one was green.

~rakshita: This is according to certain traditions. Usually, as I recollect in the Nyingmapa tradition, it's usually a pale green colour and it's called (?Abhiduti) in Buddhist Tantric literature, (?Abhiduti), and then the nerve on the one side is lalana and on the other is t?~asanp, and one is red and one is white. But I don't remember whether Talana is white and Rasana red, or the other way round. We'd have to look that up. But one visualises a green central column like a hollow bamboo and the red and white nerves as it were twining round,one clockwise, and the other anti-clockwise.

Voice: It struck me that.. ..(words unclear)

Sangharakshita: Yes or, and of Hermes. All those sort of correlations have been mentioned by people working on the subject. (Pause.)

But any~~ay the

general significance of this picture Milarepa is presenting to Rechungpa is clear. Not just a picture, well, it's the thing itself so to speak which he has enabled him to see.

All right, next verse then.

Bill Moffat: Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment.'

At the mid-point between my eyes,

Appears the auspicious sign of the radiant Dsudbhu, This shows the essence of pure form,

This proves the blessed radiance of Buddha's compassion~

Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

Sangharakshita: ~mm. So at the mid-point between Milarepa's eyes appears the auspicious sign of the radiant Dsudbhu. I'm not sure if that's Sanskrit or Tibetan, seems more like Tibetan, but the note says one of the thirty-two names of the Buddha which suggests of course that Milarepa has certain Buddha-like qualities if he is not in fact actually ~ Buddha.

Voice: Is that the hair that curls round?

Sangharakshita: Yes. So This shows the essence of pure form, This proves the blessed radiance of Buddha's

compassion~

In some Mahayana sutras a ray of light, you know, goes out from this, this urna as it is called in Sanskrit between the Buddha's brows and encircles the whole universe. So therefore one could say that is the Buddha's compassion, you know, going forth and encircling all living beings. So this too Milarepa shows Rechungpa. So

Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

Voice: Does... Is there an element of making the point that himself is the form, the sort of historical form of Milarepa is the radiance of the Buddha's compassion. I was wondering in relation to things like the ideas of incarnations and tulku and things.

Sangharakshita: No. I think the meaning is that this particular auspicious sign, this radiant white hair sending forth light represents or if you like symbolises the compassion of the Buddha, you know, extending in all directions. I think that simply is the meaning. (Pause.)

The essence of pure form is presumably light, just light. (Pause.) All right, carry straight on, someone read the next verse.

4'.

Voice: Rechungpa, listen to me for a ~m~t~

A red lotus with eight petals opens in my mouth, Adorned with a garland of consonants and vowels. They are the symbols of all Vajra teachings - That which is without end or limitation. Beholding them with reverent eyes, You will realize all Dharmas are your speech. Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

Sangharakshita: ~nm. A red lotus with eight petals opens in my mouth,. Red is significant because red is the colour of love, fascination, the colour of communication one could say, and speech, after all, and letters of the alphabet are concerned with communication . So:-

A red lotus with eight petals opens in my mouth, Adorned with a garland of consonants and vowels.

You get this garland of letters in both Buddhism and Hinduism. It's the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, you know, considered as a sort of garland. Do you know what I mean? Sometimes they are written out in a circle like a garland. Here perhaps a particular number of consonants and vowels is inscribed on each of the eight petals of this red lotus. You often get visualisation of this sort of thing in the ~Vajr~yana~ you ~visualise letters of the alphabet, both vowels and consonants. Sometimes you visualise all sixty-four, I think it's sixty-four, vowels ~nd conson~nts of the Devanagiri alphabet.

They are the symbols of all Vajra teachings.

There are two meanings here, one could say. One meaning being~ that one could in a more general way regard letters of the alphabet, th~t is to say vowels and consonants, as standing for, or representing, all the knowledge that can be communicated through speech. Do you see the idea?

hit also from a more Vajrayanic point of view the consonants and vowels make up all

mantras. Yeah? So from the Vajrayana point of view, it's not just words in the ordinary sense, and therefore knowledge in the ordinary sense, you know, that is made up from these letters, blit mantras, which of course represent knowledge, or embody knowledge of a quite °~- different kind - yoi~ could say more direct, intuitive, transcendental. So where you've got letters, you've got knowledge, where you've got mantras you've got knowledge in a deeper sense. So -

A red lotus with eight (garlands) opens in my mouth, Adorned with a garland of consonants and vowels. They are the symbols of all Vajra teachings,- That which is without end or limitation.

Sangharakshita(continued): That is to say the Vajrayana teaching itself as embodied in the mantras.

Beholding them with reverent eyes, You will realize all Dharmas are your speech.

So when you visualise mantras, the Cm Ah Hum, again this too is not just a visualisation exercise, because these mantras have a deep spiritual meaning and significance, even though it cannot be completely reduced to conceptual terms. So if you visualise the Cm Ah Hum, ~t~~ not just a visualisp~~tion exercise, it is a spiritual practice. You try to experience or feel a certain quality, a spiritual quality in these letters which you visualise, especially in connection with their colours.

Voice: Does that mean that each consonant or each mantric symbol corresponds to a sound? An actual very simple sound?

Sangharakshita: Right. Yes.

Voice: But does that sound have a direct correspondence with an aspect of Reality, in other words, is it arbitrary or.

Sangharakshita: No, in the Vajrayana tradition it is not arbitrary.

The Vajrayana purports at least to establish a system of correspondences which is, as it were, scientific. Do you see what I mean? It is not considered to be arbitrary. The correlation of colours and points of the compass and so on is not considered to be arbitrary.

Voice: Ri~ht.~~I~s it 8 bit like if you play a chord on a mundane instrument it will resonate a tr~~nscendentsl chord? You know, if you put two chords together and play one, the other vibrates in harmony, a similar kind of process.

Sangharak~hita: Yes, this is so. I have written something like this in the Survey, you might recollect, on the Tantras.

So, Beholding them, that is to say the garland of consonants and vowels, the symbols of all Vajra teaching, regarding them with reverent eyes, or

Beholding them with reverent eyes, You will realize all Dharmas are your speech.

You can take that in two ways, because Dharma here has at least two meanings. You can realise that all Dharmas, all the teachings of the Buddha, are your teachings. Whatever the Buddha has said, you have said because you have now gained Enlightenment. That is one way of looking at

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~angharak5hita:(cnntinued) it. Or dharmas can me~Sn phenomena, so to speak, dharmas with a ~m~1l~~~

So you can realise that all the objects in the universe

are vehicles of communication for Buddhas. Buddhas can express themselves through all the phenomena of existence and that therefore you can too, - - inasmuch as you also are now a Buddha and are now Enlightened.

So - Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it com are to this wondrous ame?

(Pause.) All right, last verse.

Abhaya: Rechungpa1 listen to me for a moment. From the center of my heart stream
Glowing beams of light.

This shows the Trikaya's immutability, This shows the unity of mercy and the Void. Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, But how can it compare to this wondrous game?

Sangharakshita: ~nrn. (Pause.)

So, ~entreofmheart stream. Heart

stream means that stream or flow of thoughts, here of course obviously spiritual thoughts, transcendental thoughts, which makes up the heart or mind.

From the center of my heart stream Ah no. Stream is taken as a verb here.

stream

Glowing beams of light.

This shows the Trikaya's immutability,

This shows the unity of mercy and the~Void.

Why do you think that is? Why do you think the glowing beams of light streaming from the centre of Milarepa's heart show the immutability of the Trikaya and the unity of mercy and the,Void? Is there any particular reason why they should?

Voice: Well, is it anything to do with, like the mercy and the Void, is that to do with what you were saying about the Buddha, the light coming out of his forehead, like compassion?

Sangharakshita: Mrnrn. It's also like the, ~hat is it, union of wisdom and skill. Here you've got w)ercy and the Void; you usually have rupa and the Void, rups and sunyata. These are all #fferent pairs of opposites.

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fi.

Sangharakshita(continued): They've all been unified. Milarepa has transcended all of them in their separateness. And the beams of light show that.~Per~haps one shouldn't try to pin down the meaning too specifically. (Pause.)

Voice: Is there a danger in thinking, I mean because these, these two, eh, well, sort of opposites, well not opposites, but you have wisdom and compassion. Is there a danger in thinking that compassion is dependent upon wisdom, whereas ~~~~ just that we just experienced it as arising from wisdom. Like the story of the Buddha how he absorbed the enlightenment experience then that image appeared. Is there a danger in thinking..

Sang~ara~kshita: Well, put it this way, you know, if one thinks of enlightenment, if one thinks of the enlightenment experience as having different aspects, yeah, those different aspects can be displayed, so to speak, in time only serially. If there are five aspects and you want to mention all five, you have to mention them one after the other. So it would seem as though one precedes the other mmm? But presumably i~ the enlightenment experience out of time, wisdom does not succeed compassion, nor does compassion succeed wisdom. Both are there at the same time so to spe~k, hut outside time. So it may be in somebody~s historical experience that wisdom g~ives birth to compassion or that compassion gives birth to wisdom, but sooner or later both have to be there, both have to be experienced and outside time so to speak, well, there's no question of one preceding or succeeding the other.

Voice: Or being differentiated?

Sangharakshita: Cr even of being differentiated, because when you speak of different aspects, what are you really speaking in terms of? Space? You're sort of visualising a square with four different sides or a three- dimensional figure, maybe a cube with six faces; this is what you are in fact thinking in terms of. But if you don't think, you know, of the enlightenment experience of Buddhahood in terms of space, you can't think of it as having different aspects. If you don't speak of it in terms of time, you can't speak or think in terms of those different aspects being successively realised in time. ~!rnm? I mean, that sort of language is just an accommodation to our limited way of thinking and experience. So there are no aspects and therefore there is no question really of one aspect

Sangbarakshita(continued): bein~ realised one after the other. But we cannot but think of the enlightenment experience a-s having say at least a compassion aspect and a wisdom experience, a wisdom aspect,- but havin~ differentiated them in that way and having brought them down to earth, so to speak, within time, wel-l, one must come first, and the other must come second, and if they are realised, they are realised one after the other. But this is just an accommodation to the limitations of our thinking and experiencing. (Pause.)

All right, let's see,-we've got a little time,-what Rechungpa's reaction to all this is. Someone like to read that prose paragraph.

Voice: Rechungpa, however, paid no attention to the Jetsun's advice, but sat there silently and in deep resentment. He looked askance at the miraculous scene, but showed not the slightest sign of interest in it. Then he said, "There is nothing surprising in all this; it is more amusing to watch the play of goats." Although the Jetsun had worked such a great miracle, Rechungpa showed neither interest nor admiration, but continued to demand that the Jetsun give back his books. For a while he merely sat there in persistent indignation and silence. Then he (got up), stamped heavily, and sat down again. Putting his elbows on his knees, and resting his chin on his hands, he began to hum (meaninglessly). -

Sangharakshita: You can see how deep his obstinacy was and, you know, how deep the frustration and resentment. It's extraordinary really, one can hardly believe that such a thing is possible but I'm sure it is. He shows all the manifestations of extreme rage.

Voice: It shows the more angry you get, the more absurd you make yourself look really.

Sangharakshita: Yes, yes I mean here is Milarepa putting on this wonderful, truly entertaining performance and showing him his three bodies of a Buddha in this sort of way and, you know, you can see how sullen and resentful and unco-operative Rechungpa is. He says, "There is nothing surprising in all this; it is more amusing to watch the play of goats" as if to say, "Well, I'm just not going to be entertained; I'm not going to be amused; I'm determined to be angry; I'm determined to be resentful; there's nothing you can do about it."

And sometimes people do get themselves into that state of mind. You are determined not to be pleased; you have decided not to be pleased; nobody is going to chivy you out of your negative state, you are

el.

Sangharakshita(continued): going to jolly well see to it; they can be as positive as they like but it's not going to have any influence on you at all; it's not going to make the slightest impression; you're negative and you want to be negative and negative you jolly well will remain whatever anybody does. That's your attitude. Yeah? I shall please myself. I shall be negative if I want to be. I've got the right to be negative (laughter).

i~ don't usually go so far as to say we~v~ got a duty to be

negative but we certainly say that we've got a right to be negative if we want to. I'm entitled to be negative. So you see the resistance that people can put up. So you can also understand how useless it is to try to force people, to try to make ~ople positive by force, it just can't be done. Their power of resistance is far~greater than your power of coercion. (Pause.)

You know the little verse, you know:

Induce the equine quadruped

To element aquatic,

Exgurgitation, it is said,

Must still be automatic!

(laughter.)

Voice: What was that again?

S~nsharakshita: Induce the equine quadruped To element aquatic,
Exgurgitation, it is said, Must still be automatic!

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink!

Voice: Whose version is that?

Sangharakshita: I don't know~!(laughter.) Might even be anonymous. It isn't mine anyway.(Laughter.)

So people are equine quadrupeds, aren't they? Or they can be. ~nd you can even induce them to, you know, the element aquatic, but when it comes to exgurgitation, when it comes to drinking, well, they just drink or not as they please. It has to be automatic, so to speak, spontaneous, it can't be enforced.

Abhaya: Does that mean... I thought that ultimately the positive, the (word unclear) is stronger than the negative and in fact eventually will overcome. But this seems to indicate....

Sangharakshita: No, put it this way, perhaps it would be more correct to say the positive is more patient. The patience of the positive will outlast the obstinacy of the negative. It would be perhaps safer to put it in that way rather than that the positive is stronger than the negative, which suggests a sort of overpowering, a superior force as it were.

Voice: So it's like more in terms of durability.

Sangharakshita: Yes. I mean, however obstinate Rechungpa may be, however long he persists in his obstinacy, Milarepa is capable of persisting in his patience far longer.

Voice: ~ould you say there is also another ele~ment apart from his - obstinacy? fle says, 1,It is more amusing to watch the play of go~t5~fl I mean some people actually find it more amusing, to use that word, to sort of watch "Coronation Street" or something. like~that4...

Sangharakshita: Than Shakespeare.

Voice: Yes, than Shakespeare.

Sangharakshita: Well it could. I suspect that Rechungpa here is deliberately being difficult. He is quite capable of enjoying th~s enter- tainment, but he refuses to do so because he is so angry and so resentful. Pnd you know, people can be like this if they are in a bit of a mood or a state. You know, you can lay-on a beautiful;rna~~l. forDthe~~.whjch normally they could really enjoy, they are quite capable of enjoying, btit they have decided to be displeased, so they tl~it~ their noses ~p at it, as we say.

Voice: Is it attention they are after?

Sangharakshita: Mmm?

Voice: Is it attention they are after?

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Sangharakshita: y~rell, Rechungpa seems to be getting all the ~ttention he wants. He wants his own way. He wants his own way. What does it all go back to?-Not being allowed to stop the night in that~village on the wa~ and spend some time with the lay supporters. He's not been able to do it, he's not h~d his own way. Milarepa has frustrated him and that is r~nkling in his mind all the time. i~rell, there may be other things even before that, well, what about his going to Thdia? Even that wasn't altogether him getting his own way.

Voice: I get the feelin~ that at the back of his mind he actually knows perfectly well what's going--

Sangharakshita: He p~obably does.

Voice: --on and the wrongness of his position.

Sangharakshita: It '5 almost like a spoiled child, isn't he? I mean children behave like this sometimes. Yeah? I saw - when was that, no so, some time ago - a little girl and she was 90 obstinate. I forget what it was about. It was some quite trivial thing. I think it was giving back to a little boy a toy she had forcibly taken away from him. And her mother said, "No, give it back." but she wouldn't and you could tell you could have killed that little ~irl, but she would not have given that toy back. She didn't care what happened to her but she 5ust was not going to give it back. You: know, you could see the ~bstinacy and defiance and the sullenness. She went all quiet, she wouldn't speak, she wouldn't say anything, she wouldn't look at her mother. Just, you know, she just kept hold of that toy, and she was not going to give it back. And you could see that blind obstinacy there. Yeah? You could h~ve thrashed her biit she wouldn't have given it back.

Voice: What usually makes them, whoever it is, give in, if you like, is it seems like they create their o~rn isolation

Sangharakshita: Yes. Right.

Voice: They go away and sulk. Somebody says ~?All right, I give up" and they go away and sulk and they get more and more miserable and there's nobody to sort of play their little game with them and in the end they just... they're in such a miserable state that they kind of come back and say, "I don't want it anyway~"

ot..

Sangharakshita: Yes, or they pretend it all hasn't happened or act as if it all hasn't happened. One can't help thinking perhaps that Milarepa's giving Rechungpa a bit too much attention. Perhaps he should have left him to ~et on with it. But anyway perhaps that's not his way, maybe his way of functionin~ is different.

ìryamitra: A.S.Neill, the guy who started Summerhill school, would would probably take a toy from the kid as well, something like that, or - tell her not to give it back. The idea behind that that she would straight away give it back to the boy.

San~harakshita: Mmm. Sometimes if you can get a child to laugh you can break through all this. But to force them is counterproductive very often.

Voice: I~~5 interesting because you're talking about children but that's what adults do.

Sangharakshita: That's what adults are (laughter) to a great extent. Well, yes, lo~k at how childish Rechun~pa is being. He is a sort of scholar. Maybe, he's a monk or at least a yogi, a grown-up man; but look at his childish behaviour. He's sulking because he ha5~~t had his own way. Fe's been deprived of his bit of social life, you know, he's been marched -. straight to the cave, you know, to meditate.

Anyway, we'd better leave him there stewing in it until tomorrow. Putting his elbows on his knees, and resting his chin on his hands, he began to hum (meaninglessly). People do that when they're suppressing anger - hmm, hmm, hmm (laughter)- you can ~lways tell, er, jerkina their foot and they are really angry and it's just showing in that sort of way. Anyway,

tomorrow we'll see how Milarepa handles him.

End of Tape 2 Side B of "Rechungpa's Repentance".

55.

RECHUNGPA' S REPENTANCE TAPE 3 - DAY 2

S: Would somebody like to read that first paragraph at the bottom of page 445?

Devaraja: "In the meantime, the Jetsun's body had become radiantly transparent; on his Secret Center appeared Buddha Dorje Danyi, on his Navel Center appeared Buddha Dem Chog, on his Heart Center, Buddha Jeba Dorje, on his Throat Center, Buddha Mahamaya, between his eyebrows, Buddha Sakyamuni, and upon his head, Buddha Sungwong Duba, all encircled by many deities and their retinues. These divine bodies, vivid, yet devoid of any self-nature, were all distinctly visible under a great five-colored canopy of light."

S: So you see what is happening here? What happened previously in the course of the previous transformation? Essentially it was a transformation of the ordinary body, speech and mind of Milarepa, into the three kayas of a Buddha. Here the transformation is rather different. Here, the basis for the transformation is the so-called Psychic Centres. How many of them are mentioned? There is the Secret Centre, which is at the base of the spine, the Navel Centre, the Heart Centre, the Throat Centre, the Centre between the eyebrows, and the one above the head. That is altogether six. The general principle is the same, Transformation. Some of these Buddhas are known from other sources, some apparently are not. Dem Chog, for instance, is Samvara (?). Just one point before we go on to the verses which describe the same transformation in greater detail

"These divine bodies, vivid, yet devoid of any self-nature." What do you think that means?

Abhaya: I think it's like a (inaudible) into the magic show, that is always being spoken about.

S: Yes, but why is that spoken of as devoid of self-nature?

A Voice: It's transcendental.

S: It's transcendental; yes. But what exactly does it mean?

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"Devoid of self-nature" or why is it devoid of self-nature?

In this particular instance why is it devoid of self-nature or what is self-nature?

A Voice: Well, it's no self-order - spontaneous.

A Voice: Spontaneous as opposed to the self full of

Abhaya: It's impermanent - there is no un-changing entity.

S: There is no un-changing entity. It arises in dependence on causes and conditions. It cannot be defined as absolutely existent or absolutely non-existent. In that sense it is said to be devoid of self-nature. It is of course one of the basic teachings of Buddhism that all things are devoid of self-nature in that sense. In the sense of having a sort of indestructible nucleus which does not ever change.

Simon: Is it particularly a (inaudible) that must not even think of the transcendental as a sort of ultimate thing? That even something, you know, really magnificent and transcendental is also devoid of self-nature.

S: Yes. Of course there is a difference between the conditioned, the sense in which the conditioned is devoid of self-nature, and the sense in which the unconditioned is devoid of self-nature. Do you see what I mean? Here, one could say that the transformation that Milarepa presents is of a conditioned nature, even though the significance is unconditioned. Because Milarepa produces this transformation, this apparition, if you like, this

phantasmagoria of himself, so it is something that is produced. It is produced in the sense that it arises in dependence on causes and conditions; it is devoid of self-nature. Do you see what I mean?

Devaraja: What would then be the voidness - the unconditioned devoid of self-nature?

S: Ah, well what do you think that would be?

Ahhaya: Well, there is no basic ground against which all this happens. that is no unchanging, sort of, anything.

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S: Yes. Or you could say the absence of self-nature, in the case of the unconditioned, is its inconceivability and inex- pressability. It cannot be tied down as being this or being that. It cannot be conceived or defined in any particular way. You can't even define it, you know, strictly speaking, as the void or the transcendental. In Guenther's term, it is a completely open dimension. flut,I mean, we do tend to think of the absobute or the transcendental in sort of, well in ontological terms. Whether in other sort of ground, in ultimate ground of being,or, you know, something of that sort. That is certainly not the Buddhist view, the Buddhist teaching.

Simon? Is it Guenther who also says - they are just operational concepts or something~

S: Yes. That is so~ though, in a way that doesn't help us very much because then the question arises: well, aren't they true? You have to believe, it seems you have to be able to believe that a statement is true in some sense before you actually base your life upon" it. You can't simply postulate something as an operational concept believing it is nothing but an operational concept, and proceed to operate in accordance with it, can you? That isn't, I think, psychologically possible. Y~u have to believe that it is, in some sense, it is true in an objective manner. Even though, again, in a sense~ it isn' t. But do you see what I mean? You can' t postulate something purely as an oper~tional concept in cold blood, as it were. I mean, Guenther almost sort of suggests that you can, but I don't think this is psychologically possible.

Simon? A Voice: I remember you talking sort of more methaphysically when we talked in these terms and not psychologically.

S: Yes, you are talking methaphysically, but when you speak of operational concepts you are speaking of concepts which are postu- lated for practical purposes even though you believe that they have no theoretical validity; so, I say that you cannot really do that in cold blood. You cannot postulate something purely on an opera- tional concept, you have, psychologically speaking, at the s~une

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time, to believe, that it has got some sort of theoretical validity. Some sort of objective validity, too. Otherwise you can't, sort of, gear yourself to it.

Abhaya: So how do this apply in the case of the void? If you've got to believe that it has some objective validity?

S: Well, it's not that you have to, you do. Because your mind just works like that. You have to remind yourself that it is only an operational concept, but actually, in your heart of hearts, so to speak, you don't really believe that it is. You believe that, well, yes, Reality is void, or whatever. Whatever you have been, as it were, educated to think of it as being. That it is Absolute Mind. You can't, sort of, operate on the basis of Absolute Mind being only an Operational Concept. If you really believe that, I think probably, you wouldn't operate at all. So it isn't an easy sort of position. I think Guenther is being, though what he says is correct, he's being a little bit too slick with it, as though it's an easy matter, to postulate an operational concept, off your own bat, as it were and then proceed to operate in accordance with it. Not believing that it has in fact any objective validity. I don't think that is possible. But what happens is, that you take over from the Buddhist tradition various concepts, I mean especially if you function within the Mahayana context various concepts. Like that of the Void, like that of the Bhuddhisattva, like that of Absolute Mind. You begin by taking them quite literally. Yes. And basing yourself upon them accordingly, but eventually, you come to the understanding that they are in fact operational concepts. But, by the time you really realise that it in a sense, doesn't matter. You have to realise that, I mean otherwise, you are still a victim of substantialism. You are still investing things with a reality that they don't possess, or attaching to concepts a significance which they don't possess. But I don't think, you actually, yourself, as an individual, postulate these operational concepts, in the way that Guenther, sort of, perhaps, suggests. Do you see what I mean?

Mike: I think we must have an emotional emphasis or response to what is said.

S: Yes. I'm not speaking about that, I am speaking about that we cannot believe that our own statements about Reality are purely

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fictitious, if we are to base our lives on them practically. If we believe that they are pure fictions, as in fact they are ultimately, we should just not be able to use them. But on the other hand, unless we have some understanding, that they do not possess complete objective validity, we shall not be able to use them either. So, usually, since we, as it were, study

Buddhism, we start off by assuming, by taking for granted, that when we speak about the Voidness, there is actually something called the Void, about which we are speaking. In the same way, when we speak about Absolute Mind, we assume that there is actually something called Absolute Mind about which we are speaking. That the concept has some sort of objective validity, some sort of theoretical validity. That it is not just a useful fiction for practical spiritual purposes. But, you know, gradually it dawns upon us that that is in fact the position, but by that time we have gathered sufficient momentum in our spiritual lives, so that realisation doesn't have an inhibiting kind of effect.

Abhaya: So this suggests like, well it suggest to me that the traditional philosophy, in a sense, is not suitable for the West because it might lead to this misleading sort of

S: Yes, I ~ould say it is suitable provided you can talk it quite literally to begin with. Yes. But, you cannot, as it were say to yourself, well, the aim of the Spiritual Life is to realise absolute mind. Of course there is no such thing as Absolute Mind. It is a pure fiction. Well, can you gear yourself then to the realisation of Absolute Mind? It's not possible. You have to believe in, at least the quasi-reality of the Absolute Mind before you can gear yourself to its realisation. But on the other hand if you are deeply convinced in a dogmatic sort of way, that there really is such a thing as Absolute Mind, out there, for you to realise, just as described in the Buddhist Scriptures, you will never get anywhere near the realisation of it⁴ so to speak. But even, in saying that, one is using language in a non-operational kind of way.

Abhaya: The medieval philosophies, I think the scholastic philosophies have~this distinction between essence and their existence. I wondered whether that might be of use or would that be too misleading.

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S: I don't think it really is relevant here.

Abhaya: I was thinking in terms of the existence representing the conditioned, and always changing, and the essence as the unconditioned.

Simon: The essence, you still think of it as being a material, an objective kind of thing, don't you?

Abhaya: You do but Bhante's just been saying you've got (inaudible) to do this, you can't pretend not to do it so why not do it properly.

Uplekha: I suppose in a way you need even to have a sort of intellectual appreciation of its ultimate fiction, but, even though, you accept the fact that emotionally you respond to it as an objective thing in order so that you can grow into it ... you can prevent yourself getting stuck into a particular thing.

Kulamitra? What about when you don't respond very strongly to one of those beliefs? Like, I found, doing the six elements practice I mean~ for the first five elements I really believe that there is that universal element so I found it relatively easy to imagine, you know, giving back that element. But when I got to the sixth element, consciousness, I got a bit blocked, you know, I couldn't really believe what was this universal consciousness element?

S: Well, in that case, I think one can think about it in a different way. One can, perhaps, think in terms of one's ideas, that one normally thinks of as one's own, for instance one understands the theory of gravitation. Well you didn't discard the theory of gravitation for yourself. You learned about it, that particular knowledge has come to you from the outside so you could in fact give back all those ideas which you have taken from the outside. In as much as normally you identify yourself with them, and think of them as your own, to that extent it will be a relinquishing of your ego consciousness, so to speak, on that particular level, in that particular respect. If you give back all that you have learned to the source from which you

learned it, there won't be very much left. (Laughter).

Long pause.

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Anyway all this has arisen out of the statement

"These divine bodies, vivid, yet devoid of self-nature, were all distinctly visible under a great five-colored canopy of Light. "

The adjective "vivid" is also interesting. The fact that you realise that something is devoid of self-nature, doesn't mean that you experience it any the less intensely. ~? In fact if anything you experience it all the more intensely. (Pause)

Alright, let's hear what Milarepa sings. He's going to give a more detailed description of the same phenomenon. Maybe someone would like to read that all the way through because it doesn't really add anything to what's already been discussed afterwards.

"My body is the Infinite Palace of Goddesses, Wherein dwell all Buddhas (in the Universe). In the Secret Center where Bliss is preserved Dwells the Buddha Dorje Danyi and his retinue, Glorifying my sealed Cakra of Bliss.

He embodies Buddha's Innate Wisdom.

In the Conjuration Cakra at my navel Dwells the Buddha Dem Chog and his retinue; This is the Cakra and two-and-sixty gods, Where in essence dwells the Vajra Body.

In the Conjuration Cakra at my navel

Dwells the Buddha Dem Chog and his retinue~ This is the Cakra and two-and-sixty gods, Where in essence dwells the Vajra Body.

In the Dharma Cakra in my heart

Dwells Buddha Jedor and nine deities;

They are the Essence of the Three Sattvas (?). This is the Cakra of the Vajra Mind.

In the Enjoyment Cakra in my throat Dwells the Buddha Mahamaya and his retinue,
Symbolizing the enjoyment of all forms. This is the Cakra where the Vajra is expressed.

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'z.

In the White Conch Cakra between my eyebrows

Dwells Buddha Sakayamuni and many deities; he is the symbol of Wisdom and ~erits. This is
the Cakra of Unity!

In the Great Bliss Cakra in my head Dwells Buddha Sungwong Duba and many gods; This is
the Cakra of Great Bliss, Where the Dadi and Bindus both unite.

Son, if you can identify your self with the Buddha, The Divine Body will vividly appear;

Your flesh and blood will be transformed into

the Rainbow Body.

Of all marvels, this is most marvellous~.

Son, do not lose your faith

But increase your v~neration~~

S: So this song, like the prose passage itself, continues the idea of transformation, but speaks of it in a much more specific manner. I take it you're familiar with this idea of the Cakra's? I did touch upon it yesterday, didn't I? These Cakras, if you like, these centres of energy are said to be strung out, so to speak, along the median nerve. So Milarepa is describing each Cakra as being transformed into, you know, a number of, well a whole entourage, a whole mandala, of Buddhas. In other words, he's saying, or he's suggesting, that at every level, energy is transformed in this particular way. It's not as though one is just sort of transformed in a general way, one is transformed specifically down to the last detail, as it were. (Long pause.)

You notice that in the first verse he begins by saying:

"My body is the Infinite Palace of Goddesses,

Wherein dwell all Buddhas (in the Universe)." What does he mean by that, do you think?

(Long Pause.)

What does he mean by saying

'~y body is the Infinite Palace of Goddesses, Wherein dwell all Buddhas (in the Universe)'?"

~ra~a: Is it a reference to Dakinis?

S: Goddesses presumably mean Dakinis. Yes.

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Kulamitra: Well, it's all in you. You don't have to go anywhere outside to find it.

S: Yes. All the Buddhas, all these visualized forms, they are all within you. So the body is compared to a Palace or if you like a Mandala, or if you like a Temple. Just as in the temple you get so many images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, so in the temple of the body there are all these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. So that is worked out in detail in terms of the different Chakras. It's as though, you could say, the body (this comparison is sometimes also given) is a sort of Pagoda, a many-storied pagoda, and, you know, you can go from storey to storey, and on each storey, on each floor, so to speak, there is a Shrine, you know, containing different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and so on, so the body is rather like that. It's not as though just you are transformed into a Buddha, but every one of your functions is turned into an individual Buddha. Every particular expression of your energy is turned into a Buddha. So you, being a Buddha are full of Buddhas, in a way, you are made up of Buddhas. There are Buddhas in everyone of your Chakras. There are Buddhas on every floor of the Pagoda. Do you see what I mean?

Aryanmitra: I still don't quite see how that differs from a general transformation. You said it's not general but specific.

S: Well what does one mean by a general transformation as distinguished from a specific one? It is, one could say, based ultimately on the distinction of the Path of Vision and the Path of Transformation. It is not very difficult to get a general sort of conception of Enlightenment or Buddhahood, it's not even difficult to realise it so to speak mentally, but one of the points of the Mahayana, even more the Vajrayana, is that it isn't easy, so to speak, to bring that mental realisation down, until it pervades every part of the being. So this is what the text, this is what Milarepa is trying to express, that every particular part of one's being, every particular function, is actually fully transformed. Itself becomes a Buddha. That is to say, when one speaks, one's speech fully expresses that Buddha realisation. One's tongue itself becomes a Buddha. Do you see what I mean? Not that you have the Buddha realisation in your mind but you cannot, sort of, fully expressed, it hasn't, so to speak, reached

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or penetrated into your tongue. It has. The tongue itself has become a Buddha, every part of you has become a Buddha. Every limb has become a Buddha. Every Cakra has become a Buddha. Every part of the skin has become a Buddha. This is the Tantra's way of expressing the completeness of the transformation process. Milarepa refers to it, you know, right at the end when he says:

"Son, if you can identify yourself with the Buddha, The Divine Body will vividly appear;

Your flesh and blood will be transformed into the Rainbow Body."

The tantra believes, one can take this either literally or symbolically, that the physical body itself will be transformed into a Rainbow Body. That the gross physical body will be literally transformed into something more subtle.

(Long pause.)

So in a way this is the great point of the Vajrayana, this total transformation. It is the point of Buddhism generally but the Vajrayana gives it, perhaps, a more complete expression. The Vajrayana, so to speak, says, well, you must be a Buddha right down to the tips of your toes. There mustn't be anything which isn't transformed by the high spiritual realisation. So Milarepa in a way is describing his own experience. He actually feels Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in every part of himself.

(Long pause.)

Abhaya: It says in one verse there that "The Cakra in my throat This is the Cakra where the Vajra is expressed." Why is the Vajra associated with the throat center not the head center?

S: Which verse is that?

Abhaya: This is the third verse down from the top.

S: "In the Enjoyment center in my throat

Dwells the Buddha Mahamaya and his retinue, Symbolizing the enjoyment of all forms. This is the Cakra where the Vajra is expressed."

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Right, first of all, why is the enjoyment Cakra located in

the throat? It's not very clear but I am assuming that the word "enjoyment" here has some connection with S'ambhoga, which is translated usually, the Enjoyment Body, because what, in ordinary beings, is speech, in a Buddha is the Sambhogakaya. So~ I am assuming there is a reference to that.

Devaraja: It must be the three verses, the first three verses on that page refer to the Body, Speech and Mind.

S: Yes. So, here, "Symbolising the enjoyment of all forms" is the Buddha's reciprocal enjoyment of one another's forms. Sambhoga is mutual enjoyment, or enjoyment together. So this is explained as, the Sambhogakaya, is explained as that body in which the Buddhas enjoy the vision, so to speak, of one another. It represents, as it were, you know, spiritual community on the highest possible level. It's communication on the highest possible level. So, why should it be said "This is the Cakra where the Vajra is expressed." This is not very clear but I think that the emphasis should be on 'expressed', the Vajra meaning the Ultimate, the Transcendental. This is the Cakra in which, this is the level on which, Ultimate Reality finds expression in actual communication and mutual enjoyment. Spiritual Fellowship in the highest possible sense. The Transcendental sense. I think this is the significance, here.

(Long pause.)

You notice in the Vajrayana, in the Tantras generally, all sorts of systems of correlation. One

has got the Vajra Body, the Vajra Mind and then the Vajra as expressed, Vajra speech. These are the three Kayas, but one has got six centers, so one puts, so to speak those three in the middle, and then one has got one below and two above. You can have different sets of correlations, different systems of correspondencies. It is not that it is arbitrary but we must not of it as something too fixed, and too definite. Sometimes one thing is in correspondence with something quite different. Or perhaps you could say the system is of correspondencies, it's much more subtle and much more complex and changing than we usually think. It is not that, throughout the universe, there is always three of this and three of that, and three of something else, not

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these set of three can be neatly correlated with all the other sets of three.

A voice: Would you say they would conjunct rather than correspond. so there is a movement?

S: Yes, one must take that also into consideration. Yes. (Long pause). One could even say that in a sense, though only in a sense, that Milarepa's location of particular Buddhas with their retinues, in particular Chakras, is, so to speak, arbitrary. Somebody else might have experienced, you know, other Buddhas there. In any case, all the Buddhas are, in a manner of speaking, identical. In a sense, it doesn't matter which Buddhas are where. The general significance of what is being conveyed, is clear. ~{m? That every part of your being - is totally ;transformed.

(Long pause.)

Abhaya: I suppose this is like, we are seeing this on the archetypal level, these things which take place in the form of mandalas. It's a matter of choosing which particular combination of colours and Buddhas will spark you off.

S: Yes, indeed.

~ra~a: It seems that the second, third and fourth verse on that page seems to refer to - well, does that refer to the Trikaya?

S: It does, yes it does, because you're concerned with Buddhas, and you're concerned with Body, Mind and then Speech. S~ that must refer to the three kayas.

(Pause.)

Devara;ia: Why is Sakyamuni the "Symbol of Wisdom and Merits"?

S: Well that may just be Milarepa's choice. One presumably can give a meaning to it. It's a "Symbol of Wisdom and Merits" but what does one mean by ~Wisdom and Merits." Jnana and Punya. Perhaps Milarepa refers to, you know, to a historical Buddha, because that is to say, refers to Sakysmuni, because Punya, Merits have to be accumulated over a whole series of lives. So that introduces the historical dimension and the historical Buddha and

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'7.

Sakyomuni is a historical Buddha. Presumably, he could have the Buddha Kassapa or the Buddha Kanikamini? there just as well but he didn't; he put Buddha Sakyamuni. So there's an element, so to speak, of arbitrariness. (Pause.) But let's go a little into this question of wisdom and Merits. I have touched upon it on other occasions. Do you understand what is meant by Merits? So Punya is the result of what?

Kulamitra: Skilful actions.

S: Skilful actions, Yes. But why this accumulation of Panya as well as of awareness~ Jnana. In the Mahayana especially one speaks of the Panya - sambhara, the accumulation of Merits and the Jnana - sambhara, the accumulation of Wisdom, or awareness, if you like, Jnana. Jnana being Transcendental, and Punya being mundane. Now, one might say, why should the Spiritual life be presented in terms of a gradual accumulation of knowledge, or Wisdom or Awareness on the one hand, and Merits on the other? Why should it not be presented simply in terms of an accumulation of Wisdom, or knowledge, or Awareness, Jnana? What is the need for Punya, because after all, it's the Wisdom that is going to give you Enlightenment, not Punya?

Jayadeva& He's a Bodhisattva though, isn't he? He's not concerned with self, he's concerned with others. You need Merit in order to

acquire means of imparting that

Devaraja: But is there an element of it being, in fact, if you are accumulating Jnana, inevitably it must permeate, the Transcendental must permeate through and effect and transform the Mundane and the sort of expression of the Mundane is Merits.

S: But that would only be when you had attained Jnana but here one is supposed to be accumulating Merits at least even if one hasn't accumulated as yet any Jnana. Jnana usually comes after Punya so therefore there is no question of the Punya being a sort of expression of the Jnana.

Devaraja: But do you think the Punya is the foundation on which

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~: ~o a Bodhisattva not only tries to accumulate Wisdom but to accumulate Merits because in his final life, when he becomes a fully Enlightened Buddha, he wants to have the equipment, especially the physical body, which will be the best and most suitable embodiment for the enlightenment experience that he's then going to attain. Do you see what I mean? Supposing in the course of his career as a Bodhisattva he'd cultivated Wisdom but not cultivated Merits. Supposing, for the sake of example, well - what would happen? He'd gain Enlightenment, he'd be a Buddha, but he might have a short, misshapen unattractive body, and a squeaky voice. Do you see what I mean? Which would not, well, so there would be the Enlightenment experience enshrined, so to speak, in this ridiculous human body. So would he be able to function properly as a Buddha or as well as he might have been able to function in a beautiful, fully-developed, handsome, attractive body, with a pleasing speaking voice. Do you see what I mean? So this is what is meant by, in this particular context, experiencing or achieving the best of the mundane and uniting it with the experience of the Transcendental. Yes? So the Mahiyana scripture to speak says it's not enough to have just the Transcendental, you've got to have the best of the mundane too, and unite the two of them.

Devarafla: In a way though, isn't this, I mean that would not really be possible surely, to pursue one without achieving the other as well. Is it not just a means of (words unclear)

S: The Mahayanists believe that it is possible. For instance, one way of looking at the Arahant Ideal is - an Arahant is one who has attained Wisdom yes, but he hasn't bothered so much about Merits as the Bodhisattva has. Though he has, according to some interpretations the same Enlightenment as a Bodhisattva or even as a Thuddha, he doesn't have the same equipment in the form of Punya, therefore he is not able to be so useful to humanity. And this is one of the reasons why a Bodhisattva has such a long career, as it were. It is not so much that he needs time to develop Wisdom, he needs time to develop or accumulate Punya, so in his final life, he will not only be enlightened but have a fully adequate base, a fully adequate vehicle for the support of expression of that enlightenment. This is the Mahayana view.

A Voice: You can see this on a lesser level with people who, say, have got a profound grasp of buddhism, they do a good practice of meditation, but are very ineffective in spreading the Dharma because they don't really understand people and their culture and things like that.

S: Or perhaps they just haven't got a good command of the language even. Even that is sometimes a hindrance. I mean, you might for instance be a fully enlightened being, but if you go to a foreign country you can't even speak the language, are much less likely to be able to spread the Dharma. I mean, there might be a really beautiful aura emanating from you but that wouldn't be enough. So the Bodhisattva is concerned, not only to have something to say, but to have the language in which to say it in the fullest possible sense.

Abhaya: But how does someone like Hui Neng fit in to this picture, who was quite inarticulate, when he was enlightened?

S: I wouldn't say he was quite inarticulate. He delivered discourses, he seems to be able to quote the Scriptures. He is depicted as illiterate but this maybe, whether he actually was or not is a bit doubtful because this may be simply Zen's way of emphasizing the relative unimportance of book learning as compared with actual Realization, but anyway, the Mahayana would probably reply to this by saying that, yes, if you are enlightened and if you can at least speak, talk to other people, something will come through. It's much better if also you've got all the full Bodhisattva equipment, you will be able to do still more. That is the Mahayana's point. So therefore, it's as though the Mahayana seeks to unite, if that is the right expression, the experience of enlightenment itself with the experience or the acme of the mundane.

Aohaya: So is there like someone, say, who takes the Bodhisattva Vow, like someone who, who in a small way maybe without insight, sort of decid~s, makes a decision to develop all sorts of current skills so that he will be much better equipped to ?

?: Right. Yes. It does seem though psychologically speaking that it's very difficult to develop the interest to acquire those skills if you only want them as instruments. It's as though to be able to acquire them properly you need to go after them, almost, for their own sake. So this ties up a little bit with what I was saying about your being unable to sort of postulate operational concepts as it were, in cold blood. Supposing you are Unlightened, I think it might be very difficult then for you, as an Unlightened being, to sort of settle down to learn something, which you could well have learned when you were unenlightened. Because the learning process requires a degree of real interest in that topic or that subject in which you, as an Enlightened Being, are no longer capable of giving it. (Laughter) You are more useful, therefore, as an Unlightened Being or let's say, a spiritually developed being, in in, say your childhood or your youth you had developed various

~: (Cont.) interests or skills which you would then be able to go back to and utilize, but if you didn't do that when you were young, too bad, you would just have to remain simply an Unlightened Being (laughter) with rather rough and ready means of communication with other living beings. But one can see the way this sorts out, can't one? Because, for instance, even if you are an Order Member, not that I'm identifying Order Members with Enlightened Beings by any means (Laughter) but even if you're an Order Member and you're called upon, say by Nagabodhi to write a tiltrata, will you've probably at least to know the English language, you've got to be able to express yourself grammatically and so on, at least that. So if Nagabodhi is going to invite an Order Member to write a Aitrata, other factors being equal, he'll invite the literate Order Member, not the illiterate one. There may be no difference between them as regards to spiritual understanding but you'll just have to invite the more literate one to do something of that sort and may be the one who is spiritual more developed won't be that interested in going back to school and studying grammar again, he won't be able to muster the interest. So you can understand from this what the Mahayana is, as it were, getting at. This is the classical Jdha'yana taking it quite literally, in purely traditional terms. The classical Mahayana says, well, yes, Arahantship is within your reach in this life. Enlightenment as an Arahant is within your reach but that wouldn't be very much good. Postpone it. Practice the Paraitas, the Perfections, over a whole series of lives, for three Kalpas. If you can do that, then as a result of practicing the first five of those six Paramita's, you'll end up with an enormous accumulation of Merits which will give you a beautiful body, the ability to work miracles, etc., etc., as well as the Enlightenment which would be the product of the sixth Paramita, or Prajna. You will then, with that unification of Merits and Wisdom be able to do much more as a skillfully Enlightened Buddha, or a fully equipped Buddha, for humanity, than you possibly could as an Arahant.

Abhaya: It does seem rather silly in a sense, why wouldn't it be better to become Enlightened, and do all that, throughout the career that you're building up, then you've got your

Enlightenment to sort of - as a back- ~round to all this activity of building up a much better view.

S: Ah, but it would seem, as I said, that once you are W~lightened it is difficult to generate the inter~st in learning those other things.

Abhaya: But why is that?

~: But why is it?

Abhaya: Yes, but I don't understand that. I mean, say someone

Abhaya: (Cont.) becomes Enlightened, and feels sort of outgoing to other people and finds that other people can't understand him because his speech is very slurred, then surely he would have a really bright interest in improving his articulation.

S: Oh yes, yes. But of course that is ~ust, as it were, an analogy. The actual Nah~yana Path of Accumulation of berits is much, as it were, more radical than that. It involves very, very much more.

Abhaya: I mean that's a small start, you could go one from there and

S.: But also, there is the point, the ~ahayana might say that once you have gained Enlightenment, well you disappear from the ~indane. There is no question of your continuing to live on that level, accumulating more and more merits, because all your other faults, all your unskilful roots have been destroyed, you are not reborn again. The Bodhisattva has to be careful to go on being reborn again, so that he can go on accumulating merits and be limits his Wisdom for some time. I mean this is the traditional Th~ahayana teaching.

Abhaya: Is that how you see it?

S.: Yes and no. (Laughter) Because one is, as I say, ~ust expanding the Traditional ~ahaya~a teaching to illustrate this distinction of Punya and J~nana. One can transpose it into other terms and give maybe ones own interpretation but that would in fact be quite a big undertaking because it would involve a sort of re-assessment of the Bodhisattva Ideal itself. I mean, the b~a~hayana does teach apparently quite literally, that the Bodhi- sattva' 5 career does extend right over three kalpas. At least that is the, what shall I say, the ~ffah~yana1 5 interpretation of the Bodhisattva Ideal, in so far as that really does differ from the Arahant Ideal. One can go even further then that interpretation because according to that interpretation the Bodhisattva Ideal does, as it were, actually reach a culminating point. When the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha, and on becoming a Buddha he achieves

S.: (Cont.) Parinirvana at the end of that life and he, as it were, disappears from existence, so far as the conditioned is concerned. So there is a certain point at which the Bodhi- sattva becomes a Buddha and does enter into Nirvana. But this further interpretation sort of postulates that, in fact that never happens. The Bodhisattva never finally attains Nirvana. And then that raises the question, well, why should that be? And how literally one could take that statement. And that raises the question of whether Nirvana can in fact be attained by anybody. Whether it is, in fact, the kind of thing which can be attained at all or whether that whole way of speaking does not represent a sort of operational concept, or a set of operational concepts. Do you see what I mean~? So that would carry one into very deep waters indeed. But anyway, so far as this particular (napache ?) is concerned one is just concerned to illucidate the distinction between Punya and Jnana and the accumulation of both. But the general point which emerges is the one I made at the beginning, that the b(~hayana does not think in terms of the rejection of the Mindane. It's as though the ~a~hayana believes more in the, not just the acceptance of the ~ii'ndane as it is, but in the experience of the ~tindane at its best and in the union, so to speak, of the mundane at its best, with the Transcendental in such a way that the mundane at its best provides a medium of expression you know, for the Transcendental. Something of that sort happens, you see, with ~ilarepa's display. After all he's displaying to Rechungpa forms. Rechungpa is perceiving those, well, presumably with his physical eyes, we're not told otherwise. So ~ilarepa is trying to convey something Transcendental but the language, so to speak, that he uses, is mundane. It's the language of form and colour. So it is as though the mundane in that highly refined form that is to say, form and colour, coloured Buddha forms arranged in a particular way, represent the peak of the mundane. The mundane at its best, its most refined, used to convey a Transcendental meaning. And this is what one means by the union of these two accumulations of Jnana and of Punya, of ~nowledge or Awareness and of ~erits.

Voice: I still don't quite understand how the two can be really sort of separate. That

somebody can practice Wisdom and not have the desire to express that Wisdom, and in expressing it they would gain ~erit presumably, just from their experience of communicating with other people. They'd learn more by, sort of, coming out and juSt experiencing what they'd bean learning. It would be a sort of two-way building up system. I find it quite hard to see the separation between those two.

S.: Well, you can accumulate ~erits in fact, without any Wisdom at all. If, for instance, you were brought up in a strongly traditional society where it is customary to do certain things, to perform certain actions, that might be called meritorious, and you don't really think what the meaning of it all is. You've no awareness or no consciousness of that.

Voice: Do you get reborn as a Cod or something

5.~ Yes, you could say, in a way, that the Bodhisattva as regards hLs external appearance, is a god. So if you, by performing or by accumulating rather, merits, you experience or you accumulate all that a god experiences or accumulates but, by cultivating Wisdom you could say you experience all that an Arahant experiences. And a Bodhisattva or a Buddha experiences the two things together. The god representing the peak of the mundane and the Arahant figure representing the purely spiritual. That1s simplifying it a bit because according to some schools or some interpretations at least, a Bodhisattva's or a Buddha's Wisdom differs from or even his Enlightenment differs from, and surpasses that of the Arahant. According to other schools and other interpretations, not so. But you can see the general idea, none-the-less.

Cuhyananda: Something about having to have a genuine interest. Isn't that also to do with motive and attitude at a certain time. Say, if you have a certain motive for learning some skill or art and maybe later on in life that motive, that interest isn't there but you'd still maybe, be carrying on with it and your motive could be changed.

S.: It does seem that, you know, that behind many of our interests and pursuits there's a sort of psychological need. That the interest represents a need, and in the absence of that need that interest is not there and can't be, as it were, artificially sumulated. I think in fact it is very difficult to cultivate a particular interest for purely objective reasons because the motivating force is the need and if that need isn't there you can't really cultivate that particular interest.

Kulamitra: A+so, intrests, you know, to be useful you have to put a lot into it over a period of time and if you just thought it was a good idea you might do it for a day or week, but not over a period of ten years or something.

S. : So what keeps you going is your need.

Kulamitra: Yes.

S. : That is the basis of the interest. I mean, for instance, you might think, well, it would be a good idea for you to know all about money. But why is it that people take the interest to learn all about money? It's need. If you like, greed. So if that is absent, if you transcended that due to your spiritual development, it is very difficult, I think, for you to learn all about money because that need isn't there. I think your 'objective' need, so to speak, inverted commas, isn't enough.

Devaraja: I mean, for instance, I'm wanting to learn Spanish, to go to Spain, is it possible there is an interest that develops out of an actual aspiration? I mean, what will actually motivate one to learn something in pursuit of

S.: Well, need. Need. If you found yourself in a Spanish speaking area and you need to go and get bread and wine (Laughter) and you didn't know the words, you'd very quickly learn them. In that way you'd extend your vocabulary and communicate more and more. Yes? But if you were in a sort of spiritual state where you didn't really care very much about communicating with

other people, an Arahant-like state let us say, then perhaps you ~~~l~~~~ learn very much of the language.

~ike: What if you don't feel the need. I mean you experience a period of time where you cannot see yourself in any situation where you feel your energies you don't feel disposed to need anything. You don't need to direct your energies into doing this activity or that activity or whatever. What happens there?

S Well, what has happened to your energy then? I mean, either you are devoid of energy or your energy is blocked. That would be the situation then because to be alive is to have energy, yes? And to express energy - that is a normal state, but if you don't experience any energy and energy is not going in any particular direction, either you are deficient in energy and in a sense, not fully alive, or your energy is blocked.

~ike: Earlier on we were talking about the Bodhisattvas and Punya and I kept thinking about these Zen masters - you have these characteristic impressions of these early masters being Enlightened and going off and living in caves or throwing their disciples into the water or laughing hysterically for the rest of their life or painting bamboos by the side of a mountain. I suppose they have an Enlightened experience, am I correct in . . because in the Zen tradition there doesn't appear to me to be much emphasis on gaining merit or doing skilfu~ actions, it's purely a practice of developing Wisdom, because of the lack of emphasis in that particular area, that they do seem to be ill- equipped

S. : I would say that on the whole that is true, historically speaking. Speaking in very general terms it would seem as though Zen Buddhism, in some ways, represented a return to the Hinayana. It certainly wasn't doctrinally, or anything like that, but more in terms of attitude. They did emphasize more, you know, Enlightenment, here and now, rather than Enlightenment in the future once you have accumulated a great store of berits. So they did, therefore, tend to emphasize Wisdom much more than }~rits, in practice 'and in effect, though no doubt a Zen Buddhist had you asked him about b~rits and Wisdom, he would have given you the same reply as any other b'ahay~na Buddhist. But in

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S.: (Cont.) practice it would seem the Zen people emphasize Wisdom at the expense of berits. Perhaps that was a good emphasis

it was good to emphasize Wisdom as compared with emphasizing book knowledge which was what they were often protesting against. Perhaps it wasn't so good that Wisdom could be emphasized not only at the expense of book knowledge but also at the expense of berits. (Long Pause). I mean, I think perhaps if we look at the religious traditions in the West I think we could think, say of something like on the one hand the Quakers and on the other hand the Roman Catholics. You could say that the Quakers emphasized Wisdom and the Catholics emphasized berits. Do you see what I mean? I'm taking them rather roughly as symbols in an impressionistic sort of way. The Quakers don't go in for anything like Art or ornamentation. They just sit, they don't even meditate, they just sit quietly in a bare room. Do you see what I mean? In a sense, yes, they are concerned with things that are of fundamental importance, but there is no beauty and no grace about their approach. It's not really very attractive so there is Wisdom rather than berits you could say. In the case of the Catholics, well, they've got all sorts of beauties and graces, sometimes of a rather meritorious type, with all sorts of tinsel even, but you know, maybe there isn't any Wisdom. (A laugh.) Do you see what I mean? But the bahayana emphasizes that you've got to have the two, you've got to have the full clear Enlightenment experience and that has got to find an adequate expression in a beautiful mundane form. Do you see what I mean?

A Voice: So berits is the basis for skilful means?

S.: Ah, yes, you could say that. berits is of importance when skilful means comes into consideration. Yes.

Jayadeva: I've been thinking about it in terms of "great men". You know you're not going to find "great men" in pubs being "great men". They have to be out there in the field of action, doing great deeds, as it were. So in the same way, I mean can you actually talk about the Transcendental, sort of reifying it, sticking out there, as though it exists independently of good - actions? Would that be the sort of duality between on izfie one

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S.: (Cont.) hand, and Wisdom. If there is Wisdom you will find berit?

S.: Well the Mahayana contemplates that you do not necessarily find necessarily a full equipment of merits along with Wisdom, as in the case of the Arahant. You do not necessarily find Wisdom along with a full equipment of merits as in the case of the god. The Bodhisattva has got to have both, therefore the Bodhisattva appears like a god but is in fact, so to speak, an Arahant or even a Bodhi. (Pause.) But I think the overall significance of this is that the best of the mundane is not rejected. The mundane in its more refined form, is seen as a means of expression for the Transcendental itself. But also, of course, one mustn't forget that in the last analysis for the Mahayana the duality between the Transcendental and the mundane disappears. One mustn't forget that also. When the Mahayana discusses the Bodhisattva Ideal in terms of the conditioned and the unconditioned, merits and Wisdom, etc., etc., it is discussing the Bodhisattva Ideal in terms derived from the Hinayana. It is discussing the non-dual in terms of duality. One mustn't forget that either. But it has to do so. You have to use the language of duality in order to impart the message of non-duality. That is just an instance of the very thing I've been talking about. I mean, if you try to use the language of non-duality to express the message of non-duality you'll be left saying nothing at all. If you want to say to another person, or if you say to another person "You and I are one" you can only say that by positing, well 'you' and the other person, that we'll say a duality, that you are two. You cannot say that you are one unless you have previously said you are two. So you have to use the language of duality in order to express the message or the meaning of non-duality. So this is the predicament that the Mahayana is in in a way, therefore you have to try to catch the spirit of it and not take it all too literally. So yes, in so far as one takes the dualistic language of the Mahayana literally, yes, the conditioned is quite different from the unconditioned. Wisdom is quite different from merits. You can cultivate Wisdom quite separately from cultivating merits. But on the other hand, what the Mahayana is really trying to say in the long run is, there is no distinction between the Transcendental and the mundane. Yes? That merits and Wisdom are, I won't say the same thing, but at least different aspects of the same thing. That you cannot even really, in the last resort

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S.: (Cont.) speak of a Bodhisattva Ideal and an Arahant Ideal. The very distinction itself belongs to the Hinayana not to the Mahayana. Or rather to the Mahayana only to the extent that it speaks the language of the Hinayana. But don't forget it is only speaking the language of the Hinayana, it is trying to impart a Mahayana meaning. But this is happening all the time because originally the Hinayana itself was not trying to impart a Hinayana meaning. Only when the language of Buddhism started to be taken literally or literalistically, then, being sort of considered as an end in itself, I mean, only then did the Hinayana start speaking not only speaking the language of the Hinayana but communicating Hinayana meaning. So the Mahayana arose partly in disagreement

with that and it had to make itself understood to the existing Buddhist community, so it continued to use the same language but it used it in a quite different way. But as there was no

historical sense in those days it couldn't sort of, say well, this is what happened, you've been using the language too literalistically and you mustn't do that. It had to pos~t a further higher teaching beyond that of the Hinayana. It took the Hinay~na at its own words so to speak. It took Hinayana teaching as Hinay'ana teaching. It didn't say what the Buddha meant was something different. It said yes, the Buddha did teach the Hinayana but it also taught a higher teaching which gives the real meaning of Buddhism and that's called the ~ahayana. Do you see what I mean? But eventually of course the ~ahayana started taking itself literalistically and then you got the Vajrayana. If you take the Vajray~na literalistically, well, heaven help you. (Laughter.) You know, you're lost then, at least within the context of Triyana Tibetan Buddhism. So you see what happened.

Kulamitra: In terms of our own sort of practical development isn't it? That if we were to concentrate just on Wisdom, I mean, we'd actually get quite dry, even alienated.

S. : Because you would presumably go in for study. You'd read a lot about the history of Buddhism, the different Buddhist schools. ~aybe you wouldn't have time to meditate. ~ybe you wouldn't think much of doing Puja - you'd think that was rather a waste of time if it wasn't really improving your understanding of Buddhism etc.

Kulamitra: So we actually have to take our interests which is where our emotions are tied up, our means, and transform on that level by making it more and more positive, more and more in line with our ideals.

S,: I've said repeatedly that it is quite dangerous to get ~oo far away from our actual needs. However subjective, and however limited and even however unskilful they may be you can't loose contact with them completely otherwise your pre-occupation with Buddhism will become a purely dry abstract intellectual kind of thing and will eventually perhaps even whither away. Or perhaps be nourished in a very indirect and surreptitious manner, you know, by the very unskilful pursuits that you are following. You can only manage to keep up with the dry study of Buddhism because you are having a good time in another kind of way which you don't openly acknowledge. (Pause.) You know it's a bit like, I was once told there was a famous Indian scholar in Buddhism. He went up to Tibet to searci~ for rare manuscripts and he was a vegetarian and it isn't easy to be a vegetarian in Tibet. So he used to make a joke about it after- wards. When he was asked how he managed he said, well he used to manage on Tibetan barley flour because that was all the Tibetans had which was vegetarian, but he used to add jokingly, he said that he thought that probably what kept him alive was the maggots in the barley.~lour. (Laughter.) So it's a bit like that. What is really keeping you alive in the course of your dry study of Buddhism is perhaps certain other

interests and activities which are not officially there, so to speak. Yes. (Long pause.) So you find that with many academics, scholars, who translate Buddhist texts and write about Buddhism. It is not really their interest in Buddhism which keeps them going so to speak, from day to day. It's all their other worldly activities and interests. Their family life, their professional career, their promotion prospects, their departmental politics and all the rest of it. That's where their real emotional energies are and that is what is really keeping them going and their, sort of, professional work, their translating of Buddhist texts is just sort of the side line, in a way, it's sort of bread and butter.

Virananda: There is just something I want to clarify. It's really this idea of, well it, is this thing of our interests and our needs

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Virananda: (Cont.) It's merely, I just misunderstood the terminology that's been used. But it seems to me, for instance, in this chapter that Milarepa wants to break through, wants to communicate with Rechungpa and is that on the basis of - that's presumably not the basis of a need to communicate? He's looking for a vehicle, a means of breaking through to Rechungpa.

S.: Well you could say that in a sense Milarepa can't help communicating. After all, he is, or so we have seen, apparently a fully Enlightened Buddha. He has the three Kayas which includes the Sambhogakaya, which is the complete transformation of the speech principal. So he is, as it were, communicating naturally and spontaneously. He is not going to stop communicating just because Rechungpa doesn't want to listen. (Laughter.) He just goes on communicating. He just, sort of, pours out spontaneously. That's why I said yesterday, I mean Rechungpa may cut off from Milarepa but Milarepa does not cut off from Rechungpa.

Virananda: I mean Milarepa in a way is trying to transform one of Rechungpa's needs in a way, I mean, perhaps Rechungpa was sort of like, though he really needed to, say visit patrons and sort of get distracted in that way.

S.: Well if he had been around nowadays and spoke the language of psychology that is

probably how he would have rationalised it. (Laughter.) He would have tried to convince Milarepa that that degree of distraction, well it wasn't really distraction he said, that was a necessary stage in his spiritual development but that is something he had to experience or to 'go through'. (Laughter)

Voice: That was what I was thinking actually. Those needs, you could really say I just need this, I must have it. That could become your major motivation instead of something which, it's just some- thing which, well, you've just got to bring into line.

Kulamitra: But doesn't Milarepa, I mean, he rejects that rationalisation

S.: Well yes, he did, in effect it, by just marching straight on. (Laughter.)

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Kulamitra: But he does recognise this need in this area of play- fulness, and respond to that.

S.: Yes, he doesn't so to speak, reject the principal of playfulness but he's as though saying, well it's got to be real playfulness. That is to say, playfulness on a Transcendental level. Just spend- ing your evening eating and drinking and chatting with the lay supporters is a mis-use of that principal. He' s , as it were, saying well, be really playful. Play in the true sense. You could look at it like that (Long pause) But to go back a little bit, just before we have a cup of coffee, to what I was saying earlier. It isn' t easy to sort of, sort through the whole vast mass of traditional Buddhist teaching. In no doubt, that within the F.W.B.O. there will always be a few people who do do that, who will know exactly where the F.W.B.O. stands in relation to traditional Buddhist teaching, but it won't be possible, or even necessary, for everybody to do that. You don't need to know the history of Buddhism in order to understand Buddhism. That is really the point. You don't need to fully understand, in detail , how and why schools succeeded schools. You just need the essence of the matter so far as that relates to

your own needs. I mean your own need to develop, here and now. (pause.) So in a way perhaps one has to curb ones historical sense or, because, sort of every few hundred years a sort of vast re- working of the whole Buddhist tradition took place. In a sense, that's happening with us, though not everybody within the F.W.B.O. knows what's going on. The way we look say at the spiritual Ideal, the way we speak in terms of individuality, in a way

that represents a re- , I won't say re-interpretation, but re-presentation, yes? of the Dharma.

Kulamitra: But from outside, in fifty years time, it is going to look completely different. I mean, people say at the Centres, which school do you belong to? And at the moment it is very unclear to me, but given time it will be clear to us, that we are a new school.

S.: Right, indeed. Yes.

Kulamitra: I mean that's how they'd see it.

S.: And, this is one of the reasons why I say, beware of the premature synthesis. Don't say, "Well we are this kind of school".

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S.: (Cont.)Or 'We're that kind of school' prematurely. Allow the whole thing to develop first, in accordance with ones actual needs, before one finds a label for jt. Otherwise one may be affixing a label which doesn't really suit. One may be arresting the develop- ment of the Movement by labeling it prematurely. Do you see what I mean? There may be other elements of import-ance yet to come into the Movement. For instance, supposing say, fifteen years, well no not fifteen, ten years ago when we only had say Centres - meditation was our principal activity, we said, the F.W.B.O. is a neo-meditation movement. Well, that would have limited it. People might have got the definite impression, well, we are a Buddhist neo-meditation movement, specializing in Mindfulness of Breathing, Netta Bhavana and simple visualisations. So when someone suggested starting up a Co-op, somebody else might have said, "No. That's not what we are. That's not in accordance with our identity. We are a neo- meditation Buddhist movement. Nothing to do with Co-ops." Do you see what I mean? That would have happened because you had labeled yourself prematurely. And you would have labeled yourself prematurely because you had not bewared of the premature synthesis.

Kulamitra: Is that why you sometimes said that perhaps we shouldn't even label ourselves Buddhist, prematurely, that we shouldn't . .

S. : Well, even that question doesn't arise in a way because when did Buddhism start being labeled Buddhism? Only a hundred or so years ago, you see. So that might prove to have been, well no, just premature but a total mis

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teen different ways in which German philologists have interj,reted the Sanskrit word
Samskarah. (laughter) Any way perhaps we'll stop for a cup of of coffee.

S: }?ight mo~ specifically I think there were j~st maybe two more points that we could
talk about in this last verse. First there is the question of the Nadis and Bindus uniting and
the other is the question of identifying oneself with the Buddha0 Do you know what Nadis
and Bindus are ?

DEVARAJA: Various channels.

S: ~es. The Nadis usually translated as Nerves. You can think of currents of especially
psychical energy1 One can also think of the Nadis ~s the disparate streams of energy within
the whole being. And these are to be united as part of the whole process of integr~tion of
ones energies. And so you know what is meant by Bindu ? Bindu has got various meanings.
Here it has the meaning of especially sexual energy. So, by s~~eaking of Nadis and Bindus -
Bindu literally means a point. It is sometimes explained as the drop. The drop of seminal
fluid, especially. Therefore sexual energy. So when one is speaking of the Nadis and Bindus
uniting, one is speaking of the unif- ication of all ones energies at the highest coceivable point
and one is speaking of ths union as blissful. Milarepa says: "This is the Cakra of Great Bliss,
Where the Nadis and Bindus both unite". So this draws attention to an important aspect of the
whole process of integ- ration; that the more and more the energies come together the more
blissful is the experience. Usually our energies are going in diff- erent directions and
therefore the experience is one of disharmony and even of pain and suffering. But as the
energies are more and more united, as they are brought together, as they flow all in the same
direction1 as they reinforce one another rather than being in conflict with one another, then
the experience is increasingly of bliss. So Milarepa is refereing to a situation where all the
different streams and currents of energy within the being have started flowing together from
the grossest to the subtlest and iiiost refined and is is produc- ing an experience of intense
Bliss. He says:"In the head The Great Bliss Cakra is in the head". This suggests, though it
isn't explicitly stated, that the experience of Bliss is united with the experience of Wisdom,
especially with the experience of the Void. And in fact. the vajrayana does speak very

frequently in these sort of terms That the experience of Bliss united with the experience of the ~Toid. And here again one has got an example of the blending, so to speak, of the Transcendental a~d the mundane. It is not that Bliss is to be rejected but Bliss is to be refined. Bliss is to be even sublimated and united with the experience of the Transcendental. This is what the Tantra refers to as the union of Voidness and Bliss. Bliss, as it were, represents the essence of the mundane because this is what people are after usually, very b~ten in the wrong sort of way. And Voidness represents the essence of the Transcendental. One is to bring the two together.

Is that why the first cakra is where bliss is preserved, then it becomes transformed....

S: One could say that, yes. BeCause the secret centre is the.. well there are two centres at the bottom, so to speak, of the median nerve In this particular song, Nilarepa refers to six Centres in all. Some accounts make mention of seven. Yes0 So the secret centre is the centre where especially according at least to some traditions the sexual energies are, so to speak, present in a coiled up or ~atent

form. ~o that representing the lowest end of the scale, so to speak.

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RR/4 2 Bliss in its grossest form. But Milarepa also says: "Where the Nadis and Bindus both unite Son, if you can identify yourself with the Buddha, The Divine Body will vividly appear~

So what is this identifying oneself with the Buddha ? There is of course an actual visualization practice in which you do visualize the Buddha figure, whatever it is, out there in front of you and then contemplate it. ~ou experience or visualise yourself as being Buddha. So lets just talk about that abit. What exactly does one mean by identifying oneself with the Buddha ? In what sense can you identify yourself with the Buddha ? To what extent can you do that in a real or genuine way ?

NIKE: By having a realisation that you are essentially the Buddha.

S: In what way does that differ from actually attaining Buddhahood ?

MIKE': This is presumably talking about your potential. That you do actually have a sort of seed of Buddhahood in you. 'iou aren't actually enlightened, but through practice you realise that.

S: But in the Vajrayana it goes abit beyond that because you actually visualise yourself as having the body of a Buddha, the marks of a Buddha, and so on and so forth. So what do you think is the significance of that ?

MIKE: Well is that like a symbolic transformation of all your ener1~5

S: Yes, it's like a symbolic transformation. It actually helps you really to feel that there is

some, at least, Buddha-like quality or potential in you. Because just to say that one has got the potentiality of Enlightenment, that one is potentially a Buddha, that is an dry abstract statement. There is no sort of emotional resonance attached to it. But if you actually visualise yourself as having the body of a Buddha, being seated cross-legged on a lotus throne and rays of light proceeding from different parts of your body, that may give you as it were a more emotional appreciation of the fact that you do have that Buddha potential. It also may have a secondary effect of, as it were, purifying your mundane being and maybe getting rid of unskillful mental states, like guilt, self-hatred and so on. But looking at it in another sort of way, so you think there is any danger so to speak in identifying oneself with the Buddha? Could you possibly do this in an unskillful way and if so how?

DEVARAJA: By pushing into your Ego

S: Yes, by identifying oneself with the Buddha in a purely intellectual way as sometimes happens in pseudo Zen. "Thou art Buddha" or "I am Buddha". What merely happens is that the concept of or the idea of your being Buddha is appropriated by the ego and the ego becomes Buddha. Not that the ego is transformed into Buddha, but the ego thinks that itself as ego is Buddha.

ABHAYA: It's dragging the ideal down...

S: Yes indeed. It is the negation of the ideal. It's just the glorification of the ego. So this introduces the distinction between genuine emulation and mere imitation. Do you see the point of the distinction? Sometimes the question is raised should we not imitate the Buddha? I mean in Christianity there is the famous imitation of Christ. Well if you take word literally there is nothing wrong in imitating but it has acquired a somewhat different connotation in modern times. So imitation usually means copying in rather an external way. So perhaps one should speak in terms of emulating, rather than imitating. Emulating means being inspired by the example that somebody sets and doing your best genuinely to follow that example. But imitating means behaving like that person in quite superficial manner while remaining essentially unchanged. And even copying the behaviour of that person in such a way as to even conceal or disguise your real nature. Do you [122] think one could speak in any genuine way or in a way of actually, let us say, imitating the Buddha? To use that word in a positive sense.

MIKE: Yes I think that simply by sitting in meditation posture in a way... Perhaps I'm getting mistaken between imitating and emulating.

JAYADEVA: Practising the precepts, in a sense, you're only emulating because until it becomes a spontaneous expression of your inner state you are actually just going through the motions to try and cultivate that in you.

S: Right yes. For instance, one says that one's ideal or one's aim is to gain Enlightenment, in other words to be a Buddha. So the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, actually did that and one can trace the different stages of his career. One knows how he behaved after attaining enlightenment, so therefore one can perhaps, meaning, in as much as one is also aiming at Enlightenment, one can meaningfully speak of being like the Buddha, living like the Buddha and doing what the Buddha did. In that sense, imitating the Buddha. [3] But does that mean one has necessarily got to duplicate or reproduce all the different incidents of the Buddha's

life 7

VOICES: No

S: Well, in some cases, maybe. Or perhaps one might say, "well how literally?"

KULANITRA: But I mean if you do it mechanically then it's just an imitation. If your life really does correspond in the conditions of your life to the conditions of the Buddha's life and therefore certain things become necessary like a going-forth.

S: If you are living in a palace and all that, well presumably you have to literally leave it.

SIMON: I was thinking of a heroic figure like Harmapala, some of the actions that he performed, like Bodhgaya, undertaking that. Well perhaps you could see what you could do to take on a task like that. Well, not literally to go to India to do what he did.

KULAMITRA: Isn't that what monks think they're doing by taking in the Vinaya and the robes and the bowl. They think they're emulating the life of the Buddha.

S: Yes indeed, emulating the life the Buddha led. In a few cases it may actually be so but in many cases it's just purely external. There is no doubt about that.

KULAMITRA: That would be O.K. if you really understood the principle. It is possible to have that as an expression of the principles.

S: oh yes indeed. For instance there are some Buddhist countries, where, I'm not sure if the practice is still kept up, but it was certainly kept up until very recently, when a young man becomes a monk. They sort of re-enact the Buddha's leaving home, including putting him on a white horse and leading him round the village etc. So this can have a certain significance. It can emphasise a certain principle. But it can also no less easily, just become a sort of cultural tradition, which doesn't have spiritual significance for someone who

really takes it seriously. He can feel that he's doing just as the Buddha did, in a very deep and genuine way.

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DAY 2 TAPE 4

S: ... is to say, rather scornfully, that their idea of a really good interesting lecture on Buddhism was a lengthy discourse on the eighteen different ways in which German philologists have interpreted the Sanskrit word Samskara. (Laughter) Anyway, perhaps we'll stop for a cup of coffee. (long pause) Right, more specifically, I think there were just

maybe two more points that we could talk about in this last verse. First there is the question of the Nadis and Bindus uniting, and the other is the question of identifying oneself with the Buddha. Do you know what Nadis and Bindus are?

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S: (Cont.) ... again one has got an example of the blending, so to speak, of the Transcendental and the mundane. It is not that Bliss is to be rejected but Bliss is to be refined. Bliss is to be even sublimated, and united with the experience of the Transcendental. This is what the Tantra refers to as the union of Voidness and Bliss. Bliss, as it were represents the essence of the mundane because this is what people are after usually, very often in the wrong sort of way, and Voidness represents the essence of the Transcendental. One is to bring the two together.

Guhyananda?: Is that why the first Cakra is where Bliss is preserved, then it becomes transformed

S: One could say that, yes. Because the secret centre is the - well there are two centres at the bottom, so to speak, of the median nerve. In this particular song, Milarepa refers to six centres in all. Some accounts make mention of seven. Yes. So the secret centre is the centre where especially according at least to some traditions, the sexual energies are, so to speak, present, in a coiled up or latent form. So that representing the lowest end of the scale, so to speak. Bliss in its grossest form. (Pause) But Milarepa also says, "Where the Nadis and Bindus both unite. Son, if you can identify your self with the Buddha, the Divine Body will vividly appear."

So what is this identifying oneself with the Buddha? There is of course an actual visualization practice in which you don't visualise the Buddha figure, whatever it is, out there in front of you, and then contemplate

it. You experience or you visualise yourself as being Buddha. So let's just talk about that a bit. What exactly does one mean by identifying oneself with the Buddha? In what sense can you identify yourself with the Buddha? To what extent can you do that in a real or genuine way?

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S: I mean, in what way does that differ from actually attaining Buddhahood?

Mike: This is presumably talking about your potential. That you do actually have a sort of seed of Buddhahood in you. You aren't actually enlightened, but through practice you realise that.

S: But in the Vajrayana it goes a bit beyond that because you actually visualise yourself as having the body of a Buddha, the marks of a Buddha, and so on and so forth. So what do you think is the significance of that?

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S: (Cant.) ... think one could speak in any genuine way or any meaningful way of

actually, well let us say, imitating the Buddha? To use that word in a positive sense?

Mike: Yes, I think that simply by sitting in meditation posture, in a way (inaudible) perhaps I'm getting mistaken between imitating and emulating.

Jayadeva: Practicing the precepts, in a sense, you're only emulating because until its become a spontaneous expression of your inner state you are actually just sort of going through the motions to try and cultivate that in you.

S: Right yes, for instance, one says that ones ideal or ones aim is to gain Enlightenment. In other words to be a Buddha. So the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, actually did that and one can trace the different stages of his career. One knows how he behaved after attaining Enlightenment, so therefore one can perhaps, meaning, in as much as one is also aiming at Enlightenment, one can meaningfully speak of being like the Buddha, living like the Buddha, and doing what the Buddha did. In that sense, imitating the Buddha. But does that mean one has necessarily got to duplicate, or reproduce, all the different incidents of the Buddha's life?

Voices: No. No.

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Kulamitra: But I mean, if you do it mechanically then its just an imitation. I mean, if your life really does correspond, in the conditions of your life to the conditions of the Buddha's life, and therefore certain things become necessary, like a going forth.

S: I mean, if you are living in a palace and all that, well presumably you have to, literally, leave it.

Simon: But, practically, perhaps, I was thinking of something like, the sort of idea, perhaps a sort of herioc figure like Dharmapala - some of the actual actions that he

performed, I mean, like Bodhagaya, undertaking that. Well, perhaps, you could sort of see that, by what you could do. What you could try to undergo, to take on a task like that. Well, though not literally to, sort of, go to India, do what he did.

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Kulamitra: I mean, isn't that what monks think they're doing by taking on the Vinaya and the robes and the bowl? They think they're emulating the life of the Buddha.

S: Yes indeed, emulating the life the Buddha led. In a few cases it may actually be so but in many cases it's just purely external. There's no doubt about that.

Kulamitra: That would be ok if you really understood the principles. It is possible to have that as an expression of the principles.

S: Oh, yes indeed. I mean for instance, there are some Buddhist countries where, I'm not sure if the practice is still kept up, but it was certainly kept up until very recently, when a young man becomes a monk they sort of re-enact the Buddha's leaving home, including putting him on a white horse and leading him round the village, etc., etc. Do you see what I mean? So this can have a certain significance. It can emphasise a certain principle. But it can also, no less easily, just become a sort of cultural tradition which doesn't have much spiritual significance. But none-the-less yes, it can have spiritual significance for someone who really takes it seriously. He can really feel that he's doing just as the Buddha did, in a very deep and genuine way.

Kulamitra: Isn't it like the principles and the understanding. I mean, that's the necessary bit, but it could take a traditional expression.

S: Yes, certainly it could. I think we also have to try to understand the difference between those incidences in the Buddha's life which reflect actual stages of spiritual development, and those which were merely, as it were, accidental. You could say that the Buddha's going forth represented actually a stage of spiritual development, his going forth from home. So, therefore, you could say to yourself, "Well I have to imitate the Buddha in this respect. I too have to go forth if I want to be like the Buddha, if I want to gain Enlightenment." So the Buddha left, the Buddha went forth by leaving home. He had a home to leave. He had a palace to leave. He had a wife to leave. You might not have a palace or a

wife. (Laughter) You might not even have a horse to go forth on, but you have to ask yourself, well, what is going forth for me? It's not that I've got to find a palace, and then leave it, and I've got to get married and then give up my wife, (Laughter) just to be like the Buddha. I actually knew some- body in India who did that. (Laughter) Who was a batchelor and he wanted to become a monk. But he wanted to do it the way the Buddha did it so he

S: (Cont.) ... got married and he had a son. He was quite pleased it was a boy and not a girl. And as soon as the child was born he just became a monk. He felt he had really done it the way the Buddha had done it. (Laughter)

A Voice: You would get even more mixed up if you tried to go forth in the way the Padmasambhava did. (Laughter)

S: Yes indeed. Well, it would be very difficult to imitate Padmasambhava, especially the way he was born. (lots of laughter) But certainly some incidence in the life of the Buddha, some incidence in Padmasambhava's life represent actual stages of spiritual development that everybody needs to go through. Has to go through. So you have to ask yourself, how you, in your own way, are to traverse that particular stage. I mean clearly you can't take it leterally because then you might say, well, if my father wasn't a King, and I didn't live in a palace and I didn't have a wife and son, and horse and an attendant, well, then, I couldn't go forth. So that just shows the absurdity of the literal imitation. You've got to ask your- self, well, what is going forth to me in the circumstances I am in. ~That have I got to go forth from?

Mike: Doesn't that tie in with what we were talking about yesterday, about self-will, the opposite of self-will. Having a vision. That vision being created, in part of even in whole perhaps by your Guru or the Sangha, you responding to that vision and channelling your energies towards it, into it, to create it as a potential, and that is your refuge and that is following the Buddha. Although there may well be a lot of difficulties along the way, you can see the difficulties but you feel Os overwhelmed by the vision of what you see. So that is your spiritual path.

S: Some people of course, according to temperament would derive their vision, so to speak, from the reading of the life of the Buddha. That will make it very clear, in quite concrete terms, what the spiritual life really is all about, how one leads it. Having been inspired say by the life of the Buddha and gained their vision from that, they will want to, so to speak, imitate the Buddha, so then, as I said, one would need to discriminate those episodes in the life of the Buddha which really did represent genuine stages of spiritual development, genuine stages along the Path, and those episodes which were merely accidental, incidental, due to the fact he was living in India, five thousand, four five hundred years B.C. and so on. Otherwise you become like the disciples who got themselves kittens from the bizarre

because they saw that their Guru had one and they tied it up everytime they meditated. Do you remember

S: (Cont.) that story? Well the story is, for those of you who haven't heard it (Laughter) you clearly haven't heard all the taped lectures. That a certain Indian Guru was given a little present by somebody, a little kitten. So he became quite fond of it and kept it near him, but it was a very trouble- some little kitten and wanted attention when he wanted to meditate, so what he did was, whenever he wanted to meditate he just tied the kitten to a little post which he stuck in the earth. Then he could meditate without the kitten trying to climb up him. So his disciples who were watching saw this and they noticed that every time he meditated he tied this kitten to a post (Laught~r). So they thought well, 'there must be some meaning in this. There must be some soteric significance. It must be connected with his meditation somehow. It probably helps his meditation. So they al~ went to the bazaar and bought kittens. They brought them back and tied them to posts when they sat and meditated. (Laughter and chuckles throughout this bit) It probably helped their meditation quite a lot. (Laughter) So this is an example of unintel- ligently imitating a teacher, in certain unessential respects. So one doesn't want to imitate the Buddha in those sort of ways. You can even argue wearing a yellow robe was incidental. It was just a custom in India. Even shaving the head was incidental. You could argue that. i~4aybe some Buddhists would not agree with you but you could argue in that way. That it wasn't actually essential. Not an integral part of the spiritual life.

Mike: I guess that's the thin~ to recognise the actual the skill is to recognise what is essential. In a way you can only do that with a certain amount of trial and error.

S: Yes, Indeed. (Pause) So I think we have to be careful not to over-react against the idea~of imitation. To think that you shouldn't imitate anybody in any sense is an expression of individualism in rather an unskilful way. Wanting to be different, wanting to be original, wanting to do things your own way. I don't want to imitate anybody - that sort of attitude. Where as one can say imitate the Buddha. I think one can use the word, I think imitat- ion is the word really rather than emulate. I'm not saying that one should not emulate the Buddha but imitate seems to be rather the more appropriate word provided it is properly understood. Emulate suggests that you should try to do as well as the Buddha, but imitate suggests a closer correspondence with the actual life of the Buddha. At least with what was essential and not accidental in that life. (Pause) I think we shouldn't be afraid of the word imitation just because it has been abused, or because sometimes people do imitate in the wrong sort of way.

4~lamitra: So when you use the word imitation you are thinking of something

Kulamitra: (Cont.) like 'going forth' or are you thinking of

S: Well yes, when I speak of people imitating the Buddha or imitating the life of the Buddha I'm thinking of people doing such things as going forth, yes.

£~ike: You are saying that, like, imitating is a lot easier for people to, perhaps, feel for than emulating because emulating is a bit 'out there'. In a way, yes, you want to do as well as the Buddha but it's a bit sort of n&~ulous. Imitating is perhaps mor0

S: Yes, imitation is more detailed. I distinguish between imitating and copying. You know, copying is merely external. That is to say, you dress yourself up in a yellow robe, you shave your head, you adopt a sanctimonious expression and you think that you're imitating the Buddha. You're not imitating in my sense of the term, you re simply copying.

A Voice: It's a degree of awareness though isn't it? you know~, aware of the significance.

S: Well, one has to understand what should be imitated. One imitates only what is essential and your imitation is with a view to re-creation within yourself.

A Voice: Like a ritual?

S: You could say that.

Guhyananda: Couldn't imitation develop into ritual and have dangers in that way, there wasn't awareness in the ritual?

S: Well yes and no because any practice has dangers you could say. Wven if you observe the precepts you could say there was a danger there because from observing in a skilful way you could start observing in an unskilful way. So until you actually enter the Stream there's always a danger of misunder- standing, of practicing the wrong kind of way. I mean that doesn't only apply here, it applies to any practice of the Dharma at all, in what-so-ever way. Danger is always present, yes indeed. I think one must beware of thinking

that there is any safe way of practicing the Dharma. There is no safe way of practicing the Dharma. So sometimes when people ask, well, isn't it dangerous to do this or that, well~, I say of course it is because when they ask wouldn't or couldn't this be dangerous they are suggesting, well, perhaps there are other safe ways that wouldn't be dangerous but that is not

S: (Cont.) so. Everyway is dangerous. It is dangerous to practice any of the Precepts in the sense that there is the possibility of practicing them wrongly. So you cannot to ask for a completely safe practice is really to ask for a practice where attitude doesn't matter or attitude doesn't count, You can be sure that if you just do it you'll be doing the right thing. But that is impossible. Attitude always counts so where there is a possibility of skilful attitude there is also a possibility of unskilful attitude until such time as you enter the Stream. Yes, you can sit and meditate in an unskilful way. You can do Puja in an unskilful state of mind, or for unskilful reasons. You can go on Be treat for the wrong reason. You can go on solitary Retreat for the wrong reason. You can do any of these things for the wrong reason. You can be a Buddhist for the wrong reason. You can read Buddhist books for the wrong reason. You can go on Pilgrimage for the wrong reason. I think I mentioned in this group yesterday, yes? You can't actually meditate for the wrong reason, not whilst you are actually in the state of meditation, but once you come out of it you can adopt a wrong sort of attitude, you know, an unskilful attitude. towards the fact that you have meditated. You can start thinking, well, that makes me better than somebody else for instance, and you can give an egoistic tinge to the whole thing. So there is no safe practice. There is no practice to which no danger is attached. Danger in a sense that you can use it in the wrong sort of way or adopt the wrong sort of attitude towards it. Because at every point there is a possibility of your either being reactive or being creative, until as I said, you enter the Stream. You can fall back.

Cuhyananda: Is there merit, as some schools seem to suggest, in even just repeating phrases, that there is merit in the repetition of the phrase itself?

S: Merit in the repetition of the phrase itself?

Cuhyananda: Aye, saying the phrase or performing a certain ritual or

S: I think if one adopted a very strict attitude one would say only to the extent that there is some skilful mental state present. I mean sometimes people speak as though that were possible but I think actually it isn't. However inattentive you are or however unmindful you are, some vague aware-ness, not even of what it signifies but of what it is connected with, is present. You may not even consciously think of the meaning of the words but you're vaguely conscious, it's somehow connected with Buddhism perhaps (Laughter) To that extent it is meritorious. Do you see what I mean? Other- wise why should you repeat those words rather

than any other. Why should you say 'Om i~lani Padme Hum' rather than 'It's a nice day today'. (Laughter) The

S: (Cont.) fact that you say, 'Om Kani Padme Hum' means that you are aware that there is something special about it. However vaguely, however distantly. So, I think completely meaningless, completely idle repetition is not possible. But obviously there are tremendous differences of degree. (Thong pause)

Simon: I was thinking about wanting a safe way. It's almost lik~, it's a bit like what we sometimes seek in rather a secure seeking way. It's almost like you want the spiritual life, you want the Friends, to just be, everything is handed to you. Well we've tried it out, you know, it's alright. You know, well, here we are. You just practice it and you will be alright. It's almost like the spirit of adventure, of danger, has been removed. It's sort of anaesthetised. it's almost like we don't want to experience ourselves then. It's like we want just to have everything done for us.

Javadeva: Is it Neitzsche who says 'live dangerously'?

S: Nietzsche, yes it was, yes. (Pause) Well I can't say that I agree with that though. Because you've no choice. (Laughter) He says life dangerously as if, well, if you didn't want to you could. But you cannot do anything else I mean it is dangerous to live. You know eve-n if you cross the road it's dangerous.

Jayadeva: Isn't it more like, live with awareness that life is dangerous?

S: Well, he didn't actually say that. But one must be careful not to think the meaning is that you must choose to live dangerously. No, life IF danger- ous. I mean, even eating a biscuit is dangerous. (Laughter) You might ohoke on a crumb, yes? Nothing is free from danger. How can you to live is to be in a dangerous situation. Therefore we mustn't think in the conte~t of the spiritual life, that there is any safe way. That there is nothing you can be sure, well, if you just do it, you don't have to think. You just do it and you are on the right path. 1\0. Because your mental attitude is always involved. There is a sense in which there are certain right things to do. You could say, well, meditation is one of them. ~ybe you can take it from your Kalyana Mitras that yes, meditation is one of the things that you need to do. Meditation is definitely good. But that doesn't mean that you can be quite sure that all you ve got to do is to meditate and everything will be alright. '~o. It's not as simple as that. You've got to relate the actual practice of meditation, when you've meditated. llow you meditate, the way ~n which you approach it, ~he conditions under whioh you do it, to your

own actual needs.

Kulamitra: I think that ties in with the way a lot of people see meditation to begin with, as very mechanical. They see it as a technique.

S: Yes, a sort of panacea, almost.

Kulamitra: They don't appreciate that if you meditate it implies transforming your whole life any~ay. And increasing your awareness outside the practice.

S: Well, they don't understand what meditation essentially is. That it is a raising of the level of consciousness. And they don't understand that if the level of consciousness is raised that sooner or later it brings about the transformation of the whole being. Essence preceeds existence.

Mike: I think this ties in with one of the first three fetters - dependance on Rights and Ceremonies.

S: Yes indeed. And it's significant that you only break that when you enter the Stream. Otherwise there is this inveterate tendency to do things by just going through the motions. I mean it suggests a split. A split between consciousness and being if you like. (Pause) I mean some people even think, if you think of doing something it's as good as doing it, as though the mere good intention or just intention is enough. I mean it's as though when I commented on this, in connection with certain things I'd been reading about in Minutes, Minutes of Council Meetings. Sometimes people agree to do something. Well, one gets the impression that some people feel, or have felt that once they've agreed to do something, well, that's that. They've done it. They agree, say at a Council Meeting, 'Oh yes, I'll do it.' Well then there is no need to think about it any more because they've shown their willingness and that's all that's really required. Do you see what I mean? As though they really aren't able to carry it over actually into action, and they don't really realise that promising to do something means actually doing it. They seem to think that promising to do something is sort of sufficient in itself. I mean perhaps that is putting it a bit extremely. Perhaps they don't sort of consciously really think like that but that is how they seem to feel. That seems to be their attitude. That they've done their bit by agreeing to do something. Someone asks them a month later, well, "~hy haven't you done it?" It takes them a bit by surprise it seems. It hasn't occurred to them that they should actually do it, having promised to do it. (Laughter) It's as though all the available energy has been absorbed in their actually promising to do it. Or you can even apply that to other things. When I say 'I Go for Refuge.' Well that's that. You've

gone for Refuge. Well, then you can forget about it. You've gone

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S: (Cont.) for Refuge. Not that it's a beginning of a process that you have to work on. You've said it: 'I go for Refuge' - 'Well, that's that.'¹ You've gone for refuge, you can get on with other things. (Laughter)

A Voice: So in a sense that's just a promise

S: Yes indeed. It's more like saying, "I promise to Go for Refuge, everyday, ever minute. (Pause)

mL-uhanda : It was thinking about that in the context of ordination. How in a sense it's a promise that you're going to spend the rest of your life in the act of 'Going for Refuge'.

S: Right, indeed yes. It's not even just the same act because it is an act, the significance of which continually deepens. (Thong pause)

Anyway, this has all arisen out of the consideration of "Son, if you can identify your self with the Buddha, the Divine Body will vividly appear." What do you think this means? "The Divine Body will vividly appear." Presumably it's the Divine Body of a Buddha. So what do you think Milarepa means here? (Pause)

A Voice: Your old body will be transformed.

S: If you can really identify yourself ... well this suggests of course that he is not speaking simply in terms of copying. If you can really identify yourself with the Buddha, identify yourself with the Buddha in a sense of identifying your consciousness with the consciousness of the Buddha, well, you'll start looking like a Buddha. "The Divine Body will appear" - you can't really look like a Buddha without being a Buddha.

Aryamitra: So even if you are identifying with the Buddha to the extent of carrying out the precepts and the practices and so forth, so that you obtain Buddhahood. Is he saying that or

more immediately? Is he talking about some- thing more immediate or the fact that if you identify yourself with the Buddha to the extent of lunya and Prajna?

S: The "Divine Body" seems to relate more to Punya and the identifying your- self with the Buddha to relate more to knowledge or J?~ana. Incidentally it is said in Mahayana teaching that the Dharmakaya of the Buddha is a chief result of the accumulation of Wisdom, J~na. And the i~irmanaka~ya and Sam- bhogak~ya are attained as the result of the accumulation of punya. (long pause)

S: Airight, let's go on. ~erhaps someone would like to read that next prose paragraph.

Text: "Rechun,gpa said, 'Your miracles are indeed wonderful, but my mind will not be at ease if I cannot have my books back, so please retun~ them to me.' The Jetsun then passed through rocks and other obstacles, flew by on a rock, walked and sat on water, ~u red fire and water from from his body, flew through and sat in the sky, and transformed his body from one to many and from many to one."

S: Yes Rechungpa has seen all this, he has seen there miracles but he says, "Your miracles are indeed wonderful but my mind will not be at ease if I can not have my books back1 so please return them to me." So what sort of state of mind does this reveal?

A Voice: Obstinate.

S: It's obstinacy, isn't it?

Guhyananda: He does seem to be changing a bit though. In the other one he says 'This is nothing surprising' or 'Tftw~ere is nothin sur risin in all this.'

S: Yes, that's true. But in a way, no. In a way he is becoming more obstinate because he's saying, well 'I admit the miracles are wonderful but I still just want my books back.'
(Laughter)

Kulamitra: His position is becoming more and more ridiculous.

S: Yes.

Ouhyananda: Does it mean that his initial emotional response of resentment has died down, not it's become a bit more entrenched?

S: It could be. But what one notices here is that if someone want's some- thing very much and if their mind is very set on getting that one particular thing, then they are not able to enjoy any other thing. Do you see what I mean? He is so set on getting his books back he's unable to enjoy the miracles. So som~times it happens you're so pre-occupied with the fact that you have been frustrated in a particular respect, that you've not been able to gain the particular thing you want, that you just disregard all the other things which are within reach. This happens quite a lot I think.

Devaraja: It's a loosing touch with the Greater Mandala.

S: Yes, one could say that. But it's being very rigid. It's just as, say, if I can't have this, well I don't want anything. It's a sort of expression of resentment.

SIDE B

S: (Cont.) And also, it manifests in relation to say, not having had some- thing or not having had the opportunity of doing something when you were young, and you bear a permanent grudge, a premanent resentment. You say, well, 'If I couldn't have that when I was young, well I'm not going to do this, or I don't want that.' in the present. You are still hung up on the past in this sort of way. Maybe when you were a child you wanted a particular ~ind of toy and you never got it. You were never given it, you were never able to enjoy it, and maybe you still feel frustrated on that account. So you refuse to play with the other toys, the even bigger and better toys, that are now available to you as an adult. Your emotional energy is still there with that tc you didn't get or weren't given.

Simon: But even worse then that perhaps, you can wish other people not to have those toys, well, you haven't had it so

S: (interrupting) So why should anyone else have it. Yes indeed. (Pause) So this is in a way a sort of upadana. This is clinging. You notice in the Wheel-of Life, in the chain of the Nidanas, in dependance upon trsna - craving in the sense of neurotic desire, arises uphd~na or clinging. So this is clinging. Sometimes clinging comes about due to frustration, that you have a certain craVing and that ~raving is not satisfied. You won't accept the fact that that craving is not being satisfied and just give up, turn to some- thing else even. You hang on to it, yoiI cling on to, not only to the feeling of craving itself but to the resentment that you experienced on the account of that frustration of that craving.

A Voice: How does that differ from the realm of the Hungry Ghosts where there isn't really a witch, where the witch gives them what it is they really wanted, so~I understand.

S: ~hat they really wanted? Well he gives them ambrosia. He doesn't giv~ them what they thought they wanted. He gives them what they really wanted, that i9 to say ambrosia, which represents the Dharma. So if somebody is still clinging to this unsatisfied desire, maybe for a teddy-bear, when he

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S: (Cost.) was three, well, you don't now give him a teddy-bear and say, 'Oh here you are, you've been longing for it all these years. You may be twenty~~iyp now but what you really want is a teddy-bear.' (Laughter) So you don't just give him the teddy-bear. No. You say, 'It's time you grew up you know.' You give him the Dharma, yes. And giving him the Dharma involves persuading him just to let the past be the past. Just to accept the fact he didn't get a teddy-bear when he was three, even though he wanted it very strongly. And that he, even if he was given a teddy-bear now it just wouldn't mean anything to him. It couldn't mean to him now whAt a teddy bear meant at the age of three. So what would be the use of getting one or being given one anyway. So you might as well give up your feeling of resentment and frustration and so-on, and just take and accept now what you neec now, in terms of your human development, which is the Dharma.

Abhaya: Otherwise a lot of energy can be tied up on long-standing

S: So it's just the same in the present with regards to alternative possibilities. Maybe you want to read a particular book or say you want to read a book and you want to read a particular book, but someone's borrowed it so you get into a frustrated fretful state. 'OK I

can't read that book, I'm not going to read anything.' So here you are, dozens of other good books but you're so disgruntled and resentful that you can't read the book you first thought of reading, you refuse to read any book. Or you go into a restaurant and they haven't got what you were thinking of having. They don't have that particular dish on the menu, so 'Ok I'm not going to have anything.' But that is the sort of attitude we usually adopt in the present, with regards to, as it were, co-existing possibilities. You know, we are not very flexible, we're very rigid. If I can't have that I don't want anything.

Simon: You find that sometimes with, sort of, frustrated ambition. You know, you haven't been a success in the past, so you think to yourself 'Oh I give up.'

S: Yes. 'I couldn't be a solicitor so I'm not going to be anything. I'm just not going to try and do anything with my life.' (Laughs) Or 'My parents didn't send me to University. Ok I mean, education is out as far as I'm concerned. I'm not going to bother about educating myself.'

Mike: Have you, by the same view, in an instance whereby a creative artist or something proposes to do some particular design and can't do it, thwarted by other pressures, says 'I can not compromise'. Is that not the same thing? Is that the same thing? I mean when does compromise come into it?

S: Well, this raises the question of what is an alternative? Do you see what I mean? If you've made up your mind that you want to be an artist, well, then you put your whole being in to it, and you've got to go all out to be an artist. I think a compromise arises, or the possibility of a compromise, or the danger of a compromise, when you could be an artist, but there are other things you want to do or to be, as well. Yes? And you are not willing to give them up in order to be an artist. Or at least there is some conflict. You say 'Well, I want to be an artist,' but you also say, 'I want to be a successful business man'. And you're not prepared to give up the being of a successful business man, in order to be an artist.

k~lamitra: Isn't also just taking a creative attitude to circumstances. I mean I've often heard people complain that some creative outlet was not open to them. They wanted to paint, but couldn't. They wanted to write poetry but there wasn't time. But say, for instance, when Kovida was at Sukhavati - there wasn't really time but he still wrote poetry, and therefore he did what he really wanted to do, deeply. Often people just, they are not whole-hearted about it, and they just use the opportunity to complain.

S: Yes, if you really want to do something you will usually do it. In fact people usually do do what they want to do, actually. In at least nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a

thousand. ~~(hat you are doing is what you want to do. Really. F~xcept perhaps to the extent that you are irrational, totally irrational, and want to do incompatible things. Things that you (Laughter) can't possibly do at the same time. Well you do get this. You can find people, I've met people who want to be - take an extreme example, they want to be a monk, they want to live in a monastery and meditate all the time. But they also want to have a wife and chi~dren and a happy family life and a good job. They want both but they can't have both. That's quite unreal. And then they grumble (laughter) because they can't have both.

Devara~: They can put their wife and child into the monastery. (Laughter)

S: No. They want to be there on their own. Anyway, it's not a simple matter like that.

Jayadeva: Sometimes it's an inner conflict, kind of thing. You know, two tendencies one might - two different temperaments - which have to resolve themselves.

Simon: It's also that case of given one thing you always want the other. ~ever being satisfied, never really using whatever opportunity you've got.

S: Yes. So what the danger is here, that you pay too much attention to the form and not to the substance. Say, one particular thing, or one particular activity is really equivalent to the other but sinoP there is a slightly different form, you won't recognise it. You want it in that particular form. Yes?

Mike: A very rigid attitude about what the form is.

S: A very rigid attitude. Yes. It's not, yes, well sometime there may be a difference of what you really want to do and what it is possible for you to do, and you may then say, 'I'm not going to compromise, and I'm going to persist in trying to do what I really want to do.' That is one thing. But obstinacy is when, well, you are offered something, which for all practical purposes is both objective and subjective, it is just as good as the thing you wanted but you refuse to accept it. Just because it's tied up with a ribbon of a slightly different colour or something of that sort. Or, for instance, you say you want to read a certain book, but som~~ one given it to you in paperback, and you won't read it in paperback. You insist on having it in hard covers. (Laughter) You know, it's more like that. But this is the sort of thing that people do. 'But I want to do it in my own way. I want to practice patience but I don't want to have to be patient when people speak to me angrily. I want to practice it in my

own way. I want to be patient say, when my house falls down.' (laughter) They are not really practising patience, they're practising - they're concerned in practising it in a particular way, which means they are not really concerned in practising patience at all. Just like people say 'I want a creative outlet'. Everyone you offer them they reject. (Laughter) It's not the one that they want.

Simon: So it's that thing of giving them what they think they want, but they don't actually want it.

S: So, Rechungpa says, "My mind will not be at ease if I cannot have my books back". What are his books talking about? They're talking about Buddhahood, presumably. Talking about enlightenment. And here is Milarepa actually showing him Enlightenment, right in front of his nose. But he doesn't want that. (laughter) He wants it in the form that he wants it in. (More laughter) He wants it as described in those particular books. It's almost like saying, 'Well, I don't want Enlightenment in this way, I want it in that way.' But what does it matter. It's just like if you're really hungry and you really want, if you really need food, you won't be too particular about what particular form it takes. Maybe you do like one

2: (Cont.) particular kind of food more than another, but if you're really hungry, well, you won't bother then.

A Voice: The Buddha does say that the taste of the Dharma is all one taste and form, so that the form doesn't matter.

S: The form doesn't matter. You can apply that to Kalyana Nitya. Sometimes people attach too much importance to purely secondary accidental personal qualities. They say that 'I want to enter into Kalyana Nitya with people. I want to communicate, but it's got to be a person like this or a person like that'. I mean 'I'll only enter into Kalyana Nitya with somebody with red hair'. It's almost as ridiculous as that sometimes. I mean, here is another person willing to enter into communication with him. Well, that isn't good enough. They've got to have certain other quite extraneous qualities too. Do you see what I mean? So, 'I'm not going to try and get on with him. I don't like fat people. I don't like people who don't speak very grammatically.' etc. Or, 'I don't like people from the north of England or from over the border.' (laughter) So that means losing sight of what is really essential. This is what Rechungpa has done. He just wants those books back. But no other thought in his head. He's forgotten all about Buddhism, all about the Dharma, all about enlightenment. All about Milarepa. He just wants those books back.

D~ev~a: So in a way Milarepa is almost showing him in actual fact he doesn't really want Vnlighten~~~nt.

S: Yes really. Not at that particular moment arlyway. Not in that part- icular mood.

Devarala: That, that's, I'm not sure I'm . .(unclear) but that does seem to happen sometimes. You start out- ~ith an objective and you get kind of deflected off into a side-track, and you get really stuck in it.

S: Yes. Well, I remember many examples of this sort of thing, but one in particular I remember. When I was at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara there was a very worthy elderly gentleman who took it upon himso~lf to tape-record my lectures. He made such a big job of it that the tape-recording of the lecture became more important than thp lecture itself. And he actually said one day "My tapes are more important than your lectures." (jaughter) He used to come with his little briefcase and he used to spend (he was a retired engineer of some kind) and he used to spend his whole day in the room where I gave the lectures, surrounded by almost miles and miles of

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S: (Cont.) tape, just getting himself more and more tangled up and then started taking it upon himself to edit my lectures. And he even went SO far to say that without his editing my lectures had no value. So (baughter) he used to give long introductions to Th~ lectures which he must tape and he'd begin by saying (his name was Bill. I forget his surname - Reville, that's right). He would say - he didn't have a very sort of cultured accent - he would say, he would introduce my lectures. "This is me, ~illiam Reville, introducing the Venerable Sang - ha - rak he'd never get my name right - (Laughter) lecture on delivered at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara on Sunday the ~hat the Bhikshu is going to tell you about is (Laughter) Then I'd be in full flow in the middle of the lecture and then suddenly 'click' 'Boom' and then you'd hear Bill's voice "What Bhante really means is"(Laughter). Then one day he says to me, "Bhante, your lectures are nothing witbout my editing." (Laughter) So this is quite a good eXampl~~ you see he'd got so much into this taping and editing that the lectures were almost lost sight of. (Laughter) And in the end he had about, a lot, oh so many of my lectures edited in this way and he wouldn't let anybody else near, or have anything to do with it. So people just let him get on with it. In fact, there wasn't really anybody available to tape the lectures and he made it seem such a big ~ob and so difficult, and so time consuming that nobody else dared to even think of taking it on. So I had to remain content with him (one of my many trials) until the F.W.B.O. started and after Ananda started tape-recording my lectures. That is, of course, another story. (Laughter) 3ut instances of this sort are so common. That you forget the main ~urpose of what you are doing and you get lost in the incidental details and concentrate on them. I mean for instance, you can meet

Bhikshu's in the WAnt who are much more pre-occupied with wearing the right kind of yellow robe, and tying it in the right sort of way and arranging it in the right sort of way, than with anything else. They think that is rea~ly important. (Pause)

Kulamitra: Do you think that's because before you've done anything practical before anything is manifested, it's just ideas. You can, sort of, have very positive ideas, but when you actually bring more of your being into the whole thing, like, more of your reactive tendencies begin to come out, begin to dominate what actually was an initial positive feeling?

S: That is true. Yes, you re-create your old world around the new ~ucleus, as it were. The nucleus doesn't create a world of its own. The old world reorganises itself a~ound or sets itself up again around it. You can see this happening in quite an extreme way. For instance, I've seen cases in which a young man has left home. He's just like the Buddha - left his wife, left his family, left everything. And, maybe has spent sometime in solitude'

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S: (Cont.) and maybe, yes, attain~d some spiritual experience, set up as a Guru, started a centre, started an Ashram, started a Vihara or whatever, starts getting disciples, men disoiples, women disciples. And one of the women ~ disciples starts becoming quite close to him, helping him, and eventually she becomes his wife, and maybe after a while there are children. Then maybe he brings his old mother to stay there. She's given some position or some function and then the Ashram or the Vihara, you know, it gradually becomes a sort of home and a sort of business, and yes, maybe some sort of religious activity is still going on but it is for the support of the family. So he re-organised the old set up around the new nucleus. So one sees this again and again. I've given a quite obvious example, a crude example, but it happens in all sorts of smaller ways as well. You start off with the best of intentions but the gravitational pull gets the better of you, and you, in effect, under - you know - in a different form, just set up the same old world around yourself.

Jayadeva: So you say, you could join a Co-op with the best intentions, but if you've been working for ten years in another situation, the mode in which you operate within the Co-op could be exactly

S: (interrupting) Yes indeed.

Devara~a: It's a bit like barnacles collecting at the bottom of a ship almost. (Long pause)

A Voice: It's quite frightening really.

S: So this means continual vigilance is necessary. That's why you're in danger all the time.

Jayadeva: It's good to have other people around to point out the danger for you.

S: Yes indeed because you can't always see it yourself. (Thong pause) So Rechungpa is just obsessed with having his books back. I mean for him Buddhism has sort of shrunk to just having those books, possessing those

books. Right, let's just have a quick look at Milarepa's miracles. Th~se

are the tandard miracles, or standard Abhijnas, or superpowers, super- knowledges, described in the Pali and Sanskrit texts. Passing through rocks and other obstacles, flying by on a rock, walking and sitting on water, pouring fire and water from the body, flying through the air and sitting in the sky, and transforming his body from one to many and from many to one. How literally is one to take all this?

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Jayadeva: Could you say it's symbolic in a sense, that you w~re saying that obstacles could only be overcome by sort of transcending the level at which they exist?

S: One could say that but it also represents one could say a supreme example of flexibility, which is the vory thing which Rechungpa is not being. IC'S not being flexible. I mean, what could be a better example of flexibility than passing through rocks. Or walking on water. These are all sorts of transformations and adaptations. If one wanted to tak~ it symbolically rather than literally, then one should take it as an example of infinite adaptability and flexibility.

Devaraja: But even if you do tak~ it literally it's done because it does also have a

symbolic meaning.

S: Yes, right. I mean by taking it literally I mean Milarepa actually did those things, whereas taking it non-literally Milarepa just produced a phantasmagoria of himself doing those things, as part of the entertainment.

Bill ?: If you take it literally you've got to ask, well, how did he do it? What made it possible for him to do that?

S: Yes, right, and could anybody do that, if they meditated in the right sort of way? Buddhist tradition, of course, does take their superknowledges as they're called, literally. And also, it does take them as having symbolic significance as well. It doesn't always clearly distinguish between the two.

Jayadeva: It is very different from the Christian tradition because their miracles are performed so as to amaze the public, whereas in Buddhism, you can see, he performs a miracle so as to illustrate some spiritual point, as it were.

S: And all this for the benefit of one person.

Peter ?: But even if, when you say by not taking it literally, maybe he's creating some phantasmagoria, but I mean, that's no less miraculous. It needs no less explanation from a scientific point of view than taking it literally.

S: Right, yes.

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Devaraja: Can one actually speak of actions as not being symbolic? Is it possible? I don't think it is possible to say that, that, a literal action and that's a symbolic action, and that action is symbolic as well, I mean,

I just (Pause)

S: Well, when one distinguishes between a literal action and a symbolical action, one distinguishes between an action which takes place, in the way that actions usually do take place, and between an action which only appears to take place, which is some kind of collective hallucination. Do you see what I mean?

~ulamitra: I was thinking in terms of symbolic in the sense of an action which is designed to communicate something, as opposed to something

S: Sornesody just being there. Yes.

Voice: Wasn't there almost a tradition in India, of magicians being able to (...unclear contact relations ? ...) and so forth, in a sense, maybe in that sense, maybe he could ignore Milarepa's

S: I was looking in connection with the writing of my memoirs, through some old diaries I happened to have of my stay in Kalimpong, and I found in one a reference of an incident that I had quite forgotten. My diary said some- thing like, I forget the exact words, it was something lik~ this. '1~~ician came in the afternoon.' This was when I was living in Kalimpong. I forget whether he was a man from the plains or from the hills. Well, anyway, 'A magician came in the afternoon, showed various magical feats.' (Laughter)

ffir'~lamitra: Sounds like a salesman.

S: Then 'Talked to my pupils for half and hour.' Yes. Then I tried to remember what magical feats was I shown. I just had vague recollections that he put a stone on a saucer and then on-vered it with a otoh, ar~ nen you saw the cloth rising and he pulled it off and there was a plant under- neath. And things like that. Oh yes, what else was it. Yes, he was taking great stones out of ~jis mouth, and things like that. But anyway, I couldn't have been very impressed because there was this brief reference in my diary (t~ughs) of a magician and his magical feats. I gave him some money and he passed on. They weren't just tricks, I was convinced of that. They weren't just tricks but they were feats of some kind. It wasn't sleight nf hand or anything like that. I didn't feel that I was being hypootised.

So I had no explanation of it, but anyway I wasn't especially interested (Laughter)

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S: (Cont.) being a good Buddhist I didn't think very highly of that sort of thing.

Simon: So, I mean, ~iilarepa's being - using this for a very specific purpose of demonstrating to Rechungpa

S: (interrupting) I remember there was another incident in Kalimpong, some Brahmins came from the plains. And they claimed that by the recitation of Vedic l~antras they could kindle fire. So all the orthodox Hindus in Kalimpong were very impressed by this and there was a great Vedic festival in the Mela ground, where they usually had football matches. But anyway, sort of a Vedic altar was set up and there were these Brahmins from the plains chanting their Vedic ~ntras, and they were pouring Ghee, that is clarified butter, into the flames, and the ~j~rrowari(?) merchants there, they were being, well to do people of orthodox Hindus, they subscribed altogether, I was told, about thirty-thousand rupees which were spent in this way, on entertaining these Brahmins and their leader, who was a famous Vedic scholar. And then on the last day they were going to intensify their chanting and set fire to a heap of sandalwood shavings. So practically the whole population of (Laughter) Kalimpong was standing there, all round in the stands, from which they usually watch the football matches. All gathered around because the whole population was there, about fifteen thousand, so nearly everybody was there, especially the Tibetans, to see this miracle. (Laughter) Everybody watching. I didn't go nor did just a very few of my pupils. Everybody else was there. They were chanting and chanting and chanting - but nothing happened. (Laughter) So the Tibetans started laughing and leaving in droves. 'Ha, ha, ha, these heretical Hindus, you know they can't do it. It's only our lamas can do things like that.' (Laughter) They were really pleased. The Hindus were getting more and more crest-fallen and in the end they had to help the mantras with a match (Laughter), just help with a match. No, I'm sorry, not, they tried rubbing sticks first but that didn't work either so then they tried helping with a match. Then they got a little flame and then of course re-doubled their chanting until it was burning better. So all over Kalimpong for weeks afterwards the Buddhists, especially the Tibetans were ragging the Hindus mercilessly. 'You people, you don't know anything about magic. It's only the Tibetans (Laughter) the lamas who can really do these things.' You know just like in the Scriptures, the heretical Hindus can't do what the right-believing Buddhists can do. (Laughter)

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A Voice: I bet the Lamas did take it seriously. (Laughter)

S: The lamas themselves didn't say very much but the lay Tibetan Buddhists were saying

quite a lot. (Laughter) So this is quite a famous little episode in Kalimpong history. I'm going to write a little bit about it in my memoirs. The whole town was there, just like in ancient times. The whole population, virtually - it was going on for a week, but nothing happened. (a laugh)

Anyway, perhaps we'd better stop there, and tomorrow morning, tomorrow afternoon rather, see how Milarepa deals with the situation.

poor quality from here

RECHUNGPA'S REPENTANCE. Seminar. Tape 5. Day 3. 'A' Side.

Ven. Sangharakshita;

68 Those present: / Jayadeva (?) ; Kulamitra; Virananda; Bill Moffat; Peter Markham; Guhyananda; Abhaya; Michael Chivers; Simon Chinnery;

Ken Chandler; Aryamitra; P~v~~aja.- -

(Transcriber's note: There may well be errors in the spellings of the above-named for which I apologise. In some cases it was difficult to hear the names pronounced. In the ensuing transcription I have in most cases been uncertain of which person was speaking, so rather than mis-attribute anything, I've typed 'Voice' in nearly all cases.

Sangharakshita: So, where are we? Page 446? Rechungpa says, "Your

miracles are indeed wonderful but my mind will not be at ease if I cannot

have my books back, so please return them to me." We got as far as that that, didn't we? We did. ~ I think we have to start on the remainder of

that prose paragraph. Is that not so?

VOICE: I think we did get to the end of the prose paragraph. S: Did we? All right, and then the song, as usual, describes

in greater detail what Milarepa has just been doing. So would someone like to read that song?

VOICE: "Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment. Look, nothing can impede me. This proves my mind with all forms has merged. That I

can ride upon a rock, flying through the air., proves I have mastered outer objects. Walking on water, as on earth, proves I have unified the Four Elements. The flow of fire and water from my body proves I have mastered all the Elements. Transforming one body into many and many into one proves I can benefit all beings by miracles. Sitting, walking and lying in the sky proves my Prana rests in the Central Channel. Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats, but how can it compare to this wondrous game? Son, if you lose not your faith, your prayers will be fulfilled."

S: So, what is the significance of all this? In a way, the clue is found in the second line. He says: "Look, nothing can impede me."

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The miracles (inverted commas) illustrate that in a quite literal, even 69 materialistic way, but the psychological and spiritual truth behind the

exhibition seems to be contained in these few words. Milarepa has reached a state in which nothing can impede him and he - I won't say he proves that - but he demonstrates that by, as it were, putting his hand through the rock, walking on the water, flying in the air, and so on. One may or one may not take that literally. One may or one may not accept that he did literally perform or exhibit those miracles. But the essence of the matter, spiritually or philosophically speaking, is that nothing can impede him. So what does one mean by that?

VOICE: It means he's Enlightened.

S: It means Enlightened, yes, but in what way, or in what sense is not being impeded a quality of Enlightenment?

~~~ VOICE: Just infinite expansion, infinite growth.

2ND VOICE: Free ~r8m conditioned existence...

S: But in what way is one impeded?

VOICE: Times loss... (?) It would mean that one's energy was stopped or blocked by

S: It means that obstacles really get in the way.

VOICE: Whatever obstacle comes up can be their Enlightenment, if overcome.

S: It's not even "overcome".

VOICE: Well, go through.

S: Go through. So what is the difference between "going through" and "overcoming"? You see what I mean? The unenlightened person, pursuing the spiritual path overcomes obstacles. Milarepa is not impeded by them, he goes through them. So what does that mean?

VOICE: It has to be something that's impeded.

BILL MOFFAT: There are no obstacles at all; you don't have any obstacles at all.

S:

Yes, right. To someone who is not Enlightened, it may appear

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that there are obstacles and you are not being impeded by them, you are going through them. But to you, the enlightened person, there is no obstacle at all. So you see what I mean? That's partially Enlightened

person, you may say if you use that expression, overcomes the obstacles, but for the fully Enlightened person, the obstacles are not even there.

That is the difference. It is that fact or truth which Milarepa is illustrating in various ways by his miracles. Obstacles which are obstacles for the ordinary, unenlightened, even if highly developed person, for the fully Enlightened person are not actually obstacles at all. Now can you give an example? An example rather than an allegorical illustration?

VOICE: An obstacle that wouldn't present any problem, that couldn't exist for an Enlightened person?

S: Yes, as an obstacle.

VOICE: That about the story in Milarepa's life, of when he meets some demons in his cave ---

S: Yes...

VOICE: And at first he tries various sorts of mantras to exorcise them, but then he sees them as aspects of his own mind and invites them to stay to supper, and they disappear.

S: I think that is still "overcoming", but overcoming in a subtler way DIFFERENT

VOICE: What about the example of seeing somebody giving up some attachment?

S: Yes...

VOICE: Whereas another person has nothing to give up, they're not attached, something like that.

S: Yes. Somebody might be able to live without a television set and somebody else might come along and say, "How on earth do you manage to get on without one? How on earth did you manage to give it up?" You might say, "Well, I recognise that having a television set is a great

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S: impediment to one's spiritual life and it's very difficult to

give it up. How did you manage to give it up?" The other person

might say: "Well, it's not an impediment at all. Even if it's around

it doesn't bother me." He might even say: "Even if somebody switches it on, that doesn't bother me, either. It doesn't affect me in any way. It's a matter of complete indifference to me whether it's there or not, switched on or not switched on." Do you see what I mean? It is of no concern, it doesn't matter. So, in that way, that is to go through the impediment. So it's as though, for the Enlightened person, the whole of existence, the whole of the samsara is a non-impediment, in that sort of way. You see what I mean? The fact that he has to eat and drink, that doesn't impede his spiritual realization. The fact that people speak to him harshly doesn't impede his spiritual realization. It is not that he puts up with it and practises patience. For him, there's nothing to put up with. He doesn't have to practise patience. He doesn't, perhaps, even think of himself as being patient. He just doesn't react, because he is Enlightened. There is no obstacle there for him at all. He goes straight through it. Whereas even the relatively Enlightened disciple might have to remind himself: be careful. I've got to be patient. He may actually practise patience and not react, but it is an obstacle which he has to overcome. It is not something which, for him, is not an obstacle at all, as it is for the Enlightened person. VOICE: (ABHAYA?): Something like practising awareness in certain circumstances for the relatively unenlightened person is very difficult. But for the Enlightened person, there's no question ---

S: It's the natural thing. So it's not a question of the Enlightened person. He's more easily able to overcome those obstacles. For him they are not obstacles at all because there's no question of his awareness or mindfulness being lost. Whatever happens, that won't happen. So, therefore, for the Enlightened person, the Samsara is not there. So, in that sense, for the Enlightened person, samsara is

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Nirvana. Do you see that? You could put it that, to him, it doesn't matter whether Nirvana is there or the Samsara is there. --either of

them represent obstacles to him. "I'll go straight through then". If you can go straight through the Samsara, what difference is there for you between Samsara and Nirvana? It's not that Samsara and Nirvana are ontologically identical. That's not what is meant when it is said that Samsara and Nirvana are one, or they are not two. You're not making an ontological statement, or a statement the significance of which is primarily ontological. You are, in a manner of speaking, making a psychological, or perhaps I should say spiritual, statement, that what is experienced by other people as the Samsara for you presents no obstacles. You go straight through it.

VOICE: Is it possible to make a sort of equation? It's just something Arimitra was saying about attachments~ that it's almost as if that lack of obstacle or non-existence of obstacle is absence of desire equals ---

S: Absence of desire equals absence of desired object, as desired object. If you don't desire a woman she ceases to be a woman. So what is she instead of a woman? She's just an individual~ You can put it like that. Or, if you're not hungry, the apple on the tree is just a beautiful apple. You've no desire to go and pick it. You just admire it. You just look at it. Anyway, personally I prefer Tilarea's

illustration: "That I can ride upon a rock, Flying through the air,  
Proves I have mastered outer objects."

That is to say "outer objects do not present any obstacle or any impediment

to me. And similarly with everything else, the basic significance is

the same. Water is not water, earth is not earth in the ordinary sense, so far as I am concerned. They are all equally the void. That's why I can fly in the air and put my hand right through the rock and walk on the water." Whether he actually does that in any sense, that is another matter. But the significance of what he does~ in whatsoever sense, is clear. (Pause) But do you think there's any particular

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reason why he says these sort of things, or shows these sort of things, to Rechungpa?

VOICE: Well, Rechungpa is coming across all sorts of obstacles, (word inaud. ) goats or books.

S: One could say that for the unenlightened person, there are obstacles just as for the enlightened person there are no obstacles, but for the unenlightened person, well, one could

say the unenlightened person is of two kinds and therefore obstacles are of two kinds. There's the unenlightened person who is not trying to become Enlightened and the Unenlightened person who is trying to become Enlightened. So, for the unenlightened person who is not trying to become Enlightened, obstacles are real and he doesn't overcome them. For the unenlightened person who is trying to become Enlightened, obstacles are real but he does overcome them. Rechungpa, for the time being, seems to belong to the first category. His books are for him a big obstacle, or rather his attachment to his books is a big obstacle. (Pause) So he concludes by saying: "Amazing it may be to watch the play of goats but how can it compare to this wondrous game? Son, if you lose not your faith, your prayers will be fulfilled."

SIMON: Is he also showing that, by performing these miracles, it's like nothing can impede him and therefore he could truly practise helping everybody? Well, as he says: "Transforming my body into many... .. proves I can benefit all beings". Sort of infinite freedom in that way.

S:

- Right, yes. In a way, he's saying that in order to be really

able to help living beings you need to be Enlightened, 'you need to have no obstacles. Otherwise, if you're not Enlightened, or to the extent that you're not Enlightened, the living beings that you're trying to help will themselves constitute obstacles for you. You see what I mean?

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~~ Take the example of, say, you're in a study group, very patiently trying to explain something to someone, trying to help him, presumably. Well, supposing he's particularly obtuse, or you feel that he's deliberately not trying to understand, putting up a foolish sort of resistance. You may start becoming quite irritated. So then he has become an obstacle for you. So you need to be able to go through that obstacle, because if he becomes an obstacle for you, in that way, you may start reacting and that may be to the detriment of your helping him. It would be to your own detriment, anyway. You see what I mean? So in this way you can only really help others to the extent that for you there are no impediments otherwise, as I said, the people that you are trying to help may themselves become impediments for you. Maybe this is part of the significance of what the Diamond (?) Sutra says about the Bodhisattva vowing to help all living beings at the same time thinking, or realizing, that there are no living beings. There are no living beings for him in the sense that living beings are, for him, not impediments. He goes straight through them. He doesn't regard them as entities. If you regard something as an entity you cannot go straight through it. If you regard rock as solid, you cannot put your hand into it. If you regard air as solid, you cannot sit on it or walk up and down on it. So to the extent that things are experienced as entities, to that extent there are limitations, to that extent there is impediment. 4 "So how can it compare to this wondrous game?" Looking at that in a very general sort of way, it's as if to say well, if you really want fun, if you really want entertainment, if you really want to enjoy



yourself, if you really want to play games, just get involved with the spiritual life. That's the best fun, that's the best entertainment, that's the best game. Well, in terms of a recent book, that's the master game. It's much more interesting - well, people tend to think of the spiritual life as dull and uninteresting. Well, perhaps it is when considered on purely Christian terms, but not from a Buddhist point of view. There's an expression, I don't know if you've

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3s.heard of it: "As dull as a mont~ of Sundays". (laughter) But you could hardly say: "As dull as a month of Wesak celebrations'l, could you? The connotation is completely different. Isn't it significant that we have that expres~ion in a Christian country, "dull as a month of Sundays", in the same way as we say, "dull as ditchwater"? It suggests that we don't find any relish in religion, or not in its Christian form.

VOI~E: Sunday's the day on which you're not allowed to play.

S: Yes, literally, yes. Well, Sunday is still the dQ'J on which one is not allowed to play.

VOICE: Less so than it used to be.

S: Less so than it used to be~ but there are still all sorts of

acti~ities which are prohibited on Sunday. The Lord's Day Observance Society is still quite active and influential.

VOICE: Especially in Scotland.

S: Yes. I was readiTh about one particular island, off the coast of Scotland, round which it was said that thay had a curtain of brimstone. Yes - not a bamboo curtain but a brimstone curtain because on the Sabbath, on that island, within that curtain, you couldn't even take your car out of the garage. If you were a holidaymaker an3 you took your car out of the garage on the Sabbath you got very black looks from the local residents. One of them might even come across and have a word with you. It is as strict as that, and the ministers do rule their flocks with rods of iron on t1~at little isThand. I think they all belong to - I think they're called, "The Wee Frieze". (?) (Pause)

DILL MOFTh~T: Some of them are so strict that a headmaster recent%y was dismissed from his job at the protest of many parents becaue ho said a Christmas tree couldn't be allowed. It was too frivolous for Christians to be allowed to have. ~

Well, a Christmas tree is definitely pagan, he's right there. Like Christmas pudding and mince pies, which the Puritans abolished in Britain, didn1t tthey, duriThg t!ie time that

they were in power, under Cromwell.

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7£ The heathen practice of making Christmas puddings and mince pies was prohibited by the Puritans. They have nothing to do with Christianity. It's a pre-Christian custom that has been incorporated, and the same with the Christmas tree. So they're right, in a way, but, as we say, the more right they are the more wrong, they are. (Pause).

Anyway... "Look", Wilarepa says, "nothing can impede me". For me there can be no impediment, no obstacle, no obstruction. Nothing that gets in the way. All right, what does Pechungpa say to all this?

VOICE: Rechungpa says: "Your miracles are like child's play. You have demonstrated them so much that instead of them being interesting they are dull and tiring. If you are really compassionate, please return me my books." Wilarepa replies -

S: Yes. Let's just look at that a minute. "If you are really compassionate, please return me my books." What is Rechungpa really intending to say here, do you think?

VOICE: Self-delusion. 2ND VOICE: Attachment. S: Self-delusion, attachment.. yes. But what else? Something a bit more nasty than that.

VOICE: Like a child - emotional blackmail? S: Emotional blackmail, exactly, yes. He says: "If you are

compassionate please return my books." So he's putting, or trying to put, Wilarepa into a cleft stick. Either he returns his books, and Pechungpa gets his own way, or Wilarepa has to admit that he is lacking in compassion. Don't you find that people do that sort of thing, that they try to put you into that sort of situation? I remember people used to say to me sometimes in India things like: "Oh, I'm sure that a person of your high spiritual attainment will of course agree that Buddhism and Hinduism are the same." It's the same kind of thing,

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isn't it? Or someone goes around collecting money, maybe for old donkeys, and they say: "Well, I'm quite sure that a kind, compassionate

person like you would want to help our poor donkeys." So they're sort of challenging

you to declare that you're not kind, you're not compassionate1 you don't want to help donkeys. But it's just something you don't particularly want to do. W'aybe you're not against doni°~y~ being helped but you don't particularly want to give money for that purpose. T?ut fleople try to emotionally blackmail you~and put you in that sort of position.

VOICE: Salesmen do that.

S: Salesmen. yes. It happens in all s~rts of ways. Or tftQ~r' re not quite no crude as that. They say: "This in for the di~cerning buyer." And you think: "Oh, I'm a discerning sort of man. That's me, the discerning buyer." (laughter) This particuir object that you are looking at is not for everybody.

VOICr,: Ithi~ we ought to try that when we're selling books. (laughter)

S: Right.

P~ILL MOEFAT: Some of the charities are ~)sing this method at the moment. Like sending unsolicited packets of Christmas cards and say1~~: "You don't need to return them but, if you want, we ould be pleased to accept £2 for them.

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~. Ah, yes. But you'd have to be pretty mean to send them back. in other words yes? Or strong-minded enough not to care people ~~hat thought about you. (Pause) But talking abou~indulging in emotional

blackmail, I remember this esp~cially in connection with a poster~a few years ago in London - I've mentioned it before - put out by the Salvation Arrrjw. There's a stern-looking Salvation Army officer with a child, wrapped in a blanket, in his arms and the caption says: "Now will you care?" t~ll, you don't now ~ the child is dead or aa~ been knocked over, but what the poster is saying is: it's your fault. I mean, you don't even know what you've done, or nupposed to have done,

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~lbut you're being- told: it's your fault. You're g~ilty. You've got to pay. And I thought t}is was really bad.

VCICE: There's a terrible one at the moment which has got a picture of someone in a wheelchair who's got muscular distrorhy and it says:

"You can walk away from this poster".

S:

- Right, yes. I've seen that one, too.

BILL MOFFAT: It says: "~ would like to walk away from this poster as well".

S: Ah, yes. So it is really indulging in emotional blackmail.

This is quite pernicious and it's a form of coercion. It is a form of

functioning in accordance with the power mode as I've been describing it. So this is, in fact, in a slightly different way, what P~hunc%na has

been doing. What's the page? I've lost it 447. Yes he says:

"If you are really compassionate, please return me my books.11 As though you're being put in the position of having to demonstrate that you are compassionate, by doing what the other person wants you to do. So what does that play upon, as it were?

VOICE: Guilt.

S: It plays upon guilt. And also~it plays upon your desire to

stand well with the other person. You don't want to have to admit, in or

effect, that you're not compassionate, that you're not generous~ or that

you don't care, or don't recognise your responsibility.

BILL MOFFAT: Does it mean that you don't really know how compassionate you are, or whatever~ if you were actually to go along with that kind of blackmail? You're not getting in touch with how you actually feel.

Right. So I think one should be careful that one doesn't enlist these sort of techniques for what may well be a good and worthwhile purpose. It's almost as though some of these charities are out to get money at all costs. You do sometimes find that, the people who work for charities, unfortunately, are so full of moral righteousness that they think it gives them a right to behave in a rude and browbeating sort of way. No you know the sort of thing I mean? 6 to~ou~h you've

no right to refuse and if they ask you in a rude and over-direct manner, well they've got a right to do that because they're collecting for children~or they're collecting for cripples etc. etc. They've got carte blanche to be rude and insensitive.

VOICE: It's the same with Christianity. They say, "Look what they did to Jesus, look how they hung him up on a cross."

S: Yes. That's your fault.' Yes.

VOICE: "Christ died for you".

S: For you, yes. There was another thing recently - well, it was last year or at least some months ago. There was some discussion about the Passion Play at Oberammergau. You've probably heard about this. This is a play representing the events leading up to the crucifixion of Christ and the crucifixion. The play is put on every 12 years by the whole population of a little - I think it's a Swiss village. German, is it? A German village. And the text goes back a couple of hundred years. In the course of the text the responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ is attributed to the Jews in a rather straightforward manner, that the Jews are responsible for crucifying Christ, which is of course what the Gospel says. The Gospel story makes it quite clear. According to the authors of the Gospels, Christ was crucified on account of the Jews. When Pilate gave them the opportunity of releasing Christ they deliberately asked for Barabbas, a criminal, to be released instead. When Pilate said, "This man is innocent. Do you still want him to be crucified?" they said: "Yes. Let his blood be upon our heads and upon the heads of our children." This is what the Gospel says and this version is of course reflected in the Oberammergau Passion Play, selected, of course by Catholics. Now the theists are all ganging up a bit, so offensive statements on the part of Christians regarding Jews are being toned down. So it was suggested that they did not attribute, in the

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~0. Oberammergau Passion Play, the death of Christ to the Jews, that the responsibility was not fastened on the Jews. So why did they say?

They altered it. Instead of 'The Jews have crucified Christ, the whole human race has crucified Christ. I thought that was even worse.' They're saying that everybody - they're making you responsible for crucifying Christ. Well, whether you're a Hindu or a Muslim or a Buddhist or whatever, you helped to crucify Christ. You're responsible, you're guilty. And that is an improvement on attributing responsibility to the Jews.' Well, at least the Jews were there, they had something to do with it. They were on the spot. (laughter) And their High Priest, as far as we know, did have something to do - if there was, of course, a historical crucifixion - with the whole dirty business. No Buddhist did, no Hindu did. Muslims didn't because they hadn't come along yet. But, according to this improved and more ecumenical version, the whole human race is responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. The whole human race

is guilty. Isn't that terrible? This is deeply ingrained, it seems,

in the whole Christian approach. They try to arouse your feelings of

guilt. 'You have crucified Christ'. 'Christ died for you'. 'God loves you but what did you do when God sent his only-begotten son? You crucified him. You helped to drive the nails through etc. etc. etc. - It's so bad! This plays upon people's feelings of guilt. And here we see, even in a Buddhist context! Rechungpa is doing it. But luckily Buddhism itself has no truck whatever with this kind of approach. It's quite exceptional and abnormal

within the Buddhist context. Quite clearly it's attributed to a resentful and obstinate disciple who follows his own way. He is the one that tries the emotional blackmail, not Nilarepa, not any of the teachers. In Christianity, the teachers emotionally blackmail the followers. In Buddhism it's only the back-sliding follower who is emotionally long-suffering to achieve. Isn't that Significant? In Christianity the teachers do the

very thing that in Buddhism only the bad disciples do. You put it like that.

S: I don't think Christianity could survive if it didn't respond to that guilt.

S: Christianity couldn't I think. Certainly not in the form that we've encountered it so far.

VOICE: So it's almost like spreading Christianity, by saying everyone is responsible. There are some people who don't believe

it, and --

S: Well, that doesn't make any difference, according to Christianity. You may or you may not believe it. You're a member of the human race, and as such you are responsible for the whole

sorry business. You've a share of the responsibility. After all,

you're a descendant of Adam: Adam sinned, Adam fell, and in Adam the

whole human race fell including you. You are fallen. They're very

clear about that one, aren't they? (laughter)

VOICE: It's as if they can't see you at all as an individual. So everything attributed to one member of the group is attributed to the

whole group unto however many generations.

S: This is in a way, an ancient Jewish conception. As the Jews are represented as saying (whether they did or not) on the occasion of the crucifixion or the trial of Christ at least: "This man's death be upon our heads, and the heads of our children". Well, how can it be the responsibility of the children? This is a very old, primitive idea, that blood-guilt can be actually passed on from generation to generation. But Buddhism stressing the individual does not admit that one individual can bear the responsibility for another. The

Dhammapada says: "One man cannot purify another. One man cannot

save another. He can only show the way. But in Christianity, with (it seems, Owing to its Jewish heritage) a strong emphasis on the

group's guilt can be inherited, responsibility can be inherited.

Y~~~~~VOICE: Do present-day Jews believe this, that they've inherited the guilt for the crucifixion?

S: Oh no. Their story is quite different. They would say, well, some Jews might say that if that story is accepted literally Christ did commit blasphemy, by equalling himself with God, and even deserved to be

executed. An Orthodox Jew might even say that. A more Liberal Jew might say that it is a complete fabrication, that actually things didn't happen like that at all. But there is no doubt that the Jews believed that blood-guiltiness could be handed down from generation to generation.

VOICE: I suppose it does, in a psychological sort of way, to the extent that the child doesn't become an individual. You know, feelings of the parents that are handed down --

S: But it is not just feelings that are handed on here, it is actual objective moral responsibility and moral guilt. The Jews regard themselves as having inherited, literally, the promises that God gave to Abraham.

VOICE: Why didn't the Jews accept Christ, because he was a Jew?

S: Yes, well, according to the Gospels it was because of the wickedness or the hardness of their hearts. The modern Jew will tend to say: "We do not reject Christ. They do regard him as a great moral teacher but we refuse to agree with the Christians that he was the Incarnate Son of God. That goes too far, that is blasphemy. The Muslims adopt the same attitude. Jesus was a great prophet, they say, but to join anyone to God as his Son is blasphemy, is a sin.

VOICE: They're still waiting for the Messiah, the Jews?

S: The Jews are still waiting for the Messiah.

VOICE: They've been waiting a long time. (laughter) 2ND VOICE: They've got to clean up first.

S: Well, just as the Muslims still wait for the Messiah.

This is the Muslim equivalent of the Messiah.

VOICE: The Messiah will probably come and go without their knowing it. Well, this is

whr't the Christi~ns say. The tessiah did, in

fact, come but the Jews, owing to their blindnes' and the hardness of

~3 tTheir hearts, were unable to rec&gnise him. T~hat is hy there are

still Chri~tian missions to the Jews, to try to convince the Jews that the ~ess~aTh Thas cown, or th~t the Messish did coms, but they have not been able to recognise him.

wJcL f~~q VOICE: What is the origin of the e~pectation of a Yessiah?

S: Oh, that is quite a long and complex story. Basically the Messiah is a Jew, descend&d from T)avid, who'll become the leader of the Jewish reorle uner whom the Jews will conquer the '~ole earth and reign over the earth, and th~t reign will last ov(~T e thot and years. At the end of that tinie the~~'e will be a univcrs~l judgenent. The Christians, of course have taken all this over an&~ a~rlied whatever Jewish tradition and the Jewi~h prophets say about the t{°essiah to Chriect.

~ VOICE: That's funny, the idea of a Messiah coming some tire in the future, because all of these relig5ons secm to say: "Pot no~, later."

Even these great Christian ystics, they al~~ys seem to be ending up saying: "Only hen you're dead, not now. You have to suffer now but in the future ----." They al~~ys seem to keep pC(Dple hnrgring on.

S: Well,~there have been cults and sects, the foun~ers of --hish announced,that the last dWy 'as at hand and they had given the date

and the time nd it's come and it's gone and nothirg hr hanm:ned.

Jo

But the followers ~'~'~ not lost faith in them, that's the interesting

thing. The prophet 5%J5 "God hes held it off becau~e T prayed. I spent all night praying. Cod has postponed it for & few days or a few weeks or a few years." Or else he says: "Ah, I didn't take such and such a fact into account. There was a slight

(TAPE CUTS OUT 'thE A?!B 'A' SINE ThiT hS. ON SINE'N' TTTb? PICOPPINO EttoTh\_~~~ MTh-SJtMTENCE, SO LAST P!ET OF BWU'tE'S SENTENCE GM SINS 'A' IS LOST).

End of 'A' side



~~VOICE: (opening words not rec.).. was going to end on this particul~r day and it was reported in the Press that whon these people phoned up Twickenham, because they were guing to h&ve it 'at Twickenham, they said they couldn't h~we it that week; could they have it neyt week because they had a rugby match on? (lau£Thter)

SIMON: It's interestin~ that, in an: time of trouble, sort of threatening chaos (inaud.) (3ivil War in England, these

type of groups, popping up all over the ~lace, saying. "~ell, in ~--t ~~~ - another couple of years~it will all be over". Almost like a fever o~

panic.

VOICE: When I asked my question it was more what was the mechanism that caused human bein5~ to build up an Idea of somebody, almost like a Cod, visiting ana

S: Well, I thinJc it's probably a feeling of helplessness and inability to accept that you can't have what you want, that things aren't goin\_ to happen the way that you wish. So you sort of postulate an all-powerful savour figure in one form or another, either as God or Messiah, who is goi~~ to cove and do it all for you and gratify your wishes. You can imagine these conquered and crushed Jewish tribes consoling themselves by thinking: "Ah, these wretched Centiles. They may be subduing us now, we may be under their yoke, but wait untll the fu~re. We're faithful believers in the true God. Me cannot allow things to continue like this. Me will punish our oppressors Te will raise up someboQy who will lead u5~and we shall conquer all these aentile people. We shall reign over them." Itlrs a sort ci' wish fulfilment, isn't it. That seems to be the origin (?) of it, to a great extent, and Cristianity has inherited all this.

VOICE: It seems almost inevitable, once you start believinr in Cod. The world'5 in a mess; you are in a mess. People you know are

suffering. You have to try ard find an explanation of why he would allow it.

S: t~ell, there's a very good examole of that sort of thing last week, with the Algerian earthquakes. The Algerians h:;ve started trying, to find an ezplanation for this and they've come to the conclusion that God is angry with them~because they've not been practising Islam with sufficient strictness. So apparently there's a sort of upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism.

VOICE: Do you think that was like Hitler's approach? When the Germans were down and Hitler came along as the new Messiah, and they had the thousand-year Reich that was going to ----

S: The fact that Hitler did speak of "a thousand-year Reich" is quite interesting because it does have Messianic overtones. It does tie up with certain things in Christian teaching. "The Thousand-Year Reign of Saints", as it's called.

VOICE: That's quite interesting because a parallel in the United States, well (inaud.) declined in economic power in the world, there seems to be a revival of Protestant fundamentalism. Like Reagan standing up and saying: "Well, I think this idea of evolution is a bit up the creek".

S: Yes. Right, yes.

VOICE: I just wondered if those kind of fundamentalist tendencies happen with a decline of political and economic power.

S: I think there is a broad correlation between the two, yes. I think any community that feels its power and its influence declining will try to compensate in some way or other, and we often in this sort of way. (Pause)

INTERVIEWER VOICE: It's interesting the practice of lay Christians, or

lay people of theistic religions, they seem to spend most of their time. The other day we were talking about nunya Quidj atoning for their sin. Meanwhile, the Buddhist concept of what lay people can do to develop is to gain merit.

S: Yes, that's true. VOICE: . . . which doesn't seem to.... (inaud.) fundamental relationship to the world and the environment..

A

S: The idea of merit--they have lost--at least it is very positive as far as it goes. Definitely in Buddhist countries, the lay people, especially in the Theravada countries, do think much more in terms of accumulating merit than in terms of expiating sins. They may be quite aware that some of the things they do are not at all in accordance with Buddhist teaching, but they don't feel particularly guilty about it. They'd say: "Oh well, I'm not a monk, I'm a layman". Maybe that's not quite the right attitude but at least it's not a guilt-ridden attitude, and they do their best to accumulate punya in various ways, by making

offerings to the monks; supporting the monks~ building monasteries and temples; paying-- for the publication of Buddhist texts; and so on. So, again, though there are definite limitations to this sort of approach, at least as far as it goes it is quite healthy and positive and certainly preferable to the attitude of Christian lay-people, especially Catholics, who are only too often riddled with feelings of guilt and inadequacy, unworthiness, and so on.

~~ VOICE: Christianity seems very reactive and the Buddhist attitude much more creative.

S: Yes. Well, the Christian cannot but have the feeling that he is infected with the sin of Adam. That's born in sin. The Buddhist does admittedly say: "You're born as a result of ignorance and craving, but it doesn't seem to have the same sort of effect. At least, 'you're born as a result of your own ignorance and craving in previous existences: not on the part of - or because of - somebody else's disobedience. Also the Buddhist does say that even though your existence is due to your own ignorance and craving in previous lives, in this life itself you are fully capable of doing something about it. But the Christian is told: "You are born riddled with sin and guilt on account of somebody's disobedience and you can be saved from that by believing in somebody else, that somebody else has actually saved you. You're just a sort of massive plaything, you're just a football, involved about between Adam and Christ. It's like, Adam kicks you into Hell and Christ kicks you out into Heaven. You're just a football, as it were.

~o ~ki~ 's ~ ,,,~a cot~ ~ &

even the most pessimistic type of Buddhist, says: "Well~ here you are in the Causa, ~'ic'. is a pretty interesting sort of place. You came here entirely as a result of your own actions and you can get out again, entirely as a result of your own actions." So that is a quite different overall attitude. In Buddhism, far from being a football, you are the one who does the kicking, even though it's yourself that you are kicking all the time. Anyway let's not spend any time on Christianity. Rehgungpa's being a bit Christian-like, in his attitude of emotional blackmail. "If you are really compassionate, please return me my books". ~What does W~ilare~ say? Let's read that bit. VOICE: "Uilarepa replied, "My son, do not lose faith in the Father. If you pray sincerely, you will realize that all manifestations are holy books. ~now try to pray to reach for this realization.'11

S: "You will realize that all manifestations are holy books. Bechune" is asking for his books back. But perhaps he has got too narrow a conception of what a book is. He seems to think that he can learn only from books, that only books are useful, only books are valuable. But Uilarepa says: "You will realize that all manifestations are holy books. All Dharma~ all phenomena, all forms, are holy books, in the sense that you can learn from them. They have, in a manner of speaking, poetically, you know, a lesson and a message for you. There's a famous passage in Shakespeare to this effect,

isn't there which I'm sure everybody knows. No? (laughter) It's

a very famous one. It's the one from - isn't it - "As You Like It" -

(44 isn't it Berowne who talks about "books in brooks...?"

VOICE: "Love's Labours Lost".

S: "Love's Labours Lost", is it? "Sermons in stones, books in the brooks.." - no - "Tongues in the trees..."

ABHAYA: "Sermons in stones..."

S: "Sermons in stones and good in everything." Is that Berowne or is it somebody else?

ABUAYA: I think It's "Love's Labours Lost".

But that is the attitude, isn't it? I think we shouldn't take it in a sentimental sort of way. It's very easy to take it in a sentimental way: that little buttercup has got a message for you.', (laughter) if you are only open to it and sensitive sufficiently. Or you pick the buttercup and say: "What message have you got for me?" (laughter) That is how we usually take it isn't it? But it's really something much deeper than that. It isn't a sort of moralizing thing. It's easy to say: "There's that oak tree, standing, there so stout and strong. That's how we should be. We should stand stout and strong even though we are buffeted by the storms of life." It isn't looking at it in that moralistic sort of way. But how do you think it is?

VOICE: Aesthetic...

S: But I think it's something other than that. It's almost as though everything; that exists, as you come into contact with it and as you experience it, can be an occasion for the development of insight; not artificially reading a sort of moral lesson into that object. I don't think that is what is meant at all. I don't think that is what Milarepa scans at all. It's something much deeper, much more genuine, much more real, much more natural, much more spontaneous than that. You mustn't try to catch a lesson from anything. You must be really genuinely attending to phenomena, be really aware of them, trying, perhaps, really to understand them, trying to see them, and you can develop, in relation to that particular thing, some kind of insight.

VOICE: Is that Satori?

S: Well, satori can arise in this sort of way, according to the

Zen tradition; by looking at a bamboo, or just listening to the sound of the rain falling - or seeing the morning glory twined around the bucket at the well. These are all well-known examples.

~CA VOICE: Is this the development of prajñā (?), which we were talking about - the development of the faculty of prajñā

~ prajna?

S: Well, one could say that, except that the point here is that the contemplation, as it were, of any -phenomenal object can be an occasion for the development of prag in that sense. In ~-ilarcp-a' s terms all manifestationS are holy books. It isn't that you've got to open a book called a holy book and read: "All things are impermanent", and then you answer: "Oh yes, all things are impermanent. That's what the book says." No, all manifest ations, all phenomena, can tell you, so to speak, thst th~ng, if you attend to them, if you look at them~ if you seek.

ABHAYA: The book only refers you to the thing, doesn't it?

S: Yes. The book mustn't become an end in itself. It would seem, in Rechungpa's case, that the book has become an end in itself. He is relying on the book to tell him things that he ou~t to be able to see with his own eyes as he looks around him in the world. But unfortunately we often understand religion in that sort of way, don't we, as a specific activity, as a specific department of life, rather than as something we learn from or a quality that we experience in life as a whole.

VOICE: Could you say that there is a sense in which a book is an en(1.in'itself? The actual reading of a book is part of one's experience, so ----

S: I would say that a book can only be regarded as an end in itself, so to speak, to the extent that it doesn't in fact, refer you to things other than itself. You could say, for instance, that poetry is of this sort because a poem about, say, ~ .~~~la-rk

isn't intended to give you information about 5kylarks so that you 4k~ can continue to pursue your study of ornothology. ~-oe~ about

the s%wlark is intend.ed to communicate the poet's experience of listening to the skylark which is, so to peak an end in itself. You could not capture, you oo~.ld not come to know about you could not exp.erience that poet~ s ewnerience of the skylark in ai~y other way, except by readiWs his p9em. You could listen to a~r number

--~tnn

q0° of skylarks but it wouldn't tell you what Shelley fe~t when he llistened to the skylark. So in that ~p- the book is one of the

manifests-tions. It's not just something that points you to the

manifestations. The book, the poem, is itself a manifestation.

VOICE: (inaudible).. novels~ which you could (inaud.)

S: Yes, indeed. It is in itself an occasion for the development of, well, let's say, wisdom.

VOICE: So that is the book in the sense of a direct communication from another person.

S: That is not a book, you may say. Milton says: "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, treasured up to purposes beyond life~" A real book isn't a book, or isn't just a book. It doesn't give you information about some other department of existence, it is not a means to an end. In a sense it is an end in itself. It is itself part of existence. You could even say it is itself existence. (Pause) You could illustrate that by the remark that, for instance, a telephone directory and the collected works of Shelley are both books only in a purely nominal and formal sense. A telephone directory is not really a book at all, is it?

VOICE: That's what a sutra is, isn't it? It's not a book, it's an attempt to communicate directly to you an experience which you haven't yet had.

S: Yes right.

VOICE: That's what you can relate to, as well.

ABHAYA: Wait a minute - what is a book then? We've said it's not - first of all a book is something~ that gives you information. Then we said that a work of art isn't a book, in this sense. Now a telephone directory which does give information, and a sutra, which does give information - neither of these are books. So what is a book?

S: Well, in the most practical and straightforward sense, a book is something which consists of pages and (inaudible)

-- I~~~~~+~~~~ ~~~~~~ q.i~cTh books (inverted commas) simply

/t

I.J. refer you elsewhere. But some books do not refer you elsewhere.

The telephone directory refers you elsewhere~ your motor manual

refers you elsewhere~ a book on astronomy refers you elsewhere~

a book of poetry does not refer yo~ elsewhere. It is not about

anything except itself. really. V.or is a novel, nor is any work of the imagination about anything;~ except itself.

VOICE: That caw-.e over quite strongly, didn't it, in the Sutra of Golden Light? There's only the Sutra talking about itself.

S: Yes. The Sutra is the Sutra, talking about the Sutra. Yes that was one of the most extraoudin~ry features about the whole work, wasn't it? I~'s the Sutra siWT-iWg'- the praises of the Sutra. But ,that is the Sutra, of which it is singing the praises? So here ~re these figures in the Sutra, coming forw-ard one by one, promising to protect the Sutra and the Sutra consists of very little else except these figures coming forward and promisin?;- to protect the Sutra. This su&t.ests that the Sutra is 50met;:--ing intangible and elusive that cannot really be put into words. An(1 in the end you start feelin&;~ ~n a strange sort of way, that you younse~f re in the Sutra, or part and parcel of the Sutra, includOd in it or included out of it, if you like.

So, "If you pra.y sincerely, you will realize that all manifest- ations are hoThf books. Now try to pray to me for t~i5 realization." This could, I su~posC, possibly be misu.nderstood, these tords. "Try to pray me for this realization~ Is it that, if p~chungp~ orays to Milarepa for that realization, ~NilarePa willl~literc-l% give it to him? If thPt is not the meaning then what is the caningP.

~~~~ VOICE: He' S saying "just be receptive".

S: Just be receptive. But even th:t is not enough. Rechungpa's still got to practise and realize for himself.

VOICE: Very ruch inviting his own efforts. pre)&re an open heart.

S: Prepare an open heort, yes.

~CICE: Do you think that's the translation g.~in?

S: No, I think Tibetans dc use this sort of phraseoloWW of praying, yes, indeed.

~~~ ~~~ VOICE: I suppose it ouldn't be out of place in the sense that, in ~i. a culture like, the di5ciple/spiritual teacher relationship was so

strong t~at you couldn't think of sort of developing on your ow-n out of context with a lama,

out of touch with a lama.

S: To be without a lama - - -, as I think I've mentioned in lectures, amongst Tibetans is to be regarded as being no better than an animal, with no real human status, with no culture, because there's no spiritual life. If humans beings receive Tantric initiations and practise meditation. It's only the animals that don't do that sort of thing. All right, what does Milarepa do then? Would someone like to read that paragraph?

~OIC~::~ "Then Milarepa went to a narrow path used by monks on their way to Drin. There he picked up a huge rock (that blocked the path), cut (a part of it) into pieces (with his hands) as if slicing it

a cake, threw the bits into the 'W' as if spraying water, and stamped on the (remaining) rock as though trampling on soft clay. Finally, with one hand, he threw this huge rock into the river in the valley below, and sang:"

S: All right, someone like to read that song?

BILL ~OFFAT: "Bechungpa listen to me for a moment!/ On the narrow (mountain) path/Stood an iron rock with eight edges./ Its right edge-- was brushed with travellers mounted,/ Its left when they the path descended./ One hundred blacksmiths with their hammers/ Could not have split this gigantic stone;/ A fire heated by one hundred bellows/ Could not have melted it./ But behold,/ I sliced it as I would cut a cake,/ I threw the bits as I would sprinkle water,/ I stamped upon it as I would trample mud,/ And flung it like an arrow from a bow./ If with faith you look upon your father,/ Wish that filling rain will fall upon you;/ The treasury of wish-fulfillment will be realized./ Interesting it may be to watch the play of goats,/ But how can it compare to this wondrous game?/ Try, my son to challenge your mind at once."

---Mp----- -

~3 S: This, again, is all illustrating Milarepa's original statement that nothing can impede him.

SI~O~: It's almost like he keeps on repeating this one... in a

way he is giving a lot of different teachings but at the same time conveying

he's impressing again and again a very, very basic point.

VOICE: Is there anything symbolic about this rock being iron and with eight edges?

S: I can't think of anything off-hand, but I'm sure a Tibetan lama - teacher could probably give quite a long explanation. Every



detail is usually made to mean something. There must be a reason why there are eight edges and not six.

BILL MOFFAT: And the right was brushed with travellers... edge

S: This is just to illustrate the fact that it is very narrow~ Either on the way up or on the way you down you can't help brushing at least one side.

SIMON: It also implies, I was thinking, that - I mean, Nechungpa is in such a state that actually Milarepa is really having to do the most extreme things to impress upon him this one very basic thing which says something for if you get in that kind of state. It really does need overcoming.

S: Some camouflage. (Pause) There's just one point, perhaps, that requires attention. "If with faith you look upon your father" (that is, Kilarepa himself) "Wish-fulfilling rain will fall around you. The treasury of wish-fulfillment will be realized." What's the significance of that? (pause)

VOICE: ? (inaudible)

S: No, not quite that.

2ND VOICE: The rain of the Pharma?

S But what is the significance of this wish-fulfilling? You're familiar with the 5b-Fulfilling Jewel, the wish-Fulfilling Jar, and now it's the wish-fulfilling rain and "the treasury of wish-fulfillment".

VOICE: Is it the end of needs?

S: Yes, it is the end of needs. But what - Nechungpa shown himself to be like?

VOICES: Well, he really wishes something, he really desires something...

S: Yes. He really wants his own way, and he thinks that Milarepa is opposing him. Wanting his own way. But he wants these things and Milarepa won't give them. So his experience is that the spiritual life involves not having your own way. Milarepa, his guru, doesn't allow him to have his own way. But Milarepa is saying: Must you follow the spiritual life, if you pray to your father, if you are receptive to your guru - your wish will be fulfilled.

You see what I mean? It's as though, if you follow the spiritual path your deepest wishes, your most heartfelt wishes will be truly fulfilled; fulfilled in a genuine way. You will get what you really want, which is of course something itself, but which you've been looking for in all sorts of mistaken ways in all sorts of things which just don't give you what you really want because your experience is that you get what you want but then you realize, well, you didn't really want it after all, or you get tired of it

after a while. You start looking for something else. So

;-) - a is saying: Well, if you're thinking in terms of fulfilling-

your wishes and getting what you want, then it is the way. In

the spiritual life there is the true wish-fulfilling rainbow, the 5th fulfilling gem. If you follow the spiritual path you won't be losing anything, you won't be giving up anything, you'll be satisfied. Everything you'll be gaining what you want. Your wish will be fulfilled, you'll gain real happiness. This is what it is saying.

VOICE: It's interesting, do you think there's a case for people setting themselves impossible things to achieve, so that they never become disillusioned?

S: I'm not sure what you mean by that.

VOICE: Well, let's say, if you say: If only I could obtain an instrument such and such a way, then I'd be happy. Then you

reach that stage and you realize - you get bored with it after a while. I just wondered if there was a case for saying that some people could set themselves things that can't be fulfilled.

SIMO: In a way, that's the whole point about idealism, isn't it?

S: Tell, only the Bodhisattva who, actually. He sets himself the aim of liberating all living beings.

VOICE: I think that, in a limited psychological sense, you get people who will say: I want to be this, I want to do that; in a sense, but knowing that they won't be able to do it, which gives them an excuse for not doing anything. So you say: What I want to be is I want to be a spaceman, or a rocket pilot. And you know you're not going to be, but you're not allowed to do anything

else unless you can be that. And that's an excuse for not actually doing anything. - mean that sort of thing, setting your aims too

high?

VOICE: In a way, yes. I just wondered because that seems to occur.

S: Can you give a concrete example?

VOICE: Well, maybe someone saying they want to be a rerilbr great artist, and they just haven't Lc-?Ot that touch of genius to do that.

MJOTW~.B- VCICm---: What about becoming the greatest drummer in the world? 1ST

VOICE: Yes, could be.

£:OTTIBB- VOICE: But it may be beyond your capabilities, they couldn't really stretch. Is that what you tvc~n~

1ST VgICBb: I sWtpose so In a way.

S: I think if you do that you n,ust have at least some belief that it's possible for you to be that, it is not totally uw~~asonable. After all, somebody's got to be the best drummer in the -to.21

1ST VOIC?: Well, in a way, it does relate to this whole idea about being the best in the world. That's ~-that I'm tryimn-; to convey, in

a sense.

S: All right. Let's have that cup of tea and carry on. (Pause and tinkling of teacups). Let's go back a little bit to:

q~ S: flInteresting it may be to watch the play of goats but how can it compare to this wondrous .tame?" The spiritual life Is, as it were, a wondrous game. We got off this a bit because we went

into, first of all, how religion, so to speak, wasn't at all a wondrou game in C~ristianity Far from it. r.ut perhaps we ought to go back to this point and emphasize that it is, in fact, a wondrous game the spiritual life. It is the very best entertainment. It is the ~reatest fun. And it's t-.is sort of feeling, this sort of attitude. this sort of approach that one needs to communicate, ~~ so that when they see your F.W~.B.O. poster they don't thinf~ that it'~ a p~ddhIstic version of the usual kind of religious thing, but they do get the impression that it's 5omething completely different.

VC-ICF: In what way ~o we demonstrate, though? We can't walk on water...

S: Well no, because the.t doesn't help. If you could - -ell, Jesus also walked on water. What good would it do you? It :-0i.ld just label you as another little Jesus.

VOICE: One of the best ways of doing it, I think, for beginners, are the communication exercises. They seem to be a first-rate

way of getting things (word inaud.)

BILL: I was thinking that at Heruka quite often we have so much fun on a Saturday night, we sort of look at ourselves and think: "Well, what are we giving up?" In other words, are the other people, out in the pubs or wherever, actually having as much enjoyment as we are? We're supposed to be leading spiritual lives - I mean, we have more energy ---

S: Leading lives of self-mortification and self-denial.'

BILL: Right.' (laughter)

VOICE: It's like that poster, with As'vajit - you know - is bored

S: Yes, quite. But, you know, with this fun and games approach in Glasgow, do you feel that you are really retreating? No, that people are really ~C~O~u~s~l~y~v~e~d, you know seriously- gCtiW..~. - - ~%~t~ m~r~use

97 I don't personally see very many new people coming along. At least, they haven't started trickling down south.

BILL: It's only the old members that are having fun.' No, I think that's mainly to do with the co-ops that I've (inaudible).

S: They've got trapped in co-ops, have they?

VOICE: No, it's more that there's so much energy at the moment going into the co-ops and building a new Centre that

S: How many people are there altogether around roughly ?

This isn't really as much off the track as it might seem.

BILL: I think there's probably ----. We had a Sangha Day and there wasn't more than thirty there.

S: Well, that's very poor. Because I've been at Path Street to a meeting, years ago, when Vajradatta was there, and we've had seventy people/

So that isn't really at all good, thirty for Sangha Pay.

BILL: We did have seventy people at a musical evening.

S: An~tay, tha-t's a little different, because it is a musical evening. It's not a Pharma occasion. I've been ~g;;nianP~~e Movement as a whole, there isn't enough of - well, we don't have a proper word - one has to say, "preaching of the Dharma". "TeachinC-:" doesn't really cover it because it's more than teaching~. It's going out with the Dharma, m&i~ing it known to people. I have been getting the impresv-~ion that we haven't been doing enow) of this sort of thing. It's almost neglected. So, as you have got th-is big place in Glasg..ow, and it's going- ton?ed~aO~?tine Centre - but what the people? Centre really means neonle.

VOICE: We seem to have come across quite a big point here. I wasn't joking when I said, "How do we approach them, because we

can't walk on the water". I mean~ there seem to be two possibilities and I'm not quite sure what the best middle one is. One is that you attract people by appealing to them in their own terms. 'ou 1-now, you're all wearing funny T-shirts or riding big motor bikes or

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something they would like to be. p~t then when they actually get involved they find that actually that's got very little to do with your real activities. put on the other hand you've got what you're really doing1 but which may seem to thea - from the outside - to be rather demanding.. rathe'i hard work, even rather boring. I mean, how do we actually inspire people with what we're really doing?

S: Well, I think that in the first place one must seem oneself to

be inspired. people must s~~~ as very often I know they do see, that you are happy in what you're doing, that you are having-- a t~Orou;tthly

good time. Then the natural human reaction is: "I'd like to jOIfl

in. I'd like to have a good time, too. What makes it possible for you to have such a good time?" And then you say, in effect, "Well,

getting into meditation, living in a ~ommunity, working for the Nharma", ~

and so on. put initially you've got to put across,rpractical% or

theoretically or both, you've got to out across the fact th&t the Pharma, or the spiritual life, to use a not very suitable term., iS much better fun, much more ~~-tertaining and much more inta-esting than the sort of life that they're leading-, a life of 5o-called worldly enjoyment.

This was a point which I remember being made by monks whom I knew Theravadan monks whom I met. I think they must have been Sinhalese. One day we were talking amongst ourselves and some of the monks were saying: "Look, it's really odd that the bhikkhus are supposed to have given up the world and we're not enjoying worldly pleasures. We don't have any wives, we don't have any children, we don't have any property. We're just studying the philosophy and doing a bit of chanting and preaching, but we lead such a happy life. We're always jolly and laughing. But look at these poor laypeople."

They're supposed to be wallowing in all worldly pleasures and really enjoying the Sam-sara, but they always look so miserable and downcast compared with us, even though they're supposed to be enjoying all the

things that we've sacrificed up." So there was, I remember, this discussion on one occasion when I was present amongst a whole lot of Theravada bhikkhus. They said it in those terms and it's true. But one must really communicate this.

VOICE: I think one of the ways which might be a little bit indirect is going out giving talks.

S: Oh yes, indeed, I believe that.

VOICE: And I think we could do - we don't have to sort of need to be invited.

S: No, indeed. I was making that very point this last week

to the Chairmen. We don't have to wait to be invited.

VOICE: I think there's lots of, say, small groups and so forth that would just love to have us (one or two words inaud.)

S: And schools. Just make it clear that we are available. Are they interested? Would they like to invite us?

VOICE: We're trying to do more about this and we

S: Which co-op are you?

VOICE: Windhorse Associates. We've committed 600 to do an audio-visual show of the co-ops. We take them round the schools, institutes and so on. But one of the things that I noticed quite strongly, with people who have little or no contact with the movement things that do impress them are the Newsletters and our other publications.

S: Yes, I'm not surprised. I remember so often, at least in the past, I'd be trying to send out copies of the Newsletter here and there, especially to old friends of mine, just to keep in touch, all over the world, and somebody or other always seemed to be trying to cut down that list. "Don't know who these people are. Why should they be getting the Newsletter? They can't be really interested", and sort of cutting them off the list. And some of them - of

course I put them back on the list - are people with whom Lokamitra is working in India, who were kept in touch all the time simply through the Newsletter. I had no time to write, but they were getting the Newsletter for years on end and that kept them in the picture. And now they're part of the picture.~ So I've always regarded the

Newsletter, even in the days when it was not nearly as good as it is now, as a very important medium and I still say that it's one of the most important things that we are doing. Not just that, but I must also blow another little trumpet which is the Buddha Jon (?) which is to say our Nbrati (?), not just newsletter, magazine, which comes out every three months and of which we've had now I think, well, at least seven, possibly eight issues. It goes all around you, Maharaj (?) to circulate in this area where there are 40-million people speaking Hindi:-

the Nataraj (?) language. It circulates mainly, of course among

Buddhists, two thousand copies, each one of which must be read by quite a lot of people, and it is making the F.W.B.O., or the Tibetan Sangha, quite well-known. It's eagerly read by a lot of people. So we do a lot through our newsletters and magazines and publications. We need to do more and more. I have been feeling that most of the Centres don't do nearly enough to

spread the Dharma. We must sit in our Centre, waiting for people good to come, but that's not nearly enough. There must be a joyful

outward-going attitude. This is what I was stressing, to the Chairmen last week, a much more active attitude actually to spread the Dharma. Write letters to papers, commenting on various points, try to circulate articles in wherever we manage to get ourselves interviewed on television and radio, try to get ourselves invited to give a talk on - maybe - local radio, that is more easy. Try to get into schools and groups of various kinds. It doesn't matter Women's Institutes, working Men's Clubs, schools, hospitals, anywhere where people will just give us a hearing. We seem not to bother at all. I remember in the early years that I was in England I used to do so much lecturing outside. I found it quite stimulating, but there seems very little of it now. So I really wish that people would take this more seriously.

(Joy - C) VOICE: I think people really underestimate their impact on people outside. For instance, within terms of the Movement, individuals

might feel they're not particularly evolved or developed and they may not have a very high estimation of themselves. But I don't think so.

Yes, Is that, aside from the negative aspects of working outside the

Movement, certainly one of the positive aspects is that I'm astounded by the impact that I can have on people. That's actual - just --

(tape runs out here)

(In most cases "inaudible" indicates a speaker has been interrupted in mid-sentence. "inaudible" means the sentence trail off unfinished, or the missing words were too faint to be heard, where I have typed "inaud.") V.P.  
this is page 143

The Rechungpa's Repentance Seminar

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S: Anyone in the movement, mm

?: I, was thinking that, about like, you know, that on the level of mitras, its like often, well, mitras who say, well, you can almost sort of escape that by just saying, well, you know, I've only been around for so long, or you know, I'm not very confident, I don't have much knowledge of the dharma, you know, or something, but I mean, just being at beginners class, it's like you know, people do pick up a feeling for you, even before they've talked to you, perhaps, and that, you know, Just to sort of gain confidence on Just that level seems, quite important.

S: Well, I could not help noticing with regard to the talks on the last event, I only heard the first three because I wasn't there on the second day, but I couldn't help noticing what a high level had been reached huh? I mean, even for instance one particular speaker who hadn't given a talk ever, you know, on an event before, but the standard was really quite high, yes? And, eh, I don't think it would be very easy to find talks of that sort, you know, I mean outside the FWBO, and now there's twelve or fourteen people to my knowledge, able to give these sort of talks, so, you know, I think it's a pity that these talks should be confined to centres, they should go out, especially when you hear the miserable performances that pass for talks on Buddhism or talks on this, that or the other, outside.



Devar- And from the so called people who are supposed to be the leading lights aj a:

S: Yer

Devar- I think of what his name, the Avvie Bessants pupil, Krishnamurti, I aja went to a Krishnamurti talk, it's not, it wasn't, I mean it was years

ago, but I mean, it's just so totally bland and totally nothing, by com- parison.

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S: And even some to the writing that is now appearing in the newsletter, and mitrata, you know, we were quite weak some time ago, and we still are in some ways, but definitely things are improving, you know, written contributions are getting better, and live talks are getting better all the time, and more and more people are able to do these things, I mean for- mally you know, eh, mitrata was relying, you know, for material, entirely on transcripts at my lectures, and eh, edited versions of seminars, now practically, every issue is written by an Order Member and it is up to standard, yea, so this shows a great improvement and a great expansion, but I think we must make that available to more and more people, otherwise we've got say a really good speaker, he gives a talk in Norwich, he gives a talk in Aryatara, you know, and that about that, you see, but anyway he could give that same talk all over the place, up and down the country, you only need as I've said before years ago, a repertoireon three talks, and I'm sure now that many Order Members are quite capable of giving far more than three talks, but even if you've got a repertoire of three good talks you can go around the country to different groups just giving your three talks and making a tremendous impact.

miKuia~ra: But there seems to be two things Bhandte, I mean, one is that maybe we over estimate what a professional standard is

S: Mm, I think we do.

Kula- Like I saw and audio visual show at the Wigmore Hall, which was appalling mitra: it was really bad, and I knew that we could do something like that so

much better, I mean so much better it's unbelievable, but also if we want to do that we're going to quite consciously make it a priority, you know, like giving talks, you know, maybe encouraging an Order Member whose good at giving talks to spend a few months even, just doing that.

S: Well, eventually, I mean, I hope we'll be able to support Order Members who spend their whole time giving talks or a lot of the time giving talks, I mean it's a pity we can only support someone whose actually working in a co-op, that would seem to be a bit self defeating; you know, up to a point;

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Kula- It would also seem to need, em, like, almost to sort of, push them out from the centre, from the bottom.

S: Yes

KmUiiraa: You know, because like,

S: Ah, yes

Kula- Because a lot of these people are very involved in work, in a centre or mitra: or something like that, and it would need, em, to make the space for them

to go away it would need other Order Members you know, to be more fully involved in the centre, say, or for mitras to play a much bigger part or something like that.

S: Or mitras to become Order Members more speedily.

Jaya- That's the whole point, we're not attracting enough people, therefore, dera: we've

got so much work distributed over a very small, you know the situation in Norwich.

S: Yes, this is what I've been feeling in effect more and more, that there's more and more effort, by more and more people being concentrated within a smaller and smaller area, so that we've not in fact expanding in accordance with our real potential.

(Long Pause)

Devar- I'm just wondering why that's actually happening, why there's more and aja: more effort concentrated into

S: I think it's largely to do with the co-ops, so therefore we ought not to perhaps not, 'this again is a point I've mentioned, not to think too exclusively in terms of, as soon as someone become's involved, well you

whip him into a community and whip him into a coop and that's that, no,

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S: your workers adequate wages, huh, which is in effect what we are doing, yes well we're meeting their needs but we're not giving them anything over that in fact in some cases even these needs are being met, if by needs you also mean period away on retreat, sometimes there not able to go, or that their co-op can't afford to send them. So in a way the project is being capitalised act of the wages that you don't pay the workers huh or the members at the co-op let us say. So uh, that helps to create a very tight situation then of course perhaps in some cases you've got incompetent management. That means the best use of the human and economic resource that you do have is not made, so people are having to work harder, money is wasted, and that means, you know, there's less for things like going on retreat this is actually the situation as it sometimes occurs, so therefore, I think you know, we need to look very carefully at everything we need to improve our management, in the widest sense and make the best possible use of our resources, and eh, and make sure that eh, all our resources, our human resources are not, eh that become available are not automatically you know, deployed into the co-op have got a very important, in fact, a vital part to play, but I think they shouldn't swallow up all resources, otherwise too much of the energy of the movement in every sense can just be locked up in the co-ops and I think that has happened to some extent.

Arya- I think we've almost, in a sense we're at a stage where we can come out mitra: but I think it almost inevitable with out capital that you just have to

even, Lhis is with quite a fair bit of capital,plough a lot of energy into it in the first two years, so it's almost like cs-ups that have been a bit long standing can now easily afford pay their workers.

S: So I think as we can we should make better provisions for the workers, not pay them more in the worldly sense, we re not thinking or comparable rates or anything like thaL, but what they really need for you, know their genuine human spiritual, you know, requirements, huh, and also make sure that every, well ideally every co-op, is able to support, or you know, every cs-op through a centre is able to support some full time Order Members who are devoting themselves entirely to spreading the dharma, in one way or another. Otherwise we're not really spreading and making ourselves known or exercising an influence in proportion to our real strength. Hmn, you know, it's like a sort of light bulb, you know, it's sort of capable of illuminating a big area but you've got a very dar~ small cover over it, you know, which is limiting the area that the bulb illuminates.

Simon: It does seem that we underestimate our own strength

S: I think so

Simon: I mean and thats why we're always sort of gathering in rather than going out, I mean, it does seem that theres a lack of alternatives, I mean, very much the thing is, I think, that people - what they see from the outside, well, you know, if you really want to get involved is well you know you move into a community and you know you just don't do that, you know, but to be supported you work in a co-op.

S: Yes.

Simon: But you know, I mean it's seems like the sort of experience for me of work in the co-op has been very much that it's like a training, it's like a foundation, a very sort of necessary foundation, but perhaps to some people the very idea of sort of entering into that, you know, working in a restaurant would just be, well perhaps there already developed skills. well that would just seem like sort of well doing something then already.

S: Stepping back?

L~7~08

Simon: We~l yes, stepping back, I thought those type of people you know, they sort of hang around the periferal, but they don't get involved if they just see, well I'm going to be trapped in working in this co-op.

S: Well, one woman, I don't know whether this justified or not, I just quote the example of what is wrote, one woman wrote, to me and said "well, here am I, I've been a friend for so many years, I'm getting on now, I'm sixty but all they can suggest to me is that I join the cs-op. (laughter)

Viran- Yes, I've heard talk around the L.B.C. to the effect that eh, a person anda: shouldn't be made a mitra until he or she is working for a co-oprative,

and em ah, a person who was a mitra and wasn't working for a co-op, would be very much the exception.

Kula- That was a bit more specific than that actually, I think what was being mitra: said was that since all the Order Members were very fully involved in

communities co-op's and centres, it was very difficult for us as Order Members to keep contact with mitras who were not comming to us. So that if a mitra was not in the community working in the cs-op or very regularly at the centre it was very difficult for us as Order Members to give them the time they needed.

S: Yes, so the emphasis is on contact with Order Members not on working in a cs-op or belonging to a community as such.

Kula- Right and we felt that, that was a failing in the situation, but one which

mitra: that at the moment one should just recognise and just think about it.

S: But one can also see that it's easy to move from the one position to the other, instead of explaining fully and clearly - you say well, everyone who wants to be a mitra, well he's jolly well got to join the co-op, and it's become a sort of objective requirement.

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Arya- Maybe we shouldn't have too much of a split between co-op and eh, things,

mitra: I mean you could look at it from the point of view that people who join the cs-op or some of the people who join a co-op can be going out giving talks, I mean we don't have to think that joining a co-op means em, that you know em, that you know the one we always drag up is packing nuts, and so you distinguish between these co-ops and these centres and other activities. I think we could see that people joining a cs-op could be going out, they'd be members of a cs-op and giving talks.

S: I do get the impression that a co-op does, for some reason or another, tend to swallow up all somebody's energies, that you've no time to do any- thing except you know, work within the limits of that co-op.

Simon: But, I mean, I've experienced this in Brighton, that actually that certainly was the case but I think just beginning, what's beginning to happen is like, that we're realizing, well we are realising our own strength, we're becoming more efficient, like what you were talking about efficiency, and as we become more efficient, you know, we just become more aware of the fact that, you know, if things are running smoothly you do have more energy, and in fact you don't need to employ, in fact overemploy people you know, like getting too many people just working there for the sake of doing something, it's almost like at least one person per day could be utilised in a lot of different ways elsewhere, and that just beginning to feel like a sort of outward movement, and I'm sure that'll come about later.

S: It may even be that we'll need to take conscious steps to make sure that there are enough people around working spreading the dharma and to work out a sort of ration, that for every, you know, say six people who are working in a co-op being supported by that

co-op, there is a seventh person also supported by that co-op but who is engaged in full time dharmaspreading activities.

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Deva- Do you think there's, I mean, do you think that there's a possibility that

raja: that kind of split between, I'm just thinking of something that parallels say the split between the laity and the monks in say Ceylon or something like that?

S: Well, ideally Order Members should all be interchangeable, I mean so far as order members are concerned I mean it's not that someone is supported indefinitely or forever to spread the Dharma, but you know, he can have 6 months of working in that way or a year of working in that way, then he can take over and work in a co-op for a bit, or you know, work in the centre for a bit, it's not that you're permanently you know, committed to a particular mode of activity you could shift around, and have an all round experience which is good for you as well as good for the movement, you don't think of yourself as a teacher kind of thing, because you might be you know, giving a wonderful lecture on the dharma on one occasion, but six months later you may be packing nuts in a co-op, and that is good, you know. I think, that sort of alternation.

Arya- I just feel that, say I think the word co-op is beginning to get a bit of mitra: a dirty word, I mean it doesn't necessarily mean that co-op 5 are packing

nuts, I could be making films, it could be doing design work, it could be doing theatre work, it could be writing books.

S: Well, working in a co-op can be fun.' (Laughter) Voice: Packing Nuts!

Arya- But we've somehow just got to get away from this image mitra:

S: Well, I have heard people say "I like packing nuts, I just don't have to think about anything".

Kula- I think though, that one point that Aryamitra is making when he said

mitra: is that people are quite reluctant to see dharma work as work. So if you give lectures you~re not working.

S: Ah, a bit of a soft option

Page IOUt

Kula- So, if you're giving lectures your not really working.

mitra:

S: Yes those who do, do, those who can't do, teach (laughter)

Mike Taking up what Kulamitra said, I feel I have not quite a vocation, Chivers: but I~feel very much affiliated with the work I do as an architect, and em,

I wanted a contract, a particular type of contract, when I brought the practice within a co-sprative I found to my dispair that em, there was nobody there - to bring anywhere, I mean within the movement who would work as an architect with me a minimum period being 3 years, and the type of contact with the people that I had within the Sangh~a was exact~y the type which I had for the last five years with a working environment for going along to classes, I felt that the contact, which I wanted, in order to help my developments, and help integration, was contact on a much more and intimate and personal relationship and so one does feel isolated, and because you, by your affiliation with the community and because you find yourself, the mechanism doesn't seem to sort of work a lot of people do come to me and say, "what can I do?".

a lot of them are wasters a lot of them do need to sort of em, a lot of them are sort of delusive em, things, eh thinking which are purely sort of irrational, but there are quite a few who find that if their not in a co-oprative then that's it, they're not within a community that it very much, and the communities are very very work orientated, and not of the dharma.



S: Well the community should be a community in it's own right, a commun~ty should not be an appendage of a co-op, the community should not just be the co-op dormitory, so to speak, you know what I mean, I do suspect that it does sometimes become a bit like that, that you know the community is just the place that the lads in the co-op sleep. (laughter).

But anyway I wasn't concerned to stress that so much its just this general point of our being at a movement much more outward going and devoting our- selves much more to spreading the dharma in all sorts of ways because we have now got something that we can spread, something that we can

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S: communicate and there's quite a few people now within the movement who are able to communicate it, quite effectively. Perhaps, you know, more effectively than they realise.

Anyway perhaps that's been sufficiently underlined, so would someone like to read that proseback now - 'Still without Faith'.

Voice: "Still without Faith in the Jetsun Rechungpa said, if ye can perform the miracle of restoring my books I shall then have Faith in you, otherwise, I shall not be happy or satisfied.

S: Mm, so let's deal with that first you know, Rechungpa says, "well miracles are okay, alright, I agree, but ther's only one miracle I want to see and that is the miracle of restoring my books",so he's still sticking to this same point, he's bringing everything back to that,that he wants to get these wreLched books, airight, what does Milarepa say or do

Voice: "Whereupon as though spreading wings Milarepa spread out his robe and flew straight into the sky above the precipices at the red rock he fluttered and hovered there like a hawk and then darted to the ground like a flash of lightening while performing this miracle he sang"

S: Yes, someone like to read that song?

Gyhamanda: "Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment, there on the peak of the red rocks stands a stag castle flying over it a huge hawk flaps its wings while small birds shake in fright, no human being has flown here before, none will fly here again, now look at this old man in flight, look at him soaring like a vulture in the sky, see he hovers like a hawk, darts to the ground like lightning and floats cloud like in the air, if you have Faith in me race~ e~ tThro~j h master in the hold practice that master in when you can conquer and unite Samsara and Nirvana, amazing it may be to watch the play of goats but how can it compare with this wonderful game, try my son Rechungpa, to straighten out your mind".

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S: Mm, well perhaps you know, eh, Milarepa's display you know, doesn't

em, require much comment, it's a variation you might say on you know, K

eh, the previous performance, but to do is something that requires

some attention, the last line of this song as well as the last line of previous song - the last line of the previous song is "try my son to change your mind at once"- and the last line of this one is "Try my son Rechungpa to straighten out your mind". So these really I suppose come to the same thing, changing your mind, transforming your mind, and straightening out your mind, and Milarepa can see quite clearly that what is needed on Rechungpa's part is just a complete change of attitude, and a complete straightening out of his mind, he's really tied himself in knots with stubbornness and his rigidity. Any particular point arises there out of that little episode, that little performance of milarepa's fly up into the air? It illustrates I suppose this whole question of his not being impeded by anything.

Kula- Do you think there's any particular symbolism in the hawk? It says mitra: he's like a hawk.

S: Well, a hawk sort of pounces on its prey, it hovers, I would say if there's any significance there's more significance perhaps, eh, in the reference to the vulture, "look at him soaring like a vulture in the sky", I mean the vulture soars higher than any other bird, I, the same way, prajna, the yogi, soars higher in the sky so to speak, of spiritual experience than anybody else, this is why you know, Padmasambhava is represented as wearing a vulture's feather on the top of his lotus cap. (Long pause) The hawk has very keen eyesight, the vulture has a very keen scent, but the hawk just hovers and he looks down and he can see, just a tiny little creature just moving just a fraction of an inch and it pounces. You could say that the Yogi is like that, he looks down, as it were, you know, onto or into the samsara, he can you know, just see everything that is happening quite clearly and he can pounce when necessary,

to put something right, he can pounce on some error or misunderstanding or miccaditti, you can look at it like that, you know, the Yogi's got that hawk like quality, it's an aspect of prajna or wisdom.

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Gyha- He talks about small birds shaking with fright manda:

S: Mm, yer, mm, well presumably the small birds are not so much afraid of the hawk as of the height at which the hawk flies. Hum, they don't dare to fly up there, they don't dare to go that far in their spiritual experience, there like the very inferior meditator as compared with the real Yogi., I mean changing the metaphor they're like little fishes are compared with the great whale, that lives in the depth of the Ocean, the little fish, you know, just stay in the comparatively shallow water.

Simon It also suggests, the little fishes well that all they know and that Chivers: all they want to know in a way, it's like them quite safe in their

ground so you could carry that attitude into the spiritual life to a certain extent, you know, you get involved and you find your little niche if you like and you sort of just bumble along and you let more or less everything carry you along, well it's like if you really want to get involved it's like you have to start swimming and exploring.

S: Yes, right

Jaya- I suppose you can't, I mean like taking the example of the fish, you deva: actually have to become a whale, you just can't keep swimming out into

deeper water, you actually have to change your whole mode.

S: You-could also say the higher you soar the further you can see.

Abhaya: I notice Milaresa, eh, I mean like, the dramatics of the thing, like Rechungpas always saying "give me back my books" and Milarepa isn't saying this is better than your books, he's always saying, "what's this compared with watching the play of goats, he doesn't keep emphasising the books, he always emphasises the goats which is rather

S: Yes, that time, 'cos that is what led to the whole trouble 'cos that is why, you know, Milarepa burns the books, 'cos Reehungpas was away so long having become absorbed in watching the play of the goats.

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Jaya- He doesn't get side tracked, does he? deva:

S: Milarepa doesn't

Jaya- No Milarepa doesn't deva:

S: No, well neither does Rechungpa

(Laughter)

S: Well, you know, in the case of Milarepa's very positive where as in the case of Rechungpa it isn't very positive at all, I mean, worldly people, I mean after all, everyone's worldly to some extent, but worldly people can be so stubborn and persistent and not give up, which in a way if it was in the interests of something positive, and creative would be really admirable, so it's not as though people don't have these qualities but those qualities are wrongly applied, there misdirected.

Arya- It does seem to have a real life about it, a real character, it's got mitra: real dramatic interests.

S: Yes, indeed. It's rather as if it really did all happen or that the man who wrote it all down and edited it and supplemented it, must have been

quite a literary genius, almost a Tibetan Shakespea~ (pause), alright carry on with the next prose bit

Arya- "Milarepas miracles however, did not overly impress Rechungpa, he only glanced at them indifferently, and still had no faith in the Jetson.

Then once more Mila epa held out his robe like a bird spreading it's wings and flew into the sky, there he sang

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Mike "Rechungpa Listen to me for a moment, on the peak of red rock in the Chivers: Mon mountains suddenly appeared a flock of goats, without any reason a

spontaneous play of non arising reality, one goat played the wolf chasing the flock over the ridge, this symbolised the awareness and the conquest of one foibles , this indicated the cross~ng over the mountain of dualism, this was Milarepa conjuration to show Rechungpa the essential teachings, to the miracles of your father you showe~d indifference, but in the play of goats you showed great interest, this is indeed the sign that you have lost your mind, I have showed you such great miracles, yet you have no faith in me, when I think of men like you, faithless disciples, all at this time of defilement, I feel sad and sick at heart Rechungpa listen to me for a moment, hard and solid wood can be bent if one tries, but a harsh mind is hard to bend, Rechungpa, try to subdue your mind within, Fierce tigers in the south and wild Yahs in the north, can be tamed if one tried, but pride and egotism are hard to tame. Rechungpa, try to subdue conceit within, mice under the ground and birds in the sky can be caught if one trys, but a losL mind is hard to catch, Rechungpa, try your own faults to see, the dharma of word and speculation can be learned if one trys, but to meditate on the uncreated mind, a son may leave his father and his loving mother too, but a bad temperament is hard to leave behind, Rechungpa, try to change your temper and conceit, jewels, house and land are renounce if one tries, but to renounce pleasure craving is hard, Rechungpa, try to give up your desire for pleasure, good jewels and a lovely sweet heart, if need can be left but to leave a soft warm bed is hard indeed, Ruchungpa try to give up the blind sleep of a corpse, here and there hills and rocks may meet face to face, but to see the self face of your mind is hard, the Queens and Kings decrees can be evaded if one tries but no-one can evade Yama the Lord of Death, Rechungpa, make use of death for your devotion, my son, try to correct your wrong ideas, abandon your bad actions discipline your unruly mind, your imperious thought restrain, avoid the demon of egotism, when I come to die this shall I will for you, no profowoder teachings can I give you in my life, Rechungpa, my son, bear my words in mind.

S: Mm, so that's quite a long song isn't it? So in the first verse he says "Reehungpa listen to me for a moment, on the peak of the red rock in the Mon Mountains, suddenly appeared a flock of goats, without any reason, a spontaneous play of non arising reality. That is quite profound in a way, it seems that Milarupa has created the goats by magic to teach a lesson to Rechuungpa, and this introduces the point that in Buddhism especially in the Mahayana, reality as we perceive it is very often compared to a magical show, but its very important to understand the point of the comparison for instance what does one mean by a magical show? What the Sutra's have in mind is the sort of show you can sometimes see in India, where for instance a magician, may conjure up an elephant, everybody sees the elephant, but the elephant is not really there. Do you get the idea? Em, in the same way, it is said in the Sutra's, mundane existence is just like the elephant which has been conjured up, it is perceived but it is not really there, when it is said it is not really there, it means it has no absolute existence, it has only a relative existence, it has arisen in dependence upon causes and conditions, you see what I mean? That is the point of the comparison, not that it is a magical illusion in the sense that it isn't really there at all, that it's completely unreal in the sense of being non-existent, not that you don't experience it, yes you experience it, yes it is relatively real, but it is like a magical illusion in the sense that it has arisen in dependence upon cause and conditions and has no absolute existence, hum, eh, it is also said, that with regards to the magical elephant, or the magically created elephant, can you really speak of an elephant coming into existence, or let me put it another way, there's another kind of magical creation, he, the magician eh, produces a pot, he plants a seed in that pot, and as you watch you see a tree growing up. I've actually seen this sort of thing~ yea, I found an old diary written in my Kalimpong days and I found a little note, I didn't mention it in this

Voices: Yes

S: There you are, this is one of the things I saw, I didn't see the whole thing I just saw part of it, the plant starts climbing and climbing and climbing and then the magician sends his assistant, eh, you know, climbing up, the eh, the plant is a, you know, a sort of Jack in the Beanstalk sort of thing, so the assistant, you know, the little boy climbs up and up and he disappears and then the master, the magician, goes climbing up after him and he disappears. After a minute or two you see the little boy's arms and head and ears all sort of you know, raining down onto the ground, and you know, up there somewhere the master has you know cut him to pieces and thrown down the pieces, so after a while the magician himself climbs down, picks up the pieces, puts them under a cloth, says a mantra, whips off the cloth and there the little boy, bowing to the audience (laughter) So alright, the question arises, the little boy is also a magical creation, so since the little boy is a magical creation, did the magician really actually kill anybody? You see what I mean, it's like as in a dream, if you dream that you know, you kill somebody, well have you really killed somebody, Well people might say in a certain moral sense you have, but no you're not held to be legally guilty of homicide, are you,

because you killed somebody in your dream, so it's like that with regard to the little boy that is killed by the magician, eh, you know, he doesn't really kill the little boy because no little boy had really been brought into existence, it's just a magical creation, in the same way with the elephants, no elephant has really been brought into existence, it's just a magical creation, so you can't really think of the creation of a magical creation as being the production of a real thing, so in real terms nothing has come into 'existence, nothing has arisen. So this is why Milarepa says, "There suddenly-appeared a flock of goats without any reason, a spontaneous play of non arisen reality" and this is why the Mahayana Sutras says that when things arise, in reality nothing arises. It's like a magical illusion, in fact something which is real cannot arise because that which is real does not change, it does not come and it does not go, if it does arise, well if it does come and if it does go, it is not real, you may experience it, perceive it, it has a relative existence but it is not absolutely real, it's like a magical creation, so the whole of existence is like a magical creation. So Milarepa oh, creates this scene of the goats at play, for Rechungpa and in a way there's nothing special about that, because the whole of existence is like that, in watching the goats he is in fact watching existence its self. You see what I mean?

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S: so in revealing to him, in revealing to Rechungpa that the goats which he saw were only a magical illusion, you know, created by Milarepa, he's also teaching him that the whole of existence is like that, the whole of existence is like a magical illusion, that is to say it is perceived it is experienced in that sense it is there, but it has no absolute existence and is not to be confused with that which is, you know, absolute and absolutely existing. Do you see the point?

S: All right then, he goes on to say

Simon Sorry, is that a bit like what Blake talks about the doors of perception Chimeric: being cleansed, you can see the infinite instead of what we normally see,

though, I don't know quite how you describe it, but a chink.

S: Yes or perhaps you could say it more like what Blake means when he speaks of "the

fool does not see the same tree that the wise man sees. The perception is the same but the understanding is different, so one goat places the wolf, chasing the flock on the ridge, this symbolised the awareness and the conquest of one's foibles, this indicated the crossing of the mound of dualism, so what do you think this means? "one goat played the wolf, chasing the flock on the ridge, this symbolised the awareness and the conquest of one's foibles".

Mike: Well~, when awareness dawns, so to speak, eh, thoughts, eh thoughts, you Chivers: know, the sort of running thoughts which go, projections, disappear.

S: But what is awareness? Pause

The Point that Milarepa is making is that awareness is also a thought, in a sense awareness is also a foible, because he says, "One goat played a wolf" you know, one goat~ led like a wolf, yea, so this chasing the flock on the ridge, so this symbolised the awareness of the conquest of one's foibles.

Arya- It suggests like, the idea of alienation, where you've set up the observer- mitra: tion, that observes all the other faults and one being aware, and this you

tend to see, re this as being more important.

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S: I don't think that Milarepa really means quite that, I think one goat plays the wolf is meant in a positive sense, among all these thoughts there is one thought that becomes, as it were, becomes conscious and realises what is happening, and brings all the rest under control, and drives them in the right direction, you see what I mean

Arya- Like the elephant in the Zen pictures mitra:



S: Yes, yes, you could say that, yes one thought becomes self conscious and it's because of you, you know, the development of self consciousness I mean your

Tapes changes sides.

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Tape 6

Side 2

Kula- Could you say instead of one thought, a part of your personality? Mitra:

S: Yes. Well I have spoken in those terms haven't I, in the past, in lectures that were, you know, were not really consistent 'I', not just one, 'I' which is consistent all the way through, but a collection, not to say a jumble, of 'I's'. Different selves that are apparent at different times, you know, different selves that take control, at different time, that take us over, so what happens usually is that there is a struggle among these selves and, you know, one becomes as it were, the boss one becomes the King, One becomes the ruler, and brings the others under control and in this way a degree of integration is attained, and a degree to that extent of the selfhood so to speak, the integration is genuine when you could say the self which takes over is genuinely the best of the selves hum, you might say that sometimes there are two quite powerful selves and that each of them, and that each of them, subdues a number of other selves so you may end up with two selves a lower self and a higher self, and the final struggle is between them but it's not a question of one self, the more powerful self, just holding other selves down, there has to be a genuine sort of integration, otherwise if one self is only holding the others down, then sooner or later those others will rebel and, take over and maybe the situation will be complete, you know reversed,. Well we know very well this happens, sometimes, our better self is holding down our worst self, and our better self holds the reins but sometimes, you know, the opposite is the case, our worst self has taken control, but it is a thought we start off as a jumble and from the spiritual point of view we]~ what should really happen then is that thought so to speak which is most self conscious should gradually take over the control of all the other thoughts not just holding them down, not just suppressing them but you know, integrating them, with it's self and you know in this way, you know, what we call integration, both horizontal and vertical, is achieved. So the thought which controls the other thoughts is the goat which is playing the part of the wolf, perhaps it shouldn't be wolf it's more like sheep dog. You see what I mean?

S: "Wolf" I think might mislead one, when it's more like sheep and sheepdog. It's like one of the sheep pretends to be the sheepdog and rounds up the other sheep and drives them in the right direction.

Jaya- Could it be in terms of initiative then? I mean, like people say one sheep dera: jumps over the fence then the rest will, so it's a matter of in terms

of personality maybe, one asserts itself and the rest follow but then equally another one might assert itself then the others follow.

S: Well, this is why what I said what is important, is that the thought which is genuinely the best the most endued with consciousness and awareness should be the one to take over, and I think eventually he will, because, since he has self consciousness, he does things knowingly, whereas the less conscious selves, so to speak, are acting more from instinct and blindly, so they're more likely to make mistakes, they may be very powerful but they're blind, you know, the thought which has become self-conscious may be in a sense weaker but at least it can see, it's like a fight between two men, one is very powerful very strong but he's blind, the other is very small and very weak, but he can see.

Kola- Isn't it almost like, what can happen is that the more aware self wants mitra: all the rest to do a certain thing, but they won't, instead they do what

the other blinder but more powerful self wants, but then because that's awareness then you can learn from that experience, you can follow what happens

S: You can outwit

Dula- Well, you can, you can convince those in between as it were that, what the mitra: big bad self did was a mistake and shouldn't be repeated

S: Well, perhaps that becomes pretty obvious sooner or later anyway. (pause) So to the

miracles of your father you showed indifference but in the play of goats you showed great interest, that is in what you thought was the play of goat, this is indeed the sign that you have lost your mind, I have showed you such great miracles, yet you have no faith in me when I think of men like you, faithless disciples all, at this time of defilement I feel sad and sick at heart. Now you know, Milarepa is beginning now really to rebuke Reehungpa quite strongly, perhaps in a way it's a typical situation.

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S: which Milarepa is referring to when he says "I've showed you such great miracles yet you have no faith in me." Well, you know, we do find this sort of thing happening, you know, we find for instance, eh, you know, people having a very good experience on a retreat, really enjoying it, really benefitting from it, you know, knowing that they have benefitted from it, but when they go away and after a while the memory of the experience fades, they forget what it's like to be on retreat, and even resist the suggestion that they go on retreat, do you see what I mean?, this is really the sort of thing which happens, they've had the experience, it's not as though they haven't had the experience, they have had it, they've seen how good the retreat can be, but they get so out of touch with it that they can even resist repeating the experience in fact, they don't even think in terms of they don't want to repeat the experience, because they've forgotten the experience all together, and the idea of going on retreat has come to mean, something quite different, you know, leaving the things that they're doing, the things that they're interested in, their friends, their usual activities, you know, going away to a cold distant solitary place where they'll be really put through it, they start thinking of a retreat in that sort of way, they've forgotten how much they enjoyed it.

Simon Is that because when you come off the retreat because, you know, you have Chiner~: experienced quite a lot it almost like you go back to where you left off and

your old sort of reactive self rises up in rebellion, to actually perhaps the intensity, of what you're experiencing, it can't handle it, it doesn't like it it's quite a threat and they, you know, you just start, because the experience goes into the distance you start really believing in your reacting, then you think about it, you think well it wasn't that good

S: It didn't really happen, almost

Jaya- Again it's quite wilful isn't it, because Rechungpa deva:

S: Yes, mm

Jaya- It will that sort of like stopping him from remembering dera:

S: And this is why sometimes the longer you stay out of touch the more difficult it is to get back into touch and why the retreat or the movement or the order itself, you know, seems to assume a quite threatening aspect.

Deva- I think it's em, quite useful to keep a diary, particularly when

raja: your on solitary retreat

S: Mm

Deva- I think that because when things get a bit lost, just to look at raja: that again

S: Right, yes

Simon I've also found a thing that, you know, because you ve actua~iy experienced  
Chinery: something, that you know, on the retreat say, you have'nt actually well,

you haven't integrated it, perhaps it's like you go back and you've got to put that into practise, and so you start doing that, you know, itself you know and you start thinking about it more and more and less sort of feel- ing it\_ and just allowing yourself just to practice, in whatever context your in.

(pause)

S: "The time of defilement" anyone have any ideas about this, anyone know what it means?

Kula- Is he just referring to the fact that it's supposed to be the Kali Yuga? mitra:

S: Yes, he's referring to that sort of thing, it is really a more Indian not to say Hindu idea than a Buddhist idea-because it does suggest, you know, that some times are essentially worse than others from a moral and spiritual point of view. I don't think Buddhism really admits that, not that they are worse irrespective of what individual human beings actually do, after all it's individual human beings who are defiled or not defiled, not the age as such.

Kula- Why does it crop up then, so much in Buddhist literature? mitra:

S: Mm, I mean it has been suggested, I think by Doctor Conze, that it crept into the literature including, you know, especially the later sutras or later editions or versions of the sutra's, because of the consciousness of the you know, the Buddhist heritage and Indian being overwhelmed, first of all by a recent orthodox hinduism, and then by an iconoclastic islam. I mean, things had gone so well for such a long time. There had been a prolonged golden age of Buddhism, maybe for well certainly at least, a thousand years, perhaps one thousand five hundred years. That's a very long time, but now clouds had appeared on the horizon and it seems to come entirely from the outside, not to be the result of anything that had happened within the Buddhist community itself, so they started feeling well, there's something wrong with the age, there's something wrong with the times in which we live, and then perhaps that is a general principle, perhaps there are ages of defilement dark ages that we have to go through, you know, where living the spiritual life, you know, following the dharma is more difficult than at other times. Some such factors as that seem to have been at work.

?: Is that related to the idea that Buddhism has got to die out before a new Buddha will arise in the world?

S: It may also link up with that, eh, but, you know, again the idea that Buddhism inevitably dies out is not a very Buddhist idea, because it's made clear in some of the texts that so long as people go on practising the dharma, the dharma will continue, Buddhism will continue. There eh, I mean, it isn't the case that after a certain number of years Buddhism is definitely going to decline, even if people practise if it's still going to decline, no, the decline really consists in their not practising if they don't decline in their practising it, so you cannot say that the dharma will inevitably decline, because that means that human beings will inevitably, will cease to practise the dharma, and so far as human beings are concerned, there is no question of inevitability, they are always free to practise or not to practise the dharma, otherwise you fall a victim to a sort of fatalism, which is definitely against the Buddha's teaching.

Kula- But also then, why do we get predictions, you know, prophecies, also, being made within the Buddhist tradition? I often wondered about that.

S: Mm, well, this sort of question, this sort of problem arises within the context of Christianity, in the form of how to reconcile the question of God from knowledge with human free will, that is a quite difficult question, I think it also involves a consideration of the nature of time because when you predict something, you know, what are you doing, you're saying that something is going to happen, but I don't think actually this is my personal experience, that you see something that something is going to happen within the seeing takes place outside time, so the fact that you have seen outside time, what within time, is going to happen does not affect what is happening outside time, which means after it has happened, so therefore, you have had nothing to do with it actually happening, you're not inhibited the free will of those agents. You see what I mean? So, I remember, you know, when I was in my teens, I had a number of times, the experience of seeing what was going to happen, so I thought about this quite a lot, I used to see things which were going to happen after say half an hour or so, usually it would be half an hour, I just be sort of looking up and I'd

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S: see in front of me just like a film unfolding and I see exactly what was going to happen, and I'd hear what people were going to say. After about half an hour, people including myself (laughter) and it always happened exactly as I had foreseen and I knew exactly the words that people were going to say because I'd heard it all and seen it all before, eh, so I became quite accustomed to this and I started to think about it, and these were the conclusions to which I came, that, you know, one eh, the experience shows that eh, time is not an ultimate so the relativity of time, so it's as though you're not within time at that time, your

mind is not inside time, your mind is outside time, time is in the mind you could say, so the fact that you, outside time, see what is going to happen, isn't really what is going to happen, you see what in a sense, has happened, what is happening, all the time because you are outside time, so the fact that you see what is, from the point of view of time is going to happen, doesn't interfere in anyway with it's happening or not happening inside time.

Kula- But having seen, is there any alternative, I mean, did you ever try mitra: for instance, not say what you'd seen yourself say?

S: No I didn't. Well, what would be the point because it doesn't matter.

Arya- Something similar perhaps happened to me, not say when I mitra: but in a dream, and eh, the thing happened the next day and there's

something set me thinking, but supposing in the instant when it happened eh, I was going to say well, you have another experience of what was going to happen.

S: Well I don't know, one would deal with that when one comes to it, if at all. Well, I think therefore it is possible to prophesy, you know, what is going to happen, without therefore implying any degree of fatalism, that is what in fact I'm saying. So the fact that you believe it is possible to foresee things and make predictions does not imply a philosophy of fatalism.

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Abhaya: How does this differ from hunches: because hunches are sort of fatalistic aren't they?

S: Well you can have hunch that something is going to happen, but I would say the same applies to that your outside time, or your experiencing the mind as it were, you know, outside time.

Abhaya: But suppose, you know, you had a one of that happen to you, and you see what's going to happen and it's something bad.

S: You can't do anything about it.

Mike There's no two different selves involved, but there is in a way. Chivers:

S: You can't do anything about it, so to speak, because when your out- side time. It is noL that it is going to happen, it is that its

Voice: It has happened.

S: Well in way you can't even say it has happend because that could imply time, but that it happens in an eternal now.

Gyhananda:And you could say because because you've seen it happen you haven't done anything about it.

Voice: Is that suggesting that the whole is laid out as a picture?

S: Well it does suggest that, but then again that isn't absolutely right, because then

SM? That sounds fatalistic

S: No, because then instead of seeing things in terms of time your seeing them in terms of space and space, you know, one might say, is as much

within the mind as time itself, your just changing the metaphor.



Arya- Maybe a deja-vous experience might be that in reverse, that what you mitra:

S: Well, deja-vous experiences have been explained, well at least it is a possible explanation that makes sense, a deja-vous experier-Ice is said to be, based uponorconnected with a pre cognitive dream.

Arya- Yes, that was what I was thinking, so supposing you had forgotten your mitra: image, but in the instant you thought, this has happend before.

S: Yes, that night you have a funny sort of feeling it has happend before, though in this case I remember quite clearly each time, that I had had this precognitive experience in the making state

Deva- You wern't ever tempted to say "Oh in five minutes you are going to say raja: such and such"

S: No I used to think it, I used to think Oh, in five minutes your going to say such and such (laughter) and they always did

Deva- You were never tempted just to see if you could actually raj a:

S: No it just doesn't occur to one

Simon Well it occurs to some people presumab~y heca'jse they make a living out Chinery: of that sort of thing in proclaiming to people, well your sort of going

to do this and that, meet such and such and it does happen and they think well thats

marvellous.

S: I was just interested in observing what happens and turning it over in my own mind, you know, it's implications from a philosophical point of view. That was all I was thinking about, and I came as I said to the conclusion that it meant that time was not an objective reality but time was eh, part of our way of perceiving things or perceiving reality part of the structure of our consciousness, and I found this confirmed later on in Kant's philosophy, as well as in Buddhism which I found quite interesting.

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S: Time in a 'Panyati', a conquest, according to the abhidharma, and I was quite interested to know when I read that, I thought, oh I know what that means, because I've had some experience of that

Simon Chinery: Could you just say what fatalism is then? The attitude of fatalism.

S: Well, fatalism is the belief that there is no such thing as free will, that everything that happens was bound to happen, some schools of thought

- believe in a naturalistic fatalism, that the course of nature is set, eh so to speak, by nature herself, you know, speaking anthropomorphically. You also get a theistic fatalism where you believe that everything is due to the will of God. Hindus have another kind of fatalism when they say everything is due to your own past Karma, that view being sometimes attributed quite wrongly to Buddhism, that everything is fixed, that you can't change the course of things that you do not have any free will, that is fatalism

Simon With something like natural fatalism, like you just said, isn't that Chinery: almost scientific because I mean, well scientists say that the earth

in another three million years or whatever, will through natural causes and they sort of give predictions on that basis.

S: Well you see, Buddhism would agree that you may be able to predict the course of natural events but in fatalism the human mind is treated on that particular model

Simon Just use on model for Chinery:

S: Which means that the human mind is treated in purely mechanical and quantitative terms and is made chemistry completely predictable, huh?

Jaya- I get the feeling with predictions that people are actually trying to, deva: oh, renounce any responsibility for what is going to happen.

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S: Yes well, "it was fated" eh, it relieves you of responsibility

Jaya- When people say about coming evil in the future that there will be deva: a world war

S: Yes right

Jaya You know deva:

S: "There's no use trying to stop it it's the will of God", there's no trying to do anything about it.

Simon I guess to an extent they say that there will be one Chinery:

S: Yes, indeed, right

Simon The more people sit around and say that Chinery:

S: And if you're convinced that something will happen, well sooner or later it probably will. I mean this is why someone asked me why I was talking about certain things, when there seemed to be, you know, this is in the context of the movement, when it seemed that there was possibility of those things happening, so I said that if I keep talking about something long enough it will happen. So for instance, if I say I'd really like to see a centre in Bristol, or I'd really like to see a centre in the United States, it will happen I'm sure, so if I can't do anything for the time being, at least I can talk about it, and the idea spreads around and sooner or later by sort of natural momentum, people aren't just talking, there sort of doing something about it and then it's happening.

Deva- What Bhante were you actually talking about? raj a:

S: Aaaa

Laughter

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Voice: Sheffield, (Laughter)

S: No

Deva- I drove through Sheffield once, never again raj a:

S: I had a little dream about Devaraja (laughter)

Deva- So, it's Sheffield then, oh dear raj a:

S: Well your getting warm, (laughter)

Deva- Barcelona raj a:

Jaya- Middlesborough deva:

Voice: Derby

S: B for Devaraja, B for

Laughter

Voice: Durham

S: But you see it's true, if you start talking about something, sooner or later that thing does happen, even if you don't don't do it yourself, somebody else will pick up on the idea, because in a way it's based on a psychological, even spiritual principle, if you speak about something, if you talk about something, you communicate it to somebody else and the minute you communicate it to somebody else, it ceases to be your private property. Yeh, it ceases to be just part of your own subjective consciousness, it kind of assumes a kind of public reality, it becomes a thing, and when it becomes a thing, even so to speak, a thing, shared by a number of people it does assume a Quasi existence. It is on the way actually to happening.

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Jaya- It's like myth isn't it. deva:

S: Yes, you could say that, or rumour unfortunately

Arya- When you say something in the air mitra:

S: Mm, yes

Arya BuL isn't it sometimes you don't actually have to speak about it? mitra:

S: Yes, if your thoughts are sufficient~~y strong, you might find that thinking about it is enough. Other people may pick up on your thought~ and then they'll start not only thinking but perhaps talking about that particular matter

Abhaya: That's another reason why the quality of your thought and your thinking is really important because it's having an effect

S: Yes

Abhaya: Positive thinking is so important

S: I think it is very unfortunate that so many people are thinking nowa- days it seems that an atomic war is inevitable. I think this is almost criminal, I think it's very foolish, one should certainly not think well, it's not true, it certainly isn't inevitable, it's not likely I would say, it's a possibility and Lherefore it's a possibility that one must guard against by any means one possibly can

Voice: It's also being widely quoted at the moment, the prediction of Nostradamus who apparently stepped out of time and predicted fairly accurately that it would start in Persia at approximately this time.

Simon But that really does invite again that sort of fatalistic thing, well, sort of Chinery: well then it is proved, can't do anything about it

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Jaya- Who's Nostradamus anyway? deva:

S: Well he was a French...

Jaya Oh yeah, well I just mean't so what, he said it deva:

S: Yes, indeed, so what? Then Buddha never predicted anything about an atomic war, if there was going to be one I'm sure he would have known about it and would have warned us, you know, he was concerned with much worse than that, you know, the corruption of the dharma and miccadittis.

Mike Perhaps he didn't think it was important. Chivers:

mumbles

S: "Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment, hard horn and solid wood can be bent if one tries but a harsh mind is hard to bend, Rechungpa try to subdue your mind within" Well, this is something that we know only too well, the harsh mind is hard to bend, "harsh" in inverted commas, is more something like rough, tough, rigid and Rechungpa has shown his mind to be very rigid indeed, he's not in the least bit flexible or adaptable

Jaya- You tend to invite , if your very rigid, you tend to invite tragedy deva: because you can't bend, it's like people who have very, one way of

looking at the world, something goes wrong and it destroys them, because they're only ever thought that things could be one way.

S: They can only break

Jaya- They can't bend. deva:

Kula- This phrase "Rechunjpaga listen to me for a moment" crops up again and again mitra: do you think there's a suggestion there that a moment is all that's

necessary, if he can only open himself for a moment, just a fraction?

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S: Yes indeed yes, just a crack.

Then he says "Mice underground and birds in the sky can be caught if one tries, but the lost mind is hard to catch, Rechungpa, try your own faults to see". So a lost mind is hard to catch, so what do you think is meant by losing your mind?

Arya- Unawareness mitra:

S: Yes

Abhaya: Could it be related to what we were talking about like one of the thoughts becomes a wolf or a sheepdog. You get so lost in the fascination that it seems that there's no longer any possibility that that sort of thought will emerge.

S: Yes, I mean one of the goats may have become a wolf for a few moments but, you know, if he turns back into being a, you know, a goat again just one goat among many, well, it's fairly hard for him to become a wolf again.

Jaya- If you lose your mind you go mad, it's like a kind of madness deva:

S: Yes, say you lose your mind or you lose your wits when you become drunk.

Kula- Is it also just sort of falling into a very subjective state mitra:

S: Well you lose your mind when you fall in love, it's easy to fall in love, but it's very difficult to fall out, you can't do it by an act of will usually.



Abhaya:        You can't fall out of it

S:        Sometimes you have to be just dragged out of it and even that is difficult

Simon It's like sort of giving up responsibility for yourself, it's like, Chinery:        Reehungpa  
being so stubborn, it's like he really is, you know, sort

of lost and, you know, he doesn't come at this moment, it seems like that's often the case,  
people wait to lose their mind, you know, fall in love, fall into this , that and the other, it's like  
anything to avoid being yourself.

S:        Yes, avoid responsibility, avoid awareness even.

Simon Unfortunately there seems to be so many areas where you can fall into it. Chinery:

Jaya-    It's like his books are the only thing that define him d eva:

S:        Yes

Jaya-    Whereas he should define himself deva:

S:        Yes, he defines himself simply as the possessor of the books

Jaya    And someone in love maybe, that person defines them, without that person deva:  
their lost

S: Yes their nothing. They don't experience themselves , they don't exist it's as though Rechungpa has become so attached to these books that without those books he doesn't exist. It's almost a life and death matter, he's desperate to get them back he identifies himself with them, so completely, it's like a man who loses his job, if he identifies himself with his job and he suddenly loses it, he can go to pieces sometimes, or lose his social position or lose his money, he loses his respectability, if he identified himself with those things, em, he just goes to pieces, a bit like Oscar Wilde,

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S: I mean, you know, he was sent to prison for two years and he came out a sort of social out-cast and his social position had meant so much to him that he just died after a couple of years, he need not have done, he was a healthy man in his early forties, but he could not live without the social position, without the social ambience that he was accustomed to.

Deva- I was told his health was broken by the time he spent in prison, raja: because he had to do hard labour.

S: I can't believe that, no I don't believe that reading his life, he was treated in way, quite considerably, he was made a librarian of the prison library. He did a certain amount of odd picking in the early days of this sentence but not more than that, he was even writing materials and his life was certainly not one that working man would have found in least bit difficult, no, it was the mental something, that sense of disgrace or the shame, and alienation from what he considered to be his natural or even rightful social position.

Voice: How would you relate that to what you said a few days ago, you know, about people being attached to lots of different things, so it makes them kind of invulnerable, you know, that seems to say the opposite that people can still get quite attached to things - (mumbles)

S: Well in his case he seems to have been attached very much just to one thing which was the social position that he enjoyed, being lionized in society, that seems to have meant more to him than his creative work, his writing and so on, it's almost as though his creative writing though was a great creative writer, was almost a means of that kind of end.

Abhaya: He depended on that sort of position

Vira- So in a way he had an opportunity to break through  
end:

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S: He had an opportunity to break through, but it seems that he didn't or wasn't able to take it, perhaps it was just too much for him.

Mike Bhante, it's a part of the ageing process when you get old, I don't know what Chivers: the technical name for it is, but your mind -

Voice: Senility

S: Senile decay

Mike Chivers: If one practises is one of awareness, can your awareness arise beyond your

S: I'm sure it can, but the mind functions through the brain, you know, something may go wrong with the brain, philosophically speaking, the proper messages may not get through, your paths of co-ordination may atrophy for purely physical reasons. So there may be nothing wrong with the mind or the consciousness or awareness behind the physical organism, but the physical organism is no longer able to function as an adequate medium, it would seem that this what very often happens, and no doubt we'll all experience it to some extent sooner or later.

Jaya- Would you say that with memory, memory has nothing to do with the mind. deva:

S: I would tend to say that memory does not have much to do with the mind.

Abhaya: You did say that you thought that memory was a purely psychological thing.

S: That's putting it a bit extreme~y perhaps, but I think I would add to that now, that perhaps one of the reasons why old people don't remember very well is they don't want to remember, it's almost as though they unconsciously preparing themselves for a new mode of existence, they don't want to be not sufficiently interested in this life any more to remember very much about it, in a way they don't want to think, you know, you notice that when you're young and you're in full possession of your senses that, you know, if you don't want to bother about it, you tend to forget about it, or to resist being reminded of it.

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Scots I think it's fairly obvious that creative people, old people are less likely to have had memories or show the obvious signs of senility.

S: Because there are still things that they are interested in

Voice: They're very active mentally and want to be active

Jaya- Yes that's interesting, because I've done jobs, like I've worked on a building site once and Norwich is a really small place and for months

after I stopped working there and I was walking around town and I could recognise people quite clearly but they sort of walk past me, just didn't recognise me, it was almost as if that part of their life had had no significance for them, because they'd just sort of cut it out.

S: Well they associate you just with that situation, and you know, they can't associate

you with some other situation, one does find that very much doesn't one.

Simon 7 find this walking about Brighton, I mean you sort of meet indirectly Chinery: quite a lot of people from the restaurant and you can meet them outside,

and they actually won't even see you sometimes, you can smile at them and you know them.

S: Well I've had that experience, of several people from Norwich centre walking straight past me in Norwich itself when I've been with somebody who also has been known to them, and we've tried to say hello to them or attract their attention and they've not even seen us and they've walked straight past, this has happened with several people.

Arya- Maybe it's particular to Norwich, (Laughter) mitra:

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S: I wouldn't like to think that. The Norwich centre is as bad for communication as that, there's one particular lady who's attention we tried to attract on several occasions but, completely without success, she was blissfully unaware of our existence, we were watching the changing expression on her face, but she just passed, so this I think happened two or three times with this particular person as well as with others she just didn't see us.

Arya- It work the other way round with me in Glasgow. People come up to me mitra: and say hellos and I go (laughter)

Deva- Do you remember I once took a fare off you on a bus? (laughter) raj a:

S: Well I think that's all for today.

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The 'Rechungpa's Repentance' Seminar.

Held at: Padmaloka.

Present: Ven. Sangharakshita; Jayadeva; Kulamitra; Ken ? ; Bill Moffat; Peter Marshall; Aryamitra; Abhaya; Guhyananda; Michael Chivers; Virananda; Simon Chivers; Devaraja.

Day 4 Tape 7 Side A

S: Alright. Top of page 450 then.

'The Dharma of words And speculation Can be learned if one tries; But the void of Self-mind is hard to learn.

Rechungpa, try to meditate on the uncreated mind! '

What do you think is meant by 'The Dharma of words and speculation' ?

Virananda: Just intellectual knowledge, just book knowledge.

S: (pause) It's not very difficult to study the Dharma as a subject. intell- ectually, mm? But the actual practice and experience and realisation of the Dharma, the actual realisation of one's own 'void Self-mind' that is a very much more difficult matter. So Milarepa is just drawing attention to the difference between book study and book learning, which is easy, and actual practice and realisation of the Dharma, which is much more difficult. And of course he is doing it in the context of Rechungpa's demand, his repeated demand, for his books back. I don't know if this requires special emphasis. It's very obvious, isn't it?

Virananda: Is that 'Dharma of words and speculation' a real Dharma? Because I notice that it's with a capital 'D'.

S: Well I think that probably the translation is a bit clumsy. Well ye we encounter the Dharma in the form of words and reasoning. We don't encounter it initially usually in any other way. So alright just to learn it in that way is easy, just to read the Scriptures and understand, at least intellect- ually, what they are all about. That is in fact quite easy. But to go deeper than that and to start practicing and really understanding, genuinely, what the Dharma is all about and realising it for ourselves - that is a very much more difficult matter. But it's the same Dharma in a sense. It's not that there is a 'Dharma of words and speculation and a Dharma of realisation. (pause) Then Milarepa says:

'A son may leave his father And his loving mother too,

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But a bad temperament is hard to leave behind. Rechungpa, try to change your temper and conceit! '

The leaving of the father and mother. What do you think this probably refers to?

Virananda: Leaving home?

S: Leaving home. Going Forth. That's not very difficult. It's not very difficult to Go Forth, to become a monk even, but to leave behind your own bad temperament, that is a very much more difficult matter. Of course it may be that the Going Forth from home, the leaving of the father and mother, may be a step in the direction of changing your bad temperament. It may bring you up against it more definitely. After leaving home, you may realise more clearly that it's you, it's not your environment, it wasn't your father and mother, it was just you. So it isn't that you... because a bad temperament is hard to leave behind therefore there is no point in actually leaving home, all you have to do is just sit at home or stay at home and change your bad temperament there. Not that. Because the leaving the father and mother, the Going Forth from home may be, or would be a step in the direction of developing as an individual and also changing your temperament. It's not that the one is set against the other. (pause) But this draws attention to the fact that wherever we go, whatever we do, it's the same person, and what is really important and what we are really brought up against is the need for changing ourselves, not for changing our conditions and circumstances. We know that some circumstances, some conditions are more conducive, more helpful to inner change than others, but it is the inner change that is required, and that needs inner effort.

Virananda: I was thinking that... could you say that in a sense we are always in a state like the one Rechungpa's in now? (2 words indistinct) like, holding on to something.

S: Yes, holding on to something which we overvalue, or holding on to something which has become an end in itself, holding on to something which excludes all other interests, holding on to something which has become our all in all to us (pause) What do you think Milarepa means by 'a bad temperament'? I don't know how literal that translation is but take it at its face value, 'Bad temperament'.

Virananda: Angry.

S: Mm.

Bill Moffat: Obstinacy, in this case.

S: Obstinacy in this 'case. Obstinate, yes. Resentful, rigid, unmalleable, inflexible, obdurate, stubborn. This does remind me of the fact that when, in the Pali Scriptures, the Buddha speaks of meditation, quite a lot is made of the fact that in the course of meditation one's mind becomes malleable and flexible. Have you ever noticed this, reading translations of Pali Texts? Ah, so it's as though Rechungpa exemplifies the opposite characteristics. the opposite temperament if you like - the rigidity and inflexibility and stiffness of the mind. So what do you think flexibility and malleability of the mind really signifies? After all, these are metaphors.

Aryamitra: Openness.

S: Mm?

Aryamitra: Openness. ~pen~mindedness,~

S: Mm. Open-mindedness. But does one mean thoughts, open-mindedness? Again, it's another metaphor.

Virananda: It's the ability to absorb new insights, isn't it?

s~: Yes, yes, the ability and even the readiness to absorb new insights. to effect adjustments and changes. It's the capacity for change. (pause) And it is interesting that meditation is credited, amongst other things, with this particular kind of effect, that meditation makes the mind more flexible. I mean, it isn't the way that we usually think of it, is it? We think of meditation making the mind more one pointed, more integrated, more collected, and if we are not careful that might suggest, not exactly stiffness, but something static rather than dynamic. But the Pali Texts definitely speak in terms of flexibility and malleability and ductility. (pause) So again it's just those qualities that Rechungpa doesn't



have~ I don't know whether that's connected with the fact that he seems to have dropped his meditation. (pause) so, ~s bad temperament is hard to leave behind'. A bad... it's difficult to change one's temper and conceit, especially if one doesn't meditate.

Abhaya: Does it suggest that maybe the person with this kind of temperament - obdurate and stubborn - will find it harder to meditate than an angry person or...

S: Mm, well I don't know whether necessarily harder than an angry person. because an angry person might encounter difficulties of another kind, but it certainly seems to imply that someone who is stubborn and rigid in his attitude would in fact find it difficult to meditate in as much as meditation or

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the whole process of meditation involves the development of opposite qualities. qualities of flexibility and softness and pliability, all those sort of terms are used in this connection.

Jayadeva: Pliability is a form of patience, isn't it? You adapt to situations'.

S: But what do you think exactly is meant by this pliability, it's almost an elasticity, of the mind? I think it also is connected up with the loosening up of energy. That as meditation proceeds, you feel your system loosening up, you feel rigidities softening down, you feel yourself becoming more flexible and pliable. Just like a metal when it's heated in the fire, you know, you start being able to bend it. It's rather like that.

Devaraja: The image that's usually come to my mind when I've felt like that is one of the (dance)

S: Mm, because normally one's muscles are stiff. So exercise loosens up the muscles. So it's as though meditation has much the same sort of effect on the mental level. It loosens you up, your mental muscles too to speak become much less stiff, they become more relaxed.

Abhaya: Also you cannot sort of pull a muscle 'o easily (get broken by circumstances) so easily.

S: Yes. You become less rigid, less brittle.

Simon: It also sort of seems like as your mind becomes like this...It's the idea of body, speech and mind... You become aware that it's not just the mind, it's the body and your body 'starts displaying, well extend sort of proof in you like, that your mind is becoming flexible and your body is. It's a sort of motion throughout, body upwards'.

S: In, I forget the original term, but sometimes the Pali Texts do speak in terms of something that is usually translated as 'stiffness', as a sort of mental quality, a quality that has to be overcome, you know, by the monk in the course of his spiritual life, especially in the course of his meditation, and it seems to be associated with dryness. One can speak in terms of 'stiffness and dryness', with regard to one's mental attitude when there seems to be no energy flowing, no experience of positive emotion.

Bill Moffat: perhaps lacking in receptivity too.

S: Lacking in receptivity.

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Aryamitra: It may be like Reich's idea of body armour.

S: Yes, indeed yes. Well the term 'armour' itself is very suggestive. It's something stiff and rigid and cold and hard, something that encases you and hampers you and weighs you down and, you know, prevents you from functioning very freely. (pause)

Virananda: Was there a place in that passage you were talking about dependence on rituals (unclear) isn't it? You're rigid in saying you must do things in this way, you must stick to these rules, you won't bend.

S: Yes, it's almost compulsive then. (pause) Alright, the next verse. The next verse says:

'Jewels, house and land

One renounces if one tries;

But to renounce pleasure-craving is hard.

Rechungpa, try to give up your desire for pleasure! ' Why do you think Milarepa is advising Rechungpa to try to give up his desire for pleasure?

Bill Moffat: It's distracting him from the main purpose.

Aryamitra: It's to do with his books

S: Mm, but in what way? Does one actually get that impression that the book were a source of pleasure? One doesn't really.

Virans-nda: Perhaps more relating to his desire to go to see the patron:'.

S: Yes, yes indeed.

Virananda: . have a good time and live it up a bit.

S: Yes because you know there is another chapter, we know, in which Rechungpa becomes entangled with a young lady, so it may be that Milarepa's warning that Rechungpa should try to give up his desire for pleasure is related more to that sort of~thing. And of course, perhaps similarly, to Rechungpa's desire to spend the evening with the patrons with the lay-supporters. It suggests a bit of a good time. But why should Rechungpa be exposed particularly to that sort of danger and what connection has it with his attachment to books and his generally sort of stubborn and rigid attitude.

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Devaraja: Well it's the sort of split, the compensation, (one is a compensation to the other

S: Ah yes, one's a compensation for the other. On the one hand there is this stiffness and rigidity and he's given up his meditation and he's very stubborn. So clearly he can't be getting much out of his spiritual life, can he? His spiritual life can't be a source of much enjoyment to him. So if, you know, you aren't getting any enjoyment out of the spiritual life, what do you tend to start doing? You tend to try to find your pleasures elsewhere. (pause) It therefore becomes very important - and this is something I think has been touched on more than once before - that one should find your pleasure or perhaps one should find one's enjoyment, in the spiritual life itself. It is important that your spiritual life should involve that element of enjoyment, in a skillful way of course. If there is no skillful enjoyment... I mean, so great is the need almost of the organism for pleasure, you will go after unskillful pleasures (pause) Well, one notices that sometimes in communities and one notices it especially over the weekends and in the evenings, one used to, at least. You know that people don't want to stay in the community, they don't want to stay with one another, they want to go off in search of some kind of pleasure, some kind of fun, and, you know, some kind of distraction. It's quite clear that the life of the community itself doesn't contain much that is enjoyable for them. (pause) So you could say that Rechungpa, although he is with Milarepa, isn't really leading a spiritual life at all. He is become so rigid and obstinate and so unyielding in this matter of the books that his whole contact with Milarepa has become quite painful for him. So it is only to be expected that he goes in search of distraction. Maybe Milarepa has taken Rechungpa's wish to spend the evening with the lay supporter quite seriously. He sees it as indicative of something and that's why he didn't allow him to do that, or why they didn't do that, but he sees the matter by no means resolved, especially in view of Rechungpa's overall attitude. So he warns him to try to give up his desire for pleasure because if you aren't enjoying the spiritual life, there will be a desire for pleasures, outside the spiritual life, pleasures of a kind that will hold you back.

Virananda: It does seem that he lacks, well, spiritual friendship really because, like I was thinking, if he really felt, well, friendship towards Milarepa, he wouldn't want to go elsewhere...

S: Well, Milarepa is fun...

Virananda: Right, he would enjoy being with Milarepa.

... especially when he has been entertaining you in the way he has been

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entertaining Rechungpa. But due to his obstinate attitude, he has prevented himself from enjoying all these things. But in as much as the element of pleasure, using the word in a neutral sense, is so important for a human being is' he is not enjoying the entertainments that Milarepa is offering him, if he is not enjoying the spiritual life, he will go and search for pleasures sure and in some completely different, and even opposite direction. So I think that therefore, like I've said in the past, is' we reach a point that nothing we are doing of an allegedly spiritual nature is a source of enjoyment to us, i.e. everything becomes painful and difficult we are in a quite dangerous position, at least potentially. Not that we can't stick it out, is' we are really determined to, but the natural tendency of the human mind then would be to search out for pleasure, outside the spiritual context. So if I say you don't get any pleasure, any enjoyment say, if I tell you your meditation, you get no enjoyment from study, you get no enjoyment out of contact with fellow members of your community, no enjoyment out of working in the co-op, no enjoyment out of listening to lectures, well what are you going to do? You're going to search for pleasures outside, and maybe they'll be of a quite unskillful nature. So it's quite important that you ensure that you enjoy your meditation, you enjoy your life in the community, you enjoy your work etc. (pause) One might even go so far as to say that it is not a good thing for a person's life to be devoid of pleasure. Again I'm using the word in a quite neutral sense, in the sense of pleasurable bodily and mental sensations, pleasure has a tonic effect. But what you have to watch is that pleasure does not become associated, or bound up with emotion or craving, unskillful emotions of that sort. (isn't it?) That's why the expression "pleasure-craving" is interesting, that to renounce pleasure-craving is hard. It is pleasure-craving that is to be renounced, not pleasure itself because, according to Buddhism, there is nothing wrong in pleasure, but it may be very difficult for you in practice to separate the craving from the pleasure. Because only too often with most people, to experience pleasure means almost automatically to experience craving. (use) [so one might ask the question when is it that you cannot be content to experience pleasure, but go on to experience pleasure-craving? What is it that makes pleasure become a source of craving, or an occasion of craving?

Virananda: You expect too much from it?

S: You expect too much from it, but there must be a reason that you expect too much from it.

Virananda: You use it to fill a hole in yourself.

S: Ah, yes, yes. If you are a healthy person, with no holes in yourself, so to speak, well you can experience pleasure, and just be happy to experience

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pleasure but you won't develop any craving on the basis of that experience of pleasure. Do you see what I mean? You'll be quite happy to let the pleasure go when it's time for it to go. You won't attempt to cling onto it. Because it's just a pleasure. It's not something you are trying to use, to stop up one of the holes in yourself, one of the gaps in your own life. A pleasure is merely a pleasure. It has no other significance than that. It's just like a drink of cold water when you are thirsty on a hot day - you just drink the cold water, well, that's great, your thirst is quenched. You don't start thinking "Oh I wish I could go on drinking glasses of cold water all day, all my life". But most people's pleasures we know only too well are not like that, because there are so many holes, so many gaps in them, in their lives. So pleasure is never just pleasure, it's almost always contaminated with craving. And we may sometimes have to give up the pleasure in order to be able to tackle the craving, at least for the time being. And when that happens it is quite important that we should have some simple, uncontaminated pleasures, that we can fall back on. As it is... one very simple pleasure that is usually uncontaminated, or much less contaminated than other pleasures, is just the pleasure that we get from contact with Nature, in a quite simple sense. I don't mean necessarily even just admiring the beautiful sunset, or the beautiful vista but just contact almost with the elements, say with light, and with colour, say with sunlight, or with the feel of the earth, or the smell of vegetation or the actual sensation of water say when you swim, or of the air, the wind, if you go sailing or something of that sort. I think if we desire pleasure, and what I call uncontaminated pleasure, from these sort of sources you know we'll be much more easily able to do without for a time those pleasures which for us are contaminated with craving. But I think it is very difficult for the human organism to do without pleasure altogether for too long a time.

Jayadeva: It relates -- somehow to that thing you were talking about - the Bodhi- sattva must be the Arahant and the god. It's like if you are an individual, and let's say you've got insight a well, you have the Transcendental on one side but also you experience the mundane in a full and... you get the best of both worlds.

S: Yes, right, indeed you do, yes.

Kulananda: Is that also why it's very easy I find to give up sort of city pleasures if you are on a solitary retreat. I mean you really don't miss them at all because you've got that pure enjoyment of the countryside just being by yourself. But it's often very difficult to give them up when you are in the city.

S: Mmm.

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Virananda: It's often that I find that you almost... I realise what I do need perhaps a walk in the country, but sometimes I'm incredibly reluctant to do it even though I have this. feeling that it would be good for me. And when per- haps I do go and do it, It's actually when I get out there I think - 'Well, why didn't I want to?' All those other ideas I entertained instead, you know, well they are just a waste of time. This is really what I do need.' Yet there's all that sort of resistance to doing that.

S: Mmm Mmm (pause).

Bill Moffat~ It's difficult to have spontaneous pleasures .~ch as the country- side in a city. Even to hear good music you have to in a way prepare for it by needing to book your ticket if it's an orchestra that's playing Beethoven or something. And in a way that it self incurs the anticipation, the sort of build up of attachment or desire to go to it.

S: Mmm (long pause) So Milarepa says;

'Jewels, house and land One renounces if one tries.'

That is to say, presumably he means that one can in fact actually give up those particular physical objects.

'But to renounce pleasure- craving is hard'. (pause)

Devaraja: Yes it seems~tha;t craving has a sort of sapping effect and sort of brings about a loss of faith in one' capacity to just enjoy (2/3 words unclean~

S: Mmm. Well it's as though Milarepa also means it's easy to give up one par- ticular object of craving but you haven't thereby given up the craving itself. It simply attaches itself to some other object. ~o sooner or later you've got to come back, you know, to the pleasure craving itself, as he calls it, and ~eal with that. Mm?

Virananda: I've found that... well really romantic poetry helped in the sense that if you can't experience it yourself readily, you get someone else's experience so you can see 'well,

there must be something there that I'm missing' as it were.

S: Right. Mm. Well the important point really is to set aside the craving from the pleasure, and you know you may have to give up both for the time being, in certain instances, but I think one should be really careful to make sure that somewhere in your life, and preferably within the spiritual context

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there is some room for actual enjoyment, that is, enjoyment free from craving. (pause) And one should always try to watch and see the point at which in dependence on the pleasure there arises craving. Mm? I think it is important to realise that pleasure is a vipaka and not a karma. It's the craving that is the karma, not the pleasure. pleasure is a sensation and therefore the question of right or wrong or skillful or unskillful does not arise with regard to pleasure itself. Mm? But with us unfortunately the association of pleasure with craving is almost habitual, at least you know in certain instances. (pause)

Virananda: Also there is quite a strong tie-up with guilt. I know I have found that... you might be enjoying something pleasurable but then you start thinking about it and then it becomes a quite... a sort of... well, a distracted pleasure. From there it just seems to end up in craving, because of the guilt.

~~: But again to begin with one should be quite sure that one is really enjoying the pleasure, pure, as it were' uncontaminated pleasure, and not indulging in a pleasure mixed up with craving. Yeh? It isn't easy to separate the two things out. So I think we can almost take as a model quite sort of simple bodily and mental sensations, especially those connected with the experience of Nature, and the elements. I think we are on fairly safe ground if we take those as a model, and make sure that there is some place in our lives for them. I mean the enjoyment of things like sunlight and blue skies. and green vegetation, or the enjoyment of the earth or the wind and so on. I think one can experience this or one of the ways in which one can, one of the occasions on which one can experience this, is in connection with air-travel, because very often you know if you travel by air you get views or vistas of sky and cloud, which you just never get from the earth, and this has almost a sort of psychadlic effect. I think if we have more experiences of that sort, I think maybe we wouldn't be thinking in terms of pleasures, certainly not craving-pleasure- at all. Because these experiences are so stimulating and so pleasurable in a very simple and basic sort of way, mm?

Virananda: It shows how alienated our society is, you go out on a plane and they've got



films for you and all the other kind of pleasures to distract you from what's...

S: Well, not only to distract you. I mean when they put the film on, they pull the blinds down so you don't see the sunlight, and the blue sky outside, and all the wonderful cloud formations. Well, you can spend hours just watch~r all the different cloud formations, but rather than let you watch that they put on some third-rate film and you have to pay for the head-phones anyway. (laughter) But I think, to my way of thinking, these are the only positive

things about air~travel, apart from that it gets you to your destin~tton quickly, are the panoramas that you can see, well, of the earth and of the sky I remember this especially when I returned from India to England last year. It was beautiful, clear bright weather the whole way 550 I just watched as the Middle East, and the whole of Europe unrolled themselves underneath and I actually could see Constantinople or Istanbul, I always think of it as Constantinople, and the Caspian ~ea and Mount Ararat and the Straits of Bosphorus and the Hellespont. We saw all these and the whole way you know the land, was a sort of vivid orange brown colour. I don't know how it managed that but that's the colour it was. And it wasn't till we got really to France that we started seeing some dark green patches, which I suppose were forest, but the whole of the rest of the time, all the way from India, then Pakistan then it must have been Iraq, Persia we saw, and Romania, P~ulgaria, Yugoslavia, Austria it Wa.- this vivid orange brown colour, and then of course the vivid blue of the sky all the way. And also quite extraordinary cloud formations, if they were cloud formations, which I wrote about in my letter to habda, order members may recollect, for what must have been four or five hundred miles, just streamers of cloud. I compared them with Dakini's carves just streaming along beside the aircraft. I don't know what that w~z. And every few miles they seemed to cross sort of like two threads cross~ing and then carry on parallel again. So I was watching these things. ~o when yeu~e thing like tha to entertain you... you do experience pleasure, but there's no element of craving in all that. You are just experiencing Nature or experiencing the elements without any additional mixture of craving. ~o I think we need more of that sort of experience. If we have more healthy positive pleasure, that is to ~ay pleasure which does not give rise to unskillful feeling~ of craving, well you know we are less likely to be driven as it were compulsively in the direction of contaminated pleasures. And in any case we will feel more, more healthy and an enhanced sense of well-being because pleasure, especially un- contaminated pleasure has a tonic effect on the whole system. e I thiril~ we really need to watch that. (pause) ,o Milarepa seems to have ~lected in Rechungpa a de---ire for pleasure because he knows that, owing to his stiff and rigid attitude, he can't gain any pleasure from the spiritual life. He can't even enjoy these phantasmagoria that Milarepa has presented for his entertainment. So Milarepa seems to be seeing that as a danger signal. I mean one would adopt the same sort of attitude, I mean supposing you knew someone has come on an event, a weekend event, and you ask them how did they find it and they say, 'Well, didn't really think much of the lectures and didn't enjoy the meditation, the people were a bit of s~ drag, and didn't like the gardenin~ etc.' Well, what would you start thinking? Well you'd start thinking that that person was you know completely alienated from the spiritual life in all its forms. And you wouldn't be very surprised to learn that on returning to where- ever they came from, they'd just gone straight to the pub for the evening or

you know something of that sort. c Rechungpa to an even greater extent seems to be in that sort of position and therefore Milarepa is trying to head him off in advance. He is warning him that what might well happen, especially as he has already noticed his inclination to spend the evening with the lay- supporters instead of going straight to the core.

END OF SIDE A TAPE 7.

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Day 4 , Tape 7 , Side B

~: Then he says;

'Good jewels and a lovely sweetheart If need be can be left,

But to leave a soft, warm bed is hard indeed.'

Well, do you think this is true? You might have thought that it is more difficult to leave a lovely sweetheart than to leave a --soft, warm bed, but, I mean, is it true? That it's more difficult to leave a soft warm bed? (laughter) I- Milarepa really hitting the nail on the head or has he, for once got it wrong? What does he really~mean, what is he getting at? I mean, is a soft warm bed all that seducing? Mmm? (laughter) Well perhaps you can get tired of a lovely sweetheart, eventually, but perhaps you never get tired of a soft warm bed. It reminds me, you know, a little bit about the sort of thing that's said about marriage. Well why does a man eventually get married? I mean I'm -not here speaking from experience, some of you may be able to do s~o~ but it isn't so much for the sort of things one might think a man gets married for, but it's more for comfort, and convenience, having everything to hand, and the warm slippers by the fire, and the regular meals, and the bed neatly made ever~ day. It's more for these sort of things than for anything spectacular or romantic or passionate etc, etc. This is what one has heard. So could there not be an element of truth in that? And could not perhaps MiiarPpa be referring to that kind of thing? It's~as though he's been speaking about pleasure, and no doubt pleasure-craving can be associated with the lovely sweetheart as well as with the good jewels, but perhaps' comfort is even more dangerous and insidious than pleasure, because comfort is always with us as it were.

Bill Moffat: It might even be more difficult in snowy Tibet to leave a warm bed to go and meditate in some cold...

S: Mm, yes indeed.

Devaraja: %'o comfort is more dangerous and insidious than craving?

S: Well I'm not saying that. I'm just asking whether perhaps Milarepa is not suggesting that. Is that what he means? Because he's saying,

' .. A lovely sweetheart

if need be can be left,

But to leave a soft warm bed is hard indeed'.

o why is he sugge ting, or stating, that it is more difficult to leave a soft warm bed than the lovely sweetheart. I mean, what is it that make it more difficult? I it that comfort i- more difficult to give up than plea ure?

Voices: Yes, ye-s

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Devaraja: Perhaps' there is a greater tendaney to inertia.

S: ~es.

Virananda: It's like if you've got the comforts, you don't want to do anything else. You've got it all. a god's life almost

?: Mmm.

Abhaya: But it is a kind of pleasure.

°~: It is a kind of pleasure, yes. It's a more diffuse, sort of enervating, passive pleasure, a dull pleasure. Like when you're lying in bed and not very willing to get up.. (laughter).. and the blankets are all warm 'bout you and you are in a dull, drowsy state. Yes, that is quite difficult to be tire yourself, and of course you're not really stirred up at all in any sort of way. I mean in the case of pleasure, well there is a certain amount of energy, a certain amount of life there, even when it's pleasure-craving, mm? ~c you could say, well, there is a possibility of your giving up the pleasure because at least you're alive and awake. But, you know, when you are enjoying comfort it's such a dull sleepy drowsy state that it's very difficult even to think of in terms of leaving that situation.

Kulamitra: Do you think he is also thinking in terms of the religious life, you know, you can give up things like the sweetheart and the jewels but you can make your religious life very easy and comfortable, you know lots of nice patrons who'll give you good meals and a friend everywhere you go and a social position in society.

S: Or even literally, you may give up your lovely sweetheart along with your mother and father but even if you go forth and become a monk, even if you wander from place to place, you're still sleeping every night and you're still waking up in the morning and there's still the problem of getting up! You know whether you're in a monastery, or whether you're at home or even if you're on the road, you still have this problem of getting up, especially if you've been quite warm and comfortable in the night. So it's as though comfort is more insidious than pleasure because perhaps it's more with you, unless you make definite attempts to banish it. You maybe sleep hard and cold, so that it's easier to get up because you aren't even comfortable and cosy in bed, perhaps you haven't even got a bed, just a wooden plank and a stone to put your head on.

Virananda: Jyotipala would like...

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S: Ha ha.. .but, you know, mentioning marriage, I heard yesterday even on the radio a little joke. It was a woman talking about marriage and what she was saying, she was saying that marriage was a great institution, but who wants to live in an institution. (laughter, pause).

So then Milarepa says, "Rechungpa, try to give up the 'blind' sleep of a corpse".

so this is clearly, you know, leading on from the image of the soft, warm bed. The 'blind' sleep of a corpse". What does he mean do you think by the expression, "the sleep of a

corpse"? It's contradictory or perhaps just paradoxical.

Virananda: Well it's that thing about being in activity without ever changing.

S: It's the 'blind' sleep of a corpse". First of all you're blind, then you're asleep and then you're dead, It's as though there are three progressive, three stages of deterioration. First of all you become blind, unaware, unseeing, and then you sort of fall asleep, you become confirmed in that state and then you just die, spiritually. This is what Rechungpa is in danger of. (long pause). Well, anything more about the "soft, warm bed" and the "blind sleep of a corpse"? (pause). I think one can probably say that... I mean, as most of us live in, you know, England today... our lives are quite soft, the element of comfort, is quite pronounced and one can really appreciate this, if one goes to India, and sees how people live there. Not just poor people but people who might regard themselves as, you know, quite middle class. There isn't so much comfort in life, you know, people aren't so dependant on comfort. They don't live so soft. And I think we probably have become over dependant on comfort. We're always warm, always, you know, well-fed, always you know well-clothed, always well-shod. We always have transport whether it's in the form of a bus or a car, or train, we never have to plod for miles and miles in awful weather we're never out in the elements, we never have to work in the heat of the sun all day, we never have to go hungry, we never sleep hard. Do you see what I mean? I moan~ the way we live, the vast majority of people in England now, is you know the way in which in the past even members of the aristocracy, even members of the governing classes, even perhaps the royal family couldn't live. You read accounts... there were kings in medieval times shivering in their castles, the cold wind sort of blowing in through the chinks and wrapping their velvet and fur cloaks about them. And the whole castle is cold and damp, and there's not much they can do about it, even big fires don't help. They just sit there and shiver and, you know, drink their mulled wine. Even kings had their straw-filled mattresses, and beds which were not sprung. There were no carriages, the first carriages, I think, didn't come in until the time of Elizabeth, and they didn't have any springs. She used to travel around, more often than not, in a coach without springs, over unmade roads being bumped

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up and down. (laughter). Even the Queen. I mean, she found horseback more comfortable. If possible she would travel on horseback, which meant sitting behind her Master of the Horse and hanging on to his belt, and being jogged all over these, these, well tracks as we would call them, not even roads. We don't have to face all that. You could face something like that in India. So we have a very comfortable life and I think probably we have become quite soft.

Virananda: . . . (?). . . mostly because we've come to expect those comforts to always be available for us, and actually we make a real fuss if they're not. And it's like the whole standard of living is sort of set on comforts that are definitely essential. And the sort of higher and higher standard of living and sort of seeking after more and more comfort, for sort of less

and less work.

S: Yes.

Virananda: It is not very heroic, is it?

S: It's not very heroic. Well, I've made sufficient jokes in the past about, you know, reading the Songs of Milarepa, you know, sitting in a comfortable chair and sort of munching a box of chocolates, at the same time it's pretty near the monk, isn't it? Or it can be if you're not careful (laughter) At least you have to keep the box of chocolates at bay. (laughter) Especially if you don't like chocolates anyway. But you see what I mean? We have got all these things and this is one of the reasons why I think it's quite good for almost anyone, especially Order Members, to go off to India for a while and spend two or three years working there, and you know seeing how people live there, and living like that themselves with a minimum of comfort. And you don't really miss it after a while, you know. Well the whole of the time I was in India to the best of my recollection, except if I spent a few days with friends I didn't have a proper mattress, or a sprung bed or any thing like that. I slept on a hard wooden bed with just a blanket on it, no more than that most of the time. But I never thought about it because that is the way everyone lives practically except the very, very rich.

Virananda: You do become, if you live like that for a while, you do become much more pliable physically.

S: Probably, I couldn't say very much about the physical side of it. But you certainly do live more simply and, you know, you are less concerned with comfort.

Virananda: Do you think there is a place for sort of more 'outward bound'

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activities within the Friends, giving ourselves a period of time when we are doing something a bit more healthily ascetic?

S: What do you mean, 'a period of time', it should be like that all the time.' (laughter) I mean,

that should be the norm, not the other way round, you know you live at home in comfort but have the odd "outward bound" weekend - or even year.

Virananda: And yet it seems that perhaps what the Friends is offering in term~ of a retreat is making some people, who might think of going on a retreat, a bit dubious because they think, I well, am I going to have to put up with~that? I mean maybe to us it's nothing really but, like, to somebody who has actually been very much used to comforts it's almost like to go from one extreme to the other. It's really Ciuite a lot to expect from them. It's almost like that perhaps might put people off.

S: Well, I'm not suggesting that people should go straight from a comfortable middle class home to a mountain cave, but it has to be graduated 'c that that at least is the direction in which they are moving, you know, whether they kno' it or not. It also depends upon the age group that you are trying to attract. Obviously younger people will be more prepared to rough it than older people who are a bit more set in their ways. It has been said that we are in need of a big retreat centre, you know, where there are single and double rooms and comfortable bed for completely new people because they won't like dormitary conditions, and sleeping on the floor, you know, w~th a lot of other people and they might not come, you know, ii it's like that.

Virananda: Isn't it that - going~ back to the thing ot pleasure - like if peopl are getting their pleasure from comfort, they have to have. it you ju~t take away their comfort they are going to be miserable and they're just going to go ~£~ you have to start getting your pleasure from another 'source in order to put up with those discomfort'~.

?~: Yes, well, that's why presumably people don't mind living a bit rough, and leeping on the floor in the course of a retreat because, I mean, it is such a positive experience in other ways. (pause) But even if you do have, you know, single or double rooms, even if you do have comfortable beds the whole way in which the thing is arranged and furnished and decorated can suggest an ideal of austerity. Do you know what I mean? It shouldn't look just comfortabi in the ordinary domestic sort of way. The very colour scheme can suggest at lea~~t simplicity.

Virananda: Could be very, very beautiful.

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S: Mmm (pause) I think it is quite an interesting thing this that some people find it difficult to get up in the morning. I mean, leave aside the question or the possibility that on certain occasions one hasn't had enough sleep, yes, that one feels a need for more sleep and therefore one is disinclined to get up. But assume for instance that one has had enough sleep but one still wants to go on staying in bed, this is probably not just unskillful but quite unhealthy. It is almost neurotic one might say because if one has had one L5 full night's rest, and sleep and one has a day to look forwards to, well why is it that one is unwilling to get up? It does suggest that one is unwilling to face the day. This is what it is. One is hiding away from the day, and if so, well why? Especially if the first thing you know that there is for you to do is to meditate.

Guhyananda: I know a few times when I've felt like that I definitely felt I just didn't want to be alive. And it just reminds me of what we were saying there about the 'blind sleep of a corpse'.

S: Yes I also notice with some people if they were experiencing any great difficulty especially you know emotional difficulty, they must take refuge in bed. ~o there is perhaps, also an infantile element associated with it - ~ because when you are an infant you are in bed all the time, bed represents warmth and security and absence of responsibility and not having to take decisions and having it all done for you.

Abhaya: Wheeling people around in prams all day (laughter)

Virananda: . . . (?).. order/mitra weekend... (?) (laughter)

S: ~o perhaps also one could say that this inability to get up in the morning is a bit regressive also, mm? But it's quite a common phenomenon. I'm sure in every community there's at least 2 or 3 people, who persistently find it difficult to get up in the morning.

Virananda: I think a very bad enemy of that kind of thing is this thing, that you are not sure when you have had enough sleep. You get sort of all rational about how much sleep you need, and how tired you are and often it's the very thought of that kind of activity, that mental activity, that is tiring. It's sort of from the moment you wake up you don't sort of... you just go 'great, yes, I want to get up'. It's like you start thinking and you think 'well, gosh, six hours. Yes, I was quite late last night'.



S: You try to work it out instead of feeling it or experiencing it.

Virananda: Right. And then you convince yourself, 'well I must need at least another hour's sleep, so I'd better go back to sleep~.

S: Then you find you can't go back to sleep because you're not tired or sleepy! (laughter)

Virananda: That makes you unhappy.

S: Then you get worried and think maybe you're suffering from insomnia. (laughter) But it's interesting that even in austere, medieval Tibet there was this problem.

'But to leave a soft, warm bed is hard indeed. Rechungpa, try to give up the "blind" sleep of a corpse.'

Abhaya: Of course, Milarepa is the being exemplar of being unattached to bed.

S: He never goes to bed, doesn't even have a bed.

Virananda: He doesn't sleep at all?

S: Well there's no reference to it.

Jayadeva:       There's this whole tradition of staying in bed on Sunday morning, isn't there?  
(laughter)

Devaraja:       ...(?)... the face of a British Sunday (laughter)

Jayadeva: But it's quite a long tradition isn't it? It's sort of like you have to go through the week and it's such a terrible, awful week, you have to get up early.

S: Well this is something that has appalled me sometimes staying in certain communities, the extent to which.. well, the weekend is observed. Everything just sort of grinds to a halt on Friday evenings and people seem to feel, 'Well it's Friday evening'. They're more or less under an obligation to go and 'enjoy themselves'. And then there's the whole weekend to get through, so they get through it partly by getting up late, which means they don't do any meditation, and then that means they don't feel particularly positive during the day. Also they are vaguely aware that perhaps they ought to have joined in the meditation and puja, and perhaps they feel a bit guilty that they didn't. And there aren't many people around and perhaps whoever was supposed to be cooking has forgotten or perhaps he's gone away, and no one has been arranged and everything seems to fall through, and nothing much seems to be happening

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and you don't really know what to do and you feel at a bit of a loose end. Then you almost start wishing that you had work to do and I mean I've been in communities, from time to time, where it's just felt awful over the weekend. But it's as though people... there was an unspoken agreement also that, well, you had to have a weekend. And then of course you get the Sunday papers around or maybe last week's Sunday papers people are sitting around reading. And then there's the sort of passing from hand to hand a grubby copy of Time Out. And there is a most unpleasant atmosphere when it ought to be, if there is no work, it ought to be the highlight of the week, that you're spending time together in the community. But sometimes it hasn't seemed like that at all. -c I think it's probably much better just to work through, and let individuals take a day off when they feel like it or want it or have something actually to do, other than work, and just work on. Mm?

Virananda: Abolish weekends.

°-: Abolish weekends.

Kulamitra: The difficulty is that other people are observing them and often your work is involve~ , you know, with other people's time as well.

S: I, I think... I mean, that might be so with regard to a 'hop, though that wouldn't apply on Saturdays and there are increasing possibilities' o~ unday openings - the ~-unday markets. But you can get on with thing-s like printing, over the weekend, in fact you'll be less interrupted, and disturbed by press- pective customers.

Virananda: I think a lot of it is just conditioning about work, our sort of rigid attitudes about, well almost that we deserve a day of~ and that we deserve to have our entertainment at the end of working hard for five d~ys.

S: Right, so this almc~t suggests almost a wrong attitude to work. In a ~-ense a stubborn and rigid attitude, that work is just work, th t it isn't the sort of thing you enjoy, and that it's got to be compensated for by play or pleasure at least.

Jayadeva: That was funny because that was what I experienced at university. That I expected that all the entertainments they put on would be stimulative to what you were doing. But it was all sort of getting absolutely blind drunk and doing things that just didn't connect with...

~: V~ell one of my rather disillusioning experiences was when I wa-s at Y~le. You know, I went over ~n 1970, some of you may remember, for two months. And

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in the course of my stay there, or soon after my arrival in fact, I was in- vited to a student party, So I thought, well, this will be interesting, all ~tudentn. But I was a bit dubious about going because I thought it might be so lively that it might be a bit too much for me, but anyway I went along. So the party started at about ten o'clock in the evening, and it wa held in somebody's flat in the college. This particular flat wa rather a big one with three quite big rooms, and all the lights had been turned right down and, you know, red covers had been put all over the lamps JO there was a dul red glow everywhere. You could hardly see anybody, and there wa vrey, vrey loud rock music. And people just started drifting around and just sitting, pretty aim- lessly and hopelessly, on the floor their backs against the wall, and just sort of staring. And of cour~se then there was drink brought in, there was plenty of drink, and it soon became clear that the majority, you know most of the people there were men because Yale was just in the process of becoming co-educational, most of the people had come there just to get drunk, and that was all they were going to do, they were just sitting there drinking this punch that we were offered. And you know, just getting drunker and drunker, and not communicating with anybody. Others, a minority, had come just to pick up some girl for the weekend, or for the night and there weren't many girl s-c that the few who did drift in were pretty quickly picked up, and marched off with and, you know, that was th't. 'c all the drinkers were sitting there getting more and more drunk and the music got more and more loud,

communication got less and less, and I left about two o'clock by which time people were just lying all over the floor, just dead to the world, mostly drunk. A few had left a few were being sick, and that was the end of the party. (laughter) And this was students! I'd expected something gay and lively and jolly, you know, I felt really quite disappointed. And I thought, 'it was incredible, here I am over forty-five and am I still so naive?' (laughter) To think that a party is a jolly sort of occasion where you enjoy yourself.'(laughter) It was incredible But this is just how it was. I just had a bit of this punch, and just sat there hoping I'd be able to get into conversation with somebody. Well there was one chap I knew particularly well, we had a bit of a chat, but it was very difficult with that loud pop-music blaring away, you could hardly make yourself heard, and, you know, most people clearly didn't expect much, if anything, in the way of conversation. They just sat around getting drunk. In America they seem to have a way of getting drunk a bit different from the way in which English men get drunk.

Virananda: How does it differ?

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Vira~anda: How does it differ?

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∴ Well it seems a bit less social, let's say considerably less social.

Virananda: The Americans?

S: Well, I mustn't generalise. That was just my experience at Y(j)le I'm just assuming that they perhaps were reasonably typical. Anyway perhaps we'd better pause there and have a cup of coffee. (pause)

S: Alright, let's go on.

'Here and there hills and rocks

May meet face to face,

But to see the Self-face of your mind is hard.'

Jayadeva: Have you got your mike on, Bhante?

S: Ah no. (pause) What is this hills and rocks meeting face to face? What is the sort of image, what is the sort of picture that is presented? It seems to me to be a sort of narrow, rocky gorge where there are cliffs opposite each other, the one facing the other. So,

'Here and there hills and rocks

May meet face to face,

But to see the Self-face of your mind is

hard'.

I don't know what expression in Tibetan this 'Self-face' renders. It doesn't seem to be a very traditional Indian Buddhist term, but nevertheless let's try to see the meaning of it.

'To see the self-face of your mind is hard.'

What is this Self-face of the mind do you think?

Virananda: It's a bit like a Zen saying isn't it?

S: Yes it does sound... a bit like that.

Virananda: ... 'see your own original face.'

S: Yes, yes.

Virananda: Sort of like the Higher Self I suppose.

S: Yes. Of course that is a quite unBuddhist expression obviously. But self-face, yes, it's your own face, your true nature. I mean not of course that your true nature is some kind of fixed entity, because that would go against the

teaching of Voidness. But this Self-face, I mean, there is a trace of a

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teaching a bit like this, in the Pali Canon where the Buddha is represented as saying, in the Anguttara-Nikaya, 'Just once that the mind is radiant, is pure and radiant by nature, the defilements are adventitious.' So it seems to tie up with that particular line of thought, as though our ordinary mind is not our true mind, that there's a level of consciousness deeper than that, which is still in a way our own mind but our own mind in a deeper and truer sense. It's ours in the sense that we can actually reach it and experience it~ and in a manner of speaking identify ourselves with it~ Because if we experience it, or to the extent that we experience it, it is us. Mm? Though I think I have mentioned before that we mustn't take this language of a sort of pre-existent face too literally. As when we say we are potentially Buddhas we mustn't think of Buddhahood actually existing, sort of lurking somewhere in the depth of our being. It is simply a way of saying that we can become Buddhas, we can have that experience, if we make the necessary effort. We have to be very careful how we use this language of potentiality, otherwise we shall start thinking that in a way, the experience or the attainment is already there. Do you see what I mean? If you say that you are potentially Buddha, well in a sense you are Buddha already all you have to do is uncover it. Well it's easy to say that, but if you think too strongly, too definitely that you are Buddha, without making too much of an effort to actually uncover that Buddha-nature, well then you end up with a purely intellectual statement about your being a Buddha, which inhibits actual action on your part to uncover that Buddha-nature. So it is better perhaps to think or speak in terms of attaining Buddhahood, achieving a higher level of consciousness, gaining Enlightenment, as the Theravada does rather than try to interpret the fact that it is possible for you to gain Buddhahood metaphysically and ontologically. Mm?

Abhaya: That, because of the Western psychology...

S: Yes well not only Western, even Eastern. The danger of your appropriating the fact of your ontological Buddhahood as a sort of mental possession. We get this in so many presentations of Zen, don't we? You know it emerges most prominently there, as well as in the Vedanta. So one can perhaps take this particular line in a quite simple way,

'To see the Self-face of the mind is

hard.'

Well to see the true nature of your mind even in a quite ordinary sense, to understand what is happening. Your mind is you. It's difficult to see what you yourself are up to. Mm? It's difficult to know say, what is best for you. It is difficult to know what you ought to do. So what does that imply? That it's very difficult to know yourself and to understand yourself. Though I have been speaking I think recently quite a lot about this in terms of the second or third person. That is to say it's very difficult to know another person.

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You know even if you live with them for a long time it isn't easy to know them, and you know you realise this sometimes when someone just leaves. I mean, it's happened in one or two communities recently that someone has just upped and left. And this has been quite a surprise, not to say a shock, to the other community members. So if it is a surprise, if it is a shock, what does that imply? That you did not in fact know that person, otherwise you would not have been surprised at what they did. So, you know, this is usually the case. We don't know other people and therefore it's very difficult to say what would be good for other people or what other people should do. It's very difficult to give advice, that presupposes you really know another person very well, but I think that is very rarely the case. So one can go even farther than that - it's very difficult to know yourself. I mean, you're such a sort of odd collection of impulses and ideas and ambitions and weaknesses and aspirations and feelings. It's very difficult really to know yourself and to know for certain what line you should follow, what you should do, even what particular kind of practice you should do. Whether you should work in a co-op or not. Whether you really need a solitary retreat or not. Sometimes people are not at all clear about these things. They just don't really know, and that means they just don't know themselves. Mm? Because presumably at least part of the reason is that all the bits haven't yet come together in a very intelligible way. In a sense there's just nothing to understand. Do you see what I mean? To mean when one speaks in terms of understanding something, or understanding another person or understanding oneself, it presupposes that you are a nicely integrated whole, something that can be understood as a whole, understood in toto. But for a long time one is just a bundle of conflicting impulses and ideas. It's very difficult to understand that. You can speak in terms of understanding a book but you can't speak in terms of understanding disconnected pages and sentences and words from different sources all jumbled up together in a box. You can't speak in terms of understanding that, can you? You can't speak in terms of understanding the contents of the box. Is it not so?

Abhaya: Is it as bad as that?

S: Ha, ha. Sometimes. (laughter) So that the fact that you speak at all in terms of understanding somebody, whether another person or yourself, it suggests that there is a sort of wholeness there. So you can only understand to the extent that that wholeness, and integration is there already. If it isn't there or if it is so incomplete and partial as not really to

count yet, there's no question of understanding, and it's very difficult to know what to recommend or that person.

Abhaya: It's like you can only relate to certain aspects...

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S: Yes.

Virananda: ... so that you've made your judgement...

S: Right.

Abhaya: ...on the basis of those aspects.

S: If for some reason someone tells you, "I really want to write. I really do". So, well, the advice seems obvious, "Well OK, go and write.~ But then they'll say "Ah well but.. you know..." Then another aspect of them speaks, "Well I want to have a good time. I want to live in the city. I want to see a lot of films." So you say, "Alright, maybe you could do that too." 0 you try to work it out. "Maybe you could live in the city and maybe you could spend your mornings writing, and your afternoons and evenings watching films, etc etc." Then they say, "Well I haven't got any money. I need to make money. I'd have to get a job." And then you've got to take that factor into account and then work it all out again for them and usually the result isn't very satisfactory to them. And this is what.. this is the way things go. So it isn't easy to understand. Usually when we say that we understand people or understand someone including ourselves within the context of the Friends, it usually means no more than that we are beginning to see a possibility, of all the bits coming together in a certain way, and therefore, in as much as that is the case, what in that eventuality it might be a good idea for that person to do. I think very often we can be no more definite than that. So therefore you know I think we have to be really careful, I'm thinking now especially of Order Members, and especially those who have just been ordained, I think we have to be very careful about assuming that, you know, one knows what one wants to do. someone says "Alright I'm going to do this for 5 years." or, "I'm going to do that for 10 years". That's very unlikely. It'll probably take you, even after ordination, two or three years to find out what you really want to do, and what you really should do. At least partly because there is no you yet. The fact that you've been ordained, the fact that you've committed yourself, means that henceforth one



particular element in your life has been taken over, and is going to dominate and integrate all the others, yes? ~o the Going for Refuge, the Commitment, the Ordination means that that sort of process of integration has now well and truly started up, but you don't really know what the results are going to be, what sort of person is going to arise, or develop as a result of that process. And therefore you can't be sure what you really want to do or need to do. At present or for quite a long time you are only aware of all sorts of possibilities, all sorts of options. No more than that.

Virananda: Perhaps you should just go away, go away on a long solitary and

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just, just let...

: Well that's one way. But one could just experiment, try this for a few months, that for a few months and see. You may not be able to work it out on solitary retreat at all.

Jayadeva: You could confuse yourself even more.

S: You might with thinking about it but not~actually testing any of your ideas in practise. And presumably you will have had solitary retreats even before you were ordained.

Simon: But often through being in one situation you can learn quite a lot about what you want to do and what you don't want to do. You know, whereas if you rather chased around after every idea you thought you'd like to do... I mean a lot of people do do that and they never seem to get anywhere. If you have a base as a start at least.

Kulamitra: It's very difficult to accept that inevitably it's going to take

( ) I mean you always think, well you might think, if only I went on a solitary for a really long time, then I'd know. But you wouldn't. Or you might, well if only I followed one thing through, then I'd know. But you wouldn't. Or you think, if I followed a lot of things for a little bit of time, then I'd know. But you wouldn't because whatever you do it will take quite a long time to kind of settle.

S: I think quite a lot of people in all sorts of ways, haven't given sufficient weight, sufficient importance, to the whole question of time. Not simply that things take time in an ordinary mechanical sort of way but that growth takes time, growth involves time. One finds that especially when one thinks or one speaks in terms of Kalyana Mitrata or Spiritual Friendship or even ordinary friendship. It takes time. You need to know somebody over a period of years. You may be quite positively...

END OF TAPE 7 SIDE B.

RECHUNGPA' S REPENTANCE.

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Rechungpa's Repentance Seminar

Day 4 Tape 8 Side A

S; .....but that doesn't mean that you are really friends yet. It doesn't mean that friendship has developed, mm? That builds up over a much longer period of time. So sometimes I think that in the context of the Friends, partly perhaps because of their, you know, higher conception of friendship, people are a bit disappointed that they don't have more friends, that they aren't closer or better friends with a greater number of people. I think that in a way that is natural and inevitable because again it takes time, mm, and if you've only been in the Friends say a year or two years it's unlikely that you will have any really good friends yet, it may take 5,6,7,8 years for that sort of relationship in that sort of depth and genuineness, to build up. And you probably will find, other factors being equal, that the longer you have known certain other people, especially certain other Order Members, the better friends you are with them, mm? That even if you get on very well with say comparatively new people it isn't quite a matter of friendship, in the full sense, mm? So it also takes time to know yourself; it also takes time to find out what is the best thing for you to do within the context of the Movement as a whole. You won't discover it all at once. There are all sorts of things you could do or that might be good for you to do, all sorts of things which would help the Movement; but what is the thing for you to do, you know, here and now, the thing into which you can really throw yourself, completely, wholeheartedly? That is much more difficult to discover. Something that is in accordance with the whole line of your being. Something which will enable you to use all your talents. Something into which you can put all your energies and which is really fulfilling for the Movement. ~~~~~ ~L~v~o~Ve~ut't~ngs and various things that you enjoy doing, but it won't usually be very much more than that. Meanwhile of course you yourself are growing and evolving. It's very difficult to know the one thing that you should do until there's one you to do it.' I mean we're so undecided - now, we think we might do this

and now we think we might do that - because there are so many different selves popping up at different times, and staking their claims, registering their interest. "I'd like to do this." "No, I'd like to do that." And very often they are incompatible, and in any case you can't put all your energies into any of them because there are rival claims to be considered. As you get older and more mature and more integrated, well then of course the different interests start becoming consolidated into one overriding interest to which every-thing else is subordinated, under which every-thing else is subdued. Or perhaps two or three great interests, you know, between which you alternate or which you can combine in various ways.

Jayedeva: Isn't there a sort of confusion between what you want to do and the means to achieving it? It's like maybe like part of us doesn't want to grow and develop. So it's only once you know that more or less all of you wants to grow that you can say well this is the best

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means. Whereas at an early stage you are also confusing means towards growing with parts of you that don't want to grow.

S: Well also of course in a sense, it's dangerous to separate means from ends too much. It has been said that the end is the extreme of means, yeh, as when you say for instance, "Well I'd really like to enjoy a calm happy, carefree state of mind, but I don't want to meditate. You think of meditation as the means to that in a quite external, and artificial sense. So you want that state of mind, but you don't want the means leading up to it. But you forget that that end is the means, carried, to a certain point. You can't really separate the one from the other. The connection is not arbitrary. Eventually you realise that, and if you really want to achieve that state then you'll be , you'll enjoy meditation for it's own sake as it were and not think of it, you know, too much as a means to that particular end. (pause So anyway we've just been emphasising the fact that even to understand oneself, to see one's own mind, even in a quite ordinary way is sufficiently difficult. But what about seeing, you know, what Milarepa calls 'the Self-face of your mind'? Well obviously that's going to be more difficult still, that is seeing, experiencing, your self so to speak at a much higher, or you can also say, deeper level. But it seems to me as I've been thinking over these things fairly recently, that real self-knowledge, and real knowledge of others is a very rare and difficult thing. And you know people hand out advice so easily sometimes but it's almost with an irresponsible easiness, you know, not realising what a tremendous responsibility it is to give advice and how you should really know somebody before you give that advice, or before you venture any opinion about them. It's very easy to misunderstand people.

Kulanamda: But if you're working about the centre and there are often people who want

advice and there are other people whom you feel need some prompting in a positive direction

S : Well when I say, when I speak in terms of giving advice T mean when you put it to someone quite strongly that they should do or need to do a particular thing, mm? I don't include in that definition of advice just clarifying general principles, and then leaving it to the person concerned exactly how they apply, yea? But if you say to somebody, "I think you should leave college and I think you should move into a community and coop.", That is definite advice. I think that sort of advice you should be very careful about giving. You can say, "Well if you want to evolve, well you ought to give some space in your life to meditation, you ought to be able to get away on retreat, you ought to be having positive communication with other people. Well just ask yourself whether in fact you are getting that in your present situation."

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You can put it like that. Not say, "Yes you should leave college. I think that is what you should do."" Do you see what I mean? That sort of specific advice, one should be very very wary of giving because, especially say if you are an Order Ivlember or more senior experienced person, the other person may attach some weight to what you say, may even follow that implicitly and it may not in fact be the best thing for that person. Maybe you don't know that person well enough to be able to say, but yet with great confidence you've given that advice. That is not a wise or skilful thing to do. (pause) It's a great responsibility. (mumble survive in a community.

S: (Laughs) Well if you feel that you really know somebody well, well fair enough. But you have to be sure of that; that you really know them well enough to be able to advise them. I'm not ruling out altogether the giving of advice. I'm only emphasising that advice must be based on genuine knowledge of, as well as genuine concern for the person to whom you are giving the advice. And it certainly shouldn't represent the application of a just sort of set pattern: "Oh well communities and coops, of course they do everybody good, so yes you too should move into one." Yes? But yes, principles can always be elucidated and clarified, or through discussion you can help the person concerned come to a better understanding of his own present position and exactly where he is at. In that way he is helped to make up his own mind. (pause) The Buddha himself on one occasion said, 'It is not easy to know ....' - he was asked about how to know an Arahant - he said, 'It is not easy to know another man.' He said, 'You can know another man only after living with him for a long time, and even then you must be a wise man and not a fool.' Mm?

: It's like so many married couples live together for years don't they, and don't know each other.

S: Yes, mm. And you even read in the papers sometimes of cases when the husband has you know kept up a second establishment somewhere in some other town and it sometimes goes on for twenty years, and neither wife has known about it. So that suggests you know that neither wife actually knew her husband at all. I mean we do know from our own experience

that, if we are at all close to anyone, we are constantly discovering new things about them, either about their past or their present attitudes or their ideas. Sometimes, you know, quite unexpectedly. I remember there was a very pleasant looking young man coming along to the Hamstead Vihara in the early days. Quite interested in Buddhism and meditation and, well you know, he seemingly was quite sympathetic to all the Buddhist attitudes, but I one

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day discovered quite unexpectedly that the other major interest in his life apart from Buddhism - or two interests - lack magic and the Nazi movement (laughter). Well it seems so extraordinary such a combination but, yes, he was very strongly into those things not just interested, but believing in and supporting them. He came to some of the early FVO lectures but needless to say, he didn't stay around very long. So, you know, you learn unexpected things about people, or you may discover, you know, that someone's had a really odd kind of job some years earlier. Not the sort of job that you would have thought that person would ever have held or done. And you think, "Ah well who would have thought it." So it means that it's enlarged your understanding of that person and the fact that you are surprised at all means that you had been seeing that person in a definite limited way which did not include the possibility of their doing that sort of thing, mm?

Kulanamda: I find that the more I get to know people the more they surprise me and the more I realise that I don't know them at all

S: Yes, yes.

Kulanamda: (cont.) .... you know, after superficial contact you think you know them but when it goes a bit deeper you realise

S: Well it's almost like any subject. You know, when you start learning it, studying it, it seems, you know, you have a pretty clear definite picture. As you go into it more deeply things don't seem so clear, don't seem so definite and you have to go a very long way again before they start becoming a little bit clear and definite again. But it's like that with Buddhism that, you know, when you first encounter it, you could give quite a clear, definite picture about what Buddhism stands for and what it's like. But as you go more and more deeply into it that clarity and that definiteness start dissolving a bit and you might be quite hard put to it to say what Buddhism is all about. It's as though you could say almost anything about it and it would still be quite reasonable and even quite true. (Laughter.) You can't sum it up so easily in a few words or a few phrases or a few, you know, well written pages. That seems much more difficult to do. It seems much more complex, much more ambiguous, much more many-sided, much less, you know, easy to handle. But maybe after twenty or thirty years, you know, it starts clarifying and defining itself and coming together again, mm? I think one finds this with any subject, and all the more so of course with subjects of real depth and complexity. So sometimes the beginner, the tyro, is more confident and has the subject more at his fingertips than, than the master. Mm? I remember a little example of this kind of thing when I was in Sarnath,

and two very young Indians were ordained as sramaneras, novice monks. Within five minutes of being ordained they turned on the local brahmins and were trying to convince them that there was no atman. And they were going at them hammer and tongs and (using) all the classic Buddhist arguments against the existence of the atman. And older and I hope wiser, mature monks were just smiling, at this exhibition of new enthusiasm for the Dharma. It seemed in a way so naive and childish, though they were saying all the right things, yes, yes, but they were taking their Buddhism so literally and narrowly and they were using it, you know, just like a hammer to hit the unfortunate brahmins with. They just turned and grabbed the nearest brahmin and started trying to convert him immediately after they were ordained, within minutes.' (laughter) Because it was a little village, you know, just next to Sarnath, and some of these brahmins must have been passing by, so the newly ordained novice monks just grabbed them by the throat and were arguing with them about the non-existence of the atman. And, you know, I remember one of them shouting at the unfortunate brahmin, 'Come on, tell me what work this atman does? What is its function?' Because according to Buddhism if a thing has no function it has no existence, but the brahmins were a bit bewildered (laughter). But, you know, to them it seemed so clear what Buddhism was all about and so on. But, you know, to some of the older monks, it didn't seem quite so clear and simple as that even though, yes, they agreed that, yes, Buddhism did not teach the existence of the atman. The atman postulated by the Vedanta was a delusion. But nonetheless they thought it really wasn't just so simple as that.

Simon: It seems almost that like you don't seem like that you just gain more skillful means as though you do treat every single person as totally different. You can't make any assumption about them

S: You can't really, no.

Simon: (cont) that if you rely on... (mumble) you sort of think, "Ah well here's a beginner or something and sort of come on in a particular way. And they just react and you wonder where you went wrong. But it's just like you weren't really sort of aware of them at all.

S: You have to be careful to formulate what you say with a sufficient degree of generality. If you're dealing with very new people, well, you have to deal with very broad general principles which, you know, they can understand first as general principles and

then, you know, start thinking in terms of applying to their own selves, their own lives.

Kulananda: It's also very noticeable how you always cover yourself against literalness. You know with 'as it were' in inverted commas.

S: Right, yes, yes. Well this seems more and more necessary. Though of course sometimes one reaches a point where one feels well all one can say is 'as it were'! (laughter) Like, you know, who is it, who is it - Wittgenstein's, his case of 'as if'. It's a case of 'as if' - something like that.

Devaraja: In a similar case ... (inumble) ... I was just thinking recently that one has to be quite careful. I mean like if I'm talking over something with somebody who is the same age as me it's a totally different, I find a totally different way of just presenting it. But often just the impact of your age on somebody can affect them in the wrong sort of way unless it's

S: Well, they can automatically write you off if you're five years older.

Devaraja: Or they give you too much ... they allow your age to have some sort of impact on them in that sort of way.

S: But you know it does ... it seems any sort of dogmatism seems more and more unreasonable and in effect quite impossible. Mm? Any kind of dogmatic statement. of course I mean another difficulty is that very often, especially in the case of new people, you'll be asked for dogmatic statements. People will want to elicit from you a higher degree of dogmatism than you really feel is appropriate to the occasion or to the question. Well they do this because they are looking for some kind of, well, fixed support, you know, even some kind of authority.

Kulanamda: Especially with regard to morality.

S: Well yes

Kulanamda: Would a Buddhist do this? Would a Buddhist,

S: Yes because that is a practical matter. Or would the Buddha have done this? Or would the Buddha have done that?

Kulanamda: It seems though that, on the other hand, people are so ready to interpret any show of faith or confidence as dogmatism.

S: Yes that is true.

Kulanamda: Yes, people do seem to find it very difficult to distinguish between you expressing your personal opinion strongly, but being quite happy that other people will inevitably disagree, and may even be right, and you forcing

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something down their throats which is pure dogmatism.

S: Yes. Well they very often will say that you have tried to force something down their

throat, when simply you have stated your position, and they are unable to counter it, mm?

Kulanamda: I~ight. Yes. (pause)

V: Especially if people come along to have their own Ideas about Buddhism confirmed. They don't really come to learn what you are doing.

S: Right, yes. (pause) ~hey are quite surprised. or even disappointed, to find you all looking so hapW7. (laughter) After all, Buddhism is supposed to be a - - pessimistic religion mm? It's supposed to be life and world denying.

V: But then it also does sort of mean .... I guess like Tf, if for instance classes aren't very dynamic people will inevitably pick up a sort of, "Well this is what it is like. This is how the Friends are." When often say they start talking to an Order Member or something and the Order Member presents something very new to them then they think, "Well, gosh, I didn't know this was what the Friends was about." It's almost that, you know, people need to be shown, by just sort of the number of different people at the class that you know in a way you can't label the Friends, and you shouldn't be able to just sort of say, "Well this is what the ~riends definitely is and isn't."

S: Mm. Even if you say it's a Buddhist movement Uhat doesn't help very much because, then you have to e~plain what Buddhism is and, you know, that may be quite difficult.

V: (More and more) it ~ust feels like, there are so many areas of confusion in that way anC it's just better to try and reach that person in quite a, wei~, human level. Just sort of get to know that person. (pause)

S: Anyway, what is this all originally out of? Tt's arising out of : "But to see the self-face of your mind is hard." So we've looked at that, we've done that in an almost mundane sort of way but it would seem that that is necessary first. But, you; know, looking at i%- perhaps a bit more profoundly it means encountering as it were, within ones own mind, or perhaps one should say within one's own experience, an ever clearer and wider, you know, level of conciousness. £0 do that isn't easy. Well one could even say to expand one's conscious- ness isn't easy, mm? Or even to meditate isn't easy.

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That is, you know, what the statement is really concerned with. (long pause)

One could look at it another way also. One could say it's not just a question of the Self-face of your mind being hard to see, it's impossible to see. But why should that be? Can you really see your own mind?

V: (It implies) of dualism.

S: Mm. (It implies) of dualism. Can you see the seer?



V: No.

S: Really? So what does one mean by 'seeing one's own mind?' Kulanamda: Believing it. Becoming one's own mind.

S: What does that really involve? When is that possible.

V: Total integration.

S: Of what?

V: Subject-object.

Abbaya: Univer~al Mind.

S: Let's say subject-object. That is the- real point I think. You know, you only really see the self-face of your own mind, you only really see your own mind in the true sense when there's no mind to see, and no mind seeing. When you've reached that level~of, well, we can only say consciousness, you know, where the subject-object dichotomy is transcended. So perhaps this is what, more profoundly, Milarepa is talking about. To transcend the subject-object duality is really hard. This is a much bigger, a much more difficult thing than just understanding one's own mind or one's own self in the more mundane sense. (pause) Alright, let's go on to the next verse.

"The queen's and king's decrees Can oe evaded if one tries; But noone c-an evade Yana, the Lord of Death. Rechungpa, make use of death for your devotion." Why is it that one cannot evade Yama the Lord of Death? What does that mean?

V: We're all going to die.

S: We're all going to die. You know, you can evade mundane things, mundane circumstances. You can evade,

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you ~ow, the mundane t4~S and ~~~, and their decrees but the Lord o Death, so to speak, you cannot evade. That is to say, death you cannot escape. So -"Rechungpa, make use of death for your devotion!" How does one do that? How does one make use of death for one's devotion? How does one make use of death, the fact of death, the recollection of death, the concentration on death, in the interests of one's spiritual life?

V: If you're awake to that it would jolt your energies Tnto applying yourself to the spiritual life.

S: But then everybody knows that they are going to die, presumably? No one denies

that.

V: You explained the difference earlier on between knowing and realising.

S: Mm. Yes.

V: You tend to operate (7 or 8 words indistinct) if you were going to live for ever.

S: 4~. But don't you think there's a middle way to be followed here? I mean you should recollect the fact that you will die and therefore not waste the time you have at your disposal, so far as you know because you don't know when you are going to die. But on the other hand, you know, you shouldn't be so preoccupied, so obsessed, with the thought of death that it stultifies all your activity.

Kulanamda: It's like if you get too caught up in the idea that you might die at anytime, you won't take on anything long term. You won't develop those friendships over a number of years. You'll just be so into the moment you won't

S: Well you'll think what is the use? I'm going to lose those people, maybe lose them tomorrow, maybe lose them the next day. What is the point of spending any time with them today? I don't think many people get into this sort of frame of mind but some do.

V: What about the other approach, the other attitude, that they are going to die so one must enjoy, be as direct as possible with one another and open with one another?

S: Also that there should be no grudges or resentments left uncleared up. I think sometimes one, you know, one does have the experience of having a misunderstanding with somebody else and then you just let it slide, it isn't cleared up and then one day you hear they've died. And that now means you've lost forever the possibility of removing or clearing up that misunderstanding. And one might very deeply regret that.

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So, you know, that is an additional reason for not allowing misunderstandings to continue~ I mean, the person with whom you have had a misunderstanding, might have a motor accident tomorrow and then the chance for clearing up the misunderstanding is gone for good. So one can use the recollection of death in that way also in a positive manner, in the interests of developing metta and, you know, developing good relations or keeping up good relations with other people, removing misunderstandings and grudges and resentments.

V: I was speaking with someone at Aryatara not so long ago, and as the conversation, as the evening wore on one found that the conversation was more into ( ) and they were saying that they really regretted .... the biggest thing they regretted in their life was not being able to say that they appreciated their parents for what they did, although it was deluded. In their own deluded state of mind they were trying to do what they (wanted) and when they died that they couldn't (...?) sort of help them.

S: Yes. Well this applies particularly to parents and older people who, you know, in the natural way of things will die before you do, and it is important to clear up any misunderstanding, you may have had with them before that happens. Well no, as~you say, it's not even just a question of clearing up misunderstandings but of expressing, also the positive appreciation that yo~ have never exj)ressed, and, you know .. eh the non-expression of which was in fact a sort of fault. So tnat you are not left, after somebody's death thinking, "well I wish I had said this or I wish I had said that." But you know now the opportunity has gone forever.

V: I've found a sort of sense of .. well.. perhaps Tt's of urgency, if itts correctly done. I find it is stimulating because it is sort of good to get out of the comfort mode that we were talking about earlier.

S: Mm, yes.

and that very much it is hard to see that there is any urgency in this life. There are so many distract- ions.

S: Well not only that but when you are young especially you feel as though you have endless time. You really do. I think it's only when you reach maybe the age of forty or forty-five you start realising that maybe life isn't really so long after all. But I think when you are in your twenties it's very difficult to feel really that life is short, and you may not have enough time for everything. Very difficult.

Simon: But I do~fael that, working on a sort of positive idea, that well, you know, there is so much to do, and not just thinking about that but actually

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thinking about the things one would like to do and then just sort of thinking well, you know, let's get on with them now.

S: Yes especially if one has one's youthful energy. The time may come when you are just sort of tottering around and you can't do things then. (pause) Well then Milarepa goes on to say

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"~iy son, try to correct your wrong ideas, Abandon your bad actions, Discipline your unruly mind, YOur impious thoughts restrain, Avoid the demon of egotism."

So, '... try to correct your wrong ideas,' Do you think Milarepa is referring to anything specific here? What wrong ideas do you think Rechungpa has?

V: Regarding the value of books.

S: Well he seems to have a definite wrong idea regarding the value of the books.

V: The whole of the spiritual life presumably. You know, he doesn't have any value about the spiritual life at the moment. He wants to spend time with his books and patrons, not meditating, watching goats.

S: Travelling. (pause) It rather reminds me of something - in fact perhaps I should forget it - something I published in "Stepping Stones" many years ago which just illustrates this particular point very well. A little extract from a Zen text, if I can find it without undue difficulty. (pause) Ah, on ~~~g~~L Concentration of Effort." (pause) It's on the right concentration of effort . .... this story seems to be about someone a bit like 'Rechungpa. He wanted to mix with all the patrons and all that sort of thing. So, ~There was once a man who wished to send his son into the church' - church in what? The Sangha. - 'and so he said to him, "You are to apply yourself to study the Doctrine of ~tribution - Karma - so that you may earn your living by preaching." Acting on this advice in order that he might become a preacher, he first learned to ride a horse (laughter) for he thought, "I shall keep neither a carriage, nor a carrying chair ~f my own and when a horse is s~nt for me to go and officiate as a priest, it will be sad indeed if I fell off it because I did not know how to ride." Next he learned a few little songs thinking, "After the service is over I may be pressed to take a little sake, and my hosts would think it very odd if their

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priest was totally without any social accomplishments.'" Having thus got a smattering of these two import~nt subjects, that is horse-riding and singing, he began to think of preparing himself still further. But while carefully considering it, not yet having had time to preach, he found himself an old man."

So it is a little bit like that. So any other ideas about what wrong ideas Rechungpa had?

V: Wrong ideas about what Milarepa was trying to do. T mean the motivation for what Milarepa is trying to do.

S: Mm. I mean his idea about Milarepa seems to be totally wrong as though Milarepa was just trying to frustrate him, as though~Milarepa was a sort of enemy. He didn't realise that Milarepa was trying to help him and lead him. He seems to have been totally blind to (that). But I think perhaps we can take wrong ideas in a more specific way. You could say that Rechungpa didn't have wrong ideas so much as wrong attitudes. So what do you think is the difference between an' attitude and an idea?

Jayadeva: Well there are certain Buddhist ideas and there's nothing wrong with them but one's attitude to them can be incorrect.

S: Yes.

Jayadeva: Mainly Buddhist philosophy ... is a reflection of ideas.

S: Well I regard the idea as representing a higher degree of conceptualisation, realisation,

and system-atisation. So you can have~Say a thoroughly selfish attitude but you can erect that into a philosophy of selfishness and take your stand upon it, mm? ~o~you see what I mean? So that represents the difference between a selfish attitude and a selfish idea or an idea of selfishness. So it does seem wrong ideas are a sort of concretisation of wrong attitudes. First of all the attitude is sort of instinctive, something you do automatically, instinctively, without thinking very much. But if you're questioned about it, challenged about it, and if you don't want to give up that attitude or change it, you start justifying it, you start rationalising it, you start building it up even into a whole philosophy. It then becomes a wrong idea, as well as a wrong attitude.

Ab~aya:        flo you think the obverse applies?

S:        I think it can. I think it does apply. And I think this hap~ens, well one could say, that it happens in any case, because if you have a skilful attitude, I mean the essential part of the skilfulness is that it is conscious and aware, so that you know what you are doing, but at the same time you may be asked by other people to justify your attitude, your skilful attitude, your positive attitude. You know, you may be, you know, asked why you adopt this attitude, or why you seem to believe in it. And then you have to stop and think, 'well, why do I?' And then you may try to present reasons, or such reasons as present themselves to you, for that attitude of yours. But I think you would find a need for that only for purposes of communication, mm? Within yourself you might be quite happy just with your own skilful attitude .. ah .. which .. ah .. involved ah .. a degree or element of awareness at the same time. You might not feel any need to work it all out in intellectual        in such a way as to make it a philosophy. But you might need to.

Abba a: I was thinking of philosophy being that in fact. A phios~hy of ideas being a concretisation of what would be basic attitudes.

S:        Yes. I think I wouldn't be too certain of this but I think that at least quite a lot of people would not feel any need to concretise - or rather let's say to carry through the process of concretisation - to the extent of producing a philosophy - mm? Yes?

Kulanamda: Isn't there also that it can operate the other way round. I mean, you know, you take the ideas of Buddhism ....

S:        Yes..

Kulanamda: .. and you try and work with these

S:        which are the concretisations of the Buddha's attitude or the Buddha's experience of Enlightenment.

Kulanamda: Yes, but then you try and make them effective upon the attitude level within yourself.

S:        Right. As distinct from the conceptual appropriation level.

Kulanamda: Yes.

V: And in your book the 'Survey.' I think it's the first chapter begins with saying almost - "Here's a load of ideas coming up, quite foreign, quite alien to your tradition, now prepare yourself, prepare yourself by being open, prepare the attitude first.

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S: ~ell, yes this is certainly important. I mean If you approach Buddhism to learn from it or learn about it even, then there must be a certain degree of openness on your part otherwise in fact you will learn nothing. So this is what I stress in that section the importance of right motive, as I call it. But, I mean we can understand from this the nature of what is usually called miccha-ditth~. You know a miccha-ditth~as a sort of conceptual concretisation, maybe highly systematized, of an unskilful attitude.

V: So it is correct to speak of a micch~ditth~ going deep?

S: Oh yes I think that a micch~ditth~always goes deep.

V: So it is more than just a conceptualisation?

S: Well yes and no. When you say conceptualisation, it means there is something of which it is the conceptualisation and that is deeply rooted, unskilful attitude. After all we don't produce conceptualisations in mid-air as it were. They are very intimately related towards our basic attitudes towards life.

Aryamitra: But the fact that say you may have the micch~ditthi, you'd say it was a miccha-dittht, doesn't necessarily mean you have the right attitude.

S: No, as I've said there is the possibility of appropriation on the conceptual level.

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S: Well you're not using it to modify your unskilful attitude or to develop and increase your skilful attitude, you're just using it to add to your intellectual possessions. Mm.

V: Giving that another twist, could it be possible That someone conceptually formulates in an erroneous way but underneath is a skilful attitude?

S: Sometimes this happens just because someone is confused in his thinking or has been unduly influenced or unthinkingly influenced by other people, current ideas. So one must be able to detect this. In fact you can detect it easily, you know, if you hold for instance as I've quite often done a question and answer meeting or if just people come up to you

individually, it's very easy to tell the difference between someone who holds an inveterate wrong view, and somebody who is just, you know, using rather thoughtlessly current language. They may be saying much the same thing, or asking the same question, but the basic attitudes behind the questions may be quite different. For instance, supposing somebody comes up to you, and tries to sort of argue or to speak to you on the basis of all religions being the same. Sometimes you really know that this is an inveterate deeply held miccha-ditthi on that person's part. On the other hand somebody else might say the same kind of thing, and you might feel, well, you know, he's just heard this, and, you know, he's a bit sort of, you know, positive - minded and he likes to think that everybody's together. He hasn't gone into it too deeply, so just out of good nature he thinks, so you mustn't take him up on it too seriously or too strictly. You see what I mean? You should be able to tell this sort of difference, you know, quite instinctively, in fact well one can.

V: Is there a technical Buddhist distinction between these two kinds of wrong conceptualisation?

S: I don't think that there is actually a technical term to express the distinction. But there is a very definite distinction nonetheless. (pause)

V: It's very interesting to read the lives of people, especially philosophers. You feel, well, they come out with some great philosophy and then you look at the life they lead and the two never seem to match somehow.

S: Well there are only maybe in the whole course of Western philosophy, there are only two lives, or at the most three, that seem to match to any extent.

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There's Plato's, and there's Spinoza's, possibly Bishop Berkeley's even though he was a bishop, but he seems to have been quite an admirable sort of person, in terms of his general attitude towards other human beings. But some philosophers seem to have been quite obnoxious characters. (pause)

V: You can often find that, in every field almost, that there's these people with incredible sort of insights in a way, and yet sort of as characters they are real monsters. I was thinking of in music, you know, somebody like Wagner, you know, incredible the music he sort of created and sort of ideas but the man, just reading about him, he was a total monster.

S: Well some people think the music is pretty terrifying.

V: .... these philosophers, they don't seem to me to have their philosophies don't seem to (set) around great insights but rather the achievement of a very highly developed intellect .... (unintelligible)

S: Mm. Mm. So when one is speaking in terms of correcting wrong ideas, well, what is one really speaking in terms of? One is really speaking in terms of dealing with deeply rooted

attitudes. That's why if you're arguing with someone who has got miccha- dñtthia there's not a .... , it isn't enough just to defeat him in logical argument is it? It doesn't really have much effect. You have to tackle him on a much deeper level, and that isn't such an easy thing to do. I think sometimes it happens or very often it happens that in talking with people, in discussing with people, I mean especially with regard to Buddhism, the spiritual life, and all that kind of thing. One has to ... I mean, it's not enough just to try to deal with what they say. You have to sort of at the same time try to deal with why they say it. You have to try to get in touch with that. What is it in them that is making them, say what they say? What is it in them that is making them adhere to that particular point of view? You've got to probe deeper than the point of view itself, and try to tackle the underlying attitude. Otherwise you won't really get very far with them. Even if you win with argument so to speak you won't win over the person at all. They may just end up feeling you haven't understood them or you're not very sympathetic, or you're not interested in their point of view, etc. (pause)

I was reading a few days ago of a character, I think it was in a biography, someone living in the last century, had an absolute inveterate hatred of clergy- men. But say if someone has an absolute inveterate hatred of clergymen, I mean you don't help him to get

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over that by just sort of pointing out that on the whole clergymen aren't really such bad fellows. Because he didn't apparently hold .... his attitude wasn't based on anything rational, but apparently when he was a young man, his sweetheart was stolen away from him by a curate. In that way he developed a deepseated hatred for all the clergy. So you'd have to not argue with him about the goodness or badness of the clergy. He might have rationalised, you know, his attitude by that time into a vigorous anti-clericism yeh? You would have to probe deeper and tackle his feelings of deprivation, resentment, jealousy, etc,etc. That is what you would have to do.

Abhaya: If he was prepared to let you do it.

S: If he w~s prepared. Yes, yes.

Kulamitra: It really is a task for a guru though, not to be taken lightly.

S: Bu~ even a guru can't do anything unless he is accepted or recognised as a guru. I mean Milarepa wasn't able to do very much, you know, up to this point with Rechungpa. He used his best efforts, but not with very much in the way of results. But anyway we shall no doubt be coming to that in a minute. So it also points to the fact that it's not enough to deal with people ~n a rational" superficial level and ttis links up with what we were saying before about it being difficult to know people. We are misled about people, we misjudge them because we are, you know, contacting them, and communicating with them in this quite superficial rational level. You know, our contact and our communication, you know, don't go any deeper than this, and therefore we are surprised at some of the things that they do, because they are not in keeping with the rational statements that they have made. And we've been taking those rational statements at their face value and thinking that, you know, those rational statements



did in fact express the person's real attitudes. And that isn't always the case by any means. So this suggests that in order really to know someone, you have to know them in their irrationality. Mm? It's not enough to see the tip of the iceberg.

Kulamitra: You can't judge people by what they say about themselves.

S: No. No. Or necessarily by what other people say about them. But that (knot) can be extremely dangerous. I mean\* one does sometimes meet people who have very strong ideas about certain other people!

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when they have in fact never actually met. But they've got very strong ideas about them as persons, even to the extent of developing strong dislikes for them. I mean I had an example of that only this morning in a letter from Lokamitra. He's had a letter from someone in America, a Sinhalese Buddhist, who, Lokamitra says, seems quite demented judging by the way in which he is writing and - I've never met the person, but I know about him - and he's writing to complain to Lokamitra about his publication, that is to say 'Flaming Darkness', you know my biography of Dharmapala with Dharmapala's sayings. So he is writing to complain that he had collected these sayings, and that Lokamitra is including them in his publication, without his permission. But what actually happened, was I collected those sayings many, many years ago and he some years ago, about six or seven years ago, appropriated them, and published them himself with an introduction by him as more or less his own work. So now he is writing - I don't know whether he knows what connection there is between Lokamitra and myself - complaining that Lokamitra has taken these sayings, the collection of which was his work, and has written a violent and demented letter to him, incidentally with all sorts of things about me, whom of course he has never met. So, you know, this is the sort of thing that happens. It's a concrete sort of example. And Lokamitra is quite bewildered by all this because he knows that I made this collection, it must have been nearly thirty years ago, before this person was around actually, and here he is accusing Lokamitra of appropriating his work. So these are the sort of confusions that arise. He surely of course must know in his own mind he did not collect those sayings. He must surely know that but he is writing that he did himself make that collection. And that his name Lokamitra is doing great wrong in not including his name there. This is one of the pillars of international Buddhist establishment. Lokamitra said the letter is quite demented. (pause) So this is a good example. I mean I know of this person - I've had .. well, I've not actually met him, but I've seen letters from him, not actually addressed to me. And I mean this is a very good example, I mean on the sort of conscious level he's a Theravada Buddhist, and so on and so forth, but there is a strong irrational side which, you know, has nothing to do with Theravada Buddhism, or any form of Buddhism at all. So if one was to be dealing with this person, one would have to deal with that level. I mean, Lokamitra no doubt after hearing from me., will write and point out his error but I'm sure that that will have no effect on him whatever. Lokamitra will write back and say, 'Well this collection was made by the Venerable Sangharakshita in 1952 or 1953 or whenever it was and was originally published by the Maha Buddha Society.'

You had nothing to do with it. You in fact lifted this collection and republished it yourself with your name.' Lo~amitra will no doubt write all that but I am sure it will do nothing whatever to assuage the fury of this person. Nothing whatever. In fact Lokamitra can't do anything about it, I imagine. Perhaps if he was in personal communication with him he might though, judging at least by what I've heard about this man, even that would be very difficult. But I know one thing about this man which makes me in a way .... you know, gives me a clue to the understanding of the whole situation. I followed his history over about the last twenty years, but one fact I came to learn about him, which to my mind throws quite a lot of light on the matter, which was that he has a club foot. And he has never married, you know, presumably on that account, he's nearly well about my age, and I can't help thinking that that has got quite a lot to do with it because he always seems to be doing things to draw attention to himself, you know, in the international Buddhist world. And you know he really hasn't got much knowledge of Buddhism so he often does get people to write things for him, and he publishes those things under his name, his own name, and sometimes even lifts things, as he lifted my collection of sayings, and brings out in his own way. So it would seem as though he is trying to compensate for something all the time. So one can understand that and even sympathise with it but meanwhile it makes him a very unpleasant person, and a person very difficult to deal with. I mean, as Lokamitra says, judging by his letter he is a half-demented sort of person. But again so many of the people that you meet are like this. They may not be so unpleasant, they may be quite pleasant people, but the degree of irrationality may be just as great and you make a great mistake if you try to deal with them on purely rational grounds. Or if you expect people to be rational. I said years ago, I think when I was in India, it's illogical to expect people to be logical. It's irrational to expect them to be rational. So you have to be able to contact people on a much deeper level. And you cannot help them to correct their wrong ideas unless you make contact somehow with those unskilful attitudes of which the wrong ideas are only the surface crystallisations.

V: Do you have to have integrated your own irrationality before you can do that?

S: Oh yes, otherwise you would just get irritated by the other person. It would be your irrationality against his.

I mean, men sometimes find women very irritating, you know, because of their irrationality. But they find them irritating, you know, because in many instances, at least partly because they have not come to terms yet with their own irrationality, and therefore cannot deal with a woman's irrationality, in a genuine rational way. Her irrationality sparks off your irrationality, mm? And the result is divorce (laughter) although divorce is not very irrational let's say. But you can get people getting all het up and they say, "But that party is so unreasonable." And they get quite unreasonable about somebody else's unreasonableness. So when I say it's not enough just to have a rational, logical approach you must contact that

deeper level, I am assuming that you are reasonably integrated yourself and it is not simply not your irrationality being sparked off by their irrationality, and reacting to it. You have to be able to contact them with real warmth and understanding and that warmth and understanding, will be there only if you have in fact come to terms to some extent with your own irrational side. I mean if someone is being irrational, and if you are being strictly logical that's just going to infuriate them. I remember seeing this some years ago, you know, in the case of two people I knew quite well, because they were my own aunt and uncle. My uncle, who was a chartered accountant, was very, very excessively logical, and his wife wasn't in the least logical and to everything that she said - and not only an irrational but also an emotional person - he gave a completely irrefragable, irrefutable logical reply and they used to send her up the wall. (laughter) And they used to have violent rows through all of which he would remain very, very logical but you could see the unskilful negative emotion behind the logic, and it wasn't surprising of course that they eventually separated. I saw this so clearly in the case of these two people - the over-irrational woman and the over-logical man and this is, you know, a quite terrible sort of combination. Each person needs to integrate the other extreme. The woman, or anybody who is excessively irrational, needs to become more, well let's say reasonable rather than logical and the excessively logical person needs to relax the logicity, and, you know, incorporate more of the irrational. So if someone is in an irrational state you can't just deal with them in a logical rational way neither can you deal with them by being equally rational irrational yourself. So if you have to some extent at least integrated your own reason and unreason your own rational and irrational elements or aspects.

~bhaya(?): This is quite a tall order, isn't it, in view of what you were saying that very few people have come up against their own irrationality?

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S: Well, I'm not speaking of irrationality in that ultimate, bonic? sense - your blind sort of stubborn self-will, such as Rechungpa has, you know, exhibited. I'm thinking in terms of something that stops a bit short of that.

Abha a(?): I was thinking in terms of that blind, stubborn will sort of holding you back from your irrationality.

S: Yes. But I think you have to be careful nonetheless, that when you get involved in an argument about Buddhism, that you don't sort of just fall back on an entrenched, as it were, Buddhist position simply in a blindly obstinate way. When perhaps you are unable to meet the other person's arguments, and objections. I think that is quite important, that you must be able to remain positive and open, and I think you won't be able to do that unless you've achieved some degree of integration of your own, you know, rational and irrational natures.

Kulamitra: You need a very flexible mind to answer questions, in fact.

S: You need a very nimble mind even just in the purely intellectual sense, a quick mind. But you mustn't be too quick and smart. You must at least appear to think before answering.

(laughter~ And also you mustn't give the impression of, too much at least, of just knowing all the answers. That can be very irritating because it can make everything seem so cut and dried, so slick and neat, so much so that it's totally unconvincing. I mean some Christian propagandists, have got that sort of technique, you know, they c~n give you the answer to everthing, you know, they've got it all off by heart. They can give you the appropriate quotation from the Bible.

Abbhaya: Jehovah's Witnesses.

S: They are very good at that.

Bill Moffat: Door to door saiesmen.

S: Mm. Yes. Oh dcar, time is Iwas goinr to say time is passing. Actually time has passed (laughter). So the first two lines say -

"~y son try to correct your wrong ideas Abandon your bad actions."

So one could say that well there is the wrong ideas, the wrong attitudes and then the wrong actions.

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So you know you can't really abandon the bad actions, no~ to any meaningful extent, unl~ss you have dealt in some way or another with the unskilful attitudes themselves. You ~an't, I think, go directly from ideas to actions, you have to go through attitudes. You can't just logically refute wrong ideas and in that way, you Know, cause somebody to abandon wrong actions. You have to tackle the underlying basic unskilful attitudes and so that means you have to really know the person. (long pause.)

Aobaya(?): But at least if you have this in mind, when you are being questioned, at least you can be a bit more receptive

S:Abit more sensitive, yes indeed.

Abbaya: rather than just listening to the words and ringing up the sort of

S: You have to get the feel of thait person. Try to sort of tune into whatever wavelength they may really happen to be on. They may be speaking in a alm, clear logical way, but actually innerly they may be seething with resentment. So you have to be able to tune into that, and spea~ to the~person bearing that in mind or taking that into consideration. Not jt&St the words that they say. I mean somebody might come along and say, "I've just come, I'm not re~lly very interested, I've just looked in. " But you may know from your feeling, the whole attitude of the person, that's all just a bluff, he's really very afraid of being disappointed, he'd desperatley like to join and to belong. Yeh?

V: When I was living in Aryatara there was a chap who came in one Wednesday evening who really b~re into me, whether for some specific reason I don't know, and said, "Why do I do this?" and "Why do I do that?" and I must admit I was a bit I didn't want a scene created in the middle of this Wednesday class. So first of all I said, "I don't really know, shall we- have a cup of tea together?" And after having a cup of tea together, the attitude was completely different. Just not coming in on that level but just being open to the fact that one can't ( ?) the information but there's always a cup of tea if you want one.

S: Mm. Anyway let's leave it there for today. I'm afraid it's mid-sentence but never mind, it's well

END 0? SIDE B

page 189 Rechungpa's Repentance

Tape 9. Day 5.

Side A

Present: Ven. Sangharakshita, Dharmacharis Jayadeva, Kulamitra, Guhyananda, Aryamitra, Virananda, Abhaya, Devaraja, and Bill Moffatt, Peter Maher, Simon Chinnery, Ken Chandler, Mike Chivers.

S: ... You don't find this, what one might describe as, you know, human-cum-spiritual element so strongly certainly in the Gelugpa School or in, let's say the biography of Tsongkhopa. You don't find it, perhaps, in the "Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava". You find something with a very strong emotional appeal but it's rather different from this. Abhaya: It's more, sort of, volatile. . Is this because the whole school came from Marpa? Is it... Where does the lineage start? S: Naropa. . Is it because their particular personality where they were... S: (interrupting) I think perhaps it's to a great extent connected with the whole nature of the Vajrayana. That, at least from a certain point of view, the Vajrayana was a spiritual movement of, to some extent, protest against monastic formalism, heh? And one-sided doctrinal studies. But we see Milarepa- I forget whether it's in this chapter or the other one - discouraging Rechungpa from going off to India to study...

(part of tape missing at this point?)

S: Well, how far did we get? "My son, try to correct your wrong ideas. abandon your bad actions, discipline your unruly mind, your impious thoughts restrain. Avoid the demon of egotism." I think we didn't do "Discipline your unruly mind" did we? Voices: No. S: I think we all understand what is meant by "The unruly mind". We probably all understand what is meant by disciplining the unruly mind but it might be a good idea just to perhaps try to understand more clearly exactly what discipline really is, and therefore what part discipline does have to play in the process of individual development. Discipline is a word which, I believe, some people don't like, or at least they don't feel quite happy with it. It suggests something imposed upon them from without. Sometimes people speak in terms of "iron discipline", hmm, and that doesn't sound very pleasant does it? So what is discipline? At least discipline rightly understood? \What part does discipline play in the spiritual life? What is the relationship between discipline and spontaneity? Can you have both or do you

have to choose?

Abhaya: I think you have to have both. Before you can be spontaneous you have to apply a certain amount of discipline as in practicing the arts or skills such as for example in dancing. You can't just spontaneously. . well you can dance freely but to learn to dance in the classical way you really have got to practice the discipline, and then you experience, I should think, a certain amount of spontaneity at the end of all that discipline.

page 2 190 S: Well perhaps one should think of discipline in aesthetic, rather than in, so to speak, military terms. (pause) But how does it work? You know, in what does discipline actually consist? Kulamitra: It increases your awareness, doesn't it? S: Well, that is its effect. But I mean, what do you have to do? What does it involve doing? To discipline the unruly mind. Devaraja: It's a question of structure, of ordering energy. S: Mmm, it seems more like that. Mike: Isn't it that certain aspects within oneself respond to the ideal of Enlightenment - or perhaps not even that - respond to the ideal of growth, potentiality of growth. That small aspect within oneself is doing that, and the discipline is the penetration of that small aspect into the greater aspect of oneself. It's that process merging the smaller seed to the greater part that's there. And when it comes across the barriers or the difficulties or the restraints it's more of a ... it's just applying more effort. S: Mmm. What does the word discipline literally mean, by the way? \_\_\_\_\_. It comes from disciple. S: What does disciple come from? Abhaya: Disciple comes from the verb "to learn. S: To learn. Exactly. So discipline is learning. So how does one learn? \_\_\_\_\_. By practice. S: By practice. By repetition even. So, you know, so disciplining the unruly mind means making the mind go through the motions, so to speak, so to speak, do the exercises of a ruled mind or a ruled mind, so that it gets accustomed to behaving rather in that way. If one speaks in terms of energy, or energies, it's a question of sort of cutting a channel, you know, for the energies to flow in so that they may go in the direction that you want them to go. They won't flow in that direction without a channel to flow in. So the discipline consists in digging the channel. (pause) And, you know, that relates to the structure, creating a structure. That's another way of putting the same thing. Mike: That's a very good analogy. (long pause) Abhaya: There seems to have to be a certain amount of, a certain level of, interest in the actual procedure. But if you haven't got a certain level of interest then you just can't even gather the energy together to dig the channel. I think that's the problem with a lot of us. S: Yes. For instance, meditation does discipline the unruly mind, and you create a structure. You create, or you cut a channel for the energy to follow, say by setting up a shrine, by setting up a shrine room. You know, by having a room to which you can go for meditation, by appointing a particular time, by agreeing to meditate with other people et cetera - you know, these are all part of the structure, these are all part of the process of digging the channel. But of course you still have to get yourself, you know, from your warm comfortable bed to the shrine room. (pause) Once you've done that, of course, it's more easy. (pause) And then the following line says "Your impious thoughts restrain". Impious, I assume, means opposed to the dharma. And restraining is checking, controlling. The connotation is much the same as that of the word 'discipline'. It's something more like training - mm? Guhyananda: How would you actually do that? Just... if you recognise an anti-dharma thought emerge, do you just stop thinking that? S: Well it's easier said than done. It depends on the nature of the anti-dharma thought. I mean, one passage in the Pali scriptures

page 3 /, gives four different methods, doesn't it, of dealing with unskilful thoughts. You know, supposing it's a thought of hatred. Well you can deal with it by cultivating the opposite; that is to say, by developing thoughts of metta. Or you can deal with it by reflecting on the consequences of that feeling of hatred, how it might lead you into very unskilful actions, culminating perhaps even in murder. And then you can try to detach yourself from that thought, just looking at it purely as an observer. Telling yourself it doesn't really belong to you, letting it go, not hanging onto it. Not giving it any encouragement, just let it float past. Or you can deal with it by forcibly suppressing it; by just forcibly banishing it from the mind and saying "No, I'm just not going to have anything to do with that thought. I'm just not going to allow that thought to take possession of me". Guhyanaanda: And the attitude behind that - saying I'm not having anything to do with it - is quite positive. Is that a positive aspect of yourself? S: Oh yes, indeed, it must be surely. It's the aspect, so to speak, which doesn't wish to entertain any unskilful thought. (pause) So one can restrain one's impious, one's anti-dharma, thoughts in any of these ways, which ever may seem to be most appropriate. And then, "Avoid the demon of egotism". Why do you think egotism is called a demon? Devaraja: Because it's like something which does latch on. You can have an experience... it grabs hold of you. S: It takes possession of you. Guhyanaanda: It's like a separate entity. S: Yes. (pause) "When I come to die this shall I will for you;" That's all the things mentioned, presumably, in this song. "No profounder teaching can I give you in my life. Rechungpa my son bear my words in mind." In some ways of course, Milarepa's teaching has been quite simple. Nonetheless it is very profound, so much so, he says, "no profounder teaching can I give you in my life". (long pause) Do you think he is making any particular suggestion to Rechungpa by telling him to avoid the demon of egotism?

\_\_\_\_\_ Nell, just by pointing out that he is possessed. S: Mmm. He's, as it were, suggesting that this is his attitude. His stubborn, self-willed, attitude is one of egotism. What then is egotism? I mean, it is a word that is commonly used in spiritual parlance - perhaps sometimes too freely used. Jayadeva: The demon's stubborn. Well, egotism, the opposite, well egotism then is surely an unwillingness to change one's stance, one's position, one's views. S: Yes, it's an attitude rather than an entity. It's not so much that there is such a thing as an ego, though we use that sort of language. It's a certain rigidity of one's attitude, one's unwillingness to change, one's reluctance to grow. Simon: Would you say it's a sort of orientation too? S: Yes, because there is such a thing as egotism, but there is no such thing as an ego. (pause) Also egotism is clearly a matter of degree. But when it becomes completely rigid, well then it's like a demon, well you are like a demon. Mike: I find it difficult to... well I certainly find it difficult to actually talk about the ego without getting a bit alienated. Also without, sort of, having it as, you know, as you say having it as an entity almost. You hear of people rather, sort of, bandying the word around like it is something out there and, you know, you're sort of

page 4 /f~ watching it in a rather, sort of, distracted way. S: Yes, people say, 'Well I've heard a lot of talk about ego in the past'. People say things like "Oh well, I mustn't let my ego get in the way", or "I suppose that's just my ego", or "I suppose my ego just caught me napping", as though it's a sort of, you know, mischievous entity, that is around all the time. Well that is, you know, a subtle mistake because it suggests that the ego is not you. It's you. You adopting a particular attitude. It's you being rather rigid. It's you being rather unreceptive. It's you being rather stubborn. This is you being egotistic. But I think, nonetheless, though one can of course be egotistic, one should be very careful how one uses the language of 'ego'. Kulamitra: This is why giving is so important. You know, I mean dana... S: Yes, well,

generosity counteracts egotism, but it's not as though It gets rid of you ego. One can perhaps use that language sometimes, but I think one must use it with extreme caution otherwise, you almost, you know, refuse to accept responsibility for your own egotism by postulating a separate ego entity which is not you. "It isn't me, it's my ego". (pause) So, you know, egotism is the whole tendency to rigidity and exclusiveness of attitude. (long pause) Mike: It's sort of just another way of avoiding, sort of, well, this responsibility for yourself. S: Yes. Well if you say "'It's my ego' well there's a degree of alienation there. Instead of saying 'Well it's me.'" Mike: And often people who, you know, who sort of have quite a sort of, you know, a clear, well quite a, sort of, clever mind; often they're you know, quite developed intellectually, they seem to use, you know, that sort of parlance quite a lot. And there seems to be a real lack of feeling there. That's not really what they're talking about at all. S: And, of course, again sometimes, you know, if one is being positive, or even, perhaps just strong, people will sort of suggest that that's just your ego, mm? Or even if you have a definite conviction that that is just your ego, or that you are not, you know, agreeing with them or refusing to agree with them then that's just your ego. Again one must be very careful how one uses this sort of language. You know, especially when you... when you describe somebody else's attitude in terms of it being their ego, hmm? (long pause) I mean the ego is a metaphor really. I mean the psychological or spiritual reality is that one can behave egoistically. I mean the ego is rather like the "'it'", you know? as when you speak of 'it's raining'". It's just a grammatical convenience - a grammatical usage. So that the ego makes you behave in a certain way, you know, much as the "'it'" rains. Bill: You can behave egoistically but you can't devolve the responsibility of your behaviour to your ego. S: No, no. (long pause) Alright, someone like to read that longish prose paragraph now? wLbhaa: tAs Milarepa a san he flew hi her and hi her into the sky

remorse. and an unusual faith toward the Jetsun burst forth within him. He thought "'Because I could not control my temper and give away these worthless books. I have lost my Jetsun Guru. I have paid too great a price for these worthless books. The Jetsun has performed such great miracles for me. yet I still had no faith in him. Now he has forsaken me as though shedding a heavy burden, and has gone to the Dakini's Pure land. An unbeliever such as I can never be

page 5 / 3 born there. What is the use of books without a Guru? I shall throw myself over this cliff and meet my death. I now make my last wish: In all my future incarnations may I always meet the Jetsun, and may my mind ever be at one with his'." Having made this wish, Rechungpa plunged into the abyss below with every determination (to die). He crashed on a great rock, from where he saw the shadow of the Jetsun. Crying with all his strength he called to Milarepa in a most pitiful voice, and tried to fly after him, but could not do so. Nevertheless, he managed to walk (in the air) after Milarepa's shadow until he reached the waist of Red Rock cliff. He could not go a step further, but could see the Jetsun and hear his voice.1" S: Mm, so what happens in this paragraph? I mean there's a dramatic change in Rechungpa's attitude. You know, when it comes to the point of actually losing Milarepa, or thinking that he has lost him. So he at once, and this is perhaps quite significant, and characteristic, at once goes from one extreme to the other. This is, you know, illustrated by the fact that he speaks of "these worthless books". He doesn't say "Well I overestimated the value of the books", that they've only got a relative value. They become worthless. He goes to the other extreme. He's over-valued them, now he's undervaluing them. Surely they have some value - they're not completely worthless. And of course he becomes suicidal. (pause)



This seems to be, in a way, a rather egoistic attitude. But anyway there has been a change. (pause) 'iihy do you think - this is in brackets, but the addition seems justified - why do you think it's "of a sudden"" that Rechungpa is filled with remorse? And that ""an unusual faith toward the Jetsun burst forth within him." Why is there this, sort of, sudden change? What does that suggest? \_\_\_\_\_ It was bottled up. S: Bottled up. It was bottled up. Yes. Also that he isn't a very stable sort of character. He's capable of these violent, you know, turns about. (pause) Simon: °~hat's the word, you know, when you're two people. Tou get extreme cases of it. \_\_\_\_\_ Schizophrenic. Simon: Yes, schizophrenic. S: Do you think he's being schizophrenic? ~imon: Well, to a certain degree naybe. Devarala: That surely isn't the case because the schizophrenic would not be aware of the previous state they were in. It's sort of a complete split. Kulamitra: Well to a certain extent he isn't otherwise he wouldn't say worthless books would he? Devaraja: A schizophrenic would be just... I doubt they would be able to relate the present behaviour to the past behaviour in any way whatsoever. There would be no continuity. Kulamitra: I was just talking about... S:(Interrupting) He's merely schizoid, without being actually schizo- phrenic, one could say. (pause) ~tike: ?~eems like there's a real sense of need here. Quite a basic, sort of, primal need even, and which, sort of, has been totally missing from his apProach to Milarepa before now. A sort of very rational, cold, well, rigid approach. This is quite impassioned really. S: Yes, indeed. (pause) Jayadeva: It would seem to suggest, somehow, that there's a natural sort of emotional dependence on the Guru. It's not really a disciple-

page 6/?~ guru... (inaudible)...because he actually...there seems to be that he wants to... in the other passage he is actually taunting the guru to a certain extent so he can aotnally put his emotions on someone else. Once that person's gone then he reverts to..."Oh, come back againi\ S: That attitude of dependence, yes, but this is why it is a very child-like, or childish, or even infantile attitude as we did notice the other day. Rechungpa seems to behave like a spoilt child. You throw all sorts of tantrums whilst the parents are around, and you really play up, and are a little devil, eh? but as soon as they go away in disgust and leave you to your own devices then you're begging and pleading, you know, with them to come back. Promising to be a good boy. Bill: Doesn't it in a way seem to - this turn about - seem to be even more than just a change over, because it does say "an unusual faith toward the Jetsun burst forth." This would seem to suggest that it's more than he's ever had before, even before he went to India or any- thing. S: Yes, hmm. ~a: I suppose this is because he really thiinks that he's actually, well, disappeared forever. S: Yes, but that thought by itself would not cause that sort of faith, but just a sense of loss and deprivation. But faith is actually mentioned. Mike: It does seem like Milarepa has actually created a sort of real Bardo experience for Rechungpa. I mean it's like he's really got to do something now. S: It's almost as though, also, Reohungpa's attitude is a strange mixture of the psychological and the spiritual. On the one hand he is very much the spoilt child, but on the other hand he is very much the spiritual aspirant. The two are really mixed up t0~~ther One can hardly see where one ends and the other begins. It's a strange mixture, you know, of maturity and immaturity. I think you find that in a lot of people (pause). So even in his attitude to ~iilarepa there's a mixture of reason- able dependence and unreasonable dependence, as well as, of course, the unreasonable independence. There doesn't seem to iie any reason- able independence. Have I mentioned this classification in this study group? Voices: No, no. S: Oh well, you've had it now then. (long pause) Kulamitra: The whole thing of his wanting to commit suicide as well seems, well apart from being very unskilful, quite odd in that, you know, you would have thought like if he's got a lot of faith in the Guru, then why doesn't he want to practice his

teaching now that he's gone? S: Well, he's giving way to despair. I mean he thinks that every- thing depends on his being with his guru, and now the guru has gone away. So there's a strange mixture of infantile dependence and faith in the guru. It's not as though it's entirely the one or the other. There is some genuine faith. There has been an unusual up- surge of that genuine faith. At the same time he's by no means free from thoroughly infantile attitudes. But as I said, isn't that the case. We do find that, you know, very often with people, this strange mixture of the skilful and the unskilful, the mature and the immature, the adult and the thoroughly childish. Jayadeva: Seems to be brought out by - because of - well obviously

page 7 i?~ Milarepa is very positive and Reohungpa isn't. Therefore, obviously there is a certain amount of resentment because of Milarepa's positivity, so to a certain extent it's his own self-hate. That's why he wants to kill himself. At the same time he tries to bring Milarepa down because he can't stand the fact that someone is more positive than himself. S: Well we mustn't forget that apparently Rechungpa has been with Milarepa since he was very young. So maybe as well as being his guru, Milarepa has been his sort of in loco parentis, in the place of father, you know, to Rechungpa. Mike: I was thinking about what you were saying. It was like - I mean - he obviously doesn't think about what he's going to ~o. Perhaps if he thought: Well OK, Milarepa has now gone, you know, let's face the fact, you know. It's hard but, right, I'll get over it, you know? I'll go away and practice, but it's almost like this is a sort of really a spontaneous burst of emotion. And it's spontaneous it seems because he sat on these emotions for just too long. And when they do come out they just come out in a kind of whoosh! S: And at the same time, they are a mixture of the skilful and the unskilful. What comes out whoosh is the, you know, the infantile dependence, as well as the genuine faith. Kulamitra: But as you said it doesn't seem to be... it just seems to be like one whole, almost. Like you can't - you know, in the sense that his action depends on both those things - you can't say he is being pulled by one and not the other. His action is like a syn- thesis of both those emotions. S: Yes, right, yes. (long pause) Mike: This reference you made - that (you) have found the exper- ience with some people that on one side of the aspect they are quite skilful and on the other they are quite unskilful. Is that due to... have you ever seen a reason why that has been there in a personality. Has it been due to childhood problems or... ? Si I tell what does one mean actually by the combination or mixture of the skilful and unskilful? let's say the mature and the immature, the infantile and the adult0 What actually happens in such cases? Mike: Is it like, sort of, parts of you from an early age start to grow up? You know, ~ou develop in certain ways but in other ways you don't. You become, you know, you just don't develop those parts. S: Well sometimes it represents a s~lit. I don't think always, but sometimes it's... Perhaps the simplest kind of example represents the split between the emotions and the intellect, let's say. That, you know, emotionally you may not have grown up at all. You may be thoroughly infantile, but you have ~quired a certain amount of know- ledge. You might even have been educated, you know, you might have passed examinations. You may know your way around the world. You may, you know, have a certain amount of practical know-how. In that sense you are mature, in that sense you are grown-up. But that co- exists with a really immature, even infantile emotional attitude. In that way you could be a mixture. Both of these can come out and be quite well, even thoroughly mixed up together in any given situation. Kulamitra(?): You said it's quite common. You said it's the natural. It seems to be quite natural that people liberate themselves from the group by their intellect... S: Yes.

page 8 ~6 Kulamitra(?): ...but only their emotions take quite a time to catch up. S: So, if one looks at it in that way, well it's, you know, only natural that one should be a mixture in this sort of way - just for that very reason. Though, you know, I mean, I gave as I said the simplest kind of example, you know? It very often isn't as simple just as that. It isn't just a question of, you know, emotional immaturity and intellectual and practical maturity. Sometimes one is, in some respects, emotionally mature. In other respects emotionally immature. A voice: That seems to be more the case here, doesn't it? S: Yes, it does, yes. Emotional maturity represented by the genuine faith in Milarepa that is there, and, you know, the emotional immaturity represented by the attitude of infantile dependence on that same Milarepa. (long pause) I mean this is also, you know, why, as I was emphasising the other day, one of the reasons why it is so difficult to know people. So difficult to understand others, you know, as well as oneself. Because people are usually this sort of extraordinary mixture. And you can either fasten on this element or that element. On the more skilful or the more unskilful aspect, and, you know, give a completely different reading of that person's character accordingly. (long pause) You know, Rechungpa in many ways seems a good example of the mixed up sort of person. The person who's, you know, a mixture of the very good and the, so to speak, very bad; the skilful and the unskilful; the positive and the negative. I mean, he's one of Milarepa's two greatest disciples, at least that is what he becomes in the end. But in the meantime he's one of his worst. (laughter) (Long pause) He wants to go off India without permission, gives up meditation, becomes interested in science and logic, thinks in terms of, you know, victory in disputes, wants to have recourse to black magic, gets mixed up with women, in these various chapters that we have been studying. (long pause) Simon(?): When these, sort of, emotions come out - these mixed emotions come out together - his actions actually seem quite mad. S: Yes, yes. Simon(?): I mean, if you didn't know the background, it would be impossible to know he was doing them - why he's throwing himself off that cliff. S: I mean, for instance, I mentioned. I think I mentioned in 'The Thousand Petalled Lotus' a devotee of Anandamayi. He was a devotee, but on one occasion he became so enraged with her that he knocked her down a flight of steps. (laughter) So isn't this a combination of, you know, the skilful and the unskilful? The devotion and the, well, antithesis of devotion. Kulamitra: Could you say there is always a possibility in a close relationship, you know, that there will be strong feelings there, but that it becomes, at least in part, a Relationship, you know, with a capital R, in the sense that we sometimes use that word. S: That? You mean supposing that Mila... that Rechungpa has a mixed up sort of attitude, in relation to or with another person, who has the same sort of mixed up attitude towards him. Well, what would happen? What would be the result? I mean he's only saved by the fact that the object of his mixed up attitude is Milarepa, who is completely free from that sort of thing, who is completely integrated, completely clear, completely pure, completely positive and who can fly happily away if he wants to, (laughter)

page 9 ~leaving Rechungpa to stew in his own juice. And fly skilfully, knowing that that is the best thing, also, to do. But as you say, in intense relationships, I mean, there is a tremendous mixture of the skilful and the unskilful. Jayadeva: You brought that up in your article on Lawrence, didn't you? S: Did I? In what... Jayadeva: You were talking about how on one side he was quite emotionally mature, but he had this sort of emotional dependence on women. S: Yes, mmm, so it's as though, well, an intense relationship is OK, even a mixture of emotional states and emotional attitudes is OK, provided they are directed towards somebody who is relatively free from that sort of thing and is able to handle it all, yes. Otherwise you can get into such a terrible mess. And usually, if you get into that sort of situation,

that sort of relationship with a person who is as mixed up as you are, the positive element which might have originally been there will gradually diminish, and the negative element will take over more and more. I mean, this is the history of so many relationships, unfortunately. Aryamitra: Maybe one of the points is that he was alone with Milarepa. I mean, although it might not have been as helpful... I mean if he had... I mean if he was with the Sangha, or a small group of people, a lot of that would be dissipated. S: It does seem as if there were quite a few people around, because in one of the chapters we've studied we found that actually when he came to go off to India he went off with fifteen monks who were Milarepa's disciples. He didn't, in fact, go on his own. So he does occupy rather the centre of the picture, but it does seem that there are other disciples around. (pause) And (in) what we were studying this morning here, he extricates himself, or is extricated by Milarepa from his relationship with a certain lady. And when he, sort of, comes to where Milarepa is, well, Milarepa is with a number of other Repas, and other... a number of other cotton-clad yogis. And Milarepa initiates them all, including Rechungpa. Kulamitra: ~That you were saying; in that kind of mixed situation, what were the positive elements to begin with gradually diminished. \~(hy is that? S: Rmm, well why is that? Because most of you have had some experi- ence of it at some time or other. So, you know, why does it happen? Why does it all get gradually more and more nagative, very often? why does it all, you know, go very very sour? Abhaya: Well, because of possessiveness and jealousy creeping in. S: Wim, yes. But why do they become stronger and stronger? Why is it that the positive elements in the relationship, which surely were there to begin with, don't become stronger and stronger instead? Simon: Well because they are not being developed. S: Ah, yes. Is it because the pull of the conditioned is natural... 7-S: interrupting) Yes. Because usually it's the negative things that one gives into or gives way to and, you know, they become eventually developed to such an extent that whatever positive elements might have been in the reiatio~ship are just crowded out. There's no room for them. So it's as though, if one does enter into a relationship with another person, and, you know, when that relationship, you know, involves very mixed attitudes on both

page 10 /~S sides, skilful as well as unskilful, one has to make a very special effort to cultivate the skilful elements and not the unskilful ones. In fact, the unskilful don't require any cultivation, they just grow naturally. (pause) I think probably, without any outside help it's practically impossible to ensure that those... those positive elements, you know, develop, rather than the negative ones. (long pause) Kulamitra: Doesn't it, in a' sense., come down to the fact that you are relating as opposed to cumniunicating? That you're just relating. I mean there is just no chance of someone else's positive emotions actually rubbing off on you, or yours rubbing off'~~n them. S: Mmm. Well one could put it even more strongly than that: you're not even relating. More often than not you're just exploit- ing, you know, trying to take what you want. Or with regard to...

(end of side one)

TAPE 9      DAY 5

Side B

S: There is one quite interesting little detail here. (Is that light alright?) Jaadeva: I've got it in now! (laughter) S: Alright?) "Crying with all his strength he called to ~~larepa in a most uitiful voice and tried to flv after himr but could not do so. Neverthelesss he managed to walk (in the air) after Milarepa's shadow until he reached the waist of Red Rock cliff." He's able to walk in the air to some extent. Now what does that suggest? That does it tell you? Aryamitra: He's a bit accomplished in meditation probably. S: Well yes, of course, he's developed some degree of super-normal powers, but then what does that fact tell you? Mike: That means that he's... that suggests to me like his devotion is strong enough to Milarepa. His, sort of, positive aspect in his spiritual development is strong enough. Devaraja: That's his faith, isn't it? Mike: Yes, right. S: Is it his faith? You don't, in Buddhist (word unclear)... you don't walk in the air due to faith. You walk in the air because you have developed a certain super-normal power through the practice of concentration, in a sense of samaTha, but has that got any true spiritual significance? Voices: No, no. S: None at all. It's just a power that you have developed. It's a purely mundane thing. So that fact that you are able to develop and excercise these super-normal powers has got nothing to do with true spiritual development in the full sense. Nor with spiritual, even emotional, maturity. Devadatta also had these powers, yes. But nonetheless he could attempt to assassinate the Buddha, mm? Aryamitra: And yet are these powers not without quite high dhyanio states? S: Well, what is a dhyanic state? It is a state of concentration. Wnd you may be, yes, in a very positive state so long as you are in that dhyanic condition, but when you come out, if there is no vipassana, well, you can sink right back... fall right back. ~o he did possess, apparently, a faculty of concentration; and yes, he had developed super-normal powers, but it seems that he had not developed any real insight. I mean that is the really transforming factor. Devaraja: Could it be that he could actually get that...that capacity could arise out o~ a sort of..\* neurotic kind of concentration. S: I don't know about neurotic, but i~ could be, so to speak, unskil- ?ul because black magic is one of the things he learned. If it's possible at all, well, it's with the help of a sort of negative con- centration. The mind is concentrated by unskilful mental states. By intense hatred, intense fear, that concentrates the mind. It's a sort of negative samadhi almost. It's quite a horrible thing even to think about. (long pause) But that I think is significant - that though he was so mixed up, though his attitude was so unskilful as well as skilful in certain respects. Nonetheless he had devel- oped super-normal powers to some extent\* You could imi:gine someone

page 12~ like that, you know, let loose, could do quite a lot of harm. And here he is, he's developed super-normal powers. Maybe he's got a fairly good intellectual understanding of the scriptures, and no doubt he's associated with Milarepa, he's picked up quite a few things but he's still a very mixed up sort of person. Nonetheless you can imagine that sort of person attracting quite a following, becoming a sort of guru figure, and having many disciples and followers. One knows that such people do exist. Simon: And then you get the thing, don't you, that some of the disciples (...) on the basis of those skilful qualities and achievements, but they would be really puzzled by other aspects of his character, when those cropped up. S:

Well, if it was within the Vajrayana or Tibetan tradition, or even the Indian tradition, the Hindu tradition, they wouldn't be puzzled at all. They'd say "'Ah, he's just testing us'". One hears this quite often - "lie's just testing us". Mike: It's like even if that person shows

total conflict in even ideas, like people will say, you know, that's just to prove, you know, that's just to show how wise he is, in a sense. S: There is always an explanation. Mike: ~es, an excuse. Devarala: But is this something genuine explanation for... you know. ~ S: But of course, gurus do test disciples - I mean there is that too. But one has to be rather careful in invoking that sort of explanation in these sorts of circumstances. {the guru might pretend to be angry when he isn't really angry. You can't rule out that possibility. But if somebody becomes angry you have to be rather suspicious, perhaps, if the explanation is offered too readily. That well, he wasn't really angry, he was just trying to test you. He might have felt - Oh no, he was really angry, you know, he really did lose his temper. It wasn't just a skilful display of simulated anger. Sometimes, you know ? Simon: But it's not something that you often take as a possibility, is it? That people could be so mixed t~at they could have, you know; qualities and achievements which are way beyond you but also, in other areas, be on the same level as... S: I think that one does find this. One finds that, you know, in the sphere of the arts, you know, with men of genuine genius. That who are insome respects inferior to the ordinary, happy, healthy human being. I mean Lawrence was a strange mixture of this sort. So, you know, you can recognise that and accept that, you know, more readily in the case of the artistic person. It's more difficult to..\* or rather should not... or be more careful that you do not in the case of the spiritual person. I mean, in other words, a person like that cannot be a guru, in the sense of cannot be someone in whose hands you put yourself unreservedly and uncondition- ally. You can ask hi8 advice and think it over, and weigh it up. And if you think it's reasonable then follow it. If you think it's not reasonable then don't follow it. But you cannot implicitly follow such a person. Kulamitra: You mention something about this on that tape on Stream Entry, don't you? About the stories of Indian rishis who meditate in caves and once they come out they get (inaudible). S: Well that's because they've had just a samatha experience and no experience of vipassana (pause) But we do find that people

page 13 ~14 of this mixed up character, you know, going around as a guru. And even believed to be Enlightened or proclaimed as Enlightened, or perhaps theaselves even proclaiming to be Enlightened. But it's pretty obvious they're not. But they may be people with very power- ful qualities, or they may be people with great charisma, but they do succeed in attracting quite a following. Jayadsva: floes n't it seem to be like a natural process of... not in a case of those kind, but who are trying to grow and develop, you obviously get your emotions going. It's more like a wheel - it sort of like brings up the heights of yourself but also drags up the depths, and so it tends to go in like, cycles, until you can trans- form the depths. S: Mmm, yes. (long pause)... Right, any other point arising out of this prose paragraph? Mike: Yes, just one thing. I mean I know that he's in a... I mean Rechungpa is in a pretty irrational state of mind, but is there much point in making a wish to... and to whom? 5~: Making a wish? Mike: A wish. S: Which wish are you referring to? His last wish? Mike: Yes, ~I now make ~y last wish""\* St Mmm, Well, you know, it's a bit contradictory. He's mixed up, he's confused\* ~hat does he say? ""Now he has forsaken me as though shedding a heav~ burden4 and has gone to the dakini's Pure Land. An unbeliever such as I can never be born there."" Yes, so you know, we are never going to meet again. 'fhen he says, "I now make uLY last wish: in all my future incarnations may I always meet the :ietsun." Mmm? mmm? The two statements seem to be contradictory don't they? On the one hand I can't meet the jetsun because he's gone to such and such Pure Land and I'll never be born there; and then he makes the wish ""Well may I always be born wherever he is"". So he doesn't really know where he is or what he's doing or what he's saying. Though even this wish

of his thought, apparently, or perhaps even might be to some extent genuine, is not completely pure. He's still very much an expression of his mixed up state. It's not purely an expression of faith. And the mere fact that it's a last wish, you know, that he's going to die, or to commit suicide after making that last wish, you know, that causes it to be rather suspect anyway. If someone says, "Alright, I'm going to commit suicide now and this is my last wish and they leave a sort of letter behind them, well, can you take that as an expression of a really balanced and positive mental state? (laughter) (long pause)... ¼~imon: Do you think, maybe, the attempted suicide is because he actually... h~ can't resolve his experience at that point so he just wants to end his experience? S: Well, one gets the impression as though... well again it's mixed\* Rather than being the child has lost its father and is completely inconsolable and thinks he can't live without him. The disciple has lost his guru, and thinks he can't make any spiritual progress with- out him so he might as well die. The two things are completely mixed up. It's partly skilful and partly unskilful. At the moment, per- haps, it seems predominantly unskilful, though there is nonetheless somewhere, at some level, something very positive which saves him in the end. something to which Milarepa can appear, something genuine, some genuine faith hidden under all that stubbornness and self-will. (long pause)... Well, I'd like to read the\*\*\* that little prose

page 15~~ bit that follows and that following song. Simon(?): ""He saw Milarepa sitting in a cavity hollowed out from the side of the cliff with his other two transformed bodies sitting

repentance: ""Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment. Look, from one Father Jetsun emanate two others! To them you should confess your sins\* Of them you should ask of their well-being. From them you should receive the Tantric precepts, And ask for Initiations and Instructions. Of them ou should be the rofound Demonstration In them you should take refuge. Add place your confidence.

"If you have faith in my miracles, Your pride will be curtailed. Ill deeds indicate the victory of Yama: If of him you are afraid You should abstain from vices. ~ho hts hinder one's devotion So of them repent.""

S: So, ""He saw Milarepa sitting in a cavity hollowed out from the side of the cliff with his other two transformed bodies sitting beside him."~ These are two bodies that Milarepa created before, remember? The ones to which Rechungpa, you know, didn't pay any attention. ~o you remember? 'all singing together in response to Rechungpa's call of repentance."" So they all three of them say: ""Rechungpa, listen to me for a moment. Look\* from one Father Jetsun emanate two others! To them you should confess your sins, Of them you should ask their well-being. You notice that confession of sins comes first. ~hy do think that is? Aryamitra: So that he could become receptive. S: Yes, so that he can become receptive. That's the first obvious thing that he has to do. lie has to recognise and acknowledge his mistake. He just has to confess. 'Of them you should ask of their ~£~~~~bein.'" V"hat do you think that signifies? A voice: Communicate. S: Yes, it does suggest the beginning of comr~~.unication. It goes back apparently to the social customs of the Buddha's own day, because in the Pali scriptures we read that when someone visits the Buddha or when the Buddha visits someone, as when, for instance, in the Vimala- kirti Nirdesha Sutta, ~~anjugosha or Manjushri visits Vimalakirti. He enquires after his health. That is the polite sort of thing to do, and it's the polite sort of thing to do because it initiates

communication. To them you should confess your sins, or them you should ask of their well-being~, From them you should receive the Tantric precepts And ask for Initiations and Instructions. Of them you should be the profound demonstration Demonstration means a sort of pointing out. This is a pointing out of the Truth, so to speak. An indication of the Truth without actual recourse to words. This is a sort of wordless communication. In them you should take refuge And place your confidence."

page 16~3 So Milarepa, apparently, sees that Rechungpa has, at least to some extent been purified by his experience. He's been traumatised by the disappearance, apparently, of Milarepa, and he's now in a more receptive frame of mind. So he tells him what he has to do: he has to confess his sins, his weaknesses, his shortcomings, and he has to establish some kind of positive communication with Milarepa. He's got to be receptive to him, ask him for instruction of various kind~, and go for refuge to him and have faith in him. Abhaya: 1) Do you think this was deliberate on Milarepa's part, or is it just Rechungpa's interpretation? S: What was the reference? Abhaya: "Flying higher and higher into the sky". But, I mean, could it just be that Milarepa was\*\*\* it was the beginning of another, sort of, demonstration to win him over but then Rechungpa interpreted it wrong. S: It could be but one doesn't know. It isn't explicitly stated. But, you know, the result is the same. Rechungpa thinks that he's going to lose Milarepa and that, so to speak, brings him to his senses. (long pause)... "If you have faith in my miracles, Your pride will be curtailed" I mean, what are these miracles then? Well, emanating the two other bodies. But do you think this is true? That "if you have faith in my miracles your pride will be curtailed." I mean, what is the difference between Milarepa's miracles and these supernormal powers? The exercise of supernormal powers that I referred to. Abhaya: Presumably the miracles point to the Transcendental. S: Yes\* Yes, the miracles have a spiritual significance whereas the supernormal powers of themselves don't have, they're simply extensions of mundane capacities. ~3 But Milarepa's ""miracles"", inverted commas, are more than that. They do have a spiritual significance, they communicate a ~50a~~~~ so to speak. (pause) But how is it that if Rechungpa ~as faith in Milarepa's miracles his pride will be curtailed? Kulamitra: he will have to recognise something greater than himself. S: Yes, yes. And if he truly recognises that, well then he will have to be receptive. Or rather he will be receptive. Simon: Is that why, in the first bit of the verse, Milarepa says confess et cetera to the emanations rather than himself? As if directing him away from himself as a human being to himself as something definitely higher. S: Yes, something archetypal, as it were. Perhaps it is difficult for Rechungpa to see that something higher in Milarepa because he's just a little old man in a cotton cloth. So the archetypal forms that Milarepa has emanated would show him in his true nature. You know these are much more, well perhaps, inspiring and fascinating and impressive, so therefore perhaps, Milarepa says, "To them you should confess your sins, of them you should ask of their well-being", et cetera. (long pause)... Right, "Ill deeds indicate the victory of Yama; If of him you are afraid You should abstain from vices".

Well, ""~Ill deeds indicate the victory of Yama." This is no doubt a sort of, almost allegorical way of speaking. There is again, so to speak, no actual Yama as a person who, you know, is victorious when one performs evil deeds, or ill deeds. It's just, you know, a way

page 17~~ of saying if you perform ill deeds you're overcome by the king of death. You'll go again round and round in the samsara. Abhaya: Is this quite common in Tantric Buddhism?



The disciples seeing the guru's sambhogakaya? Does this go on up till recently from your experiences in India? ... S: (interrupting) This does.. \* this does tie up very much with what The Vajrayana tradition says about seeing the guru as the Buddha. This doesn't mean upon the figure of the guru you should artificially, you know, superimpose a figure of the Buddha and, you know, try to identify the guru with the Buddha in an artificial or sort of force-ful, or willed, you know, kind of way. One has genuinely got to be able to see in say the... I was going to say, individual personality of the guru what is really of universal significance. You know, not to be misled by accidents. That is to say, not be misled, in this case, by the fact that Milarepa is an old man, very insignificant in appearance, just wearing a plain cotton cloth, nothing special, nothing impressive. That's not the real Milarepa. I mean, one could apply the same things to men, let's say, of literary genius. You may have read the works of a certain poet or novelist, be greatly inspired, so you expect when you meet the man he will have the same impact on you as, you know, all that poetry. After all, he's written it, it's him, it comes from his experience. But, you know, when you actually meet him what do you see? A fat little man who is going bald. Well is this the man who has written, you know, these poems? You know, people who had met Wordsworth in the flesh were deeply disappointed. An elderly civil servant, rather stiff and stand-offish. So, is this Wordsworth? So, you know, yes, it's the same Wordsworth who has written those poems. So you have to be able really to see and to feel that the poet, you know, as it were, behind that unpromising exterior that he might have adopted, you know, for one reason or another, maybe just in sheer self-protection. So it's just the same with regards, or even more so, in the case of the guru. One mustn't be, you know, misled by purely, so to speak, accidental features, but try to see the well, even universal significance of what he says or what he does and so on. So Milarepa demonstrates that in a very vivid way by creating these two emanations\* This is what I'm really like, I'm not really this funny little old man. So it doesn't necessarily mean that actually the disciple sees that as a sort of splendid phantasmagoria. Maybe a guru like Milarepa can create that sort of thing and, you know, demonstrate it quite literally, but even that is, very often, is not enough, or not the real thing even, because after all, Rechungpa did remain cold to that at first. So it is a question of genuinely seeing, as it were, in the person of the guru, what it is he really signifies, and what it is that he really represents, and not attaching too much importance to purely accidental, you know, factors and circumstances. Jayadeva: Isn't there also a correlation between - er - it says here he should ask these emanations for Initiations and Instructions. I remember you saying something about when the cap is handed over in Tibetan certain initiations, the guru's actually in deep meditation so it's almost like you are receiving initiation from the sambhogakaya. S: Yes, so... I mean, applied to Milarepa it means... it is not that, ignore the actual person of Milarepa, and turn to one of these emanations, that is not the meaning, but in Milarepa himself "see"

page 18~~ the emanation, as it were. In other words~ when you cannot receive initiation from Milarepa unless you experience him,,or you can receive initiation from him only to the extent that you experience him as he really is. In other words, you can only receive initiation from him if you have some genuine contact and communication with him\* Not if it remains on the purely external, superficial level where, you know, you are just chatting with this little old man sitting naked at the mouth of the cave. You've got to have a deeper contact and really experience him as he is. Not just see the physical body but have some experience of the mind within. One mustn't take this display of these emanations too literally. They are not separate they are Milarepa. Mike: The whole idea of "seeing" is metaphorical isn't it? I mean what you see, when you experience someone what you see is not something that can literally be

seen, is it? It's just... S: Well, something to be experienced, if to take the example that I mentioned, that of the poet: Well you may be deeply familiar with the poet's work, and when you meet him your first impression may be, you know, one of surprise. Well how could that person possibly have written these poems. You don't see the poet in that man, but you could perhaps get to know him better. And then you might even know exactly how he has come to write those poems, and why. And that might give you a better appreciation of those poems. And you may really feel, well yes, you know him better too. You know the man as a poet now. (long pause) Probably Wordsworth is quite a good example, because he was really quite off-putting, I mean as he became older. Abhaya: He sounded a bit pompous too. S: Yes, yes. Abhaya: Socially very stiff and stand-offish. S: Yes. And Goethe. I mean Goethe could be very freezing. But this was quite deliberate on his part, to keep people at a distance so they did not trespass on his privacy. He could be very formidable indeed. (pause)... And Eliot, likewise, according to a recent biography, you know, a review of which I was reading the other day. He could be quite fierce and frightening just to keep people at a distance so they didn't trespass upon his... Abhaya: It's almost as if people like this have to create a certain persona to defend themselves from intrusion. A voice: And exploitation. S: Even exploitation. I mean others though, like Shelley, didn't. Shelley seems not to have done this sort of thing. Byron seems to have done it to an extent. (pause)... Coleridge wasn't able to do it. A voice: What do you mean, Coleridge wasn't able to do it? S: Well, he had certain sorts of weaknesses of character so he just wasn't able to create a self-protecting persona. He was left very vulnerable, very exposed, and had to be looked after by other people in the end. I mean, Blake didn't create a persona, it seems. He seems to have managed quite well without one. That's why he was described towards the end of his life as a man without a mask. That's the title of a recent biography of Blake: "A Man Without a Mask". (pause)... I think Lawrence didn't have a persona, and he suffered very much, perhaps partly, at least, on account of his not having one. Abhaya: But then you get, like, the Tibetans, who have suffered from having this, like, spiritual persona which they've got trapped in, haven't they? S: Mmm, yes, yes.

page 19~6 Abhaya: Because people relate to them through that persona all the time. S: Well, in a way. The persona is safe if it represents you as less than you are, hmm? Your disguise should be a humble disguise. I mean otherwise, I mean, why need you... If you are just an ordinary man what's the point of disguising yourself. Just as, if you're an extraordinary man, you disguise yourself as an ordinary man to escape notice, you know, under circumstances where you don't want to attract notice. But if you are an ordinary man but disguise yourself as an extraordinary man it can only be to attract attention. (laughter) (long pause)... Anyway that's a useful point at which to stop for tea, I think. I mean, these few lines seem quite straightforward: "You should abstain from vices. Bad thoughts hinder one's devotion. So of them repent." Alright, let's just read Rechungpa's own song; that line of prose and then his song. Someone like to read please? Mike: As the tears poured down his face, Rechungpa sang: "Listen to me Father Guru, Embodiment of wisdom and of blessings. Listen to Rechungpa, your blind and impious son, and do not fail in your miracles. Listen, Jetsun Guru in the centre, To you I make obeisance and offerings. Of you I ask of your well-being and confess my sins. Oh. My Father Guru, it was you who gave me the Precepts. Initiations and Instructions. It was you who enlightened me And gave me a lasting refuge. Save me, I pray from stumbling. Protect me without mercy. Safeguard this poor and impious mendicant." S: Let's read. You notice that Rechungpa uses the expression "Father Guru", Do you think there is any significance in this? Abhaya: Well, Rechungpa was son disciple. S:

Mmm, but also it seems connected with his mixed up attitude. He, you know, relates to Milarepa in a quite childish, even infantile way, as though Milarepa really was his father, and he relates to him more positively, more skilfully to some extent, as though he is, in fact, his guru. ~imon: But surely that is reinforced by Milarepa calling him son. S: Yes, that's true also. Perhaps, I mean, Milarepa understands it as purely spiritual. But it's as though Rechungpa's attitude is not just that of a son spiritually speaking, which is metaphorically speaking, but sort of psychologically speaking also. Mike: But as you were saying, I mean earlier, how that could have arisen, the fact that he'd been with, you know, to an extent therefore he is a father and also, I mean, I was wondering how actually detrimental or otherwise that would be because it's almost like that could be just a step in the progression to actually really experiencing Milarepa as... well, as the guru. First perhaps he has to experience him as a sort of father, because of his emotional immaturity. S: Yes. I mean Milarepa does in fact say in the next song: "'~un am son \~bom from childhood I have cherished..." as if to say, well he did bring him up, in the ordinary way almost,

page 2C~7 as well as actually teaching him spiritually. But it isn't as though Rechungpa has a straightforward relationship with Milarepa either as father, so to speak, or guru, so to speak. It's as though both are mixed up. Jach is a mixed up relationship. He hasn't really grown up in the ordinary human sense nor developed, you know, very much perhaps in the spiritual sense either. ~imon(?): ~ you think that ~eans although this is a spiritual confession there's also an element of, sort of, prodigal son? you know, returning to the fold. S: Yes... yes, yes. I mean, although he uses the expression Father Guru, and though it does occur, you know, throughout the book, and though Milarepa does address Rechungpa as his son, this sort of terminology is not so usual, in fact, in Buddhism generally. Bhikshus are not addressed as father, as Catholic priests are addressed as father. That just doesn't occur usually. Nuns, for instance, are addressed as Barjini by the lay people, which means sister\* Not as mother. There is no Mother Superior\* So, in a way, this is quite interesting because you might expect that the lay people would address the monks as father, but in fact they don't. (long pause)... Anyway, Rechungpa sings and he prays, so to speak, you know, to Milarepa. He says: "'~ten Je tsun Guru in the centre To you I make obeisance. and offerings. Of you I ask of your well-being and confess my sins." What is the significance of that? Milarepa has directed Rechungpa to the two emanations but he says no, "'to you I make obeisance \* Now what do you think that means? Abhaya: He can only relate to the little old man in the cotton frock, and not so much to these spiritual emanations. S: Well, that might have been the case before but I think that now there is a difference. I think that Milarepa is just testing him and Rechungpa is just saying, as it were, well now I know what you really are like, I know that this is you, I know that the little old man is in fact these two glorious emanations. You see%, in other words, I appreciate now the little old man at his true worth. I know what he is really like. I'm not going to ignore him any longer. I know that the little old man in his depth is, you know, whatever these emanations display. So it is as though Rechungpa is not caught out by that any more; he has realised, you know, Milarepa's true greatness. He really appreciates him~~and therefore it's to him that he makes obeisance and offerings et cetera. And therefore he goes on to say: "Oh my Father Guru it was you ~Tho gave me the ~recepts. Initiations and Instructions\* ~souwhoenlihtenedme And gave me a lasting refuge." I mean, he's able to see Milarepa in his true depth, so he doesn't, sort of, so to speak, imagine a sort of Ideal Guru apart from the actual concrete Milarepa himself. He realises that Milarepa, whatever he may look like, is in fact, you know, the true guru - is in fact the Buddha, et cetera. (long pause)... Read that next prose paragraph because this throws light back on the song.

Guhyananda(?): "Rechungpa managed to reach the place where Milarepa sat, and Thenhugp~d him with such great and overpowering emotion that he fainted. When he came to4 Milare~a brought him back~tc the hermitage." S: This is, in a way, quite unusual in Buddhism. Certainly in Indian ~uddhism. That is: "Rechungpa managed to reach the place

page 21~~ where Mila en h ed him with such eat and ov - powering emotion that he fainted." We notice in Tibetan Buddhism generally a very free expression of emotion. We notice this in the "Life of Milarepa", if you've ever read it, by Rechungpa - where people shed tears and so on. Even the guru sheds tears, you know, quite freely. Do you see what I mean? So here he is, Rechungpa managing to reach the place where Milarepa sits and then hugging him with such great and overpowering emotion that he just faints away. I don't think you'll ever find anything like that in Indian Buddhism, or in Chinese Buddhism. You might in Japanese Buddhism and maybe, I'm not sure of this, you know, in some Zen situations. But it's very, very uncharacter- is tic of Indian and Chinese and South-f~~ast Asian Buddhiam. Not only this intense personal emotion but the quite active expression of it. It seems very characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism. And maybe it's one of the reasons why we can relate, you know, more easily perhaps to Tibetan Buddhism in some respects, despite all the exoticism. Especially, you know, as regards, you know, Milarepa and his disciples and so on. I mean this perhaps wouldn't be so characteristic of Gelugpa schools. They are more restrained and, in a way, more Indian. In a way more disciplined - not so freely expressive of emotions, but we do get that in the Kagyapa School. Perhaps particularly, certainly, in the case of Milarepa and his disciples - this very free expression of, well, in this case, very positive emotion. Or perhaps mainly positive emotion but there is still an infantile element in it. It's very difficult to tell. It is in one way, you know, a bit like the child, you know, who regains the lap of his mother or father, just hugging them in sheer relief. (pause) Mike: But it does seem that as long as that other element, the spiritual element is there very much - as long as that is pre- dominant - then things are alright. uimon: Do you think that that's perhaps also something to do with the fact that it's a very early stage in the founding of the kagya tradition and that it's very informal? S: Yes, this is true. It is very informal, so to speak. I mean, true discipline is there but there's nothing rigid. (long pause) Kulamitra: ~o discipline has nothing to do with formalism? S: Not formalism, but may have a lot to do with form. Guhyananda(?): Thy do you say the kagyapa school especially? S: Well, mainly on the strength of the life and songs of Milarepa.

(end of tape)

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Sangharakshita: ? to their emotions and feelings.

A voice: And the Vajrayana school was started by the Kagyupa?

Bhante: No. No. The Kagyupa school represents one particular branch of the Vajrayana tradition transplanted from India to Tibet. Marpa was the one who went to India. Met the great Indian Vajrayana guru, Naropa. And then Marpa returned to Tibet, you know, to teach, and Marpa, therefore, was the link between India and Tibet and, you know, Milarepa was the disciple of Marpa, and regarded generally as the effective founder of that particular tradition in Tibet.

Simon: This whole thing of, you know, what comes over from the biography. It gives a different impression of what Spiritual life really is than you normally receive. I mean, it struck me, the extent to which human emotion is experienced and communicated through the biography. Um, sometimes you get the impression that spiritual life, you know, excludes all those feelings but obviously for

Milarepa (Bhante interrupts)

Bhante: You certainly could get that impression from the, well, from the Theravada. Even, to some extent, from the Pali scriptures themselves. Not if you've read them carefully, and noted that at least, some instances of when emotion does enter into the picture. But you would certainly get that impression if you've read the Abhidharma. Or if you've read, you know, books about Buddhism, in fact books about Theravada Buddhism written by modern Buddhists in Ceylon, or Thailand, or Burma. You'd get, very likely, the impression of something very dull and dry that did exclude the element of emotion. (Long pause) But, in a way, its very characteristic that if you ask, say, a Ceylonese, Bhikshu about such things as Puja and worship, he would say 'Oh well, thats all just a concession to the lay people. You know, its alright for them but, you know, Bhikshus are beyond that sort of thing. They are more, you know, spiritually

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mature. They are more intellectual. That being a word of high praise.

They don't need all that'. They might even dismiss it as all just superstition. That's not the real Buddhism. The real Buddhism is just to understand the doctrinal teachings. To study the Pali texts. To learn Pali. Thats what Buddhism is really all about. (long pause)

Kulamitra: But what about this thing of continuing to sort of, deeply experience say painful human emotions, you know, even after you've had a very profound spiritual experience.

Bhante: Well this is just an example of ones, you know, the whole nature of the process of human development. That it takes place little by little and partially and one part of you, so to speak, is developed while another part isn't. I mean, one speaks of, say, painful

human emotions but what is it that makes the human emotions painful? The pain is created by unskilful elements. So, what one has to do, is not to get rid of human emotions but, you know, to get rid of those elements of attachments and possessiveness which give the emotions their painful tinge, as it were, on certain occasions. So ones emotions are purified, you know, from the element of pain. They become completely positive. Become completely skilful, and, you know, those emotions have an absolutely central place in the spiritual life. Sometimes in the West, we, the modern West, we tend to think that human emotions are almost essentially painful. That as long as you have emotions you'll always have pain. But from a Buddhist point of view that is not so. You can have emotions which are entirely positive and pleasurable and such emotions are experienced, for instance, in connection with meditation or in connection with devotional practices. So, you know, there is no question of getting rid of human emotions. That is the impression you get from the Theravada, that that is what Buddhism is all about. But certainly, you know, texts like the Songs of Milarepa make it clear that what is to be eliminated is the painfulness.

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The painfulness being, of course, created by craving, or attachment which is just what all Buddhist teaching says. But once that is eliminated what one is left with is not just nothing but a state of intensely positive, and pleasurable, even blissful emotions. And that comes out very clearly from the pages of the 'Songs of Milarepa'. I mean the pain is there so far as, say, Rechungpa is concerned but you can see that in the case of Milarepa there is intense emotional positivity without any trace of suffering at all because there is no trace of attachment. (pause) I think the general impression that prevails about Buddhism in the West, certainly in England, is that it is rather arid. Rather dull, rather lifeless. Unemotional. That it discourages emotion. That Buddhists are rather colourless people. Rather lacking in life and vitality. Well this is certainly, you know, the impression I got when I met, you know, Western Buddhists in London, you know, for the first time after many many-years. One certainly couldn't say that they were people of strong positive emotion. There didn't seem to be much in the way of, you know, strong emotion of any sort about them. But when there was it was definitely negative rather than positive. To be emotional was rather bad form. In other words, that type of interpretation of Buddhism fitted in rather well with a certain kind of English attitude. (Pause)

Jayadeva:      Stiff upper lip.

Bhante:          Yes, indeed.

Mike: I was wondering about, you know, when you said about, you know, the emotional content of something like this were accessible to people but I was wondering like English people are renowned for, yes, as you say, there sort of unemotional state and yet by reading something like this it's the emotional that we relate to. That sort of, really seems to bear out

the fact that we do need the emotional. Its almost like its to the emotional that people turn but in a very indirect way.

Bhante: Yes, and without openly acknowledging it sometimes. In a

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furtive sort of way. I mean, I also discovered that many of the so-called strict Theravadans still had a sort of, I mean English Theravadins, still had a sort of hankering after Christianity. I'm sure it was because they'd found their, an emotional element, that they hadn't been able to discover in Buddhism. Or that they thought wasn't in Buddhism, or even that they thought shouldn't be there. So they continued to have this sort of surreptitious attachment, you know, to Christianity. Sensing in it some kind of emotional nourishment such as they were not getting, you know, from Christianity. There was something also of this sort in connection with Sinhalese Buddhism. I have spoken of this before that some years ago when I was in India there was a very lengthy and vigorous correspondence in the correspondence column of the "Buddhist" magazine. The 'Buddhist' being the English monthly journal published by the young mens Buddhist association of Colombo. And the correspondence related to the construction of Devaliyas by Buddhists. A devaliya is a temple of a Hindu God.

You know that in Ceylon there are quite a number of Hindu's? as well as the majority Buddhist population. And, you know, Buddhists, in any case, very often worship Devas. That is to say gods of the round as they are called. That is to say lay Buddhists. Bhikshus do not worship them. But lay people do worship, in Ceylon, the Hindu gods. They consider them as simply more powerful beings, than human beings but not as necessarily more enlightened. So they pray to them for worldly blessings and prosperity, but for Enlightenment they turn to Buddhism to the Bhikshus, and to the Buddha. So what was happening and what the correspondence was all about was the fact that, Buddhists, Ceylonese Buddhists were building more devaliyas, temples for god:~, and to so say, in effect, Hindu gods, than they were building Buddha temples, and that why should this be, and also whether it was inconsistent with Buddhism or not. Some Ceylonese Buddhists held that it was quite inconsistent with Buddhism. That Buddhists ought not to be building devaliyas. They ought to be

building, you know, temples for the Buddha or Viharas for the Bhikshus. Others held that Buddhism did recognise the devas, that it gave a place to the devas, and that there was nothing wrong in, you know, from a Buddhist point of view, in people, at least lay people, worshipping the devas. It did not infringe in any way of Buddhism. It was not a betrayal of Buddhism. You could be a faithful Buddhist. Going for Refuge to the Buddha, ~harma, and Sangha, and still worship the devas. Still build devaliyas. So, you know, I followed this correspondence with great interest, and I came to the conclusion that why Buddhist were building devaliyas in such numbers was because the worship of the Hindu Gods, represented that sort of emotional and colourful element in Religion. Lets use the word religion for the time being, which was rather conspicuously lacking in the rationalistic Theravada that they were getting officially, so to speak, from the Bhikshus. They couldn't turn to the Mahayana. They couldn't worship Bodhisattvas because that would have been heretical Buddhism. They wanted to remain strict Theravadans so it wasn't open to them to, you know, to worship

the Mahayana Bodhisattvas, so they worshipped Hindu gods more. So it's as though their religious life, even their spiritual life was split between the dry and arid Theravadin Buddhism and the rich and emotional popular Hindu deva worship on the other. Whereas it seems to me that the Mahayana, through the, you know, figure of the Bodhisattva had been able to blend the two. You definitely had the Buddhist spiritual content, the Buddhist spiritual teaching in all its purity. But at the same time in a very rich and colourful, and vivid and emotionally appealing form. So in Ceylon, in Theravada Buddhism you had the clarity without the colour, and in the Deva worship the colour without the clarity and they weren't able to bring the two things together. Well I thought that a very dangerous state of affairs. So you get much the same thing, or you've got much the same thing, I felt, in the case of these English Theravadins who

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on purely intellectual grounds had embraced, let's say Theravadin Buddhism in a rather dry and rationalistic form, but who had remained emotionally unsatisfied, though there is no question of them turning to the worship of Devas, so, you know, they continue to be emotionally attached to Christianity. Some of them used to go to midnight mass at Christmas time and things like that. Or to go and do their meditation in churches because they liked the atmosphere, they said.

Guhyananda: I was thinking that maybe there is a bit of a call for that in England.

Bhante: A call for?

Guhyananda: Well, Tibetan iconography and Bodhisattvas are on quite a high level but we don't really have any gods, do we?

Bhante: We have angels.

Guhyananda: We have angels.

Simon: I kind of see where this sort of, what you can relate to is perhaps sort of imagery that people in the West have used. Perhaps, the sort of, using the imagination in a way that somebody like Blake did. He created a whole sort of hierarchy.



Ehante: A whole mythology.

Simon: Right, I mean, perhaps if you can't relate to that mythology, you know, perhaps even create your own.

Voices: Or Greek.

A voice: I was just thinking, I was thinking myself of building a shrine to Apollo. Apparently his symbol is a golden arrow. A golden arrow, some offerings, things like, sort of, aside of my Buddhist Shrine. A bit like that.

Bhante: I suppose it might be a symbol for the movement. A golden arrow. Yes. We could call the Newsletter, 'The Golden Arrow' (Laughter).

2I~ Devaraja: We haven't got a rival now. We haven't got a rival (inaudible)

Mike: It does seem that sometimes, well I've just found that sometimes, well, sometimes T'v~ got a lot out of Puja. Sort of emotionally felt really good from doing it. And other times its felt really cold doing it. And its at those times when I find it, you know, when I'm uninspired. You know, it does seem, its sort of really important to have that kind of emotional colour there.

Bhante: Yes.

Mike: You know, therefore to really seek out sources of inspiration.

Bhante: Mm. I also think, therefore, its very important that images that we have say, on the shrine, to use that term, should be aesthetically appealing and quite a number of Buddha images originating in the East a~e not emotionally appealing and not really attractive. And they're not inspiring.

Jayadeva: I think its going to be, I mean, in a way it5 a long term problem. It's not going to, sort of, suddenly. Given that we live in culture thats so alienated. Until we've created our own society. Until we've got people being brought up within the movement that will be ableb have people immediately responding to shrines with images that are European in...

Ehante. I think one does find that people respond quite strongly and quite positively to Blakes images. That they are immediately intelligible without much in the way of, you know, conceptual explanation. (Pause)

Devaraja: Do you think it would help if we, if our shrine rooms became a bit more obviously devotional things, I mean in a strong sense, and a decorative sense. Because T know there has been one argument that they should be kept very very simple so

Bhante: I think we should be careful. I mean I've even said sometimes that they should be kept simple, bllt not that they should be kept plain,

Mm. Necessarily. I've said that they should be kept simple in the sense that they should not be fussy, when they are decorated. They should not be cluttered. The over all effect should be rich and pleasing and beautiful. It shouldn't be just like, you know, an old junk ship, of all sorts of mixed Chinese and Japanese and Indian, and Nepalese antiques and images of various-kinds. You know, maybe with dust on them, or one of two of them chipped and broken, and not really sort of harmonising together. We don't want that sort of thing. Tibetan Shrines are sometimes like that because different people present things at different times and they're all, sort of, stored away in the shrine. Or placed- in some corner of the alter and, you know, that is really to the detriment of the overall aesthetic come devotional effect.

Devara~ I mean, perhaps the use of rich brocades and

Bhante: Well we can consider anything. Rich brocades. A natural wood. But not anything fussy. Watch things like lace curtains, you know, tLots of- colourful, sort of, silk flounces. And let the colours be good colours and the silk real silk and so on. Do you see what I mean? I'm reasonably pleased with the effect in the two shrine rooms at Surhavati. I think that, they are both heading very much in the right direction and are really very effective but, you know, we could do even better I'm sure. We don't even need to have the same kind of shrine everywhere. Some -shrines can be really simple even austere. But others can be really rich, and glowing and colourful.

Jayadeva: Its funny the only, sort of, architectural form that I've found that incorporates simplicity and beauty Islamic.

Bhant~: Yes I use to feel this in India. I often use to feel, well, it's all wrong but actually I'm much more attracted by Islamic architecture than the Indian Buddhist architecture. (Long pause). Also I think, we shall really only be able to do what we want to do,

and express ourselves, you know, fully and properly in this respect. When our shrines are custom built. When we aren't having simply to adapt already existThg rooms of various kinds, you see. We are very handicapped in that respect. In fact, I have been thinking that perhaps in future we shouldn't adapt buildings any more. We should just build. Very simply. It can be done. And I think it would be much less trouble also. And probably cheaper to build, simply. Afterall, if you build a Centre in a new town. Well what do you want. All you need, well, if you reduce it to the absolute essentials, one big meeting room. Maybe with a shrine at one end which can be screened off by folding doors. And you need, you know, a bit of reception - come - ~ff ice accomodation and two or three rooms for your full-time workers. You can build that quite simply and easily, Yes? Rather than, you know, and then entirely for your own requirements. Entirely according to your own design. A very light simple, cheap, kind of constmction, but well planned and well designed. Rather than getting some heavy Victorian building, and having to, sort of, adapt it and tart it up and, you know, all the rest of it, and its just not in keeping with what you're trying to do. Its overlaid with very heavy associations of all sorts. This is what I'm tending to think nowadays.

Mike: I'm afraid that new buildings - there is so much legislation as to whats got to go into those buildings. I mean you may have an idea of what you want in that building but planning

Bhante: But then again I see all over the place, you know, all sorts of little catholic churches going up, or just mass centres, they call them now, and some of the Pentecostal churches, they put up little buildings. It's basically that sort of thing. One big meeting room and accomodation for whoever stays there, or who works there or who visits there. It's as simple as that. Surrounded by a little garden, and a bit of space for parking. This is essentially all

that you need in a small city centre. Mm? I'm sure it could be done quite easily. I mean they do it, why can't we? (pause) Not that I'm holding them up as an example in any way, really.

Abhaya: Not that we thought you were (Laughter)

Bhante: Not that I thought that .... (lots of laughter) So what we've really been talking about is simply the place and importance of emotion in the spiritual life, isn't it? Because "Rechungpa managed to reach the place where Milarepa sat, and then hugged him with such great and overpowering emotion that he fainted. When he came to Milarepa brought him back to the hermitage". How we're not told. Whether flying through the air or, you know, by more ordinary means. (long pause) Alright, let's hear what follows. The Jetsun then said

Mike: "The Jetsun then said to Rechungpa, "If you wish to attain Buddhahood, you must practice the Pith-Instructions. Those books of polemics and the evil mantras of the heretics had no value for us.

The Formless Teachings of the Dakinis are good and sound - these I did not burn, but I burned all the rest because they would only have caused one to fall into the lower realms, in spite of one's original intention to attain Buddhahood".

Bhante: Yes, So "If you wish to attain Buddhahood, you must practice the Pith-Instructions" These are the, so to speak, quintessential teachings of the Vajrayana. "Those books of polemics and the evil mantras of the heretics had no value for us". The word heretics is a bit suspect here. There is really no word corresponding to heretic in Buddhism. The Tibetans have an expression 'outside people'. That is to say 'Those who are outside the Buddhist Spiritual Community by virtue of the fact that they have not gone for Refuge. But heretic is a word of quite different connotation. You know, heretic means one who is, as it were, of the faith, that, who understands the faith wrongly.

Kulamitra: Could you say also, you said not gone for Refuge, true going for refuge is when you have actually had spiritual experience of the Transcendental so written by people who hadn't had any real experience of the

Bhante: No. No it doesn't even mean that. It means outside the Spiritual Community even in the broadest sense. An unenlightened Buddhist is still a Buddhist. Fortunately for us (a laugh). So "The Formless Teachings of the Dakinis are good and sound - these I did not burn, but I burned all the rest because they would only have caused one to fall into the lower Realms, in spite of one's original intention to attain Buddhahood". What does that really suggest? I mean why was Rechungpa concerned with these books of polemics and evil mantras?

Devaraja: Something to do with an interest in Black magic.

Bhante: Because he wanted to use them for certain purpose, didn't he? What was that?

A voice: To debate.

Bhante: Mm. To win with debates. But its as though, if you use, or try to use any means, even an evil means, to attain even a genuinely good end, er you know, this will have disastrous effects and will eventually result in your abandoning the spiritual path altogether and even falling into lower realms. Even falling back.

A Voice: So intent is not good enough?

Bhante: Nm?

A voice: Int~t is not good enough?

Bhante: Intent, as it were, in a purely abstract sense is not enough I mean, Rechungpa, was in the state of having intended to attain Buddhahood. That was his intent. But he was a disciple of Milarepa but he wanted to defeat those logicians and in order to defeat them

he wanted to learn polemics and logic, even black magic. But, you know, if you get involved in those sort of things even though you think that you are going to use those evil means to a good end the effect will be that you resile even from your intention to gain Buddhahood.

Kulamitra: If you, mm, if you try and defeat your enemies but employing the same means that they use you actually become like them.

Bhante: Yes, you put yourself on the same level. What are the Lower Realms. The Lower Realms are the Hell Realms, the Ireta Realms, the Hungry Ghosts that is, and the Animal Realms. (long pause)

Simon: Why is the Asura Realm not one of the Lower Realms?

Bhante: Well, in this case, the Asuras are a sub-division of the Gods. (Long Pause). Alright would someone like to read the song that follows?

Simon: 'Now hearken to my song'

Rechungpa, my son, Whom from childhood I have cherished, You went to India for the Pith-Instructions But have brought back books full of arguments. You were thus exposed to the danger of becoming a debater. You wanted to be a yogi, But books like those and their ideas Could make you a pompous preacher! To know both one and all, that was your wish; But if you are caught up in endless words, You will wreck the most important one. Your intention was to understand the Dharma, But if you are caught up in endless acts, Greedy and arrogant you will become. The immaculate Dharma for which I sent you- Has flown into the crevice of a rock And is preserved by the Dakinis; You may recover it if you pray sincerely. I have burned the magic books and evil mantras As an offering to the God of Fire; Many will be helped by this. Do not lose your temper, Lest you be scorched by anger; Do not distress yourself or grieve, For that will hurt your mind and body. Do not bestir yourself with many things, But relax, and sit at ease, Remembering your Guru And his grace and bounties!"

Bhante: So "Rech'ing~, - my son~ Wbo~ fro~ cbi~hood I have~ -cherisheci, - Y-ou weat to- Tnd~ii I~or ~the~ ~ith-Thatruftioii~ But have brought back books full of arguments.

Well, he did apparently bring back some Pith-Instructions if the Dakini Dharmas are those but he also brought back books of a polemical nature, the value of which was purely intellectual.

"You were thus exposed to the danger Of becoming a debater"

What do you think Milarepa understands by the word debater? Does it mean that debate is wrong in itself?

Abhaya: Well, you can understand the teaching just rationally, but not

Bhante: Not only understand it rationally but who tries to convert, so to speak, others by purely rational means. Entirely by means of logical argument. (Pause)

"You wanted to be a vo~i. But books like those and their- ideas Could make you a pompous preacher!"

You see, Milarepa regards being a yogi and being a pompous preacher as mutually exclusive. He doesn't say 'Preacher', a "pompous preacher". Because if you simply study books, if you study, say, Buddhist polemical literature, you try to win debates and convert people in this way without practicing meditation, without developing yourself spiritually. Well, you'll be just concerned with words. And you'll become proud and arrogant and pompous. You'll just want to impress people, with your knowledge, with your learning. With your power of argumentation. Pompous, you know, suggests all this sort of thing.

"To know both one and a~,~ that was your wish; But if you are caught up in endless words, You will wreck the most important one."

The 'one' apparently meaning, you know, the one thing that you should really be concerned with. You know, your intent or your resolve to gain Buddhahood. Or meaning everything else besides. You were'nt satisfied with knowing just the one thing, how to gain Enlightenment,

9,, you wanted to know ever"~hing else too. You wanted to know all

about logic and science and polemics and Black Magic. (Long Pause).

"But if you- are caught up in endless words, You will wreck the most important one."

If you studied too much, if you study too many things. Especially with the wrong motive, you'll forget all about trying to attain Enlightenment. Which is, in fact, almost what Rechungpa has done. (pause) It's as though, you know, if one is not careful, the intellectual study, at least the academic study, even of Buddhism itself, can be an obstacle to the actual practice of Buddhism. Not that studying Sutras isn't important. Not that one can't gain great inspiration from them but study by itself is not enough. And, in any case, the approach mustn't be intellectual, or, at least, mustn't be academic. One must study in order to practice. I mean study in order really to understand. (Pause) I mean, study a little and study deeply, rather than just skim through alot, and understand it only superficially.

Javadeva: It's like the er, it's the first part of the No~Le Eight Fold Path, is Vision. I mean you could have a great Vision, you could keep coming into contact with that Vision through study, but you forget the other seven. There are so many people who maybe do have vision but don't go any further than that to the extent they don't make any progress.

Bhante: While of course, in some cases, with some people it isn't even vision. It may be a right understanding, but its not a perfect ~sion. Or it may not even be a right understanding. It may be a wrong understand ing, at least, wrong to a certain extent.

Simon: Well presumably if you don't practice it is, in fact, wrong understanding.

Bhante: Well, you may have a correct understanding without actually putting it into practice. But in a sense you've a wrong understanding

at the same time, because surely part of the right understanding is that it must be practiced. If you really understand that, well you will practice. If you don't practice it means you haven't understood it is to be practiced. You think there can be just a theoretical understanding. Which in the case of Buddhism there cannot.

Mike: Well its a continual process. You have a vision, you practice and from the practice your vision is refined.

Bhante: (interrupts) Your vision is reinforced.

Mike: And your practice reinforces the vision.

Bhante: Yes. (Pause) And also you notice the expression "endless

words". There's no end of words, there's no end of concepts, you can't possibly come to the end of them all. You can't say, well, I'll finish my study of Buddhism first and then I'll start practicing. I'll read all the Sutras first and then I'll start practicing the teaching. That is impossible. There is no end of words, no end of concepts. No end of interpretations. No end of systems of philosophy. Mm? You have to stop before you reach the end of your studies and start practicing. Maybe long before.

Jayadeva: And often you find, you come across problems in your study, because you don't understand something, you can only really resolve that problem by, sort of, higher spiritual understanding - you know, when you get a paradox or something. Two different ways of looking at things (long pause).

Mike: You do get people who are, sort of, happy to go on and on studying, but from the sort of motivation that then they'll really know about



Bhante: Yes, well, I mentioned the case of Ceylon. For instance, in Ceylon, everybody agrees that, yes, the Dharma should be

practiced. Yes, but in order to practice the Dharma, you've got to study the Dharma. To study the Dharma you have to study the

Pali Scriptures. In order to study the Pali Scriptures you have to study Pali. In order to study Pali you have to study Pali Grammar. In that way you get bogged down in Pali grammar for the rest of your life, perhaps. Some Bhikkhus never get beyond Pali Grammar. Mm? (Pause) This applies to Thailand as well. So your Buddhism becomes, your Buddhist life becomes studying Pali grammar. But when you've maybe learned it really well, and instead of then going on really to study the scriptures deeply and then practice them, you become a professor of Pali, in a Buddhist College. And you teach another generation of students Pali grammar. This is what actually happens. (Pause)

Devaraja: It would be better to translate into a modern language and burn the Pali.

Bhante: (Laughs) Almost, almost. It's only quite recently that, you know, Pali scriptures have been translated into Ceylonese. I'm not even sure that the translation is completed yet. When I was in India they had made a small beginning. The Pali scriptures were translated into English before they were translated into Ceylonese. It's extraordinary, isn't it? So, you know, if you met a Ceylonese Bhikkhu, and you said you were interested in Buddhism, well, he'd always say that the first thing you must do is to study Pali. That is the stock answer. But one can appreciate that it is important to be able to get to the original text and understand them in the original language but, you know, one shouldn't linger too long over grammar and language but come onto the meaning of the text, and how the texts are to be practiced. How the teaching is to be practiced.

Kulamitra: It seems to me something of that even in the Tibetan Tradition as it's told in the West. There seems to be a lot of emphasis on

learning Tibetan and say reciting your Sadhana in Tibetan.

Bhante: Yes. Though, of course, that Tibetans translated everything into Tibetan, very sensibly. And they didn't, they kept hardly any Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet. They had just translations. They had everything in their own language. Which was very good. But they don't seem to be so keen, that, you know, that in the West, that everybody should have and do everything in their own language. It seems very strange. Although there's some special value attached to Tibetan. Some special, sort of, mystic quality.

Jayadeva?: Is that why it has become more of an ethnic thing do you think? As opposed to a universal religion?

Bhante: That maybe part of it, but as a language becomes old or archaic a certain sort of sanctity attaches to it. As to the language of the English prayer book. You know, a lot of people, don't want to tamper with. It's very archaic but the fact that it is archaic, you know, endows it with a sort of halo, almost of Religiosity. Which some people find very evocative. Especially as the translations into modern English aren't especially inspiring. If they were it might be a different matter. (Long pause)

G~anda: Is there value in the retention of some parts in an old language?

Bhante: I think in the case of Buddhism there is some value, in at least, having the Refuges and Precepts in Pali. For more than one reason. First of all, these things that we need to chant, and chant in unison, so far, are more easily chanted in Pali. Just because Pali has a more euphonious combination of consonants and vowels than does English. And also, I think, in as much as Buddhism did originate in India it isn't a bad thing that we remind ourselves of that fact, you

know, also, you know, since those particular words, perhaps, are something like the words which were uttered in the Buddha's own day. Gives us a sort of link. But I think, only these few simple basic things need be recited, you know, a language other than English. I think, there's no point in reciting in Tibetan or Japanese or Korean. If you've recited in any, you know, non-English language it should be the language which goes back as far as possible, you

know, to the language that the Buddha may have used.

Guhyananda? The Mantras being in Sanskrit and Pali as well, is the value just in the sound of the words?

Bhante: Well there's some value in the sound but I think one shouldn't sort of, you know, look at that into occult sort of way. As though there is some sort of magical value in a particular sound. There maybe an emotional significance in particular sounds.

Guhyananda? Would the Mantras be as effective ? (Bhante interrupts)

Bhante: The Mantras have no meaning. For instance how ... There is no questi~ of translating Om ah hum. You could only translate something if it has a conceptual meaning. Om a hum in Tibetan is exactly the same as Cm ah hum in English. Do you see what I mean? I mean if you make the ... I mean you can translate Cm Mani Padme Hum in a way because Mani Padme means Jewel in Lotus but you'll still have to translate Cm Jewel in Lotus Hum. Because Cm does not have a conceptual meaning. It's just a sound. So the point of translating it, you know, doesn't arise.

Guhyananda: Or Gate gate, paragate, that

Bhante: Well that has a grammatical meaning so that can be translated. That can be translated. Gone, gone, altogether beyond and so on. (Pause).

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Mike: I think that is what you said about the need for the emotional

content. I know (Laughs) I wouldn't appreciate it, sort of, chanting Gone, Gone, as much as Gate, gate. (laughter)

Bhante: Well. Gone is in monosyllable. Maybe you need a disyllable there. Do you

see what I mean. Gate gate (chants) Instead of Gone, gone (laughter)

Something inaudible.

Kulamitra: I find I don't really like the, I appreciate the Precepts, but I don't really like chanting the Tiratana-vandana in Pali. I get a stronger emotional response by reading the English Version, which I like very much actually.

Bhante: Er. That's very interesting.

END OF SIDE ONE

Side B .. Buddhists chanting things in Tibetan or Japanese, it would be rather like, for instance, say Christian missionaries going from Europe, say to Africa, and because they came from Spain they insist on all the African Christians that are their converts, you know, reciting the Lord's Prayer in Spanish. You could understand them asking their converts to recite it in Latin or in Greek but why in Spanish? Because Spanish has got no particular, you know, relationship with the origins of Christianity. So if you follow that principle you'd have African Christians, well, those who have been converted by Spanish missionaries, doing things in Spanish, those who've been, you know, converted by French missionaries doing things in French and so on. In the same way, you would get some English Buddhist doing things in Tibetan, some in Thai, some in Burmese, some in Japanese. Which is actually what you get, to some extent. So I would say do everything in English, with a few simple basic things in Pali or Sanskrit or Pali and Sanskrit. That seems to me the sensible arrangement, and keep the

secondary Buddhist language, like Tibetan and Japanese and Chinese out of the picture all together. Otherwise the picture just becomes too complicated, too crowded. (Long pause).

So Milarepa also says

"Your intention was to understand the Dharma, But if you are Caught in endless acts Greedy

and arrogant will you become.

What sort of acts do you think Milarepa has in mind? (Pause)

Devara4affi Acts against other people.

Kulamitra: Acts of obstinancy

Bhante: Act of obstinancy. Mm. Acts which represents a sacrifice of er, well in effect, of the end to the means. You know, the means are supposed to be a means to that particular end, like Black magic helping you to convert people but actually those so called means will in the long run destroy the end. (Long pause)

(Something inaudible)

Bhante; Yes. Caught up, entangled (Pause) But It's like, you know, the case of the example which I gave. I mean your intention, say, might be to study, and to practice the Dharma but if you're caught up in en~less~acts,~first of all, you know, studying Pall grammar, and Pall language itself. And maybe History of the Pall language, and Pali phonetics and phrenology, then maybe you'd get, you know, co-opted to help compile a dictionary. Then you become a prof essor of Pali in a college. Well, in that way, you are caught up in "endless acts". Those acts originally, at least, in principle, had some bearing upon your ultimate goal or purpose, but they'd become a sort of end in themselves. You got caught up in them. They become a hindrance, an obstacle. And you become "greedy and arrogant". You may then think in terms of your career as a college lecturer or a college professor. A professor of Pall. You cease to be a Buddhist,

you know, for all intents and purposes. (long Pause) So Milarepa goes on.

'1Tha immacuiat~e~ Dhar~a~ ~or~ whi~ch I sent you Has flown into the ~crev1ce of a rock  
And is pr~eserved by the Dakinis; You may recover it if you pray sincerely".

What do you think this is all about? Is it to be taken literally?

Devaraja: I think it means that by praying, means that you are being devoting yourself to something and you will have a devotional attitude

Bhante: Well it's as if the book has flown into a crevice of a rock and the Dakinis are looking after it and if Rechungpa wants to get it back he's got to pray sincerely. But, perhaps it's more than that. That the Dakinis represent the forces of Inspiration. They are keeping, they are guarding the teaching. He has to contact those forces of Inspiration. He has to change his attitude. He has to be sincere. And then he will contact you know, the truth of those teachings. The real truth in his own inner life and experience. Then he'll get back, so to speak, those books, those teachings.

Bill? The crevice of a rock is his attitude up until now.

Abhaya: What about the Dakinis? I've never quite been able to find an emotional correlative in my own mind. The Dakinis are talked about, but it doesn't, like, quite make the connection.

Bhante: You mean a connection with something in the Western Tradition? A voice: The muses?

Abhaya: Well, yes, somehow.

Bhante: Yes the muses cover part of it. Blake's emanation. Mra?

Abhaya: But I thought Blake's emanation will get .. that's a sort of split off and because it becomes split off then it's alienating from (Bhante interrupts)

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Bhante: Well no, it isn't, no it isn't necessarily split off. You know, Blake uses the term

emanation, as far as -I remember, both for the split off and for the not split off female counterpart. Sometimes he refers to, or under certain circumstances, you know, in certain conditions he refers to the split off emanation as the 'Female Will'. Capital F, capital W But he can speak, I think, of the fallen emanation as well as the unfallen emanation.

Abhaya: So which are the unfall,... who is the unfallen emanation in the form of equivalent of a Dakini in Blakean ? mythology?

Bhante: Well in Buddhism., of course, there is no fall. Yes? In the christian sense. So, I mean, Blake, so far as I recollect, has the same names for the fallen and unfallen aspects, broadly speaking. For instance those Los and Enitharmon, they are called Los and Enitharmon both before and after their fall. Enitharmon being, the emanation of Los. Jerusalem is the emanation of Albion. (Long pause). But I think there isn't really a proper equivalent, you know, in Western Tradition to the Indo-Tibetan conception of Dakini. It's a very rich and er, what-shall I say, poetic and spiritually significant concepti&n or symbol. And also quite ambiguous as often, you know, er you know, symbols are. It can mean a rather lively, vital, human woman. It can represent a sort of fairy, a sort of female angel. The forces of inspiration. The muses. A female Bodhisattva. A female Buddha. That is, a Buddha in female form. A Bodhisattva in female form. It can represent all those things.

Abhaya: Tara.

Bhante: Tara is or can be referred to as a Dakini. The female counterparts of the Buddhas are Dakinis. Sort of, you know, sort of Goddess-like figures are Dakinis. Its very wide. In late Indian, I think perhaps non-Buddhist literature, Dakini means a prostitute. I think in modern Hindi Dakini is used in that sense. In modern literary Hindi.

Abhaya: I was thinking of a bit in Arthuronian legend. Like the 'Lady of the lake' that sort of undeveloped inaudible.

Bhante. Yes right. It's a little bit like that because yes, half formed, because shes

Abhaya: Shes been around (I think) (Laughter)

Ehante: Yes quite. She appears from this other dimension and then sort of receives the sword. Its flung back into the lake.

Abhaya: Whereas the Dakinis in Buddhist mythology are flying through the air.

Bhante: Yes. Yes they don't seem to be especially associated with the

sea, at all. Then the question arises, well what does the, what does the air or space or the sky represent? It's a symbol of the void. It's the open-dimension of being as Gunther calls it. And it's not just empty, in the sense of being vacuous. It's full of, sort of, spiritual life and movement. And perhaps, you know, the Dakinis represent that. Mm? The sort of vibrations, the energies that pass through space, or the void. Which means filling it with life and colour, and so on.

Devaraja What are the Daka pertain to then?

Bhante: Just the same.

Devaraja: So, what is it? For a women its the Daka~

Bhante: Pardon

Devaraja: For a women's spiritual aspirant its a Daka.

Bhante: Yes. It doesn't seem to work, you know, quite in the corresponding ~~~ay. For a woman it's a man it would seem. In other words it isn't that the Daka does for the woman exactly the same thing as a Dakini'

does for the man because, you know, the woman, as such, is different from the man to begin with. It's as though a woman needs a Dakinl

too. If Dakinis represent forces of inspiration. Or the woman needs to become a man first.



Mike: Although they're female the Dakinis, it doesn't mean that they're female as separate from the male, does it? In that the Dakini does have masculine qualities. Or sort of masculine integration.

Ehante: Well the ~akin1 is not really a natural individual. It's a symbol for certain qualities. It like, for instance, saying well, you know, that Tara is the embodiment of compassion. Airight, well is Tara undeveloped? Is she one-sided? That's not the point. The figure of Tara is meant to embody specifically that quality of compassion mm?

Jayadeva: I would say, in terms of, you know, use the image of a female because inspiration is that aspect of trying to woo. But, sort of, maybe you just call it female. It isn't actually a female thing.

Bhante: Or that~you call it female because it has on you, spiritually, an effect, analogous to that of the female on the male biologically it arouses your energies. This is what it means, basically.

A voice: Could you say that again? I'm a bit mixed (laughter)

Bhante: Well, just as, biologically, the female arouses the energies of the male, so the Dakini, represented in female form, psychologically and spiritually, arouses the energies of the spiritual aspirant.

Abhaya: Just as the muse arouses the energy of the creative

Bhante: Yes. Or even in another, putting it another way, is his creative energies. But experienced, so to speak, as an external force.

Devaraja: Would figures like Aprodite, and what do you call it. Aphrodite as a similar

Bhante: It's very difficult to say because I think the figures of Greek mythology aren't really very real to us. What they originally meant to people who actually worshipped them is very difficult to say. Also depending on the period of history. I mean, a Greek, of say IOOBC

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might have felt quite differently about Aphrodite from a Greek of

a iOOOBC. I think the Greek classical figures, really, despite all our efforts, are quite stale to us. I mean, they are very beautiful and attractive but I don't think they really move us at all deeply.

Kulamitra: They don't seem to occupy spiritual dimensions.

Bhante. No they don't.

Simon? They still have that feeling for us, as you say, beautiful ~~ut they're of cold white marble whereas the Greeks (Bhante interrupts)

Bhante: I think we have that association, very strongly, of cold white marble.

A voice: But for the Greeks they were coloured, and therefore alive.

Bhante: Well at least they were gaudy. Bright, colourful.

Abhaya: I suppose that the value or the power of the symbol is that it's really not strongly associated with any particular culture.

Bhante: Mm. Though again it expresses itself in terms of many different cultures yes.

Aftwaa: I was thinking of like Buddha forms. Like its when you're dealing with a meditating Buddha figure it's just a basic human form. There maybe some basic dress and origins but it's basic human form

Bhante: I think it would be very easy to express that and to remove any sort of Indian or Tibetan, or Chinese element and just have, you know, a seated figure of that kind. Yes? (Pause) I suppose that one couldn't prevent some degree of limitation because it would be, for instance, Caucasian rather than Nongoloid or Negroid. I mean, could one create something that is neither Caucasian, not Mongolian nor Negroid? Would that be possible? If one couldn't there would be a definate limitation.

Kulamitra: Presumably one could but then would anybody identify with

it?

Bhante: Right. Yes. Yes. You would have to be racially quite a mongol yourself to identify with it. (laughter) It's interesting that Padmasambhava has, usually, features which are, sort of, partly Arien and partly Mongoloid. (Pause) Anyway.

"I liave burned the ina~i~c books and evil mantras As an offering to the God of Fire;  
~illbeheledbthis."

The books that don't reach you sometimes help you more than, well By not reaching you, you know, books do you more good than reaching you. The Bible that you don't read does you more good (laughter).

"Do not lose your temper, Lest you be scorched by anger; Do not distress yourself or grieve,  
For that will hurt your mind and body."

You know, that's interesting. That loosing your temper, anger, distressing yourself or grieving hurts your body as well as your mind. The mind, afterall~,~reacts upon the body. You'll probably be more likely to catch cold. (laugh)

"Do not bestir yourself wiTh many things But relax, and sit at ease, Remembering your Guru  
And his grace and boutThes!

This sort of idea, this teaching of relaxing and sitting at ease, is very important for the Kagyupas, in fact, for the Vajrayana generally. It's not relaxation and sitting at ease in quite the ordinary sense of just stretching out your legs and having an easy time. It's a complete, total psycho-physical, or spiritual-cum- psycho-physical relaxation. A complete absence of strain of any sort, like a complete spontaneity and naturalness of the deepest, or if you like, the highest level. (long pause) I mean, relaxation of this kind is quite difficult to practice. In fact it can't be practiced at all. So one can't even say its difficult to practice or that it's easy to practice.

Guhyananda: I don't quite understand that. Is it relaxing but sitting in a (primal ?) position.

Bhante: It says sit at ease but this is not to be taken literally. You can relax in any posture. I mean if it depends upon any particular posture you could say it isn't real relaxation. (Pause)

Mike: You say that stress is laid on it. How is stress laid upon it in that tradition?

Bhante: Well in the sense that it is pointed to or it Is inculcated or you're reminded of it. There is not anything you can do about it really. I mean, Milarepa exalts Rechungpa to relax and sit at ease. Well, he doesn't tell him how to do it. If someone says to you, 'just relax' they aren't asking you to do anything in particular. They are asking you to stop doing anything in particular. So don't even meditate. Don't even try to practice the precepts. Don't indulge in any un-skilful mental activity. Don't even indulge in any skilful activity. Don't think about the Sam' sara. Don't think about Nirvana. Don't try to be a Bodhisattva. Just relax.

Kulamitra: So it seems to correspond with, sort of like, what the Bodhisattva '5 meant to do. He's meant to be vigorous but always be in a medative state. You mean

Bhante: Well it's a state, looking at it in another way, from another point of view, of complete spontaneity. It's not relaxation in the ordinary sense because, you know, when you relax in the ordinary sense, you relax from doing particular things. Wordly things. But here you relax from even that sort of relaxation. You're not even, you know, not making an effort. (Pause) So really what is being emphasized here is "spontaneity" and "naturalness", inverted commas, at the very deepest level.

A voice: So Milarepa's not saying, sort of like, 'do that'. He's

saying that's something you must tend towards developing.

Bhante: You could put it like that. Though even that doesn't really cover it. But it's not doing anything in particular. Certainly not, deliberately trying not to do anything. You just like, let go.

Mike: Is he, sort of, saying this to Rechungpa because also, I mean, he's just been through quite a lot, sort of, emotionally very up and down?

Bhante: And been making all sorts of efforts. Wrong efforts in various ways. All the trouble, you know, and worry, in a way. The wear and tear of his going off to India.

Mike: It's almost like there's so much churning around there still that, you know, it would be better just to let go of it all and almost start again.

Bhante: But it isn't just a psychological relaxation which he's advising him. It's more, well one can call it, an existential relaxation.

Guhyananda: He does say 'Remembering your Guru'

Bhante: Yes he does.

Devaraja Presumably this is in terms of, perhaps, the Mahamudra.

Bhante: Yes the Mahamudra is involved. I mean, the Mahamudra is of this type, so to speak. It's not anything that can be practiced. If you can practice it it's not the Mahamudra. If it's

anything that you can deliberately do in any sense at any level it's not the Mah~mudra

A voice: What is the Mahamudra? (Laughter).

Bhante: It's just relaxing and sitting at ease. If you, you know, sort of, perch yourself on the chair, and say 'here I'm sitting at ease'. It's not really sitting at ease. It's not something you can do deliberately. You just have to let go. Just let yourself sink back.

So you just let yourself sink back into the absolute, so to speak. Take your ease, you know, in the absolute. Without making any sort of effort, either after Samsara or Nirvana.

Kulamitra: Would you say this is what the just sitting practice really aims at in a way?

Bhante: Only in a way because, you know, if it aimed at anything there'd be no .. ..(laughter). That's why you just sit. That's all that you're doing. You don't think of it as a means to anything.

A voice: How do you describe that as being Vipassana or Samatha practice?

Bhante: Well it wouldn't be Samatha. If it was anything, if it could be classified under either of those terms it would be Vipassana. Anyway we seem to have come to the end for the time being. (long long pause). So these are Milarepa's words to Rechungpa at least for

the present just "relax, and sit at ease, Rememberin~~' your Guru And his grace and bounties!

Perhaps the suggestion is, inasmuch that these two lines come after the exultation to relax and sit at ease. Perhaps a suggestion is that Rechungpa's remembering Milarepa and his grace and bounties should be quite a quite spontaneous and natural thing. It's not a sort of exercise that he's expected to do. It should be spontaneous and natural just like the, you know, the relaxation and sitting at ease itself. Something that quite naturally sort of, floats into or springs up in his mind.

A voice: Which is the nature of Milarepa's feelings towards Marpa.

Bhante: Yes, yes. If it's something, if gratitude is something that you have to be taught, well, it isn't real gratitude.

Alright leave it there for the moment.

END OF TAIE

Bhante: Well, well who would have thought (Laughter) Are you satisfied with that? (The voice prints).

Jayadeva: Yes, thats fine.

Bhante: Well how far have we got? Page 453. The first prose paragraph. Would someone like to read that?

~nanda:

"Rechungpa thought, "My Guru' 5 words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's. I will now pray the Dakinis to give me back my books." He sat and prayed, and in a short while the Formless Dakini Teachings, together with other books that were beneficial to the Dharma and to Sentient Beings, all miraculously returned to Rechungpa' s hand. He was delighted beyond a measure. He confirmed and imprinted on his mind a faith that Milarepa was Buddha Himself. He thought, "So far, - I have -served the Jetsun in many ways. ~Hereafter, I will serve him even better than before." This vow he kept, and lived up to it all his life."

Bhante: Miii. What does one make of this expression or this statement?

"My Guru's words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's.

Aryamitra: He's speaking from the same state of being or not being. He's speaking from the same state of mind as the Buddha.

Bhante.. Yes. But, er, I mean is there not a difference between a Buddha and a Guru? Is there not some difference between what a Buddha says and what a Guru says? Otherwise there's no difference between the Esoteric Refuge and the Exoteric Refuge, so to speak. In any case how does Rechungpa know, you know, what the Buddha has said? Presumably, you know, he's relying upon the Scriptures. So in what sense are the Buddha's words identical with the Guru's? Or rather the Guru's identical with the Buddhas?

A voice: They're in harmony.

Bhante: They're in harmony. Yes. But in what sort of way are they in harmony?

A voice: They point in the same direction.

Bhante: Yes, but do they point in the same kind of way? I mean, what is the difference between a Buddha and a Guru?

Abhaya: Isn't it the same like the Buddha said about his disciples, the Arahants, there is no difference between my attainment and the attainment of the Arahants. Just that the Buddha comes before and shows the way. Is it related to that?

Bhante: Yes. Even, lets assume for the sake of argument, that there's no difference between, say, the Buddha's spiritual attainment, and Milarepa's. Is there still no difference in the way that they speak? So what would that difference be?

Abhaya: The difference of physical conditioning, and enviornment, and language, and things like that.

Bhante: But put it, maybe, more simply. Did the Buddha, that is to say, Sakyamuni Buddha, know Rechungpa?



A voice: No.

Bhante: Well no. I mean, in a manner of speaking, at least, he didn't so did he therefore, I mean, in his teaching, give anything that was specifically addressed to Rechungpa.

A voice: No.

Bhante: No, he didn't. But did Milarepa give any teaching that was specifically addressed to Rechungpa.

Voices: Yes.

Bhante: So therefore, so far as Rechungpa was concerned what was the difference between the Guru's words and the Buddha's words? (Pause)

Guhyananda: More specific the Guru's

Bhante: Ah. The Guru's words are more specific. But do words which are more specific necessarily differ from words which are more general?

240 Abhaya: Well there is a better chance that you will actually apply them to yourself. If you get them directed to you straight from the Guru.

Bhante: So what is the nature of the difference between the Buddha's words, one could say, and Milarepa's words, directly addressed to...

A voice: Well, personal.

Mike: He's experiencing, I mean, he's actually experiencing the words directly. He's able to sort of practice them directly. Whereas, perhaps, the Buddha's teaching was, you know, a bit, well, slightly removed.

Bhante: So in what sense would it be removed? Because, after all, don't forget, Rechungpa does say that not only the Guru's words are absolutely true they do not differ from the Buddha's. So in what sense do they not differ?

Voices: Well its true

Mike: Isn't it that the Buddha's words have gone through the Guru to -Rechungpa? Through that lineage in a way.

Bhante: Yes.

Mike: So it is the Buddha's words and it is the Masters words.

Bhante: Yes, but there is a difference too. Is there not? Otherwise the Guru is exactly the same as the Buddha. There's no difference between them, and it's assumed in the Vajrayana that there is an important difference between the Buddha and the Guru. That's why you need a Guru as well as the Buddha. It's actually quite simple, what I'm getting at.

Jayadeva: Well the Buddha's words as far as Rechungpa was concerned were words that he'd read about in books.

Bhante: Well not just that.

Kulamitra: The Buddha's words to Rechungpa - they outline general principles.

250 Bhante: Yes, this is the real point. That the Buddha's words in

the Sutras so far as Rechungpa is concerned laid down general principles. But you know, Rechungpa's, I mean Milarepa's teachings apply those general teachings, those general principles, specifically to Rechungpa's own case, against a background of the same spiritual Realization that the Buddha himself had. So when Rechungpa says "My Guru's words are absolutely true and do not differ from the Buddha's . Do not differ from them in the sense that a specific application of a general principle does not differ from the general principle itself. Do you see what I mean? That they're identical in that sense. Not that Milarepa simply says the same thing that the Buddha says. And that is the difference between the function of the Guru and the function of the Buddha. The Buddha, as it were, in relation to, you know, the Buddhist tradition as a whole, lays down general principles, general truths. But the Guru, in principle, having had the same spiritual experience, you know, as the Buddha, gives a much more specific application of whatever the Buddha has said, whatever the Buddha has taught. In accordance with the needs of the disciple with whom he's actually in personal contact. So the words of the Buddha, you know, and the words of the Guru are the same. Their import is the same in the sense that the general is contained in the particular. The general principle is contained in the particular application. (Pause). So, in this way, the Guru's words are identical with the Buddha's words in the same way that the Guru himself is identical with the Buddha. Not that there's no difference between them in actual functioning. The Guru's words are more specific, you know, just as the Guru himself, so to speak, is more specific. (Pause).

Abhaya: I was thinking when you were saying that about your teaching on the Higher Revolution of the Individual which is a particular application of general Buddhist principles contained in specific teachings.

261 Bhante: Yes, right, one could say that. Ideally its contained in,

you know, the Buddha's teaching about the Noble Eightfold Path. But we don't find it there, you know, in the Pali or Sanskrit scriptures in that particular form. That is something which is brought out in accordance with particular circumstances, or the interests of particular people.

Abhaya: Yes. In that sense there's a correspondence between the Buddha and the Guru, where it said like a Guru, or the Buddha is necessary because he sort of clears the undergrowth from the path that is already there. People, in the present day, they may have access to Buddhist Scriptures, they may even read a lot of scriptures, they may not actually see the path.

Bhante: Right. Yes.

Abhaya: Its as if you need the intermediate immediacy of the Guru to clear that path. I'm sure its specific for the individual.

Bhante: Yes, yes, that~ true. Yes. Yes. The path is there but it may not seem like a path.

Abhaya: Which so often doesn't to people who just read the Scriptures. It just seems dry, arid and (inaudible).

Bhante: Right. You just don't see the relevance of it. You just don't see, you know, how it connects. That's true, yes. You think its got nothing to do with you. (Laughs)

Guhyananda: Maybe thats why people sometimes go to India in order to be Buddhists. We had one Glaswegian who thought you had to go to Ceylon to be a Buddhist. In a sense he's thinking that Buddhism means this to be close to the Buddha's general principles.

Bhante: Well not even the general principles but they act as the cultural forms. Did he actually go?

Guhyananda: Yes, he did. He came back pretty quickly though.

Bhante: Oh, thats good.

Guhyananda: He realised that he was barking up the wrong tree.

Bhante: Where did he go?

Guhyananda: He went to Srilanka.

Ehante: What was his report when he came back?

Guhyananda: Em? He was a bit vague but generally he realised that his ideas he had before he went out were quite different. He wanted to become a monk, I think.

Bhante: Well that would have been easy enough, I would have thought.

Guhyananda: But changed his mind inaudible

Bhante: And how long was he there?

Guhyananda: About four or five weeks.

Bhante: Oh well. He might have been put off by the climate or the food.

Guhyananda: He could have been.

Ehante: Well that is interesting because we have a Ceylonese Eriend you probably know, called Siri, who has just had to go back to Ceylon because his father who is very old has just had a stroke, but anyway he's very devoted to the TP.W.B.O. and feels that the F'.W.B.O. should be introduced into Srilanka. And he 's willing to do whatever he can to help. So I've suggested to him that he acquires some land in a quiet spot in the hills and constructs a small meditation centre there. And that F.W.B.O. activities should start up in Srilanka taking the form of a meditation Centre, you know, where meditation Retreats for lay people could be held. Because there's quite enough of, you know, chanting of Pali Scriptures and, you know, even preaching the Dharma, you know, in a way. Though he says they still need to have

~S~3 the Dharma preached (laughs) He doesn't think its being preached

there as well as its being preached by ~.W.B.O. but anyway, I thought it would be good to start with meditation courses for lay people. Because there isn't much provision of that sort of thing in Srilanka, unfortunately. And then we could see where that led. So he has undertaken to do something of this sort. It wouldn't be very difficult to put up a simple building - yes, because in that sort of climate you don't need much in the way of protection from the elements. I suggested that he tries to find some land in the hills, in the midst of the jungle, you know, reasonably accessible but certainly quite secluded and even solitary. And I'm sure something of that sort could be done. So let us see. I just put it to him. I said if he could just do something like that then, on one of my visits to India I could just, you know, fly down to Srilanka, you know, for a few days, just to see what is happening, and then to decide what is to be done next. But I put it to him that this is what he has to do if he really wants to help the IP.W.B.O., you know, find a foothold in Srilanka. He says he has sufficient money himself to be able to get the land and put up a small building. So, alright, let's see. I've asked him to keep in touch with me and let me know what is happening. So, it may be that, you know, some time later it will be possible for people to, you know, to go and practice the Dharma even in Srilanka (Laughter) (Pause).

Anyway, thats just by the by.

So ~Begch~~pa thought, "My Guru's woris are absoThtely trtie ami do not differ froin gtheg Buddha's. I will now ~ray to the Dakinis to give me back my books".

Anyway before we go onto the Dakinis giving back Rechungpa's books. Just something more about that preceding statement or thought. Rechungpa is able to recognise that Milarepa's words are not only absolutely true but that they do not differ from the Buddha's. It is very important to be able to recognise when someone is~saying the

same thing, as either, perhaps, you or even another person, despite the fact that they are using different words. I mean, I have been talking Thite a bit, I think it was mainly in this group about how difficult it is to know other people deeply. So that means, also, its difficult to understand other people. It means its difficult to understand what other people say, you know, what other people are trying to get at. And sometimes if we don't listen vry carefully, or we don't know them, we don't understand them very well. We may think that they're saying someThing quite different from what we are saying, whereas actually, from, perhaps, their point of view, they are not. Maybe they're seeing it from a slightly different angle, or they're putting the emphasis, you know, somewhere differently from what we would put it, but substantially, you know, they are saying the same thing. So if we are more aware of this, and more sensitive to this then we'll tend to avoid many of those arguments which are just about words. Mni. Even if there is some difference it's important not to get bogged down in the difference when in fact there is substantial agreement. You know, and when, they're not in fact saying anything very different from what you have siad. And if there is a substantial agreement well one should be satisfied with that. Not expect complete agreement, you know, down to the last detail. Agreement of ideas does not mean point by point identity of ideas. So, you know, Rechungpa is able to recognise that, you know, what Milarepa says is

substantially the same as what the Buddha says. It's an application of what the Buddha said to more specific circumstances. That is to say to Rechungpa's own. You know, he's able to see that, despite the fact that perhaps the Buddha's idiom is rather different from Milarepa's idiom. (long pause).

So he goes on.

"I will now pray the Dakinis to give me back my books"

~6S

~~~ gsatg ~n~ g~ayei, g andg i~ a short whileg theg For~nless Da~~i Teachings, gtogether g~Ith nther gbeOksg ~th&t ware beneficial gtog the Dbariaa gani to s~ti~t beinggs, all riraculogusly return~~ tog Rechungpa' 5 hand. He was delighted beyond all measure"

So what does this incident mean, do you think? (pause)

Jayadeva: I would have thought it meant meditate rather than pray

Bhante: One would have thought so. But perhpas we shouldn1 t be too scared of the word, you know, pray. It doesn't necessary have a sort of mundane theistic connotation. Again it's a question of trying to understand what is really happening. If, lets say, a Tibetan Buddhist engages in an activity which he renders as prayer. Well, what is actually happening?

Devaraja: Its an invocation.

Bhante: Er. I would say that if the word prayer is used the suggestion is that you are actually asking for someting. Mm? That what you say takes the form of a request. But why do you think that the request is the form that is taken here? The petition almost. (Pause)

Voices: Inaudible

Bhante: Well, for instance, let's say that you are praying. A Tibetan Buddhist is praying. He's not praying to God because he doesn't believe in God. Maybe he is praying to the Buddha, a Bodhisattvas, Dakinis. He's not praying in the sense of asking for any material thing. He is praying in the sense that he is asking for blessings. He's asking for higher understanding. Asking for Wisdom. Asking for Compassion. So what is happening? What is his attitude? You know, why is what he's saying taking the form of a request. That is to say, a prayer? Why is it that he is asking for something? What does that mean?

Devaraja: It means it's a position of receptivity.

Bhante: It's a position of receptivity. Yes.

A voice: Also he feels he hasn't got it.

Bhante: Yes, it expresses the fact that he hasn't got it. That he would like to have it. And, you know, it's a question of, in a way, well, the limitations of language. I mean, if there is some material thing that you haven't got, that you wanted. You just say to someone well please pass me, please pass me the toast. Or whatever it is. Please give me some money. So here are the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, they have got Wisdom, they have got Compassion. You haven't got, you want it. So your aspiration to develop Wisdom, to develop Compassion, takes the form of a request, you know, to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to give you that. Actually, you know very well, you know, as an unformed Tibetan Buddhist, that Wisdom and Compassion are not qualities that can be just handed over to you, just given, you know, to you by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. You know, just like a slice of toast or like money. You know that very well. But, none the less, you continue to use the language of request, The language of petition. Do you see that? And, do you see also why that is?

Jayadeva: It's harnessing the mundane to the Transcendental end.

Bhante: Yes it is. (Pause) Because you cannot help think, I mean language is almost, well, language almost compels you to think of qualities like Wisdom and Compassion as qualities that can be acquired. That can be received. That can even be given. So you use that language. It has a certain emotive value anyway. It does express an openness and receptivity. But not that you really do literally believe that you can be actually given those qualities by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In any case, of course, perhaps, you realise, or you understand, that those Buddhas and Bodhisattvas aren't really separate from you.

They can be regarded as representing or symbolizing unrealized states of one's own being, which one is trying to activate in that particular way. So therefore, prayer, understood in this way is not out of place in Tibetan Buddhism or maybe we could say not out of place in Buddhism generally. And it is a very different attitude from that of meditation. Do you understand that? or do you see that?

Voice: Mm.

Bhante: It's not the same thing as Meditation.

Simon: But, in a sense, it does seem to, give one the feeling of where one's at, so to speak. You know, it does, it sort of deflates any inflated idea, you know, if you're actually asking for something-, you really are emphasising that you haven't got it. That you are in need of it, so to speak. It does seem to emphasise that.

Bhante: Yes.

Jayadeva: Meditating in a shrine room, you still bring in that element of devotion by doing it in a place that is devoted to meditation and higher things than yourself.

Bhante: Yes, right.

Abhaya: It sounds like, that prayer is a psychological need from the way it's put. So, you know, you seem to be saying, well, I know there's, you know, there's not really anything that can be acquired or anything I can get, or anything that's outside me but this is the way that - the way the mind works.

Bhante: I think, though, you know, continue to bear in mind say, the Tibetan Buddhist. I think that that is actually the Tibetan Buddhist's experience. Not that he thinks that Oh! I'll just, make a sort of pretence of asking, so to speak. I know that I've really got to do it myself. But that at the time of praying he actually feels that it is his actual experience that he hasn't got it and that he

is to be given and therefore he has to ask. I mean, he may have, a sort of, intellectual understanding, that, well, its all within him, and he maybe convinced that is a true understanding but that is not his actual experience at the time.

Kulamitra: In other words he's trying to work on a metaphysical level when you're only psychological.

Bhante: I wouldn't say just psychological, though, in a narrow sense.

Abhaya: So this suggests that if you're really into the Puja, doing the puja an~ you're praying to the Protectors, you really do experience the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as definately out there, and something they have got which they can give you in a very real way.

Bhante: Yes, yes. I think one shouldn't sort of, inhibit or overlay that expereince or prevent oneself from experiencing it fully just because one has a purely rational understanding of the fact that, well, you know, that Buddha's and Bodhisattvas are not really out there.

Devaraja: Yes, it seems that that, sort of, way of, that mode of ~tivity, of prayers, its almost like a (inaudible), it's almost like a theatrical need, it's a dramatic need. It's a ritual need which very few of our activities enable us to actually... to act in that way. And it's really important.

3hante:g Because I do know quite a few people, over the years, I think now, mainly within the Friends, that ask, or you know, raised with me, the question that sometimes they do actually feel like praying.

Abhaya: Yes.

Bhante: They feel like praying to the Buddha or Bodhisattvas and so on but then they inhibit that and then they write to me and say, well, is this alright, you know. Because so far as we understand, you know,

in Buddhism there is no such thing as prayer. There's only meditation, and in any case what can the Buddhas do for you? I mean they can't give you anything. You shouldn't ask them for anything mundane anyway. And as for Spiritual things, well, you've got to earn those, you know, by your own efforts. So even though we feel like praying, well, perhaps it is just a weakness that we've got to suppress, you know, what do you say? So I always, you know, reply that if you feel like ~ayingg If that is your actual feeling and experience, well, you

~ ahead with that. And work out the, you know, the "theology"

(inverted commas) of it afterwards. Do you see what I mean? But if it is your genuine aspiration, well don't suppress it. It also is a means of concentrating ones emotional energies. One mustn't forget that also. And, afterall, one is operating within, one is actually experiencing the subject-object duality. And it's as though one has to go through that, rather than just try to negate it on purely rational grounds.

Voices: Yes.

Milte: It's a experience I've had, sort of, in the Puja, very much having a feeling for, well, that you know, you are actually asking for, what, for, the strength, the guidance, and yet, you know well, thats, not, you know, thats not just sort of flop down and its all going to be given to me. But I found very much the other extreme to what you're saying about, that, you know, part of you really blocks your feelings because you think, no, this is, I shouldn't be doing this, this is somehow, well, you know, sort of a Christian thing almost. Sometimes I 've got into quite an unhappy state from doing that because it's almost like thats very solidly blocking off a source of emotion which feels like, when I do let it run, it is really, sort of preparing a very sort of receptive feel.

Bhante: But also perhaps one could say that it is as true to say that the Buddha's and Bodhisattvas are outside you as that they're

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inside you. Because whatever you say, you're still, in effect, operating within the subject-object duality. It is not that they are really inside you, but not outside you, because that assumes that the subject is more real than the object, which it isn't. Both are equally real and equally unreal. I mean you can think of, of that reality which is neither subject nor object, either as a sort of super object (laughs) outside you or as a super subject, you know, inside you. It doesn't really make any difference. It's a bit like, you know, a rather caustic commentator, you know, on the Bishop of Woolwich's new theology and all that. And talking about the 'gro~id of being' and this commentator said afterwards, well don't you think its a tremendous change, and he said 'no', it's just a change over to sky-father to earth-mother. He said its really all the same. It's a bit like that.

Kulamitra: We touched on it yesterday to a certain extent. We were talking about the Dakinis and the muses. ~oreces of inspiration, which, I mean, you do experience to a certain extent. Can be experienced. It's a force from outside coming

Bhante: Well yes, that is the actual experience of many poets. Well, it can be interpreted, or looked at, well, as something that is welling up from within but their actual experience is of a force coming from definately outside and coming into them.

Abhaya: We were saying again, that at the beginning of a poem, by involing the muses, I mean, sometimes you read it like just a pure formality, something that they do, but in fact, maybe, they really feel this. Actually do invoke the muses.

Ehante: Well, some poets anyway. Well, Milton seems to have had a genuine experience of that sort, of some kind. And ~ie~~gche certainly did though he didn't speak in terms of the muses exactly.

.261 Abhaya: Do you ever feel that Virananda? (laughter)

Virananda: No.

Bhante: Well he's in a state of constant inspiration. (Laughter)

Simon: Even with the, you know, religious prophets or things like that. I mean you do get people who have definately had an experience of something higher entering their lives from outside, but then rigidly interpreting it in the light of Theistic tradition.

Bhante: Yes, right, yes, mm.

Jayadeva: It would seem to be almost impossible to build great works of art and things like that if you felt that it all came from within yourself, because there'd be no need to give, like,

expression to it, somehow.

Mike: It's a bit limiting isn't it? If it's just your, sort of, your kind of, crummy everyday self its come from its very boring. (Laughter). There's no expansiveness to it. No vast kind of stage with people by (pause) magic (laughter).

Jayadeva: I mean, if you took all the archetypal Bodhisattvas, and just thought of them as being aspects of yourself.

Bhante: Well, that is true, that they are aspects of your deeper self..

Jayadeva: Yes but

Bhante: But that is assuming that you are speaking of the reality which is neither subject nor object in terms exclusively of subject. And it's no less valid to think of it exclusively in terms of object. (mm?). So they're just as much out there, in reality, as they are in here. It's not that it is more true to think of them as existing in the depths of your own being, you know, it's not any more valid to think of them in those terms than to think of them in terms of ~isting way beyond anything that you can experience or conceive of~g

Abhaya: So would you say that the need of pray or the urge to pray, in this sense, would, like, continue until the Bodhisattva has become a Buddha, or until a very high level of Spiritual attainment...?

Bhante: Oh yes, I would, definately. Yes. I mean, it's as though, one can either try to call up from within or call down from above. Yes? But it comes to the same thing. Mm. Because, in a way, I mean, language has severe limitation here, you are trying to, so to speak, introduce into your experience, you know, within the, you know, the subject-object duality something which is beyond and which can be thought of either as below the subject or above the object. If you think of it as being below the subject you think of it as something emerging from within the depths of your own being. And if you think of it as something beyond the object you think of it as something, you know, sort of transcendentally aloof to which you must direct your prayers and aspirations and so on.

Abhaya: Well, this is what annoys me rather about I wouldn't say normal Christians, but Christian intellectuals, who are now going away from God as Supreme Being, and if one spoke to them in this sort of way their retort would be 'Oh that's God ~h~ng Oh yes, we agree, we're on the sam

Bhante: There is, there is a difference. There is a difference in several ways. One, we do not postulate the Buddha, even conceived of as a Buddha to whom you can pray, as exercising any sort of Cosmic i[n]jection as creator and preserver and so on. Also for Christians God is genuinely object. The God to whom they pray is genuinely an object. Part of the objective universe so to speak. But for the Riddhist, the Buddha as object though experience as object, in Reality is only, what I call, a symbolic object. That is to~~y, or a psuedo-object. That is to say Ultimate Reality is conceiv~(l of as in Buddhism, as neither object nor subject. In that Ultimate Reality

the subject/object distinction does not exist. But at the moment our experience and our expression is entirely within the subject/object framework. The minute we think of that which is beyong subject and object distinction we make it an object. Yes? But if we, if we postulate an object, you know, that is to say, the Buddha, which symbolises that which is neither subject nor object, that Buddha object is an object only in a purely formal and symbolic sense. Whereas God, the God of Christian theology, is an object in a real sense. Do you see the difference?

Kulamitra: They reify their 'Ground of Being'.

Bhante: Yes, so, so, so if you pray to the God of Christianity you are a real subject praying to a real object but in Buddhism, if you as a Buddhist pray to the Buddha you are a symbolic subject praying to a symbolic object so as to transcend altogether the subject/object duality. That is the difference.

Mike: In terms of experiences which would (Bhante interrupts)

Bhante: Though,just to add to that, just for a minute, you may experience yours~elf, or will experience yourself as a real subject praying to a real object but you will know, on reflection, that that is not so, and, you know, when you have, you know, a more Ultimate experience you know, that will be transcended.

What about the

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

~a: that God is immanent suggesting that he is subject as well as object.

Bhante: Well he is immanent as Creator. Well they try to make God, in that case both object and subject. Whereas the point of Buddhism

is neither object nor subject.

Simon: In terms of people's experience, people have these very strong experiences of something, something new and higher entering from outside. Is there a distinction between, you know that when it's transcendental and that when it's still mundane, or is it just a ~estion of interpretation? I mean, I'm thinking about say you experience that as the Bodhisattvas or you experience that maybe just as the muse or as the voice of God or something like that.

Bhante: Well what is meant by experiencing it as mundane or experiencing it as Transcendental? Because one could say, to the extent that,

you know, the subject/object duality persists there is no question of any transcendental experience. There is only an object which you postulate as transcendental but you're not actually experiencing it as transcen~ental because you're experiencing it as an object. The more you experience it not as an object the more you you experience it as the transcendental. I mean, the more, I say, through your subject/object type experience, the experience of the transcendental, which is neither subject nor object, perculates. It's as though the subject/object experience becomes progressively more and more diaphanous, you could say.

Jayadeva: I thought,I was going to say,I thought you'd, in a tape, you'd said there were four, there was the four stages of consciousness. There was subject, then subject/object, then transcendental which was reality seen as an object.

Bhante: Yes. Yes. But, er, I mean you cannot but see reality as an object from within the framework of the dualistic mind. But the object that you see, to the extent that you really experience it as an object, to that extent it isn't Ultimate Reality. But you can experience it, you know, as an object, so to speak, thinking of it as

Ultimate Reality and, you know, as your experience deepens you actually experience less and less as an object opposed to a subject. I mean the line of demarcation between you and it, so to speak, becomes finer and finer. You, as it were, merge into it, or it merges into you, in a manner of speaking. (Pause).

(?): Would there be different types of people, so to speak, who would see,- who would relate to it in either subject or object. Would it ~me from a different attitude if you related to it, say subject

Bhanto It could be, I'm not sure about this but it could correlate with the introvert and the extrovert attitudes. I've not thought about it at all, you know, systematically, but there could be some such connection. I'm only suggesting that as a possibility. I can't say that I really know or have come to any conclusion. (Pause).

Mike: Jungian psychology refers to the disturbed introverted mind as the energies lying within, sees images within himself, di5t~gbing images within himself, while a disturbed extrovert sees people outoide as being threatening, so if, one was to turn that around the other way, a positive flow, introvertly, and energy was going in a positive inward energy flow then I suppose you'd be experiencing if from within, but if you had a positive external flow being an extrovert, you'd see things from without. In terms of God. I suppose.

Bhante: Well no, not always in terms of God, I would have thought Bodhisattvas out there.

Jayadeva: But there would be a distinct. .. surely a distinction, in a sense, that even if you experience it outside, once that experience had gone you wouldn't feel as though it's something that you had to appropriate from sort of, like, historical beings.

Bhante: Right, yes, yes, yes. (long pause). So anyway what does all this come b~ck to? That we have to be very careful not to dismiss prayer or think of prayer necessarily in

Theistic and dualistic terms.

266 Or not to think necessarily that there's no place for prayer in Buddhism.

(Pause). Also, to go back to one of the points I made, that underlines the fact that one should not, sort of, deny one's own actual experience, in the interests of a rational understanding of things, even though that understanding, as such, maybe perfectly correct. You've got to proceed from your experience, whatever the limitations of that experience may be. Or you've got to keep close to your own experience. (Pause).

A voice: In a more mundane way you'd say, well, it's your emotions that you must proceed from.

Bhante: Yes, yes. Well in connection with prayer of this kind, obviously the emotions are very much involved. So to cut yourself off from prayer would be to cut yourself off from well at least, a large part of your emotions. (long pause). Do you think there is any significance in the fact that Rechungpa prays especially to the Da~kinis? Apart from the fact, of course, that, the Da~kinis are particularly connected with the Teachings that are dealt with in the books that he wanted to get back.

Mike: Well, they seem to be the positive. They seem to represent the positive qualities or causes which counteract Rechungpa's obstinacy.

Bhante: You could say the Dakinis are themselves prayers. Yes? Do you see what I mean? (Pause) Well the Dakinis are forces of aspiration. Or you could say, perhaps, especially aspirations directed towards the Transcendental. So they are prayers. So they are prayers. Embodied prayers. Just like the offering Goddesses. Mm. (Long pause) I mentioned, the other day, I think it was in this group, that the word Dakini is connected with or derived from the Sanskrit word for space or direction. But we didn't go at all into the significance of that. Space, of course, you could say, represents the void. Represents Sunyata. Represents, you know, Ultimate Reality. Yes? In the sense that Ultimate Reality offers no obstruction, no impediment, it's a

state of Absolute freedom in which you can, as it were, move about with complete freedom. So, you know, what, therefore, does the Dakini represent?

A voice: Forces of freedom.

Bhante: In a way the forces of freedom. Yes. It represents the possibility of movement in that open dimension in any direction. So the sky is full of Dakinis.

Kulamitra: Otherwise we would have a rather static understanding of the Void.

Bhante: A, sort of, static Absolute. (Long pause).

Abhaya: It also reminds me of what you were saying about meditation. If you develop meditational consciousness the mind becomes more

malleable (Inaudible)

Bhante: Yes right. More Dakini like (long pause)

"He sat and prayed, and in a short while the Formless Dakini Teachings, together with other tools that were beneficial to the Dharma and to sentient beings, all miraculously returned to Rechungpa's hand. He was delighted beyond all measure".

So what do you think happened? What does it signify? What does it represent?

Mike: I can't help thinking, you know, that Milarepa's got a hand in it. That he's actually making the books re-appear for Rechungpa.

Bhante: Could be.

Kulamitra: I don't see how the Formless Dakini Teachings could actually appear in his hand. I tend to see it as quite a spiritual experience.

Bhante: (Bhante interrupts). Well, he's referring to the books. He's referring to the books, you know. Remember. I mean he had those Teachings written down in books. And, you know, Milarepa burned all the books dealing with evil Nantras and so on, but the books apparently dealing with the Formless Da-kint Teachings were hid away in a crevice of a rock and it's those books which Rechungpa has now got back by praying to the Dakinis. So what do you think that represents?

Abhaya: It means That~he had these all within him anyway. That's the point he missed, he was looking for an outside

Bhante: In a sense. It's as though that it's suggesting that just mere actual physical possession of the books is of no value at all. What you also need is the, you know, the understanding, is the spirit of the Teachings written down in the books. So you haven't really got the books until you've got that spirit. So when he developed the right spirit, when he prayed to the Dakinis. When he put himself in touch with the forces of inspiration. When he put himself in touch with those very spiritual forces from which the books came. Then The books really did come into his possession. Then he did become the master of those teachings. Do you see what I mean? (Long pause)

I mean you don't possess, really possess books unless you understand what they're all about. Otherwise it's only, you know, so much waste paper that you own. (Pause) Otherwise, you know, you could have all the Buddhist Scriptures on your shelves but perhaps you haven't read them. Or maybe you've read them without understanding. Maybe you've read them and misunderstood. So, you know, strictly speaking, the Scriptures are not there on your shelves. You haven't got the Scriptures. You haven't read the scriptures. So therefore, you could say, that it's only when you've penetrated the real meaning of those scriptures, when you've had some realisation of it, then you've really got those books on your shelves. So it's like, you know, unless and until Rechungpa was, so to speak, really in touch with the Dakinis he didn't have those books. They only came back, so to speak, into his hand when he developed the right spiritual attitude towards them. (Pause) So the incident seems to mean something like that.

Not to say, of course, that it didn't literally happen too. And "He was delighted beyond all measure" He seems to be rather an extreme sort of character. He was delighted once before, wasn't he? When was that? Was it in this chapter?

A voice: When he saw the goats.

Bhante: Yes, when he saw the goats. And also, it must have been in the other chapter, when he was allowed, after all, to go off to India. You know, when Milarepa finally gave his

permission, for Rechungpa to go to India. Even though he hadn't advised him to, in fact he'd advised him against going, Rechungpa was really delighted. So here he's delighted too, beyond all measure. But do you think there was any difference between these two delights. On that occasion he was delighted because he'd got his own way. So on this occasion is he delighted because he's got his own way?

Abhaya: It seems to be more of a spiritual

Ehante: It seems to be more of a spiritual delight. He's not simply delighted to have got the books back at long last after all this insistence on having them back. He's not just glad to have them back or delighted to have them back. I mean, perhaps, he's delighted to have the means of benefiting many sentient beings. Perhaps he's delighted to be in touch with the Dakinis. Delighted, in a sense, to be reconciled, you know, with them, because they couldn't have been very pleased with, you know, his having the books of their teaching with him, in the wrong sort of way. (Pause)

So "He was delighted beyond all measure~. " -"He got confirmed and imprint~ on his mind a faith that Milarepa was Buddha Himself-. He thought, "so far, I have served the- Jetsun in many ways. Hereafter, I will serve him even better than before". This vow he kept, and lived up to it all his life".

This also brings up the questions of vows. He made a vow, and we've told kept it. "Lived up to it all his life' That isn't any easy thing to do, is it? What do we mean by a vow? What do we understand

by this word, vow? I think there's still quite a bit of, I won't say, confusion, but unclarity in people's minds about vows.

Jayadeva: Does this refer to what you were saying about promise. We sort of, think that the important thing is the taking the vow. Whereas the important thing is keeping it. So, in a sense, you haven't really taken a vow if you haven't kept it for the period that you said you were going to keep it. Unless you act upon it you haven't really taken a vow.

Bhante: Well, you could say that. But that might be regarded as a bit sophistical. That if you break it well you haven't really taken

it. That you cannot in fact break a vow.

Jayadeva: Well just in the sense they're not something that you easily take.

Bhante: Certainly not something that you easily take. But what does the taking of a vow really pre-suppose, in you.

A voice: You're integrated enough to -

Bhante: Yes, it pre-supposes quite a high degree of integration. (Pause) Because, you know, the presupposition is that you are able to be completely single-minded. That there is not going to be some factor within yourself that you haven't taken into consideration, that is going to intervene and cause you to break the vow. (Pause)

Abhaya: But isn't there an element of uncertainty in one when one makes the vow. Because, in a sense, there is - you make the vow because there is a certain weakness which you have to overcome, so ...

Bhante: Yes, yes, but not necessarily. It can be a purely positive vow. Like a Bodhisattva vow. (Pause) You know, you may make a vow to perform a certain good action without there necessarily being a weakness that it is specifically intended to counteract.

Abhaya: But in the case of that sort of vow where there is a weakness, I mean, there is a lack of integration, and you make your vow, in a sense, to become more integrated and there-fore to overcome that weakness.

Bhante: But that would suggest that in order to make and keep the vow, there still needs to be a very high degree of integration, well,

well over 50% so to speak. Otherwise you just simply will not be able to keep the vow because it would be very difficult to keep it by sheer force of will. So a simple vow is not by itself, you know, the means of overcoming a serious weakness in which a great, quite a big part of your personality and quite a large amount of your energy is involved. I mean, one of the vows that people often take, or have taken, is the vow of celibacy or vow of chastity. So if you're conscious that, for instance, you are, you have a serious let's say weakness in this particular area, and that your sexual passions are unusually strong, well you would be very ill-advised just to try to deal with the matter by taking a vow. I mean you need a whole sort

of regimen and way of life, I mean, to help you to bring that particular aspect of yourself under control, so to speak. If you make a vow to be celibate say for a year, and if those sort of passions were about 60% of you, well after a few weeks, or after a few months, you'd be really struggling hard and you'd have a terrible conflict on your hands and you probably would loose.

Or even if you won it would be, just a sort of, technical victory (laughter) which wouldn't do you much good. Do you see what I mean? So, you know, a vow of celibacy would not be the means of dealing with that particular, you know, situation, even if you really had made up your mind to deal with it. You need the support, for instance, much more, of, you know, circumstances which were conducive to the non-arousal of sexual passions. Maybe particular types of meditation. Even a particular diet. But just a vow would

not be a means of dealing with that situation.

Guhyananda: A vow may have a spiritual element in it where a resolution wouldn't have. You might resolve to do something and

Bhante: Well, a vow is usually more solemn because you, as it were, call the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to witness. You call, perhaps, fellow members of the Spiritual Community to witness your vow. This is all a means of bolstering it up. Because you would not like to let them down. You would not like to disappoint them, and so on.

Simon: So what is the real place of a vow? What are the right circumstances for making a vow?

Bhante: Well, in the first place, a reasonable, quite a reasonably high degree of integration. A vow, well a vow is not a substitute for other spiritual measures. (Long pause) Also, I think, a vow should relate to something very specific and concrete. For instance, you make a vow that you will do the metta-bhavana meditation one hour every day or every morning. Absolutely without fail for a year. That is a sort of, you know, suitable vow. Something specific. And, you know, really sort of tie yourself down. I mean, for instance, somebody told me that he madge a vow I think it is to do the Mindfulness of Breathing for half an hour everyday. So I said thats too vague. I said what do you mean by a day. Do you mean one period of twenty-four hours? Or do you mean, duirng the hours of light on a certain calender day?. You know, what do you mean by a day? Have it absolutely clear in your own mind. (Long pause)

Abhaya: (Laughs) Did his jaw drop?

Bhante: It did a bit. (Laughter) But he saw the point. Yes. And he saw it would help, you know, if he had that very clear in his own mind. Otherwise the mind will start finding little loopholes (Laughter).

So is it every, you know, twelve o'clock midnight to twelve o'clock ~idnight, is that one unit? Within that one unit of time, you know,

must you do half and hour of Mindfulness of Breathing? Is that what you mean? Be very clear about that. Otherwise you might find, well, you have in a sense kept your vow, but a sort of thirty-six hour period has gone by without your actually doing the Mindfulness of Breathing practice. (Long pause) So a vow must be very specific. You must be very clear what it actually is that you are pledging yourself to observe. (Pause) And a vow should certainly stretch you quite a bit but it shouldn't be something which is, well, given your particular temperament and, you know, spiritual capacities, it shouldn't be something which is a bit hazardous, or a bit, you know, something your friends might doubt, you know, that you would really be able to carry out. Or one might say, you know, a vow is that, with regards to which, you must be able, really to commit yourself to do, with the force of your whole being. With the complete conviction that, yes, you are absolutely going to do it. There mustn't be any sort of doubt or hesitation and that again suggests that you know yourself really quite well. It mustn't be a fool-hardy sort of thing, you know, based on an inadequate knowledge of yourself. It mustn't be a mere wish. It must be a real determination, a real resolution, a real conviction, a real commitment.

Simon: But if it's a real determination with the force of your whole being behind it why is a vow actually necessary? You know if you re really going to do it

Bhante: Well it gives you an additional enforcement by, I mean, calling upon Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and members of the Spiritual Community to witness. Mm. (Pause) But if of course there's no difficulty at all and you're going to do it anyway, well, you don't even think about a vow, or even think about a resolution. It's just something that you do. (long pause)

A voice: Ypu might want to do it just as a, to experiment. Supposing you wanted to renounce something, to see what the implications were,

and what's going on in the situation.

Bhante: Mm. Well that would be quite valid, provided, you know, you had sufficient strength of mind and were sufficiently integrated to be able to carry out the experiment.
(long pause)

Devaraja: Would it be better, I mean I found that I - er - that it was easier to be celibate for a time without a vow, in actual fact. It's almost as though I approached it experimentally and I sort of said, well, you know, let's give it another day. In a way it felt more there's more tension that way, you know. (pause).

Ehante: Well, with regard to any activity, if there is a fixed terminal point there is a tendency to look forward to that point. Mm. Do you see what I mean? That even say with regard to something positive, like a study Retreat, you know, if you know, that it is going to tend on a certain day or at a certain time there is a tendency, you know, to, to sort of start counting the days. Mm. And, you know, that does interfere, to some extent, slightly at least, with your spontaneity. It also, in the case you mentioned it could also have something to do with some peoples' not to feel very happy being tied down or under an obligation, or obliged to do something, or compelled to do something, even though it's they themselves that are doing the obliging and the compelling, so to speak. You feel more free, you know, extending from day to day, as though, well, it's still within your own, your own control. The original vow was within your own control but you, you know if you made it, say, you, six months earlier. Well it doesn't feel like your decision. Even though you know, yes it was your decision it feels, you know, your experience is that it is something imposed upon you. It's the past self imposing it on the present self. You know, whereas, you know, if the present self can, you know, decide freshly each day, well it seems

as though it's more with~ your control. As though you're more free and doing what you want to do. It has all those sorts of implications.

A voice: Also having, you know, called on the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and your brothers in the Dharma, and stuff, when you made the vow you can, afterwards, you can project authority onto them, can't you?

Bhante: Yes, yes. Well you can, so to speak, project authority onto yourselves. You know, your own past self.

Simon: Yes, you can do that without taking a vow. You can get into that state of mind. Well making part of yourself an authority figure, at, sort of you know watching in....

Mike: I think the best time to make a vow is when you feel more metta towards yourself (Pause).

Bhante: Mm. Anyway perhaps we should stop there for our morning coffee. "And lived up to it all his life" (Laughter) Alright then.

Mike: Perhaps it would be a good idea if Simon asked that question now.

Bhante: Yes, that's what I meant.

Simon: Right, yes. What I wanted to say was I was just wondering if you could say what you thought passivity was, as an opposite to activity. Because, well, because of the case that I gave, that you can sense perhaps that somebody is in a passive state, and yet, it might seem, you might feel it's quite clear to you that they are, and yet to them they, you know, it might be quite difficult to get them to see that. To realise that. Or to realise it in yourself.

Bhante: Well, essentially passivity is the state in which you are acted upon. Mm? Whereas activity is the state in which you act upon others. Or upon yourself. I mean, others include yourself. That is it includes yourself as the object of your own action. So if you're in a passive state you're in a state in which things are acting upon you all the time without your acting upon things. And it would seem that this is not, on the whole, a very healthy state

for somebody to be in. A state in which they are being acted upon the whole time. Mm? So when you, when you say the Yogi, you know, goes into town, what he has to make sure of that he is not simply in a state of being acted upon the whole time. Because if you are acting upon things then that is counteracting, you know, they're acting upon you. To the extent that you are acting upon things, I mean, they are not acting upon you.

A voice: Does that correlate directly with reactivity and creativity? That passivity is a state of reactivity and activity is a state of creativity?

Bhante: I don't think it quite corresponds. No, because you could react and it would be an act, but it would not be a creative act.

A voice: Right.

Bhante: Do you see what I mean? So the idea will be to be active and to be creatively active. Rather than to be passive.

Simon: It seems that you could easily say, I mean, it seems, in a way, easy enough to get somebody's energies going but actually to perform skilful acts on top of that is quite another thing altogether almost~ I mean, I was thinking of the opposite of that, that, well, I mean, this is just happened in the past quite recently, that I found that, you know, you approach somebody with that sort of point, that you really feel that they are being quite passive, and that they retort with the fact that they're not being passive. That they're being receptive, you know.

Bhamte Well, this raises the question of what is the difference between passivity and receptivity. So what is the difference?

Simon: Well, it seemed to me that sort of like receptivity actually presupposes a certain amount of energy flowing. A certain amount of

well awareness and activity in a creative way. That, sort of, being receptive is creative.

Bhante: But it's almost as though, when you're being receptive, I mean to somebody acting upon you, it's as though you're sort of almost joining in his activity upon you. You're affirming it, positively.

Jayadeva: It's like, you were talking about the orchestra as a spiritual community - they're all playing but they must be receptive towards each other or else they just go off doing their own sort of like, solo pieces.

Bhante: Yes, and receptive to the conductor. I think quite often people think that they're being receptive when they're merely being passive. And the two are quite distinct.
(Pause)

Abhaya: How would you relate this to what you, what we finished up with yesterday about the Great Relaxation of the Mahamudra. Is that, in a sense, there is still an activity there?

Bhante: Well, yes, and no. You know, I mean, really activity and passivity, in the terms that we've defined them, you know, have significance only within the framework of the subject-object duality. But the Mahamudra is supposed to go beyond that. So it isn't a question of, well, a subject being passive to an object, nor of an object acting upon a subject. Or it is not a question of a subject being active in relation to another subject. It goes beyond that altogether. (Pause)

Jayadeva: So there must be receptivity in order for teamwork to take place? Because otherwise it's just sort of people passively obedient, obeying somebody providing all the drive. And sooner or later you actually will get a reaction from within those people. You won't actually get co-ordination of energies.

Bhante: Yes, indeed. It's not enough to get people to do as you tell them, you have to enlist their active and intelligent co-operation if you're not to have a reaction of that sort, eventually.

(pause) And, sometimes, you have a situation in which people want you to take all the responsibility. Yes. They don't want the responsibility. So that means that you have to tell them what to do. On the other hand they don't want to be told what to do. So you can only share in the responsibility if you are active. Yes? You know, you can't sort of, you know, hand over the responsibility with the whole project to somebody and then expect not to be told what to do. This is what you sometimes find. If you want to share in the decision making you must have a share in the responsibility. That seems to be, you know, one of the difficulties in industry at present. But we won't go into that in detail.

Simon: That does go back to the thing that, you know, when perhaps in a team situation, say, one person is becoming very passive and that you - a person who is more tended towards, well, activity, and at least trying to become creatively active, you know, at least try to take responsibility, it's like they try to point that out to that other person, but they react. And they just say, well, you know, you're being authoritative. And yes they're quite happy to sit back and, sort of, say, yes, yes, yes, all the way along.

Bhante: But you see, in a co-op situation, while there will naturally be some variation between people in respect of passivity and activity, willingness or unwillingness to take on

responsibility, there cannot be too great a difference. You cannot have anybody in a co-op who just wants to be told what to do. Or just wants to avoid responsibility because, usually, even though you want to avoid responsibility you don't really like being told what to do. So you can't really have anybody like that in a co-op. Unless he very freely acknowledges his weakness and is really trying hard to overcome it. But someone who just wants to, you know, find a secure corner in a co-op, and, you know, just let other people exercise the responsibility and especially if he doesn't

want to be told what to do. Either he's not a fit member for a co-op.

Simon: It's a total contradiction of a, sort of, idea of creative growth isn't it?

Ehante: Yes, indeed. It's doubtful whether he's even suitable as an employee of a co-op, you know, not to speak of a co-op member.

Simon: I mean, that's a sort of extreme example, but I mean, as you say, you do get degrees of that within, you know, within the co-op.

Bhante: On the other hand, you see, you know, the other extreme, you can't afford to have within co-ops people who just want to boss and to domineer. That is the other extreme. Yes? They may be very capable, very efficient, but if they're not prepared to work co-operatively they've no place in the co-op.

Simon: Well they lack receptivity presumably to the others (longpause).

Bhante: I think it is very important to distinguish passivity from receptivity. Mm. As well as from, you know, activity - genuine activity.

Mike: It's very difficult. It's very difficult to be receptive. I mean, taking music for a particular thing, um, I mean as far as classical music is concerned. I just don't know what the approach is, you know.

Bhante: Well first of all one has to listen (Laughs).

Mike: Well, I know. I fall asleep.

Guhyananda: It ties up with masculinity and femininity, men and women. Like women are quite often thought to be receptive because they're women. But its not necessarily so.

Ehante: No. Well sometimes their so-called receptivity is indifference. (Laughter) You know, if you say to a woman, oh I think I'm going to become a Buddhist, you know, they say "o.k. dear" (Laughter).

As if you've said I think I'm going to become a Hindu. "O.K. dear". It's not that, you know, that she's being receptive to your, you know,

ISO becoming a Buddhist or becoming a Hindu. She doesn't really care

either way. You can do what you please, as regards to Religion - so far as she is concerned. Unless of course 5h~~5 an ardent Catholic (Laughter) You know, so long as your relationship doesn't remain unchanged. You know, she doesn't mind. Because she's indifferent. So she isn't being receptive to the idea of being a Buddhist or a Hindu. You know, she's just indifferent. It doesn't matter. It doesn't mean very much to her.

END OF TAPE

RECHUNGPA ' S REPENTANCE - DAY 6 TAPE 12

281 S: So I think that very often women are being 'receptive', inverted commas, to men's ideas, in this sort of way. The men who are enthusiastically expanding their ideas to the woman, to the women, think that they are being really receptive and taking it all in, well the truth of the matter is that they don't really care very much about it. They don't care enough about it, or about that particular matter, to disagree or to resist. They are just probably thinking about something else entirely. Yes? And just going along with it, with whatever the man happens to be into. It isn't a matter of importance for them. So that is not receptivity.

Devaraja: I don't know whether this has a bearing but I've noticed that in general that women tend to respond to the energy that you put into a point rather than the actual points themselves.

S: Well men do too, come to that, very often.

Peter ?: They'd be more receptive if somebody was arguing with them, but in the end of the day, through the argument they'd come to actually be open to some of the things that you were saying.

S: Yes, yes.

Jayadeva: You know, one thing I find about this whole receptivity thing, which I don't agree with, is when someone says that being receptive means doing something the way someone else does it.

S: Ah, well, yes I have been thinking about this quite a bit recently, not so much in connection with receptivity, as in connection with openness or alleged openness, or alleged absence of openness, because one does sometimes hear or one hears reports of people saying things like, "Well he's just not open to me". But when you go into it you find, well there has been a long discussion but the other person has simply not agreed with what the first person says, so the first person reports this as "He's not very open to me". But this is not necessarily so. The failure to accept your point of view may be due to lack of openness, but on the other hand, it may be due to a genuine disagreement. Simply seeing things in a different way and from a different point of view. So I think we must be very careful not to evaluate when we should be simply describing. The fact of the matter is, he did not agree with what you were saying. That is what you should say. "He did not agree with me." You should not say, "He was not open to me". I mean, you could perhaps say that if you really thought it and perhaps if he was not

282 S: (Cont.) open to you, but that the fact that he disagreed with you should not be described in terms of his not being open to you. A lot of that sort of thing goes on I'm afraid. I'm talking about with the 'Friends'. (Pause)

Simon: Why is that? I mean, why do people want to, sort of, assess a situation like that

S: Well, to assert that somebody is not open is a dishonest way of continuing the argument.

Javadeva: In a sense it's a failure - to recognise - well those aggressive qualities which you maybe have to bring up. I mean, because an active disagreement between people is, can really spark something off.

S: But, basically it's a lack of understanding of what openness really consists in. Somebody - openness doesn't just mean agreeing with what somebody says. Someone can be very open to what you say and sincerely listen to it and try to understand it but still not agree. So it doesn't mean that he hasn't been open to you. So agreement is not the proof of openness necessarily because someone may agree. I mean, well, as I said, in the way a woman agrees with a man very often. Or they may disagree without, you know, failing to be, to be open at all.

Kulamitra ?; Because this whole question of fierce friendship which the Newsletter is all about

S: Yes, it's as though one is trying to put the other person in the wrong, by saying that they, well, I mean, "They are not open to me". You want them to agree with you. You want them to accept their point of view, your point of view. They have not done that. So you cannot accept simply, you've been unable to convince them. You accuse, you attack their motivation. You say they have not been open to you. They're closed to you, etc., etc., yes? I have seen many instances of this in reports of discussions and so on.

Devaraja: What mainly from, sort of Co-op minutes and things like that?

S: Well, Co-op minutes and Order Reporting-In and so on.

Peter ?; In fact, if you're really open to somebody as a person, I'd have thought that it's inevitable that you're likely to find a lot of things ... which you do actually disagree with without stopping being open to them. I mean, it would be strange if you agreed on every single point.

S: But it's a, it's a particular instance of this attributing motives to people. Or perhaps an even more particular instance, as I've said, evaluating instead of merely describing. Or being under the impression that you are describing when, in fact, you are evaluating. Do you see what I mean? It's a loaded description. For instance, to give you an example. You might ask somebody, 1, Well, did you have, well, what sort of a, you know, what sort of a contact,

what sort of discussion did you have with somebody?" Then they say, "Oh he was being very aggressive." That tells you absolutely nothing about the discussion. It's pure evaluation. Yes? Because that person might have put just a few logical points disagreeing with you and that is reported as "He was being very aggressive". Which is a purely emotive sort of evaluation, not a description at all. So, sometimes when discussions are reported to me I don't get somebody's argument, I get purely subjective impressions of an evaluative nature. This tells me absolutely nothing at all about the content of the discussion. (Pause) So one gets these pseudo-reports, full of expressions like - "Well somebody wasn't very open and somebody else is very aggressive" or even, "Somebody was very heavy." But what does that mean? You're not even told perhaps what they said or what they were talking about. You may be told all that they started being very heavy. Do you see what I mean? So if anybody is in the position of writing minutes or reports of any kind please bear this in mind. It is what it is, what it is is points and arguments and reasons. Not emotive - your emotive evaluations of what somebody said or how they acted. Otherwise one is left completely in the dark after reading these so called reports. Do you understand the sort of thing I'm getting at? It's as though, very often, people are unable to make this sort of distinction which is so important and necessary. (Long pause) So, for instance, if you, if you say that, well, you put forward a certain idea but other people were not open to that idea, it sort of absolves you from finding any reasons in support of your idea. They are just supposed to be open. If they don't like it you immediately say, well, "They are not open to it". Which suggests some sort of wrong attitude on their part because everybody agrees that openness is a virtue - openness is a positive quality, so if one can sort of convict somebody for a lack of openness you've at once put him in the wrong. He's sort of lost the argument, so to speak. But in fact there hasn't been an argument. You've just labelled him as wrong or negative. "Oh that's right, yes. I got a very negative response." Meaning somebody didn't agree with you. (Laughter) Not that someone flew into a violent temper and hit you over the head with a chair. (Laughter) No. But somebody disagreed with your idea or didn't go along with it. So this word, 'negative' is used so ambiguously and dishonestly. It can be that some, I mean, negative can mean that simply somebody said "No" which is fair enough. That can be descriptive. But the word negative as we use it is generally

S: (Cont.) ... so loaded emotionally, so that if you say that, "Well, somebody adopted a negative attitude to my suggestion" it doesn't mean that they became full of anger and resentment and hatred when you made that suggestion, but simply that perhaps, quite mildly, they disagreed with it or didn't think it a particularly good idea, for certain reasons that they put forward. This is all summarised in the minutes, perhaps, as he or she was quite negative about it. (Laughter) Or about people, "He is quite negative about her." Well he might have good reason to be. Or it might be that simply he put forward certain points of somewhat critical nature, which may have been quite objectively valid but this might get reported as "He was very negative about her" - as though it is some wrong attitude on his part. So we have to really watch this. These pseudo-descriptions which are really evaluations - highly subjective evaluations. (Pause) And you know, impugning, indirectly impugning other people's motives and attitudes. (Pause)

Mike: It gets back to what we were saying about (Laughter)

S: I'm wondering whether there might be an example. I hope not. You don't get them in every set of minutes but they do turn up quite frequently.

Guhyananda ?: Will the minutes be censored in future? (Laughter)

S: No, there is nothing there. (Pause) You know the sort of thing I mean though, you must have come across it on various occasions but maybe have felt that something's wrong but have not been quite able to put your finger on it. (agreement)

Kulamitra: It's a very difficult thing with minutes as well because other people reading them often take them as being objective so if you're minuted as saying you felt negative about so and so, if they don't come and grab hold of you and say "What have you got against me?" then you're astonished because you don't know what you have supposed to have said.

S: Yes. Yes.

Mike: I can't see why the neg ... the reports are always edited so much, they seem to be

S: Which reports are you referring to?

Mike: The co-operative reports.

S: Well I suppose it's just for reasons of space. You can't have absolutely every word. But a summary should be a factual summary. You shouldn't try, sort of, solve the problems, so to speak, but just giving purely subjective impressions. (Pause) Well, for instance, you can say that so and so dis-agreed with the proposal, not so and so was very negative about the proposal. You see the difference?

Mike: But what one tends to get isn't, is not subjective impressions but if you like, the spiritual parlance attached to what actually goes on. If someone wasn't able to do something it's reported as being his energies aren't properly channelled. (Laughter) (to do with the

Three Jewels (Laughter) and the said offender has taken a vow that the next three months he will do this to expiate his ego (Laughter) (unclear)) You know it sou~a~ absurd but it does happen.

S: I can't actually remember any examples of this sort (Laughter) Yes but I see what you mean. One has to be very careful about interpretation. For instance, well it may be that somebody says quite frankly, 'Well I'm sorry I can't help on that occasion' and this might be reported as that he was unwilling to co-operate. (Laughter) But it may be that he was. That is a different matter. But, on the other hand, it may actually genuinely be that he was unable to help. So again one must be very careful to keep evaluation separate from factual reporting.

Mike: It's even worse when it's on a, on a superior angle. As if someone has a vision of the spiritual qualities that are going on, and it's even worse still if people actually believe that.

S: ~es. Well they see things in terms of their own interpretation or evaluation rather than, so to speak, in purely factual terms. It could mean, of course, it means an interpretation or evaluation sooner or later may have to be given but then one should be quite sure to get the facts straight first. I mean there is a layer of pure fact. For instance, well, let us say, Upasaka A did not turn up for the Order meeting. That is the fact from which you start. That he was not physically present. You then enquire why he was not present. It may have been that he was in India, and had forgotten to tell you that he was going. (Laughter) It may be that he was sick. It may be that he preferred to go to a film instead. Yes. But you start from the fact. You say, "He was not present." You don't sort of look around and not see him and say then, "Upasaka A is failing in his commitment." Do you see what I mean? That is jumping straight in with an evaluation. Instead of first of all making the statement about the fact that he is not present. There could be a hundred different reasons, and

S: (Cont.) ... your evaluation of his not being present, your assessment of its significance, should take into account what is actually happening and the reason for his not being there. You shouldn't just look around, as I said, and see that he's not there and then at once evaluate the situation as "Well he's failing in his commitment tonight." But this is in fact very often what happens. It could be that the fact of his absence means that he's failing in his commitment, or the fact of his absence could have a quite different significance. So one must wait and learn what the situation actually is. I'm not saying that one shouldn't evaluate but one should not mix up the valuation with the factual description of the situation. That must come first. That is the basis. Get that clear first what is actually happening apart from any evaluation of it. (Pause)

Simon: It does seem what happens is that the evaluation comes first and not even in very clear terms. It's not, you're not even laying your cards on the table clearly because if you

did, at least then there would be a basis for people to say, well, "What do you mean? That's not very clear." But instead you sort of dress it in, as you say, sort of, pseudo words. You know, like, "He's not being open, he's blocked or whatever".

S: Oh yes, 'blocked' (Laughter) (inaudible) Oh that's another

Simon: You say, oh yes, right yes - but it's so vague.

S: If on a particular occasion you don't perhaps feel like communicating or maybe people have put the question to you in the wrong way, or the occasion isn't suitable, if you don't come out with your reply straight away, just sparkling and bright, at once you're labelled as blocked. (Laughter) Or maybe they've asked a stupid question. (Laughter) And not really wishing to expose the stupidity of the question, you just keep quiet. (Laughter) Maybe they'll say "Oh he's very blocked." (Laughter) You see? Again it's an evaluation. But yes, "He's negative or not being open or he's blocked". Or "He's not very committed". You see all these sort of statements are made instead of giving factual descriptions of the situation. Yes? I mean the factual situation with regards to the incident I have just mentioned was that he did not reply to me. You may then proceed to ask, well, what the reason was. It could be that he was blocked in his communication with you but you shouldn't jump right in with that again. The facts are he did not reply to your question. Full stop. You can then pause a while and think about it. What it might mean. But it's almost as though one is using these evaluative terms and phrases just to do the other person down, and put him in the wrong all the time. This is what seems so often to happen. It's very rarely I think the other way

S: (Cont.) ... round. It's usually this way round. Well, to use the phrase, a negative way round.

Simon: It does seem, that was what I was thinking about, it does seem like inevitably this kind of thing just leads to problems, and more problems and problems and problems, then like, you actually forget what you are talking about. Even what you're there for in the first place, to do. You just, you really get bunged, bogged down.

S: Well, people seem to know what I'm talking about then so maybe I'm not the only one who's noticed this sort of thing.

Javadeva: It's an avoidance of communication really.

S: It sometimes, it seems also to me to be an avoidance of rational discussion and argument. I think people are very often weak on rational discussion and argument. They don't know how to make their points in the proper logical manner, they don't know how to convince others. Perhaps they haven't got the patience, perhaps they haven't got the time. So they want to deal with the situation literally at a blow, by saying "Well you're just not open - so accept what I say."

Kulamitra: Isn't it, you know, rather than trying to use a logical mind to understand Ultimate Truths, its real function is to clarify those kinds of situations.

S: Right, indeed. Also, you could say, it's a sort of emotional blackmail, indirectly, because no-one wants to be considered not open. So if you threaten to call someone not open if he doesn't agree with you, well he probably will agree with you, or be inclined to agree with you, however unwillingly. So it fosters a sort of dishonesty in the other person. (Pause) What other phrases are used in this way? That, "Oh he had a negative attitude". "He isn't very committed." Yes? These are very common ones but are there any others?

Abhaya: "He needs to develop his masculinity." (Laughter)

S: Yes, well. "He's very aggressive." "He's aggressive."

Jayadeva: Yes right, "He's very aggressive".

S: But he said what he really thought, this is sometimes described or rather evaluated as, "He became quite aggressive."

Jayadeva: "Impatient."

S: "Impatient." Yes.

A voice: One of them is "He's not receptive".

S: "He's not receptive." Yes, this is a variant of "Not very open".

Ken: There's a whole range of more subtle ways of describing, or reporting which do the same thing. If you're not aware of your own, when you've made an evaluation yourself - when you're reporting, it comes out. You can select what points to present from the other arguments, and the sort of weight that you give them and the language. It's the same thing really. It's less obvious perhaps then

S: Well it's as though there are a number of attitudes which are generally accepted in the 'Friends'. And rightly accepted, as being quite skilful, yes? It is a skilful thing to be open. It is a skilful thing to communicate. It is a skilful thing to be positive. But if we're not careful we start just paying lip service to those ideals, and using those ideals or using those terms, at least, in such a way as to enforce our own point of view, our own attitudes. Because everybody is trying to be open, everybody is trying to be positive presumably. So by accusing people of not being positive and not being open you can manipulate them and get things done your way, because people don't, obviously, like to be thought of as not positive and not open and all the rest of it. So if you can accuse them of being, not being open, not being direct, or whatever you can sort of start nudging them in a particular direction.

Abhaya: I think in the earlier days it used to be "Well, you're not committed", because in those days there weren't quite so many terms to bandy about. (Laughter) So there was this lack of commitment charge. It does seem to sort of, behind it there is, there's a certain amount of negativity ...

S: ~t not that sometimes one might have to come to the conclusion that someone is not very committed or is not open. I'm not saying that that may not be the case. I'm only pointing out that there was a difference between the actual factual situation and your evaluation of it. (agreement) And you should not mistake your evaluation for the actual factual situation. And so, and sometimes, things are presented as facts which are only subjective valuations, which may be right or they may be wrong.

Devaraja: Do you think it's possible on the other hand, for facts to have, somebody present the facts with a lot of energy back or a certain order of facts (inaudible as Bhante interrupts)

S: Oh yes, indeed.

Devarala: Another order of facts.

S: I mean I've given quite simple examples but actually it can be much more complicated than that.

Kulamitra: There ~till seems to be a lack of rational, truly rational development and also an unwillingness to separate and look at things on one level, on a rational level and then have your subjective response to them.

S: Well, yes. I think another example, perhaps, in some ways this is the root of it all. Using 'I feel' where you should really be using 'I think' or the word 'Impression', as if to say the fact that you feel something or you have an impression gives it, ipsofacto, an objective validity. For instance, you say, well this is the sort of thing I've heard. "I feel that he's not very committed" Alright. So someone says "But look, he comes to every class, attends every meeting, he's given all his money to the Movement (Laughter), he meditates for three hours a day, he studies regularly." And then someone says, "But no, that's all true, but I feel that he's not committed." (Laughter) And you've got to take that feeling as a fact. Or rather, you've got to have that feeling, you've got to give to that feeling, the status of an objective evidential fact that somebody's feeling that someone isn't committed actually tells you something about the person who is alleged not be committed. So sometimes in a sort of discussion about somebody I've heard someone say, "Well I feel he's committed." and somebody else says, "No I feel he isn't." No arguments or reasons offered on either side.

Devaraja: ~ecause they're feelings, you mean? (general agreement)

S: Yes, because a feeling mustn't be questioned. So maybe, yes, a feeling mustn't be questioned but then feelings mustn't be brought into discussions and argument~ A feeling is not an argument in itself. Do you see what I mean? Or you say, "Oh I feel his attitude towards me is very negative."

Airight, maybe the bloke's just cooked you a nice meal, and he's spoken to you really kindly and he's done lots of things for you, and he's included you in his Metta Bhavana, but you say, "No, no - I just feel he's

S: (Cont.) ... got a negative attitude towards me." And then that is taken seriously, as a fact. Well, why has he got this negative attitude? (Laughter) Yes? That's the second stage,

yes? So I say, "Well, I feel you're very negative towards me. Why are you being negative towards me?" And they say, "Well I don't feel negative towards you." "You're not in touch with your own feelings." (Laughter) Or else, "You're not open with me. You're not admitting it." Do you see the mess into which people can get. This actually does happen sometimes. I know actual concrete incidents of this sort of thing.

Mike: It's even worse, not only are they saying what they feel about a situation but when they, then they sort of say, "Yes, I intuitively feel" as if suddenly he's been thunderstruck by visions from the Bodhisattvas and you're suddenly in contact (Lots of chuckling) and you're at the other end ... (loud laughter)

A Voice: You're the victim.

Mike: And the other thing, if suddenly when you see this act going on, "God, what's happening to me" and "Oh, perhaps he's right."

S: This happens. That's a further complication. You start thinking that the other person's feelings may be justified. "Well maybe I do feel a bit negative towards you." (Laughter) May be even in the end you will succeed in convincing yourself that you have been negative whereas, in fact, perhaps you haven't. Because he's so certain. "I just feel it' I just, I just get this impression of you so strongly ..." so it must be there.

Devarala: It's usually accompanied by "You know what I mean?" (Laughter)

S: But I think we can trace it back. I think we've got a whole Mitrata out on this already. I think we can trace it back even further. It's connected with people's inability, or unwillingness to articulate in forms of, in the form of reasoned statements. So why is this? Why are people - and this is something I've certainly noticed, unwilling to give a reason for their alleged feelings? Or rather, why do they put their attitude or their point of view in terms of their feelings and not bring it out in forms, in the form of a rational statement with supporting reasons and arguments and evidence and all the rest of it? Why do they do that.

A Voice: Because failure to be open. (Laughter)

Abhaya: No, because they feel this is their weakness, not being able to, they don't want to be defeated in an argument.

S: Yes. They may genuinely feel that they've got a weakness or they may just not be open to the possibility of being wrong. So if you come out in to the arena, so to speak, the public arena of discussion and argument and logical points - well you could be proved wrong. As though they do not want to risk being proved wrong. So therefore they make very forcible, purely subjective emotional statements which obviously cannot be questioned and then don't present these simply as subjective emotional statements, present them as some kind of objective proof or evidence. The fact that I feel very strongly that you have got a negative attitude as it were has to be accepted as proof, they you have got a negative attitude without my having to demonstrate that in any other way. I think this is the root of it.

Kulamitra: Isn't there one of the Four Great Reliances connected with that? Relying on the meaning and not on the words, or what someone actually is saying rather than their personality because I feel people

S: Yes, you could, yes, because if by personality you mean the emotional emphasis with which they say it.

Kulamitra: Yes, yes.

S: But that doesn't tell you anything about the truth of the statement. It only tells you something about the degree of conviction with which they formed it. It's like the classic example I give of the clergyman who delivered a sermon and someone picked up his manuscript after the sermon and saw he'd made marginal notes. And against one passage he'd written "Argument weak here - shout~" (Laughter) It's a bit like that. So if someone says to you, "Well, I really do believe you're, you're really negative towards me, you really are." If they say it with sufficient strength and emphasis that takes the place of an argument, but quite illegitimately. So a statement is no more true because someone believes it strongly than it is because someone just holds to it very tentatively and provisionally. The strength of your conviction says absolutely nothing about the rationality of your argument.

Kulamitra: Sometimes even if you then say, "Well ok, what am I supposed to have done?" They say, "No, no, that's not the point." (General agreement)

Devara~a: "It's your feelings that I'm talking about not your actions."

S: "And I'm an authority on your feelings (Laughter) not you."

Devaraja: But it's particularly bad if somebody does have a tendency maybe to be not too much in touch with their feelings because they are

very much a victim of that.

S: That's true. Yes. Because they don't experience their feelings and they think, "Well, perhaps you do experience more, you pick up something." There was a classic example, I won't give any more specific details, some months ago I heard of somebody, happened to share a room with somebody else and in the morning accused them of sending up erotic vibes. And the unfortunate person who was supposed to have sent up these erotic vibes entirely denied it, and said they had no consciousness of it at all. But the other person insisted that these erotic vibes had actually been sent out. (Laughter) The person who was responsible for sending them was almost called upon for an explanation, (Laughter) which he of course was unable to give. But this is the sort of thing that happens.

Simon: The other thing is projection, of course, "Oh man, you're just projecting."

S: Oh yes, that's another classic.

Simon: That's incredibly vague in a way.

S: Because we do know that such a thing as projection does take place. We accept this. Rather in, this is what gives the argument its edge, that actually we know that such a thing-as projection takes place, therefore it is a possibility to consider, but

Javadeva: You're projecting?

S: Yes, "You're just projecting." If someone wants to deny the truth of what you say - I mean you may genuinely be pointing out an unskilful attitude in somebody but their response to that is "Well you're just projecting. No, I'm not bad tempered. No, I'm not in the least, no, I'm NOT!" (said bad temperedly) (Laughter) "You're just projecting." Yes, that's another classic.

A Voice: If you are picking up on somebody's unconscious content, i.e. what we were talking about the other day - we had to deal with peoples' irrational side, and take into consideration when we're arguing

S: Well, I think the most important this is, I would almost say this is the golden rule, don't try to discuss it or to bring it up on the context of a Co-op or even an Order meeting. Have a quiet chat with them quite privately, yes? And make sure that you've won their confidence or that there is a good communication between you before you bring things up like this, and put it forward just as a suggestion. You can only say "Well, this is my feeling, this is my experience. Take it for what it's worth, don't take it as proof. Take it, just ask yourself, well, is that possible". Just put it to the other as "Well I may be mistaken, I may be projecting, who knows. But this is actually what I feel. Please at least look at it. Please at least consider it." Don't suddenly in the midst of a Co-op meeting hit him over the head with "No, you're projecting, you always project on to me." etc., etc. And, of course, as I've said before, don't question peoples motives. Motives can be questioned, they can be looked at, but don't try to rebut somebody's argument simply by question- ing his motives.

A Voice: In the context of argument?

S: In the context of argument yes. Just meet his argument with another argument. Supposing you bring up one argument after another, yes, and that person is just rejecting your quite reasonable arguments, again and again and again - it gradually becomes obvious to everybody he's just being unreasonable, and that therefore there's some irrational factor at work. You don't need to pin it down on him. Everybody can see it after a while. You just go on being rational and reasonable. But not the minute he disagrees with you just question his motivation, that completely confuses the issue.

A Voice: -Even if you're right?

S: Even if you're right. Just go on being right, by producing another argument, or

explaining the first one more carefully than before, and more clearly. Just say to yourself, "Well maybe I've not put it across clearly enough." Try again.

Mike: They'll say you're in your head. (Laughter)

S: Yes, that's another one. "You're in your head."

Mike: Or "You have dim vision." (Laughter)

S: (Laughs) "You're out of touch with the vision."

Mike: "The trouble with you, you have aim vision."

S: Some of you seem to have suffered quite a lot. (Laughter)

Kulamitra: There's also like completely different attitudes towards an argument at work. Like, an argument really you should, both people should go in to it openly, with the fact they may be wrong, however convinced they are. And also, hopefully, like if that's proved in the course of logical argument, you can learn from it. If your attitudes or ideas were actually incorrect and through the logical argument you become convinced of that, I mean, you've learnt. But all these other things

S: Well, pretty often it isn't as simple as that. That you were a hundred percent right, and he was a hundred percent wrong. No. You notice there was a certain point that you didn't take into consideration. Or certain facts that he overlooked. And this is brought out into the open in the course of discussion, so more often than not you both modify your attitudes or opinions in the course of discussion and you come to some sort of mean position usually in the end. This is more often what happens. Or you might both agree in the end on some third, quite different alternative or possibility or idea. It may become obvious in the course of discussion that both of you are wrong, or both suggestions are not really the best and you think of something quite different as a result of your discussion.

Kulamitra: But all these other things, they're just examples of cunning employed to win an argument at all costs.

S: Right, yes, indeed.

A Voice: So why do people want to win an argument?

Javadeva: An unwillingness to change.

S: At all costs. But why is it that some people feel it's so important apparently to be right?

Simon: Well it's this willful thing isn't it? That's what we've been studying for a week. I mean, that seems why what we're studying is so incredibly relevant. Well just because like in greater or lesser extent, you know, like all these things everytime it sounds like its willfulness, it's a just sort of fixed digging in of the heels and being irrational and

Simon: (Cont.) ...justifying it with a whole load of, sort of, pseudo terms. You know, just twisting things.

S: But isn't it unfortunate that our quite positive or quite skilful vocabulary is mis-used in this sort of way. This is what I've been thinking recently, that it's such a pity, yes.

A Voice: That's an aspect of the cunning.

S: Yes, yes, indeed.

Mike: It's not just vocabulary. It's the way people talk to you. I mean sometimes if you do

have a particular problem that does have to be talked out between individuals, a sort of body position, it takes up a stance, or you know, "Come into my room and let's talk about it." You know, but, as if you're an invalid. (Laughter) (inaudible - so much laughter)

S: Well, yes. It's a bit like in Soviet Russia and even in this country if you disagree with the system, you need some kind of mental treatment. (Laughter) Yes? As you say, one must be very careful about one's attitude. If someone disagrees with you, you don't think "Oh you poor thing." (Laughter)

A Voice: I think another aspect is people put a lot of, place a lot of their feeling of existence, so to speak, on (inaudible) as well so what happens is that that gets threatened, so they have to win.

S: Or they don't even risk winning or losing so they just present it in terms of feelings which of course can't be questioned. (Pause) And also this has the additional disadvantage of, you can present it in terms of not just your feelings but your own intuition or even a higher intuition. Well this is what pseudo-Guru's do don't they? It may be their actual ideas or even their feelings, but it's all presented as some kind of higher insight and intuition, or even revelation and all the rest of it. "You can't disagree with what I say because it's God speaking." I mean I've even known a person, quite intimately, of that kind. "To disagree with me is to disagree with God, and that's a serious matter."

Jayadeva: People putting their experience behind it as well. So they're saying of course, my feelings are more genuine - I've had more experience.

S: Well, that's the appeal to authority, basically. (Pause)

Kulamitra: It does seem though, that within the context of a meeting, if the arguments are on that level it becomes very difficult for that meeting to effectively make decisions because though, you may convince somebody through the strength of your feelings in that situation

S: Yes, may carry the meeting by the virtue of the strength of your feeling.

Kulamitra: You may carry the meeting but next week everybody's going to come back in disagreement again.

S: Right, or at least because they haven't been genuinely convinced they're not going to perhaps carry out the things they they were pressured into agreeing to.

Simon: Because they haven't realised it themselves, in fact. I mean, that seems the point. You can really hammer somebody quite clearly as to what they're doing but if they don't, well if they don't want to recognise that, want to practice that, they can't accept it on their own terms

S: But I always say that this is where the Chairman of the meeting comes in because the Chairman of the meeting should call anybody to order, one who questions the motives of another member of the meeting or who is presenting emotive evaluations as fact, as factual statements. I mean he should just not permit this. So that means the Chairman needs to be pretty sharp and pretty alert. They should point out, well, this is not an argument in support of, or against, as the case may be, the proposal.

Kulamitra: It seems we have very few Chairmen who are actually able to do that, people who can chair a meeting.

Guhyananda ?: Perhaps a short business course is needed.

S: Mmm?

Guhyananda ?: Perhaps a short business course is needed.

S: Maybe a more concentrated Dharma course. (Laughter)

Simon: I mean, I remember when I first got involved with the 'Friends'. It was like, I really resented having to say what I felt. That is what people would say, "What are you talking about?" I would sort of, I would just assume they would know what I was going on about, and whatever it

Simon: (Cont.) ... was. And that to actually have to put my terms down, and say, "Well this is what I mean." I didn't like at all. And I think that's like most people but as you become, as you get into the 'Friends' you realise, well, I'm going to have to do that but you still avoid doing it. But I mean, more and more it just seems the only way to ever get any clarity. To ever, sort of, avoid all of what we've been talking about, to sort of practice, practice, clearness at all costs. (Pause)

S: Yes and Devaraja mentioned this other point. I mean, when people say "You know what I mean, don't you?" as though you've got some intuitive telephathic sixth sense. So they don't have to go to the trouble of laying it all out, rationally and logically.

Jayadeva: I seem to think that if you are quite clear about what you feel you should be able to articulate it quite simply. It doesn't actually mean that you have to have a really sophisticated intellect.

S: No, no.

Javadeva: I mean because if you feel, if you genuinely feel something then it's not going to be, sort of, mixed up and confused.

S: No. I think if you've got genuine feelings, I mean, certainly with regard to ordinary mundane matters, and if you aren't emotionally or psychologically blocked, you're going to be able to articulate those feelings, in a rational sort of way. There isn't going to be all that hiatus between the two.

A Voice: Well, in a sense, there won't be a split, will there? It won't be as if there's a feeling and you've got to articulate them, you'll just be speaking.

S: So I think people who've just got feelings and who say they can't articulate them or that they're too deep to be articulated are probably just confused, just mixed up. (Pause)
Anyway, what did all this come out of?

Devarala: It actually came out of~point that was raised

Simon: What I asked about at the beginning - about passivity and activity.

Devarala: It came out of a point that Bill brought up about passivity.

S: Yes, but how did we

(END OF SIDE ONE)

S: quite a few months. Maybe over the last year, on and off, because I noticed, mainly in the reports of various kinds of discussions that I get, that these sort of mistakes are being committed⁴ And quite frequently committed. So I think it is quite good that we've brought the whole matter out in to the open, and let's hope there will be a lot more clarity in future.

Simon: Sorry, Bhante, there is just one more thing - that's when somebody says about, like, "Well, you're just rationalising something". Have we covered that?

S: No, we haven't, in a way, not specifically because we know that rationalising is, rationalisation is possible. It's possible to ration- alise. But, in a way, the person who adopts this purely pseudo-emotional attitude gets back at the person who is trying to reason things out, and to present logical arguments for his position by-saying, "No. No, you're just rationalising". You see? And that is a terrible thing because this really is a negation of communication, because what other communication can there be, except a rational one. I mean, over matters of say, practical concern, when you're trying to weigh up pros and cons and trying to decide what course of action to follow? You must do that in a rational manner. Not on the basis of mutual intuition. You have to weigh up evidence, consider pros and cons, estimate your resources. These are all quite rational activities. So if somebody say~, "Well no I don't agree with that, for such-and-such and such-and-such reasons." well then you come back with "No, no you're rationalising." Well you're saying 'Let's not discuss it at all.' This is what you're really saying. Let's abdicate reason all together, abdicate rational discussion.

Kulamitra ? : If someone is rationalising but you approach that though logical argument it should become quite obvious.

S: Yes indeed. Yes, right. You don't need to accuse them of rationalising because the resistance that they are continually putting up to your obviously logical and reasonable statements will become evident to everybody. You just need to be a bit more patient. Or sometimes a bit more sure of your position, which meant perhaps you may need to have done a bit more home- work, that you ought to have thought out the whole thing better. Sometimes people want to push through their proposal because they haven't really thought them out, haven't given them proper consideration, or they want to rush them through, trying to cut out any discussion. And someone ~ays, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. What do you mean? Where are we going to

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S: (Cont.) ...get the money from?" "Oh that's just a detail" they might say. (Laughter)

Mike: There's the etherial obstacle also in this sort of communication, when some people have a definite charisma and you can sense a - quite a manipulation going on with his charisma.

S: I think charisma is a quite dangerous thing because it can be used negatively as well as positively. So if one has a touch of charisma one should be very careful how one uses it. It may be all right when one is lecturing in an inspirational way about the Dharma but not when one is engaged in rational discussion about, say the pros and cons of some particular p- ce of Co-op business. And your charisma is quite out of place there because your charisma may lead the whole Co-op in to disaster. (Laughter)

Jayadeva: It's a bit like the whole, like the charge of the Light Brigade. You know, we get up and we, it's a disaster but everyone makes these victory speeches and drinks toasts, sort of thing. You know, the same kind of thing does happen, can happen in the business.

S: Ah another one, yes. Another allied thing, refusal to face the fact of failure. This is something that I've noticed from minutes. But it may be that a certain project was put in to operation. Let's say it was a fund-raising project, for the sake of argument. Supposing the aim of the project was to raise £500. Ye', let's say for the sake of argument. But actually what happens is you incur a debt of £100. (Laughter) So I get a minute which says project was a great success, everybody had a very good time, there was a very positive atmosphere, communication was excellent. Then right at the end. Unfortunately we didn't make quite as much money as we expected. (Laughter) Do you see what I mean? This actually happens. The fact that the main purpose was just not fulfilled, that the project was a complete failure, this is not faced up to. Pro- minence is given to all the secondary positive elements, which were admittedly positive, but they are brought in in such a way as to disguise the fact of essential failure. So here the sort of wrong view seems to be that you have to present everything as having been a great success. You can't face up to the fact that it wasn't a success, that you made a mistake. Do you see what I mean? May jbe you've incurred a debt unnecessarily, but you don't say, "Well that was a really stupid thing for us to have done, we've lost £2,000 because of that." You say, "People rallied round really wonderfully, it was wonderful to see their spiritu of Dana and generosity."

jTh~.

'300 S: (Cont.) ... And you gloss over the fact of your mistake. Maybe people did rally round wonderfully, and maybe that is a very good thing, but you -use that to gloss over the fact that you made a terrible mistake. Have you noticed anything of this sort? Not facing up to failure, or again, maybe don't even think of it in terms of failure or success. Not really facing up to what actually happened, what the facts of the situation were. (Pause) So I say, this is again becoming quite common in the Movement. Everything is presented as a wonderful success, when very often it wasn't a wonderful success. And it's important that that should be realised.

Jayadeva: It's like vagueness in describing what we're doing. Sometimes people walk in and say, "Really got my energies going, I'm feeling really positive, I'm really eng" - actually don't tell you anything about what they're doing. If anything, it could be that they're working for the local, you know, dustbin

A Voice: Pub.

Jayadeva: Pub, yeah, right. It could be anything. But they've just told you that they're really positive and

S: Yes, yes.

Mike: You know, you hear a discussion say, in a tea-break or something like that and there's three or four people around, and say, "What have you been doing?" "Oh I've been really positive, really good, gettin~ on with it." And then the next person says, "Oh yes". You know, it has, there is a competitive element, even competitive element on the other way, of really going through it. "I'm really going through it:" (Laughter) 'Oh man, I'm really going through it."

S: Something which I have started really sort of rebelling against, 'cos I ask, (Laughter) I ask people, "How are you getting on?" "How did you find the Retreat?" "Or your solitary retreat or the study?" And then the answer is, "Something really started coming up." (General 'yes' and laughter) So you've got this picture of people always about to be sick. (Laughter) Do you see what I mean? Sometimes seems to be quite sort of false or artificial. It's always 'something coming up'. You don't say, "Well, I understood something" or "I felt something" - it's 'something coming up'. A suggestion of being it's something from your murky past, or something of that sort. But it's almost, sort of derigueur to have something coming up, if you're on retreat or you go away on solitary - if something doesn't come up it hasn't been a success. If you just got

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S: (Cont.) on with your meditation really - well, well that's a bit of a come-down. So again it's jargon. People falling back upon Jargon, and being misled by jargon, and thinking that jargon means something. But this terrible vagueness -

Devarala: I think there's value in sort of, going back to something earlier, in having, keeping of contacts with friends outside, because it keeps (inaudible as Bhante interrupts) from slipping into jargon.

S: Yes, yes, they do. They ask you what you really mean? (Laughter) "What energies? Seem pretty limp to me." (Laughter)

Guh~yananda: or "Could I have that in English now?" (Laughter)

S: Yes, right.

Mike: But that, but that does create quite a distancing from people in the community and the people outside the community.

S: Well, I go in very - it creates quite a distancing between people within the community because jargon doesn't really communicate anything. You're going through the motions of communicating, you're all using these familiar words but nobody really knows that anybody means. Well, if someone reports in, "Oh this month or this week I've really been getting my energies going." What does that really communicate? Doesn't really tell anything at all. It doesn't even necessarily mean that someone is experiencing his energies, he might have been working. So he presents that in the correct jargon as "He's been getting his energies going." But actually he might not have felt any energy by working at all. Do you see what I mean? It's, it's interpretation, and evaluation. It's not anything factual, though it's masquerading as something factual, masquerading as a factual statement~ It seems to me that people who take the Chair at meetings have got to become much more strict.

Simon: Or I mean it just seems like generally in the spiritual community with friendship, it must be like that. It must be just, sort of, discriminating and, I mean it's interesting. I was just reflecting that, I mean, one of the friendships that I have had for the longest time in a way I was thinking, like, this morning, it's becoming harder and harder as a friendship because so much of the sort of vagueness that we used to relate on is just, it just seems pathetic. It just seems so insipid. You know, it's only, it's more and more like only the best is good enough in our communication and that does often mean that when we get together

Simon: (Cont.) ... things are a bit tense. It's like you want to fall back on vagueness but it's almost like that other person knows that and it's not going to work.

S: I've just thought of a specific instance where something I said in quite specific terms, actually stating fact, was interpreted in a very evaluative sort of way. I mean I happened to meet somebody and I happened to find that we were able to talk quite easily and I was quite pleased that though I hadn't seen much of this person before I was able to talk quite easily and he was able to talk to me quite easily. So I stated this. This re-appeared in some report of a report of a report of a discussion some months later as 'Bhante thinks so-and-so is great'. (Laughter) So what sort of statement is that? That you think somebody is 'great'. (Laughter) I'd been completely specific but here I was being translated into these vague and general terms which meant nothing at all. A vague woolley blanket of approbation. But what his, the person's greatness, if anything, consisted, that was not stated.

Peter: It seems to me that in terms of Chairmen of meetings that it's not necessarily the best thing to have the Chairman of a Centre or the Manager of a Co-operative as

S: What do you do - call in an outside adjudicator. (Laughter)

Kulamitra: You almost need someone who is not so deeply involved in things.

Jayadeva: Also he's got to assert himself and not be bent by the weights of other people's opinions.

S: I think I shall just have to use my red pensil and if I encounter jargon in the minutes - just underline them and send them back for clarifi- cation and re-writing.

Simon: But, I mean, really you shouldn't have to do that, I mean

S: No, indeed, it's pathetic. (Laughter)

Simon: Well, I mean yes.

Mike: I mean that's in a way, quite a waste of your time, I mean that kind of nonsense. (Laughter)

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S: Well, I don't know. In a sense, because it goes so deep into spiritual life. For instance you find, not that it's only in the 'Friends' - you find it in Eastern Buddhism. I mean, a fat little man with a brown com- plexion and wearing a yellow robe and a quite, sort of arrogant air, walks into the Centre and he says, I°I'm a Bhikhu." Well, it's the same sort of thing, isn't it? He really thinks he is and that he should be accorded a certain kind of treatment, etc., etc. He doesn't really know what it means to be a Bhikhu apparently. But you're expected to treat him as one, regard him as one. It's the same kind of thing. The jargon is being taken too

literally, or used in the wrong sort of way. "I'm leading a spiritual life." Oh yes, you are living in a place labelled a Vihara, and you're going and teaching Pali in the local college, and you're not actually seen eating after twelve o'clock, yes. You're leading a monastic life. That's what you say. That's what you actually even believe. (Pause) So it's a very widespread sort of thing. We, in particular, we just encounter it in our own particular way, in our own particular set up. We must be very much on our guard because it means, well, truth goes out of the window. Communication goes out of the window. Self-knowledge goes out of the window. Even ordinary straight-forward ~honesty goes out of the window because how can you take decisions on the basis of dis-soussion of this sort? No wonder some dis- cussions end inconclusively and you're sort of searching in the minutes, what did they actually decide? (Laughter) Sometimes it isn't at all clear. What were they going to do at the end of all this discussion? Oh no, that seems to be lost sight of altogether.

Simon: I mean, I've noticed that just in Co-op meetings. Like, sometimes you'll be talking about something for half an hour, really sort of getting all the points worked out and then you come back the next meeting and nothing happened about it because you've actually just forgotten to say who is going to take responsibility for this. You know, that sort of very last thing has been forgotten so everybody goes, yeah, great idea and nothing happens.

S: Yes, right. Oh yes, one actually finds it reported like that in minutes sometimes.

Jayadeva: Yes, especially when people try and change what they say. They don't put in, "I disagreed with what so-and-so said". They're not bold enough~to say that. They try and work it so that they were mis-reported or the point they were making was far more subtle and you know.

~O4 ¼ S: That's another one. "You don't understand what I'm getting at." (Pause) Perhaps we'd better come back to the text for a few minutes before we close. Nonetheless it's been a quite useful discussion, hasn't it? I mean logic and science do have their uses in the right place. It's not that they can be abandoned altogether. You don't expect logic and science to do the work of meditation but they are useful in sorting out the pros and cons of certain lines of action. (Pause)

So we were actually on this: 'He confirmed and imprinted on his mind a faith that Milarepa was Buddha himself. He thought "So far, I have served the Jetsun in many ways. Here after I will serve him even better than before." This vow he kept, and lived up to it all his life.'

I think we'd better not get on to that next song. I think we'll keep that for tomorrow. Any points we can tidy up around what we've been doing this morning? (Long pause) We have covered quite a bit of ground because we had quite a thorough discussion about prayer, which I think was quite important. I don't think this had been, this particular topic has been gone into really at all yet on the occasion of any study group, and we've had this discussion about

jargon which was also very important.

Simon: It does seem, a sort of, at the moment what I find, sometimes is this, sort of real conflict between my idea of what being clear is. My idea of what being, having your emotions flowing freely, and it seems like often the two are in opposition when in fact, obviously they should be moving together. Yes, of course, you should be emotionally involved but you should be clear in your thinking as well. I mean over something like this idea of praying, it's almost like a reaction to that is from the wrong motives. It's like just how we were talking about here, you know, that somehow it's not good or something. Then you think about it, and well, yes, I rationalise it.

S: Where as I said, and I advised people who feel like praying but think they probably ought not to, well, to go along with it and sort of work out later how it all relates to Buddhism and to what extent it's skilful and what it isn't, but not to deny their own feelings and even, as on this occasion, to follow them through.

Simon: Yes, that does seem really important, just to acknowledge where you are at.

S: Yes.

Simon: It's exactly the same as, sort of, well on the rational level, like you were saying on this last thing about failure. I thought that was

Simon: (Cont.) ... especially relevant because it's once you know that that particular sort of stand you've been taking is not the right one, it's like then you can change.

S: So there is a sort of common thread in the discussion or in the consideration of prayer and the consideration of jargon - it's really trying to see the facts of the case. To really try to see things as they really are, I mean that is in a way the basic principal of Buddhism - Yathabhuta- jana-darsana - the knowledge and vision of things as they actually are. (Pause) And if you have an impulse to pray, well just acknowledging that, that is a fact. A psychological fact. Maybe you shouldn't be wanting to pray, but you are wanting to pray. Alright, you acknowledge that. And in the same way what are the facts of the situation? What did somebody say? Don't just evaluate it in subjective emotive terms. Stick to what he actually said. Stick to his actual reason. Stick to his actual argument. Stick to the facts of the case. Don't get side-tracked into discussions about motivations. (Pause)

Guhyananda ?: That'll be the argument now - "You're only getting side- tracked into the (Laughs) motivation." Now think up another one.

S: Mmm. In about twenty years time. (Laughter)

Guhyananda ?: I was thinking in about twenty minutes. (Laughter)

A Voice: Next week.

Abhaya: Or "Oh, that's just jargon."

(Inaudible mumbles)

S: But I don't think that will be possible because if you just say to someone, "Well, that's just jargon" without trying to show it's jargon, it will be immediately obvious what sort of game they are -playing. It might be a good idea for someone to write up all these things in the form of an article. It would be quite a good one, wouldn't it?

Mike: Write about it?

S: Mmm. Well have a go at it certainly.

Jayadeva: It's got a lot to do with the current Newsletter, hasn't it? 'Fierce Friendship'.

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S: That's true, indeed.

Jayadeva: Maybe if they brought out a Mitrata concerned with 'Fierce Friendship' or something.

S: Yes. (Long pause) I think it's also very much to do with the group and the Individual, because if you have recourse to all the i~cks that we've been talking about, very often you're trying to impose on someone a sort of standard group attitude. You're trying to bludgeon them into conforming very often.

Kulamitra: Devamitra touched on it in his talk on the 'Dance of the Dakinis' - he was saying that at meetings you can say things like, "Certain people think it would be a good idea if we were to do this" whereas what you're really saying is, "I think we ought to do this". But you're putting away, sort of like, a lot of other people.

S: Well, I jumped on, some time ago, somebody saying, or was being reported, "It has been decided that" (Laughter) because it's not stated then who decides so there's, so there's no responsibility. So, in this case, actually it was I who had decided so I said you should say, "Bhante decided that" you know, not, "It has been decided that ..." Because it was actually I who took the decision and I was responsible for it so this should, I mean, this should always be the case. One should never use these sort of impersonal expressions. (Pause)

Simon: I was thinking also actually of someone who'd said, it was some time ago, it just seemed to me really good and relevant, the fact about if somebody says, oh yes, I think it was on the last weekend seminar about - perhaps it was Vajradaka actually - he said if somebody says, "OK I'll see you tomorrow at 10 o'clock, we'll make that a date" then that person, it had come 10 o'clock, you've been waiting for ages, doesn't turn up and then you find them a week later and you say, "Well by the way what happened to you then?" And instead of just saying, "Well, I didn't want to come" or "I decided not to come" they say, well, incredible sorts of things come out like, "Well I thought, well, I realise, you know, I really needed to catch up on my reading, or you know" (Bhante interrupts)

S: Well, no actually what I said is even worse than that. They put it into 'I had to do something~' "I had to go shopping." Or "I had to go out with my wife." In other words they abdicate responsibility. They present their own decision or choice as a matter of, sort of necessity.

S: (Cont.) ... Something that they had to do, so that therefore you can not quarrel with them about it. After all if someone is knocked down by a bus coming to see you, well, it's not his fault then if he doesn't arrive on time. So people try to present their choices in that sort of way. That 'I had to go for a walk' or 'I had to talk to somebody' as though there was an external compulsion at work which relieves them of all responsibility in their life. Again this is just dishonest and refusing to face and to state the facts. Oh dear, what a lot of examples of this sort of thing we're uncovering - almost a little anthology.

Jayadeva: It seems to be rife though really.

Simon: And yes it does all seem to go back to a very simply, well, simple but yet so entrenched attitude which does seem like, well, what Rechungpa's come up against, in quite an extreme case, of just sort of, this is just your willfulness. This is just your sort of, you don't want to be clear, you don't want to change.

S: I think some of it goes back to old hippy attitudes of inarticulate-ness and subjectivity and all that kind of thing.

Kulamitra: But it's also there are many disguises, aren't there? I remember you saying, on a completely different occasion, that vagueness is often not really vagueness in the ~ense that someone doesn't know what they're doing, they know

S: It's a smoke-screen.

Kulamitra: It's a smoke-screen.

Mike: Isn't it true that Confucius, when he ran, I think he ran, or governed the various different provinces in China, he was asked "What's the most important thing to do, to run them?" And he said, "The first thing to do is to define what you mean."

S: Yes - rectification of terms. Yes, that's true. What are you talking about? Because I mean, if you're not clear what you are talking about how can you come to definite decisions. I mean how can you, actually, commit yourself unless there are some agreement as to what constitutes commitment. Or some understanding of what constitutes commitment. (pause)

Kulamitra ?: But even just that question, "I am not sure you are talking about?" is often taken as aggressive.

S: Yes, well sometimes it could be, of course. You could ask it aggressively.

Javadeva: Yes, but what's wrong with aggression. It puts a value on aggression, it is almost putting a value on aggression, as though there is something wrong with it.

S: Well, let's, even assuming that say aggression is quite negative and that you should not have asked the question in a negative way, well, answer the question first, and keep that separate from tackling the person about his aggressiveness. You can take that up on, if necessary, on some other occasion. (Pause)

Voice: I think another way of say, of using some of these things like "He wasn't open to me" and so forth, in order to edge people into doing what you have in mind is another sort of expression of not treating people, -seeing people as individuals but rather people you can use in one way or another. Not treating them, not seeing them as individuals

S: Well, in fact it means that you are not open to them. But anyway, we won't go in to that. (Pause) Well, there does also seem to be a lot of confusion about the place of reason and again I think this is an old hippy legacy perhaps, as regards to some people, that reason has got no value - rationality has no value. People placing, attaching importance to hunches and feelings and impressions, and they avoid saying, "I think this." They say, "Well, it's my feeling" or "I get the impression that" as though that is in itself quite adequate, as a reason.

Abhava: That has to be set against

S: or a proof.

Abbayg: That has to be set against the fact that in Buddhism, that reason won't take you all the way.

S: Yes, indeed.

Abhava: Because of that people have tended to think that reason is no good.

'30,

S: No use at all.

Abhaya: So you've got to put the whole thing into a total context.

Simon: Can - I mean I - it seems like you can, though, follow back from why people are like that because I mean, we understand that life, yes, we are all rather sort of intellectual in the West and more sort of purport to be that. We'd rather use our heads rather than our feelings so it's almost like we have to go to the other extreme and get into our feelings but in a rather sort of crude way to begin with.

S: Well, I wouldn't mind if people actually did that but it's usually rather sort of dull, tepid feelings, or even thoughts and ideas masquerading as feelings. I think the person who really feels strongly and passionately is more likely to argue his case than the person who is all vague and with wishy-washy feelings. (Long pause)

Jayadeva ?: Yes, it should be full-blooded, shouldn't it? (Pause) It's like when you read Lawrences '5 polemics, I mean, or somebody's poetry who's really affected, you really feel, you know, he genuinely feels that, and he's not sort of disguising it. (Pause)

S: Well, perhaps we'd better leave it at that. We really will finish off this chapter tomorrow.

Voice~ Tomorrow's the last day, isn't it?

S: I'm afraid so - it will be tomorrow afternoon.

END OF SIDE TWO - TAPE 12

'310 DAY 7 TAPE 13

S: OK. We start, or rather we finish. (Laughter) Alright, towards the bottom of page 453 - someone like to read that prose passage and we'll deal with that first. "Now the disciples"

Text: "Now the disciples and patrons ~thered to welcome Rechungpa. From the assembly Sevan Repa arose and said, 'You must have learned and brou~ht back from India both the Pith-Instructions as prophesied by the Jetsun, and the ~cience of Lo~ic. Now please tell us how can we win a dispute should we ever become involved in one?' Milarepa said, 'Rechun,;pa, you ma tell them how to 'win' a dis ute in the li ht of the D~kinis teachin).'"

S: So what do you think the significance of this episode is? One of the Repas wants to know how they can win a dispute, should we ever become involved in one. After all Rechungpa has been to India. He's not only received, come back with the Formless Dakini Dharmas, he's also come back apparently with the Science of Logic. Milarepa intervenes and says, "Rechungpa, you may tell them how to 'win' a dispute in the li~ht of the Dakinis (teachin~~s)." There's a difference of emphasis. It's as though Rechungpa perhaps is a bit non-plussed. He thinks he understands things better now. He understands that it isn't a question of over-coming the logicians with logic, though apparently at least one of the Repas still thinks that that is possible. So he's asking Rechungpa to explain to them how to win a dispute using logic, if they should ever be involved in one. So Rechungpa is clearly hesitating to reply. Well, after all, I've seen through all that now. What am I to do? So then Milarepa says, "Rechun~~~a you may tell them how to 'win' a dispute," (italics and inverted commas) "in the li~ht of the Dakini's teachin~s." You can tell them how to win in a different way. You can treat the whole concept of winning metaphorically. Don't refuse to answer the question but answer it on your own terms. "In the light of the Dakini 's teachings." This is what Milarepa seems to be saying to Rechungpa. What does Rechungpa say, or rather sing? Someone like to read that?

Text: "The great Transmission Buddha, Dorje-Chang will quench all disputes in the lineage. Our Guru Buddha-Rea will end the disputes of cravi teachers. The Pith-Instructions and the Transmissions Skilful Path will quench all evil argument derived from constant thinking. The omnipresent Mirror of Equality will reveal all concealed vices. The Precious teachings of the Great Bliss will burn all wandering thoughts in its Wisdom flame. The Nadis and Pranas in the Cakras will dispel at once all drowsiness and

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TEXT: (Cont.) distractions. The Teaching of the self-liberating Mahamudra will conquer the demon of ego-clinging to the Five Consciousnesses. The Teaching of the radiant Wisdom Lamp will dispel darkness and ignorance. The Act of Chu La Swordsmanship will cut, with ease, the ties of worldly desire."

S: So, "The great Transmission Buddha, Dorje-Chang, will quench all disputes in the lineage." Which particular lineage is being referred to here?

Devaraja: The lineage from Naropa.

S: The Kagyupa Lineage itself. Their own school, so to speak. Their own tradition. So Milarepa is saying that it may well be, that in the course of time, within our own lineage, within our own Spiritual Tradition, within our own school, disputes may arise. So the question of quenching such disputes will also arise. So how is that to be done? Who will quench the disputes? And he says therefore, "The great Transmission Buddha, Dorje-Chang will quench all disputes in the Lineage." So who is Dorje-Chang? In Sanskrit - Vajradhara - the holder of the Vajra. And according to the tradition, just as Milarepa received teaching from Marpa, in the same way Marpa received teaching from Naropa, Naropa from Tilopa and Tilopa himself from Dorje-Chang. So what does this mean? That if disputes arise in the lineage, those disputes will be quenched by Dorje-Chang himself?

Simon: It implies a sort of contact right through the Gurus so that the argument, the dispute will be quenched by whoever (inaudible) Milarepa (inaudible) Rechungpa. Because the, sort of, originally, they are still very much in touch with Dorje-Chang.

S: Suppose Milarepa himself is no longer around, Rechungpa is no longer around. Well, what then?

Jayadeva ? : Does the term quench, in this sense imply that the disputes will arise as a result of unskilful mental states and these will only be put out, like the fires of craving, will only be put out through, sort of like archetypal Spiritual Experience, which Dorje-Chang symbolises?

S: Symbolises. I think the general meaning is something like that. That disputes will be quenched only by people attaining the kind of spiritual realisation which is symbolised, so to speak, by the figure of Dorje-Chang, Vajradhara. If there are any disputes, they won't be quenched by means of

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312 S: (Cont.) ... logic or by referring to texts. They will only be quenched when those involved in the dispute rise to the spiritual level, the Trans- cendental level of Dorje-Chang. Do you see what I mean? If there are disputes, well, what is the real cause of the disputes? Certain mental limitations, ignorance even, craving even. Disputes very rarely have any real basis. So the only way to resolve disputes is by increased spiritual practice on the part of all concerned. There's no other way.

Jayadeva: Don't you say something about this in 'Peace is a Fire'? Opposites are not to be eliminated but united in a higher unity - or something?

S: Yes, yes, one could look at it like that because the different points of view which have given rise to the disputes may not, in fact, be really contradictory. They may just be different ways of looking at things. And if you rise to a higher point of view, if you develop a real spiritual experience of realisation, you may then be able to see the truth that is contained in both those points of view. You may be able to reconcile and harmonise them. Or you may see that, well, one or the other of them is entirely wrong, or both were wrong. But whatever it may be, as your own spiritual experience increases and deepens the disputes will be resolved. They'll be quenched. So if disputes arise within the Spiritual Community the only real way of resolving them is, by as I said, increased spiritual practice and experience and realisation on the part of all concerned. I mean, I feel this really strongly, say when I've received letters from different parts of the world, that is to say from F. W. B. O. Centres and so on outside England, and when I hear that maybe things are not going quite as they should do, there are differences of opinion. Sometimes it seems very clear that these differences are not going to be settled on their own level at all. But only if the people concerned just grow up a bit, mature spiritually. That's the only long term solution. The disputes can't be really settled or sorted out on their own level. Sometimes the issues involved are too complicated to sort out, many factors are involved. Who said what, when - there's no end to it sometimes, even though they are quite ordinary simple matters. So, "The great Transmission Buddha. Dorje-Chang will quench all disputes in the Lineage." It's not that Dorje-Chang is to be

conceived of as an independent personality who actually comes along and adjudicates between you. No. You yourself must rise to the level of Dorje- Chang. You yourself must become Dorje-Chang. It's only then that the disputes will really be quenched. Or to put it in more simple terms, disputes within the Spiritual Community are quenched only as members of the Spiritual Community mature spiritually, to a greater extent deepen their experience. You might even say that a dispute can never be quenched on its own level. It's only patched up for the time being. (Long pause)

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3/3 S: (Cont.) ... Then Rechungpa sings, "Our Guru, Buddha-Repa. will end the disputes of craving teachers." How does Milarepa end the disputes of craving teachers? (Pause) Does he end them on their own terms, do you think? (Pause)

Voices: No. No. No.

Devaraja: By stimulating people to a new level of awareness.

Yes. By introducing a new factor in to the situation. A purely spiritual factor. But why do you think Rechungpa says "The great Trans- mission Buddha, Dorje-Chang will quench all disputes in the Lineage. Our Guru, Buddha-Repa. will end the disputes of craving teachers." Why that division of labour, so to speak? Why cannot Dorje-Chang quench all disputes or 'end all disputes of the craving teachers.'?

Devaraja: It's just that they're out of contact with Dorje-Chang.

S: I mean Dorje-Chang represents the essence, the spiritual essence of that particular tradition so if you belong to a common tradition, you have a common spiritual ideal, a common goal. Although something that you can appeal to in the case of disagreement. You've some common basis of reference. Do you see what I mean? But that doesn't, that isn't the case in the case of the craving teachers, of various kinds, who do not belong to the Kagyupa Lineage. You can't appeal to them by saying, well, look, you're not behaving as a Kagyupa Lama should behave. Well they are not Kagyupa Lamas anyway. So that sort of argument has no, has no force with them. So how does Milarepa cope? (Pause)

Kulamitra: He becomes their Guru in a way.

S: Yes, he has to become their Guru. He seems to have that sort of ability. You notice the expression 'craving teachers' is a very strong one. Obviously it's really, in any meaningful sense self-contradictory because how can teachers be craving, and how can people who are full of craving really be teachers. But, nonetheless there are, some people seem to like to pass for teachers no doubt.

A Voice: Would it refer to the Bon priest?

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3/4 S: It could refer to them or it could even refer to Buddhists themselves

who have gone astray. So "Our Guru, Buddha-Repa" that's the Buddha who wears the cotton cloth of the practitioner of the Psychic-heat Yoga, "will end the disputes of craving teachers. The Pith-Instructions and the Trans- Mission's Skilful Path will quench all evil argument derived from constant thinking. " What is this "evil argument derived from constant thinking."? What sort of thing does Rechungpa have in mind for this?

Kulamitra: Philosophical thinking that represents linguistical analysis, that kind of

S: It's a sort of a logical or pseudo-logical sophistry that arises from an over active brain. (Lon~pause) ~ven probably in the sense of unskilful.

Jayadeva ?:: It's like you've written somewhere about people who go on asking questions because they don't really want an answer.

S: Yes. Yes indeed. They just go on elaborating and refining still more. So in what way do "the Pith-Instructions and Transmission's skilful path" quench "all evil argument derived from constant thinking."? How do they quench it?

Abhaya: Well they transcend it through a rational process.

S: Well essentially they transcend it by being practiced. They quench it by being practiced.

Jayadeva ?: They give it a direction. (Long pause)

Abhaya: There is a lot of emphasis in this whole text on Transcendence isn't there? I know there is in Buddhism generally but there seems to be, over the last few days, quite a lot more.

S: Of going beyond.

Peter: It seems that's one the plagues of the Westerner. I don't know from the West (inaudible) that, you know, this thing of constant thinking. Argument that comes from constant thinking in modern books.

aI~

S: You do have this in India too, especially with highly intellectual Brahmins who are a bit resistant to Buddhism. I mean, they are quite capable of this very thing, "evil argument derived from constant thinking." It's as though thinking becomes a habit.

Mike: A sort of habit to fill, fill what would otherwise be natural space, periods of calm.

Kulamitra: Didn't you say something about too much thinking is pathological?

S: Mmm (Laugh) I think Nietzsche said something like that, didn't he? He didn't exactly say thinking is pathological but something quite close to that. (Pause)

Abhaya: Do you think the, like, the realisation that Milarepa is talking about actually has an effect on the thinking process? Does it improve

S: Oh yes indeed, oh yes indeed. I mean the fact that one meditates, or the fact that one has developed insight does not really inhibit the thinking process as such. But if one wants to give an example of that, usually our minds work, our thinking processes work in a very desultory, haphazard sort of way. So instead of saying, going from here to here using, doing the minimum amount of thinking necessary for arriving at~a particular conclusion, we just wander all around and then finally come to the point. But I mean that wandering around being due to the presence of all sorts of extraneous emotional factors, and conditioning and reactivity and the rest of it. But when insight has been developed the thinking process itself functions in a much more straight forward, what shall I say

A Voice: Purposeful.

S: Purposeful, yes. For instance, supposing you want to think about something and try to reach a conclusion about it. Well, you just do that. Your thinking process doesn't get mixed up with all sorts of uns~ilful thoughts and emotions and so on. You can actually use your thinking mind as a sort of instrument in a quite efficient way.

Simon: It does seem like Manjugoaha's sword, the sort of just cutting right through, getting right to the, sort of, point. Reaching that quite clearly without effort almost.

(3" S: Because, you notice it especially when there's a discussion about, I mean a general discussion say at a Co-op meeting or Council meeting, as to what would be the best way of doing a certain thing. I mean at least three-quarters of the discussion is usually irrelevancies, yes? Or even side-tracks. Things that have no bearing upon that particular question, of the best ste~~ to adopt to achieve that particular end. The discussion~ if all the irrelevancies were excluded, the discussion no doubt could be cut down from fifty minutes, to ten. So it's much the same in the, in the case of the individual mind. We sort of conduct an unnecessary discussion in our own heads, instead of just thinking straight-forwardly and logically and coming to the conclusion that is best. Do you see what I mean? But when the mind becomes more developed~unskilful mental states are excluded. And there is insight there. Well, when we do have to think our thinking is purposeful and to the point and direct and doesn't get lost in irrelevancies or side-tracks. So our thinking performance is improved. It means we cannot do more with the thinking process than the thinking process is able to do. But, on the other hand, usually our thinking process doesn't work correctly, doesn't function with optimum efficiency just because it is disturbed by extraneous emotional factors, and reactivity and so on.

Javadeva: It's a bit like, I get the image of, like your intellect is a tool, but if you've got a drunken man wielding this tool he can't exactly do much with it, so you don't need a better tool so much as someone who's sober handling it.

S: Yes, right. (General agreement)

Abhava: People, I think people often come up with saying that they can't think very well or they don't I mean there is something to that. But I often feel that it is an emotional thing rather than anything to do with the actual rational thinking process. There are so many emotional disturbances.

S: Yes, right. Or emotional blockages. I mean on account of which they can't think at all. But they can't think not on account of the inadequacies of the thinking process, at least for certain purposes, but because of the emotional blockage.

Simon: I mean, it seems like with emotional blockage it, sort of, implies well, your energy is blocked and it, I mean if the energy was flowing then there wouldn't be this resistance to thinking because the thinking process would be a natural performance of a natural expression of your energy. I mean I find this. When I'm feeling energetic I'm much more willing to think about things and am much more clear about thinking as well. It's that sometimes when you sit down and you really have to grit your teeth to try and think. But it's just often it seems that you've just cut off, your energy isn't there to do that. (Pause)

S: Well if energy isn't there you can't fulfil any normal human function very adequately. (Pause) Then, "the omnipresent Mirror of Equality will reveal all concealed vices." What is this 'Mirror of Equality'? I think there is a suggestion here, even if it isn't actually, actually it isn't the thing itself of the ~irror-like Wisdom.

Kulamitra ?: That's where you see everything undifferentiated - is that what you mean? That kind of Wisd~m.

S: Yes, except that the Mirror-like Wisdom is associated with ...

A Voice: Indra's Net.

S: No. The Mirror-like Wisdom is associated with Ratnasambhava.

Abhaya: No, isn't it Aksobhya?

S: No, with, no, no the Wisdom of Sameness is associated with Ratnasambhava. The Mirror-like Wisdom with Aksobhya, isn't it? But here you've got equality which is a characteristic of Ratnasambhava's Wisdom associated with the mirror which is the symbol of Aksobhya's Wisdom. Perhaps we should take that as a reminder that you can't really differentiate these Wisdoms too literally one from another. They're all of them aspects of Enlightenment itself. The Wisdom of the Dharma-Dhatu. I mean in what way does the "Omnipresent Mirror of Equality reveal all concealed vices."? What is this Mirror?

Kulamitra: By reflecting to you things as they are it stops you from avoiding the fact that those things are vices. Shows you equality as it really is.

Simon: The mirror also implies something, unless you actually want to

Simon: (Cont.) ... deliberately turn away from it you have to look at it, it directly reflects you.

S: Sometimes it's said just as by looking into a mirror, you can see if for instance you have a pimple on the face, in the same way looking into the mirror of the Dharma you can see what your own spiritual blemishes are. The Dharma gives you a sort of standard. The Dharma is the Mirror. Looking into it you can see where you're really at. (Long pause) Perhaps we could touch at this point on the fact that from a Buddhist point of view, from a spiritual point of view openness is very important. The reference here is to "concealed vices" and to conceal your vices through concealing your thought, your weakness to attempt to cover them up, within the context of the Spiritual Community~is considered quite a serious matter - that within the Spiritual Community you should want to appear other than what you really are, better than what you really are. Certainly as regards as within the Spiritual Community this is almost an offence. I mean, perhaps if you're, if you're open about your vices or your weaknesses, blemishes outside the Spiritual Community, well advantage may be taken of you on that account. But there's no such fear, there's no such danger within the Spiritual Community. Within the Spiritual Community you should be completely open. I mean that is one of the functions of the Spiritual Community, to enable you to be completely open and not conceal anything. You could even say therefore, the Spiritual Community itself

is the Mirror, which enables you to see what you're really like and to be completely open about that. (Pause) I mean, it ought to be a great relief to be able to be quite open about everything, and not to have to conceal anything.

Simon: It seems sort of like, when that doesn't happen it's more likely when somebody feels that they are actually not going to have the support if they do open up. I mean to the extent they say, look, I've got this or I think like this, or I have this vice or whatever, and they feel like they're going to be, well, like in the outside world, rather put down, I mean, rather sort of, sort of put to one side almost. That there isn't well, in other words that there isn't the sort of positive emotions. There isn't the friendship there.

S: Or, of course, they may feel that they may be obliged to do something about it. That if they, if they acknowledge those particular weaknesses or blemishes to Spiritual Friends within the Spiritual Community, well it won't, the matter won't be allowed to rest there. They'll be asked, well, what are you going to do about it. And that of course may also make them sometimes reluctant to be completely open. I mean, sometimes you don't

S: (Cont.) ... mind being completely open about certain things with your worldly friends outside the Spiritual Community, because perhaps, that they're not going to insist on your doing anything about your weaknesses. They'll be only too happy perhaps that you too have got your weaknesses. They might even encourage you in those weaknesses. So there's no question of being open with them in the way that you are with Spiritual Friends. Your openness in that sort of way is not real openness. (Pause) I mean you may have a tendency to drink too much and get drunk sometimes. Well if you admit that within the Spiritual Community, well it becomes a sort of confession. In a way you're asking for help in getting over that. But if you, you talk about that, the same sort of thing to your worldly friends outside, who are also doing the same kind of thing it becomes an almost a sort of bragging. Showing that you're just like them and far from suggesting that you try to overcome it they just slap you on the back and tell you what a great chap you are.

Kulamitra: And buy you another drink. (Laughter)

S: Buy you another drink.

A Voice: Isn't there also the thing, to be open in that way you have to be open first with yourself. That those things are vices. You know

S: Well sometimes of course you may not know. I mean, sometimes quite ambiguous cases where you're not sure, so you make sure by just being open about everything and then maybe if there is something you have been open about that you hadn't realised in fact was a weakness well then, you can be told about it. It isn't that you always necessarily know that something is a vice. You might have thought it rather a virtue. (Long pause) I mean, you might have thought it rather a virtue that you were frank and straight-forward but your Spiritual Friends point out to you that you're just crude and insensitive. (Laughter) (pause)

Simon: But~that does mean that if somebody is that direct with you that they really, it's really like they're ... the tendency just to sort of lay into somebody is quite strong, almost you know. You might not even do it very directly. You might think you are being positive. I mean this goes back, I suppose, to what we were talking about yesterday, but,---the sort of feeling of, well, you think it might be helping them, you might be giving advice. You know you might be doing this, that and the other for them, but actually the way you put it is perhaps far too well, crude really for them to I mean, they might accept it and go, 'Oh yes,

Simon: (Cont.) ... well, I'll definitely do that' but actually they go away and it's still the same because they're not willing, they're not willing to change. It seems that's really important to put things, well, skilfully as one can.

S: Though, of course, in the case of a weakness which you see as a weakness and which you acknowledge as such, the fact that you've acknowledged it quite openly means that, well, you are on the way to changing already. You might, of course, also occasionally have the opposite experience of confessing something that 's a weakness only to be told that it is, in fact, rather a virtue.

Devaraja: Can you give me an example?

Kulamitra: You might think you're crude, insensitive, when you're (Laughs)

S: Yes. Or you might be under the, under the, yes, you might be under the impression that you're, that you are just too direct. And you might be told by your Spiritual Friends that, no, that is rather refreshing candour on your part. And it's not crude, or not blunt. You might be under the impression that you sometimes hurt people's feelings by your directness but your Spiritual Friends might assure you, well, no, their feelings have never been hurt. (Pause) I have sometimes said that, that as one goes through life, perhaps by the time you are half-way through, the sort of awful thought dawns upon you with regard to your own qualities - that all the qualities that you thought were your virtues were in fact your vices and all the things you

thought were your vices were, in fact, your virtues. (Laughter) I think there is some truth in that. For instance, you might have thought, well you're such a patient person. You come to the conclusion in the end, no, you were merely timid. (Laughter) Do you see the sort of thing I mean? So in the course of life sometimes there is a complete revaluation, a self-revaluation in this sort of way.

Devaraja: I remember when I first met you, you seemed very, very patient then it's almost like at one point within the space of about six weeks. (laughter) you certainly started to get the boot in. (laughter)

S: (inaudible) (Laughter)

Devarala: I think you were quite getting, sort of, you used to put up with an awful lot.

S: Then the worm turned. (Laughter)

Devarala: I think it's very good that you did.

S: I do remember on one occasion in the early days of the F.W.B.O. I think it was our second A.G.M. I actually banged my fist on the table, and shouted at everybody. Things seemed to go rather well after that. (Laughter) I remember the way in which the glasses jumped up and down on the table, because the A.G.M. was held in an Indian Restaurant. You weren't there were you.

Abhaya: No. I remember you telling me.

S: The second one. I remember it rather well because I hurt my fist because (Laughter) I wasn't used to banging it on the table in that way. It hadn't been banged like that before perhaps. I thought I might have broken both (laughter) I know I hadn't, I only bruised it. It's as though I hadn't had enough practice at that sort of thing. But this is also connected with another thing I've been saying in the course of the week. It's very~difficult to understand oneself or others. Because if you so, well, half-way through life or any other time, suddenly have the self-revaluation, it really means you haven't understood yourself very well up to that date. If you have to reverse your whole judgement and assessment of yourself. I think this

can well happen. But it means that you are just beginning to understand yourself better. Perhaps you have been misled by other people in the past, about your own true character. I think it can happen very easily and very frequently.

Guhvananda: Could it be said a kind of misunderstanding of human nature itself?

S: It could be. It could be. As when, anything like, I mean, some people perhaps, or there are people who, as it were, condemn any sort of manifestation of energy, anything vigorous, as crude and aggressive. With regards to let's say, human nature itself, not just to this person or that person. (Pause)

Simon: It's often making up for, sort of, an emotional, sort of, deficiency in yourself when you I mean I was thinking the case of, perhaps you, well, from an early age perhaps you were told that you have certain

Simon: (Cont.) ... qualities. Your parents impress upon you that you are a charming little boy. You are a very nice boy, and you're very

polite and stuff. And you go about and you think, well, that the way to win approval, I mean you don't think that perhaps, so you become charming and nice etc. You know this unfortunately just seems to build up and up and up and get more and more

S: When actually the truth is you're a horrid little brat.

Voices: Right. (laughter)

A Voice: Underneath you hate it.

Simon: But I mean that's really quite something, if you, if it's sort of well it's part of your persona and for somebody, well Spiritual Friends are saying, well, that this really isn't how you are, and you must realise this because if you just keep on going on like this it's never really going to be you there. It's really quite hard to sort of, well, change that.

S: But sometimes, I mean, I have known people who are genuinely convinced that they are happy and positive and cheerful always. But actually they're not. They've misunderstood themselves completely. They've just got this rather facile, sociable exterior but if you look at them carefully you can see that in their heart of hearts they're deeply sad people. Even if you catch them off their guard when they're not being the life and sole of the party they look sad. But actually they really think of themselves as always happy. But you can see that they're not. They are not at all happy. But they believe that they are. And that's the sort of image that they have of themselves. They believe that that's the sort of quality that they've got. Happiness, joy, sociability but really they're not like that. So they have to revise their opinion about themselves. (Pause)

Simon: It does seem unfortunate that often it's not even perhaps, what you personally feel is the best quality but more what you feel other people think.

S: It's what other people value you for.

Simon: Right. And you just sort of play up to that.

S: I can remember when I was a child, when I was at school, for some

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323 S: (Cont.) ... reason or other, I don't know how it developed, but I had a very sharp tongue. I was able always to answer back, any, I could answer anybody back. (Laughter) I always (Laughter) And I had the dreadful habit of always having the last word. (Laughter) But I remember there was one particular teacher who encouraged this. He seemed to think it was my most valuable quality. (END SIDE A) Or he, perhaps he made me, at least for a few years, sort of, value that particular quality more highly or see it more positively than in fact it should have been seen. I think I got over it fairly quickly but I remember it being encouraged quite definitely by this particular teacher who seems to enjoy it, perhaps in some slightly perverted sort of way.

Peter?: I think something might be relevant is that thing Cintamani talked in his article of Initiation into Manhood. Adopting your mother's view of what a man is rather than your father's view. And, you sort of, thinking that you're being masculine when you're not being masculine at all

S: Because it's alright to adopt father's view of what a man is provided your father hasn't got his view of what a man is from his mother. I don't know whether Cintamani thought of that one but it's not necessarily the right view of what is a man just because it happens to come from father. Just because the immediate source is father. But it's true.

Devarala: What if mother got her view of what a man is from her father? (Laughter)

S: No. Mother usually gets her view of what a man is from the women's romantic papers and magazines. (~huckles) (Pause) But it's, I mean, I did from a matter of interest, a couple of years ago, I happened to be travelling around and I found in somebody's house one of these little novelettes by Barbara Cartland. And just as a matter of interest, before going to bed, I read it and it was really interesting because apparently one gathered from that, at least from this novel, I don't know whether, I mean, she gives the same sort of picture in other novels, but you gathered about the hero and indirectly men in general, at least really good men. The sort of men qualified to be heroes, that one~heir characteristics was that they had no sexual desires at all. (laughter) This seems to be one of the characteristics~of a man. Of a hero. He just enveloped his beloved in a cloud of tenderness and all that sort of thing but there wasn't a touch of sex or anything of that sort. Apparently

he was completely devoid of all those sort of lower emotions. (laughter) Do you see what I mean? (pause)

Mike: If you ever saw Barbara Cartland you'll probably understand why. (Laughter)

Onhyananda: To come back to the way, what you were saying about, the values you have that you like to keep the group you're in. I mean, if you think of the extremes between say the hippies and the punk rockers. They are quite different, quite different values in a way. Say if you're a punk rocker your behaviour would be, your accepted behaviour would be quite different from that ...

Simon: Actually that reminds me of the last weekend seminar because, because the side Vajradhaka was talking about the, sort of, reaction to conditions. Thinking you'd broken out of those conditions. I mean I was thinking like, you might if you were brought up~in a middle-class situation like me, of like, you know, you think, well, I'm, to heck with all this politeness and stuff, you know, I'm not having it anymore. And you become sort of like a rebel. But in becoming a rebel you inevitably identify yourself with some group. You just become another set of conditions. You exchange one set for another.

S: Well it's a bit like George Bernard Shaw's quip about the liberated woman at the beginning of the century. He said there was this tremendous movement of feminism. And he said, 'Twenty thousand women rose as one man and said, 'I will not be dictated to' and went and become shorthand- typists.' (Laughter) (Clapping) (Lots of laughter) He was a very wicked old man. (Laughter) There you have it in a nutshell. That the young rebel, the young non-conformist (General agreement) well, you see, all these people ... well it's really funny to me looking at it I hope quite objectively (laughs) you hear certain people talking about conformity, or non-conformity, and not wearing uniforms etc., well every single one of them is dressed in jeans and the same sort of jersey (general agreement) If they're not wearing a uniform well it's difficult to say who is. The same sort of hair-style and everything.

Kulamitra: In fact they're even worse. If you then come in having been part of the crowd, wearing jeans, you come in with a short hair- cut and a good pair of trousers, they're really cutting and scathing. They don't like it at all.

S: The last thing you are allowed to be is yourself. (Pause) Anyway how did we get on to that? "The omniscient Mirror of Equality will reveal all concealed vices." But you're not, you don't really become an individual just by becoming a member of another group. This is what it really means.

Mike: Bhante, about this thing about re-evaluating the self. I mean presumably that's something meditation and living in a Spiritual Community does constantly. It's like you don't have time to settle in, or hopefully you shouldn't have time to settle in to a identity, you should always be moving about.

S: And certainly people should not try to settle you down in to an identity and label you in a particular way. Well he's the young rebel and, and he's the one that's into the arts etc., etc. Or he's the old has-been. (laughs)

Simon: Old-timer.

S: He's thirty. (laughs)

Kulamitra: Something that struck me, this thing of virtues and vices, which is which is, in regard to confession. You know, sometimes you feel, you feel because of your guilt that you

want to confess something but then you suddenly realise that what you have to confesse is not what you thought because of the quilt was involved, but the whole conditioning and the quilt itself and the thing itself may be actually ok.

S: Right yes, and yet there is, of course, the connected question that sometimes even admitting something to be a strength and something to be a weakness, the two are very intimately connected. You get a shade more of something it becomes a weakness, a shade less it becomes a strength. And vice-versa. You know, sometimes it's really quite difficult to sort out one from the other and to think in terms of well, those are definitely virtues and those definitely vices. It isn't really as simple as that. (Long pause) Anyway, mull~it over for a minute. (long long pause) Is that in anyone's eyes? No. Alright. "The precious teachings of the Great Bliss will burn all wandering thoughts in its Wisdom flame." What is this saying. The 'Great Bliss

A Voice: The Dhyanas?

S: No it goes far beyond the Dhyanas. It's the Great Bliss - Maha Suka - which is the experience of the heights of* well, joy. In union with the realisation of Sunyata. So the "Precious teachings of the Great Bliss will burn all wandering thoughts in its Wisdom flame."

Jayadeva: Sort of Transcendental Tranquility?

S: So why is it that Great Bliss or the 'The teachings of Great Bliss will burn all wandering thoughts in its Wisdom flame.'? What are wandering thoughts? What is the connection between Bliss and thoughts? Or Great Bliss and wandering thoughts? Why do your thoughts wander?

A Voice: Because you are unhappy.

S: Because you're unhappy, yes. When you are experiencing Great Bliss which is the acme of Bliss, conjoined with the realisation of Sunyata, why should you have any wandering thoughts? All your thoughts will be fully absorbed in the experience that you're enjoying.

Jayadeva ?: I like the imagery because it seems to say that Bliss is a real, sort of like, fire. It's

not sort of, just being sort of laid back.

S: Yes, right.

Javadeva: Full of energy. (Pause)

A Voice: Is it the same as saying that also, that your energy is dissipated (unclear) this is the unification of energy

S: Yes, indeed. Or even in the case of Bliss in the more ordinary sense Dhyanic bliss, it has a tendency to intergrate and to unify and to cause wandering thoughts to subside. But they subside only for the time being, so as you are in that Dhyana state. But in the case of the Great Bliss they're just, they're burned for good.

Abhava: Is it very difficult to say which comes before the other? It's the unification that causes the Bliss but then the other two, sort of snowball.

S: Well, it's a bit like Samatha and Vipassana. You develop a certain amount of Samatha on the basis of that a certain amount of insight. Then because you have developed a certain amount of insight you are able to

'32~ S: (Cont.) ... have a better experience of Samatha. Because of that a still better realisation of insight and so on. You know they move back and forth. Or you move back and forth between the two. Eventually you unify them and intergrate them completely. It's the same with Bliss and Sunyata. (Pause) I mean Bliss corresponds also roughly to Samatha and Wisdom to Insight.

Mike: This idea of, sort of, burning flames and the sort of idea consuming his thoughts, and that they're not, they're not sort of just cut off and chucked out but it's they're transformed, transmuted through flames.

S: Yes, right. (Pause) And then in the same way Milarepa says, "The Nadis and Pranas in the Cahras will dispel at once all drowsiness and distractions." Well naturally because the Nadis and the Pranas are forms of energy. So if energy is aroused then of course all drowsiness and distractions will be dispelled. (Pause)

Kulamitra ?: I don't know if this is a red herring but we were saying yesterday how the Greek Gods and their mythology somehow had no meaning for us but I feel it does lack this kind of, what will be good, sort of, like the idea of burning and fire and

S: You mean the Greek Gods lack?

Kulamitra ?: Yes, they seem to.

S: They're a bit too suave aren't they? A bit too elegant almost. Well unless you go back to the Archaic gods or the gods of the archaic period. But they are just rather a bit too primitive. (Pause) Or perhaps we ~ee the Greek Gods much through eighteenth century spectacles. Perhaps we haven't really got to terms with them. Perhaps our view of the Greek Gods has been far too conditioned by later approaches. Perhaps we haven't got to grips with the~. I think one can say from a scholarly point of view that it's only in the present century that really serious work has been done on Greek mythology. I mean, just to give an example, if, you may have heard of Flaman, a contemporary of William Blake. Well, he did sort of classical illustrations to all sorts of classics like Dhante's Divine Comedy, and they're very beautiful elegant little drawings, they are sort of classical. But do they really give you the spirit of classical Greek art? They are really something quite different. They are much more they are much too neat and scrubbed and elegant and almost natty. Do you see what I mean?

Mike: I think it's because like again it's been a predominantly intellectual approach and I'm sure it's not like the Greek gods were, sort of marbled and unapproachable and sort of, that we can't connect with them as human beings. It's just that through the sort of interpretation that the scholars have given them they've actually taken out the, all the sort of primal energies perhaps

S: But in the present century scholars have started putting that back. And they've started realising how crude and primitive and bloody even Greek mythology was. I mean, Homer seems to have edited it and refined it a lot. He seems to have cut out some of the most horrid or most of the more horrible myths. He doesn't mention them in the Iliad or the Odyssey.

Abhaya: And yet I would have thought that he was more, he was much more in touch with that primitive side than other literary figures, judging by the Iliad and the Odyssey are some quite

S: Not with regard to the Olympian Gods. I mean, if, for instance you read the Theogony of Hesiod, isn't it. Yes? But the myths there, especially the creation myths, I mean the myths about Cronos and Zeus, and how Zeus displaced his father, they are much more crude and brutal than anything I think that you get in the Iliad and the Odyssey. I think the same with Hesiod. He gives bits and pieces of mythology which are more barbaric, but I think barbaric is the word, than what you find in Homer. I was also reading the other day an account of Pindar. In the first Olympian Ode, Pindar explicitly repudiates a certain myth, the myth of Tantalus and Prometheus. He says no, this could not have happened, the gods would not have behaved in this way. It's as though he's repudiating the earlier barbaric version of the myth, and it's just too much for his more civilised stomach. So it does seem until right down until the classical age when the process of refinement more or less got under way. I mean, maybe you could include Homer and that comes in a bit earlier. I mean a lot of Greek mythology was really very barbaric and savage and not in the least polished. Well you get pieces of it even continuing later. Well Apollo and Marsyas. Marsyas sort of bragged that he was just as good as Apollo and challenged Apollo but of course Apollo defeated him in a musical contest. So what did Apollo do then? He flayed Marsyas. He skinned him alive. This is the elegant obeying god of healing and literature. (Laughter) Can you imagine the Belvedere Apollo doing that sort of thing? But that, so that is part of the myth of Apollo. That is what he did on that occasion. And in the same way Apollo himself and Artemis, they slew with the arrows the children of Niobe because she boasted that she had more children than Leto, the mother of Artemis and Apollo, who had only those two. So there was a lot of cruelty, a lot of barbarism.

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Mike: I think that, that point is almost like, so that the Gods aren't polished. They aren't out of our reach. In a sense the human element can reach up and ascend above the gods. That seems very much how I've sort of related to them. It's not like they're out there as sort of finished products, but very much that some of the attributes which were given to them, like Apollo, were very much human qualities to be

S: Also, another point is that it's not only the Greek mythology doesn't just consist of, of gods in human form. You've got all sorts of other monstrous figures. Many, many of them. The Gorgons, and the Chimera (?) and the Cyclops. Well the Titans. Can you think of any more?

A Voice: Medusa.

S: Medusa who was one of the Gorgons, yes.

Voices~ The Centaurs.

S: The Centaurs.

A Voice: Cilla and Koriptis (?)

S: Cilla and Koriptis (?)

A Voice: The Harpes.

S: The Harpes. The Furies. It's full of these sort of figures too. We mustn't overlook them.

Abhaya: So what are you saying? You're saying that mythology is more worthwhile in a sense, as long as it retains its primitive

S: No. We started off as saying that maybe, that Greek mythology didn't mean much to us because it was so sort of polished and elegant, but then the point was made that, well, that is just a version of Greek mythology. Let us say Greek mythology as seen through eighteenth century, even Victorian spectacles. If you get closer to Greek mythology, and get a real look at it, especially the, in its comparatively raw state, in which it existed up to the time of perhaps of the classical period, it's a very different thing. (Pause) Though we are usually presented with a sort of sanitized version. (Pause)

S: Right. "The teaching of the self-liberating Mahamudra will conquer the demon of ego-clinging to the Five Consciousnesses." So what's the connection here? What is this self-liberating Mahamudra? It's a sort of completely spontaneous transcendental attitude. It impresses the spontaneity of the Transcendental. So it's this that is going to "conquer the demon of ego-clinging. 11 In "the self-liberating Mahamudra" you just let go. And if you just let go, how can there be any question of clinging to the ego? (Pause) Or "ego-clinging to the ~ve Consciousnesses." That is to say, that the ego is just sort of holding on to the Five Consciousnesses for the sake of security, hanging on to things that you can see and hear and taste and touch and think about. One mustn't forget the sixth consciousness too. So if you just let go of all these in the Transcendental spontaneous experience of the Mahamudra, well what room then for ego-clinging. (Pause)

Kulamitra: I suppose you only have to let go once and that's it?

S: If you really let go. (laughs)

Mike: Why does it only refer to the five though?

S: I rather wonder because really it should be six. Well, of one wants to exclude ego-clinging to the mind itself, which certainly should be excluded in the sense of one should get free from that too.

Mike: I wonder perhaps if it has been dealt with in the regards "Will burn

all wandering thoughts" "Will dispel all drowsiness and distractions. '

S: Mmm. Could be. (Pause) And "The Teaching of the radiant Wisdom Lamp will dispel darkness and ignorance." Well, this is obvious. If there is light there is no darkness. If there's Wisdom there is no ignorance. (Pause) and then "The Act of Chu La Swardsmanship will cut with ease the ties of worldly desire." There's a note on that Chu La. "The text reads etc. The meaning of 'Chu La' is very obscure. 'Chu' originally means water: it could therefore be interpreted as Act of Fluidity - denoting the non- clinging and all-free attitude of an enlightened mind." So world desire is a sort of, in a sense of neurotic craving, a sort of clinging, a sort of tightness. If you just open up, if you're free, flowing, spontaneous, it will overcome all those sort of things. (Pause)

Kulamitra~?: Could there be an analogy, this idea of swordsmanship with, let's say, the Bodhisattva and Buddha? In order to cut through ignorance

~33' Kulamitra ? :(Cont.) ... in one fell swoop you have to, sort of like, fashion yourself to be, an image would be a really sharp razor-blade, and so you have to spend all that time, as it were, just fashioning yourself as a tool, before, to do it just in one go.

S: Yes, yes. Well the more concentrated the mind the deeper the thrust of Insight, when it eventually comes. (Long pause)

Devaraja: It's amazing, 6~echungpa '5 really got it right this time.

Simon: It's almost like, sort of, all that wisdom has suddenly come up in him.

S: Yes. Yes.

Mike: Before you wouldn't have believed that he could say something like that. I mean he's not only saying it, he's really saying it with conviction.

S: Right, yes. Right.

Mulamitra ? : And it brings us back to, in a sense, what we were talking about confession - like when he made a real confession before and not there is nothing to regret. Once you're really confessed back.

S: Yes, there's no looking back. (Long pause) Of course Milarepa has something more to say. He still has something to add, as we shall see. Perhaps we'd better have our tea first, and then conclude. (Pause) Alright, Milarepa' 5 words. Would someone like to read what Milarepa comments and then the song.

Text: "Milare~a commented, 'What you have said is very good. But in addition we need the Instruction on the View and Practice. Now listen to my song:

The View is the wisdom of the Void,

The Practice is the illumination of non-clinging, The Action is the everlasting play without desire, The Fruit is great immaculate Nakedness.

Concerning the view of Void-Wisdom

The danger is to miss it,

Through words and thoughts.

If absolute knowledge

Has not been gained within

Words alone can never free one from ego-clinging.

Thus, you should strive for true understanding.

Concerning the practice of Illumination free from clinging, The danger is to miss it By adhering to mere concentration. If Wisdom has not shone within, Steady and deep concentration by itself Will never lead to Liberation. Wisdom never comes With distractions and drowsiness; You should thus work hard on mindfulness.

Concerning perpetual Action without desires, The danger is to miss it

By indulging in idle talk.

Before all appearances have become

Aids in one's meditation practice,

'Tantric Acts' will be

Worldly desires disguised.

You should thus strive for purity, and non-clinging.

Concerning the immaculate Fruit of Nakedness, The danger is to miss it through your thought. If ignorances are not purged within Hard effort will bring but small results. You should thus strive to wipe out ignorance."

S: This classification - View, Practice, Action, Fruit - is a quite standard one. The View represents the particular conceptual embodiment of Perfect Vision. The Practice is the practice in accordance with that. The action, one could say, is the more specific form of that practice. And the Fruit, the spiritual result. So Milarepa says, '~The View is the Wisdom of the Void'. The fundamental philosophy of 3Liddhism, so to speak, is the philosophy of Sunyata. The fundamental "Practice is the illumination ~n-clin°n." That is the clear mental state, attained through the absence of all desires. "The Action is the everlasting play without desire." The action, in accordance with the realisation attained through that practice is a sort of spontaneous play, which is without desire. And "The Fruit" the

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S: (Cont.) ... Ultimate spiritual result, "is the great 'immaculate Nakedness." The great, completely pure, state of realisation of Reality, as it really is. Then in each of the succeeding verses he explains in greater detail what he means by each of those four. So he says, "Concerning the view of Void-Wisdom. the dander is to miss it through words and thoughts." The View, the Perfect Vision of Sunyata is communicated through thoughts and through words. But one can become entangled in those thoughts and words for their own sake, as ends in themselves. So if that happens then one misses the essence of the matter; misses the real message; misses the Perfect Vision of Void-Wisdom. You could be a student of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras, you could study the Madhyamika Teachings but you could be so wrapped up in a purely scholarly study of those things that you miss the Perfect Vision of Void-Wisdom itself. That's the danger in this con- nection. "If absolute knowledge has not been gained within. words alone can never free one from ego-clinging." One has to understand and apply the real meaning of the words. "Thus you should strive for true understanding.~ Not just an understanding of words and thoughts but try to intuit, try to truely understand what those words and thoughts are really trying to com- municate. (Pause) And there is this danger, of course, in a sense, at every level of the Buddha's teaching. Not only with regard to the teaching concerning Void-Wisdom. The danger is that one will become over pre- occupied with just the words and the thoughts and miss the real inner meaning. (Pause) So "Concerning the nractice of Illumination free from cli n the da r is to miss it b adheri to mere concentration." By mere concentration is meant the Dhyanas or Samatha experience without any Insight. It is a very clear and very pure state but one can mistake this for Enlightenment, for Bodhi, itself. The Buddhist view is that many Hindu Yogis get into

this state, or Buddhist yogis too if they are not careful. One finds many examples of this in the Zen tradition, of Gurus exalting their disciples to press on, not to mistake a temporary blissful, clear pure state for Enlightenment itself. So "Concerning the practice of Illumination free from clinging, the danger is to miss it by adhering to mere concentration. If Wisdom has not shone within, steady and deep concentration by itself will never lead to Liberation. Wisdom never comes with distractions and drowsiness: You should thus work hard on mindfulness." Why do you think mindfulness is especially mentioned here? in this connection?

Kulamitra: Something quite practical which you can do outside of meditation.

S: Yes, there is that. But it's as though you have to have mindfulness with regards to the meditation itself. The concentration, rather, itself,

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S: (Cont.) ... with regard to the Dhyanas, with regard to Samatha. Not become absorbed and, so to speak, intoxicated, and carried away by them. Because they can be intensely blissful states. So retain your mindfulness even with regard to your experience of Samatha. Remember that Samatha is not the last word of Buddhism. It's a, I mean, a very noble thing. It's a very lofty experience, but it is to be used as a basis for the development of Insight and Wisdom. Remain mindful of that. That seems to be the connection here because "Steady and deep concentration by itself will never lead to Liberation. Wisdom never comes with distractions and drowsiness;" The suggestion is that you can have a quite deep experience of Samatha but in the absence of Wisdom there's always the danger that that may just become a dull and drowsy sort of state. It won't be really clear and really bright. There'll be no Insight. (Pause)

And, "Concerning perpetual Action without desires, the danger is to miss it by indulging in idle talk. Before all appearances have become aids in one's meditation practice, 'Tantric Acts' will be worldly desires disguised. You should thus strive for purity and non-clinging."

The actions are the apparently unconventional acts in accordance with one's higher realisation, in acts directed, you know, to helping other people. Other living beings. And these 'Tantric Acts', I mean may on occasion be very bizarre indeed, but if you haven't reached the level of which all appearances, all forms, have in fact become aids to meditation practice, then your so-called Tantric Acts, your so-called bizarre performances, unconventional behaviour, will just be worldly desires disguised. (Pause) It's like Lamas taking spiritual consorts and Dakinis to themselves, and giving that a lofty spiritual significance - it's just worldly desires disguised. Or the same with money. "You should thus strive for purity and non-clinging." I mean Milarepa doesn't deny that there is such a thing as Tantric Acts. Yes. In some of the Gurus of this line, Marpa, Naropa, Tilopa, did some very strange things indeed, but they had reached a very high level of spiritual realisation. For them all appearances were aids. In other words, there was nothing that they had to avoid. For them there was no real distinction

between Samsara and Nirvana. They could, in a way, do anything. They could appear to break any convention, even the so-called moral rules. But their so, their Tantric Acts were really Tantric Acts. So one should not perform the so-called Tantric Acts unless one has reached that really high level of spiritual development.

Simon: And yet, it seems that like, the sort of, a great sort of ignorant desire from people to, sort of, the Tantra is what it's all about. It has that attractive mystical quality because it can't really be defined, so that you could get away with the worldly acts, quite easily.

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S: Well, unless you meet someone like Milarepa. (Laughs)

A Voice: Can you think of any examples in your experience?

S: Like?

A Voice: Well, Tantric Acts which seem like unconventional?

S: Well, genuinely unconvention acts? Only of a comparatively minor nature. Not anything as it were, really affronting conventional ideas. Not that I can recollect. I remember some relatively, or you could say minor Tantric Acts. One particular teacher I had who was a Ningmapa Lama, usually he used to stay with me from time to time in Kalimpong and he meditated in the morning. And at breakfast time he'd quite often say that such and such thing came up in my meditation this morning. We've got to do it. Or I've got to do it. Or you've got to do it. One of the things that came up, one day, he announced it one breakfast time, was that we were to put a banner of victory on the roof of the Vihara. So this is a little unconventional, as it were. Do you see what I mean. It's sort of tending in that direction, but to the best of my knowledge he never did anything of an unconventional nature to the extent of, sort of, breaking the accepted, moral rules, or anything of that sort. I remember there was another Lama, that~I didn't have much contact with. I'd met him once. He was, in a sense, the

Guru of the Maharaja of Sikkhim, or the Maharaja-kumara, as he was at that time. He lived near, he lived on the outskirts of Sikkhim and in accordance with his directions the Maharajakumara, as he then was, built a bit stupa. He had a little hut by the side of it. But he was always drinking whisky. And he was apparently always drunk. And myself had heard the Maharajakumara say, "Well, I don't care that he's always drinking whisky. I don't care if he's drunk. As far as I'm concerned, he's the wisest Lama that I know." And he meant it really seriously. And there did seem to be, to be something. I didn't find him personally very attractive at all, but a lot of people did. And it - well I only met him once any way, but it did seem that he had something so to speak, despite that sort of behaviour, which isn't all that unconventional by Sikkhimese standards. (Laughter) Buddhism having degenerated considerably in Sikkhim. But it wasn't really the sort of behaviour that was expected of a Lama, but nonetheless he was very highly regarded.

Voice: Wasn't Milarepa's Guru* Marpa, wasn't he continuously getting drunk, or was this skilful means?

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4336 S: I don't remember. I wouldn't say that he was continually getting

drunk. But anyway, you have to be really careful because if I hear that anyone~in Glasgow (Laughter) say an Order Member, is getting drunk and saying, well he's just engaging in Tantric Acts, we shall be very suspicious. (Laughter)

A Voice: We're all Tea-totallers.

S: Mmm?

A Voice: We're all Tee-totallers.

S: We're all Tea-tot&llers. (Laughter)

Javadeva: That's very suspicious.

S: No. That's the real Tantric Act. (laughter) Reak skilful means.

Devarala: As long as they don't drink at tea time. (Laughter)

Simon: It does seem that, the sort of, there would be a danger from people who, well just misunderstand what the Tantras is all about, looking for, sort of, obscurity, unconventionality in a Teacher. And it's almost like the more unconventional they are the more wise and cosmic they are or whatever.

S: The more fantastic.

Simon: Yes. I mean a bit like what you were saying about the disciples watching that monk with the cat and tying it up the significance is that

S: Or the other one I mentioned when the monk, well, a Guru really, was flicking custard over the audience in Cambridge. His handful of disciples were really taken by this. They really thought it the greatest thing. (Laughter) They really upset others. His disciples, well, they really thought he was imbued with sort of transcendental significance. He was just being a bit silly, I feel. Maybe he was a bit bored with it all. (Laughter) It was a bit of a joke, and one shouldn't take it too seriously but they did take it seriously, as though it had a tremendous significance.

Simon: It does, sort of, show how, well, how in a way gullible people are. How they want to see somebody

S: Well, I have said in the past my impression sometimes is, being in contact with, or hearing of different so-called Spiritual Gurus, as though a lot of people, thousands of people are going around begging to be deceived: Please deceive me. (Laughter) This is almost what if you are, sort of, straight and put all your cards on the table, yes? (Laughter) They just want to be deceived. They want to be led by the nose. They want to be bamboozled. This is what they want it seems, in many cases. (Pause)

A Voice: You pointed out in the 'Thousand Petalled Lotus' when you came across that female Guru, I can't remembor the name.

S: Anandami(?)

A Voice: That the Indians are very fond of equating, like unconventional behaviour with spiritual attainment.

S: Yes, that's right. Yes. Yes. Well there is* I mean, a spiritually developed person may well act in total disregard of social conventions and so on, but you can't turn round and say therefore, if you act in total disregard of social conventions therefore you are a spiritually developed person.

Simon: Because it's almost like if you see a so-called sort of spiritual teacher, and he's just actually being himself and perhaps he is going for a walk, or he's, sort of, he's playing with somebody. I don't know, doing something quite normal. It's like people go, well he's

(END OF TAPE)

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RR/14 JAYADEVA: I do remember some...I can't remember... some book on Zen I read some time ago, but it was an interesting quotation from a passage of Zen scripture or something and someone was saying to come and see something, saying: 'I well, you're Enlightened, or whatever what makes you different from me ? I mean, here you are, you eat, you do everything that I do " and what I found interesting was the master said: "Yes, I eat, but when I eat, I eat. Whereas when other people eat, they don't actually eat. They're engaged in lots of other thing They never do one thing at a time." ; which I found quite interesting

S: Well, yes I've just thought of a little, another little example of this sort of thing. A rather silly example. There was an Indian well I won't even say teacher. A, sort of, social reformer, the chief disciple. you know, on the, sort of social reform side of Mahatma Ghandhi called Vinoba Bhave. Have you ever heard of him ? He was very famous in India. I think he's dead now. But a friend of mine, was a disciple of his and I heard a lot about him through her. Anyway, he was a rather, well, a really strange Character, I think. He was just going round from village to village and doing, sort of, village "uplift" type of work and he had all sorts of eccentricities. And he came, in the course of his travels, with his disciples, to

Sarnath. And he was of course received and entertained by the Maha Bodhi Society monks there, including my old friend Sangharatna. So, I heard about this afterwards from Sangharatna himself. And he said they were all very displeased with Vinoba Bhave, Apparently he'd been lodged in the Birla Dharmshala at Sarnath and Sangharatna before, or rather, on the evening of their arrival, they arrived late it seems, had asked his disciple what Vinoba Bhave would require in the morning for breakfast etc. So they said he'd require such and such because he had a very special eccentric diet, you know, quite different from anybody else. And Sangharatna was assured that he must have it at seven o'clock. "He's very very particular about eating punctually." So he must have it right on the dot at seven o'clock. It could not be a minute later. And, of course, it should not be a minute earlier. But right on the dot." So this was so much impressed on Sangharatna that he said you know, well I'd better tend to it myself. So just before seven o'clock, he got his special breakfast from the kitchen and walked across from the monks' kitchen to the Birla Dharmshala just a few yards and arrived at just a few seconds before seven o'clock. So he said to the disciples; "Here we are. I brought it so he could have it right on time, just as he wants it." So they said: "oh, he's already gone to the temple". So Sangharatna said, well he was a bit surprised, but he said: "alright, never mind, he can have it when he comes back" I So they said: "Ah, he never comes back". (laughter) So Sangharatna said; "What do you mean 'he never comes back'. Surely he comes back from the temple to have his breakfast. I brought it for him at seven o'clock, just as you said". "No, no. He never comes back. That is his greatness." (laughter) So Sangharatna said, "I just lost my temper; because he had rather a hot temper (laughter) "I told them what they could do with his greatness." (laughter) So this is an example of not just eccentric but inconsiderate behaviour, you know being regarded as a sign of greatness. So I don't think he was very welcome at Sarnath again. So you know, it's very often just an attempt to create an impression. You've heard the great Tantric Gurus behave in this way or behave in that way, so, you just imitate them to try to convey the impression you're a great Tantric Guru. There are thousands of people who will fall for this. Swallow it all, hook, line and sinker. It's amazing. One is really amazed by people's gullibility and credulity.

DEVARAJA: I've heard strange stories about Trungpa Rimpoche. Vast

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RR/14 quantities. ... 2

S~: of skillful means

SEVARAJA: Yes, vast quantities of skillful means (laughter)

KULAMITRA: It seems just a reflection of the whole way people project onto the Guru-figure. That they cannot just, you know, take their actions in a straight forward way, and even be open to the fact that it may or may not be straight forward. There maybe something behind it but maybe not. But whatever happens they have to, kind of, keep their picture of what the Guru is really like.

S: I mean sometimes you can say, you can actually see the Guru staggering around drunk. And he's quite clearly just drunk. But the disciples will go on saying to you: "No, no. He's just testing us". At all costs their, sort of, belief in him has to be kept up. You know, even in

the face of their own senses. Well, sometimes, I mean one doesn't exclude the possibility that he maybe testing them but then you have to know him quite deeply and quite well before you can be sure of that sort of thing.

Q: Isn't it also, a bit like what we were saying yesterday: like have the facts first and then the interpretation. That there's always just the interpretation.

S: Right. Yes. But if you find that in the case of a particular Guru that even though, you know, he drinks a lot of whisky, even though he's always drunk and he's running around with women and he doesn't seem ever to study the Dharma, but nonetheless you see that his disciples really do progress and you cannot deny it, well, then you might say: "well, perhaps there is something in his methods. Perhaps he really is a Guru." You have to judge the results. Yes? Do you see what I mean? You cannot rule out the possibility completely. You have to have an open mind. But, nonetheless, that open mind does not exclude a big dose of scepticism. Healthy scepticism. You're not obliged to believe everything that everybody says. I mean, I can recollect another little example of this sort of thing. There was a lama in Kathmandu, at Bodnath, the famous Chini Lama. I heard all sorts of stories about him; about his drinking and womanising and just being after money etc. I heard all these stories about him, which may well have been true. But a woman came to see me in Kalimpong. A woman called Estelle Holt, who was a journalist. Up until recently was on the staff of the Evening Standard, I think. And she said, she didn't know anything about Buddhism, never studied. So she'd been to Kathmandu and she'd stayed with the Chini Lama. And she'd been quite impressed by him. And he only knows broken English, as I knew, because I'd met him myself. So I asked what did he teach her. "What did you understand from him? So in her own way, without using any sort of Buddhist terminology, she gave me an account of what she'd learned from him; What he'd taught her, and it amounted, actually, to a, sort of, ... well it was the Ghadavyuha philosophy. So somehow or other through his broken English despite his drinking and womanising and the rest of it, he'd put this across to her in such a way that she'd really understood it. So I said; "well that old Chini Lama must have some "

thing. Otherwise how could he have done this? She's not a Buddhist. She doesn't understand Buddhism. She'd not read anything about Buddhism. She'd just spent a few weeks with him. But he'd put across something to her. So, despite his unconventional behaviour, he must have some kind of spiritual understanding and insight. So, you know, in these sort of instances one must have an open mind. One might say that one can even imagine some Guru's being deeply convinced that

~go RR/14 conventional, the force of convention was so powerful that they were justified in going to any extremes just to break it. You can understand some Guru's genuinely feeling like that. And never letting up all through their lives and saying, "well I don't care, whether people misunderstand when they think I'm really drinking and womanising. I don't care. But I'm not just going to be a sort of respectable religious teacher. I'm going to, sort of, discourage people who aren't really serious and who can't penetrate through and see what I'm really like." You can understand a Guru taking this attitude in some cases. So you have to have a very open mind. On the other hand, you might find a Guru who is completely conventional. You have to be open to the fact that he may be just as much a Guru as Someone who is completely unconventional. Gurus, as such, are neither conventional nor unconventional. So they cannot be pinned down in that sort of way. So, O.k., Trungpa

drinks etc etc, but that doesn't necessarily invalidate him. You've got to know him beforehand you can be really sure. On the other hand a particular Bhikhu may be very respectable, may never drink, never look at a woman, observe all the rules but you know you cannot conclude from that that therefore he must have insight and wisdom. You have to know him and understand that from your own deep personal contact with him. There is no guarantee. I mean, ~Guru means by very definition, so to speak, some one with whom we have a direct personal relationship. So you can only someone is only a Guru within that particular context. You cannot, sort of, judge from a distance whether he is a Guru or not. ~6ean you can only come to some conclusion one way or the other if you have some direct contact with him.

KULAMITRA: it's often the disciples that actually create the difficulty isn't it? The Guru just acts and leaves it to people to think what they may. But it's the disciples who become very insistent.

S: Though, of course, again up to a point, the Guru is responsible for how people regard him. I mean, sometimes Gurus, inverted commas, try to shift the responsibility to their disciples. I've given an example of this in what I've (not as an example, it's just an incident in the memoirs) I've just been writing: A friend of mine went to Luck- now, after he went to see a Bhikhu there an elderly Theravada Bhikhu and got to know him. On a subsequent visit he found the Bhikhu sitting in front of a big framed photograph of himself. So the visitor who became a friend of mine afterwards, he looked from the monk to photo and from the photo back to the monk. Back to the photo and then he said: "Well, that's strange, in this photo you've got a halo but I don't see any halo" (laughter). Do you see what I mean? They do this sort of thing in India. There around the photograph of the monk, big enlarged photograph, life size nearly, around his head there was a sort of halo or aura. So when this person said well I don't see "looking at the monk himself, 'I don't see any halo" the monk got really quite cross. He said, "My devotees put it there. So then, this other person got quite annoyed in turn and said "Well You conceited old man, you put it there yourself"; which was probably true. So sometimes "Gurus", they do that sort of thing and then attribute it to the disciples. Or, as say in the case of Ramana Maharshi, you know that caste distinctions were observed in his Ashram. And people, used to say "Well, it's not him it's his brother who is the manager. I mean the Maharshi cannot avoid all responsibility. You cannot put it off to the disciples. They're supposed to be the disciples. You're supposed to be the Guru. So either they are doing it in accordance with your instructions or not. If they're doing it in accordance with your instructions, say so. If they're not, say No, I'm sorry I'm not able to persuade them to act in accordance with my instructions. But with some pseudo Gurus you get

RR/14 this sort of dishonesty. Well, I don't say this sort of thing, sort

4 know, but don't do this, or make these sort of representations

about myself, it's my disciples who do it." That is quite dishonest. One comes across a lot of that sort of thing. Or "I do it just to please my devotees" You're sitting up on a great throne, surrounded by this, that and the other, you say, I don't attach any real significance to these sort of things. I just do it for the sake of my devotees. They insist on it, Eh? On the other hand, sometimes it may be true. You cannot say that it's always untrue but you just have to see for yourself and come to your own conclusions, based on your own personal

experience and understanding of the situation.

MIKE: Bhante, this coming to your own conclusions crops up again and again within the spiritual life, right the way through. I mean there is the Dharma offers advice which you can...gives direct guidance if you have the faculties which fail to see it. But there's always one bit of advice contradictory apparently to another. But between the two you can see, you can see that it's not all black or white.

S~: Well, there's no such thing as advice in the abstract. Advice is always advice for a particular person. So you just have to see which advice, so to speak, applies to you. And, therefore, it's best get the advice from someone who knows you. Because you know, going through the scriptures and coming across different bits of advice directed to different people, you may not be sure, you know, which piece of advice is meant for you, because you may not be sure which particular person in the scriptures you resemble. Are you like Ananda or are you like Sariputra? Should you take more seriously that the Buddha says to Ananda or something different that he says to Sariputra? Though this is where the Guru comes in. That is to say, well, not even Guru, Kalyana mitra. Someone who knows you personally and can tailor the advice to your personal needs. Otherwise you can search the Scriptures and find passages where the Buddha says "Go slowly. Do it gently, little by little." Another passage says "Throb yourself right in. Cast aside hesitations and doubt. Tackle it directly. Well, alright, which one is meant for you?

MIKE: But you've got decisions, not decisions but you've got.... I see them sometimes in terms of decisions that one hasn't at the back of one's head got some sort of divine vision as to whether it's one side or the other. Whether you go in one direction or whether you go on another. I mean, even if there's two choices it would be easy, but sometimes there is more than that....

S: Well, I was going to say, even if you have Kalyana mitras, well you've chosen those Kalyana mitras. You might have two. Sometimes they might give you different advice. (laughter)

MIKE: But what faculty do you respond with if it's not thinking, feeling...

S: Well, whatever you've got. You just have to make use of whatever you've got. If you've got thinking, make use of thinking. If it's intuition, feeling make use of those. Whatever you've got. Just be like an animal which finds itself in a difficult situation: well if it's got a beak it'll use it, if it's got claws (laughter) it will use them. If it's got wings it'll use them. Use what weapons, so to speak, whatever faculties that you have

SIMON: It does seem, also that the situation as it comes is sort of you know how to deal with it, in a way. There is no sort of, I mean you cannot really put over prepare yourself. You just go into a situation open to the fact that there's a certain way of dealing with it but I'll only know that when we actually start communicating.

Whatever happens

3qz RR/14 S: Ye~, quite.

5 JAYADEVA: You know, even if someone gives you ~dvice its for you to make the decision always.

S: Yes, to follow it or no~ to follow it. Unless you are comp4etely passive

Jayadeva: The problem really is not which to take bit in decision. And you can overcome that by making the decision.

SIMON: You only learn from that as~ell, don't you ? I mean o?erwise you are just sitting on the fence. You're letting other people do your expriencing for you it seems.

DEVARAJA: But you do make the decision in the end because you start looking around for somebody whose going to decide according, in accordance with what you whnt him to decide

S: Even sitting on the fence is a decision, realL~

GUHYANANDA: Maybe it's~ not as straight forward as that. Maybe you have make a fe~ mistakes and you just come to ft)m what people say to you an~also what you think and any mistakes you've made and

S: Yes, in the end you do decide ~ecause, even, not to do anything at all is a decision. Not to follow anybody's advice is a decision. You cannot avoid decisions.

MIKE: No~you cannot avoid decisions but just that its seems that the mechanism that you've got to make them is there. Sometimes I feel very poorly equipped....

S: Well, perhaps one is

MIKE: the limitations which you have....

S: But one shouldn't dwell so much on ones limitations that one is inhibited from all action. That is a danger. Otherwise you will, in effect, have come to a decision just to stagnate and procrastinate Anyway last verse:

Concerning the immaculate Fruit of ~akedness, The dan er is to miss it throu h our thou ht. If ignorances are not purged withinl Hard effort will bring but small results. You s~ould thus strive to wipe out ignorance.

S: Th Immaculate Fruit of Nakedness is the expe~~ience of undiluted spiritual Reality as a result of all you spiritual practices an experiences. The danger is to miss it through your thought. The danger is to miss it through thinking abiut it or to think that you have Realit when, in fact, all that you have is a thought about Reality. If ignorances are not pur~ed within the i~~norances being all the thoughts about Reality which present themselves as knowledge of Reality. Hard effort will bring but small results. You should strive to wipe out ignorance. Just effort by itself is of no use. It must be a , sort of , illumined effort. An effort free from ignorance. An effort which dies not depend upon thoughts. That does not

mistake thoughts for Reality. Otherwise they'd be no realisation of Reality in its nakedness, so to speak. T~ought has to be abandoned in the end. SIMON: Ts this also the practice of discrimination as well, in so

much that the more that you think about things the more there is just So many, sort of, alley ways and you've just got to .

RR/14 S: But it's not that one shouldn't think about things. Not that one shouldn't think about Reality, so to speak. But that thinking should be used as a sort of spring-board for the actual experience and realisation. Not become an end in itself. One shouldn't confuse the thought of Reality with Reality itself. Or think that when one is thinking about Reality in an abstract way that actually you are in contact with Reality. You're not... You are only thinking thought about Reality. So then it concludes;

All present at the meeting were convinced by the truth of this song and all were inspired with joy. This is the story of the Wild goats (laughs) This is where it all started from

Anyway any other points arising out of what we've done so far? Or any time this week ?

GUHYANANDA: I thought there seemed to be a bit of a link between what we started with today and what we finished with yesterday.

S: In what way ?

GUHYANANDA: We were talking about if you've got like emotional hang-ups you cannot think really on pointedly. We were talking yesterday about how people won't think things through ; use jargon Like it could be using the jargon to avoid confronting certain emotional areas that they just don't want to confront.

S: Well, one could say that these 'Tantric Acts', inverted commas. is sort of acting the jargon. The jargon cannot just be spoken you know. You can in a manner of speaking act the jargon. ~mean, you mentioned that Mike, didn't you ? When you said it's not just a question of talking. Someone can just put their arm round you and say "Let's go to my room. Let's have quiet talk about it." The very gesture is a sort of extension of the jargon. So the 'Tantric Acts' are a bit like that. A sort of dramatic equivalent of the jargon. You certainly find with some Gurus, maybe Hindu ones, more than Buddhist ones, it's derigueur always to be blissful, always to be, sort of revelling in Divine Bliss. Have a big smile stretching from ear to ear. You know all that sort of thing. As though life is just too wonderful because you realise the absolute and cast your eyes up and all the rest of it, yes ? (LAUGHING) It's a big act. Maybe they have got a sort of rather optimistic temperament but none-the-less, in terms of the Transcendental it's just a bit of an act. And you hear expressions like that in India. They're talking about a particular Guru. People might say ~ He's always revelling in Divine Bliss" or "He's always rolling in Divine Bliss". (laughter)

DEVARAJA: There is something that wasn't directly related.. when we were talking about Greek Gods. There seems to be one school of thought that it's almost like a necessity for us to

either discover or resuscitate or create our own sort of, indigenous gods. I can't say personally that I feel a strong need for that. I don't know whether it's a deeper layer....

S: It really means that one needs a language. One needs symbols for dealing with, handling, coming to terms with one's own experiences or what is happening within one at a deeper level. This is what it means, really.

DEVARAJA: I mean should there ideally be something that you share in common: symbols you share in common with other people? Or...?

S: It does seem that myths and symbols, by their very nature are what you share with other people. But also a medium of communication. Yes, you can have your own private symbols but they won't be of much

use in communicating with other people. It also does seem that if

3Lt4 RR/14 you reach a certain level of what Jung called the collective unconscious the symbols that you encounter there are in fact common. You may give them a particular form, an individual form but basically they're the same symbols that are encountered world wide at all ages.

What is Jung's collective unconscious? I've heard those terms bandied around but never had a definition.

S: Well it isn't really any thing. And Jung doesn't give a definition. He avoided giving a definition. I think one has to read the literature a bit extensively you know, just to get some sort of feeling about it. But if one can attempt a definition; but then that would be against the spirit of the thing itself. There is a paper-back called "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious". I think that gives one a reasonably good idea. It's in the Order library.

SIMON: I was just thinking of the idea of symbols .. people who have experienced these symbols can communicate them to you but I found what happens is that you can hear them talk a bit ... various gods, angels etc and it stirs you a bit perhaps you think about it. But it's very much out there. But I find it not until you actually through the processes of your imagination or the combination of meditation and you just begin to experience something of some sort of emotional experience that kind of relates to the symbol of say an angel. And it's then that that breathes life into it almost. That actually sets the symbol on fire. You know that's when it actually means something. Before it just is a concept.

S: You cannot find or create your symbols or gods in cold blood so to speak. But if one looked around one might find that one might have symbols or gods. I seem to remember a sort of large painting done by you of Superman some years ago.

DEVARAJA: Yes, a sort of superman figure.

S: It might have been something of that sort or have that sort of significance for you.

DEVARAJA: It was a figure on fire. I found that a lot of the talk about finding these gods a bit

artificial and a bit kind of...people say:"I don't really respond to Buddhist symbols and it seems a bit over the top really. In actual fact forms like Padmasambhava and Dakinis are beautiful and aesthetically very beautiful. I mean I think it's just a....something wrong with you as a human if you don't respond to them in a way. You don't have to find something that's exclusively ethnic.

S: After all people respond to Buddhist symbols quite powerfully who don't know anything about Buddhism at all. Don't they? So that means the appeal of the symbols is not you know linked with any sort of understanding of what they signify. Or what they are connected with historically and so on.

DEVARAJA: So artificial kind of chasing after trying to resuscitate Greek gods in a way just seems totally contrived to me. I mean the Greek gods are no more part of our heritage than Buddhist deities.

S: Right. If you find Greek gods actually appealing, well fair enough. But not that you ought to find Greek gods appealing, because Greek culture is, to some extent, at the root of Western Culture. Though it could be that the Greek gods are stone dead for you as perhaps the Christian Saints.

SIMON: I think what you were saying about like the sort of Dakinis

and figures like Padmasambhava being alive. I mean yes they should be. At times in my experience they have been very alive. But at other times it's say your imagination is a bit deadened or rather insensitive to the appeal of the Bodhisattva figure and therefore to make steps up to that again. And the way I do that is just by

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RR/14 using my imagination to start off on quite simple levels. Superman maybe. Sort of building it up from there. But using your imagination and to that extent I think it is a sort of personal thing. Therefore there is no general rule that gods are in and if you cannot get in with gods there is something wrong with you.

DEVARAJA: I always find it a bit of a distraction.. I can remember Padmapani a few years ago saying "We're going to finish all these Celtic deities, and that's what we've got to get into and lay lines and so "

on S: Well we know so little about Celtic deities anyway and they can't become very vivid for us even from purely literary point of view.

Aryamitra: When I was living in Edinburgh, living with Derek Allen he was very much into Thor. And I got interested and wondered if this does actually represent some kind of image or aspect of ourselves, anything archetypal. So I thought I'd just experiment by visualizing it. I did this and did get quite a feeling for Thor but very very crude indeed. And maybe they do come from some kind of source that you can get in contact but my experience was very very crude. Why are people into that ?

S: Well, he's got a big hammer. (laughter)

JAYADEVA: It's important that we don't go about creating him artificially that they do come from some experience.

S: But you cannot create them artificially actually. You can only think that you do.

If you create it it's an expression of you.

S: Yes

JAYADEVA: Well it's the sense that the Greek gods weren't something that people sat down and thought about and thought "we need an image or need a logo"

S: They were landed with them whether they liked it or not. They couldn't remember when and how they began. There they were. Demanding sacrifice and all the rest of it.

: I wonder if I could visualise some of Blake's images. Use them

S: Well one could try. After all he has depicted them in his paintings and illustrations.

DEVARAJA: I just cannot see why one would choose to visualise a Blakean deity - in preference to a particular Bodhisattva. I'm just trying to find a reason why...

Well, there's something that maybe you respond to. I remember Dhammaninna said that when she was doing a Tara practice she would quite often get another Tara that she had never seen before and I think you said that's o.k.

S: It is a question also on the level on which they arise. I think you could say that one of the advantages of say Blake's images is that they are a sort of intermediate between the experiences that one has on the level of ordinary waking consciousness and the levels that are represented by say the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures. It's rather difficult to get right up there so Blake might be a sort of half-way

house. Provided of course he does appeal to you naturally and spontaneously and there's something in your feeling and your emotion that naturally latches onto those figures. You cannot sort of reason yourself into it. If they, if Blake leaves you cold well that's it. I doubt if there is anything you can do about it.

RR/14 . Well maybe that's the same with the idea of Greek mythology . Maybe Greek culture just brings you a little bit closer.

S: If it really does appeal to you, but then it cannot be as I have said a cold blooded sort of thing. Nor can you say well you ought to get it from Greek culture. I think you'll know very quickly if you just look at certain figures and pictures. Yes. You'll know at once whether you really feel something . Whether you resonate or whether they do just leave you cold.

DEVARAJA: It seems to depend very much on the artist who is representing them. If the artist is actually in touch

S: Yes there is that factor too.

DEVARAJA: I was thinking about this and trying to find a way of arriving at a satisfactory argument for myself. I feel very satisfied say by Greek mythological content in works of art when it's works by a particular artist that I admire or respond to. For instance Shelley, Keats or Botticelli.

S: Which, of course, is a very highly specialised reading.

° There is another side, another aspect in Greek culture, Which is very poignant to you. It might even be unconscious but its very appealing and use maybe some of the art forms of other things because they somehow represent something else.

S: Ah, they reflect something of that.

° Yes. That its not necessarily the actual statue or the actual art at all, but its something else that you're picking up on in the Greek culture or at least our interpretation that you find quite appealing. And you identify that with the art. Greek art that just symbolises that for you. It might even be a romantic type of thing.

S: Yes, it might not be purely aesthetic at all.

KULAMITRA: Plus you could also say that maybe, some people are so alienated they cannot recognise real beauty.

S: Well, it could be..

DEVARAJA: I think Mangala said a really good thing last night. He said that surely the importance about it was that the human values that came out or a study of Greek culture was the value placed on strong male friendships.

S: That is true. Heroic friendships, you could say.

SIMON: That is Exactly what I feel about some of Blake's symmetry. It's like he speaks, he's a living example of the heroic human being He really stirs my imagination. I don't know much about him but it is the human content. Not anything else, really. Well I won't really see what else there could be apart from a rather old academic appreciation.

S: Any other point ?

. I Was wondering about this question breaking through one's self will. Primordial self-will. What I mean is to what extent can one help bring oneself to a position where one is totally frustrated and thereby in a position to break through self-will ? Or to what extent can one do it or is it the case that it's something that is always done by other people~ you find yourself a victim to circumstances ?

S: I mean one doesn't like to over generalise but it does seem to be that it always occurs in connection with your relationship with other people. It seems to me that it can occur in either one of two ways. Or sometimes in both ways. The two ways reinforcing each other. Either it can be as a result of your being deliberately subjected to a process of that sort by a Guru, who deliberately puts you through it as say the Tantric Guru does, or the Zen Master does.

RR/14 Or it can be as a result of pressure upon you, usually pressure in a 10 positive sense, from other members of the spiritual community. You being a regular member of that community over a long period. I think it can happen also, as it were, fortuitously as a result of just frustrating experiences in ordinary life. But I think that is quite haphazard, and is just as in fact is far more likely not happen than to happen. So I think it almost always comes about, either because you're put in that position of existential frustration by the Guru or by other members of the spiritual community. Whereas, for instance, say in a spiritual community, you may be under the impression that you are doing something quite right. That you are right. But everybody else tells you that you're quite wrong. At first you cannot believe it. But gradually, maybe over the years you start having, developing great faith and confidence in those people. And then they're all saying that you're wrong in that particular respect. You just cannot see it. So this might create a great conflict in you. Why do they say that I am wrong? I just cannot see it. In what way am I wrong? Am I wrong? Or are they all wrong? And this can lead to a state of, sort of, existential frustration. Which in turn may lead to a sort of break through.

So it would be misguided to adopt a course of austerities to....(laughter)...with the view to well totally frustrating yourself

S: No, well no. I would say that austerities under those circumstances would be more likely be an expression of self-will rather than to frustrate it. You see because one likes to choose one's frustrations: "You see, I'm agreeable to being frustrated in this way but I'm not going to be frustrated in that way". But the Guru or the other members of the spiritual community don't allow you to choose. Some times we say "I don't mind people saying this to me but I really object to them saying that. That I just won't have. I can put up with anything else. I don't mind being patient but I'm not going to

be patient about that". Well that's the very thing that you need to be patient about. So unconsciously you cannot but, if you impose frustrations on yourself and try to frustrate your own self-will, you cannot but impose those frustrations which are, so to speak, agreeable to you (laughter)

SIMON: It's again building up... this persona you've built up. I don't mind being called greedy~ that doesn't bother me at all but if somebody says: "you're quite an angry person really, aren't you ~~~ I'd get sort of angry and say: "No, it's the last thing I am. I'm not angry". It's so obvious actually if you just put the pin in the right place almost.

S: You see the essence of the needling that is unexpected. Because if you know you're going to prick yourself just here you're keying yourself up to with....

END OF TA~E S: You cannot really give yourself a krck in the behind. It's go~ to be done by somebody else. (laughter) Without warning, unexpectedly (laughter) Just as you're enjoying the play of some goats.

S: Or when you're being one of the goats yourself (laughs) sometimes

SIMON: Its almost does seem the times when you feel most secure are the times when you should really check that you're not just settling in and settling back0

S: Well, this is what I've been saying for years with regard to the movement as a whole. That when we start being abit successful that's the time when we've got to be really careful. Because if one is succ-

essful one can become over-confident. Over confidence makes you rash and unmindful. And then you start making mistakes. Then you start making mistakes0 Then you start getting into difficulties.

ABHAYA: What do you mean by successful in those terms ?

S: Well, whatever one thinks of as success. The fact that you are successful if you're not careful gives you a feeling of a self-satisfaction and complacency and inflation. You get carried away by that. You start making mistakes.

AEHAYA: Do you think that the Movement is just entering that phase now ?

S: I started isuing these warnings as far as I remember about five years ago. SO I don't think it has happened that we've been sort of carried away by success or anything like that. But there is always that sort of danger. Both individually and collectively.

SIMON: It seems a tendancy that You gain a little bit of ground and the tendancy seems to revel in the fact that you've attained that but as soon as you start revelling in it you're lost , whatever you thought you'd gained.

End of Seminar